

Melksham Town Council

**Minutes of the Full Council meeting held
on Tuesday 28th May 2024**

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk
	Tracy Predeth	Locum Clerk

Two members of the public and one member of the press were present. One member of the public was present virtually.

1/23 Public Participation

Sue Mortimer.

KGV Café. No advice on whether or not to tax the building was taken. How much VAT did the Council have to pay back to HMRC at year end? How much has it cost Melksham residents by not seeking professional advice at the start of the project?

The Town Mayor Councillor Price advised that an answer was not available at this time. He asked if in future in depth questions could be emailed to the Locum Clerk in advance so she could try to have an answer available on the night. An answer would be provided within 7 days.

2024/2025 Budget. Included items totally £90000 that were movements between reserves, not expenditure. Why was this amount included in the precept charge?

The Town Mayor Councillor Price said a reply would be provided. Sue Mortimer said that none of her previous questions had been answered. The Locum Clerk said that she did respond advising that a Locum R.F.O had been appointed and she would meet with Sue at some point.

Joe McCann

In May 2023 Council signed off on £50000 funding for upgrading Awdry Avenue play area. This was subsequently delayed because of the wider Park Strategy. Is there a date for the Park Strategy?

No update on the Park Strategy was available. Councillor Oatley advised that Awdry Avenue play area is being looked at by Community Conversations. He and Councillor A Westbrook will be bringing a motion to Asset and Amenities Committee to work with Community Conversations. Councillor Oatley explained that Community Conversations provides funding for deprived areas in Wiltshire and will fund work to Awdry Avenue play area.

The Town Mayor Councillor Price noted the motions on the agenda that may affect park strategy.

2/23 Apologises

Apologies were received from Councillor J Crundell and Councillor Forgacs.

3/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4/23 Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from councillors but Councillor Hubbard did mention his motion on Public Participation. The Town Mayor Councillor Price said he would look into this.

5/23 Minutes

The Committee Clerk advised on amendments that had been made to the minutes that were not reflected in the agenda pack but were shown in the version linked to the email sent to members.

789/23 – Councillor A Westbrook was elected Chair.

792/23 – Councillor Griffin's election as Chair was not unanimous.

793/23 – Reference to Asset Management and Amenities changed to Personnel.

The minutes of 20th May 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by The Town Mayor, Councillor Price.

6/23 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor, Councillor Price announced that two members of staff, Town Clerk Linda Roberts and Communications & Events Officer Gloria Delves were leaving. The final day for both would be Friday 31st May 2024.

7/23 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Alford advised that Wiltshire Council discussed the density of solar farms and had resolved to seek clarity from the Secretary of State on the cumulative impact of Solar Farm schemes.

8/23 Resolution from Community Development Committee

Councillor J Westbrook introduced the item.

Concerns were expressed on staffing the event, the current levels of general reserves and that the event had been reported as happening before it had been ratified.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

Sue Mortimer referenced the sum she had mentioned earlier which would be available for use.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

Councillor Hubbard suggested a friendly amendment so that any request for additional funding would come direct to full council.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to ratify the resolution with the amendment that any additional funding requirements would be subject to review and discussion by Full Council.

9/23 Motion to Adopt Core Strategy

It was agreed to advance this item up the agenda as any decision may impact on the other motions.

It was agreed to refer to the strategy as Melksham Town Council Strategy rather than Core Strategy to avoid confusion with Wiltshire Council Core Strategy.

The motion, and the way forward, was discussed. Concerns were raised about the wording of the motion and the specific recommendations imposing a rigid framework of priorities.

It was suggested that the specific recommendations were suggestions and do not form part of the resolution. It was requested that it be specifically minuted that they were suggested actions and not requirements of the motion.

The Committee Clerk read out the motion as he understood it. Councillor J Westbrook queried the omission of the wording "At each meeting..." to "...be provided". The view was expressed by some councillors that this was unnecessary. It was suggested that this could be considered by the Task & Finish Group.

The Town Mayor Councillor Price called for a vote on the motion as read out by the Committee Clerk.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to

- (i) fully adopt the purpose and core values of Melksham Town Council as set out at the strategy meeting on 19th May 2024
- (ii) amend the transport section of the core values to refer to reliable bus and train services
- (iii) set up a Task & Finish Group, open to all councillors, to formulate an action plan.

10/23 Motion on Green Flag Status

Councillor A Westbrook introduced the motion. There was general agreement on the benefit of Green Flag status and discussion on the way forward.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- (i) To obtain Green Flag status for King George V Playing Field (commonly called the Park)
- (ii) The Melksham Town Council Strategy Task and Finish group to consider the formation of a sub committee to include councillors, officers and all users of the park to help the Amenities Team plan, manage and maintain this area for people in Melksham and visitors to our area.
- (iii) Task & Finish group to bring an action plan to full council on 29th July 2024.

Membership to be open to all councillors and the locum clerk to set dates for a couple of meetings.

11/23 Motion on Project Assurance Sub-Committee

Councillor Griffin introduced the motion.

The motion, existing project management reporting and calls on staff resources were discussed. It was felt that the Melksham Town Strategy Task and Finish group may result in the reconfiguration of committees, sub-committees and working groups.

Councillor Griffin, with the agreement of the seconder Councillor J Westbrook, withdrew the motion.

12/23 Motion for Youth Advisory Board

Councillor Stokes introduced the motion.

Councillor Oatley suggested the age limit should be increased to 25 for young people with SEND and it should be an advisory group rather than allocate specifically to each committee.

Councillor Hubbard suggested speaking to Joe Sutton as Wiltshire Council. Safeguarding would need to be more detailed.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to set up a Youth Advisory Board and to discuss with Joe Sutton at Wiltshire Council the next steps needed to do this.

13/23 Working Groups

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED for the Melksham Town Strategy Task & Finish Group to review Working Groups and make recommendations back to Full Council.

14/23 Financial Statements

14/23.1 Lloyds

The statements were received.

14/23.2 Unity

The statements were received.

14/23.3 Petty Cash

The statements were received.

15/23 Committee Minutes

15/23.1 Community Development Committee

The minutes were received.

15/23.2 Economic Development and Planning Committee

The minutes were received.

15/23.3 Finance Administration and Performance Committee

The minutes were received.

16/23 Working Group Notes

The notes were received.

17/23 Confidential Session

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to go into confidential session for the remainder of the meeting.

18/23 Cricketers Cafe Lease

The proposed lease was discussed and some concerns were raised.

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

RESOLVED

- (i) for the Locum Clerk, Councillor Aves, Councillor Hubbard and Councillor Rabey to meet with Craig. If Councillors Aves, Hubbard and Rabey then have no concerns the Locum Clerk is delegated to approve the lease. If there are concerns the matter will be referred back to Full Council
- (ii) The Locum R.F.O is to be asked to investigate the question of VAT on the Pavilion.

Meeting Closed at: 9.20 pm

Signed:

Dated: