

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Asset Management and Amenities Committee meeting held on Monday 16th December 2024

PRESENT: Councillor A Westbrook (Chair)
Councillor J Oatley (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor T Price
Councillor J Westbrook
Councillor S Rabey

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:	Tracy Predeth	Locum Clerk
	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk
	Hayley Bell	Deputy Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: Three members of the public and one member of the press were present.

50/24 Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cooke who was substituted by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey

51/24 Declarations of Interest

Councillor A Westbrook and Councillor J Westbrook declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 as members of Melksham Green Space.

52/24 Public Participation

Sue Mortimer.

1: Report for agenda item 5 contains duplicate and missing pages.

The Chair Councillor A Westbrook confirmed that members had received the full document via email and any member of the public could have a copy on request.

2: Where is the cost of grass cutting for the allotments shown as the maintenance for allotments code 4201 is £Nil?

Councillor A Westbrook confirmed an answer would be sent but her understanding was that grass cutting at the allotments was done in house and therefore would not show

any costings. Councillor Hubbard explained that if work had previously been contracted out the budget line would remain for at least 3 years afterwards.

3: What is the breakdown of the Assembly Hall up to date income code 1173 Live Shows Hall Hire and up to date cost code 4960 Live Entertainment?

Councillor A Westbrook advised that the information had been supplied to members recently. Councillor Rabey surrendered her copy to Mrs Mortimer.

Councillor A Westbrook took the opportunity to formally thank Mrs Mortimer for the Christmas Lunch the previous Sunday.

53/24 Tree Planting

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to advance this item and item 15 up the agenda.

Councillor J Westbrook thanked Melksham Green Space for the report. The council would need to speak to relevant landowners and a maintenance plan would be needed. It was suggested that schools and the wider community could be involved.

The Clerk was asked to start discussions with landowners and appropriate groups.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the representatives of Melksham Green Space to talk.

Ian Cardy confirmed that Area F was owned by Wiltshire Council and managed by Green Square. Green Square were happy for the plan previously produced by MTC to proceed. Aster Housing keen to have a community Orchard in site G.

Questions were asked. Ian Cardy confirmed trees would be native and suitable for the site, that Primrose Drive Nature Group would continue to maintain Area C and private gardens shown in Area G were not part of the plan.

Councillor Hubbard advised MGS to contact Naomi Styles, Woodland Officer at Wiltshire Council Climate & Environmental Services to make a request for funding from Wiltshire Council Great West Community Forest Fund. Councillor A Westbrook noted that Melksham Town Council had £10000 in a Tree Planting Budget.

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Jack Oatley and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- for officers to start conversations with landowners and work with Melksham Green Space to discuss next steps

- to delegate authority to the Clerk to use the Tree Planting Fund, code 220/4179.

54/24 Project Update

The Deputy Clerk confirmed she was working on colour coding the project document with blue for completed, amber for underway and red for not started.

Allotment Audit and Management

Land grab with solicitors.

Allotments- Water Troughs

Fitted in Awdry Avenue. Methuen and Dunch Lane to be fitted in January.

Awdry Avenue Play Area

Payment schedule agreed. Wiltshire Council sending through grant agreement. Work to start in January to be completed by the 21st February.

Blue Pool/Assembly Hall Project

Transfer with solicitors, then to contract finder for tender and architects designs. Members requested that the process be started to run alongside the legal work rather than waiting for the legal work to be completed.

Church Street Toilets Transfer

Wiltshire Council open to Expression of Interest and can provide costings. Members agreed that costings were required before anything else could be done.

Green Flag Status for KGV

Green Flag Award website says applications for 2024/25 closing date is January 2024. Councillor A Westbrook has emailed for clarification. There was discussion on the Task & Finish Group. A query was raised on whether Task & Finish Groups in general were appropriate.

Joint Cemetery Strategy

Meeting was cancelled because of budget discussions. Meeting will be arranged for New Year.

KGV Eco Loos Conversion

Contractor has backlog. Head of Operations has been chasing for a firm date.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that if a firm date could not be delivered, officers were empowered to select a new contractor.

KGV Sensory Garden

Work due to start next day. This was initial work only and a detailed plan for the garden would be put to committee, probably at the next meeting. There was an issue with wet pour in the Dog Park and advice was needed from Wiltshire Council flood experts. Detailed plan for the garden should be available for next meeting.

KGV Signage

Dog signage going in this week. High quality stickers confirming the wifi would be installed in January. Skatepark signage in place.

Play Area Signage

Work proceeding to replace. No recent progress due to lack of capacity for Head of operations. Members felt this did not have to be done by Head of operations and could be passed to another officer.

Recruitment of Assembly Hall Staff

Two applicants. Interviews to be held shortly. Clerk confirmed recruitment was difficult because of unsociable hours and need to have transport.

Rivermead School Parking

Deputy Clerk due to meet with Head Teacher in January. Councillor Hubbard concerned that there was a “reset” and work done by Councillor J Westbrook and himself would be lost. Agreed that Deputy Clerk would meet with Councillor Hubbard and Councillor J Westbrook.

Skate Park Signage

This had been completed.

Skylark Road Lighting

Paul Weymouth was assisting but this is a busy time of year for him. No firm date set yet.

Street Trees

Waiting to hear outcome of application to Wiltshire Town Programme.

Town Hall Clock

Inspection has been made. New mechanism needed. Costing to be investigated.

55/24 Minutes

The minutes of 21st October 2024 having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by Councillor A Westbrook.

56/24 Budget 2024./25

The item was noted.

57/24 Assembly Hall

Head of Operations gave a verbal update on figures to date and projected for the year.

There was discussion about Assembly Hall income and future. Some members felt that the Assembly Hall, as a community asset, should not be judged purely on a commercial basis. Councillor J Westbrook suggested taking to the management of Cheese & Grain in Frome.

A meeting was requested. Councillor J Westbrook asked for social media and/or advert in the MIN inviting people to give their views on the future of the Assembly Hall. Councillor Ellis pointed out that a report on this had been done and asked for it to be recirculated.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to hold a full council meeting in January to discuss the Assembly Hall.

It was confirmed by the Clerk and the Committee Clerk that a meeting would be arranged for Monday 27th January 2025.

58/24 Allotment Audit

Waiting list.

How many names were on the waiting list and how long do we give people to reply to an offer?

Fees.

What is the annual charge and can it be raised? Confirmed had gone up from £40 to £50 and needed to give a years notice. Councillor Rabey advised caution and not wishing to price people out.

Grass cutting.

Could frequency of cutting be increased? Head of Operations would speak to the Amenities Manager.

Deer incursions.

Could a fence be installed, would this solve the issue and how much would it cost? To come back to next meeting if required.

Future reporting.

Report to come back to next meeting and thereafter twice a year to include details of waiting list, income and expenditure.

59/24 Friends of KGV

The Deputy Clerk spoke to the item. A Friends Group would have access to grants not available to the Town Council. Councillor Hubbard and Councillor A Westbrook would be attending a meeting on 8th January 2025. It was agreed to bring the matter back to the next agenda.

60/24 Awdry Avenue Play Area

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED for the Town Mayor Councillor Price to write a letter of to Bridie Hanraads and team.

61/24 Works Vehicles

The Town Clerk confirmed details of Bradford on Avon's electric fleet. Councillors discussed the merits of various issues - lease over purchase, trialling vehicles, obtaining expert advice, use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil Fuel, analysis of need.

It was agreed that Head of Operations and the Amenities Manager would meet with the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey to discuss needs.

62/24 Asset Transfers

Blue Pool and Church Street Toilets were discussed under project update.

63/24 King George V Park

64/24 Splashpad

Members put forward their preferences.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to confirm 2025 Splashpad opening from Easter weekend through to the middle of September between the hours of 11am to 6pm.

65/24 Updating Report

Sensory Garden, Dog Park and Green Flag Status and KGV Signage were discussed under project update.

KGV Lighting Survey.

Lighting survey went live last week and will be open until 22nd January 2025.

86 responses to date.

Letters hand delivered to properties adjacent to park and information displayed in Evie's Kitchen.

QR codes can be put up in the park.

Members discussed whether the deadline could be shortened and whether an Impact Assessment and an Equalities Assessment were necessary.

Councillor Hubbard suggested that as the dimming was a trial it was appropriate for there being a period of dimmed lighting and a period of full lighting during the consultation.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED for the lights to be put back to their pre-trial level and for an Impact Assessment to be undertaken.

66/24 Wiltshire Town Programme

This item was discussed under project update.

Meeting Closed at: 9.30 pm

Signed:

Dated: