

**Thorpe St Andrew Town Council
Minutes of the Finance and Staff Committee Meeting
held on 23 April 2018 at 7.30pm**

1 Present:

Miss S Lawn (Chairman)

Mr J Emsell Mr J Fisher Mr I Mackie Mrs T Mancini-Boyle

Apologies: Mr F Bowe Mr L Reeves Mr J Ward

In attendance:

Dr T Foreman (Town Clerk)

Mr D Sayer (Parks and Estates Manager) Mrs D Matthews (Committee Officer)

5 members of the public were present.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

None

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record.

4 PUBLIC SESSION (limited to 3 minutes per speaker)

Charles Avenue and Beyond - Members of the public spoke in relation to item 6 on the agenda, Charles Avenue and Beyond. They outlined the aims and aspirations of their community group and gave details of some of the projects and activities they wished to undertake to develop community cohesion in the Town. These included a range of activities at the recreation ground, in conjunction with the Friends of Thorpe St Andrew Parks and community events. The idea for re-wilding some areas and allowing grass to grow could possibly be extended to verges to help discourage parking. The group was currently organising weekly events attended by residents from 10 to 95 years of age and approximately 60/70 people had joined their group on Facebook and other social media. They were keen to see a wide range of activities in the Town in addition to football and welcomed the café initiative as a positive move to enhance connectivity and wanted to encourage residents to stay in the Town rather than seek activities outside and to create a "hub" for the Town. They welcomed the addition of the running track which had been utilised well and an informal park run had been held. They suggested the track could be enhanced further with the introduction of distance markers which could incorporate numbers in an artistic way and they were happy to help with this.

The group had benefitted from free use of the Morse Pavilion for some of their initial events and had raised funds for charity and were requesting that consideration be given to extending this free use of the facility to enable them to extend their activities.

In response to a question about the current status of the residents group, the residents responded that they did not wish at this stage to be bound by constitutions and regulations, preferring instead to focus on maintaining an informal approach with an

emphasis on organising activities and not running an organisation. Measures were in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of attendees, particularly children.

Correspondence from St Andrews Football Club - A member of the public spoke in relation to Item 7 on the agenda and concerns of the football clubs operating from the club house on the recreation ground about the impact of the café project on their income from the sale of teas/coffees etc on match days. They welcomed café project in principle, as it was a much-needed facility but asked if consideration could be given to running the café from the clubhouse. He outlined the typical expenses on match days and how these had to be funded from yearly signing on fees and from fundraising. The sale of refreshments brought in income of approximately £1,500, which helped to offset the annual costs of running the clubs. Costs to players and parents continued to increase and it would be difficult to impose another increase. He stressed that the football clubs were a very important part of the community and much improvement work had recently been undertaken to the clubhouse. The clubhouse was not used to any great extent during the week and it would be good to see it being used at other times. Running the café from the clubhouse would support this and provide a good-sized indoor seating area for café users. If the Town Council was not minded to support relocation of the café, they were asked to consider subsidising the clubs to help compensate for the loss of income from tea/coffee sales.

5 FINANCE

Members considered the papers distributed at the meeting and made the following decisions:

- (i) Review of Responsible Finance Officer job description – no changes had been made since the last review and it was agreed to note the current situation for approval at Town Council's AGM;
- (ii) Review of Finance Regulations – these had been reviewed and updated earlier this year and it was agreed to note the current regulations for approval at the Town Councils' AGM;
- (iii) Income, Expenditure, Balance Sheet and Variances 1/4/2017 to 31/3/2018 – members noted the current figures, in particular the level of reserves accumulated which was in line with the levels recommended by the auditors, and agreed to note the current situation for approval at the Town Council's AGM;
- (iv) End of Year Earmarked Reserves - agreed to note the current situation for approval at the Town Council's AGM.

6 CHARLES AVENUE AND BEYOND

Members considered the correspondence from the Charles Avenue and Beyond Residents and had regard to their representations made earlier in the meeting. The Chairman welcomed the comments and suggestions put forward by the residents and confirmed that the Council would always welcome ideas and suggestions. She commented that there were significant plans in place to develop the parks in conjunction with the Friends of Thorpe St Andrew Parks. She was sad that the residents did not feel there was a good community feel in the Town as a lot of work

was already being done to support community cohesion and a wide range of activities and community groups already existed. Other members of the committee welcomed the suggestions made by the Group and their aims but made reference to the need to ensure the Town Council continued to meet the needs of the majority of the Towns' 13,000 residents and to ensure it continued to comply with the financial regulations and legal responsibilities binding local authorities. The Council currently hosted a number of events which were aimed at the Town as a whole and offered good value for money. They commented that it was not always possible to please everyone as some facilities were welcomed by some and complained about by others.

The Town Clerk reiterated the need for Council to take action and decisions which were within the powers of the authority and to be mindful of the requirements of S137 in assisting community groups. To this end they needed to exercise due diligence when considering financial requests to ensure any organisation was properly constituted and that any proceeds were used appropriately and safeguards were in place to ensure this happened. He reminded members that there were a large number of existing community groups hiring facilities in the Town and that these were all charged in accordance with the agreed charging schedules. Members felt there was opportunity for the residents to work with the Friend of Thorpe St Andrew Parks to deliver some of their aims and activities and they welcomed their suggestions. Having regard to the constraints on the Council and mindful of the need to be fair to all community groups, they felt unable to support the request for free use of the Morse Pavilion.

RESOLVED that the request for free use of the Morse Pavilion by the Charles Avenue and Beyond residents be refused but that the Town Council welcomes their ideas and suggestions and would be keen to see them work with the Friend of Thorpe St Andrew Parks to develop some of the ideas.

7 CORRESPONDENCE FROM ST ANDREWS FOOTBALL CLUB

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk setting out concerns from the St Andrews and Thorpe Ladies football clubs about the café project at Thorpe recreation ground.

The Town Clerk and the Parks and Estates Officer confirmed that plans for the café included an indoor seating area and that proposals for the kitchen area complied with the necessary requirements to cater for the public. The café project had emerged from consultations about development of the park and the main requirement was for a facility which allowed parents to supervise children on the nearby play equipment whilst using the café. Operation of the café from the football clubhouse would not meet these requirements in terms of its location and the facilities available in the kitchen. If the football club was keen to expand use of the clubhouse, the Town Council could assist the club in promoting the facility as it received regular inquiries about the availability of function/meeting rooms for hire and the Town had over recent years lost some of its venues. A comment was made that in the past the perception was that the football clubs' facilities were not available to the general public but it was acknowledged that this was changing and the club becoming more open to other users.

Having listened to the case for the football clubs, Members concluded that it was not

possible to consider moving the café to the football clubhouse. With regard to the cost to the Council of maintenance of the football pitches, and the level of subsidy already offered to the football clubs (which was in line with other sports clubs in the Town) it was noted that there was already a net deficit to the Council and it was therefore not possible to consider increasing the subsidy already given. Members felt that it was possible for the football clubs and the café project to both cater for their users alongside each other. If the café project proved successful, this would generate another income stream for the Council which could potentially in the future be used to support the costs of maintenance of the parks/pitches.

RESOLVED to note the concerns of the football clubs regarding the café but that the Council feels that no action be taken in this respect at the present time. Support would however be available to the football clubs to help them with any plans to increase lettings of their clubhouse.

8 PROPOSALS FOR PATHWAY AND TREE PLANTING ON FITZMAURICE PARK

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk setting out proposals for the installation of pathways and tree planting on the park. Pathways would be laid to the children's play area, the multi-purpose games area and the tennis court and would be wide enough to accommodate a vehicle. Some top resurfacing of the tennis court would also take place. The proposals would also include the planting of a number of free trees which the Town were applying for from the Woodland Trust as part of the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy project. Additional paths would be considered as part of a second phase later next year. It was hoped that the work on the paths would commence late summer and the tree planting in autumn. The proposal also included the installation of blue picnic benches and a green planter.

RESOLVED to support the proposals set out in the report to install paths, a planter and benches and plant trees on the Park and that £2186 from the New Homes fund be used towards the cost of the avenue of trees and £1575 from the Community Infrastructure Levy be used for the materials for the pathways.

9 WORK EXPERIENCE REQUESTS

The Town Clerk reported on requests from two high school students for work experience placements ranging from a few days to a week.

RESOLVED to support the two requests for work experience placements.

10 PARK BIN WASTE CONTRACT

The Town Clerk reported on issues with the current park bin contract and a suggestion that the contractors be invited to submit in advance the collection dates for the following 12-month period and that a penalty clause for non-collection be included in the contract. He commented that it appeared that large bags of dog waste were being collected and deposited in the bins. It was agreed that there was a need to remind residents – perhaps via the next Thorpe News that dog waste could be deposited in residential refuse bins and it was noted that this was a message the District Council was hoping to reinforce at a district level. It was also noted that when the bins were due for replacement, consideration would be given to replacing them with a different design with a small top opening.

RESOLVED that the park bin contractors be invited to submit in advance the collection dates for the following 12-month period and that a penalty clause for non-collection be included in the contract.

11 SERVICE YARD CONDITION

Members viewed aerial photographs of the service yard noting the location and condition of the buildings. They agreed that some of the existing buildings needed to be replaced and that proposals be drawn up and costed for removal and replacement of some of the buildings for consideration at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that proposals be drawn up and costed for the removal and replacement of some of the buildings for consideration at a future meeting.

12 TOWN CLERK APPRAISAL

The appraisal of the Town Clerk included a review of work undertaken in the previous year and consideration of the work needing to be done in the forthcoming year and it was therefore proposed that the appraisal be undertaken by the Chairman of the Finance and Staff Committee, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor.

RESOLVED that the appraisal of the Town Clerk be undertaken by Chairman of the Finance and Staff Committee, the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- First World War Commemorative Garden – benches
- Café project – proposed plans

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm.

Signed:

Dated: