

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Asset Management and Amenities Committee meeting held on Monday 21st October 2024

PRESENT: Councillor A Westbrook (Chair)

Councillor P Aves
Councillor T Price
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:	Tracy Predeth	Locum Clerk
	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Hayley Bell	Deputy Clerk
	Dave Elms	Amenities Team Manager

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Five members of the public and one member of the press was present.
Two members of the public were present virtually

33/24 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Ellis and Councillor Hubbard.

34/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35/24 Public Participation

Sue Mortimer, resident.

Question on something raised at July Full Council meeting on Skate Park signage. Has there been any progress? The Chair Councillor A Westbrook advised that there would be an update under item 13 King George V Park.

Annie Benham-Taylor, Tree Warden.

Attending to answer any questions there may be about the survey conducted in August.

Ian Cardy, resident.

Speaking on behalf of Nigel and Annie Benham as well as himself, members of the Melksham Green Spaces Group (MGSG). Also was previously a Tree Warden and has an interest in that item. MGSG would like to produce a Melksham Community Green Planting Plan. This would suggest planting areas, suitable trees and a planting

management and maintenance plan, which would be fully costs. MSGS has the experience and expertise to produce such a plan, to have the approval of the Town Council, Council staff and the community. To be funded by the Town Council. MSGS believe it can be delivered within the Town Council budget for tree planting 2024/25. Would be something Town Council would be proud to sponsor and would involve Melksham people in its planning and execution. MSGS would like the Town Council to consider this and ask for it to be approved and put into place quickly. The Chair Councillor A Westbrook thanked Mr Cardy and said it would be considered alongside item 12.

Bruce Saunders, resident.

Committee considering a 4x4 vehicle for the Amenities Team. Feels this goes against any green agenda and is not necessary in Melksham. Other Councils are moving to green, electric vehicles. Cannot see any benefit.

Should speak to Bradford on Avon Town Council who have a great deal of experience with electric vehicles.

Glad to see council is taking on the Blue Pool. Could take access road off of the Campus access into the courtyard and create a secure vehicle compound. Some of the building could be converted to a three bay workshop. Money would then not have to be spent on rent and the Amenities Team would be conveniently located next to the Town Hall.

Proposal for sterile trees is not good for bio-diversity.

Assembly Hall bar historically has 100% markup between cost and sales. Costs this year £10000 and turnover of £16000. This is something that should be looked at.

The Chair Councillor A Westbrook advised that sterile trees was a recommendation of the Environment Agency.

36/24 Minutes

The minutes of 12th August 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record.

37/24 Financial Matters

38/24 Budget 2024/25

Noted,

39/24 Budget 2025/26

There was discussion and members identified the following budget items which might need to be increased.

- Repairs and maintenance
- Pavilion (should this now be referred to as the café) – Fire safety checks and maintenance.
- Market Place toilet maintenance.

There was discussion and questions on the following

- The cost and level of cleaning of toilets.
- Grass cutting and re-wilding.
- Sports Roadshow
- Play Areas and Open Spaces underspend
- Solar Farms Projects

40/24 Assembly Hall

The report was considered. It was felt that greater explanation was required. The Chair Councillor A Westbrook asked for a properly costed report for the December meeting.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak.

Sue Mortimer, picking up on Assembly Hall bar sales, felt there should be a point of sale system.

Bruce Saunders queried whether the committee was quorate. The Chair Councillor A Westbrook confirmed she had obtained confirmation of this but would like to remind councillors to try to find a substitute if unable to attend.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

41/24 Tree Planting

This item was advanced up the agenda. The report was received and discussed.

It was noted that Councillor A Westbrook and Councillor J Westbrook were members of the Melksham Green Spaces Group. It was confirmed that as a non-pecuniary interest, it did not exclude them from voting on this item.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that

- Future tree planting schemes include a watering bag planted with each tree
- There be a maintenance schedule.
- There be checks on trees once planted, utilising the experience of the Melksham Green Spaces Group to assist with this.
- Melksham Town Council asks the Melksham Green Spaces Group to proceed with the report outlined in public participation
- Melksham Green Spaces Group report on re-wilding as well as tree planting.

Standing Orders were suspended. Annie Benham-Taylor asked for clarification on whether the role of Tree Warden was officially recognised. It was confirmed that Wiltshire Council did not recognise Tree Wardens in terms of planning applications. The Town Council could have a Tree Warden but would not ask for comment on planning applications involving a tree. If a member of the public raises issues the Tree Warden can contact officers or direct the member of the public to officers.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

42/24 Avon War Memorial

Councillor A Westbrook thanked those team members involved for their response to the issues with the War Memorial.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to add a plaque and to source an expert to clean and repair the inscription, to be funded from CIL Money.

Standing Orders were suspended.

Joe McCann asked if this was a temporary siting as the memorial has been concreted in. The Head of Operations confirmed that it would be easy to move and there is currently a three year licence.

43/24 Hanging Baskets

The Deputy Clerk advised that she was looking at streamlining the process and costings and a report will come to the next meeting.

44/24 Replacement Work Vehicles

There was discussion on purchasing versus leasing and electric/hybrid vehicles and type of vehicle. The Amenities Manager explained why a 4 by 4 was required.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak. The Amenities Manager responded to their concerns.

Councillor A Westbrook suggested speaking to Bradford upon Avon Town Council about their experiences with electric vehicles.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed for officers to make further investigations and speak to Bradford on Avon Town Council.

45/24 Water Troughs

Head of Operations confirmed that one trough each would be placed at Dunch lane and Methuen Allotments. They will both be replacing taps so no additional pipe will need to be laid.

Members confirmed they were happy with this.

Councillors asked for an Allotment Audit to come before the committee.

46/24 Wiltshire Town Programme

Miriam Zaccarelli and the Deputy Clerk Hayley Bell spoke about the programme and summarised proposals contained in the report.

Other ideas considered subsequent to the publication of the agenda and report were

- Covered cycle storage
- New website showcasing information about Melksham
- Telephone boxes
- Lighting up Town Bridge
- Signage for the Town Hall
- Gender neutral public toilets

Members discussed and asked some questions. The following points were confirmed.

- Some of the funding could be used to provide support in delivering projects
- Council would be kept informed on spending
- Year 2 funding had not been lost and had been rolled over into the year three allocation

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of the public to speak. Annie Benham-Taylor asked about the high pavement on Bank Street. It was confirmed that

planting in this area was included. Councillor Aves sought clarification on the request to LHFIG for funding in this area.

It was proposed and unanimously resolved to approve the submission of the application with the projects mentioned in the report and additional projects discussed in the meeting.

It was proposed and unanimously resolved to give delegated authority for officers to take the matter forward.

47/24 Community Conversations

It was confirmed that there was an open day on 1st November at Forest Community Centre with plans for new play areas.

The Town Mayor Councillor Price asked that it be noted Awdry Avenue play area is priority as £70000 funding will be lost if not completed. It was agreed to take Awdry Avenue to full council, by special meeting if required.

48/24 King George V Park

The Head of Operations gave a report on work required in KGV.

Although not related to the agenda item the Deputy Clerk took the opportunity to advise members that the Town Hall clock is due to be assessed so it can be fixed.

49/24 Project Update

Members discussed items on the list, including whether some of the projects listed were high priority. It was confirmed that the priority had been set at the Strategy Task & Finish Group.

Updates on some items were given.

The following were requested

Allotment Audit – to next agenda

BMX Pump Track – change to medium

Bowmans Court Lighting – change to low. Check for delegated authority.

Church Street Toilets Transfer – Send expression of interest to Wiltshire Council.

Confirm cost of taking on toilet block. Contact Melksham Pet Foodbank to keep them up to date.

KGV Eco Loos – progress as soon as possible.

KGV Masterplan – remove as Sensory Garden and Dog Park have their own lines.

Signage – to show that Wi-Fi is available.

Play Area Strategy – change to medium

Recruitment – advert in Melksham News

Skate Park Lights – mark as completed

There was no formal vote on the above but no objections to any of the suggestions were raised.

Meeting Closed at: 9.20 pm

Signed:

Dated: