

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 23rd September 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor T Price (Town Mayor)
Councillor S Rabey (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 C Stokes
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. Two members of the public were present virtually. Councillor A Westbrook was present virtually as an observer.

76/24 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor A Westbrook.

77/24 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Aves, Councillor Hubbard, Councillor Oatley, Councillor Rabey and Councillor J Westbrook declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 14.

78/24 Public Participation

Joe McCann referenced the number of high priority projects at item 17 and asked if council felt it had a problem with taking plans from paper to action and if so, what they felt the issue was. The Town Mayor Councillor Price replied that he was happy to sit down to talk about this.

79/24 Questions from Councillors

Councillor Griffin confirmed that he did not require the questions he had asked and the answers he had received to be read out. As a follow up he asked if the VAT review had

commenced or when it was likely to commence. The Clerk confirmed that the review was due to happen and she would find out the date.

80/24 Minutes

The minutes of 19th August 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price.

81/24 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor had no announcements to make but referenced the big weekend past with Lions Club 50th Anniversary, Forest & Sandridge School 150th Anniversary and Proms in the Park.

82/24 Police Report

The report was noted. Sgt Rutter was unable to attend the meeting because of other commitments.

83/24 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Alford. The next cabinet would be considering the Local Development Plan and Spatial Planning Strategy, which would be replacing the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Public consultation had taken place and the plan would go on to full council and then to the Planning Inspector for consideration. The Government review of NPPF will increase the requirement to build in Wiltshire by 81% or 34000 houses a year which Councillor Alford feels is not deliverable.

Councillor Hubbard. Wiltshire Council has adopted SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy with some interesting ideas for anyone involved or with an interest in SEND and Alternative Provision. Recently spoke at the National Care Leavers Conference and will be attending Local Government Association National Conference in Harrogate where he will be chairing a session on Early Years and Children's Play. Has recently chaired an LGA webinar on free school meals auto enrolment and will be chairing another on young people's oral health.

84/24 Lloyds

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

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Aves and Councillor Griffin as signatories to the Lloyds account.

Councillor Hubbard commented that he thought it had been decided to close the Lloyds account. The clerk said she would check.

85/24 Unity

Councillor Ellis requested that he be removed from the list of signatories for Unity. The Town Mayor Councillor Price and Councillor Hubbard both confirmed they were happy to be signatories and would create online accounts.

86/24 Financial Regulations

It was noted that some amendments were needed, including section 1.5 and standardised references to VAT.

The item was deferred to the meeting on Monday 30th September 2024.

87/24 Motion from Councillor Stokes

Councillor Stokes stoke to the motion and noted that funding of £1080 had been obtained from the Arear Board, subject to match funding

Councillor Hubbard noted a similar event had been held in Devizes.

Council was advised that the event would be led by the band who would be coming from Melksham Oak.

Concerns and questions were raised about

- Funding when there were so many high priority projects. (it was noted that the Youth Council was on the high priority list)
- The scheme would be hijacked by party politics. (Councillor Stokes agreed that party politics should have no part in it)
- Venue. (Intended to be held in the Assembly Hall and this was included in the costing. To Councillor Stoke's knowledge the hire charge was not discounted.)
- Timescale. (Hopefully be towards the end of October.)
- Safeguarding/DBS checks (4Youth would be involved)

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

RESOLVED to match fund the £1080 grant awarded by the Melksham Area Board for a preliminary event for the setup of the youth advisory board and for MTC to allow the use of the assembly hall for the event.

88/24 Canberra Community Park

This item was advanced up the agenda.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend standing orders.

Carl Houghton gave some history and context. Had been asked by 4Youth to help develop land behind Canberra Centre as a community use space. Had been supported by lots of agencies and groups. They were asking for assistance to lay accessible pathways.

Standing orders were reinstated.

The Town Mayor Councillor Price gave his wholehearted support to the project and suggested that CIL money could be used.

Councillor Hubbard gave some more information about the pathway. It was not a 4Youth project, although payment would have to be made to them. It was intended to set up a Friends of Canberra Park. A company had offered to do the work as part of their social responsibility but were now unable to do so. Councillor Hubbard stressed that this was at no fault of the company or the project.

It was noted that an identical application had been made to The Melksham Almshouse Charity.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend standing orders.

Carl Houghton said that there were many aspects to the project and the application to the Almshouse Charity could be amended.

It was confirmed that planning permission was not required.

Councillor J Westbrook asked if there were plans to make people aware of the garden. Councillor Hubbard confirmed that it is already widely know and used by dog walkers and as a cut through.

Councillor Ellis raised the following concerns

- council strategy to concentrate facilities in KGV. (Answer, this was not a Town Council project).
- Taking funds away from Town Council projects. (Answer, funding could come from CIL money).
- Have nearby residents been consulted? (Answer, yes and the response is supportive)
- Can a vote be taken without a motion?

Councillor Hubbard confirmed that the first 15% of CIL money is for Melksham Town Council sole use and the next 15% is joint with Melksham Without Parish Council.

Standing orders were re-instated.

Members agreed to defer a decision to the next meeting on Monday 30th September. For the benefit of other organisations considering a grant The Town Mayor Councillor Price confirmed that he would be seeking a resolution for Melksham Town Council to cover the whole cost of £7988.40.

89/24 Change of date of meeting

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

RESOLVED to change the date full council meeting due for 27th January 2025 to Monday 20th January 2024.

90/24 CCTV

The Town Mayor Councillor Price felt that discussion was needed on the CCTV policy and exactly where the council was on CCTV provision. He referenced a recent Knife crime for which there was no CCTV coverage.

Councillor Hubbard spoke to the item. He asked for this item on the agenda so he could address comments made and wanted to give an update.

New cameras in Market Place are all in and operational. Two cameras on junction of Market Place and Spa Road, camera on King Street, two cameras in King Street carpark and two cameras on Stratton Way are all installed but not yet fully operational because of restriction placed on the contractor so not allowed access to the Town Hall out of hours. Contractor can only work on the cameras after 6:30pm. Link between the Skate Park and toilet block replaced and operational. Link from KGV park to church fully operational.

Councillor Hubbard expressed his concern about the restriction of access which puts pressure on contractor and causes delays.

Councillor Griffin asked about High Street/Bank Street. There was no information available.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend standing orders.

Joe McCann asked how many cameras there were in total, how many were installed and working and how many were supposed to be installed.

Councillor Hubbard gave the information he had. Joe McCann asked how many cameras were supposed to be installed. The Town Mayor Councillor Price said a written answer would be provided.

Standing orders were reinstated.

There was discussion on CCTV installation and contractors' access.

Councillor J Crundell left the meeting at 8:25.

There was discussion on CCTV policy, access and remote access.

The Town Mayor Councillor Price had met with Sgt Rutter and set out some suggestions

- Only nominated people to have access to CCTV footage
- Footage only to be accessed if requested by police
- Police to be able to occasionally live monitor, if approved by council
- There be no need for remote access

Councillor J Westbrook suggested that the police set passwords.

Councillor Hubbard suggested that any support contract would require remote access but such access could be restricted to identified IP addresses. 2 factor authentication using an authenticator app.

Councillor Griffin pointed out that remote access could be switched on and off.

Suggestions to be incorporated into a draft policy to be put to council for approval.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend standing orders.

Joe McCann asked if there was an update on the disposal of the old recording equipment. The Town Mayor Councillor Price confirmed there was no update.

Standing orders were re-instated.

91/24 Pilot to trial legal walls in Wiltshire - proposed use of A350 underpass

Concerns were raised about the project encouraging graffiti in other locations but it was noted that the project would be monitored and terminated if necessary. This was a national scheme and evidence suggested that it decreased illegal graffiti. It was also noted that the contents of the wall would be monitored to ensure it was appropriate.

Members were happy that a scheme was now going forward but some disappointment was expressed about previous projects put forward by Melksham Town Council not being actioned.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the initiative.

92/24 Town Hall Opening Hours

The Town Mayor Councillor Price spoke to the item.

Members were generally supportive but concerns were raised about timing and problems taking time off in lieu. The Clerk advised that there were not always enough staff available to open on Friday at this time.

Councillor Hubbard referenced Warminster Town Council when officers cannot come to work before 1pm the day after attending a meeting out of hours. He suggested starting Friday opening after Christmas.

Councillor Alford suggested half day opening.

Councillor Ellis suggested opening Friday to facilitate Assembly Hall bookings and closing half day Tuesday and Wednesday.

Councillor Oatley felt the Town Hall should be open Monday to Friday if staffing levels allowed.

The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey proposed commencing on Friday 1st November.

Councillor Hubbard felt a longer time was needed for new staff to settle in and proposed an amendment to commence after the Christmas and New Year break. Councillor Stokes seconded the proposed amendment. The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey did not accept this friendly amendment. A vote was taken and the proposed amendment was not passed.

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

RESOLVED that the Town Hall will be open to the public on Friday between the hours of 9am and 4:40pm, commencing on Friday 1st November 2024.

93/24 Project Management

The document was noted. It was agreed that work would be done to create a live version of the document and get some project information on the website.

In respect of item 33, Councillor Alford asked for a meeting of the Cemeteries Working Group to be called.

In respect of item 90, Councillor Hubbard asked for a meeting of the CCTV & Community Safety Working Group to be called.

94/24 Asset Management and Amenities Committee

The minutes were received.

95/24 Economic Development and Planning Committee

The minutes were received.

96/24 Finance Administration and Performance Committee

The minutes were received.

97/24 Neighbourhood Plan

The Steering Group was meeting on Wednesday 26th September to finalise the amended plan and Melksham Town Council would be asked to approve on Tuesday 8th October.

It was confirmed that £7630 had been spend in this financial year. Councillor Hubbard asked if that was the final cost. The Clerk advised it was, so far as she was aware.

Meeting Closed at: 9.20 pm

Signed:

Dated: