



Public Document Pack

Melksham Town Council

Town Hall, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6ES
Tel: (01225) 704187

Town Clerk and RFO Linda Roberts BA(Hons) PGCAP, FHEA,
FLSCC

To:

Councillor S Crundell (Town Mayor)
Councillor T Price (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Cooke
Councillor J Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor C Forgacs
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor J Oatley
Councillor S Mortimer
Councillor S Rabey
Councillor Stokes
Councillor J Westbrook

19 February 2024

Dear Councillors

In accordance with the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, Sch 12, paras 10 (2)(b) you are summoned to attend the **Full Council** meeting of Melksham Town Council. The meeting will be held at the Town Hall on **Monday 26th February 2024** commencing at **7.00 pm**.

A period of public participation will take place in accordance with Standing Order 3(e) prior to the formal opening of the meeting. The Press and Public are welcome to attend this meeting in person, alternatively the public and press may join the meeting via Zoom.

In accordance with the Council's commitment to being open and transparent; all Town Council meetings are recorded and broadcast live. The right to do so was established under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L A Roberts BA(Hons), PGCAP, FHEA, FSLCC
Town Clerk and RFO

Melksham Town Council
Full Council
Monday 26 February 2024
At 7.00 pm at the Town Hall

Public Participation – To receive questions from members of the public.

In the exercise of Council functions. Members are reminded that the Council has a general duty to consider Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and the need to conserve biodiversity. The Council also has a duty to tackle discrimination, provide equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations in the course of developing policies and delivery services under the public sector Equality Duty and Equality 2010.

Virtual Meeting Access:

Please follow the joining instructions below for the virtual Zoom meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83669876198?pwd=WlAvY1ZsYVNyUIM3VktgajFhOHhtdz09>

Meeting ID: 836 6987 6198

Passcode: 481965

Participants will be directly let in the meeting by clicking on the above link. There is no waiting room

AGENDA

1. Apologises

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declarations of Interest in respect of items on this agenda as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already

Email: towncouncil@melksham-tc.gov.uk **Web:** www.melksham-tc.gov.uk
Facebook: facebook.com/melksham.town

declared on the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

3. Questions from Councillors

To receive questions from Councillors.

4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held on 22 January 2024.

5. Town Mayor's Announcements

6. Police Report (Pages 9 - 14)

To note the Neighbourhood Policing Team Rural Report January 2024

7. Reports from Unitary Councillors

Unitary Councillors to report on any matters affecting Melksham which have been discussed at Wiltshire Council Meetings.

8. Calendar of Meetings 2024/2025 (Pages 15 - 16)

Members are requested to approve the Calendar of Meetings 2024-2025.

The first Economic Development and Planning meeting for January 2025 has been moved to a Thursday. The last meeting of 2024 is 10 December. Three weeks from that date is New Year's Eve. If the meeting is put back to Tuesday 7 January 2025 there would not be time to issue the agenda 3 working days beforehand. If the meeting is put back to Tuesday 14 January 2025 it is likely that response dates for any planning applications will have already passed.

Dates for Environment and Climate Working Group have not been included due to the resolution of council on 18 December 2023.

Meetings for May 2023 were set last year but did not include a Finance, Administration and Performance meetings in May 2024. A meeting has been added for 13 May 2024.

The Events Working Group meeting for January 2025 has been moved to the 3rd Thursday to allow time for agenda to be published and to avoid conflict with the Economic Development and Planning Committee.

9. Biodiversity Policy (Pages 17 - 30)

To receive and approve the recommendations of the Environment & Climate Working Group.

On 30 January 2024 Environment and Climate Working Group resolved to recommend

that Full Council adopt the policy and the action plan/smart objectives as put forward.

As some of the work on the action plan would fall to the Amenities Team, they have been invited to attend to give some input into the feasibility of the task list.

10. CCTV Report (Pages 31 - 62)

To receive CCTV report and for decision on further action.

11. Public Newsletter (Pages 63 - 78)

For comment on draft public newsletter. As publication has not yet been approved, the draft is not viewable in the public pack.

12. Appointments

12.1 Committees

For decision.

To appoint Councillor Griffin to committees.

Current committee make up (all committees should have nine members):

Asset Management & Amenities – nine members

Councillors Aves, Cooke, S Crundell, Ellis, Forgacs, Hubbard, Oatley, Price, Rabey

Community Development – seven members

Councillors Aves, J Crundell, Mortimer, Oatley, Rabey, Stokes, Westbrook

Economic Development & Planning – eight members

Councillors Alford, Aves, Cooke, Ellis, Oatley, Rabey, Stokes, Westbrook

Finance, Administration & Performance – eight members

Councillors Cooke, J Crundell, Ellis, Forgacs, Hubbard, Mortimer, Rabey, Westbrook

12.2 Outside Bodies

To appoint a representative of Melksham Town Council to the Operational Flood Working Group.

13. Finance Authorisation and Signatories

13.1 Councillor Griffin as a Signatory

To add Councillor Griffin to the list of signatories for Unity Bank.

See also 12.2 below.

13.2 First Request of the Finance Officer

For decision on the request of the Finance Officer.

‘Due to the resignation of several Cllrs I now have 4x signatories for Unity Bank – Cllrs Crundell, Forgacs, Cooke and Mortimer. These Cllrs have bank authority for the dual authorisation – meaning that after I have input payments 1x Cllr then accesses and ‘ticks it off’. As you are aware, there have been recent delays in both the approval of invoices and the dual authorisation. Following a plea, I now have Cllrs Aves, Rabbi & Westbrook which has sped up the approval side. However, I am unable to add them to the bank as Unity require the written resolution. Can I, therefore, request that this matter is agenda’d at the next relevant meeting and, if resolved, I will complete paperwork.’

13.3 Second Request of the Finance Officer

For decision on a request from the Finance Officer.

‘Following a decision by the Clerk & Locum Clerk all payments are now made from Unity Bank however no decision was made regarding a transfer of funds. Aside from a few DDs each month the Lloyds account continues to accrue money. As at 31/12/23 Lloyds held £1,118,731.35 compared to Unity which held £179,813.91 and this sum is decreasing rapidly. I am looking for approval to either transfer a monthly sum from Lloyds to Unity or a lump sum. This can be easily achieved by writing a cheque. I believe this may need a resolution..’

14. Motion on Policies and Governance (Pages 79 - 82)

To consider the motion of Councillor Griffin.

15. Motion on Publication of Information (Pages 83 - 96)

To consider the motion of Councillor Griffin.

16. Motion on MTC Website (Pages 97 - 100)

To consider the motion of Councillor Griffin.

17. Community Governance Review - Consultation Briefing Note No. 24-03 (Pages 101 - 102)

To note.

18. Committee Minutes

18.1 Asset Management and Amenities Committee

To receive the minutes of the Asset Management and Amenities Committee meeting held on 4 December 2023.

[Link](#)

18.2 **Economic Development and Planning Committee**

To receive the minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meetings held on 5 December 2023 and 9 January 2024.

[Link to 5 December](#)

[Link to 9 January](#)

18.3 **Finance Administration and Performance Committee**

To receive the minutes of the Finance and Administration and performance Committee meeting held on 20 November 2023.

[Link](#)

18.4 **Staffing Committee**

To receive the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee meetings held on 4 December 2023 and 12 January 2024.

[Link to 4 December 2023](#)

[Link to 12 January 2024](#)

19. **Working Group Notes**

19.1 **Events**

To receive the notes of the Events Working Group meeting on 2 November 2023.

[Link](#)

19.2 **Environment & Climate Working Group**

To receive the notes of the Environment & Climate Working Group meeting on 5 December 2023.

[Link](#)

20. **Neighbourhood Plan**

Update from Town Council representatives on the group.

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Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 22nd January 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor S Crundell (Town Mayor)
Councillor T Price (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Cooke
Councillor J Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor Stokes
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk
	Kalpesh Patel	Locum RFO

There were five members of the public and one member of the press present

Public Participation

Simon White

Had previously contacted Melksham Town Hall about reinstating the Town Well as a Wishing Well to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Melksham Lions. He was concerned that he had been advised that the matter should be raised with Wiltshire Council but had received no other reply. The Town Mayor, Simon S Crundell said that the matter would be put on the agenda of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday 30th January 2024.

Also expressed his concern about the Refa Tandoori roundabout and damage done by a Wessex Water truck driving over it. He said that the sponsor of the roundabout had been into the Town Hall but the response had not been helpful.

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell advised that he had written to Wessex Water but had received no reply. He would contact them again.

Councillor Hubbard asked why, as a Melksham South councillor and a Wiltshire Councillor he had not been copied in on the matter of the well. Councillor Ellis stated that he had copied the email to Councillor Hubbard

Adrienne Westbrook

Had asked 7 months ago about the Melksham Town Hall website and had been told there were issues. Was concerned that the election result had not appeared on the website and would probably not be readable in any event.

At this point the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes due to problems with Zoom. The meeting re-convened at 7:30pm.

Paul Carter

Thanked Head of Operations Hugh Davies for support for a recent Historical Association meeting. Confirmed he would support the restoration of the well.

Asked about the Cooper Tires War Memorial and whether the Town Council was taking any steps to preserve it.

The Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Price advised he had submitted a motion for the Town Council to take ownership of the memorial. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell suggested the matter be referred to the next meeting of the Economic Development & Planning Committee.

Also asked about support for a town museum and a request for the Historical Society to have two display cabinets in the Town Hall.

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell said that a museum was an options being considered as part of the potential Assembly Hall/Blue Pool redevelopment and any decision would be a collective decision of councillors. He would discuss with the Committee Clerk the appropriate committee for the question of display cabinets.

Finally Paul asked about Explore Wiltshire and said that he would like to be involved. The Committee Clerk advised that council had already considered this and the matter was with the Communications Office. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell said that officers would be in contact with Paul in due course.

Colin Goodhind

Referenced full council meeting of 30 October 2023 and expressed his concern that Sgt Rutter, a serving police officer, waited 45 minutes to give her report and stayed 1 hour 20 minutes in full in order to comment on the motion for CCTV in KGV. He asked if this was a good use of police time. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell said that in such circumstances, items would usually be pushed up the agenda but on this occasion Sgt Rutter indicated her willingness to stay.

Asked about progress on amending Procurement Policy and referred to his motion, which was unanimously approved, to full council on 20 June 2022 to encourage dialogue and improve communication.

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell referred to the Project Management Plans now been introduced which should help.

Joe McCann

BMX Pump Track. When was this passed over to Reg Williams, when would it come back to council and how much was it costing.

It was confirmed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell and the Head of Operations that the matter had been referred to Reg Williams to deal with the tender but had now been brought back to be part of the wider park strategy.

CCTV Report. When will be it be received and how much has it cost?

Head of Operations advised it had been received and was on the agenda for the next full council. He would confirm the cost and come back to Joe.

671/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Forgacs, Councillor Mortimer and Councillor Rabey.

672/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

673/23 Questions from Councillors

Councillor Ellis raised questions and concerns about a resolution made by full council on 18th December 2023.

At full council on 18th December the council passed the following motion:

""It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Oatley and RESOLVED that the Environment and Climate Working Group completes its work on the Biodiversity Policy to be brought to Full Council meeting on 22 January 2024. The existing group is then dissolved and new terms of reference are to be put to Full Council at the first opportunity.""

However, this was not on the agenda for the meeting and our standing orders state.

""Standing Order 10b reads 'No motion may be moved at a meeting unless it is on the agenda and the mover has given written notice of its wording to the Proper Officer at least seven clear days before the meeting. Clear days do not include the day of the notice or the day of the meeting.'""

This standing order is there for a very good reason - it's to allow all councillors to be fully informed ahead of time and to make good decisions. The standing order is there to prevent poor decisions being made based on assumptions and incomplete and incorrect data which I believe happened in this case.

QUESTION 1: May we consider the motion passed on 18th December to be outside of the standing order of this council, and so null and void?

The draft biodiversity policy paper for the council to adopt was discussed in person in the Town Hall between group members and the Town Clerk (Linda Roberts) in late October 2023. It was left that she would be "topping and tailing" it to bring back to a subsequent full council. I note it is not on the agenda for this (to be read out 22.1.2024) evening's meeting, and members of the group have discussed it further and have topping and tailing suggestions now written up.

QUESTION 2: May we organise an ECWG meeting with officer support with prior circulation in an agenda of the draft policy so that it can be brought to full council at the February meeting for ratification

The Environment and Climate working group has been meeting with officer support from 6 p.m. ahead of the Economic Development and Planning Committee. The environment is a consideration on all council business, and this arrangement has allowed us to take a view and inform councillors on all committees with a sustainability aspect, whilst at the same time making economic use of officer time; it has avoided there being a call on yet another evening.

With just an hour to conduct business, councillors and community members of the group correspond and meet online and in person, and talk with others who can help inform us, between formal meetings. Anyone who has expressed an interest has been welcomed, and as a result we have been better informed for ECWG meetings. Such discussions prior to council meetings are not unusual across the council as a whole; they are not working group meetings and people are take part purely if they wish. There appears to have been a misunderstanding at 18th December full council meeting that these intermediate interactions between us were ECWG meetings, which they were and are not.

I welcome the opportunity to rewrite the terms of reference for the Environment and Climate Working Group - we have acknowledge the need for us to do so, in order to move on from the interim arrangement set up to be effective in reviewing the council's activities against sustainability criteria.

QUESTION 3: Please can we also consider and update the terms of reference for the Environment and Climate group of the council, at formal ECWG meetings, with a view to doing to prior to the end of the current financial year? The group has made good use of volunteer enthusiasm, expertise and time over the last year, and this dedication by those outside and within our councillor ranks, and by moving it forward in this way we will continue to make full use of that resource and in an effective and supportive way, including (but far from limited) to meeting the council's biodiversity obligations.

The committee clerk confirmed that his reading of Standing Orders was the same as Councillor Ellis but he had no authority to declare a resolution null and void. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell said many decisions were made without a formal motion and to declare the resolution null and void would set a precedent. Councillor Ellis still felt the resolution should be null and void. The Town Mayor noted Councillor Ellis' comments and said he would take a more direct interpretation of Standing Orders in

the future. Councillor Hubbard repeated his concerns regarding meetings outside of the Town Hall.

674/23 Minutes

The minutes of 18 December 2023, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

675/23 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell welcomed Councillor Griffin.

676/23 Police Report

The committee clerk advised that he had still been unable to make contact with Simon Tuong but had been advised that Sergeant Rutter had now returned to her post.

677/23 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Alford updated on Wiltshire Council budget. He noted the financial difficulties of many councils.

Councillor Hubbard also noted the financial difficulties and that most would have to implement cuts or overspend.

678/23 Melksham Community Support (MCS) Service Project

Kate Brooks and Sarah Cardy gave a presentation on the work of the Community Support (MCS) Service Project. Councillors asked questions about promoting the service and accounting for people who had previously volunteered under the Melksham Community Support.

It was suggested and resolved that Age UK Wiltshire should submit a funding application.

679/23 Staffing Review

The Town Mayor advised that before moving on to the budget members would need to discuss the Staffing Review. The Committee Clerk, Locum RFO, press and public left the room as this item was confidential.

680/23 Budget 2024/2025

Changes were made to salaries, tree planting/ecology, general grants, play equipment and advertising.

There was a discussion of advertising, newsletter and marketing and the pros and cons of amalgamating these as one code.

It was unanimously agreed that the £20000 for Play Equipment under code 4158 be moved to a Ring Fenced Reserve for new play equipment.

Sinking Fund 9233 is to be renamed Play Equipment Replacement Reserve.

Councillor Hubbard commended work done to bring down the increase but cautioned members that next year's budget discussions would be starting from a lower base point.

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell also commended the work done to bring down the increase.

Councillor Ellis felt that there was no clear strategy and there was currently no responsible officer or responsible financial officer. He asked for a recorded vote.

The locum RFO advised members that budget as it stood gave a precept of £1047270, a Band D tax of £175.69 and an increase of 3.96%.

A recorded vote was held.

Councillor Alford – for
Councillor Aves – for
Councillor Cooke – for
Councillor S Crundell – for
Councillor Ellis – abstain
Councillor Griffin - for
Councillor Hubbard – for
Councillor Price – for
Councillor Stokes – for
Councillor Westbrook - for

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the budget precept.

[Link to budget](#)

681/23 Civic Awards

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell, the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Price and Councillor Aves expressed their willingness to volunteer.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Aves, Councillor Crundell and Councillor Price to the Civic Awards Panel.

682/23 Social Media Policy

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** for a motion to be introduced to amend Standing Orders.

683/23 Extension of Meeting

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend standing orders and extend the meeting beyond 10pm.

684/23 Assembly Hall/Blue Pool

The report on responses from architects was received.

There was discussion on the next step. Councillor Ellis suggested the Assembly Hall Working Group meet with Mark Saint. Councillor Hubbard suggested appointing an Assembly Hall manager and bring them into the process.

Head of Operations felt that if an Assembly Hall manager was in place, he would be less operationally involved and would have some capacity to manage the regeneration project, however that plays out.

There was discussion of the options.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Head of Operations do report back to the Full Council meeting in March with suggestions for how to proceed.

685/23 Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) for Melksham

It was suggested that councillors submit their views and response to the consultation be delegated to the Committee Clerk.

The Committee Clerk suggested he meet with Councillor Ellis, as had happened on a previous transport consultation.

It was decided to refer the matter back to the Economic Development and Planning Committee.

686/23 Calendar of Meetings 2024/2025

This item and all subsequent items were not reached and will be considered at other meetings.

687/23 King George V Park

688/23 Update

689/23 Splashpad Opening Times for 2024.

690/23 Shurnhold Fields

691/23 Economic Development and Planning Committee

692/23 Staffing Committee

693/23 Events Working Group

694/23 Neighbourhood Plan

Meeting Closed at: 10.25 pm

Signed:

Dated:

Melksham & Bradford on Avon Neighbourhood Policing Team

Rural Report January 2024

Meet your team:

Melksham



PC Ben Coombs
Looks after:
Sandridge
Redstocks
Broughton Gifford
Norrington -
Common
Atworth
Shaw Whitley
Beanacre
Forest



PCSO Mel Culliford



PC Elliott Holdsworth
Looks after:
Steeple Ashton
Keevil
Bulkington
Poulshot
Inmarsh
Seend
The Stocks
Semington
Seend Cleeve

Bradford on Avon



PC Jen Miller
Looks after:
Holt
South Wraxhall
Bradford Leigh
Staverton
Monkton
Farleigh
Farleigh Wick
Little Chalfield
Great Chalfield



PCSO Laura Wallace



PC Rachel Jackson
Looks after:
Conkwell
Little Ashley
Winsley
Turleigh
Avon Cliff
Westwood
Wingfield
Limply Stoke

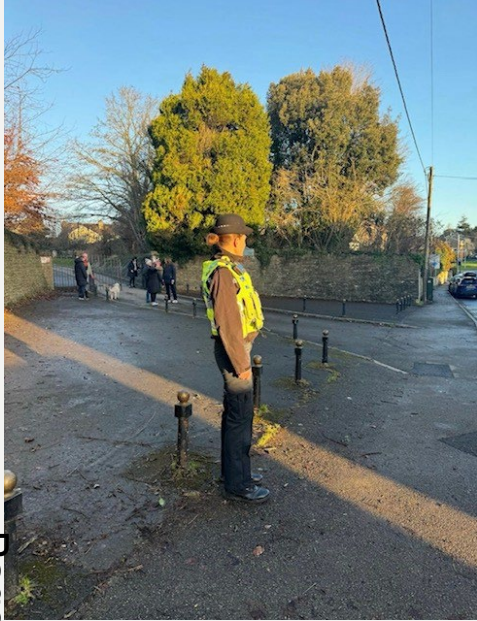


Inspector Andy Lemon



Sergeant Gemma Rutter

Where have we been and what have we been up to?

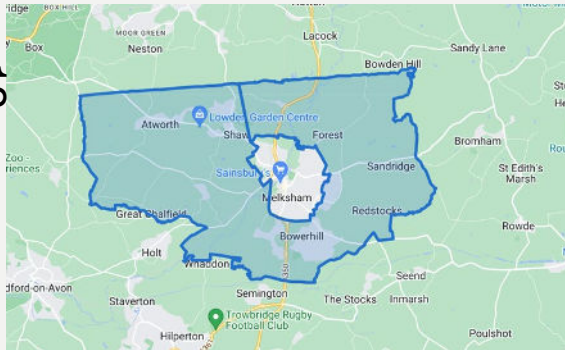


The new year has brought in new changes for NPT which we have promoted through a week of engagement and action across our areas. This has seen the team complete a number of school engagements; drop in sessions and days of action which involved traffic offence and speed watch actions.

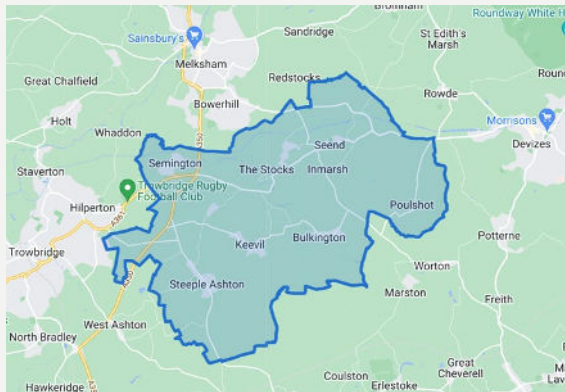
As a force, the changes include NPT areas being aligned to one Chief Inspector who specifically focuses on NPT instead of NPT and response. For our area, we are now under the leadership of Chief Inspector James Brain who has years of experience in both our own force and Avon and Somerset when it comes to community policing.

Page 12

Non dwelling burglary in Westwood- cable taken



1 dwelling burglary- as part of a neighbour dispute in Bowerhill



1 theft of sheep hurdles and a sheep trailer in Steeple Ashton

NEWS:



Join Inspector Lemon & Sgt Rutter on Facebook for a live Q&A session, Wednesday 7th Feb at 6PM

Page 13



The teams will be out in the mobile police van from the 13th-15th Feb promoting safety from violence for women and girls. For locations please check updates on our Facebook pages or contact PC Rachel Jackson for more information.

A note from Sgt Rutter:

Dear all,
Thank you for your patience with us as a team over December/January. Due to a change in force postings December saw me looking after Warminster Station and its teams. Thank you to A/SGT TUONG who looked after our NPTs in my absence.

Please remember to contact your area PC for any questions, concerns or information you require for your area:

ben.coombs@wiltshire.police.uk

elliott.Holdsworth@wiltshire.police.uk

rachel.Jackson@wiltshire.police.uk

jennifer.miller@wiltshire.police.uk

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MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/2025

* Meeting falls on Tues/Wednes (or following Monday Public Holiday)
** Meeting will begin at 7.30 pm or on the rising of the previous Committee meeting
*** Budgets to be approved

	2024								2025				
	5 & 26 Bank Holiday			26 Bank Holiday				25 and 26 Bank Holiday	1 Bank Holiday			18 & 21 Bank Holiday	
	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Annual Town Meeting											17		
Budget Working Group													
Asset Management and Amenities		10		12		14		16		10		7	
Chairs Meeting (as required)													
Community Development	7		1			1			20			14	
Economic Dev & Planning	14	4, 25	16	6, 27	17	8,29	19	10	9,28	18	11	1, 22	13
Envi & Climate Working Group (third Wednesday of the month)													
Events Working Group (first Thursday of the month)	2	6	4	1	5	3	7	5	16	6	6	3	1
Finance Admin & Performance	13		8		9		11		13		3		6
Full Council	20 Annual Meeting, 28	17	29	19	23	21	25	23	27	24	24	28	19 Annual Meeting, 27
Staffing Committee (as required)													
Neighbourhood Plan													

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Biodiversity Policy

Background

In accordance with the duty imposed on Town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and rural Communities Act 2008, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, Melksham Town Council (herein after referred to as the Council) which has many functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

Diversity

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water of pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

Aims and Objectives

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

The full Council and any committee of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways.:

- Consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact/nature positive practices.
- encourage and support other organisations within the town to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

Actions

Planning applications

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.
- support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- Include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

Land and property management

The Council will:

- Carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- Consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regarding to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the Government's regulations for plant protection products.
- take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.

- Source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use.
- consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Local community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

Monitoring

This policy was adopted on (Minute reference yy) and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually, with reference to the original biodiversity audit to show progress.

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Draft Model Action Plan

Site/objective	Action	Outcome	Target	Reporting/Publicity
Whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Gain local support for action	Ongoing	Newsletter, social media, website
Protect and support biodiversity	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species	Ongoing	Mapping
Closed Churchyard	<p>Additional Planting</p> <p>Maintain and renew bird boxes as required.</p> <p>Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance.</p> <p>Leave leaf litter and dead vegetation where possible as a habitat for invertebrates.</p>	<p>Increased diversity of habitats and food sources</p> <p>Increase cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals.</p> <p>Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.</p>		
Recreation Grounds	<p>Sympathetically maintain hedging.</p> <p>Leave some areas unmown</p>	<p>Food sources and cover</p> <p>Encourages insects.</p>		

Draft Model Action Plan

Site/objective	Action	Outcome	Target	Reporting/Publicity
	Only use environment friendly pesticides where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions	Sustain and enhance natural habitats		
Common/other open spaces	<p>Adopt a management plan</p> <p>Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.</p> <p>Work with the principal authority on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.</p> <p>Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, make clear what is expected e.g., peat free compost and no chemicals.</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance natural habitats</p> <p>Protecting habitats</p> <p>Protecting /enhancing habitats</p> <p>Regular attention</p>		
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered	Protect/enhancing habitats	Ongoing	

Draft Model Action Plan

Site/objective	Action	Outcome	Target	Reporting/Publicity
	<p>against the requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries</p>	Extending habitats		
Increase community awareness of biodiversity	<p>Ask residents for their view on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the town.</p> <p>Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the Town Newsletters</p> <p>Create a page on the council's website for photographs, information and links.</p> <p>Encourage local farmers to contribute.</p> <p>Provide seed bombs/bulbs etc. for residents' use.</p> <p>Discourage floodlighting.</p>	<p>Engagement/ownership of biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p> <p>Extending habitats</p> <p>Protect nocturnal animals</p>	Ongoing	Neighbourhood Plan consultation

Draft Model Action Plan

Site/objective	Action	Outcome	Target	Reporting/Publicity
Support Community Projects	<p>Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.</p> <p>Work in partnership with schools to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.</p> <p>Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.</p>	<p>Extending habitats</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p> <p>Promote biodiversity</p>		

Biodiversity Duty

Introduction – Statutory duty

Under the 2-21 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities are not obliged to publish a report on their actions but the [Government guidance](#) requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and must reconsider the selected actions within five years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

To comply with the guidance, town and parish councils could as a minimum:

- Have biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- Note what action they are already taking to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree what further steps they should take to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Such steps may include:

- Reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities, e.g., potential for jointly supported wildlife corridors.
- Making contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation.
- Carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings and/or the whole council area, potentially involving residents in a [‘BioBlitz’](#)
- Gathering expert advice
- Gathering expert advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity, such as from [Caring for God’s Acre](#) and the [Eco Church initiative](#) in respect of churchyards.
- Drafting an action plan that covers action that the council will take itself as well as support for the actions of other local bodies.

Whatever action is agreed, as a minimum local councils could ensure they address biodiversity concerns when commenting on planning applications.

Linda Roberts
Town Clerk

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Draft Biodiversity Action Plan for Melksham Town Council (Best printed on A3 in colour)

These are ideas taken from the **Draft Model Action Plan (in black text)** with specific Melksham projects and SMART objectives added by the ECWG group in December 2023 (in green) as requested by [Full Council on 27 November 2023](#).

It is suggested that Councillors and Council staff consider which of these are realistically achievable with current MTC/ volunteer resources before Council adopts the Action Plan.

All the below actions are in line with the objective to increase biodiversity in Melksham or to protect and support existing biodiversity.

Site/ objective	Action	Specific tasks	Measurable questions	Achievable	Relevant Outcome	Time-bound
Closed St Michael's Churchyard	Encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity	Work with Tree Wardens, churchwardens, volunteers, Bloom group/ Council staff and advisors to ensure biodiversity in planting and maintenance	Annual meeting set? Can the species of birds/insects be monitored?	Existing good relationship with knowledgeable and interested partners and volunteers		Every year
	Maintain and renew bird boxes as required.	Ask the Shed Club to make 5 new bird/bat boxes before nesting season and place in appropriate locations	Are 5 boxes complete and installed?	Shed Club have supported before, and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust can give advice if required	Connect and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species Increased diversity of habitats and food sources	3 months Every year
	Leave leaf litter, logs and dead vegetation where possible as a habitat for invertebrates.	Mark out an area that will be undisturbed Reduced leaf collection	Is the area clearly marked with signs? Are leaves being left?	There is already an area of branches etc that has been left for years which could be expanded/ clarified.	Increase cover for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals.	
	Continue to leave areas of grass unmown for rewilding	Agree areas with all involved. Ask Shed club for blue hearts to include	Area agreed and mowing managed? Blue hearts in?	This is already ongoing, can be extended and communicated further	Encouraging insects particularly butterflies and bees.	Ongoing
	Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance.	Create a plan (including above actions) that all involved agree to. Include a copy on the church noticeboard/ MTC website/ MIN	Meeting to agree the plan set? Information shared?	The community understand the need for biodiversity which can be explained with simple, respectful communication		6 months
Recreation Grounds: KGV Playing Fld The Woody Dorset Crescent Primrose Drive Speedwell Cl Spring Meadow Hazelwood Rd Lewington Cl Foresters Park Awdry Ave Riverside Dunch Lane (All on this map here)	Sympathetically maintain hedging to protect wildlife habitats and cover.	Take advice from WWT/ Ian Cardy/ Tree wardens and build into workplan	Advice sought? Workplan updated?	Interested partners already keen to help	Food sources and cover Encourages insects, which will increase pollinators as well as provide food for birds	Every year
	Leave some areas unmown	Create a plan that all agree to for each play area. Communicate with signs/blue hearts (x24)	Plan agreed? Signage in place?	There are areas of space in some play areas where this is possible	Sustain and enhance natural habitats	3 months
	Continue to only use environment friendly pesticides and weedkiller where absolutely necessary and only in ideal weather conditions	Ensure training and explanation to all who manage the areas	Training complete?	Eco-friendly weedkiller already being used.		3 months
	Plant new trees/shrubs/ flowers with biodiversity in mind.	Continue to identify areas suitable for more (or replacement) trees/shrubs across the 12 areas	How many trees planted? Are dead trees being replaced?	Can expand on the ongoing planting strategy and work with volunteers/ Bloom Group/ tree wardens. Budget available for planting		6 months
	Water new planting in dry months					
	Encourage bats	The Bat Conservation trust recommend: • Planting night-scented flowers (e.g. white jasmine, honeysuckle, evening primrose) • Building a pond • Bat boxes • Wilding - the extra fauna attracting insects then attracts the bats • Creating linear features i.e. hedgerows/treelines • Reduce/remove artificial lighting	Are appropriate flowers planted? Is there a location for a pond identified? Are there bat boxes in place? Is lighting suitable for bats?	There are a range of spaces where bat friendly initiatives can be introduced	Increased habitat and food sources will support bat populations	One year

Site/ objective	Action	Specific tasks	Measurable questions	Achievable	Relevant Outcome	Time-bound
Common/ other open spaces: Shurnhold Fields	Work with MWPC to adopt a management plan	Set up a meeting with MWPC to build biodiversity into workplans	Included in workplans?	This document is a starting point	Sustain and enhance natural habitats for insects and wildlife	6 months
	Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Put up/ replace posters on dog mess and litter on gates. Continue to maintain and empty bins	Posters in place? Bins being managed?	Mostly already in place		Managed weekly
	Work with Wiltshire Council on verge management, favouring biodiversity but noting which areas may need cutting for highway safety.	Establish regular communication with WC re planting. Use the WC grounds map to be aware of and support rewilding schemes along Melksham highways	WC rewilding taking place?	WC already have a policy of rewilding verges which can be expanded and communicated with residents		Annual
	Encourage residents to adopt areas to look after, make clear what is expected e.g., peat free compost and no chemicals.					
Allotments	Include biodiversity requirements in allotment tenancy agreements.	Peat-free compost Eco-friendly pesticides/weed killers Support the creation of habitats for wildlife; bee-boxes, hedgehog homes, log and stone piles for invertebrates, toads and slow worms	Requirements in place? Advice/ guidance on wildlife provided in annual rent letter?	Good allotment management in place already Good systems of communication with allotment holders		Already in hand? Annual
River Avon and Clackers Brook	Tackle litter and pollution	Work with the Bloom group to provide the extra long litter pickers in monthly Tidy Town Days plus volunteer insurance	Is it being used effectively? Is insurance in place?	3m litter picker bought by MTC suitable for reaching litter in river		Litter free river and brook will support wildlife habitats and discourage additional littering
	Encourage/protect the otters on the river Avon	Seek advice from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust	Advice sought and agreed to?	Otters have been seen along the river and Clackers Brook	Sustainable habitat for otters in Melksham	3 months
Conigre Mead Nature Reserve	Work with the Conigre Mead volunteers to establish the area as a 'biodiversity hub'	Set up a meeting with the Conigre volunteers to arrange additional promotion of the area, regular educational sessions and work with schools to arrange visits.	Is there a page on the website? Have sessions been set up?	Already established, wheelchair accessible, lottery funded project with volunteers and information boards.	Easily accessible area where people interact with their surroundings and learn about what they're seeing, hearing and smelling, and take greater interest in preserving the natural environment.	One year
The Built Landscape	Ensure that planning consultations are considered against the requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan	Ensure all planning is considered with biodiversity in mind	Biodiversity considered?	Strong Neighbourhood Plan process in place	Protect/enhancing habitats Extending habitats	Ongoing
	Continue to include protection of green space in NHP	Extensive consultations and updates taking place	Biodiversity included?			Ongoing
	Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries	Ensure hedges/ wildlife corridors are maintained	Included in NHP?			Ongoing
	Ensure biodiversity in MTC planted areas: Queen Mary Gardens Prince of Wales Garden Town Centre Planters Town Centre baskets Town Centre Roundabout The Friend's Garden	Set up a meeting with planting contractor to ensure wildlife-friendly varieties are chosen in MTC annual planting contracts. Liaise with Bloom volunteers on their planting too.	Advice sought from WWT/ Ian Cardy? Pollinators included? Bloom volunteers involved?	Knowledgeable sources available to advise. Budget available for annual planting	3 months	

Site/ objective	Action	Specific tasks	Measurable questions	Achievable	Relevant Outcome	Time-bound
Increase community awareness of (and responsibility for) biodiversity in the whole council area	Raise local awareness of biodiversity.	Create a page on the council's website for photographs, information and links.	Is the page there?	No cost to add more pages to MTC website.	Gain local support for action Engagement/ownership of biodiversity	Within 3 months
	Raise understanding of biodiversity within Council staff, especially grounds team	Invite someone from WWT/ Ian Cardy to spend a day with the team/ give a presentation to Council	Training session arranged?	Knowledgeable people available to advise	Promote biodiversity	
	Ask residents for their view on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity within the town.	Run a questionnaire/ consultation with article in MIN – paper survey and online Collate responses and update biodiversity plan	Consultation complete? Responses included in plan?	Easy to reach community through existing channels	Extending habitats	1 year
	Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife	Possible actions highlighted in the Town Newsletters, website, social media, MIN	Articles produced?	Good existing networks of communication		Quarterly?
	Encourage local farmers to contribute.					
	Provide saplings/ seed bombs/bulbs etc. for resident's use.	Build on residents' tree planting scheme. Use Google sheets for people to sign up, order plants from a local contractor and arrange a collection day at the Town Hall for residents	Publicity complete? Sign up sheet in place? Plants collected by residents?	Residents' tree planting scheme was very popular in 2020 and 2022.		Annual
	Discourage floodlighting.	Explain problems of light at night on web/MIN/ social media	Article produced?	Good channels of communication in place	Protect nocturnal animals	3 months
Support Community Projects	Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Work with housing and residents associations, schools and Bloom Group on planting projects			Extending habitats	One year
	Work in partnership with schools to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.	See Conigre Mead project above			Promote biodiversity	
	Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Have a stall/ presence at Melksham Food and River Festival, Carnival, Christmas Lights Switch on etc	Are stalls booked and volunteers found	Melksham's many community events are well established opportunities to reach the community	Promote biodiversity	Annual
	Melksham in Bloom local Competition – ensure prizes and recognition given to biodiversity in private/ community gardens	Work with Bloom volunteers to ensure categories and scores reflect biodiversity	Categories updated?	Good partnership with Bloom, and existing competition in place with environmental scores included already	Raise awareness and education around biodiversity	Annual
	Community Grants Scheme – include grants specifically for environmental projects	Update grants policy to include environmental projects and promote through web, MIN, social media	Policy updated? Environmental grants promoted?	Already a requirement for groups to provide an environmental policy when applying for general grants		Quarterly
	Melksham Bloomers – support and work with the Bloomers on their monthly tidy town days and planting prep for South West in Bloom entry	Make the Town Hall available for refreshments and toilets on the monthly tidy town days Help promote and work together with the volunteers	Support in place?	Well established Tidy Town Day already generates support and volunteers – easy to build on this success	Maintain a litter free environment and support community volunteers to take responsibility	Monthly
Council Policies	Follow all points outlined in the accompanying Biodiversity Policy	Adopt the policy by Full Council and regularly review	Is it adopted? Is someone responsible for it?			
	Continue to include an environmental/ biodiversity impact section on every agenda report for consideration	Include in all reports to Council	Is environmental impact included?	Already in place	Maintain Melksham Town Council's commitment to biodiversity and the natural environment	Ongoing
	Work alongside Wiltshire Council's Blue Green Infrastructure Strategy here	Staff to be familiar with its contents	Has it been read?	Thorough policy created by Wiltshire Council with in depth research and evidence is a useful guide for MTC		

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Report

Review of existing Public Space Video Surveillance Provision and recommendations for Improvements

On behalf of



Melksham
Town Council

Date: 17 Jan 2024

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Issue record

Issue	Document Name	Revision No.	Date of Issue	Description	Issue by
1	Melksham Town Council review of Public Space CCTV provision	-	17 Jan 2024	Draft Report – issued for comment/approval	KG

Contents

Issue record.....	1
1 Premises Details.....	4
1.1 Client Details	4
1.2 Survey Details.....	4
2 Introduction.....	5
3 Current Configuration.....	6
3.1 General.....	6
3.2 Town Centre Public Space System	6
3.3 Town Hall/Assembly Hall System.....	7
3.4 King George V Park.....	7
3.5 Rapid Deployment cameras	8
4 Options for the Future.....	9
4.1 Option 1/2 - Continue With Separate Systems and Expand as Required	9
4.2 Option 3 - Amalgamate the Systems and Record/Review Centrally	9
4.3 Option 4 - Amalgamate the systems and configure for remote monitoring	10
5 Data Protection and Security.....	11
5.1 Use of equipment from manufacturers in the Peoples Republic of China (PRC)	11
5.2 Routine Maintenance.....	11
6 Cameras v Applications	12
6.1 Fixed Cameras	12
6.2 PTZ Cameras	12
6.3 Multi sensor cameras.....	12
7 Advanced Technologies available in IP based CCTV systems.....	13
7.1 AI based Video Analytic technology.....	13
7.2 Automated Number plate recognition (ANPR)	14
7.3 Facial Recognition Technology.....	14
7.4 Body worn video (BWV)	14
8 Cost Estimates	16
9 Camera schedule	17
9.1 Camera 1	17
9.2 Camera 2	18

9.3	Relay point.....	19
9.4	Cameras 3, 4, 5	20
9.5	King George V Park PTZ camera	21
10	Biometrics and Surveillance camera commissioner letter 2022	22

1 Premises Details

1.1 Client Details

Client /owner: Melksham Town Council

Premises Address: Melksham Town Hall

Installation description Town Centre VSS installations in Melksham

Principal Contact: Hugh Davies, Melksham Town Council

Contact tel. no:

1.2 Survey Details

Survey Carried out by: Ken Graham

Surveyor contact: 07703 648938

Survey Date: 15th December 2023

Site Contact:

2 Introduction

This report sets out the current situation and options for the future provision of public space video monitoring within the town of Melksham, Wiltshire.

The council has operated a small surveillance system in the town for some years. In addition, there is a separate small system installed within the Town Hall/Assembly Hall.

There is also a separate system installed at King George V Park which records a PTZ camera in the car park, cameras on the toilet block and cameras on the Pavilion. There are further plans to install cameras around the park footpath, when new lighting is installed.

The council has bought two rapid deployable 4g cameras and battery packs, although these have not yet been used.

We understand that the council were considering purchasing a further camera, but this is currently on hold pending submission of this report.

Within this report we have set out some potential ways forward and provided additional information on more advanced features that the Council may consider in the future.

3 Current Configuration

3.1 General

There are three distinct Video Surveillance Systems (VSS) operated by Melksham Town Council. These are:

- Public Space System comprising 6 cameras installed in the town.
- Town Hall Assembly Hall system comprising four cameras
- King George V Park system which includes the cameras monitoring the car park outside the toilet block and the Pavilion.

The Public space and town hall systems are recorded in the Town Hall. The King George V Park system is recorded in the Pavilion. The systems are not actively monitored but are used in investigations and to provide evidence following an incident in the area. There are no formal maintenance arrangements in place.

3.2 Town Centre Public Space System

The Public space system is recorded on a Dallmeier Network recorder within the Town Hall. It is understood to be the oldest system and includes 6 cameras installed in the Market place and the junction of the High Street, Bank Street and Lowbourne. This includes two Pan, Tilt, Zoom (PTZ) dome cameras and four fixed cameras.

The original installation was well designed and specified with good quality equipment for the time of installation. The basic infrastructure can be further developed and expanded if required.

The exact specification of the existing cameras is not known. However, if the PTZ cameras are as originally specified in the Global MSC specification of 2013, they will be Dallmeier analogue cameras and have a resolution of approximately 0.5 MP. Equivalent cameras available today would be Internet Protocol (IP) and have a specification of at least 2MP. 3MP and 4MP are common.

The fixed cameras have been installed more recently and therefore are likely to be 2MP or 3MP IP cameras, which can provide a higher quality image. Monitoring is focused around the market Square with only the single camera at the other end of the High Street.

The Dallmeier recorder has recently had an upgrade to the hard disk drive to increase its capacity to 6TB. This should provide more than adequate capacity to record the existing cameras at their full resolution and store images for 30 days.

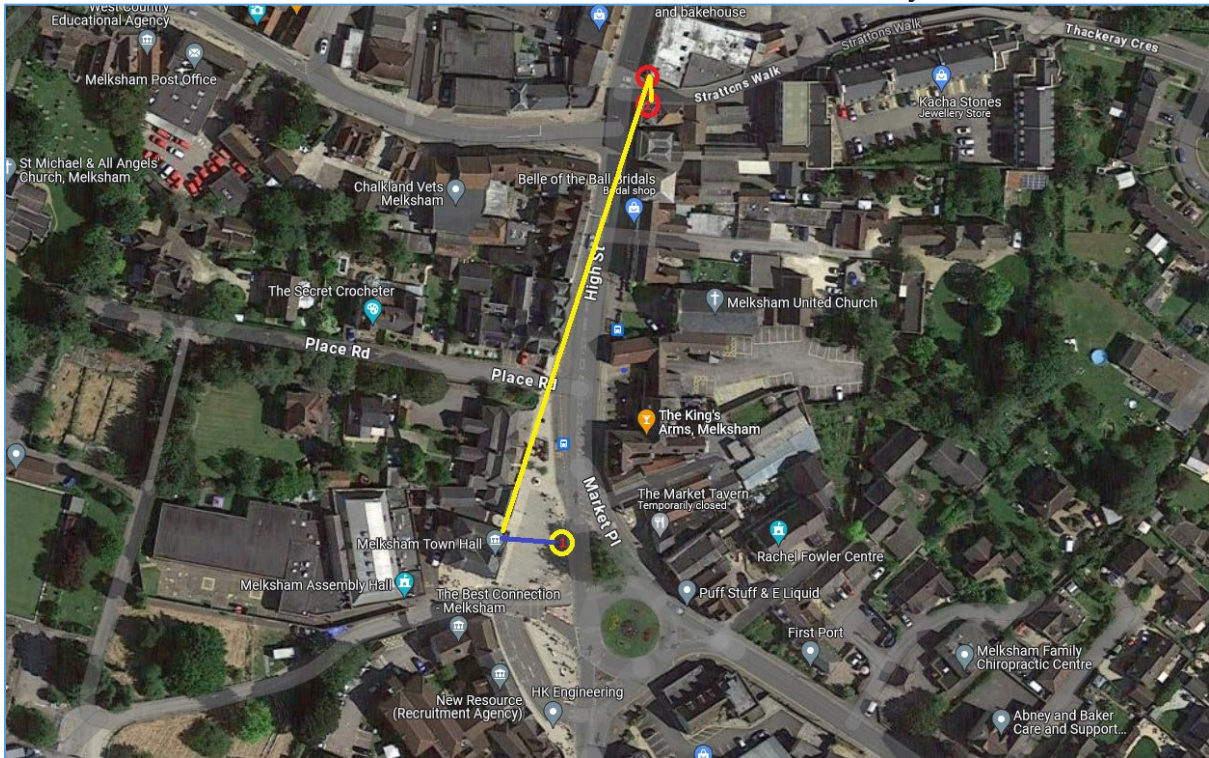


Figure 1: Existing Town Centre provision

3.3 Town Hall/Assembly Hall System

The Town Hall System comprises a Hikvision recorder and four Hikvision cameras installed within and outside the Town Hall. This system is completely independent of the Dallmeier system and is viewed on a separate monitor. The image quality is understood to be good.

3.4 King George V Park

The King George V park is the most recent system to be installed and comprises the following:

- Bath road car park – dedicated camera column with a Hikvision PTZ – wireless back to Hikvision NVR housed in the Pavilion
- Toilet Block in Park – 5 x Fixed Hikvision camera, wired to the adjacent column and then wireless back to Pavilion
- Pavilion – 4 x fixed Hikvision cameras wired directly to the NVR in the Pavilion.

Work is currently under way to install a further 8 fixed cameras and a PTZ camera around the park footpath. All of which will be connected to the existing NVR in the Pavilion.

This is a stand alone system. Review, monitoring and copying of images must be carried out within the Pavilion, although there is a broadband connection available within the Pavilion to enable remote access.

3.5 Rapid Deployment cameras

We note that the council has purchased two rapid deployment cameras with two battery packs for each. These use 4g GSM technology to transmit images from the cameras.

These can be useful devices but can only provide low resolution images suitable for transmission over 4G. Although they are described as rapid Deployment cameras, it can often be easier to use traditional cameras where wireless transmission paths are available. Where there are no wireless transmission paths available, the rapid deployment cameras will provide images subject to battery capacity and support short term needs.

4 Options for the Future

There are three potential options for the future recording and monitoring of public spaces in Melksham, which are:

- Continue with the separate systems recording locally for evidential purposes only
- Amalgamate the systems to allow central monitoring, review and/or recording
- Amalgamate the systems and configure to allow active remote monitoring

Once it has been decided how the cameras are to be recorded and/or monitored, this will inform what investment should be made in the system for the future. If the system is to be used purely to record images for future, then the existing PTZ cameras should be replaced with fixed cameras or multi sensor cameras, as outlined in section six.

4.1 Option 1/2 - Continue With Separate Systems and Expand as Required

The three existing systems each operate independently, and are capable of recording good quality images for retrieval at a later date. The Dallmeier system has recently had the hard drive storage updated and a new operating pc provided. As previously mentioned the PTZ cameras are relatively low resolution and can be improved considerable without changes to the infrastructure. This system should be able to support up to 8 high resolution cameras recording at full resolution, or more, at a reduced resolution.

If this is the chosen route, then the three existing PTZ cameras should be replaced with fixed cameras or multi sensor cameras which will allow recording of activity in more locations than the current configuration with PTZ cameras.

It will require recordings to be reviewed or copied for evidence in each location which will have some impact on activity in the Pavilion as these actions will require access, and privacy from the café operator.

4.2 Option 3 - Amalgamate the Systems and Record/Review Centrally

This scenario assumes that the systems continue to be used for recording and review only, so would also benefit from the replacement of PTZ cameras with fixed cameras.

The main benefit of this option is that it removes the need to access the Pavilion to access recordings for review or copying and ensures the data remains secure.

The easiest and most economical method of achieving this would be to create a wireless link between the Town Hall and the Pavilion. At the time of the initial review it was not possible to establish the best route, as this will require the use of a raised platform such as a scissor lift or Cherry picker to establish direct lines of sight, but some potential options are suggested in the image below.

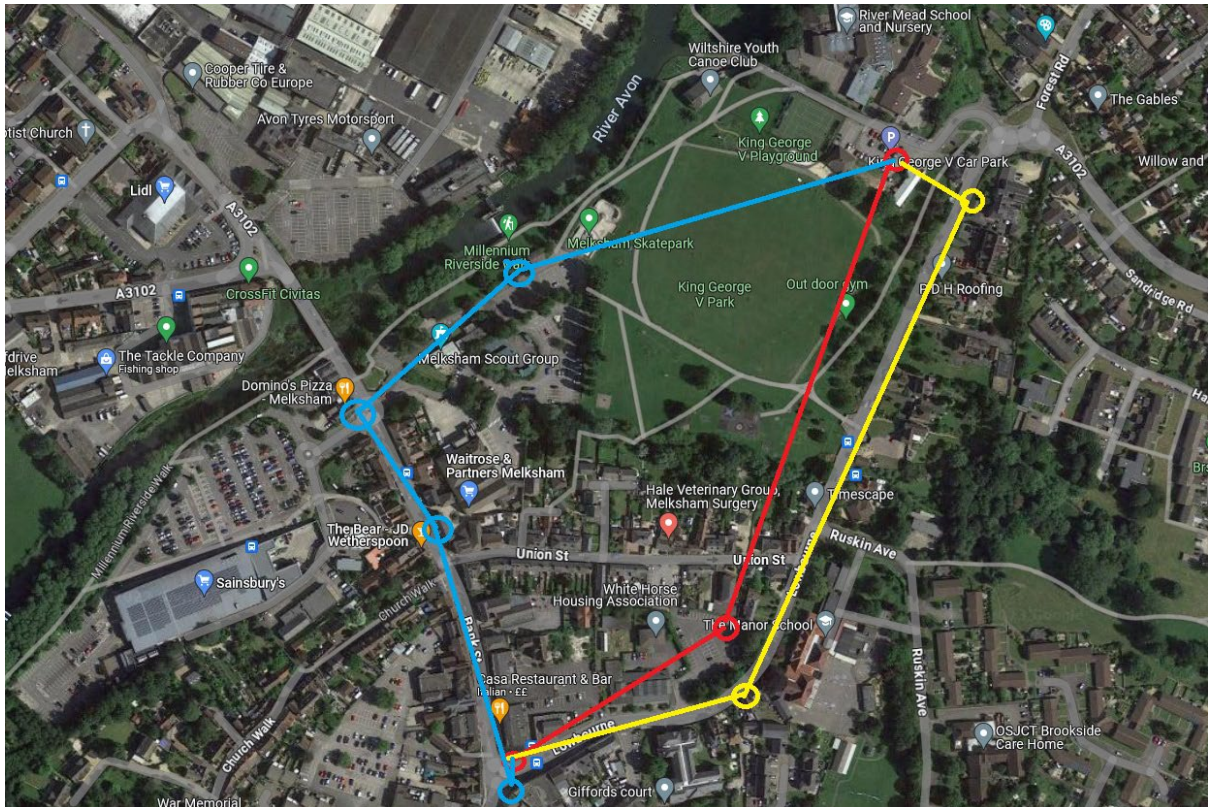


Figure 2: Possible wireless link options

4.3 Option 4 - Amalgamate the systems and configure for remote monitoring

In this scenario the systems would be amalgamated as in the above option with the addition of a link to a third party monitoring facility.

In this situation the existing PTZ cameras would benefit from being upgraded to at least 2MP units with 32x PTZ lenses that would enable them to view and monitor activity in a much wider area with clarity.

This option would require a fibre optic link from the Town Hall to the monitoring facility. (It is understood some discussions have already been had with Warminster Council who operate such a facility). The cost of the link would be subject to a quote from BT Openreach. It is likely that a 100Mbps link would be required.

The cost of the link and monitoring service will be considerable and therefore should be balanced against current illegal activity and the need for such an arrangement. We suggest allowing a budget of between £3k and £5k per annum for a link to Warminster Council, plus the monitoring facility cost.

5 Data Protection and Security

All Video Surveillance systems used to monitor public spaces must be registered with the Information Commissioners office which can be found [here](#).

Access to recorded data (Images) must be strictly controlled and not shared outside the organisation unless specific protocols are followed. Once the systems are installed, the installer should not retain access to the recorded data. Further guidance from the ICO is available [here](#).

When systems are installed all security features should be enabled and all equipment should be provided with unique passwords.

5.1 Use of equipment from manufacturers in the Peoples Republic of China (PRC)

In 2023 The UK Government banned the use of equipment from PRC manufacturers from use in Government and Critical National infrastructure sites. This mainly affects equipment from Dahua and HikVision.

As the council uses HikVision equipment you should understand the potential risks. A copy from the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner, sent in 2022, is attached for your information.

This does not mean you cannot continue to use HikVision equipment, but should do so, fully understanding the potential risk.

5.2 Routine Maintenance

Routine maintenance of the systems is essential to ensure the best quality images are obtained from the system where the cameras are focused.

Cameras require regular cleaning and refocusing. They can also be moved through legitimate and illegitimate activity in the area so that they are no longer focusing on the desired target.

It is also necessary to regularly update firmware in the pc and recorders when security patches are issued to ensure the security of the system and data.

We recommend the council enter into a maintenance contract with a qualified service provider to provide routine maintenance and emergency repairs when required.

6 Cameras v Applications

6.1 Fixed Cameras

The vast majority of cameras used in surveillance systems are fixed cameras. Basic cameras can be bought for just £10's and then there are dozens of specialist variants and different qualities available.

They are best deployed where the requirement is to monitor activity at a particular spot. They can be focused on that position and deliver high quality images of activity within the field of view.

They are also ideal where there is no active monitoring of the system by an operator. As long as they have high enough resolution and there is adequate storage in the recorder, they will record all the activity at the position for review at a later date.

6.2 PTZ Cameras

PTZ cameras are ideally suited to monitor larger areas where the system is actively monitored by an operator. High resolution cameras with 32X zoom lenses would allow an operator to identify a person or vehicle 200m away. However, a PTZ camera with similar resolution to a fixed camera would typically cost three times as much.

PTZ cameras are generally not suitable for use where the system is not actively monitored. PTZ cameras on "tours" typically only focus on any particular area for a short time, and will miss much of the activity in the area. Multiple fixed cameras, panoramic lens cameras or multi sensor cameras will provide much better information.

6.3 Multi sensor cameras

A fairly new development in camera technology is the introduction of multi sensor cameras. These include multiple fixed high resolution camera sensors in a single housing. These can be installed in a location such as a junction, to provide views in two, three or four directions simultaneously. By using high resolution sensors the operator can electronically zoom into a subject to reveal detail with one sensor, whilst recording continues from the other sensors.



Multi sensor camera

7 Advanced Technologies available in IP based CCTV systems

Upgrading to IP based CCTV monitoring provides a range of opportunities to introduce advanced technologies to improve the range and performance of CCTV monitoring services such as those below.

7.1 AI based Video Analytic technology

CCTV based video analytics are now widely used to detect entry into sites both externally and internally. They can also be used to identify unusual patterns of behaviour such as going the wrong way through a scene, to detect items appearing in a scene or being stationary for extended periods or items being removed from a scene.

The technology used for the video analytics in VSS systems varies considerably. The most basic systems are based upon a simple technology that detects a change in the pixels to determine if anything has changed in the scene. Because it is relatively basic technology it often cannot differentiate between a person and an insect or even leaves. It will also be affected by environmental factors such as light, fog, or rain. Consequently, a system using this technology can generate many unwarranted activations.

Where a system generates a high volume of activations it is likely to lead to low confidence in the system performance, and a high risk that control room staff will not react swiftly to a genuine activation.

The more advanced video analytic solutions use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and can differentiate between a potential human intruder and environment influences. They can also be configured over time to differentiate more precisely, by “teaching” the system to ignore certain features. Intelligent systems used in an internal environment are very reliable.

Video analytics can offer a number of important security features such as:

- Intrusion – where a person enters an area at a time when the area is closed
- Line crossing – where a person crosses a virtual line in a scene
- Unusual movement – e.g., where a one way system is in use, if a person or vehicle moves in the opposite direction an alert will be provided.
- Object appearance – where an object appears stationary in a scene for an extended period (e.g., a bag left outside a venue)
- Object removal – where an object that has been fixed in a scene for an extended period is removed.

In addition, video analytics can provide a range of additional management information such as:

- People counting either within a scene or passing through.
- Behavioural analysis which can determine where people go within a scene, which parts are most visited and desired routes through a scene.

- Virtual sensors which can be used to trigger lighting, video displays or background features.
- Some systems can also provide analysis of people passing through by age or gender.

7.2 Automated Number plate recognition (ANPR)

Automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR) is a technology that uses optical character recognition on images to read vehicle registration plates to create vehicle location data. ANPR can be used to store the images captured by the cameras as well as the text from the plate, with some configurable to store a photograph of the driver. Systems commonly use infrared lighting to allow the camera to record images at any time of day or night. It is widely used in law enforcement, but can also be used in a wide range of other situations such as:

- Parking enforcement
- Car park charging
- Control of barriers of gates
- Tracking of vehicles
- Control and enforcement of one way systems

7.3 Facial Recognition Technology

Facial recognition technology, can be used to match faces of individuals within a cameras field of view against known individuals within a database and create an alert for verification and action. This is a relatively new technology and one which can be controversial with privacy campaigners. This technology is not normally a standard feature of CCTV monitoring software but can be overlaid as an addition.

7.4 Body worn video (BWV)

Body worn video has been in use for a few years now and has been widely adopted for use by Police, Border Force, paramedics, security guards and others in customer facing roles where there is potential for conflict or to provide specialist remote support. The original camera systems were able to record video and audio for download later. More recent systems are able to use Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or GPS to live stream audio and video. They also include GPS trackers as an additional safety feature.

Many VMS systems now include the capability to incorporate body worn video into their control and monitoring capabilities. This offers public space monitoring two areas of opportunity.

The first is where security staff are deployed at entrances to entertainment venues, or patrolling public areas. In these situations audio and video recordings can be obtained of interactions with the public. This can be particularly important where security staff interact with members of the public who may be behaving aggressively or where an incident occurs,

as a source of video/audio evidence. They can also provide reassurance to members of the public in similar situations.

The second area of opportunity is where council staff are carrying out their duties as lone workers either on fixed sites or when attending remote sites. In these cases, the BWV can provide reassurance to lone workers and allow control room operators to track and monitor them as they carry out their duties.

8 Cost Estimates

The following are offered as a guide only. They are based upon mid market equipment supplied and installed by qualified installers. Exact costs will be dependent on the quality of equipment selected and the nature of the supplier.

Option	Work	Estimate
Option 1	Continue with existing separate systems and replace existing PTZ cameras with two fixed 4MP camera at each location.	£2k - £2.5k per position
Option 2	Continue with existing separate systems and replace existing PTZ cameras with a three/four sensor multi sensor camera at each location.	£3k - £4k per position
Option 3	Amalgamate monitoring and review at Town Hall	Either option 1 or 2 above plus £2k - £4k
Option 4	Upgrade two town centre PTZ cameras and reconfigure for remote active monitoring	£10k - £12k plus revenue cost

9 Camera schedule

9.1 Camera 1



Location	Marketplace
Communication path	Cable direct to CCTV monitoring position in Town Hall
Description	PTZ dome camera
Recorder	Dallmier system
Observations	Column shared with fixed cameras connected to Hikvision system

9.2 Camera 2



Location	Junction of High Street, Bank Street and Lowbourne
Communication path	Wireless to column opposite and then to Town Hall
Description	PTZ dome camera
Recorder	Dallmeier system
Observations	

9.3 Relay point



Location	Junction of High Street, Bank Street and Lowbourne
Communication path	Wireless from camera 2 opposite on to Town Hall
Description	PTZ dome camera
Recorder	Dallmeier system
Observations	

9.4 Cameras 3, 4, 5



Location	Marketplace
Communication path	Cable direct to CCTV monitoring position in Town Hall
Description	Fixed IP cameras
Recorder	Dallmier system
Observations	Column shared with PTZ camera

9.5 King George V Park PTZ camera



Location	King George V Park carpark/toilets
Communication path	Wireless to Pavilion
Description	PTZ dome camera on dedicated column
Recorder	Pavilion Hikvision system
Observations	Toilet block cameras connected to switch and also transmitted to Pavilion

10 Biometrics and Surveillance camera commissioner letter 2022



OFFICE OF THE BIOMETRICS
AND SURVEILLANCE
CAMERA COMMISSIONER

Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP

Copied to: John Edwards, Information Commissioner
Silkie Carlo, Director, Big Brother Watch
Rt Hon Baroness Williams, Minister of State, Home Office

10 June 2022

Dear Sir Iain

Risks to UK from Chinese State-Controlled Surveillance

I write further to the event at which we both spoke on the above subject earlier this week.

I would begin by endorsing your characterisation of the breadth and depth of the risks, their provenance and, most importantly perhaps, the urgency they now call for. The key question, as we on the panel agreed, remains what is to be done about them.

For my part, my correspondence with the relevant companies - and also with government departments - on this matter is all in the public domain but has yet to produce any discernible action. While the arguments deployed in this debate embrace a wide spectrum of issues, from my perspective as Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner the matter can be simplified to one of trust. The use of biometric surveillance by the state is a matter of increasing sensitivity and significant public concern - not just here but globally. As almost all of the technological capability for biometric surveillance is privately owned, the only way we will as a nation be able to harness the many legitimate uses of that technology in the future is in trusted partnership with trusted private sector partners.

In short, the people we trust - the police, fire and rescue, local authorities and the government itself - must be able to trust their technology partners, both in terms of security and of our shared ethical and professional values. And the publicly available evidence tells me that some of these companies - notably Hikvision and Dahua - simply cannot be trusted, partly because of concerns about the role they and their technology are believed to have played in perpetuating the appalling treatment of Uyghur Muslims as set out in the report of the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee last year (and recognised in the government's formal response), but also because of those companies' absolute refusal to engage with even the most cursory level of public accountability in response to those concerns.

The report by Big Brother Watch has corroborated what the surveillance community has known for some time: that almost every aspect of our lives is now under surveillance using advanced systems designed by, and purchased from, companies under the control of other governments, governments to whom those companies have data sharing

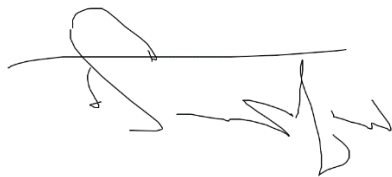
obligations within their own domestic legal framework. The proliferation of these systems means we have a public surveillance infrastructure built on 'digital asbestos' requiring both considerable caution when handling the products installed by a previous generation and, as a priority, a moratorium on any further installation until we fully understand the risks we have created.

I have been assured by ministers that these issues will be addressed in the Public Procurement Bill currently before Parliament and it is my sincere hope that any subsequent legislation will be sufficiently comprehensive, not just to address the letting of new public surveillance contracts, but also to reinforce the fidelity of our country's critical surveillance infrastructure in its entirety.

I will shortly be conducting a survey across police and local authorities to identify how many are relying on these surveillance systems but this will only inform a small part of the picture; what is ultimately needed is a full inventory across our critical national infrastructure.

To my mind this is not about interfering in another country's domestic affairs; this is about reinforcing the legitimate expectations in ours.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fraser Sampson', written over a horizontal line.

Professor Fraser Sampson
Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner

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PROTECTIVE SECURITY GUIDANCE

State Threats for Local Councils

State threats is a term used to describe overt or covert action orchestrated by foreign governments which falls short of general armed conflict between states but nevertheless undermines or threatens the safety and interests of the UK, including: the integrity of its democracy, its public safety, its military advantage and its reputation or economic prosperity.

State threats are a real and evolving risk to the UK, which manifest in a number of different forms. We know state actors have the intent and capability to interfere in our democracy, including local government, to achieve their aims. States who engage in hostile activity in or against the UK are becoming increasingly assertive in how they advance their own objectives and undermine the safety and interests of the UK. They want to access information, and we know the scale of their approaches is vast. They are persistent and patient, using conferences, networking, and social events on and offline to build contacts.

Local councils are increasingly developing overseas links, through foreign investment, through their supply chains and through growing numbers of international students and foreign ownership of assets in their areas. Whilst it is critical that local councils are able to retain strong diplomatic, economic, and cultural links around the world – state threats are something that all councils need to be aware of.

This guidance is produced by the National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and is aimed at senior officers and leaders in local councils to raise awareness of what state actors are targeting, their methods of attack and to signpost wider guidance available. Raising awareness of these risks and taking sensible measures to mitigate against them should be seen as part of councils' wider approach to building a good [security culture](#), which is the set of values, shared by everyone in an organisation, which determine how people are expected to think about and approach security.

What are state actors targeting?

Intelligence gathering by state actors is wide ranging and is motivated by a range of requirements for information in both local and national government and industry:

Government information

A clear priority for state actors is to gain access to sensitive information at all levels of government, including local government. They aim to target information at all classifications from a range of government departments. As council officers and leaders, you are in high profile roles and have access to information, networks, and communications. We are aware thresholds in intelligence collecting are low and state actors see 'inside' knowledge as extremely valuable.

Commercial data

Commercial data can include business processes, corporate strategies and negotiating positions. This can provide foreign businesses and government entities with significant advantages over their interactions with UK counterparts.

Human resource data can also be used by state actors as an attack vector, targeting employees with specific roles for recruitment. Individuals' information being available can render them vulnerable to blackmail, harassment, or coercion.

Dissidents and diaspora communities

State actors may target dissidents and diaspora communities based in the UK for their own domestic political reasons. The lengths a state might go to, and the methodologies used will vary, but activity can have an adverse impact on individuals and communities. This could include harassment of perceived critics who are active on social or mainstream media, surveillance, intimidation, or targeted disinformation campaigns regarding dissidents; or the organisation of state-sponsored counter-protests. At the less common end of the spectrum, this could manifest as physical threats to people, such as assault, coerced returns, and assassination. Diaspora communities of some state actors may also be targets of foreign interference. Activities against these communities may seek to intimidate and or impede freedom of thought.

Intellectual property (IP)

State actors may look to steal IP which then allows a firm in their home state to replicate a product without associated research and development expenses.

What methods could state actors use to target local councils?

There are several methods that state actors could use to gather intelligence or influence decision makers to benefit their interests:

Human intelligence

Used to describe the collection of information from human sources, a human intelligence source may provide access to sensitive information. Those targeted could be staff, former staff, contractors, or anyone using your site. They all have the potential to be an insider threat.

Cyber attacks

State actors may use computer networks to gain access to confidential information. The most capable actors have large scale dedicated cyber teams, and there are also techniques widely available at minimal cost to carry out a broad range of cyber-attacks. Attribution can be difficult, so such attacks provide easy cover for state actor cyber operations.

Technical attack

This could mean targeting hotel and meeting rooms, baggage, and electronic devices by technical means used by officers and councillors during travel. It could also include entry into council properties to gain physical access to documents. The highest risk is when you're overseas, but if you're hosting delegations or visits that's also an opportunity for state actors to access sites and people.

Supply chains

Most local councils use suppliers to deliver products, systems, and services. Increasingly suppliers are securing access to their client's information and assets and often that access is

unmonitored. For example, cloud providers may keep huge amounts of client's data or network service providers may provide data storage overseas.

Interference

Foreign interference comprises activity conducted on behalf of a foreign state that undermines UK interests through actions which are either corruptive, deceptive, coercive, or criminal. Interference methods may include cultivating people at a local level to achieve their aims, known as seeding.

How can you help mitigate risks to local councils in vulnerable areas?

Protect the integrity of elections

State actors may try to intervene in the democratic processes of local councils, particularly through online activity. They could use misinformation to try to influence and disrupt both voter behaviour and the running of elections. The Local Government Association has published [resources on how councils can respond to extremism and misinformation](#) in their areas, as well as [tools to support councils](#) and [councillors in their online communications](#).

The National Protective Security Authority (NPSA) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have published [guidance on protecting the integrity of local elections from cyber and other attacks](#). The guidance explores distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks which can make important websites unavailable at key points during an election and provides advice on how cyber security measures and routine audits of electoral processes can prevent most attacks from succeeding. It also emphasises the importance of individuals involved in electoral processes being discrete about their role, particularly on social media, and being vigilant about those around them, including reporting any unusual behaviours.

Secure supply chain vulnerabilities

A vulnerable supply chain in a local council can cause damage and disruption. All external services are vulnerable to malicious behaviour, which can put end users' security at risk. State actors may look to obtain commercially sensitive material and IP through participation in joint ventures or inserting themselves into the supply chain. [NPSA's Protected Procurement toolkit](#) provides guidance on embedding security throughout the procurement lifecycle to protect organisations from supply chain attacks.

The LGA offers a free e-learning [course on cyber resilience](#) in local government supply chains aimed at providing local government procurement officers and contract managers with an in depth introduction to cyber security, and NCSC has useful [guidance on mapping your supply chain](#).

Ensure good cyber security

Much of councils' online business includes systems that are used to store and access sensitive and confidential data. All councils will hold information or infrastructure of interest to malicious cyber attackers. The LGA offers a range of support on cyber security, including [guidance for councillors which sets out what councils can do to protect their systems from potential attacks](#). This includes:

- implementing firewalls and scanning services
- applying guidance from the [National Cyber Security Centre](#)

- training for council staff and elected members
- meeting compliance regimes to connect to government private networks, such as the [Public Services Network](#) and the [Health and Social Care Network](#)

The LGA also produces free monthly [cyber, digital and technology e-bulletins](#) containing sector highlights, security updates and upcoming events.

The increase in remote working since the pandemic has created further challenges, and NCSC has published [guidance on preparing organisations and staff for home working](#). NPSA has also produced [guidance documents which reference COVID-19 and security](#). Managing your digital footprint is also key, and you can find out more about this via [NPSA's digital footprint guidance](#).

Conduct overseas business safely and securely

As council representatives you may travel overseas as part of your roles. There are increased security threats when travelling abroad, as you will be in an unfamiliar environment where you have less control. The [Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office offers general advice on the safety and security of travel to foreign countries](#).

NPSA has published [advice on assessing the risks of doing business with overseas parties](#); and issues to be mindful of when travelling abroad can be found in [NPSA's trusted research on countries and conferences guide](#).

Councils should also be mindful of any risks associated with hosting international delegations by conducting due diligence on any visitors and their organisations with their security team. Further guidance on this can be sought from NPSA.

Be mindful of hostile approaches

Council representatives often have public-facing roles and will need to interact with a range of people as part of everyday business. Whilst most individuals that approach you and your staff will have legitimate reasons for doing so, others may have more covert intentions.

- Be vigilant – consider whether individuals who have initiated contact with you are showing a sustained level of interest in you, your work, or your colleagues. Ask yourself whether their interest feels anomalous to your normal council business.
- Check they are who they say they are – research any unknown individuals online and look to see if the organisation they represent exists. Check their social media profile is consistent with their stated role and the nature of their contact with you.
- Consider taking a colleague when going to meet someone new – intelligence officers can sometimes be deterred by the presence of a third party at a meeting. It would also make it harder for you to be blackmailed.
- Seek to withdraw from the conversation if you think you have been approached, and politely refuse to engage.
- Report any suspicions that you may have to your security team immediately; trust your instincts.

For further guidance, download [NPSA's think before you link](#) app and complete the app's online safety course.

Where to go to for advice?

Further advice and guidance can be accessed via the three national technical authorities, NPSA for [physical](#) and [personnel](#) security, [NCSC for cyber security](#), and [UK NACE for technical security](#).

Operating in conjunction with the three national technical authorities, you can also access guidance and advice from [Government Security Centres \(GSeCs\)](#), which deliver advice, consultancy services and products by domain experts.

Where you encounter incidents of coercion, intimidation, harassment or harming of dissidents by state actors, this should be reported to the police.

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MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

Proposed by: **Andrew Griffin**

Seconded by: **Jennie Westbrook**

Dated: **13 February 2024**

1. Purpose of the motion

To ensure that ALL Policies & Governance documents of the Council are reviewed and updated before 31 March 2024 so as to be current and valid prior to commencement of the next financial year.

2. Background (Including previous resolution/s made and date/s if applicable)

See details documented below.

3. Current Situation

See details documented below.

4. What financial implications are there?

None.

5. How does the motion link to Town Council policies and core values?

The motion proposes that currently extant policies of the Town Council are reviewed before re-adoption.

6. What risks are there? (Provide a risk assessment)

Failure to maintain policies and procedures in line with current best practice could result in an increased risk of incorrect action by staff or councillors.

7. What crime and disorder implications are there?

None

Melksham Town Council – Review of Policies & Governance documents

8. What environmental and biodiversity considerations are there?

None

9. What safeguarding concerns are there?

Melksham Town Council does not currently have a published Safeguarding Policy

10. Motion

That officers, councillors, and staff ensure that ALL Policies & Governance documents of the Council are reviewed and updated before 31 March 2024 so as to be current and valid prior to commencement of the next financial year.

11. Does the motion impact/ support any previous decisions of council?

Yes; this Motion involves the review, update and readoption of existing policies.

12. Confirmation that the item under consideration has not been discussed by Council within the preceding six months. If it has, has there been a material change and what is this?

Confirmed.

13. Please summarise any specific recommendations you have in relation to next steps

See details documented below.

Office Use:

Date of receipt by Proper Officer:

Date of proposed council meeting for motion

Date/s of relevant resolutions: (record full resolution/s here)

Motion accepted by Proper Officer:

Motion rejected by Proper Officer:

Reasons for rejection:

On the council's website page (<https://www.melksham-tc.gov.uk/about-melksham-town-council/data-transparency>) is a section titled;

Policies & Governance documents

Copies of all council policy documents

Below this are listed 29 Policies and Procedures documents with hyperlinks to the relevant files in pdf format, as listed in the following table (as at 10 February 2024):

No.	Title	Last Update	TBR Date
1	Acceptable use of email tablets and internet for councillors policy.pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
2	Audio Recording, Filming and Photography Policy.pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
3	Code of Conduct 2021.pdf		No
4	Communication Policy.pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
5	Complaints Policy.pdf	28/06/2021	Jun-23
6	Data Privacy Impact Assessment.pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
7	Data Protection Policy.pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
8	Data Security Incident Policy.pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
9	Documentation Retention Policy.pdf	28/06/2021	Jun-23
10	Equality and Diversity Policy.pdf	28/06/2021	Jun-23
11	Financial Regulations 2023.pdf	22/05/2023	No
12	Flag flying policy.pdf	28/06/2021	Jun-23
13	Investment strategy policy.pdf	24/01/2022	No
14	Lone Worker Policy.pdf	28/06/2021	Jun-23
15	Memorial-Bench-and-donations-policy.pdf	19/04/2022	Apr-24
16	Mobile Phone Policy.pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
17	No Fly Posting Policy.pdf	04/04/2022	Apr-24
18	Pre Application Policy for Major Developments (1).pdf	22/03/2021	Apr-23
19	Privacy Notice .pdf	Mar-22	No
20	Procurement Policy Clean Policy.pdf	17/01/2022	May-23
21	Publication scheme Policy.pdf	04/04/2022	Apr-24
22	Recording of Meetings Policy .pdf	04/04/2022	Apr-24
23	Reserves Policy.pdf	04/04/2022	Mar-23
24	Roundabout Policy and application form.pdf	04/04/2022	Apr-24
25	Scheme-of-Delegation Policy.pdf	23/03/2020	Mar-23
26	Standing Orders 2023 approved 22.05.23.pdf	22/05/2023	No
27	Terms of Reference 2023 Melksham.pdf		No
28	Training and Development Policy.pdf	28/06/2021	Jun-23
29	Vexatious Complaints Policy.pdf	28/06/2021	Jun-23

I have undertaken a review of each of these 29 documents, and found that 6 do not include a “To Be Reviewed” date, and 18 have a “To Be Reviewed Date” which was passed at least 8½ months ago.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Reading each of the policy documents revealed a few minor typographical or grammatical errors that would benefit from correction, but not many items that might require fundamental revision, except the following recommendations:

1. **Data Protection Policy;** should include a requirement that a robust data backup/recovery process is in place for all Town Council digital data.
2. **Mobile Phone Policy;** should include specific reference to it being illegal to hold and use a phone while driving, except in very limited emergency situations. There should also be confirmation that under no circumstances will the Town Council accept any liability or obligations arising from a breach of the law by an individual.
3. **Safeguarding** Melksham Town Council currently has no publicly published policy on Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults. An appropriate policy document should be formulated and adopted as soon as possible. If required, guidance can be obtained from LGA, NSPCC, Ofsted, or other organisations.
4. Several instances were noted where replacement of the words “may” and “should” by “shall” or “must” would provide clearer and more forceful guidance or instruction less open to misinterpretation.

Andrew Griffin

10 February 2024

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

Proposed by: **Andrew Griffin**

Seconded by: **Jennie Westbrook**

Dated: **13 February 2024**

1. Purpose of the motion

To formally require that the Town Clerk or other Officers and staff of Melksham Town Council provide and publish all information that is required by law.

2. Background (Including previous resolution/s made and date/s if applicable)

See details documented below.

3. Current Situation

See details documented below.

4. What financial implications are there?

None.

5. How does the motion link to Town Council policies and core values?

The motion proposes that currently extant policies of the Town Council are reviewed before re-adoption.

6. What risks are there? (Provide a risk assessment)

Continued failure to comply with legislated disclosure and publication requirements could result in sanctions or penalties being imposed on the Town Council, Officers, or Councillors.

7. What crime and disorder implications are there?

See 6 above.

8. What environmental and biodiversity considerations are there?

None

9. What safeguarding concerns are there?

None

10. Motion

That the Town Clerk or other Officers, and Councillors, provide and publish all information that Melksham Town Council is required to by law.

11. Does the motion impact/ support any previous decisions of council?

No.

12. Confirmation that the item under consideration has not been discussed by Council within the preceding six months. If it has, has there been a material change and what is this?

Confirmed.

13. Please summarise any specific recommendations you have in relation to next steps

See details documented below.

Office Use:

Date of receipt by Proper Officer:

Date of proposed council meeting for motion

Date/s of relevant resolutions: (record full resolution/s here)

Motion accepted by Proper Officer:

Motion rejected by Proper Officer:

Reasons for rejection:

For the purposes of relevant legislation, Melksham Town Council is classified as a Category 2 authority, as its annual gross income or expenditure does not exceed £6.5 million. Relevant legislation and regulations that are applicable to Melksham Town Council relating to the periodic publication and reporting of financial transactions and other matters, and with which it must comply includes:

- Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
- The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (Issued by Department for Communities and Local Government)

Part 2 of LGTC 2015 sets out the information that local authorities are required to publish, and Part 3 sets out information that is recommended for publication. The results of a review of information published on Melksham Town Council's website at the beginning of February 2024 are set out in the table below. Information was obtained from the webpage <https://www.melksham-tc.gov.uk/about-melksham-town-council/data-transparency> titled "Melksham Town Council Finance & Policies".

2023/24

Information Title	Detail	Freq	2022/ 23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Expenditure exceeding £500	Date/Dept/Beneficiary/Purpose / Amount etc	Q	I	N	N	N	
Government Procurement Card transactions	Exp > £500; Date/Dept/ Beneficiary/Purpose/Amount etc	Q	N	N	N	N	
Procurement information	Contracts etc > £5000 Description/Dates/Dept/Supplier/ Amount etc	Q	N	N	N	N	
Local authority land	UPRN/Address/Holding basis etc	A	N				
Social housing asset value	Numbers/Value etc	A	N				
Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations	Date/Period/Dept/Beneficiary/ Purpose/Amount etc	A	N				
Organisation chart	Grade/Title etc inc salary bands	A	N				
Trade union facility time	Representative FTEs/ Names/Spending	A	N				
Parking account	I&E Use of Surplus	A	N				
Parking spaces	Number On/Off street	A	N				
Senior salaries	Number £50k+ & details	A	N				
Constitution	Publish on website	A	N				
Pay multiple	Highest paid / Median	A	N				
Fraud	Number of occasions etc	A	N				
Waste contracts	Details when first contracted	1	N				

Key:

Frequency of Publication: Q – Quarterly, A – Annually, 1 – Once

Results: I – Incomplete, N – Not Published, Blank – Not yet due

Further observations

On the same webpage, the section headed “Melksham Town Council Finances” includes a sentence; “In accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014, the Town Council publishes . . .”. However, LGTC 2014 was withdrawn on 8 April 2015 and superseded by the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, which remains in force and applicable to Melksham Town Council.

Though expenditure data for Unity and Lloyds is provided in monthly PDF files for 2022/23, none of the information that was required to be published annually in respect of the year ended 31 March 2023 or previous years is available. No information at all has been published in respect of transactions for the current financial year ending 31 March 2024.

Where no information has been published, it is possible that for one or two categories (e.g. Social housing, Trade Union time) there are no transactions or other information to be reported in respect of that item. If that is the case, to avoid uncertainty for readers, and unnecessary questions to the Town Clerk, a statement to that effect should be published.

However, there are clearly substantial failures to publish any of the required information relating to:

- Procurement information
- Local authority land
- Grants
- Organisation chart
- Parking spaces
- Senior salaries
- Constitution
- Pay multiple

For reference, the full text of Annex A to LGTC 2015 which sets out both the information which must be published, and that which is additionally recommended, is provided in a separate document.

Conclusion and recommendations

As a consequence of the above noted omissions, Melksham Town Council is prima facie in breach of its obligations to publish information required by the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. It is unclear what sanctions, if any, the council may be liable to as a consequence of these failings. However, it is failing in its obligations to residents in not publishing information which is required by relevant legislation.

The Council should immediately resolve to require that all of the required information is generated and published as soon as possible, and thereafter maintained as required periodically by the LGTC 2015. Reasonable targets for publication are:

By 31 March 2024;

- All annually required information in respect of the years ended 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2022
- All quarterly required information up to 31 December 2023

By 30 April 2024;

- All annually required information in respect of the year ended 31 March 2024
- All quarterly required information up to 31 March 2024

Andrew Griffin, 12 February 2024

Annex A: Table summarising all information to be published

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
Expenditure exceeding £500	<p>Quarterly publication</p> <p>Publish details of each individual item of expenditure that exceeds £500, including items of expenditure, consistent with Local Government Association guidance, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual invoices • grant payments • expense payments • payments for goods and services • grants • grant in aid • rent • credit notes over £500 • transactions with other public bodies. <p>For each individual item of expenditure the following information must be published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date the expenditure was incurred • local authority department which incurred the expenditure • beneficiary • summary of the purpose of the expenditure • amount • Value Added Tax that cannot be recovered • merchant category (eg. computers, software etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish information on a monthly instead of quarterly basis, or ideally, as soon as it becomes available and therefore known to the authority (commonly known as 'real-time' publication). • Publish details of all transactions that exceed £250 instead of £500. For each transaction the details that should be published remain as set out in paragraph 29. • publish the total amount spent on remuneration over the period being reported on. • classify purpose of expenditure using the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Service Reporting Code of Practice to enable comparability between local authorities.

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
Government Procurement Card transactions	<p>Quarterly publication</p> <p>Publish details of every transaction on a Government Procurement Card. For each transaction, the following details must be published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date of the transaction • local authority department which incurred the expenditure • beneficiary • amount • Value Added Tax that cannot be recovered • summary of the purpose of the expenditure • merchant category (eg. computers, software etc). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish all transactions on all corporate credit cards, charge cards and procurements, including those that are not a Government Procurement Card. For each transaction the details that should be published remain as set out in paragraph 30.
Procurement information	<p>Quarterly publication</p> <p>Publish details of every invitation to tender for contracts to provide goods and/or services with a value that exceeds £5,000. For each invitation, the following details must be published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference number • title • description of the goods and/or services sought • start, end and review dates • local authority department responsible. <p>Quarterly publication</p> <p>Publish details of any contract, commissioned activity, purchase order, framework agreement and any other legally enforceable agreement with a value that exceeds £5,000. For each contract, the following details must be published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reference number • title of agreement • local authority department responsible 	<p>Place on Contracts Finder, as well as any other local portal, every invitation to tender or invitation to quote for contracts to provide goods and/or services with a value that exceeds £10,000.</p> <p>Publish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information on a monthly instead of quarterly basis, or ideally, as soon as it is generated and therefore becomes available (commonly known as ‘real-time’ publication) • every invitation to tender for contracts to provide goods and/or services with a value that exceeds £500 instead of £5,000 • details of invitations to quote where there has not been a formal invitation to tender • all contracts in their entirety where the value of the contract exceeds £5,000

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of the goods and/or services being provided • supplier name and details • sum to be paid over the length of the contract or the estimated annual spending or budget for the contract • Value Added Tax that cannot be recovered • start, end and review dates • whether or not the contract was the result of an invitation to quote or a published invitation to tender • whether or not the supplier is a small or medium sized enterprise and/or a voluntary or community sector organisation and where it is, provide the relevant registration number. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • company registration number at Companies House • details of invitations to tender or invitations to quote that are likely to be issued in the next twelve months • details of the geographical (eg. by ward) coverage of contracts entered into by the local authority • details of performance against contractual key performance indicators • information disaggregated by voluntary and community sector category (eg. whether it is registered with Companies House, charity or charitable incorporated organisation, community interest company, industrial and provident society, housing association, etc).
Local authority land	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish details of all land and building assets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all service and office properties occupied or controlled by user bodies, both freehold and leasehold • any properties occupied or run under Private Finance Initiative contracts • all other properties they own or use, for example, hostels, laboratories, investment properties and depots • garages unless rented as part of a housing tenancy agreement • surplus, sublet or vacant properties • undeveloped land • serviced or temporary offices where contractual or actual occupation exceeds three months • all future commitments, for example under an agreement for lease, from when the contractual commitment is made. 	<p>Publish information on a monthly instead of annual basis, or ideally, as soon as it becomes available and therefore known to the authority (commonly known as 'real-time' publication). It is also recommended that local authorities should publish all the information possible on Electronic Property Information Mapping Service.</p> <p>Publish the following additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the size of the asset measured in Gross Internal Area (m²) for buildings or hectares for land, in accordance with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Code of Measuring Practice. The Gross Internal Area is the area of a building measured to the internal face of the perimeter walls at

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
	<p>However, information about the following land and building assets are to be excluded from publication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rent free properties provided by traders (such as information booths in public places or ports) • operational railways and canals • operational public highways (but any adjoining land not subject to public rights should be included) • assets of national security • information deemed inappropriate for public access as a result of data protection and/or disclosure controls (eg. such as refuge houses). <p>Information on social housing is also excluded from this specific dataset.</p> <p>For each land or building asset, the following information must be published together in one place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique Property Reference Number • Unique asset identity - the local reference identifier used by the local body, sometimes known as local name or building block. There should be one entry per asset or user/owner (eg. on one site there could be several buildings or in one building there could be several users, floors/rooms etc – where this is the case, each of these will have a separate asset identity). This must include the original reference number from the data source plus authority code • name of the building/land or both • street number or numbers - any sets of 2 or more numbers should be separated with the '-' symbol (eg. 10-15 London Road) • street name – this is the postal road address • post town 	<p>each floor level. Local authorities using Net Internal Area (m²) should convert measurements to Gross Internal Area using appropriate conversion factors and state the conversion factor used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the services offered from the asset, using the services listed in the Effective Services Delivery government service function list http://doc.esd.org.uk/FunctionList/1.00.html (listing up to five main services) • the reason for holding asset such as, it is occupied by the local authority or it is providing a service in its behalf, it is an investment property, it supports economic development (eg. provision of small businesses or incubator space), it is surplus to the authority's requirements, it is awaiting development, it is under construction, it provides infrastructure or it is a community asset • whether or not the asset is either one which is an asset in the authority's ownership that is listed under Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011 (assets of community value) and/or an asset where the authority is actively seeking transfer to the community • total building operation (revenue) costs as defined in the corporate value for money indicators for public services

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Kingdom postcode • map reference – local authorities may use either Ordnance Survey or ISO6709 systems to identify the location of an asset, but must make clear which is being used. Where an Ordnance Survey mapping system is used (the grid system) then assets will be identified using Eastings before Northings. Where geocoding in accordance with ISO 6709 is being used to identify the centre point of the asset location then that reference must indicate its ISO coordinates • whether the local authority owns the freehold or a lease for the asset and for whichever category applies, the local authority must list all the characteristics that apply from the options given below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>for freehold assets:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ occupied by the local authority ○ ground leasehold ○ leasehold ○ licence ○ vacant (for vacant properties, local authorities should not publish the full address details and should only publish the first part of the postcode) <i>for leasehold assets:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ occupied by the local authority ○ ground leasehold ○ sub leasehold ○ licence <i>for other assets:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ free text description eg. rights of way, access etc. • whether or not the asset is land only (without permanent buildings) or it is land with a permanent building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • required maintenance - the cost to bring the property from its present state up to the state reasonably required by the authority to deliver the service and/or to meet statutory or contract obligations and maintain it at that standard. This should exclude improvement projects but include works necessary to comply with new legislation (eg. asbestos and legionella) • functional suitability rating using the scale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ good – performing well and operating efficiently (supports the needs of staff and the delivery of services) ○ satisfactory – performing well but with minor problems (generally supports the needs of staff and the delivery of services) ○ poor – showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (impedes the performance of staff and/or the delivery of services) ○ unsuitable – does not support or actually impedes the delivery of services • energy performance rating as stated on the Display Energy Certificate under the Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
Social housing asset value	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish details on the value of social housing assets within local authorities' Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p>Information to be published using the specified value bands and postal sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total number of homes • the aggregate value and mean value of the dwellings for both existing use value (social housing) and market value, and • percentage of homes that are vacant and that are tenanted. <p>Information to be published at a general level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an explanation of the difference between the tenanted sale value of homes within the Housing Revenue Account and their market sale value, and • an assurance that the publication of this information is not intended to suggest that tenancies should end to realise the market value of properties. <p>Other residential tenanted properties that the authority may hold within their General Fund are excluded from this specific dataset, as is information on other building assets or land that local authorities hold within their Housing Revenue Account.</p>	
Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish details of all grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. This can be achieved by either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tagging and hence specifically identifying transactions which relate to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations within published data on expenditure over £500 or published procurement information, or • by publishing a separate list or register. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish information on a monthly instead of annual basis where payments are made more frequently than a single annual payment, or ideally, as soon as the data becomes available and therefore known to the authority (commonly known as 'real-time' publication).

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
	<p>For each identified grant, the following information must be published as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • date the grant was awarded • time period for which the grant has been given • local authority department which awarded the grant • beneficiary • beneficiary's registration number • summary of the purpose of the grant • amount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information disaggregated by voluntary and community sector category (eg. whether it is registered with Companies House, charity or charitable incorporated organisation, community interest company, industrial and provident society, housing association etc).
Organisation chart	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish an organisation chart covering staff in the top three levels of the organisation. The following information must be included for each member of staff included in the chart:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • grade • job title • local authority department and team • whether permanent or temporary staff • contact details • salary in £5,000 brackets, consistent with the details published for Senior Salaries • salary ceiling (the maximum salary for the grade). 	<p>Local authorities should publish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • charts including all employees in the local authority whose salary exceeds £50,000 • the salary band for each employee included in the chart(s) • information about current vacant posts, or signpost vacancies that are going to be advertised in the future.
Trade union facility time	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total number (absolute number and full time equivalent) of staff who are union representatives (including general, learning and health and safety representatives) • total number (absolute number and full time equivalent) of union representatives who devote at least 50 per cent of their time to union duties • names of all trade unions represented in the local authority 	

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a basic estimate of spending on unions (calculated as the number of full time equivalent days spent on union duties multiplied by the average salary), and • a basic estimate of spending on unions as a percentage of the total pay bill (calculated as the number of full time equivalent days spent on union duties multiplied by the average salary divided by the total pay bill). 	
Parking account	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish on their website, or place a link on their website to this data published elsewhere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a breakdown of income and expenditure on the authority's parking account. The breakdown of income must include details of revenue collected from on-street parking, off-street parking and Penalty Charge Notices • a breakdown of how the authority has spent a surplus on its parking account. 	
Parking spaces	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish the number of marked out controlled on and off-street parking spaces within their area, or an estimate of the number of spaces where controlled parking space is not marked out in individual parking bays or spaces.</p>	<p>Local authorities should publish the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • free parking spaces available in the local authority's area and which are provided directly by the local authority, and • parking spaces where charges apply that are available in the local authority's area and which are provided directly by the local authority. <p>Where parking space is not marked out in individual parking bays or spaces, local authorities should estimate the number of spaces available for the two categories.</p>

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
Senior salaries	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Local authorities must place a link on their website to the following data or must place the data itself on their website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of employees whose remuneration in that year was at least £50,000 in brackets of £5,000 details of remuneration and job title of certain senior employees whose salary is at least £50,000 employees whose salaries are £150,000 or more must also be identified by name. a list of responsibilities (for example, the services and functions they are responsible for, budget held and number of staff) and details of bonuses and 'benefits in kind', for all employees whose salary exceeds £50,000. 	
Constitution	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Local authorities must publish their Constitution on their website.</p>	
Pay multiple	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish the pay multiple on their website defined as the ratio between the highest taxable earnings for the given year (including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances and the cash value of any benefits-in-kind) and the median earnings figure of the whole of the authority's workforce. The measure must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cover all elements of remuneration that can be valued (eg. all taxable earnings for the given year, including base salary, variable pay, bonuses, allowances and the cash value of any benefits-in-kind) use the median earnings figure as the denominator, which should be that of all employees of the local authority on a fixed date each year, coinciding with reporting at the end of the financial year exclude changes in pension benefits, which due to their variety and complexity cannot be accurately included in a pay multiple disclosure. 	

Information title	Information which must be published	Information recommended for publication
Fraud	<p>Annual publication</p> <p>Publish the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of occasions they use powers under the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud (Power to Require Information) (England) Regulations 2014, or similar powers • total number (absolute and full time equivalent) of employees undertaking investigations and prosecutions of fraud • total number (absolute and full time equivalent) of professionally accredited counter fraud specialists • total amount spent by the authority on the investigation and prosecution of fraud • total number of fraud cases investigated. 	<p>Local authorities should publish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total number of cases of irregularity investigated • total number of occasions on which a) fraud and b) irregularity was identified • total monetary value of a) the fraud and b) the irregularity that was detected, and • total monetary value of a) the fraud and b) the irregularity that was recovered.
Waste contracts	<p>One-off publication</p> <p>Local authorities must publish details of their existing waste collection contracts, in line with the details contained in paragraphs 32 of the Code, at the point they first publish quarterly contract information under Part 2 of this Code.</p>	

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

Proposed by: **Andrew Griffin**

Seconded by: **Jennie Westbrook**

Dated: **13 February 2024**

1. Purpose of the motion

To introduce procedures to review the functionality of the Council's web-site and make necessary corrections.

2. Background (Including previous resolution/s made and date/s if applicable)

See details documented below.

3. Current Situation

See details documented below.

4. What financial implications are there?

None.

5. How does the motion link to Town Council policies and core values?

Links to the Council's Communications Policy.

6. What risks are there? (Provide a risk assessment)

No formal risks, but continued dissatisfaction by residents and other users of the website will negatively impact their perception of Melksham Town Council.

7. What crime and disorder implications are there?

None.

8. What environmental and biodiversity considerations are there?

None

9. What safeguarding concerns are there?

None

10. Motion

That the Town Council implements formal procedures to review and correct the functionality of the Council's web-site and make necessary corrections by 31 March 2024 and at least quarterly thereafter.

11. Does the motion impact/ support any previous decisions of council?

No.

12. Confirmation that the item under consideration has not been discussed by Council within the preceding six months. If it has, has there been a material change and what is this?

Confirmed.

13. Please summarise any specific recommendations you have in relation to next steps

See details documented below.

Office Use:

Date of receipt by Proper Officer:

Date of proposed council meeting for motion

Date/s of relevant resolutions: (record full resolution/s here)

Motion accepted by Proper Officer:

Motion rejected by Proper Officer:

Reasons for rejection:

Introduction

As a Melksham resident I viewed the Town Council's website at <https://www.melksham-tc.gov.uk/> on several occasions to seek local information. During my campaign to become a councillor through the later part of 2023 and early 2024 I referred to it more frequently, and more critically.

During the Public Participation section at the last Full Council Meeting held on 22 January 2024, and as minuted, a member of the public reported that she had observed issues with the website recently and had previously raised this matter about seven months ago but had seen no improvement.

The footer on each web-page indicates that the Website design is by Koodooweb, a trading style of Web & Digital Marketing Solutions Limited, based in Cirencester. The footer also includes "Copyright © 2021" without any attribution. It is not clear whether Koodoweb has any obligations for the maintenance of functionality and/or content, or if that is the responsibility of council staff (Communications Officers ?).

Review

My review of the website was mainly concerned with the functionality and appearance of the site, and not with the actual content per se, though some remarks do relate to content. I have viewed the website using multiple devices and browsers:

- Windows 11 PC; Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge
- Apple MacBook; Safari
- Android Tablet; Google Chrome
- iPhone: Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge

However, not all checks were conducted with all device/browser combinations, and my primary use is by PC or MacBook.

General observations regarding website

- Several links or 'Buttons' appear not to function correctly using Google Chrome browser
- Several links seem to move in a circular way

Further observations on

Website Section	Item	Problem
Home page	Main central Graphics	PC & MacBook do not display correctly using Chrome, Edge, or Safari See screenshot below.
Home Page	Centre of main graphic (on PC or MacBook)	Links to: https://www.melksham-tc.gov.uk/local-news/parks-green-spaces-and-playgrounds-survey . Displays message "Message from Melksham Town Council about an exciting opportunity November 7, 2022"
Finance & Policies	Grants	No files found. Are there no files, or is the link incorrect:
Finance & Policies	Income and Expenditure	No files found. Are there no files, or is the link incorrect:

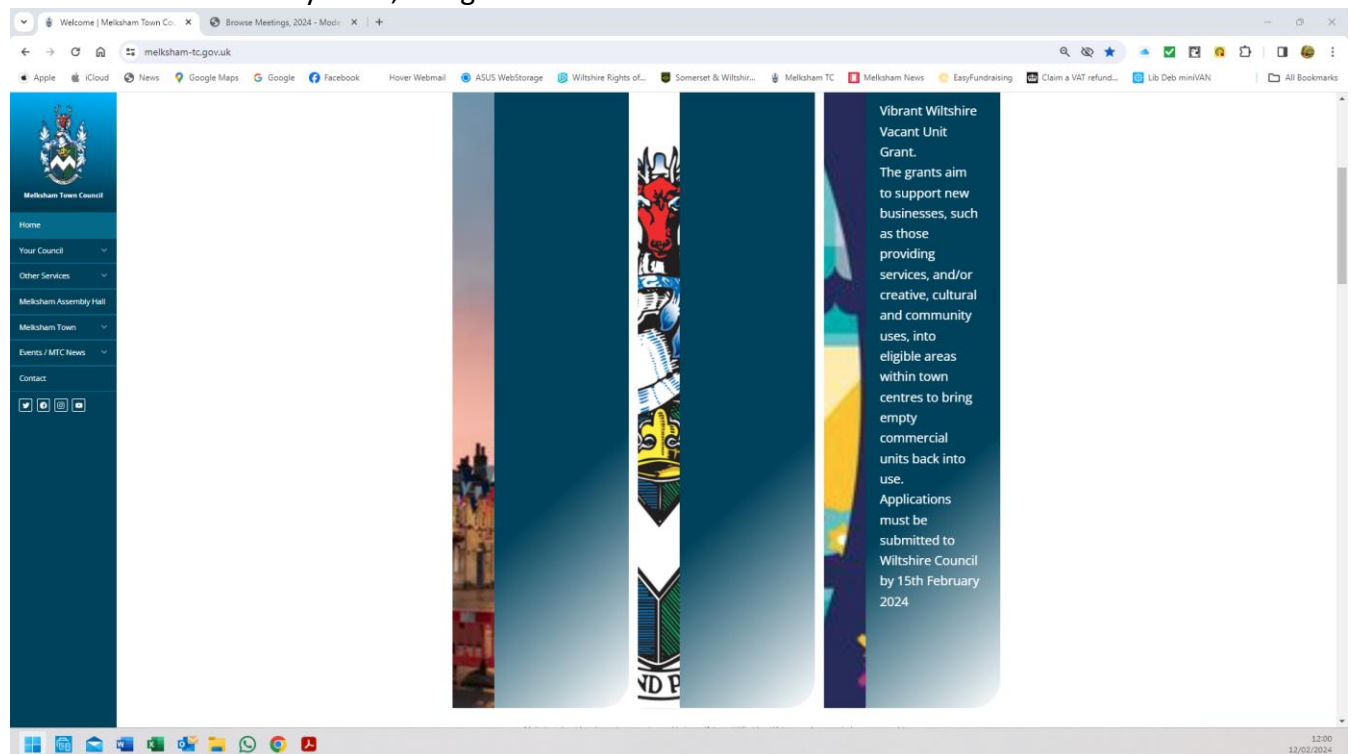
Conclusion and recommendations

Though functionality seems to be better using mobile devices than laptop or desktop computers, the small screen size and different appearance makes detailed analysis more difficult. With laptop or desktop computers however, there are clearly some problems with functionality that will adversely affect users experience and be detrimental to the reputation of Melksham Town Council.

Therefore, it is recommended that;

1. As soon as possible the entire web-page structure be reviewed in detail and systematically, and any “broken links” or other defects are corrected so that complete and proper functionality is available to all users regardless of platform.
2. Procedures are adopted to ensure that complete and proper functionality on all platforms is maintained in future, and that tests are undertaken periodically to confirm this.
3. the council’s Communications Policy and/or Publication Scheme Policy are reviewed and if necessary, amended to include the requirements to periodically ensure proper functionality of the website is maintained in future.
4. Fixed content (e.g. in page footers) is similarly reviewed and corrected periodically to ensure it remains up to date and valid.

Screenshot 12 February 2024; Google Chrome on Windows PC



Andrew Griffin, 12 February 2024

Community Governance Review - Consultation Briefing Note No. 24-03

Service: Legal and Governance
Date Prepared: 12 February 2024
Further enquiries to: cgr@wiltshire.gov.uk

Background

A Community Governance Review (CGR) is a process to provide opportunity to review and make changes to governance arrangements to town and parish councils. This is to ensure that they continue to be reflective of the identity and interest of local communities, and that they are as efficient and effective in their governance as possible.

This note is further to Briefing Note 23-27 announcing the commencement of a Community Governance Review for 2023/24.

Draft recommendations

Following analysis of all relevant information the Electoral Review Committee has formed draft recommendations for the areas listed above, which it will now consult upon.

It should be noted that most of the proposed changes relate to very minor proposals to correct apparent electoral boundary anomalies. In those cases, there may not have been previous engagement with the local parish councils prior to the consultation.

Parishes where recommendations for governance changes have been made:

- Mere and Zeals
- Trowbridge and North Bradley
- Salisbury (Dorset Rd/Cambridge Rd)
- Royal Wootton Bassett and Brinkworth
- Broad Town and Clyffe Pypard
- Chippenham (Ray Close)
- Trowbridge (Frampton Court)
- Calne and Calne Without (Low Lane)
- Westbury East (Millstream Cottages)
- Wilcot, Huish and Oare, and West Overton (Heath Cottage)
- Bradford on Avon (Kingston Road)
- Melksham (Bolwell Place)

- Calne (High Street)

A consultation on the proposed changes will take place from 12 February – 18 March 2024.

The full Draft Recommendation document and the online survey can be found at the council's webpage below:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-cgr>

Public meetings

The Committee will also hold a public meeting to receive representations in respect of the proposals relating to Mere and Zeals parishes. This note will be republished when the date has been arranged and provided to the relevant councils to publicise.

Reasonable numbers of hard copies of the consultation materials will be available upon request. The council will contact parishes through this briefing note. Letters will be sent to households in areas proposed to be transferred to another parish with details of the consultation.

Next steps

The Committee will analyse responses to the consultation and will then determine whether to confirm its final recommendations, to be considered at Full Council at an appropriate meeting in 2024. It may decide to amend its proposals and undertake further consultations.

Any changes to electoral arrangements for parishes, arising from the Review, would come into effect from the next scheduled ordinary parish council elections in May 2025. Any changes to the areas of parishes would have to be effective from the start of the financial year on 1 April 2025.

Due to the nature of some recommendations consent would be required from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England for some changes.