

## **Melksham Town Council**

### **Minutes of the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor S Rabey (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor G Ellis  
Councillor C Forgacs  
Councillor J Hubbard  
Councillor J Westbrook

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor P Aves

**OFFICERS:** Andrew Meacham Committee Clerk

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** One member of the public was present and one member of the public was present virtually.

Mike Saunders asked for updates on a number of matters.

Noticeboard in Church Street is scratched and difficult to read. Will this be replaced?

Lighting in King George V has gone quiet. It was confirmed that a motion had been passed and work had started. Councillor Hubbard advised that bespoke parts had to be ordered. Completion expected February/March.

Town Hall as wedding venue. Head of Operations advised that the matter had been put on a back burner as the two times it had been before council there was little appetite for it. The Town Hall had previously had a licence but it was a loss maker. The matter may be revisited when resources allow.

Roundhouse Repointing. The Chair confirmed that planning had only recently been granted and the matter had been reported on by BBC news. Councillor Hubbard pointed out that a date could not be arranged until after planning permission was granted.

Assembly Hall roof . The contractor was running behind due to various weather events and work would commence as soon as possible.

Dog Agility Area. In discussion with local experts. Will be more Dog Enrichment than Dog Agility.

Assembly Hall management. This is a staffing matter which cannot be commented on at this time. Mike expressed concern that, in his view, there was an increasing amount of information not available to the public. The Chair confirmed that anyone is free to contact any councillor, or the Town Hall officers, direct. A lot of the information requested tonight is already in the public domain. Councillor Ellis referred to item 5 of the agenda. Councillor Westbrook noted that it was ultimately intended that project updates would be available on the Town Council website.

Councillor Hubbard asked for clarification on reference to his 'misunderstanding' at the last full council meeting. The question of ECWG meetings was discussed.

Councillor Ellis asked for it to be recorded that he had questions on this matter to be put to full council on Monday.

**74/23      Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mortimer.

**75/23      Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**76/23      Minutes**

The minutes of 20 November 2023, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by Councillor Rabey.

**77/23      Matter arising from Full Council on 18 December 2023 and Finance, Administration and Performance on 20 November 2023**

Members were reminded of what occurred at the Finance, Administration and Performance meeting of 20 November 2023. The question was asked whether members should discuss the matter in the absence of Councillor Mortimer. Councillor Hubbard felt that the matter should be discussed in view of the upcoming budget.

The Locum RFO gave his professional opinion that it made no difference how the items were coded. Councillor Hubbard outlined his concerns. There was a discussion, mainly between the Locum RFO and Councillor Hubbard. Councillor Rabey commented that many councils do as Melksham Town Council currently does.

There was discussion on whether Standing Orders allowed the motion to be revisited at this time or if the motion was valid. Councillor Hubbard suggested that if seven councillors wrote to the Proper Officer (or in the current circumstances the committee clerk), the matter could be brought back to full council on Monday.

**78/23      Project Plans**

A verbal update was given.

Bowman's Court Lighting – referred to LHFIG who are meeting later this month.

BMX Track – responsibility for the tender process has been passed to Reg Williams.

Cricketer's Café – Expected to open beginning of February. Councillors agreed that the refurbishment looked amazing. The committee clerk commented that, subject to any objection, this should no longer be considered a council project

Dog Park – Dave Elms is in consultation with Andrew Bloomfield on design of Dog Enrichment Area. Dog Agility Equipment would need to be breakaway and would be easily to steal. Councillor Hubbard asked what was happening with the previously installed kit and was a refund being sought.

KGV CCTV – Poles are up and expected to be completed 16 February 2024.

KGV Lighting – As KGV CCTV

East Melksham Community Hall – Planning application was expected to be submitted mid December. However, David Sharp emailed some questions to the Town Clerk on 12 December 2023. Head of Operations will see if he can answer the questions.

CCTV Report – Being dealt with by Ken Graham of Instrom Ltd. Expected before the end of the month.

Councillor Aves asked if it could be confirmed where the money put aside for the work on the entrance to Shurnhold Fields was held.

Councillor Ellis said there were some other projects he would like updates on and he would forward details.

**79/23 Financial Statement**

**80/23 Lloyds**

Received.

**81/23 Unity**

Received.

**82/23 Petty Cash**

Received.

**83/23 Monthly Statement**

Councillor Hubbard noted that the spreadsheet on page 31 of the agenda pack shows the same information as the spreadsheet on page 55 for item 6.6, but differently and under different sub-headings. Could this be looked at so there is a consistent method of recording the data.

Councillor Rabey asked, if councillors have queries on financial statements, could they if possible be emailed in advance to give officers notice.

Subject to the above, the statements were received.

## **84/23 Budget Report**

Councillor Hubbard queried the following.

Overspend on 4021 Stationery, 4042 licences/software and 4104 window cleaning.

4150 Uniform/PPE. Assume because of high turnover of staff. Head of operations advised also because of ensuring a stock of supplies.

4156 Vehicle leasing. At 146% and another quarter to go. Head of operations confirmed payments made monthly and would shortly be dispensing with one of the leased vehicles. It had been intended to get rid of one vehicle at the start of the year but problems with other vehicles meant were unable to do so with knock-on effect on budget. Councillor Hubbard commented that a Budget Report to accompany the statement would explain such issues.

4102 Non Domestic Rates. Head of Operations said that an office had previously been let out to another business and double rates are incorrectly being charged.

4158 Replacement Play Equipment. Is this actually dog agility equipment. Head of Operations believed it was. Councillor Hubbard said this should not be under replacement play equipment and asked for an assurance that it would be corrected coded.

4309 Newsletter. Councillor Hubbard believed the Council had a duty to issue a yearly newsletter and could this be looked at.

4354 Parking Scheme. Is this figure correct or is it miscoding? Committee Clerk advised he personally had regularly taken envelopes full of refund vouchers. Possible reasons for increase in usage of the scheme were discussed. Councillor Hubbard felt council would at some point need to consider how the scheme would work if car parks went to online payments only and whether the refund should be one hour or two hours.

4913 Water DO NOT USE. Clearly is being used. Head of Operations and Locum RFO advised this would be a historical note which has copied across all 4913 codes. The wording DO NOT USE should be removed.

Assembly Hall. There was discussion on ticket sales money and where it was recorded. Councillor Hubbard also stressed that it was council policy to have hire charge only and not ticket splits. Councillor Westbrook asked for clarification regarding the definition of 'council run events'.

**85/23      Earmarked Reserves**

Councillor Hubbard referred back to his earlier comments and also that not all earmarked reserve 'pots' are showing. Council cannot see what is actually available to spend.

Subject to this, the statements were received.

Meeting Closed at: 8.05 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**