**COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA PACK**

**5 NOVEMBER 2024**

A logo of a castle

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Thetford Town Council, The Carnegie, Cage Lane, Thetford, IP24 2DS

Tel: 01842 754247

**THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Date: **Tuesday 5 November 2024** Time: **6:00 pm**

Place: **Guildhall Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Place, IP24 2DT**

**Members are hereby summoned to attend the above meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the agenda should be carefully examined.**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:**

H. McCambridge (Chair), I. Evans (Vice Chair), C. Barreto, M. Brindle, T. Jermy, T. Land,

M. MacDonald, S. Terry, S. Wright.

**FOR INFORMATION:**

A. Blackbourn, D. Blackbourn, C. Harvey, D. Jefferson, A. Mitchell, V. Peters,

V. Ross-Smith, M. Stirrup, R. Wood.

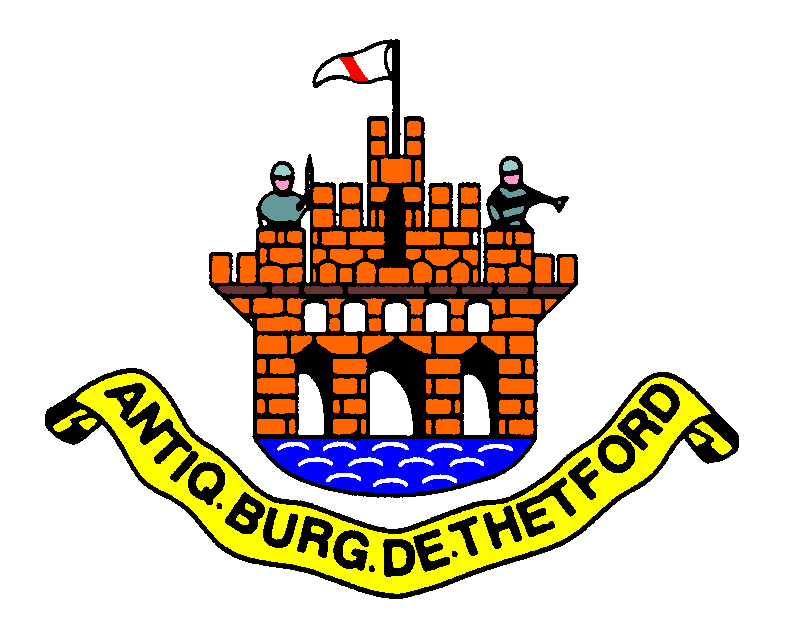
**Town Clerk**

**31 October 2024**

**AGENDA**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **373/24** | **Apologies for Absence**  To receiveand approve apologies for absence. |
| **374/24** | **Minutes Community and Environmental Services Committee**  To confirm the minutes of the Community and Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 3 September 2024 as a true record and be signed/initialled by the Committee Chair.  Decision required: To agree the minutes of the last meeting.  Lead: Chair. |
| **375/24** | **Declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**  To receive any additional interest not already registered. |
| **376/24** | **Town Team Manager’s Report**  To receive and discuss the report from the Town Team Manager.  Decision required: To note the report.  Lead: Town Team Manager. |
| **377/24** | **BFER Interpretation Boards**  To consider a request from BFER for the Town Council to enter into a 5-year licence agreement with Breckland Council for the maintenance of BFER Interpretation Boards along the river. To receive a report on the possible cost implications to the Town Council for doing so.  Decision required: To decide how to respond to the request from BFER.  Lead: Deputy Town Clerk. |
| **378/24** | **Financial Reports**  To receive and note the financial reports for the six months ended 30 September 2024.  Decision required: None.  Lead: Deputy Town Clerk. |
| **379/24** | **Draft Budget**  To receive and discuss the Committee’s draft for the year ending 31 March 2026.  Decision required: To approve the draft budget or to suggest changes that needs to be made.  Lead: Deputy Town Clerk. |
| **380/24** | **Small Grants**  Small Grant Applications that have been previously circulated to Committee Councillors should be considered.  Decision required: To approve the Small Grant Applications received.  Leads: Chair and Deputy Town Clerk**.** |
| **381/24** | **Update on Potential Funding Bids**  To receive a verbal update on various funding bids that are being pursued by Officers.  Decision required: To note the update.  Lead: Deputy Town Clerk. |
| **382/24** | **Progress on Actions from Previous Meetings**  To review and note the action points carried forward from previous meetings.  Decision Required: None.  Lead: Chair. |
| **383/24** | **Committee Officers Update**  To receive and note any update from the Committee Officer since the agenda for this meeting was issued.  Decision required: None.  Lead: Committee Officer. |

**A recording of the meeting can also be viewed on** [**https://bit.ly/ttceventsyoutube**](https://bit.ly/ttceventsyoutube) **usually within 5 working days after the meeting has been held.**

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**DRAFT**

**Agenda Item 374/24**

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| Report To: | Community and Environmental Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Deputy Town Clerk |
| Subject: | Confirm the Minutes |

**To confirm the minutes of the Community and Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 3 September 2024 as a true record and be signed/initialled by the Committee Chair.**

Present: Councillors: M. Brindle, I. Evans, C. Harvey, T. Land, M. MacDonald, H. McCambridge (Chair), S. Terry

Officers: S. Wright (Town Clerk)

A. Yorke (Deputy Town Clerk)

N. Thompson (Committee Officer)

Members of Public: There were none.

**269/24** **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor T. Jermy’s absence was noted.

**270/24** **Minutes**

The minutes of the Community and Environmental Services Committee meeting held on the 7 August 2024 are a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**271/24** **Declarations of Any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

**272/24** **Town Team Report**

The Committee Officer spoke about a report on the activities of the Town Team, Cemetery, Allotment, Market and the Volunteers. The Committee expressed their appreciation for the work done by members of the team, noting the positive impact that the new Amenities Assistant had on the toilet amenities in the town centre. In respect of the Cemetery the potential lack of space in the new part of the Cemetery was noted as this could have an impact on future burials for the remaining four months of the year. The need to look at other ways to help mark the passing of a deceased by families and residents other than in an interment was encouraged. It was hoped that this piece of work would be undertaken soon. In respect of allotments, it was noted that the backlog in reallocating plots was being eliminated. The Tuesday market viability was under threat due to very small stallholders and this needs to be addressed. The efforts of the new Market Co-ordinator in attracting potential new stall holders was noted.

The Deputy Town Clerk noted that the Heritage and Events Committee were looking at an event to recognise the work of volunteers as a whole and there was a need to work in tandem with this Committee in acknowledging volunteer efforts and support to the work of the Town Team.

There was a discussion about the location of bins and benches, and the potential to review locations around town, specifically thinking about distance from each other and from paths and walking routes.

Serco are due to cut the flower meadows but have said they cannot do this until mid-October which is too late in the year for our wildflower meadow management.

The report was noted.

**273/24** **Final Financial Reports**

The Deputy Town Clerk explained why it has been decided to change the way the Committee received their financial reports. Previously, the Committee would have received a financial report on the same day of the meeting, and these would be preliminary due to the closeness of the Committee meeting and the end of the preceding month. This made it difficult to analyse and study the financial information. The Deputy Town Clerk had tabled final reports for July 2024 and had done an analysis from a financial and budget risk. After highlighting the major variances and risks, members of the Committee agreed that the new reporting format was helpful.

Committee members agreed that the leasing of vehicles was a cost that could be reviewed and reduced and suggestions, such as looking at a lease to purchase model offered by a rental vehicle company and electric vehicles, were made.

There were no other specific comments on the Cemetery and Allotments reports. Monthly takings for the market to be included as part of the report.

The Committee noted the Final Financial Reports.

**274/24** **Fencing on Castle Mound**

An Individual member of the Committee had asked the Committee Officer by way of email whether the temporary fencing used on Castle Mound should be made more permanent, hence the reason for this agenda item. The Committee Officer re-iterated that fencing was fundamental graziers would leave the site if there were dog attacks.

**RESOLVED:**

The placing of a permanent fencing structure be investigated by officers for the Committee to consider at a future meeting.

**Action:** Officers to pursue the installation of a more permanent livestock structure; December 2024.

Proposed by Councillor T. Land and seconded by Councillor C. Harvey.

**275/24** **Community Orchards**

The Committee briefly explained the Community Orchards funding from Breckland Council. The importance of identifying Council-owned and publicly accessible land was important. Council owned land in Dane Close was identified as being suitable as there was no other use for the land at present. Glebe Close was identified as a potential site but the transfer of ownership to the Council is still in progress.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Officer submit the application for a Community Orchards Grant noting the looming deadline date and identify Dane Close as the land to site the orchard.

**Action:** Pursue an application for a grant and the identification of suitable land; December 2024.

Proposed by Councillor T. Land and seconded by Councillor C. Harvey.

**276/24** **Progress on Actions from Previous Meetings**

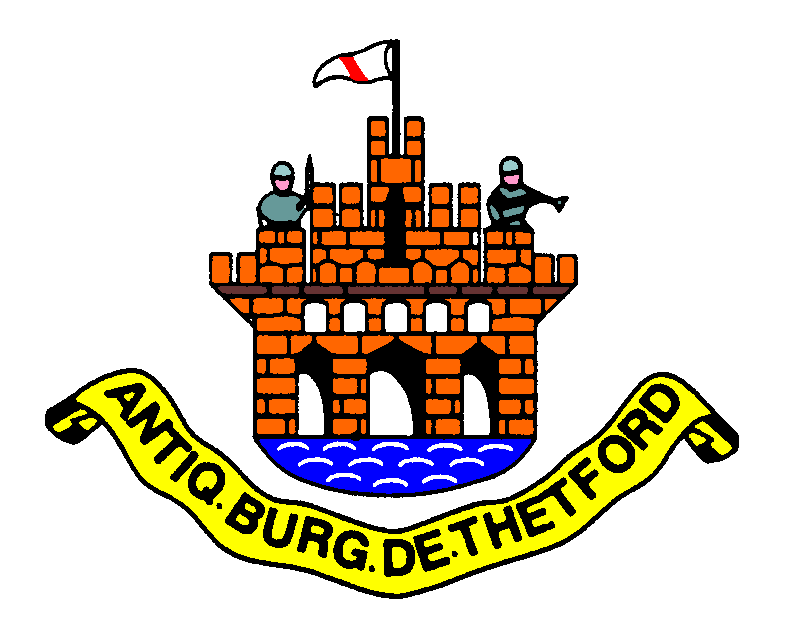
The Deputy Town Clerk indicated that progress on actions from previous meetings had been disappointing but hopefully more progress will be made. Those items that had been completed were identified and noted. There was a query on the removal of nettles around a litter bin on Mill Lane and this will be further investigated.

**277/24** **Committee Officer’s Update**

There was no update.

**The meeting closed at 19:02**

Chairman: H McCambridge



**Agenda Item 376/24**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Report To: | Community & Environmental Services Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Community and Environmental Services Manager |
| Subject: | Town Team Report November 2024 |

1. **Town Team**

The Team have been working on the maintenance of open spaces and town centre areas to help improve the aesthetics and appearance of the town, as well as attending to any maintenance defects.

This continues to see further working partnerships and agreements of works being carried out to various assets and sites, as well as future improvements being planned wherever possible.

Norfolk County Council Highways continue to work closely with us and we have recently held a meeting with the new Highways Officer for Thetford.

During the visit NCC assets were looked at to see where improvements are needed.

These included:

* Replacement removeable bollards for pedestrianised area King Street
* Resurfacing of roadway around School Lane Car Park.
* Resurfacing of layby & replacement kerb edges Cage Lane
* Replacement of heritage LED streetlamps for Town Centre
* Lack of NCC Highways grass cutting to sites and road verges owned by them.

Other works now planned include –

* Reduction of the large hedge at the boundary of the Thetford Bus Interchange
* Underpasses & issues surrounding these.
* Crossing islands at roundabouts and weed and hedge growth alongside the highways.

We have also planned regular visits in with the new Highways Team to meet and discuss issues in Thetford going forward.

Breckland Council have been working alongside Town Council Officers, and this has seen the start of licence agreements, which will be drawn up, for sites within the town areas. Going forward this will be the process.

These include licenses for –

* **Pocket Parks-** (subject to funding proof for a three-year license term)

Additional options of purchase may become available from BDC once secured.

* **Benches For Abbey Water Meadows -**Subject to Norfolk Police SNT approval before BDC approve the license for siting. TTC will need to fund and take full responsibility & liability if agreed.

We also continue to work closely with the Breckland Enforcement Team and assist where any issues arise within the town and estates and open spaces.

Recent issues that have occurred include anti-social behaviour particularly at the following locations –

* King’s Square.
* St Cuthberts Church yard & walkway.
* Local shop windows and street CCTV being vandalised.

Another meeting is now scheduled with TTC Officers, The BDC Team and Norfolk Police to look at how we combat these issues and engage with the youths.

Moving forward we hope that this will see further significant improvements in joint working partnerships together and to raise improvements needed from all services that each governing body provide for the town and residents.

These will include –

* Grass cutting and vegetation cutting along the highway areas and roundabouts.
* Weed control within the public spaces and estates and highways.
* Underpass cleanliness and maintenance defects.
* Street lighting defects being rectified.
* Open space maintenance.

We have also been working with the Team Ministry of St Cuthberts Church to see if CCTV cameras can be used as a deterrent and be fixed within the area to help reduce the ASB issues being experienced.

Team tasks carried out throughout the month of September & October have included

* Assisting with grazing and fencing repairs of sites
* Carrying out internal play park repair works
* Cutting down vegetation on the banks of the Creeping Marshwort site.
* Install chatty benches at Ford Meadow
* Vegetation trimming at Castle Park and Ford Meadow.
* Remove summer planting and plant winter planting for the town’s flower beds and planters.
* Regular building checks for fire & legionella compliance.
* Moving out of Kings House & setting up in the Guildhall.
* Litter bin & dog bin replacements at both Abbey & St Johns Way estates.
* Trimming of Skate Park hedges.
* Bus Station toilet door repairs.
* Castle Park fence repair works.
* Providing water for new livestock.
* Street cleansing of TTC owned amenity spaces.
* Public toilets cleansing & operations.
* Team training which has included – health & safety, manual handling, first aid, COSHH and risk assessing.
* Community litter pick over two days at St Johns Way & Beech Close Woods.
* Community bulb planting at Nuns Bridges, Ford Meadow and Mill Lane
* A license has been submitted to plant Snowdrops to be planted along Kimms Belt. We are awaiting approval for this.

**Community Orchard**

The Team recently applied and bid for funding which was being provided by Breckland Council as part of the Kings Coronation Living Heritage Fund which still had money available for district towns to apply for to create community orchards.

Following the bid application and project outlay being submitted we have been notified that we have been successful and have obtained an amount of around £500.00.

The area identified for the orchard by the committee at the previous meeting was Dane Close.

All the trees have now been ordered and will be delivered in January.

The Team will then set up and advertise out to the community and councillors to organise a planting day to hopefully get residents involved in creating a new fruit orchard for the community to access free food in the near future.

A tree with apples on it

Description automatically generatedA close-up of pears on a tree

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1. **Open Space Maintenace Works**

The new grazing licenses have been drawn up and signed to secure our new grazier for the Ford Meadow & Barnham Common.

Native sheep including Jacobs have been placed & sited on to Ford Meadow to reduce the vegetation in line with the site’s Management Plan.

A sheep in a field

Description automatically generatedA group of sheep in a field

Description automatically generated

The Castle Mound site has now also had further sheep added to the Mound itself, and this will now see the scheduled monument grazed as per the Management Plan for the site throughout the winter months ahead of spring.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust recently visited and conducted a survey since the first area had been grazed and this showed positive effects of the wild flora and fauna returning to the areas of the Ramparts.

A key factor, and a really good sign, they discovered was that areas of the plant species Meadow Rue were returning and that there were also good signs of various Chalk Flora also returning to the Ramparts themselves.

The sheep have also tackled and eaten the invasive species including the Golden Rod and the Ragwort.

It is now hoped that going forward with the grazing now taking place at both Ford Meadow and Barnham Common, many other positive aspects will now be seen within the areas.

We hope in the future that Ford Meadow can then be registered as a priority habitat and other areas can be classified as county wildlife sites with the NWT.

A group of sheep grazing in a grassy area

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1. **Future Works**

* Town’s Christmas Lights Switch-On.
* Spring bulb planting.
* Create Community Orchard.
* Revamp sleeper flower beds around the Carnegie and the installation of neuro diversity boards.
* Venue and building maintenance tasks.
* Preventative maintenance to TTC assets.

**Items for the Committee to note**

To be aware of the vast amount of gorse clearance and scrapes needed as part of the Management Plan for Barnham Cross Common.

This will enable the areas to be reopened up from scrub and reallow the Brecks native species to return to the site.

The Town Team along with the Conservation Volunteers will carry out clearances through the winter months of scrub & gorse to smaller and more manageable parts, but mechanical machinery is now needed for the scrub in larger areas.

All works will be approved by Natural England with consents before any works proceed within the SSSI site.

A field of green plants

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A collage of a field of plants

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1. **Burial Administrator’s Report – November 2024**

**Interments**

In September we carried out a total of 4 interments. 2 were ashes interments and 2 were interments in the cemetery extension.

In October we carried out a total of 2 interments. 1 was an interment in the older section and 1 was an interment in the cemetery extension.

In November we currently have 4 ashes interments booked in.

I have been advised by an undertaker that there will be a burial coming in November which will take place in the cemetery extension. Once this is booked in it will leave us with three burials in the cemetery extension for the rest of the year. We also have 1 further ashes interment to be booked in.

Below is my spreadsheet showing how many interments have taken place so far in 2024.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **Ashes** | **Old** | **New** | **Total** |
| January | 2024 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| February | 2024 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 5 |
| March | 2024 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| April | 2024 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| May | 2024 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| June | 2024 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| July | 2024 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| August | 2024 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| September | 2024 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| October | 2024 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| November | 2024 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| December | 2024 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|  |  | 28 | 5 | 21 | 54 |

**Noticeboards**

The noticeboards have been ordered and I am awaiting a completion date.

**Thank you letters for Conservation Group and Thetford In Bloom Volunteers**

The letters have been prepared and will be given to the volunteers at the next meetings of the volunteer groups.

1. **Market Co-Ordinator Report**

Julija, the Market Co-Ordinator, has been working hard in assisting our current market traders with the weekly Tuesday and Saturday markets.

This has now seen Julija reaching out and further promoting the weekly markets by interacting with the many local existing businesses, as well as other markets to try and recruit more stall holders to come and trade.

The new market trader’s pack has been distributed throughout the town, and work has now begun with the looking into further events taking place on the area on non-market days.

New stall holders have been contacted and have now shown interest and one has even confirmed for 2025.

These include –

* Chocs Away who sell homemade Turkish Delight, chocolates and macarons (Tuesdays and Saturdays).
* Redfield’s Fruit & Veg – their first day of trading has now been confirmed for Tuesday 14th January 2025.
* Luna Rose Crafts - 12th April, 3rd May, 17th May and 14th June (Saturdays) confirmed.
* Doodle Donuts who provide a variety of flavoured doughnuts.
* Aunty Annas Portuguese Takeaway.
* Chilli Freaks.

These events would be held aside to our regular Tuesday and Saturday market days to see the open space brought into use more and the area developed further.

Ideas currently being explored include:

* Regular farmers markets
* Producers market & mini food festivals
* Craft market days
* Events

1. **Allotments**

**Relinquished Plots**

Fourteen plots have been relinquished during October and this number will possibly increase towards the end of the year after the final rental reminders have been sent out.

There are 53 rental payments still outstanding (database checked on 28/10/2024).

**Allocations and Waiting List**

Since the beginning of September, 17 applicants have received an invitation to attend an allotment viewing. This has resulted in 16 applicants going forward with their applications.

The allotment waiting list currently stands at 27 applicants (list checked on the 28/10/2024). Two of these applicants would prefer to wait for availability on the Magdalen Street allotment site, which currently does not have any vacancies.

**Vacant Plots**

There is a total of 25 vacant plots across all the sites.

* Mundford Road – 8 full plots and 4 half plots.
* Bury Road – 3 full plots and 3 half plots.
* London Road – 2 full plots and 2 half plots.
* Icknield Way – 1 full plot and 2 half plots.

It is the intention to convert the vacant full plots into two halves which will increase the rental capacity to 31 plots.

**Site Water Supply**

The water supply to all sites will be turned off between the 1st November and the 31st March.

**Pest Control**

The appointed pest control company has continually been monitoring the allotments sites and has updated us of his work. However, we are still receiving reports of rat activity on some sites.

**Livestock**

It is now a legal requirement to register kept birds with the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and this came into force on the 1st October 2024. Information posters have been displayed at relevant sites informing tenants of this requirement.

1. **Volunteer Groups**

The Conservation Volunteers and the Thetford in Bloom Volunteers have been working alongside the Town Team.

Areas worked on throughout the months of September & October for the Conservation Volunteers:

* Sir Frederick’s Wood – Mahonia Control as per the Management Plan.
* A guided walk of open spaces.
* Pond and memorial garden works.
* A guided walk to visit the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.
* Invasive species control at sites (Ragwort & Canadian Golden Rod).
* Clearing back pathways at conservation sites.

A group of people in the woods

Description automatically generatedA dirt path through a grassy area

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A group of people standing on a gravel path

Description automatically generatedA group of people standing in a forest

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A group of people wearing vests and standing on a bench

Description automatically generated A group of people outside working on a table

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Thetford in Bloom Volunteers

The In Bloom Volunteers have been busy helping keep areas of the town centre clean and tidy.

This has included looking after the following areas and keeping plants looking their best:

* Kings Street.
* Riverside Walk.
* Thetford Bus Interchange.
* Kings Street Garden (behind St Cuthbert’s).
* Market Place.
* Carnegie and Guildhall areas.

They have also assisted the Team in replenishing the planters and barrels and looking after the Thetford Bus Interchange site flower beds.

Further works the group have carried out alongside the looking after of the town is the supporting the Thetford Community Autumn Litter Pick Event.

Group members also attended the Anglia in Bloom seminar in preparation of next year’s Anglia In Bloom entry for Thetford.

A person leaning over a suitcase

Description automatically generatedA planter box on a street

Description automatically generatedA flower bed with plants and flowers

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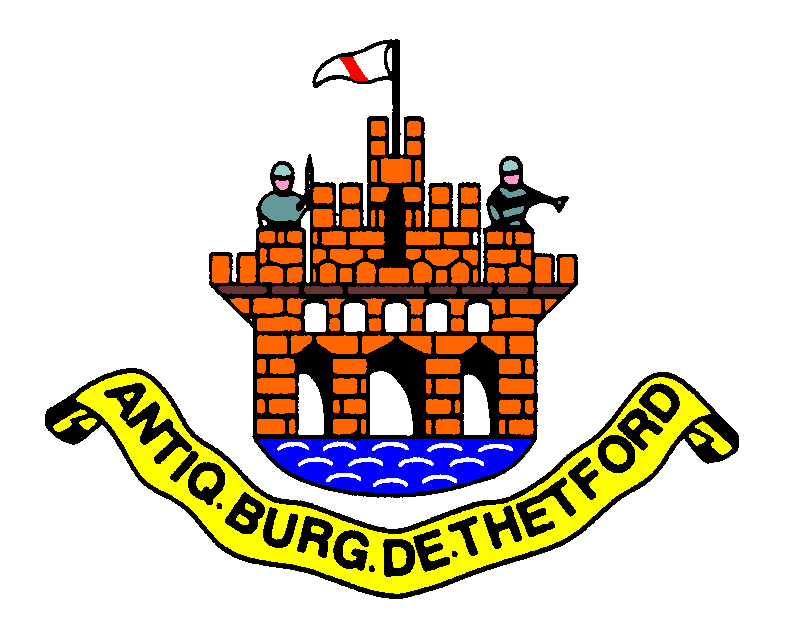
A planter with plants in it

Description automatically generatedA black metal fence with plants in it

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Total hours for the volunteers this month equated to 119.5 hours combined.

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| **Officer Recommendation:**  That the Committee note the report. |

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**Agenda Item 378/24**

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| --- | --- |
| Report To: | Community and Environmental Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Community and Environmental Services Manager |
| Subject: | BFER Interpretation Boards |

**To consider a request from BFER for the Town Council to enter into a 5-year licence agreement with Breckland Council for the maintenance of BFER Interpretation Boards along the river. To receive a report on the possible cost implications to the Town Council for doing so.**

Thetford Town Council have been recently approached by the BFER Project who have been working across the Brecks to focus on the river heritage of the various towns and villages of the local area.

As part of the project interpretation boards have been produced along stretches of the river at various locations including Mildenhall and Brandon as well as other local towns and villages.

For the Thetford part of the project, BFER would like to produce two interpretation boards which would be designed to tell the story of the rivers and their use over time, to help celebrate the connection with the people of Thetford. They will cover recreation and industrial/trade, along with any other key local information felt to be relevant.

Both boards will include reference to the Thetford Town Council river trails and other walks, and a small section on water safety.

The historic material has mostly been gathered in the Tales from the River project, along with Industrious Rivers, Ancient House Museum, and other sources.

The location for the boards has now been set and approved. One will be sited at the old Thetford Lido close to Nun’s Bridges. The second location is near the jetty close to the Coffee Mill.

The river lido board will focus on the rich history of that swimming pool provision from 1890 to 1972, and of swimming in the river, BFER have had a wonderful resource donated to the project – a 1994 thesis by a local woman whose family moved with the overspill and who love the town. She did a detailed study and gathered memories from people born as long ago as 1912 along with research in the Town Council and Museum archives. This will be supplemented this with oral history interviews with local people. The board will also, very briefly, summarise the importance of Nuns Bridges – already covered elsewhere, and alert people to walks to the BTO, Ford Meadow and Spring Walk.

The jetty/Coffee Mill panel will focus much more on the industry and trade, including the Maltings, Tannery and other industries, mills, lighters and for recreation mostly on boating and fishing. It will also mention the Duleep Singh statue on Butten Island.

BFER have also asked about the possibility of using the Thetford Town Council logo on the boards. Would we agree to this?

The BFER Project will fund, install and produce the boards under a five-year licence being set-up through Breckland Council.

The BFER project will finish in March 2025 following the expiration of their funding, and they have approached us to see if we could be named on the licence, as well as to take ownership and full responsibility of the boards going forward if the committee agrees?

This would mean that following an approval and agreement being set, the council would then ensure that going forward the boards are maintained and cleaned and replaced where necessary as well as to renew and set up a new licence as the named applicant when the first five years expire.

We estimate the maintenance costs to be no more than £150.00 per annum.

Below are examples of the proposed boards in Brandon and Mildenhall.

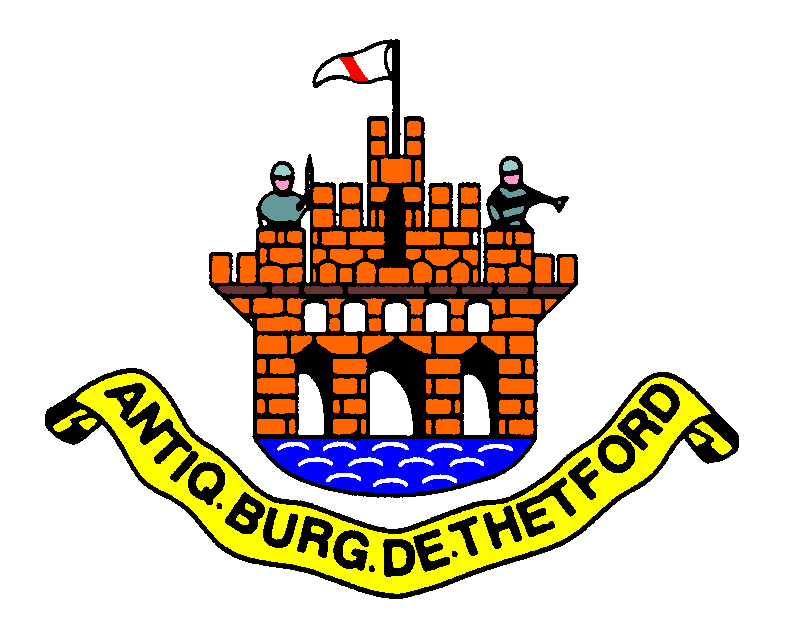
A close-up of a brochure

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A close-up of a brochure

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| **Officer Recommendation:**  That the Committee: -   1. Decide how to respond to the request from BFER. 2. That if the Committee is minded responding positively to the request, that it budgets £150 per annum per Board for maintenance for 5 years. 3. That Officers provide the assurance to Breckland that the Council will maintain the Interpretation Boards after the BFER project ends in February 2025. 4. BFER commit to the purchase and installation of the Boards before the obligation of the Town Council commences. |

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**Agenda Item 378/24**

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| --- | --- |
| Report To: | Community and Environmental Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Deputy Town Clerk |
| Subject: | Financial Reports for six months ended 30th September 2024 |

**To receive and note the financial reports for the six months ended 30 September 2024.**

There are 4 financial areas (General, Cemetery, Allotments and the Market) within the Community and Environmental Services Committee and each has their own budget and financial statement.

This report highlights the key areas to note based on the attached financial reports: -

***Community and Environmental Services – General***

1. From an income perspective, the Community and Environmental Services Manager has raised significant donations from businesses and the County Council (see n/c 4416 - £10,426). These were not budgeted and have resulted in a positive budget variance in income n/c 4416 and a negative variance in expenditure n/c 5417/5418. The donations have covered the additional expenditure that has been incurred.
2. A key financial risk is the lack of grazing on Barnham Cross Common and the Castle Mound. Due to the significant efforts of the Community and Environmental Services Manager in sourcing a grazier, it is unlikely that there will need to be mechanical cutting of Castle Mound. Unfortunately, the lack of grazing on Barnham Cross Common may result in the need to use mechanical cutting to reduce the gorse in this The n/c affected will be 5442 and if mechanical cutting has to be used, extra costs of £2,500 per day required could be incurred.
3. Toilets expenditure (n/c 5470) is significantly over budget. The reason is that it was expected that the contract for toilet cleaning would end in the last financial year and Council staff would be employed from 1 April 2024. This did not happen. Effectively the high spend in n/c 5470 has been funded from savings in salaries (see comments below).
4. The Council has entered into rental agreements on its vehicles and having employed more staff, have required more vehicles. This cost needs to be contained otherwise the Council will exceed its budget by 300%. The new Town Clerk has been tasked with addressing this matter.
5. Tree Surveying costs have significantly exceeded budget (n/c 5456). There is an element of catch up as the annual surveying fees are negotiated on an annual basis. There has also been more surveying done in the current year. It is hoped that there will be a saving in Tree Cutting and Maintenance costs (n/c 5457) that will offset the overspend in tree surveying costs.
6. On a positive note, the salaries expenditure is significantly lower than budget, even though all posts have been filled other than the recruitment of 2 apprentices. This “saving” has effectively funded all the adverse variances identified above.
7. A further pleasing note is that playpark expenditure is much lower than budgeted. Typically, vandalism is extremely high in the summer holiday period, but this year has been an exception. The significant investment in playpark backlog maintenance and renewal in previous years have also helped as equipment failure is a lot lower.

Overall income is £16,772 higher than budget and expenditure is £15,442 lower than budget. There are no major concerns from a budgeting perspective

In the medium term, tendering for a new open space contractor is being undertaken as this cost will have major budgetary implications for the Council in the 2025/26 financial year (see agenda 379/24).

***Community and Environmental Services – Cemetery***

1. Cemetery income is difficult to predict as some Cemetery Charges are based on whether it relates to a parishioner or non-parishioner as there are significant differences fees (fees relating to non-parishioners are mostly double that of parishioners). At the end of the period, income is significantly higher than budget (even though internments are only higher by 1 compared to the same period last year) . This is not a matter of concern.
2. There is an unbudgeted grant from BFER and this will be billed to BFER shortly relating to the pond at the Cemetery. The expenditure (n/c 5515) was also not budgeted, and this will be effectively funded from this grant.
3. Cemetery maintenance (n/c 5510) is higher than budget due to the need to replace a rotted walkway due to health and safety concerns. There is a risk this budget could be exceeded if there is a need for emergency maintenance.

Overall income is significantly higher than budget (£5,538) and expenditure is ££3,554 higher than budget. There are no key financial risks for the six months ended 30 September 2024.

In the longer term, there is a financial risk that the Cemetery will have no capacity, and this will need to be addressed in the budget preparation process for future years.

***Community and Environmental Services – Allotments***

1. The allotment year runs from 11 October to 10 October of the following year. Allotment fees are payable by tenants on 11 October 2024, so the majority of allotment income is generated later in the financial year. That explains why there is very little income recorded in the financial report.
2. Allotment fees are set one year in advance, so the fee increase for 2024/2025 has already been set. A comparative study on allotment fees and deposits compared to other Councils has been undertaken. Thetford Town Council’s fees are in line with most other Councils surveyed.
3. Total expenditure is lower than budget (there is an positive variance of £1,546, which is not significant). One of the over-expenditures relate to water tap repairs and the purchase of water tap keys. Water tap keys are effectively an inventory item and the Council charge those tenants who require a key to pay a refundable £10 deposit. Due to the small amounts involved, the necessity and cost of an inventory system to better account for this expenditure will outweigh the benefit of accurate reporting. The other area relates to unplanned tree maintenance which cost £3,700. These over-expenditures have been effectively funded from a £4,544 saving in the salaries budget.

Based on the Allotments financial report, no financial risks have been identified.

***Community and Environmental Services – Market***

From a financial perspective, there are no financial risks associated with the Market for the period ended 30 September 2024. From an operational perspective, a lot of effort has been made by the Community and Environmental Services Manager is reaching out to potential market stall holders.

It may be appropriate to look at forming a working group to look at this in more detail. If the Committee is minded to form a working group, this can be discussed at the next Committee meeting in more detail.

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| **Officer Recommendation:**  The Committee note this report. |

**FINANCIAL REPORT – COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: GENERAL (FORMER AMENITIES COMMITTTEE)**



**FINANCIAL REPORT – COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: CEMETERY**

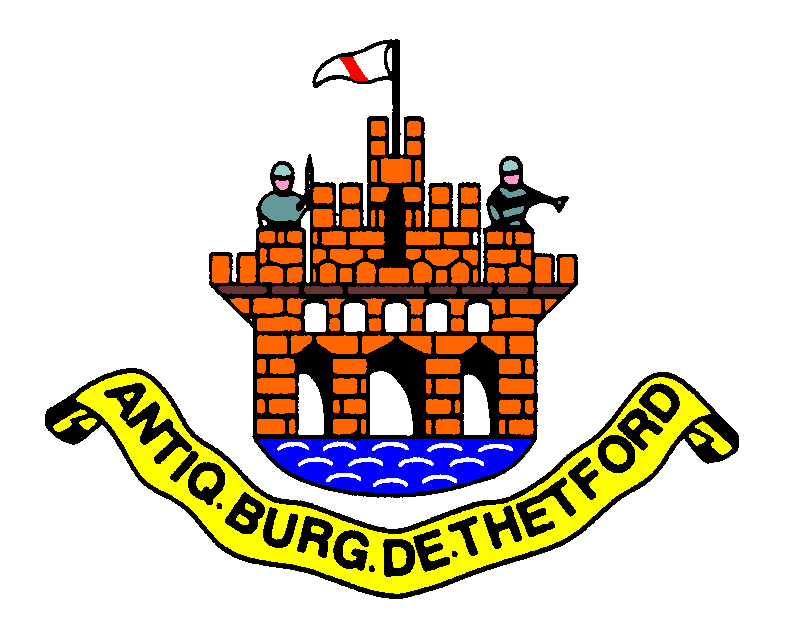


**FINANCIAL REPORT – COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: ALLOTMENTS**



**FINANCIAL REPORT – COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: MARKET**



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**Agenda Item 379/24**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Report To: | Community and Environmental Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Deputy Town Clerk |
| Subject: | Draft Budget |

**To receive and discuss the Committee’s draft for the year ending 31 March 2026**

There are 4 financial areas (General, Cemetery, Allotments and the Market) within the Community and Environmental Services Committee and each has their own budget.

This report highlights the key areas to note from a budget perspective and which the Committee may want to discuss or note.

***Community and Environmental Services – General***

The Community and Environmental Services - General draft budget is set out in the following pages. The following require consideration by the Committee.

Budgeted income

It is not yet known what the grant from Rural payments will be for the 2024/25 year and therefore it is difficult to prepare a realistic budget for this income at the date of this report. We have requested our agents to move the Council on to the new Rural payments Scheme which pays a higher grant compared to the older agreement that we were tied into. We have just received correspondence from the Rural Payments Agency that we are eligible for an additional grant and are waiting for more information. It is likely that the budget for this income will need to be revised once the status of the new grant system has been confirmed.

The Town Team Manager has been extremely successful in sourcing donations for the Anglia in Bloom floral displays. The same level of income has been budgeted for 2025/26.

Budgeted expenditure

Officers are in the process of determining costs for the new contract that will need to be in place from 1 April 2025. This covers the Hanging Basket, Open Space Vegetation Management contract and Cemetery Grass Cutting. It has been estimated that these costs will double as the 5-year contract was sourced at a below market rate in the 2020/21 financial year.

An exercise will have to be undertaken of what work can be undertaken in-house and what will need to be outsourced. This will have an impact on staffing, equipment and vehicles. It is too soon to budget in these circumstances. The Town Team Manager has started to request quotes, but this is a lengthy process.

The other uncertainty from a budgeting perspective is the extent to which grazing can be used as a substitute for mechanical cutting and the subsequent burning of waste. Significant time and effort has been put into sourcing graziers and this will determine the use of this resource to maintain our open spaces. An amount of £20,000 is suggested from a budgeting perspective to be put aside for mechanical cutting.

Other matters that need consideration are: -

* The possibility that the Council will need to take on the maintenance of street furniture owned by Breckland Council. The street furniture budget may need to be further increased.
* The amount paid to graziers may need to be increased. The positive financial consequence of using a grazier versus mechanical cutting cannot be overstated.
* There has been an increased focus on preventative property maintenance and all backlogs in maintenance of the properties for which this Committee exercises oversight has been substantially addressed. This should generate longer-term maintenance savings.
* In the last 3 financial years, the Council has spent significant amounts on eradicating the backlog in playpark maintenance. This investment has paid off and it is expected that no spending from reserves will be required. However, there is a need to reinstate the maintenance reserves that have been used in previous years to fund backlog maintenance, so it is suggested that contributions to reserves be increased in future years.
* In 2024/25 it was budgeted for 2 apprentices to commence employment in the Town Team. No progress has been made as the Town Team Manager has limited capacity to manage additional staff at present whilst dealing with the backlogs in a number of key areas in the operations of the Council. The Committee will need to decide whether to -proceed with this recruitment.
* Vehicles are a cost challenge, and the Town Team Manager is trying to investigate different alternatives to the current leasing arrangements. Decisions will need to be finalised on vehicles before the budget can be finalised.
* This Committee is responsible for driving the Council’s green agenda. Initiatives that the Committee want to see pursued will need to be identified for inclusion in the budget.



***Community and Environmental Services – Cemetery***

The Community and Environmental Services - Cemetery draft budget is set out in the following page. The following require consideration by the Committee.

Budgeted income

Cemetery income has reduced significantly in recent years. This is due to the ratio of resident versus non-resident internments – non-residents are charged nearly double what residents are charged. An exercise was done in the previous year to undertake a review of cemetery fees. The Committee may need to consider annual increases in Cemetery fees to fund the longer-term need to develop a new cemetery (the existing cemetery has limited remaining capacity).

There are opportunities to look at growing cemetery income through non-burial sources (such as memorial trees) but there is limited staffing capacity to further explore these opportunities.

Budgeted expenditure

There is a need to develop a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan for the Cemetery to ensure that maintenance is addressed pro-actively. There has not been a significant spending on the Chapel or maintaining the Cemetery in recent years so the risk of more expensive emergency maintenance may increase if a preventative maintenance plan is not implemented.

The other major cost is cutting the grass at the Cemetery. This cost has been budgeted to double due to the same factors explained under the Community & Environmental Services – General vegetation management contract.

Ground water monitoring costs have not increased since 2018. These have not been budgeted to change in 2025/26.

***Community and Environmental Services – Allotments***

The Community and Environmental Services - Allotments draft budget is set out in the following page but one. The following require consideration by the Committee.

Budgeted income

A preliminary benchmarking exercise has been done recently and the Council’s allotment fees are basically in line with other Councils. The key factor that impacts on allotment fees is the size of the allotment, which is not easily comparable. One of the factors impacting on allotments is that the new allotment year starts on 11 October each year and the Council has to give one year’s notice to increase its fees. This was missed last month.

The Committee may decide to consider a standard annual increase each year in its budgeting process so that allotment fees increase annually in line with inflation. This will assist the officers ensure that income increases consistently and that there is no major “catch-up” increases every few years.

Budgeted expenditure

A preventative maintenance plan has been prepared and needs to be costed and time-framed for inclusion in the budget. This will assist in future year budget preparation.

Typically, the budgeted expenditure is very low.



***Community and Environmental Services – Markets***

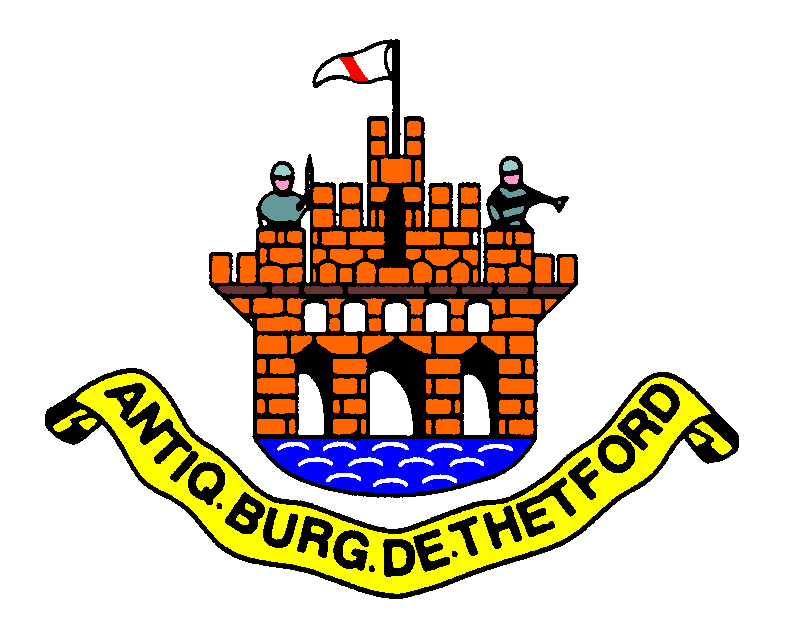
There is very little flexibility in the markets budget. The opportunities to increase market fees are limited and the maintenance costs are also unlikely to be significantly.

There is a need for a working group (see previous agenda item) and this will need to focus on renewing the market. This is not budgeted to have an immediate financial impact.

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| **Officer Recommendations:**  There is too much uncertainty at the date of this report to approve a draft budget for Community and Environmental Services. It is therefore recommended that the Committee: -   * Note and discuss the matters set out above. * Identify matters for inclusion when the budget is further revised. |





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**Agenda Item 380/24**

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| Report To: | Community and Environmental Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Deputy Town Clerk |
| Subject: | Small Grants |

**To consider the Small Grant Application that have been previously circulated to Committee Councillors.**

**SMALL GRANT CHECKLIST: THETFORD SINGERS**

**Date Application Received: 29/10/2024**

***NOTE: There should not be a period exceeding 2 months for all these steps to be completed***

**Date Application Assessed: 29/10/2024**

**Date submitted to Community and Environmental Services: 05/11/2024**

**Date Applicant notified:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date Applicant asked for report: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

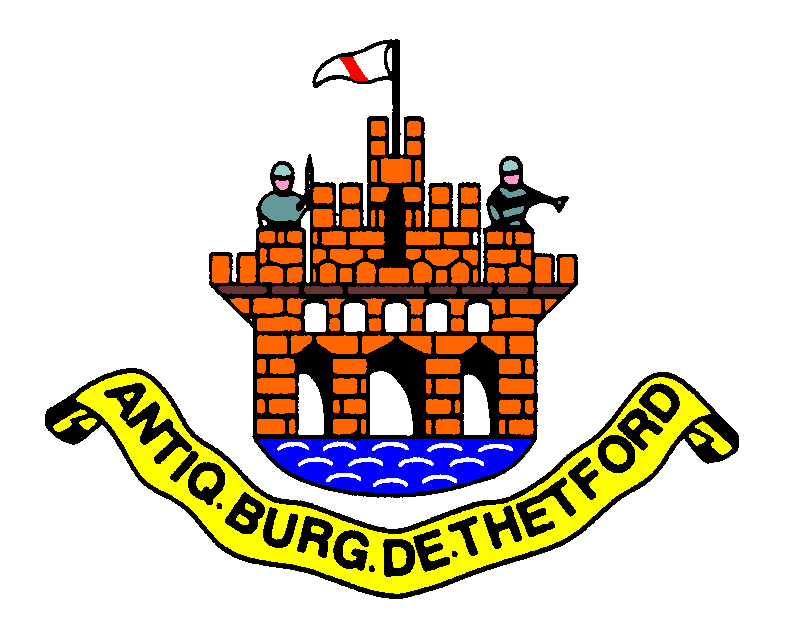
|  |
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| **Thetford Voices has a clear mission: for all children to have access to music, and the opportunity to perform music live alongside our team of professional musicians. To achieve this, we run free singing workshops for children aged 6-16 in Thetford and the surrounding areas. In 2025, we plan to run a two-day Summer workshop and a one-day Christmas workshop. The workshops will provide the opportunity for children to experience group singing and performing live in a concert, many for the first time. Since the pandemic, we have seen a rise in anxiety in the children we work with. Our professional music team and pastoral volunteers coach the children through their nervousness and support them to perform to large audiences. The benefits of our projects extend past musical development: the workshops help participants to grow their confidence and social skills, providing formative experiences for the children.**  **Thetford Singers have applied for a £500 grant.** |

| **No** | **Description** | **Complies** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Yes | No | N/A |
| 1. | Will it bring direct benefit to the area, or any part of it, or all or some of its inhabitants? | X |  |  |
| 2. | Is the applicant a “not for profit” organisation or charity? | X |  |  |
| 3. | Does it operate within the town boundary and provide direct benefit to all or some of the town’s residents? | X |  |  |
| 4. | Does it provide the following benefit to the residents of Thetford? |  |  |  |
|  | * Environmental projects and improvements? |  |  | X |
|  | * Promotion of sports & healthy lifestyles? |  |  | X |
|  | * Provision of arts, cultural and historical activities? | X |  |  |
|  | * Organisation of events and activities that promote the town of Thetford? | X |  |  |
|  | * Help to vulnerable groups, e.g. people on low incomes, elderly, organisations working with participants who have a disability? | X |  |  |
| 5. | Does it address the following considerations: - |  |  |  |
|  | * Does it work with 0-18 year olds? | X |  |  |
|  | * Is it a resident’s group? |  | X |  |
|  | * Has the applicant received a grant before? | X[[1]](#footnote-2) |  |  |
|  | * Does it undertake other fundraising activities? | X[[2]](#footnote-3) |  |  |
|  | * Will the small grant be used as match funding? |  | X |  |
|  | * The Council could favour applicants that show they are requesting funding that will provide benefits in the short medium term and long term. | X |  |  |
| 6. | Does the applicant have some form of management committee or steering group? | X[[3]](#footnote-4) |  |  |
| 7. | Does the applicant have a bank account with more than one signatory? |  |  | X[[4]](#footnote-5) |
| 8. | Does the applicant have a constitution or set of rules signed by an officer of the applicant? | X |  |  |
| 9 | Can the applicant demonstrate that it is aware of health and safety requirements? | X |  |  |
| 10. | Does the applicant have a working child protection and/or vulnerable adults protection policy (only if the applicant is working in this area) | X |  |  |
| 11. | Will the grant be used within one year? | X |  |  |
| **FOR START UP ORGANISATIONS** | | | | |
| 12. | Does the applicant set out why they want to start the group |  |  | X |
| 13. | Is the perceived need for the applicant’s services set out |  |  | X |
| 14. | Has the applicant provided a copy of their draft Constitution? |  |  | X |
| 15. | Is there evidence of support to run the organisation? |  |  | X |
| 16. | Are there copies of bank statements and a forecast income and expenditure statement? |  |  | X |
| **FOR NON-START UP APPLICANTS** | | | | |
| 17. | Are there annual accounts or a statement of income and expenditure? (Note: For small grants we require your accounts to be independently verified, not audited. For large grants, require to be audited. | X[[5]](#footnote-6) |  |  |
| **FOR SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS/PTA’S** | | | | |
| 18. | If the applicant is a school association/PTA applying for a grant which is for an extra-curricular activity, will funds be ring-fenced and will the applicant have separate bank accounts and a Constitution. |  |  | X |
| **EXCLUSIONS (ALL FUNDERS)** | | | | |
| 19. | Is the applicant an “upward funder”? If yes, then a grant will not be considered. |  | X |  |
| 20. | Is the applicant part of a national organisation? If yes is the risk of national funding adequately mitigated? |  | X |  |
| 21. | If the applicant is a religious group, will there be an ongoing benefit to the wider community irrespective of religious beliefs? If no, then a grant will not be considered. |  | X |  |
| 22. | Is the applicant is involved with political parties/activities? If yes, then a grant will not be considered. |  | X |  |
| 23. | Is the applicant an individual or will it only benefit a single individual? If yes, then a grant will not be considered. |  | X |  |
| 24. | Is the grant for general maintenance and running costs.? If yes, then a grant will not be considered. |  | X |  |
| 25. | Has the expenditure or project already been undertaken or completed? If yes, then a grant will not be considered as funding cannot be made retrospectively. |  | X |  |

**Conclusion: The Thetford Singers have complied with the conditions of the Small Grant Application.**

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| **Assessment Completed by:** | **Name: Marzena Maga and Alan Yorke** | **Date:**  **29/10/2024** |

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| **Officer Recommendation:**  The Committee consider whether or not to support this grant application |

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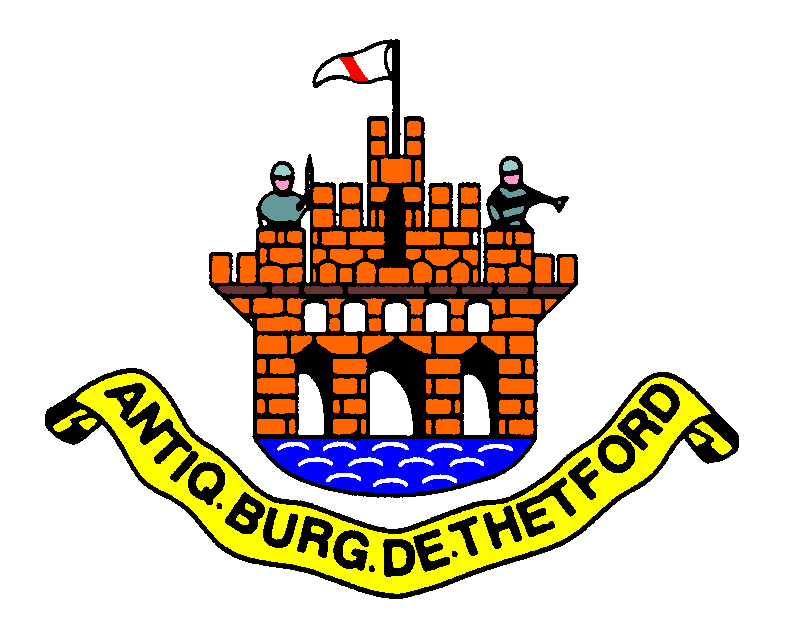
**Agenda Item 381/24**

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| --- | --- |
| Report To: | Community and Environmental Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Community and Environmental Services Manager and Deputy Town Clerk |
| Subject: | Verbal Update on Potential Funding Bids |

**To receive a verbal update on various funding bids that are being pursued by Officers.**

On the following pages is a control list of all the projects that are currently being pursued and for which potential funding is being sought.

| **Project** | **Area** | **Who Will Benefit** | **Description** | **Estimated Costs** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Thomas Paine Statue Renovation** | Thetford Town Centre | Local residents, tourists, and heritage enthusiasts | Enhancing the heritage information around the statue will contribute to Thetford’s rich historical narrative, reinforcing civic pride and educating visitors on the town’s connection to Paine's legacy. | unknown |
| **Benches for Abbey Water Meadows/Green Spaces** | Abbey Water Meadows & other green spaces | Local walkers, families, elderly residents, and tourists | Providing seating areas encourages community use of green spaces, supporting mental and physical wellbeing by allowing people to rest and enjoy nature. | £5-£8k |
| **More Floral Display Planters** | Urban areas throughout Thetford | Thetford residents, local businesses, and visitors | Adding floral planters will brighten up urban spaces, promote biodiversity, and make the town more welcoming. These displays can contribute to a sense of place and improve community aesthetics. | £2-£4k |
| **Poly Tunnel for Green Space Planting** | Town Council's Greenhouse/Planting Facility | Town Council grounds team, volunteers, and residents | A poly tunnel will allow year-round plant cultivation, supporting the town’s commitment to enhancing green spaces and ensuring floral displays remain vibrant throughout the year. | £10k |
| **Rain Water Harvesting for Floral Displays** | Multiple locations (in proximity to planters and flower beds) | Town Council staff, residents, and environment | Collecting rainwater will reduce the environmental impact of maintaining floral displays, making the watering process more sustainable and reducing reliance on mains water. | unknown |
| **Community Pocket Parks/Flower Beds Creation (Owned by BDC but hopefully will be maintained by TTC)** | Various residential locations: St Martins Way, Kimms Belt, Fulmerston Road, Glebe Close, Rosecroft Way, Ladies Estate | Families, local residents, children, and elderly | Small community parks will repurpose underused spaces, creating local green hubs where residents can gather, relax, and enjoy the outdoors. These parks will foster a sense of community, offer recreational space, and contribute to environmental improvements. | £5-10k |
| **Seating and Raised Planters for Community Orchard** | Dane Close Community Orchard | Local families, gardeners, and volunteers | Introducing seating and raised planters will encourage residents to spend time in the orchard, offering both a functional and social space. It will make the area accessible and enjoyable for all age groups, especially the elderly and children. | £10k |
| **Perimeter Surfacing and Community Green Space/Garden** | Back of the Carnegie Complex | Thetford residents, community groups, event attendees | Creating a landscaped area with planters and seating will provide an attractive, multipurpose space for gatherings and events. It will enhance the Carnegie's external environment and support local biodiversity. | £20k |
| **Heritage Master plan** | Ancient House Museum, Guildhall, St Marys Church and The Thomas Paine Statue | Local residents, tourists, and heritage enthusiasts | Thetford’s Heritage Masterplan is strategically investing in the town's rich historical assets to preserve and enhance its unique cultural identity. Funding is focused on key heritage buildings, including the Guildhall, where restoration and revitalisation efforts will ensure its continued use as a community hub. The Ancient House Museum is also a priority, with plans to improve accessibility and enhance visitor experience. Additionally, the masterplan includes refurbishing key historical landmarks like the Thomas Paine Statue and surrounding areas, ensuring that Thetford’s heritage is celebrated and preserved for future generations | **£2m** |

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**Agenda Item 382/24**

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| Report To: | Community and Environmental Services |
| Date of Meeting: | 5th November 2024 |
| Authorship: | Community and Environmental Services Manager and Deputy Town Clerk |
| Subject: | Progress on Actions from Previous Meetings |

**To review the action points carried forward from previous meetings as well as those items that have been completed during the current Mayoral Year.**

**ACTIONS IN PROGRESS OR COMPLETED SINCE LAST MEETING**



**ACTIONS PREVIOUSLY COMPLETED AT PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS**



1. An application was made in July 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Main income source is membership fees. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The information assessed in Questions 6 and 8-10 was included in the previous grant application that was received in July 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. This information needs to be confirmed. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Thetford Singers is a registered charity (Charity number: 269142). Their reporting to the Charities Commission is up-to-date. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)