

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of Full Council

on Monday 14th July 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S Rabey Town Mayor
Councillor J Westbrook Deputy Town Mayor
Councillor P Aves
Councillor E Calland
Councillor R Cleary
Councillor M Drewett
Councillor G Elson
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor C Stokes
Councillor A Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE

OFFICERS Hayley Bell Action CEO/Town Clerk
Andrew Meacham Committee Clerk

PUBLIC: 3 members of the public and 1 member of the press were present and 8 members of the public were present virtually

69/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Alford (personal) and Councillor Crossley (work)

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

RESOLVED to accept the apologies.

Councillor Hubbard raised a query on the vote and whether it was intended that a vote to accept apologies was intended to reset the clock on the 6 month rule. There was some discussion and it was agreed that Council should discuss and vote on the matter at the next Full Council meeting. Councillor Hubbard requested that tonight's vote should not have any impact on the 6 month rule.

70/25 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

71/25 Public Participation

Public Participation 1.

Q. Has there been any discussion around contingency plans in the event of a repeat of the cancellation of the Christmas Light Event?

A. There has been no discussion yet but there will be. The Council is currently recruiting for a Community Development Officer and they would need to be a part of that process.

Q. Has work on the council website been completed? Are all features in place?

A. Yes, just some fine tuning to be done.

Public Participation 2

Spoke on joint working of Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council, East of Melksham Community Centre and Cooper Avon.

Present to represent Melksham Transport Users Group.

Also a member of Wilts & Berks Canal Trust and would ask that Melksham Town Council consider appointing a rep.

The Town Mayor Councillor Rabey confirmed that there had been correspondence about East of Melksham Community Hall

72/25 Questions from Councillors

Councillors had no questions.

73/25 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor had no announcements.

74/25 Reports from Unitary Councillors.

Councillor Griffin

Planning application for 2 Sarum Avenue approved. Area Board has an agenda planning session on Wednesday.

Councillor Hubbard

Wiltshire Council in process of developing new Business Plan. Consultation is open and Wiltshire Council keen to get input from Town Councils. Intended to get final document back to council for approval in October.

Initiative announced today to provide 6000 children with free swimming in the school holidays. Any young person registered or applied for FUEL programme or any secondary

school aged young person on free school meals. Pilot programme but hoping to extend in the future.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Melksham Town Council puts on record that it is delighted that Wiltshire Council is giving free swimming sessions to young people in Melksham and across Wiltshire.

Area Board is identifying priorities. Any input would be appreciated.

Over a third of British Dyslexia Association recognised Dyslexia Friendly Schools are based in Wiltshire.

Councillor J Westbrook

Wiltshire Council has announced that it is returning full budget back to LHFIF.

75/25 Outside Bodies

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint representatives to outside bodies as follows:

Elblag Twinning Association - Councillor Aves

Melksham Almshouses – Town Mayor Councillor Rabey and Councillor A Westbrook

Melksham Carnival – Deputy Town Mayor Councillor J Westbrook and Councillor Elson

Melksham Transport Group – Town Mayor Councillor Rabey and Councillor Calland

Melksham Riverside Club - Deputy Town Mayor Councillor J Westbrook

Wiltshire and Berks Canal Trust - Councillor Griffin

It was agreed that Councillor Elson would be an informal first point of contact for Friends of Melksham Hospital

76/25 Bank Signatories

It was proposed by Deputy Town Mayor Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Cleary and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint members to the pool of signatories as follows:

Reconciliation – Councillor Drewett, Councillor Elson, Councillor Griffin, Councillor Stokes,

Signature – Councillor Aves, Councillor Calland, Councillor Cleary, Councillor Hubbard, Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, Councillor A Westbrook, Deputy Town Mayor Councillor J Westbrook

77/25 Audio Recording Policy

The Town Mayor Councillor Rabey advised that it had already been picked up that the time for uploading to YouTube was not as the resolution and will be amended to 24 hours.

A change was suggested to paragraph 5.1 but it was pointed out that the change would be unlawful.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve and adopt the policy with the following amendments

- 3. 4 Amend to read *“The recording of meetings will be uploaded, unedited, to YouTube within 24 hours of the meeting unless the item was within Part 2 of the agenda or for the purposes of public decency.”*
- 5.1 Add email address for contact
- 6.2 Remove this paragraph

78/25 Complaints Policy

It was proposed by Councillor Elson, seconded by Councillor Cleary and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve and adopt the policy with the following amendments:-

- All references to Chairman to be changed to Mayor
- Clause 4 Remove the second paragraph
- Clause 5 Remove the words *“In any case”*

79/25 Co-Option Policy

The following points were raised.

- Introduction – paragraph 3 amend to read *“A copy of the vacancy notice must be sent to the Returning Officer at Wiltshire Council so that the progress can be monitored.”*
- Clause 4 – Remove the requirement to attend at least one full Council meeting as an observer as this requirement will considerably slow down the process.
- Clause 5 - says what happens if not enough candidates come forward to fill vacancies but does not say what happens if the Town Council vote doesn't fill all vacancies.
- Clause 5 - concerns that not allowing abstentions is not lawful.
- Change Parish Council to Town Council
- Put policy in same format as all other policies.

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

UNANIMOUSLY AGREED that councillors would review the policy and email any comments/suggestions to the committee clerk with a view to an amended document coming back to the next meeting for consideration.

80/25 Publication Scheme Policy

The following points were raised.

- 1.2.8 Council obliged to have a register of items that have been requested under the Freedom of Information Act. This should be referenced here or as another sub paragraph
- No reference to GDPR

The Town Mayor Councillor Rabey requested that councillors email their comments to the committee clerk.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to bring this policy back to the next meeting

81/25 Social Media Policy

The following points were raised.

Clause 4.2 – stipulate who is authorised.

Clause 4.3 – change *“non-political”* to *“non partisan”*

Clause 6 – remove *“These platforms include but are not limited to:”* and remove the named platforms

Clause 7.2 – Replace with *“Anything that breach UK Government Guidelines on hate speech, harassment and discrimination.”*

Clauses 7.3 & 8.1 – not happy with these. Councillors must be allowed to engage in political debate. Suggest changed to say *“Councillors should not engage in political debate on Melksham Town Council social media account”*

There was great concern and debate over what could be defined as Political Debate.

It was suggested that the introduction did not align with a recent decision of council.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the policy should be redrafted from scratch.

82/25 Blue Pool

The item was noted. It was felt that the insurance and business rates were high.

The following suggestions and requests were made.

CEO/Town Clerk to look at any possible exemptions or discounts for the business rates.

CEO/Town Clerk to check the rebuild cost as insurance will be based on this and rebuilding as a swimming pool and gym. Melksham Town Council did not intend to rebuild as a swimming pool and gym.

CEO/Town Clerk to look at the possibility of re-registering the Blue Pool as part of the Assembly Hall which would attract business rates as one unit and as a Community Hall rather than as a swimming pool. It was noted that the Blue Pool and Assembly Hall are one physical building and an argument should be made on this basis. Daily internal checks should be made on the building to argue that it is not empty.

CEO/Town Clerk to provide a projected timeline for development of the Blue Pool.

83/25 Shurnhold Fields

The item was noted

84/25 Other Items to Note

The CEO/Town Clerk spoke to the grant application to Area Board. Members confirmed that any projects should be approved by Council before grant applications are made.

Items were noted.

85/25 Cemeteries Task & Finish Group

There were no volunteers and the matter was deferred to the next Full Council meeting.

Meeting closed at: 20:25

Signed

Dated