

## Melksham Town Council

## Minutes of the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee meeting held on Monday 11th March 2024

**PRESENT:**

Councillor S Rabey (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor A Griffin  
Councillor J Hubbard  
Councillor J Westbrook

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillor P Aves, Councillor S Crundell and Councillor T Price

**OFFICERS:**

Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
Gloria Delves	Communications and Events Officer

## 86/23 Public Participation

**Adrienne Westbrook**

Thanked the council for putting Food & River Festival on the grants list and for upping the grant last year. Wrote to all councillors last year about electrics in KGV. The supply now available is insufficient for the Food & River Festival. A generator will have to be hired and run for 48 hours at a cost of £1500. Does the council see the park as a community venue? If so, should consider putting in another supply box. Head of operations said he would speak to Adrienne about the issues.

**Sue Mortimer**

JPEG is responsible for issuing proper practices about the governance and accounts of smaller authorities.

First question relates to Section 1 – Proper Practises Annual Governance Statement  
1.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts.

My first question is when and by which Councillors was the review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal controls last undertaken?

## Second question

Last year we were without accounting data for 3 to 4 months because of corrupt data in the Rialtas software. I feel this could have been avoided if the accounting software would have been regularly backed up.

My second question is can you let me know if back up are now being done after the accounting software has been used?

Councillor Rabey said that someone would come back with the answers.

**John Glover**

MTC budget is a matter for MTC Councillors but there are two joint projects with MWPC. The MTC adopted budget for 2024/2025 has no expenditure for the Joint Melksham neighbourhood Plan or the Age UK Project Worker.

The Age UK Project Worker contract was a joint contract signed by Age UK, MTC and MWPC. How can the joint project proceed if not funded? If MTC does not fund then MWPC will continue but only to serve their own residents.

Expenditure is expected on the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood in the coming year, if only for the referendum.

Councillor S Crundell and Councillor Hubbard felt there may have been an expectation of an underspent but they would look into the matter.

**Joe McCann**

Was it the intention going forward to only stream meetings on Zoom or are there any plans to stream on YouTube or restore streaming to Facebook? It was confirmed that all options would be explored.

**Sarah Cardy**

Concerned that grant application is under small grants for which it doesn't meet the criteria. Believed that the application would go back to Full Council. Now have a member of staff whose future is uncertain. Will also affect people that member of staff is currently supporting, who are not getting support from other sources. The support they receive will be being spent locally.

**87/23 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor J Crundell.

Apologies were also sent by Councillor Ellis but were not recorded at the meeting.

**88/23 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Westbrook declared an interest in respect of the Melksham Food & River Festival grant application as a family member of the Food & River Festival chair. Councillor Westbrook remained in the meeting but abstained from the vote.

Councillor Hubbard declared an interest in respect of the 4Youth grant application as chair of the Trustees. Councillor Hubbard remained in the meeting but abstained from the vote.

## **89/23 Minutes**

Councillor Westbrook noted that her name was not on the list of attendees. Subject to this, the minutes of 15 January 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by Councillor Rabey.

## **90/23 Major Grants**

### **Tourist Information Centre**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to award the Melksham Tourist Information Centre a grant of £4000.

### **Citizens Advice Bureau**

It was noted that funds were previously granted to provide a service for Melksham residents at the Town Hall. This service was no longer provided. No vote was required.

### **Food & River Festival**

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

**RESOLVED** to award the Food & River Festival a grant of £5000.00

### **Christmas Lights Group/Light Fantastic**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to award the Christa Lights Group a grant of £10000.

### **Melksham Carnival**

There was discussion on the sums allocated to Melksham Carnival and the amount carried forward. Councillor Hubbard noted there had been no virement and suggested that a recommendation be made to full council for a virement of £1500 from General Reserves back into grants. It was agreed it would be referred to full council

### **4Youth**

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

**RESOLVED** to award 4Youth a grant of £10000

#### **Party in the Park**

There being no paperwork or information provided, no decision could be made.

### **91/23 Grants**

#### **Milktown Writers' Group**

There was confusion as to what the grant was to fund.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to allow representatives of the group to speak.

Sam Geddes and Jeff Phelps spoke on behalf of the group. They wish to set up a more functional website to incorporate blogs, share the groups writing and be more interactive. Want to be a voice in the community.

There was discussion and questions on accounts, bank statements, match funding and a breakdown of the figure requested. It was noted that the rules do allow volunteer manhours to off-set match funding but more detailed information was need on this and other matters.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to reject the application but invite the group to resubmit for the next round of grants.

#### **Back on Track – Stroke Rehab Service**

It was noted that this grant was applied for every year and consideration should be given to moving it to major grants.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to award Back on Track – Stroke Rehab Service a grant of £1000

#### **Trauma Breakthrough**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to award Trauma Breakthrough a grant of £1000

#### **Celebrating Age Wiltshire**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to award Celebrating Age Wiltshire a grant of £1000  
**Wiltshire Sight**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to award Wiltshire Sight a grant of £500

#### **British Cactus & Succulent Society Wiltshire Branch**

Councillor Rabey and Councillor Aves advised that they were members of this society. Councillor Rabey noted that this was another annual request.

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

**RESOLVED** to award the British Cactus & Succulent Society Wiltshire Branch a grant of £544.40.

Councillor Rabey and Councillor Aves abstained.

#### **Age UK Wiltshire**

There was discussion on possible ways forward.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow John Glover and Sarah Cardy to speak.

Councillor Hubbard made it clear that his issue with the funding was that the project was no longer Melksham Community Support Service and was in effect an age specific support officer. If expressed in that way, he had no issue with the funding. It was suggested that the application be considered in that way, the balance of funds in major and small grants, calculated at £8524 be awarded and the matter referred to full council to consider the balance and how the Council wished to classify the project.

After a query from the Communications & Events Officer investigation revealed that some grants awarded for room hire had not been taken up and would therefore be rolled back into general reserves.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to award Age UK Wiltshire a grant of £8524 plus whatever the remaining funds in the grant pot are, which could be up to another £1500. The

balance of the request and the nature of the agreement between Melksham Town Council, Melksham Without Parish Council and Age UK Wiltshire be referred to full council.

## **92/23 Financial Statements**

Councillor Hubbard again expressed his concerns about the accuracy of figures. Councillor Hubbard had prepared documents setting out reserves and summary of 2023/24 accounts to month 10. These were circulated to members and Councillor Hubbard spoke to the breakdown and the issues.

Thanks were expressed to Councillor Hubbard for the work undertaken.

The issues were discussed.

It was proposed by Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to allow Sue Mortimer to speak.

Sue Mortimer asked members to bear in mind that when setting the budget for 2023/24 it was supported by £130000 from general reserve. Councillor Hubbard gave a comprehensive answer to Sue Mortimer's concerns. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell gave a further explanation.

John Glover commented on the agreed budget.

Joe McCann asked how the Council had got to this situation. Members felt they could not comment.

Councillor Hubbard felt it should be recorded that there have been challenges and problems but it was time to look forward.

Standing orders were reinstated.

It was proposed by Councillor Aves, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that financial reports be available for each committee.

Councillor Griffin felt that a summary in addition to the existing reports would be helpful. Other members felt this was not necessary.

## **93/23 Lloyds**

Councillor Griffin raised the following.

Page 71 there is a refund of just under £5000. Head of Operations confirmed we had been overpaying for a number of years.

Councillor Rabey again asked members if they could submit queries of this type in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Griffin felt that the recording of VAT seems to be inconsistent.

The statements were received.

**94/23      Unity**

The statements were received.

**95/23      Petty Cash**

Councillor Griffin queried an entry for milk with VAT against it.

The statements were received.

**96/23      Monthly Financial Statement**

It was proposed and unanimously agreed that Councillor Hubbard and Councillor Griffin form a short-term Task Group to look at the accounts and accounting procedures ready for the new financial year.

The statement were received.

**97/23      Budget Report**

The report was received.

**98/23      Income Report**

The report was received.

**99/23      Earmarked Reserves**

Subject to previous discussion, the report was received.

Meeting Closed at: 9.00 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**