

THRAPSTON TOWN COUNCIL

Mayor: Cllr Sam Cribb

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on 01832 734673**

171-2017/18

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council
held on Tuesday 24 October 2017 at 7.30pm at the Town Council Office**

Present: Cllr Cribb (Chairman), Cllr Baden, Cllr Boyd, Cllr Carter, Cllr Charles, Cllr Draycott, Cllr Latimer, Cllr Read, Cllr Strode-Willis, Cllr Wheeler and Cllr Winter.

In attendance: Sue Morrison (Clerk), Linda Marshall (Clerk Elect), Mr E Franklin (Chair if the Friends of Thrapston Library) left the meeting after item 5, PC Paul Mitchinson left the meeting before Item 4, Cllr Brackenbury (County and District Councillor). Five members of the public present leaving after Item 5.

Agenda	Item	Action	By Whom
1.	Apologies for absence Cllr Vaughan offered his apology which was accepted by the majority of Councillors.		
2.	Declaration of interest in items on the agenda None		
3.	To receive any issues from members of the public None		
	PC Mitchinson introduced himself to the Council. He advised members that he had been the commander for a 3 month investigation resulting in a drugs raid with 5 properties being raided and 7 people arrested but bailed. The charges ranged from robbery to dealing in Class B drugs. The investigation is ongoing with phone records being analysed. He requested that any members of the public with any information should come forward. There have also been quite a few burglaries		

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	<p>taking place in the locality, mainly to empty homes. Residents should be aware that houses in darkness and where wheelie bins are not put out on designated days give an indication to robbers that no one is at home. PC Mitchinson left the meeting before item 4.</p>		
4.	<p>The Chair of the Friends of Thrapston Library to address the Council regarding the proposal to close the facility.</p> <p>Mr Franklin, Chair of the Friends of Thrapston Library addressed the Council in a personal capacity regarding the consultation of reducing library provision in the County and the impact it would have on the town. (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>The Friends of the Library are considering calling a public meeting to discuss options and requested assistance from the Council. Members agreed to providing the Plaza free of charge and to assist in advertising the meeting.</p> <p>County Councillor Brackenbury advised that officers and the portfolio holder, Sylvia Hughes, for Library Services should be available to attend the meeting. She gave details of indicative costs for the freehold of the library building, together with the annual running costs, excluding staff costs.</p> <p>She explained that the County Council needed to save £10M in 2018/19 and had statutory functions that had to be undertaken. It was unclear when the closing date for the consultation was and Cllr Brackenbury will clarify.</p> <p>It was noted that although Thrapston Library was one of the smallest in terms of floor area, it was providing very good value for money at approx. £1 per visit. Members enquired as to how the criteria was determined.</p> <p>Members were concerned that without early years intervention continuing, the town may well become as deprived an area as some of the local towns.</p> <p>Both the County and the District Councils would like to form Community Hubs to ensure that residents are able to access services. It was felt that having a hub at the District Council offices may not be the best place and something in the centre of town be considered.</p>		

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	<p>Cllr Brackenbury encouraged people to come up with options as she felt that County Council would be open to new ideas. There could be opportunities to share staffing, to apply for grant funding etc.</p> <p>The County are in discussion with the Government as they do not consider that the funding formula for Northamptonshire is correct, they currently receive £100 per person per year less than Surrey.</p> <p>Members requested more information such as:</p> <p>Clarification of all costs.</p> <p>The population of the catchment area for local libraries and specifically Thrapston Library.</p> <p>The routes of the mobile library and how withdrawal may upwardly impact the use of Thrapston library.</p> <p>Whether developments/population increases had been considered when determining the size of the libraries.</p> <p>How the proposal of withdrawing bus subsidies may further impact the people who need to travel to get to a main library, the nearest being Kettering. At present this route will still be subsidised but it is still expensive to use.</p>		
5.	<p>The Council to discuss and agree response to the review of Northamptonshire Libraries Consultation</p> <p>Following the discussions, it was proposed and agreed that the Town Council should formally object to the proposed options in the consultation.</p> <p>On receiving financial clarification on the cost of staffing, freehold or lease costs, overheads and book service licenses/fees the Council, together with the Friends of the Library, should discuss the matter with the County Council representatives to seek an amicable conclusion to benefit the residents of the town. Partnership working with the District and local towns should be considered.</p>		
6.	<p>To approve the minutes of the Devolution of Services meeting notes dated 26 September 2017</p> <p>It was proposed and agreed that the minutes be approved and were duly signed by the chairman.</p>	Noted	

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7.	<p>Resolution: To approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting dated 26 September 2017 (circulated) It was proposed and agreed that the minutes be approved and were duly signed by the chairman.</p>	Noted	
8.	<p>To receive a report from last JAG meeting and to identify items for the forthcoming JAG meeting The next JAG meeting will be on 3 November 2017 but no specific matters were identified.</p>		
9.	<p>To consider applications for the Councillor vacancy Only one application has been received for the position of Councillor. Members considered the application and agreed that the applicant be contacted and if, following a meeting with the Clerk to explain the commitment. they continue to be interested, they be asked to join the Full Council and the Planning, Leisure and Amenities Committee.</p>	Contact the applicant for discussion	Clerk
10.	<p>To create working party to enhance the Peace Park A working party to look at enhancing the Peace Park was created with the following Councillors Cllrs Boyd, Carter, Charles, Draycott, Latimer and Winter. The first meeting will be convened in January 2018.</p>	Arrange the Peace Park Working Party Meeting	Clerk
11.	<p>To note that the internal financial audits by Councillors have been undertaken The Clerk reported that the internal audits conducted by members of the Finance & Strategy Committee were up to date and asked Members to note it.</p>	Noted	
12.	<p>To note and action the interim report of the Auditor The Internal Auditor from NCALC has conducted a half yearly audit and highlighted some small issues that need to be addressed and suggested more detail is given for two payments. (Appendix 2)</p>	Noted	
13.	<p>To receive an update on the Community Speed Watch project Following the request for volunteers in the Council newsletter in September and a request on Social Media, only two people had put themselves forward.</p>	Noted	

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14.	<p>To receive written reports on courses attended.</p> <p>The report of the Clerk Elects recent training on Cemetery administration was noted. (Appendix 3)</p> <p>Members were reminded that a short note on the effectiveness of training should be submitted to the Clerk after all training courses.</p>	Noted	
15.	<p>To request Councillor commitments for upcoming events</p> <p>There are two events imminent and Councillor support is required. The lists were circulated, and members asked to complete to ensure sufficient provision is provided. Name badges and Event High Visibility tabards to be worn.</p>	Provide name badges and high visibility tabards	Event organiser
16.	<p>Clerk's report (for noting)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The donations from the dog bags has amounted to £262.07 to date 2. Members were reminded of the Remembrance Events. 	Noted Noted	
17.	<p>District Councillors Report</p> <p>Cllr Brackenbury advised that the District Council are looking at the District Wide Plan. She advised that the County Council have a consultation on Phase 1 of their budget proposals, which include aspects such as reduction in the routes of the gritter lorries – members requested to know what routes may be curtailed. If Thrapston is impacted the Town Council may consider contributing to ensure roads are cleared and safe. Cllr Brackenbury to provide details of the number of salt bins and the related costs.</p> <p>Stopping the Community Enhancement Gangs work will impact the Town Council as they spend a day a year siding the verges. Members asked what the cost saving of reducing the Customer Service function by 10 hours a week would be and had consideration been given to still providing some contact for those who work i.e. 10am to 6pm or 8am to 4pm to still make the same saving.</p> <p>Cllr Brackenbury explained that she had used her Empowerment Fund money of £5K pa to support a variety of projects and organisations and groups but not on a regular basis so there was no dependency, therefore</p>		

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	<p>withdrawing this fund from all County Councillors should not adversely impact a particular sector. It was noted that some of these organisations or groups may come to the Town Council instead.</p> <p>The County Council are hoping to save between £2m and £4.3M from the sale of the libraries.</p> <p>Cllr Brackenbury stressed that all the consultations are exactly that, and if other options can be found to realise the £10M shortfall from the 2018/19 budget they will be considered. The final budget will be set in February 2018.</p> <p>The Town Council will have to set their precept in December, without knowing the outcome of all the consultations.</p> <p>When asked about cost savings by having Unitary Authorities, Cllr Brackenbury explained that a consensus has not been agreed between the County and the District/Borough Councils and therefore without all parties agreeing, a case cannot be put forward to the Secretary of State for approval.</p>		
18.	Chairman's comments None		
19.	Items for Future Agendas <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To organise a Cemetery Working Party Meeting. 2. To add the proposed Arts Festival to the Full Town Council Agenda 3. Contact Housing Developer to contribute to Speed Awareness Device. 	<p>Arrange the meeting FTC 28/11/17</p> <p>Discuss with developer</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
	There being no further business the Chairman ended the meeting at 9:24 pm		

Signed.....

Dated.....

A few observations on Northamptonshire County Council's consultation on the future of libraries and the options available.

These observations are purely my own and not representative of any other person or group.

There has been a library in Thrapston since at least 1889 when Mr Ibbs ran a circulating library in the High Street with both a pay-to-read and subscription service. Later, reading rooms, institutes, working men's clubs etc provided libraries.

In the 1960's a library was based in the Methodist Church. Otherwise, the closest to town and the surrounding villages was in Kettering.

Demolition of the town centre made it possible to build a new library which opened in the 1970's and continues to date.

The County Council have proposed three options for public consultation.

Option 1

Offer 21 smaller libraries to community groups, organisations or businesses to be run as community-managed libraries

Retain a reduced countywide digital, information and business offer

Retain 15 libraries within county council management and further develop as community hubs – 8 large libraries, 7 medium libraries

Investigate potential future library service provision to additional location in Corby

Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library

Option 2

Retain a reduced countywide digital, information and business offer

Retain 15 libraries and further develop as community hubs – 8 large libraries, 7 medium libraries

Investigate potential future library service provision to additional location in Corby

Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library

Option 3

Retain a reduced countywide digital, information and business offer

Retain 8 libraries and further develop as community hubs

Extend Library to You to replace Mobile Library

None of the above will leave a library in town unless taken over by the community.

I, along with others in the County believe there is a fourth option which has not been mentioned.

Option 4

That the library service stays as it is and the authority either find from their own resources or seek alternative funding to keep the service going as a County service. It is not acceptable that the community be corralled into accepting a fait accompli of taking on the library or closure!

I understand that the County Council receives less in central Government grant than it should, but I also believe that it should not be down to the people of Northamptonshire to bail out a Government which appears to have consistently failed our County. As an aside, I notice that the County Council has moved into a new £53m headquarters!

Should the community take on the library, the following costs, plus no doubt many others I have not yet thought of, will need to be covered.

premises and possibly equipment rental with budgets for upgrades etc;

various insurances, premises, contents, public liability of a minimum £6m;

staff salaries (it won't work just by hoping volunteers will always be available);

on-going maintenance costs;

new book purchases;

funding volunteer and staff training, both initial and on-going;

cost of setting up a public lending rights scheme to pay authors (I cannot see how the current scheme could include a community-managed library – correct me if I am wrong).

For the community to somehow find funding for this, whilst the County Council continues to charge more Council Tax would, in effect, mean we pay for a service we do not receive, and then pay for it again.

For information, Thrapston Library usage figures which I extracted for the period April to September 2017 are:

	April 17	May 17	June 17	July 17	Aug 17	Sept 17	Oct 17	Year to date
No of physical visits	3394	3301	3945	3,780	4,395	3,953		22,768
New members	26	30	21	34	40	23		174
Library closures	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Blue badges and bus passes issued	26	28	28	21	45	29		177
Under 5 activities	15	18	19	17	16	15		100
Over 5's activities	10	14	5	8	13	9		59
Volunteer hours	79	93	68	170	175	101		686
No of volunteers	(17)	(19)	(15)	(20)	(15)	(17)		hours.

I would be grateful if Thrapston Town Council members would discuss the above and also make representation to their County Councillor. There is strength of feeling locally. I am encouraging people who comment to me to make direct contact with their County Councillor for a response to their concerns.

We have a very well-used community hub in the library, as is obvious from the figures, with very committed, hard-working librarians. To lose it would be an indictment on the County Council and a major loss to an ever-expanding growing community.

Judging by the strength of local feeling, I shall look at the possibility of calling a public meeting in the near future, to which I would invite both our County Councillor, MP and the media.

Eric Franklin
22nd October 2017

Northants CALC IAS

Interim Internal Audit Report

Name of council:	Thrapston Town Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	J Hodgson	Date of report:	20/10/17
Year ending:	31 st March 2018	Date audit carried out:	19/10/17

Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the council's control. Managing the council's internal controls should be a day-to-day function of the staff and management and not left for internal audit.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chairman of the Council:

As part of interim audit I took the opportunity to examine the day to day financial procedures through a random sample of transactions.

I would recommend that where a payment is not supported by an invoice (e.g. cheques 303183 and 303182) greater detail is placed on the records to provide a clearer audit trail i.e. the Minute reference supporting the grant decision.

I understand that the Council is considering creating a grant awarding policy. Such a policy will make it easier for the Council, Clerk and applicants where the Council is approached for a grant and the Council should take advantage of 'best practice' in grant policies adopted by other councils and grant making bodies when drafting its own policy and application form.

I would like to draw the Councils attention to the need to ensure that all expenditure is underpinned by the appropriate legal power. Transaction 86 had been incorrectly allocated to S137 of the Local Government Act 1972. Whenever the Council resolves to undertake a new activity or expenditure, the power to do so should be ascertained prior to the resolution.

I would like to thank Sue for her assistance during my visit.

This report is based on the evidence made available to me. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. Consequently the report is limited to those matters set out above.

Yours sincerely,

J Hodgson

Ms Jenny Hodgson MICLM
Internal Auditor to the Council
01933 461868

Cemetery Compliance Course
Wednesday 11th October 2017
Daventry

Cost: £145.00
Attendee: Linda Marshall

I attended the above course which, although provided by SLCC, the delivered by a lecturer was from ICCM.

There were only 7 delegates present which gave us all an opportunity to discuss issues relating to our own Council.

I felt the course was beneficial and it clarified a number of issues that Sue and I had identified prior to my attending which we can now start to implement.

I think it was very good value for money, and would be a beneficial course for office staff and the burial ground contractor to attend.

Linda Marshall