

Minutes
Venues and Markets Committee
Democratic Services

Date 24/01/2024
Time 18:00 - 19:50
Location King's House; Council Chamber
Present Carla Barreto, Chris Harvey, Terry Jermy, Terry Land (Chair), Victor Peters, and Stuart Terry.

Officers David Brooks (Venues and Markets Officer)
Hazel Doyle (Communications Officer),
Stacey Cornwall (Market Co-ordinator)
Karen Robinson (Committee Clerk)

Members of the public There were no members of the public in attendance.

MINUTES

612/23 DECLARATIONS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

None.

613/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies: Councillor Douglas Jefferson (Vice Chair).

Absent: Councillor Mike Brindle.

614/23 MINUTES

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Venues and Markets Committee meeting held on 15th November 2023, which were received by Council on 28th November 2023 are a true record and signed/initialled by the Committee Chairman.

615/23 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Committee discussed the Communications Report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- The Councillors noted that the poster sites are full and informative, and that Press Releases are being generated, although further clarification is still required regarding communication between the Committee and the Officers.
- It was suggested that an Instagram be set up to encourage engagement between the Council and young people, although students and art groups are already involved with the Council within the educational programmes already in place.

Action Point: The Officers organise a journalist/guest reporter and contact schools.

The report was noted.

616/23 THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Committee identified articles and other content to be included in the upcoming newsletter (Summer/Autumn Issue):

- Issue number 2 of 'Our Town', bi-annual newsletter is scheduled to be delivered on the first weekend in April 2024 and covers the months of April to October.

- Committee Officer to work with Councillors Terry Land and Terry Jermy to produce a draft version, the period of this issue (April to October) is very busy with events that it was suggested careful lay out was to include smaller articles, more variety, details, and links to the new website, plus QR Codes.
- Suggested items to be included in the newsletter: Thetford in Bloom, The Annual Town Meeting plus Mayor Making, update from the new Mayor, hanging baskets, 80th Anniversary of D-Day, and the re-development of Ramsey Close as an allotment site and the summer schedule of Market Place and Town events.

RESOLVED: The content for the newsletter was approved.

617/23 THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Committee received an update on the new website and confirmation of the launch date of 31 January 2024:

- The Committee Officer informed the Committee that as an alternative to a secured Councillor site within the new website, it was proposed to expand the Town Council Sharepoint site which is already accessible to all staff to include all Councillors. The site can be populated with historic documents, and information as well as up to date events and project work information that Councillors would find useful.
- Emergency contact information section of the Senior Management Team, to include photos, email addresses and phone numbers to be provided on the website. A roster will be implemented. All staff will be included in the 'meet the staff' section which would include Name, Job Title, Job Responsibilities.
- The Chair asked if the new website had been tested across various platforms, including Firefox, Chrome, Edge, Tablets, and Laptops.

Action Point: Committee Officer to speak with staff on Thursday 25th January 2024 and ask if they want to provide personal photos on the website.

The update was noted, including the identification of any additional actions required to support the new website launch.

618/23 WEEKLY MARKETS

The Committee discussed a report on the current administration and marketing of the weekly markets:

- The Market Coordinator has settled into the role and has continued to attract more traders to the Market Place, continues searching for a permanent food vendor to the Market Place, and is hopeful that this can be achieved once the weather conditions improve. She has been producing digital media updates on the market traders and has suggested that an increase in footfall may be achieved by targeting specific age generations for differing markets and market days.
- Welcome Pack to be generated to include the promotion of reduced rates, waste disposal, refer a friend scheme, and to organise meetings with traders and Councillors.
- Work to continue regarding the Continental Market by moving the current traders onto King Street at the same time and vice versa.
- The Market Coordinator has completed the audit of the gazebo stock belonging to the Council, which were purchased several years ago, and repaired those that were salvageable.
- The Committee approved the purchase of five replacement canopies at a cost of £550.00.
- The Chair requested that the Market Coordinator sets up a Twitter account.

Action Points:

- 1) Committee Officer to purchase five replacement canopies at a cost of £550.00.
- 2) The Market Coordinator sets up a Twitter account.

The report was noted.

619/23 APPLICATION TO HIRE THE VENUE FREE OF CHARGE

The Committee discussed two applications for hiring a venue free of charge:

- The retrospective application was not approved.
- The second application regarding support of the neighbourhood Police Team resurrecting the Shop Watch Scheme.

Councillor Victor Peters proposed, and Councillor Carla Barreto seconded.

RESOLVED: That the application to support the Shop Watch Scheme be approved.

620/23 VENUES AND MARKETS STAFF UNIFORMS

The Committee discussed feedback from staff on the wearing of uniforms:

- The Committee Officer reported that there was confusion as to whether all Council staff were to be included in the allocation of uniforms etc. The Council had already purchased some polo-shirts with The Carnegie and The Guildhall logo, plus lanyards.
- A suggestion of purchasing a minimum of one item of clothing per person, plus magnetic name badges was agreed and uniforms for the Town Team may require separate re-branding.

The update was noted.

621/23 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Committee received an update on any health & safety matters that had arisen since the last meeting:

- The steps and railing repairs at the rear of The Carnegie/Lower Market has commenced, following the guidance on required planning permissions.
- Town Team to investigate possible sinkage of ground near to the tree between The Carnegie and Rudlings Solicitors.
- The heating system in The Guildhall is no longer functional, and a cheaper option to use current radiators supported by a gas-powered system is preferable.
- The newly-appointed Structural Engineer has determined that the condition of the second tower is good and does not require any repair work, therefore, costs for the repair to the clock alone, can be assessed and whether it is feasible to undertake the repairs. The internal scaffolding, which is the main restrictive issue to the venue operation can be resolved within weeks and the remaining scaffolding can be dismantled and grant funding sourced to enable the repairs needed to be completed.

The update was noted.

622/23 PRELIMINARY FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee discussed the preliminary Venues and Markets Financial Report, which was circulated prior to the meeting:

- Overall actual income is significantly lower than budgeted and the Guildhall Tearoom is no longer operating as a traditional weekly tearoom, although there are pre-booked weddings for the Spring and Summer months. The cost-of-living crisis and the restrictive repair work involving the scaffolding has had a direct impact on income and operations for the Council.
- Overall costs are significantly higher than budgeted due to The Carnegie repairs and maintenance which includes fire and intruder alarms, boiler servicing, and repairs to the water heater.

The financial report was noted.

623/23 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

None.

624/23 COMMITTEE OFFICERS UPDATE

None.

Chairman