

## **Melksham Town Council**

### **Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 25th November 2024**

#### **PRESENT:**

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

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk
	Tracy Predeth (virtually)	Locum Clerk
	Hayley Bell (virtually)	Deputy Clerk

Five members of the public and one member of the press were present

#### **110/24 Apologies**

The Town Mayor Councillor Price announced that in view of the weather the majority of the items on the agenda would be deferred to Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

Apologies were received from the Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey.

#### **111/24 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **112/24 Public Participation**

**Andrew Rowan.**

Lights in KGV. Was surprised to see that the lights had recently been dimmed. His wife commented to him that she felt unsafe in the KGV with the dimmed lights. Why had the lights been dimmed and is it planned to turn them up again?

Flooding. Speaking for himself, Mr Carey and Mr Bell. Flooding did not enter house but garden, garage and newly laid driveway was under water. Mr & Mrs Carey have over

two inches of water inside their property. Mr Rowan asked if the spoil in the KGV was being moved to the Dog Park. The Dog Park currently acts as a flood plain and raising the level of the Dog Park would affect this.

The Town Mayor advised that lights had been dimmed to what was considered the lowest safe level as a trial. The Clerk confirmed that a survey is being put together to aid a final decision.

Councillor A Westbrook had attended a meeting with the contractor and the amenities team. The intention was to remove the rubber matting then add some spoil and topsoil. Mr Rowans concerns had been raised and a representative of Wiltshire Wildlife Trust was going to check with a water engineer surveyor. The contractor for levelling the sensory garden area is confident he can use the spoil to help level the slope down to the railings.

Mr Rowan asked if a flood risk assessment had been done. It was confirmed that an assessment had been made by Danny Everett of Wiltshire Council and NVB Landscapes but the details were not to hand. The Town Mayor Councillor Price promised to ensure the information gets to Mr Rowan.

**Bruce Sanders.**

Splashpad water consumption was £26000. Would council consider installing a system to filter and re-use the water. The Town Mayor Councillor Price advised that the sum was a build up of 4 years charges and would not be that sum every year.

**Colin Goodhind.**

How successful has the major £15,000 tree planting project been?

I'd like to know:

- I. Who had overall responsibility for the project and who was the contractor?
- II. How many trees are thriving?
- III. How many have died?
- IV. Why did trees die?
- V. Was Richard Collet with his 20+ years experience in Bath consulted at any stage?
- VI. What's being done to ensure future planting is well-managed and more successful?
- VII. If not included in the answer to vi above, are there plans for Richard Collett to oversee all future horticulture-related projects in a supervisory capacity?

The Town Mayor Councillor Price advised that a written response would be provided.

**Sue Mortimer.**

How many agenda boards are there in town and would the council consider asking if one could be sited in the Campus? The Town Mayor Councillor Price thanked Sue for her question.

**Joe McCann.**

What support has the council offered to local businesses or does it have any plan to offer support to local businesses or residents affected by the flood.

Councillor Stokes advised that she had been working with the Town Council and with Brian Matthews MP and speaking to Wiltshire Council to try to get sandbags and concrete blocks. The Town Mayor Councillor Price said that Melksham Town Council would take the recommendations of Wiltshire Council. The Town Council will do what it can to help residents and businesses.

Councillor Stokes drew peoples attention to the helpline advertised on Wiltshire Council website.

Councillor Hubbard asked about Wiltshire Council Flood Operations Group. Councillor Aves, as MTC rep on the group, had been told new supplies of sandbags were being purchased.

It was suggested Travis Perkins be contacted.

Joe McCann asked if the response has been timely. The Town Mayor felt the Town Council had done what they could in the time available.

Andrew Rowan mentioned the problem of people driving through the flood water creating a bow wave effect. This was noted and agreed to be a problem but only the police can enforce road closures and resources were obviously stretched more than usual.

#### **113/24 Confidential Session**

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

**RESOLVED** to go into private session for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **114/24 Evie's Cafe**

Members discussed aspects of the lease and current situation. Hayley advised that the lease was now in the name of BOA Kitchen Limited.

Councillor Hubbard advised members that in his view the original lease had not been good but the current version was.

Questions were asked about rent and rent increases, signatory on behalf of BOA Kitchen Limited, option to renew, break clauses, maintenance and maintenance liability, tenants responsibilities and boundary of the leased property, tenancy and utilities payments, the Town Council's investment in refurbishment and whether the lease would be backdated.

Questions were answered by the Clerk and Deputy Clerk with input from members.

There was discussion on Melksham Town Council's investment in refurbishment and the terms of repayment. Some members pointed out the additional work done by the tenant and the subsequent savings to Melksham Town Council. The Clerk advised she would seek advice on the position.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor S Crundell and

**RESOLVED** to agree to completion of the lease on the basis of agreeing break clauses and annual rent increase based on the average of Consumer Price Index and Inflation over the previous 12 months. The investment of £25000 to be deferred to the meeting on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024 and the Clerk to prepare a report on options.

**115/24 Bowerhill Depot**

**116/24 Awdry Park**

The Deputy Clerk advised that a decision was required on two preferred proposals but no contract would be issued until the grant was confirmed. Councillor Ellis stated for the record that he would sit out the discussion as he had not been able to properly read the papers in the short time allowed.

Members liked aspects of different designs but were disappointed by the lack of benches. It was noted that some designs included picnic benches but it was felt that back support was required. It was noted that the target age group used imagination in play as well as physical play equipment.

There was a query on maintenance costs. Full details were not available but the Deputy Clerk confirmed that there was a maintenance schedule.

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

**RESOLVED** to put forward options Rhino and Monkey, but wanting to see a sensory element and swings for both toddlers and older children.

The meeting was closed. All other agenda items were deferred to Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024.

Meeting Closed at: 9.00 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**