

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 29th April 2024

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk
	Tracy Predeth	Locum Clerk

Twelve members of the public and one member of the press were present and two members of the public were present virtually.

750/23 Public Participation

Councillor A Westbrook read out a statement from Wendy Isaacs regarding the motion at item 11.1.

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell asked members of the public present who supported the motion at 11.1 to raise their hands and also invited them to come forward to speak if they so wished. 9 people raised their hands.

Sue Mortimer

Pleased to see the toilet block would be transferred to Melksham own Council at no cost. She supports the Pet Food Bank but would like to see the toilet block re-opened as a toilet and sited surveys by Together Melksham and Age Friendly Melksham showing support for more public toilets.

Richard Rogers

The Pet Food Bank is a vital service and there are other options for toilets in local businesses. Councillor Alford advised that the Pet Food Bank and re-opening the toilets could both be done.

Joe McCann

Public Spaces Protection Order in Avon Place. Is this now in place and if so, how long it had been in place and is there any signage? The Town Mayor consulted with the committee clerk who advised that he thought Wiltshire Council had said there was insufficient evidence for an order but he would check.

Mobile CCTV. What is the Council policy for deploying it and has it ever been deployed? The Town Mayor said he believed there were approved sites and that it had never been deployed. The Committee Clerk would check with the Head of Operations

Sensory Garden. Is there an update? The Mayor consulted the committee clerk who confirmed it was on the agenda for the next Asset Management & Amenities meeting.

Splashpad. Has it been resurfaced and if not, when would it be done? The committee clerk would check with the Head of Operations.

Park Strategy. When is this likely to come back to Council? The Town Mayor said to the best of his knowledge it had not come back. The committee clerk would check with the Head of Operations.

Councillor Rabey advised that councillors had been advised that splashpad resurfacing was due to commence this week but was dependant on the supplier and the weather.

Davina Griffin

Lives in Union Street and her garden backs onto the park. She had worked hard on her garden and house and it was her haven. She is now dazzled by the lights in the park and the pleasure in her garden has gone. She would rather there was no lighting. She recognises that people want them but the lighting should not be intrusive and disturbing. Others in Union Street and on Lowbourne are affected. One of her neighbours has said she no longer needs to put the light on in her kitchen.

When the Skatepark was installed there was a lot of effort to minimise intrusion. She feels that an impact assessment should have been undertaken before installing the lights and there is no evidence one had been undertaken. She asks the council to take action and will take enforcement proceedings if necessary.

Sarah Cardy

Spoke regarding the grant awarded, the Age UK Project and the need for parity funding from Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council.

Sue Mortimer

Noted that there was no funding in budget for Age UK and suggested it should be taken from General Reserves.

751/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Cooke and Councillor Forgacs.

752/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

753/23 Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

Councillor Griffin had emailed the Mayor but it was pointed out that questions from councillors should be sent to officers 5 days before the meeting.

754/23 Minutes

The minutes of 18 March 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

755/23 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor welcomed Councillor A Westbrook to the council.

He noted that this was his final full council meeting as Mayor.

756/23 Police Report

The report was noted.

757/23 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Alford mentioned a site visit to the proposed location of Lime Down Solar Park in Whitley, at which about 250 people attended.

Councillor Oatley advised the next Area Board meeting will take place at 7pm on 22nd May 2024 at the Riverside Club. The focus will be on Health and Wellbeing.

758/23 Virement for Melksham Carnival

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the public to speak to this item.

Sue Mortimer quoted from Finance, Administration and Performance meeting of 20 November 2023 - It was proposed by Councillor Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Rabey and **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that Melksham Carnival Group's Major Grant of £2500 in this year's budget be rolled over to be added to next year's Major Grant. She did not think it had come before full council.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Councillor Hubbard wanted clarification on the grants awarded to Melksham Carnival.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

Michelle Brightwell from Melksham Carnival believed that the sum due was a total of £3500.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Councillor J Westbrook believed that the total sum was £2500.

There was further discussion.

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

RESOLVED to pay £1000 from General Reserves to Melksham Carnival as a payment against whatever is due and for officers to investigate what has been awarded.

759/23 Age UK Wiltshire

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell noted that the report of the Finance Officer showed a total of £7660.60 left in the grant funds from last year.

There was discussion on the item. Councillor Hubbard felt councillors needed to be mindful that this was a three-year project and agreeing payment today would commit to a further £12000 in next year's budget. The Town Mayor advised that it would equate to a little over 1% increase in the precept.

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

RESOLVED to make up the deficit of £4339.40 from General Reserves, making a total payment of £12000 from last years grants funding and/or general reserves as required.

760/23 Lighting in King George V Playing Field

The matter was discussed. It was generally acknowledged that there were a large number of positive comments about the lighting but that the needs of residents living around the park needed to be taken into consideration.

Councillor Alford asked if the lights needed to be on all night. The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Price appreciated the problem but could not support turning the lights off as the park was used late night and early morning. He also recollected that it had been said in earlier discussions that turning the lights on and off was bad for some wildlife.

Councillor Hubbard felt the lights were quite bright and asked if they could be dimmed. He suggested Light Fantastic be asked to make suggestions to address the issues.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

Davina Griffin thanked councillors for their acknowledgement of the needs of “the minority” and stated that an impact survey should have been conducted before the lights were put up. She asked to be informed of the date of the Asset Management & Amenities meeting. (The date was confirmed later in the meeting and Davina confirmed she was able to attend.)

Sue Mortimer commented that she lived in Webbs Close and has had to purchase blackout curtains.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

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

UNANIMOUSLY PROPOSED to refer the matter to the next Asset Management & Amenities meeting on 10th June 2024 and ask Paul Weymouth of LightFantastic if he would attend that meeting to make suggestions to deal with the issues.

761/23 Community LunchOn

Councillor Rabey summarised the discussions of the Events Working Group.

There was discussion on the proposal, on resources and on Wiltshire Together in general.

Sarah Cardy spoke about Wiltshire Together.

The view of the council was that this was not an initiative they could support at this time and another market town could be the pilot.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to revisit the initiative in a year.

762/23 Motion on Church Street Toilets

Councillor Alford spoke to his motion. He confirmed that the Pet Food Bank Group were prepared to fund work needed on the storage area but that Wiltshire Council would expect a term of the licence to be re-instating the toilets.

There was discussion on the costs involved in re-instating the toilet facilities. Councillor Aves noted that when the toilets were previously discussed it was decided not to proceed because of the business rates. Councillor Hubbard confirmed that the Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill had been passed so there would be no business rates. However, the toilet block was not functional and would need to be completely refitted.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED for officers to explore an asset transfer and produce a report for full council on the potential cost/benefits and risks.

763/23 Motion on Cemeteries

Councillor Alford and the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell spoke to the motion. There was discussion on the current position and future capacity.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to set up a working party, inviting the parish to join, and to explore the options for future delivery of the cemetery service.

764/23 Staffing Committee

The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Price outlined his proposal as follows.

- (i) To amend clause 1 so that membership is elected every year rather than for the four year term of office of the council.
- (ii) To delete clause 3.5 of Delegated Business
- (iii) To delete clause 3.7 of Delegated Business
- (iv) To delete clause 3.8 of Delegated Business.

There was discussion of the proposal. Councillors felt it would have been helpful to have full details in advance.

Councillor Hubbard spoke on the purpose of the Staffing Committee, the amount of work that is done behind closed doors and the membership.

Councillor A Westbrook felt that the name of the committee should be changed to Personnel Committee. The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Price was happy to accept this as a friendly amendment.

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

RESOLVED to amend clause 1 so that the membership is elected every year.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Council, seconded by Councillor Westbrook and

RESOLVED to delete clause 3.5.

Having made the resolution Councillor Hubbard pointed out that the decision affected clause 3.1. There was discussion and it was agreed that the Locum Clerk would bring recommendations for revised terms of reference to the annual meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor A Westbrook, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Staffing Committee be renamed Personnel Committee.

765/23 Advertising in Melksham News

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow Joe McCann to speak.

Joe outlined the quote. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell asked some questions on invoicing and any pages over the 18. Joe confirmed that the discount would apply to any advertising over the 18 page. Councillor Hubbard explored alternatives that may be cheaper.

At 8:55 Councillor Aves, Councillor J Crundell and Councillor A Westbrook left the meeting.

Councillor Alford asked if there was room for negotiation if, in the future, we could commit to every issue.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept the quote, to be funded from General Reserves, to be back filled from advertising budget.

**766/23 Management of Council business and publicity during the pre-election period.
Briefing Note No. 25-06**

The item was noted.

767/23 Economic Development and Planning Committee Minutes

The minutes were received.

768/23 Finance Administration and Performance Committee Minutes

The minutes were received.

769/23 Communications Working Group Notes

Councillor Ellis noted there was a Communications Working Group meeting on Thursday 25 April 2024. He asked when the next meeting was. It was confirmed that the meeting did not take place, should have been marked as cancelled and a new meeting had not yet been set.

The notes were received.

770/23 Events Working Group Notes

The notes were received.

771/23 Confidential Session

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to go into confidential session for item 16.

772/23 Neighbourhood Plan

9:20 Councillor Alford left the meeting.

Councillor Ellis gave an update on the Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors asked if it would be possible to have a brief written update.

Meeting Closed at: 9.25 pm

Signed:

Dated: