

# Public Document Pack

## Melksham Town Council

### Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 26th February 2024

#### PRESENT:

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

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk

#### 695/23 Public Participation

##### **Bruce Sanders**

Made statements and asked questions surrounding the Assembly Hall and Blue Pool. A transcript is attached.

The committee clerk advised that there was an Assembly Hall Working Group, comprising of all members of the council and there had been one meeting. There had been some interest from architects. On the calendar of meetings, the committee clerk said that no working group meetings were on the proposed calendar (*see also item 703/23 below*). Working Group meetings could be called as required.

The Deputy Mayor Councillor Price said he would speak to the Mayor about getting the matter moving.

##### **Adrienne Westbrook**

It had been resolved in 2022 to amend allotment agreements to allow surplus produce to be donated to charitable causes. The current agreement does not allow this. Could action be taken on this.

**Christina Connor**

What consultation took place on the relocation of signage for the 403 Cycle Path from the corner of Longford Road to the Green Space in Hornbeam Crescent where is now blocks the view from two properties.

Councillor Hubbard advised that he had visited the site and could see no good reason for the change. He has written to the area engineer for clarification.

**Joe McCann.**

How were Instrom chosen to produce the CCTV report? Head of Operations advised they were recommended to him and had been used by another local authority.

Are the Council aware if the police were involved in the review? Head of Operations confirmed they were not involved.

What is the CCTV report for and what was it to show? Head of Operations – Council requested the report and it was to make recommendations for future CCTV in Melksham.

Does the Council feel it is wise for officers to be producing a weekly internal newsletter? Councillor Price – this will no doubt be discussed under agenda item 11.

How does the council intend to publish the proposed public newsletter? Councillor price – this will be discussed under agenda item 11.

Has the Council explored alternatives to streaming meetings on Facebook? The committee clerk confirmed they had not.

Were there any plans to do so? Committee clerk – the council is required to provide a live stream, which it does via Zoom. Recordings are shared to Facebook the next day.

The Council looks like it will be spending between 5-10% of its budget on legal fees, HR fees and potential pay-outs to ex-staff. Do councillors think this is acceptable and what do they intend to do about it? The Deputy Mayor Councillor Price said it had happened and had to be dealt with but he would hope it would not happen again.

Is there a staffing plan? Councillor Price – there will be, but would not be appropriate to discuss at this time.

**Mike Saunders**

Requested councillors to speak up a little.

Apologies were received from the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, Councillor J Crundell and Councillor Forgacs.

**697/23     Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**698/23     Questions from Councillors**

Questions from Councillor Ellis.

Q1 - I note that the Melksham Town Council web site continues to have a poor front page experience. This was previously explained to be due to issues with what we can (and cannot) do with the current software, service providers and setting. I understand that this is a known problem and that we are looking to get it fixed.

A1 - Communication team have very limited editing rights to the website. We can't add text boxes or images on the front page, we have been in contact with Koodooweb our current website provider. For any changes to be made to the MTC website we require to purchase a FLEXSupport service, which start from £105.00 per hour. This will need authorisation from the Clerk or the Council, depending on any existing resolutions.

Q2 - Please can you let me and the public at this meeting and viewing online know what is being done to make the web site look professional, and when the public will see a site that is worthy of our Town Council. Please confirm that changes will be made in such a way that the site can be easily and efficiently updated on routine matters by our staff team in future without recourse being needed to external programmers of other consultants.

A2 – The Town Clerk, the Communications and Events Officer, Clive Merritt and Councillor Westbrook met with Mark Hockings from Designer Mark to discuss rebuilding MTC website to allow more editing rights to comms officers. Committee Clerk believes the Locum Clerk was writing a report. The Town Clerk is not at work and the locum has retired. Until the return of the Town Clerk, neither the committee clerk nor the Communications and Events Officer can take the matter further.

Councillor Ellis noted the motion of Councillor Griffin and asked if the deadline was achievable. The Committee Clerk felt that it was not and he had already discussed the matter with Councillor Griffin.

**699/23     Minutes**

Councillor Hubbard asked that item 684/23 be amended to read 'Councillor Hubbard said if we are appointing an Assembly Hall manager, then they can be part of the process'.

Subject to above, the minutes of 22 January 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Price.

**700/23 Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Price, referred to the resignation of Councillor Mortimer and thanked her for her work as a councillor and her continuing work in and for the community of Melksham.

**701/23 Police Report**

It was noted that Sergeant Rutter sent her apologies and she would attend in March. An email update from her was read out. There had been a spike in statistics for retail burglary. Five arrests had been made and charges were being taken to the CPS. Two people have been arrested and charged for the recent arson in the toilets. Two youths have been charged with arson at Forest Community Centre and were appearing in Court that day.

It is a small group causing the issues and attempts to work with them and their families had not been successful. They will be electronically tagged as a result of the most recent issues.

**702/23 Reports from Unitary Councillors**

Wiltshire Council held its budget meeting last week. The precept was set at the recommended level. Wiltshire Council Tax will go up by 4.99%. No changes were made to the previously publicized budget.

**703/23 Calendar of Meetings 2024/2025**

The calendar was discussed. The Deputy Mayor Councillor Price commented that there were a number of clashes with Melksham Without Parish Council and should the matter be delayed to allow discussion. It was generally felt that the calendar should be set so that Councillors, Officers and residents have dates to work from.

Councillor Ellis pointed out the calendar included Events Working Group meetings and this was contrary to the answer to Bruce Sanders in public participation. The Committee Clerk acknowledged this was the case.

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow Bruce Sanders to speak. Mr Sanders suggested that it might be possible to approve the calendar but flip meetings. It was explained why this would not work

Standing Orders were reinstated.

It was proposed by Councillor Oatley, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the Calendar of Meetings for 2024-2025.

#### **704/23 Biodiversity Policy**

Councillor Ellis spoke of the good work done by Environmental and Climate Working Group.

Councillor Alford arrived at 7:40pm.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to suspend standing order to allow Stephen and Richard of the Amenities Team to speak.

Stephen and Richard spoke of existing and continuing efforts to incorporate Biodiversity into the job.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

Councillor Oatley thanked Stephen and Richard for coming and said that it was good to see staff passionate and committed.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Aves and

**RESOLVED** to adopt the policy and action plan.

#### **705/23 CCTV Report**

The report was received. Members generally were disappointed with the report and that there were some inaccuracies. However, it was felt it provided a good basis to take further action. It was generally agreed that a monitored system was not required.

Councillor Cooke and Councillor Alford felt that council needed to be clearer and more specific with the brief when making resolutions.

Councillor Hubbard felt that KanConnections should be consulted, in a meeting with councillors, officers and possibly the police. There was a discussion on whether or not

this was appropriate, during which standing orders were suspended to allow Joe McCann to speak.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Price and

**RESOLVED** to speak to existing supplier, KanConnections, with a view to holding a single meeting involving the Councillor Hubbard, Hugh Davies, the Police (possibly Sergeant Rutter) and KanConnections, to confirm what is needed and bring a costed proposal back to council.

#### **706/23 Public Newsletter**

The draft Newsletter and the idea of a Newsletter generally was discussed. During the discussion Standing orders were suspended to allow Joe McCann and Mike Saunders to speak.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Aves and

**RESOLVED** to set up a Communications Working Group to work with the Communications and Events Officer and the Communications Officer to put together a Marketing and Advertising Plan to bring back to Full Council. Councillor Rabey, Councillor Hubbard and Councillor Westbrook to sit on the Working Group.

#### **707/23 Committees**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and

**RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Griffin to the Community Development Committee, the Economic Development and Planning Committee and the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee.

#### **708/23 Outside Bodies**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Aves to the Operational Flood Working Group.

#### **709/23 Councillor Griffin as a Signatory**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Griffin and Councillor Westbrook as signatories for Unity Bank.

**710/23 First Request of the Finance Officer**

It was noted that the resolution made on agenda item 13.1 dealt with this item.

**711/23 Second Request of the Finance Officer**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to allow the finance officer to transfer a monthly sum of upto £100000 from Lloyds to Unity.

**712/23 Motion on Policies and Governance**

Councillor Griffin spoke to his motion. Of 29 published policies, 18 were past the date for re-adoption. There was discussion on the proposed timescale, officer resources and the need for Town Clerk input. Councillor Hubbard expressed concern that there was no Safeguarding or Vulnerable Adult policies and that these needed to come back to the next full council meeting for adoption.

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to ensure that all policies and Governance documents of Melksham Town Council are reviewed and updated over the next twelve months, with the proviso that a Safeguarding Policy and a Vulnerable Adults policy be available for approval and adoption at the next full council meeting on 18 March 2024.

**713/23 Motion on Publication of Information**

Councillor Griffin spoke to his motion and there was discussion on training on use of the website. It was confirmed by officers that the issue was not uploading the information but identifying the information to upload. The question of the appointment of the locum financial officer was discussed.

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 the Town Clerk or other Officers and staff of Melksham Town Council provide and publish all information that is required by law, on the understanding that Kalpesh Patel is appointed locum RFO.

**714/23 Motion on MTC Website**

Councillor Griffin spoke to his motion. There was discussion on the defects of the website.

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin , seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to use training and website budgets to

- (i) buy in services from the supplier to fix the current problems
- (ii) train the Communications & Events Officer and the Communications Officer
- (iii) ask the supplier to grant local administrator rights or at least full editing rights to the Communications and Events Officer

**715/23 Community Governance Review - Consultation Briefing Note No. 24-03**

The Briefing Note was noted, as to the anomaly regard. A similar anomaly was noted on Coronation Road.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that officers would contact Wiltshire Council asking for the Coronation Road anomaly to be rectified.

**716/23 Asset Management and Amenities Committee**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Rabey, and

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Asset Management Committee meeting of 4 December 2023.

**717/23 Economic Development and Planning Committee**

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Stokes, and

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meetings of 5 December 2023 and 9 January 2023.

**718/23 Finance Administration and Performance Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor Westbrook, seconded by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price and

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Finance Administration and Performance Committee meeting of 20 November 2023.

**719/23 Staffing Committee**



It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Price, and

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Staffing Committee meetings of 4 December 2023 and 12 January 2024.

**720/23      Events Working Group**

The notes of the meeting of 2 November 2023 were received.

**721/23      Environment & Climate Working Group**

The notes of 5 December 2023 were received.

**722/23      Neighbourhood Plan**

Councillor Ellis gave members an update.

**723/23      Town and Parish Annual Report**

The report was noted.

Meeting Closed at: 9.25 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**

This page is intentionally left blank

Statement : Several months ago the council turned down the suggestions of the F o MAH stating that it was the councils role to determine the future of the Assembly Hall and Blue Pool and that although NO meetings had been held , and NO meetings had been scheduled ,that the council will move on this.

Question :Have any meetings been held , or are any meetings scheduled.

Statement: The Agenda proposes a set of dates for meetings this year:

Question : Where are the meetings to determine the Assembly Hall Blue Pool future. This potential multi million , once in a lifetime investment can not be dismissed as an agenda item of 20 minutes. There needs to be a series of dedicated meetings starting with a vision of how you see it being run in the future.

Statement: Wiltshire Council will be pressing for a decision one day soon and you do not want to rush your response.I do note ( January full council) that you tasked the Amenities Manager with drafting some suggestions ,but frankly I suggest he is overburdened with other responsibilities and can not surely be expected to give this the depth of time it needs ,since frankly , you have given him no clear guidance of your needs.

What you really achieved was to kick the can down the road a few months.

Statement: The Assembly Hall has lacked investment and vision for over 50 years, this is not a reflection of this council. However this council has shown with its successful development of the cafe in the Park , that it CAN work with business people to develop co invested business plans that deliver a quality service to the community.

I strongly recommend the council follow a similar path with the Assembly Hall .

Non of you have any idea how to run a successful night time economy businesses.

There seems a reluctance in this instance, to work with a successful businessperson ?

But a successful businessperson will ensure the place is full of people as much as possible ,because that's why they are in business.

if won't be over priced beers, because nobody would buy them ,

it won't be overpriced tickets because no one would buy them .

It will be professionally promoted events using latest media techniques because they want to succeed

It will be popular events ,again because they want to appeal to the most people , and that surely is what you want?

It can't be you spend £ millions of pounds and get no increase in footfall

Whatever it will be , it can't be " the same old same old ".

This page is intentionally left blank