

## **Melksham Town Council**

### **Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 22nd July 2024**

#### **PRESENT:**

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

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Tracy Predeth	Locum Clerk

Two members of the public and two members of the press were present and two members of the public were present virtually. Gary Johnson was present virtually to give a presentation.

#### **34/24 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Hubbard and Councillor J Crundell.

#### **35/24 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **36/24 Public Participation**

##### **Michelle Brightwell.**

Came to say thank you from the Carnival Group for the Town Council's support.

##### **Sue Mortimer.**

Skatepark signage. Noted that a child had broken an arm and asked when will required signage be put up. The Head of Operations confirmed this was in hand and should be done within a couple of weeks.

What was the budget for café improvements and was actual cost under or over budget. The Clerk advised that she would need time to get the figures and would come back to her.

**Joe McCann.**

Referring to item 9 on the agenda, why was an additional line required. Head of Operations replied that Council had voted to supply free internet access in the Town Centre and to install a CCTV system along the length of the High Street and the new line would supply appropriate bandwidth.

Referring to item 8 on the agenda. Does the Council know how much officer time would be saved if the system is adopted. Head of Operations advised that it was not known at this point.

**37/24      Questions from Councillors**

Questions from Councillor Ellis.

Our Council has a very large number of projects in various stages. I am often asked by members of the public about progress on a particular job or project and I was going to ask at this meeting for updates in the public domain on perhaps a dozen projects. However, on Monday of this week (15th July) our "Strategy Task and Finish Group" met - 10 councillor and 5 staff members present and we resolved to get a list of projects to our officers so that we know what we've got on our plate to prioritise.

For information - I am aware we have been here before - Councillor Goodhind was steering a system through Sharepoint that we could refer to, and more recently Councillor J Westbrook was instigating a system of including an update on all projects in the agenda for each Finance and Performance meeting, but this has not happened either due to (I understand) a lack of staff resource, and indeed councillors have been reminded / asked to be aware of the load we put on officers by asking. We are encouraged to let things slide, on the basis that if we don't, we'll be putting pressure beyond reasonable expectation on officers.

On that basis, and looking to help move things forward, I am asking below only items which are both important and urgent.

1. Can you please give a brief public update on when, where and how members of the public can find updates on projects in progress now and in the future?

Clerk. Once Council has agreed their strategy and priority of projects that would be public in the minutes and we would be able to work on the best way to communicate information to members of the public.

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We have lacked an active permanent clerk, a responsible finance officer, and a deputy clerk for some time now. And we have lacked an events officer for several months. We have excellent staff in some other roles who are picking up an amazing amount of the extra work, but that's sometimes at the expense of their own job, sanity and perhaps beyond their training.

2. What steps are we taking to ensure that we are staffed appropriately in consideration of the welfare of our staff and our ability to perform as a Town Council working for Melksham in line with an agreed strategy.

Clerk. There is a recruitment complain for a Deputy Clerk and an Events & Community Development Officer. Closing date is 4<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Locum Clerk and Locum RFO have been taken on at least until the 2025 elections.

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3. I understand that councillors are providing a list of project by 22nd July (the date these questions will be addressed) and that a list and status on each of them will be available to the Task and Finish Group on 5th August.

May I assure members of the public who are asking me that I will be able to give them an update on all the projects they are asking me and I register with staff by 22nd July about shortly after the 5th August meeting?

Clerk. Again it comes from the project list.

Csl Ellis. So within a week or so we should know where we stand?

Clerk. Yes.

#### **38/24 Minutes**

The minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Price.

#### **39/24 Town Mayor's Announcements**

Melksham Town Crier Jax Brady has resigned and her last engagement will be the Food & River Festival. On behalf of the Council the Town Mayor thanked Jax for her work in the role.

Thanks to the Carnival Committee for bringing the carnival back to Melksham. Looking forward to carnivals in years to come.

#### **40/24 Reports from Unitary Councillors**

Councillor Alford.

Wiltshire Council Chief Executive Terrence Herbert would be leaving as from 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024. His replacement was Lucy Townsend, former Corporate Director of Children's Services and her appointment was expected to be confirmed on Wednesday.

Cemetery Provision. Work is continuing on whether Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council will co-operate on future provision.

Blue Pool. Action needed to be taken to advance this project.

Enhanced Highway spending. There are plans for a new maintenance program and issues with weeds on the A350 have been flagged.

Traveller Policy. A number of traveller pitches have been proposed for discussion, although none are in Melksham.

Councillor Oatley joined the meeting at this point.

#### **41/24      Play Area Strategy - Presentation from Eugene Minogue**

Gary Johnson gave a presentation of the system and its benefits. He addressed Joe McCann's question by advising they had found a significant decrease in use of officer time with the system.

Members asked questions and raised concerns.

It was generally felt that it was a good system but not suitable for a town of Melksham's size.

The Clerk noted that some smaller councils similar to Melksham were using the system and suggested she obtain some feedback and the matter be referred back to Asset Management & Amenities.

#### **42/24      Data Comms into the Town Hall**

This item was referred to the next Finance, Administration & Performance meeting.

#### **43/24      Safeguarding Policy**

Councillor Oatley spoke to the policy. Some tweaks have been suggested by Councillor Griffin and some amendments would be required to take account of a Youth Council but it can be adopted as stands.

Questions were asked about naming the safeguarding officer and training.

It was suggested the matter could be deferred to allow Councillor Oatley to deal with Councillor Griffin's tweaks.

It was agreed to defer to the next meeting.

#### **44/24      Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy**

The Clerk spoke to the item.

Councillor J Westbrook noted some outdated wording.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to adopt the policy, with the amendment that Transgender should be used in place of Transsexual.

#### **45/24      CCTV Policy**

There was in depth discussion of the policy and its implications. These minutes record a summary of decisions and questions but not in a chronological order of discussion.

**The following amendments were agreed.**

##### **3.2.2**

Remove

- Partnership representatives, elected Members of the Council
- Outside visitors

Add "in the execution of their duties" to maintenance and cleaning staff.

##### **3.2.3 & 3.8.1**

Visitor log and Event log to be kept under lock and key.

##### **3.3.2**

Amend to show three operators, the Clerk, The Deputy Clerk and The Head of Operations.

##### **3.8.7**

Amend to add mobile phones/devices.

Signage on the door and wall of CCTV room to say mobile phones not allowed.

#### **5.1.1**

Change Data Protection Act 1998 to Data Protection Act 2018.

**The following amendment was also proposed and discussed, but was not agreed.**

#### **3.2.1**

Councillor J Westbrook felt this should show names not job titles.

**The follow queries were raised and answered at the meeting.**

Do councillors be informed of any requests for access? Answer – no, but can be if they so wish. No such wish was expressed.

What happened to the old equipment? Answer - Some was junk and some traded in. A member was unable to find the trade in in the agreement. What was the trade in value? Answer. It was in the quote and from memory was approximately £2000.

Confirmation that there would be no audio recording? Answer – Not on Town Council CCTV but Café CCTV does.

Will the CCTV in KGV be used to enforce bylaws? Answer – No. The wording of bylaws is somewhat antiquated and action may be taken in the future to update them

Confirmation the makeshift CCTV room at Splashpad is no longer operative? Answer- Cables have been removed and the screen can no longer be used.

Will footage previously viewed from Splashpad be viewable from Town Hall and when? Answer – Yes, hopefully from sometime in August

Why was a CCTV control room built? Answer – to comply with Home Office regulations about securing footage.

**The following actions were also requested.**

Confirmation that remote access would not be possible.

Confirmation from Kann Connections on building of CCTV control room.

A written response to a question from Joe McCann as to whether the previous CCTV installation was secure. (Standing Orders had been suspended to allow the question to be asked).

Confirmation from Kann Connections as to date KGV CCTV will be viewable from Town Hall control room.

Confirmation that trade in value has been applied to cost.

There was lengthy discussion of whether authorised operators should be allowed to view footage without first involving the police. It was suggested that senior management team can view the footage is when there is a suspicion of criminal damage to council property that cannot definitely be identified as a crime without viewing the footage. No decision on amending the policy as it stands was made.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** for the policy to be resubmitted to Council with tracked changes and Kann Connections be invited to attend when the policy is next considered.

**46/24 To receive a special resolution to amend standing orders**

This item was deferred.

**47/24 Accounts**

**48/24 Lloyds**

The statement was received.

**49/24 Unity**

The statement was received.

**50/24 Petty Cash**

The statement was received.

**51/24 Committee Minutes**

**52/24 Asset Management and Amenities Committee**

The minutes were received.

**53/24 Economic Development and Planning Committee**

The minutes were received.

**54/24 Finance Administration and Performance Committee**

The minutes were received.

**55/24 Confidential Session**

The meeting went into confidential session.

**56/24 Staffing**

The Clerk updated members on confidential staffing matters.

Meeting Closed at: 9.30 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**