

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Asset Management and Amenities Committee meeting held on Monday 24th February 2025

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:	Tracy Predeth	Locum Clerk
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk
	Hayley Bell	Deputy Clerk (virtually)
	Brian Bennett	Assembly Hall General Manager/Facilities

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: 16 members of the public and one member of the press were present and 4 members of the public were present virtually.

67/24 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Hubbard, who was subbed by Councillor Rabey, and from Councillor Price.

68/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

69/24 Public Participation

Public Participant 1 Church Walk/ Canon Square.

1: Please can you confirm whether the Council is already considering extending the CCTV coverage to include the area near Church Walk and Canon Square?

2: Please can we have permanent, not mobile, CCTV installed of sufficient quality to identify culprits in Canon Square and Church Walk and the vehicle entrance, which would provide the police with enough evidence to stamp out the on-going drug dealing, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour in that area? Residents are happy to work with the Town Council on positioning the cameras to enable as much coverage as possible.

3: Are you able to advise a timeline for CCTV installation, which we understand is technically possible, particularly with regard to extending coverage to the end of Church Walk and Canon Square?

4: Is signage going to be put in place at the areas covered by CCTV, as this may well act as a deterrent? There are currently cameras in Church Walk but no signage.

5: Have the police been involved in the specification and positioning of the CCTV system?

6: Have the police raised a need for additional CCTV coverage in that area? There has been a lot of trouble and the police have been called out on a regular basis. Have the police contacted the Council about this?

7: Existing CCTV camera positioned at 32 Church Walk pointing towards Bath Road loses definition towards the junction of the High Street enabling further unseen drug taking, dealing and other anti-social activities just off the high pavement area. We have sufficient evidence this is taking place but not caught on camera and therefore police are unable to act. Are there plans to extend coverage further down towards Bath Road.

8: How does the Council plan to engage with residents on this ongoing issue and will there be further opportunities for public input the need for CCTV coverage during or after the meeting?

Public Participation 2 Church Walk/Canon Square.

Police have knocked on their door several times in recent months asking to view CCTV footage to aid various investigations of domestic violence, anti-social behaviour etc. Approximately 90% of properties have recording doorbells but recording is limited without subscription.

Has resided in Church Walk for 8 years and incidents of anti-social behaviour and drugs have increased. Police should not have to rely on resident's CCTV. Should be able to go to council rather than knocking on residents' doors late at night, which can be disconcerting for elderly residents.

Public Participant 3 Church Walk/ Canon Square.

Ongoing ASB and suspected drug dealing. CCTV coverage is inadequate. Culprits have realised some areas are not covered.

Public Participation 4 CCTV.

Given that the CCTV system is not live monitored, how can we be sure that the 70 + cameras are working and showing good quality images? Is there a clear plan and appropriate log system in place, so that we can retain and note incidents that are caught on CCTV?

Public Participation 5 Lighting in KGV.

Disappointed with quality of the survey and feels questions were loaded and pejorative and designed to get the response that everyone loves the lights. Did not address the purpose agreed to 10th June last year which was a survey to look at the impact of lights on residents.

If everyone likes and wants the lights will go along with that but a democracy should take account and notice of the interests of minorities. This has not happened on this occasion.

Wished to clarify some comments on social media and in report that she had said the lights interfered with her sleep (not mentioned by name but clearly aimed at her). She had never said this. Was called selfish for not having blackout curtains. Has in fact had them for at least the last 40 years.

Decision making trail in minutes was torturous and difficult. Difficult to see proper consideration of financial side, decision not to tender etc. Unable to find consideration of ongoing revenue costs. Unable to find evidence that bio-diversity policy taken into account or expert opinion obtained.

Public Participation 6 Lighting in KGV/Eco Loos/Dog Park.

KGV. Not seen results of survey. Chair thought she had sent link but will send again.

Eco Loos. Installed in 2022 but not serviceable. What are the costings and how much has it cost so far to have two attempts to connect to mains sewerage? The Chair advised that there was an item on the agenda about re-opening the eco loos.

Dog Park. What is happening? Chair confirmed that this was also an agenda item.

Public Participation 7 Lighting in KGV.

Some talk of dimming the lights. Most common response, particularly from women, was they felt safer with the lights. (Objection from public area that survey had no gender information). Clarified meant from personal knowledge. Requests not dimmed as lighting to path adjacent to Lowbourn would then be insufficient.

Public Participation 8.

1: Project update dated September 2024. Is this the last update or an error? Chair confirmed there had been discussion at the last meeting and there are further updates in the agenda. Therefore probably a misprint.

2: Will the council be considering the use of mobile CCTV in Church Walk/Canon Square. Chair – that option is not on the agenda and thinks it is considered inappropriate to use mobile camera in that area. Council must rely on the police to advise where they feel mobile CCTV would be useful.

3: Has there been any discussion of whether dimming KGV lights would have an effect on clarity of CCTV images?

Public Participation 9.

Item 10 Asset Transfer. Is there a report or is it just the costs for Bath Road toilets attached? Answer - Costings are to show a comparative cost. Further details in the Clerks report.

Goalposts motion. Confirmed Wiltshire Council happy for goalposts to be replaced. Councillor Rabey advised there was now the possibility of doing more than just replace a single goalpost.

70/24 Minutes

The minutes of 16th December 2024, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair Councillor A Westbrook.

71/24 CCTV

The General Manager/Facilities gave an update on CCTV working group meeting. Referencing public participation, he confirmed that there was a log, recordings remain on file for 30 days and the cameras are checked regularly.

Councillor J Westbrook joined the meeting at this point.

There was discussion on the request for additional CCTV. Councillor A Westbrook advised that Sgt Rutter felt CCTV would be beneficial. She also urged residents to report any suspected incidents to Wiltshire Police as they were not getting the number of reports they would expect with a major problem.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED for the clerk to look at extending the fixed CCTV system and report back with costings and suitable location with input from Wiltshire Police.

72/24 KGV Lighting Survey

This item was advanced up the agenda.

Members discussed the survey. The views and concerns of residents were noted and acknowledged.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the report and confirm that the lights are to remain at the level they now are.

73/24 Play Areas

This item was advanced up the agenda.

The Deputy Clerk gave an update. Turrets had been remodelled. Sign off was due on Thursday 27th February and official opening set for Saturday 1st March.

The report and complaint were noted. The Clerk would be responding to the complaint.

74/24 Budget 2024/25

The report was noted.

75/24 Assembly Hall

This item was considered in confidential session.

76/24 Report of the Clerk

Church Street Toilets.

Noted.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED for the clerk to further investigate the feasibility of the project based on the bullet points in the report and the possibility of obtaining grants.

Town Centre Tuesday Market.

Members were in favour of the Clerk exploring Melksham Town Council taking over management of the market.

Blue Pool.

The report was noted. Questions were asked as follows.

Will the water tanks situated over the Assembly Hall but part of the Blue Pool be removed? Chair advised her understanding was that all Blue Pool equipment would be removed.

Where will the budget for a project manager come from? Chair advised that would be a matter for the Personnel Committee.

Would councillors be invited to the informal meeting with architects? Yes. It was confirmed that the meeting would not be on Monday 3rd March and would be re-arranged.

Town Hall Clock.

Noted.

Green Flag Status.

Noted. The Chair confirmed she had seen the report and considered it a good report.

Sensory Garden.

Noted. It was confirmed the site was currently too waterlogged to proceed.

A question was asked about re-instating the mosaic. The Chair confirmed that a sun and shade survey would be conducted to establish the best location for the sun dial/mosaic.

Dog Park.

Noted. As above, currently waterlogged.

Eco Toilets.

Noted.

It was **resolved** to open as soon as possible.

Signage.

Noted.

Splashpad.

Noted.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Rabey spoke to the application. She advised that grant funding may be available and it may be possible to do more than replace a basic post. The motion would be resubmitted once this had been investigated.

It was **unanimously resolved** that the Deputy Clerk would investigate what, if any, grants were available.

78/24 Assembly Hall

This item was considered in confidential session.

79/24 Asset Transfers

See 77/24 above.

80/24 Splashpad

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to renew the splashpad maintenance contract.

In reply to questions from members the Clerk confirmed that budget was allocated in Project Funding and arrangements were in hand for staffing the splashpad.

81/24 Allotments

The report was noted. Members asked if figures could be provided for plots rented but not being cultivated.

Questions were asked as follows.

Update on land grab. Clerk did not have answer but would find out.

Where were allotments advertised? On Facebook.

82/24 Community Gardens

Councillor J Westbrook gave an update.

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that, with the agreement of current tenant, the allotment plot can be utilised for community use.

83/24 Wiltshire Play Pitch Strategy

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would represent Melksham Town Council at the meeting.

84/24 Town Development

An update was given.

85/24 Shurnhold Fields

86/24 Shurnhold Fields Working Group

It was **unanimously resolved** to ratify the decisions made at the Shurnhold Fields meeting of 24th September 2024.

87/24 Shurnhold Fields Improvements

Members were not happy to proceed without a gate and some questioned the need for a carpark at all.

It was **resolved** to take the matter to Full Council and invite Melksham Without Parish Council to send a representative.

88/24 Friends of Shurnhold Fields

It was **resolved** to approve payment from the joint fund for the purchase of new tools.

89/24 Friends of KGV

It was noted that there was a meeting on Monday 11th March 2025 at Evies Kitchen.

90/24 King George V Park

See 77/24 above.

91/24 Project Update

Noted.

92/24 Confidential Session

It was **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential and sensitive nature of the business about to be transacted, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the public and press are excluded and are instructed to withdraw.

93/24 Assembly Hall

The General Manager/Facilities presented a report on the potential benefits of a ticket split or reduced hire and ticket split. Members discussed the issue and the historical issues.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that the Assembly Hall General Manager/Facilities in discussion with the Clerk, be permitted to make decisions on hall hire or ticket split based on historical information. New acts will be booked as a hall hire until the bookings have proved successful.

There was discussion on the embargo on running events and how this affected current regular events. The General Manager/Facilities indicated his wish to hold a tea-dance for VE Day. Members liked the idea of a tea dance and discussed the possibility of an Assembly Hall Committee with authority to approve one off events.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the General Manager/Facilities and the Clerk would look at the possibility of holding a tea-dance and whether this could be funded from budget currently allocation to VE Day. On other events, the status quo would remain for the time being.

It was agreed that the question of an Assembly Hall Committee was a question for the new council.

94/24 Quotes

There were no quotes to agree.

Meeting Closed at: 9.30 pm

Signed:

Dated: