

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 21st March 2022

PRESENT:

Councillor J Hubbard (Town Mayor)
Councillor C Goodhind (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor J Crundell
Councillor S Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor C Forgacs
Councillor S Mortimer
Councillor J Oatley
Councillor T Price
Councillor S Rabey

OFFICERS:

Linda Roberts	Town Clerk
Hugh Davies	Amenities Manager
Patsy Clover	Acting Deputy Town Clerk
Christine Hunter	Committee Clerk

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

Adrienne Westbrook raised her concern that decisions about the future of the Cricketers' Café were being made by the Council behind closed doors. She stated this was not democratic and it was wrong to discuss the Café in such a way. The King George V park is a destination park with a variety of attractions for visitors apart from having an accessible café. She asked the council to think carefully about whether they would approve the report's recommendations contained in the agenda and reinforced how important the park is to the Melksham Community.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, recognised the importance of the park to the people of Melksham and stated that the agenda item on the Cricketer's Café would be considered carefully by Council.

250/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Houghton.

251/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

252/22 Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

253/22 Minutes

The Town Clerk stated that the minute numbering from the previous meeting was incorrect and required amending.

The Town Clerk also advised that the Solar Farm monies received this year were now included in the Earmarked Reserves. The Committee Clerk would amend minute item 239/21.4 in the minutes of 24 January 2022 to reflect this.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to amend the minute numbering on the minutes dated 24 January 2022, and minute item 239/21.4 to confirm that the Solar monies would be included in the Earmarked Reserves.

The 24 January 2022 minutes would be approved and signed at the next meeting of the council.

254/22 Town Mayor's Announcements

The date of the Mayor's Civic reception was noted. The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard gave an overview of the schedule for the evening of the Mayors Reception.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, confirmed that the Annual Meeting to be held on 16 May 2022, where the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be elected and positions on committees appointed.

255/22 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Alford reported that at the Wiltshire Council Budget meeting held in January 2022, the following budget decisions had been made:
He confirmed at the meeting:

- a 3.5% council tax increase with a 1% increase on the Adult Social Care levy.
- the process to apply for Luncheon Club funding had been amended to allow for new applications to the Luncheon Club.
- to increase car parking charges.
- to charge for disabled parking
- agreed increases in children's and adult social care funding.

Councillor Alford confirmed that Wiltshire Council had decided not to charge for parking at the Campus initially, but to monitor the Campus parking use. If there is no abuse of the system there will be no charge for time limited parking.

Councillor Alford reported that the Area Board and Wiltshire Wildlife Trust have been working together on a project at Clackers Brook. He also reported on and a significant tree planting scheme near Lacock. Councillor Alford advised that they would be looking for volunteers.

256/22 Accounts

Councillor Mortimer advised that the payments report, agenda item 7.1, had not been received at the Finance, Administration and Performance Meeting held on 14 March 2022. The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, suggested that the financial reports be deferred to the next Full Council meeting for approval.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that agenda item 7 be deferred until an investigation had been undertaken to identify which reports had been considered by the Finance, Administration and Performance meeting held on 14 March 2022.

257/22 Committee Minutes

257/22.1 Asset Management and Amenities Committee

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Asset Management Committee meeting held on 14 February 2022.

257/22.2 Bench Sponsorship Policy

Members discussed the proposed Bench Sponsorship policy considering the type of bench suggested, inclusion of , length of time that plaques are allowed to remain, and plaque content. Councillor Price suggested a memorial area be delegated in the dog run of King George V park and that benches have a vessel for floral tributes.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Bench Sponsorship policy be amended and to delegate authority to the Asset Management and Amenities Committee to approve the revised policy at their meeting on 19 April 2022.

It was also requested that all members see a copy of the amended policy before approval at the meeting.

The amendments to the policy include:

1. Policy Item 4.1 include the wording “if a bench has been donated, once it is installed it becomes the Town Council’s property”.
2. Policy item 4.1 after words “ for the” add the words “choice, specification and” before the words “procurement of the bench”.
3. Floral tributes – add “the council reserves the right to remove all floral tributes left by the bench within (time frame to be specified) days”.
4. Policy item 4.5 delete the wording “who have lived within the town (within the last 4 years)”
5. Policy Item 4.6 amend the wording “may contain the name of the person and date of birth and death only” to explain that a more personal inscription is allowed on a bench plaque.
6. Policy Item 4.6 Delete the wording “at the end of a 10-year period any memorial plaque shall be removed and may be collected by the applicant”.

257/22.3 Community Development Committee

Members considered the list of proposed events from the Community Development Committee for Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations. At the Town Clerk’s suggestion it was agreed that a Jubilee Celebrations Working Group would be set up with Councillors Goodhind, Aves, Price and Mortimer to be members. The Working Group would create an action plan and designate time to support the events.

Councillor Rabey raised concerns from the Avon Bowls Club regarding the proposal to close the Market Place as they require access for a Centenary event at that time.

It was proposed by Councillor Oatley, seconded by Councillor J Crundell, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Community Development Committee meeting held on 7 March 2022.

It was proposed by Councillor Oatley, seconded by Councillor J Crundell, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Mortimer as the town council representative on the Melksham Carnival Committee.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, seconded

by Councillor J Oatley, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to note the draft Action Plan of activities proposed by the Community Development Committee and to approve their recommendation that £6,000 be used from the General Reserves, to fund the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration events. Of that £6,000 an allocation of £1,000 to be allocated specifically to provide children's entertainment in King George V Park at the picnic event scheduled for Sunday 5 June 2022.

257/22.4 Economic Development and Planning Committee

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meetings held on 31 January 2022, 14 February 2022 and the draft minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on 14 March 2022.

257/22.5 Finance, Administration and Performance Committee

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

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee meeting held on 14 March 2022.

257/22.6 Staffing Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Alford, seconded by Councillor Price and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 28 February 2022.

The Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Goodhind, asked for an explanation of why the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference were being made and what the difference was between the previous and proposed changes. The Town Clerk confirmed the staffing Committee had requested these changes to the Terms of Reference. Councillor Alford explained that the previous staffing issue were dealt with by the Staffing Committee who did not have the experience or qualifications to deal with H.R. matters. It is the Town Clerk's responsibility to manage all staffing issues except the

employment of the Town Clerk.

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

RESOLVED to approve the proposed new Terms of reference subject to the following amendments:

1. That the posts making up the Senior Management Team are clearly identified in the terms of reference, and
2. They include an explanation that all actions delegated to the Town Clerk are exclusive of the Senior Management team, whose employment matters would be dealt with by the Staffing Committee.

258/22 Working Group Notes

258/22.1 Business Review Working Group

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, Councillor Oatley and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the draft notes of the Business Review Working Group meeting held on 22 February 2022.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to suspended Standing Orders.

Adrienne Westbrook raised her concerns that the Cricketer's Café is not being used efficiently and suggested that any form of provision of refreshments would be better than the café being closed.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

258/22.2 Cricketer's Cafe

The report of the Acting Deputy Town Clerk was noted.

Following discussion Councillor Alford stated Council needed a unified view on what is wanted for the facility, based on evidence from members of the public.

The Town Clerk advised that NVB architects had quoted for a new design and layout at the Cricketer's Pavilion, going on to advise that NVB had been involved in the Masterplan for King George V Park and the public consultation exercise.

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

RESOLVED to get a temporary solution prior to opening the Cricketer's Café this year. To appoint NVB Architects, with a budget of £5,000, to carry out a community consultation to explore the best operation at the Cricketer's Café. Those findings to come back to an Extraordinary Council meeting to be scheduled for June 2022.

258/22.3 Building Condition Report

Condition Reports:

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to:

- undertake the red highlighted works as recommended in the report and that a scheduled review of works to be undertaken every four years, with an annual report on properties in order that every new council is aware of the building condition.
- undertake works to the Melksham Independent News building and the Art House Café building needed for Health and Safety reasons (red per the reports) with costs to be met from the Unplanned Maintenance budget and the General Reserve.
- the remainder of the works (amber and green per the reports) to be put on hold for budgetary reasons.

258/22.4 Strategic Plan

The Town Clerk confirmed the Strategic Plan is a way for the council to share its aims and objectives with the community. In addition to the Strategic Plan it is envisaged that each committee would have its own action plan linked to a budget.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to defer approval of the Strategic Plan and ask the Town Clerk to arrange a Saturday Visioning Day to finalise the Strategic Plan.

258/22.5 Environment and Climate Working Group

Councillor Ellis asked if members of the public could attend the Environment and Climate working Group. The Town Clerk replied if the Working Group felt they needed to allow members of the public to attend it would require approval from Full Council.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the draft notes of the Environment and Climate Working Group meeting held on 3 March 2022.

259/22 Neighbourhood Plan

The notes of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 9 February 2022 were received and noted.

Councillor Rabey reported that the ongoing work with Place on the next part of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan had begun.

The Town Clerk explained that now that legislation has changed and Neighbourhood Plans only protect against a lack of 5-year housing land supply for two years that the review would extend Melksham's protection.

The themes covered in the review include:

- Local Green Space
- Implications of the By-Pass
- Town Centre (Masterplan)
- Environmental Issues
- Implications of the Melksham Canal Link
- Strengthening the existing Heritage Policy – creating a local list of assets

The Town Clerk advised that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group would be seeking town council representation on the themes who would form sub groups of the steering group.

The Town Clerk also confirmed that there would be a Housing Needs Assessment. This assessment was to establish the types of houses the Melksham Community will require in line with local demographics.

Councillor S Rabey explained that there had been an appeal against a planning decision at Townsend Farm (Melksham Without) which was being held up as a test of the Joint

Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. An expert had been engaged to provide advice and assistance at a cost of £1000.00

260/22 Written Motion from Councillors

The Motion from Councillor Mortimer was received.

The motion included a suggestion that the town council lease some of the disabled parking spaces in the town from Wiltshire Council to enable drivers who use the disabled parking spaces to continue to do so for free past 1 April 2022; with the town council meeting the cost directly with Wiltshire.

Councillor Alford explained at this time that Wiltshire Council have no policy in place regarding any leasing arrangements on disabled parking spaces. Once the Traffic Regulation Order had been approved and a policy in place it is anticipated that Wiltshire Council will be in a position to work with local councils who would like to lease disabled parking spaces.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to ask the Town Clerk to request that Wiltshire Council notify the Town Council as soon as a policy has been agreed and to note the town council's interest in a scheme to lease disabled parking spaces albeit subject to budget implications.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Hubbard, advised it was approaching 10pm and in accordance with Standing Orders the meeting would close at 10pm. The Town Mayor requested that the remaining agenda items be referred to a rescheduled Full Council meeting. The Town Mayor suggested that meeting to take place on the rising of the Economic Development and Planning Committee on Monday 4 April 2022.

Meeting Closed at: 10.00 pm

Signed:

Dated: