

## **Melksham Town Council**

### **Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 20th June 2022**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Crundell  
Councillor S Mortimer  
Councillor P Alford  
Councillor P Aves  
Councillor G Cooke  
Councillor G Ellis  
Councillor C Goodhind  
Councillor J Hubbard  
Councillor L Lewis  
Councillor J Oatley  
Councillor S Rabey

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Linda Roberts	Town Clerk
	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Patsy Clover	Deputy Town Clerk
	Christine Hunter	Committee Clerk

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** One member of the press was present. Two members of the public were present virtually.

Pam Wiltshire complemented the town for the Jubilee weekend celebrations which were outstanding and passed her congratulations to everyone for all the hard work. She stated it was lovely to see the town decorated, the planting looking exceptionally good with much improved hanging baskets. Pam asked if anything would be happening to improve the Prince of Wales Gardens area. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, confirmed that the Head of Operations would provide Pam with a written response to her question.

#### **292/22 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors J Crundell and Houghton.

#### **293/22 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **294/22 Minutes**

Councillor Ellis requested that Agenda Item 16 be amended to show a correct permanent record of the current membership of the Publicly Owned Assets in

Melksham Working Group (Councillors Aves, Ellis and S Crundell). The Town Clerk confirmed the agenda would be amended and republished.

The Town Clerk advised that she had requested an amendment to the draft minutes be made to reflect the correct membership of the Publicly Owned Assets Working Group but the circulated draft minutes did not reflect the amendment.

Councillor Hubbard disputed the accuracy of the draft minute number 290/22 of the Annual Meeting held on 16 May 2022. Councillor Hubbard stated that the draft minutes excluded new members of the Publicly Owned Assets in Melksham Working Group from being elected, that Councillor Alford was a Wiltshire Council representative on that Working Group and did not record the request for confirmation of the permitted number of Melksham Town Councillors on the Working Group.

Councillor Hubbard requested that the minutes be amended to include these comments as a true record of the discussion.

It was agreed that minute no. 290/22 be amended to show that Councillor Alford is a Wiltshire Council representative on the Melksham Public Assets Working Group, and had been requested to seek clarification from Wiltshire Council about the number of Town Councillors allowed to be on the Working Group and report back to the next Full Council meeting scheduled for 20 June 2022. The resolution would be amended to show the correct membership as agreed at the Annual Meeting on 16 May 2022, that being Councillors Aves, Ellis and S. Crundell, and that following confirmation of the maximum number of Town Councillors permitted on the Working Group, members would be appointed at the next Full Council meeting. The amended draft minutes would be circulated to councillors for approval at the next Full Council meeting scheduled for 25 July 2022.

#### **295/22 Town Mayors Announcements**

The Town Mayor confirmed that the Town Clerk had met with Wiltshire Officers in connection with Wiltshire Council's Standards and Well Being work. Reminding members that the Town Clerk had sent a link and invitation to the Positive Conduct – Positive Democracy webinar scheduled for 7 July at 5pm via Microsoft Teams.

The Town Clerk confirmed that it would be useful for Councillors to attend the webinar adding that the National Association of Local Council's 'Society of Local Council Clerks and One Voice Wales Civility and Respect' campaign had captured the interest of Wiltshire Council.

#### **296/22 Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from Councillors.

## **297/22     Reports from Unitary Councillors**

Councillor Alford updated members on the Christie Miller site, advising that residents had raised concerns about the effect of the demolition on nesting birds. He confirmed that inspections had taken place and all works had been carried out to the highest possible standard.

Councillor Alford confirmed that the Area Board were reviewing Campus opening times. He also advised that Wiltshire Council would make an announcement soon on various options available to support people in financial difficulties.

Councillor Alford explained that the challenges around waste collections were a national problem with bins locally being collected late. Councillor Rabey suggested that Wiltshire Council could put notices on social media informing residents of late bin collections.

Councillor Hubbard reported on behalf of Wiltshire Children's Services and confirmed that two summer holiday camps would be running in Melksham providing positive activities and a daily meal for the young people attending, every child on the free school meals scheme could attend any of the holiday camps in the county.

## **298/22     Police Area Report May 2022**

The Police Area report for May 2022 was received.

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, confirmed that there had been some positive news with the Youth Offending Team. Councillor Hubbard suggested inviting a police member to the next Full Council meeting to present the report.

## **299/22     Accounts**

Members noted that the Financial Reports had not been reviewed by the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee before being submitted to this meeting. A request was made that Finance, Administration, and Performance Committee meetings were scheduled prior to Full Council Meetings to enable this.

### **299/22.1     Petty Cash to 30 April 2022 (Month 1)**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the petty cash payments.

### **299/22.2     List of Payments to 30 April 2022 (Month 1)**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the list of payments.

**299/22.3    Monthly Financial Statement to 30 April 2022 (Month 1)**

The monthly financial statement was noted.

Councillor Hubbard questioned why the Council had a small sum of money in a higher interest account and £1.3m in two deposit accounts. Councillor Hubbard requested that in order to spread the risk suggestions of options for the investment of the £1.3m be forwarded to the next Full Council meeting.

Councillor Mortimer asked that the Financial Statement dates for the Earmarked Reserves, CIL and Solar Farm monies be amended from 2021 to 2022.

**299/22.4    Detailed Income & Expenditure Report at 30 April 2022 (Month 1)**

The detailed Income and Expenditure report was noted.

**300/22    Town Council Income Received Report to 30 April 2022 (Month 1)**

The Income Received report was noted.

Councillor Hubbard asked for clarification that the reports had been reviewed at the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee, in accordance with the agreed policy, before being submitted to Full Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee had not met to be able to review these reports, but that they were included in the External Auditor's Report. The Town Clerk confirmed that the minutes of this meeting would record that the finance reports had not been reviewed by the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee.

**301/22    Earmarked Reserves at 30 April 2022 (Month 1)**

The Earmarked Reserves were received.

**302/22    Year End Budget Report 2021-2022**

The Year End Budget Report for 2021-2022 was noted.

Councillor Mortimer asked for clarification regarding the grants (Page 46 of the agenda) where it stated that there is a grant for Party in the Park. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, explained that in January the Council had approved

usage of Party in the Park grant funding to support the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the report would be checked and explained that a heading in the accounts could not be changed, but that a note would be added to the report to explain expenditure of Party in the Park grant funding.

### **303/22 Bank Signatories**

Members noted that Councillor Goodhind remained a signatory on the Town Council's Unity Trust Bank Account, this had not been recorded in the previous minutes. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, made a request for Councillors to come forward as signatories to the bank account.

### **304/22 Internal Auditor's Report 2021-2022**

The Internal Auditor's Report 2021-2022 was received.

Councillor Hubbard asked why the Rialtas Sales Ledger tool had not been used during the year as its use had been suggested to improve good practice. He asked what steps had been implemented to ensure that it is now working correctly?

Councillor Hubbard asked why casual staff had been paid double which had been picked up by the Auditor? The Deputy Town Clerk explained that Wiltshire Council erroneously paid casual staff double during December 2021 which was rectified in the January 2022 payroll.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the audit had identified the risk of having all Council funding in two current accounts. With the adoption of the new policy, Diversification of Investments and Interest Earning Potential, the risk could be spread, following the auditor's recommendation.

Councillor Hubbard raised his concern about the debit card spending limits due to the large amount of funds held in the current accounts. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that, currently, the debit cards have a £500 limit per calendar month which is inadequate and officers are progressing with increasing the limit. She explained that all debit card spending is closely monitored.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive and adopt the Internal Auditor's report and the recommendations contained therein, noting that officers had already addressed the recommendations.

#### **304/22.1 Diversification of Investments and Interest Earning Potential**

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk was received.

Councillor Hubbard asked whether the Town Clerk had delegated authority to open additional bank accounts and what were the specific instructions regarding signatures, as three minimum would be required for safety? The Town Clerk replied that legislation excluded Town Clerks from being bank signatories and that she understood the financial regulations to include a minimum of three signatories on each account.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to accept the proposals in the Diversification of Town Council Funds report with two amendments:-

1) the policy wording to be amended from “to a maximum of two accounts” to “to open as many accounts as deemed necessary with other financial institutions”.

2) to include the following wording in the policy “with a minimum of three signatories”, and

to delegate authority to the Town Clerk to open as many accounts as deemed necessary to ‘spread the risk’, and increase the council’s interest earning potential with a maximum investment of £150,000 in each new account.

### **305/22 External Audit 2021-2022 - Approval of the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements**

Councillor Hubbard requested that in future all External and Internal Auditor reports be forwarded to Finance, Administration and Performance Committee before approval by Full Council.

#### **305/22.1 Annual Governance Statement 2021/2022**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2021/2022 and for the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, to sign the Annual Governance Statement as detailed in Section 1.

#### **305/22.2 Accounting Statement 2021/2022**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the Accounting Statements for 2021/2022 and for the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, to sign

the Accounting Statements as detailed in Section 2.

### **306/22 Neighbourhood Plan**

Councillor Hubbard reported that the meeting of all the Neighbourhood Plan Task Groups had been very positive and constructive, with expertise being supplied by Place Studios. The Task Groups had already met to progress items allocated for action.

Councillor Aves updated on the Housing Working Group and reported that work was much quicker and more thorough in Neighbourhood Plan #2 (NHP#2).

Councillor Goodhind agreed to present to the Area Board Meeting on 22 June 2022 alongside Melksham Without Parish Councillors on the progress to date of the NHP#2.

Members noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Survey closes on 30 June 2022. Councillor Aves confirmed that the evidence gathered would be essential in forming housing requirements for developers. Councillor Hubbard suggested the information is placed on the Town Council's Facebook and website pages.

Councillor Hubbard explained that the appeal for the development of 100% affordable homes at Townsend Farm had been supported, as Wiltshire Council were failing to reach the affordable homes target. He reported that the Regulation 14 protection was unchanged.

Councillor Hubbard explained that a resolution was passed at the last meeting of the Economic Development and Planning Committee that Melksham Without Parish Council (MWPC) would be asked to part fund Priority for People which would become part of the NHP#2. If this was not agreed by MWPC the project would be reviewed. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, suggested that the council should wait for the outcome of tonight's MWPC meeting where the decision would be made whether they would part-fund the project. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that there is a very tight deadline with the NHP#2 - Regulation 14 must be applied for by the Autumn 2022 subject to Wiltshire Council submitting the draft emerging Local Plan. She suggested the Town Clerk, and Councillors Ellis and Rabey discuss this separately.

#### **Town Centre Masterplan**

The Town Clerk requested that members passed a resolution confirming that the Town Centre Masterplan would be included in the reviewed Neighbourhood Plan. Adding that this would mean policies made would have planning weight. A separate Masterplan would not be afforded this weight.

The Town Clerk also reported that the brief for the Town Centre Masterplan had been sent to AECOM who were going to supply technical support for the Masterplan.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Town Master Plan would become part of the Neighbourhood Plan#2.

### **307/22 Financial Regulations 2022**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to adopt the Financial Regulations 2022 with the amendments to 5.2 as resolved at the Full Council meeting held on 16 May 2022.

### **308/22 Committee Minutes**

Members agreed to vote for the following minutes of committees en bloc.

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Aves and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive the draft minutes of the Community Development Committee meeting held on 13 June 2022 and the minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meetings held on 4 April 2022, 9 May 2022 and the draft minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on 6 June 2022.

### **309/22 Staffing Committee**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Staffing Committee meetings held on 27 April, 12 May 2022 and the draft minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 2 June 2022.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the resolution from the Staffing Committee meeting held on 2 June 2022 to dissolve the Grievance Investigation Sub-committee.

### **310/22 Working Group Minutes**



**311/22 Parks Working Group**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive the draft notes of the Parks Working Group meeting held on 10 May 2022.

**312/22 Environment and Climate Working Group**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive the draft notes of the Environment and Climate Working Group meetings held on 23 March 2022, 20 April 2022, and 18 May 2022.

**313/22 Membership of Publicly Owned Assets in Melksham Working Group**

Councillor Hubbard asked if any meetings organised to discuss publicly owned assets in Melksham would be restricted to Working Group members, as it is Town Council policy to allow councillors to attend any working group meetings. Councillor Aves explained that there were representatives from the Town Council on the Working Group and they could feed back to other town councillors from those meetings.

Councillor Hubbard expressed his concern that it had been reported in the local press and Wiltshire Councillors had contacted officers suggesting that the Town Council is moving to Melksham House. Councillor Alford confirmed that this rumour did not come from the Publicly Owned Assets in Melksham Working Group.

Councillor Ellis asked for the agenda for the Annual Meeting held on 16 May 2022 be amended to record the correct members of the Working Group. The Town Clerk confirmed that the agenda would be amended.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to defer the item to the next Full Council meeting to be held on 25 July 2022 where membership will be confirmed and new members will be elected if allowed by Wiltshire Council.

**314/22 Membership of Wilts and Berks Canal Trust**

It was agreed that Councillor Goodhind would be the Town Council representative to the Wiltshire & Berks Canal Trust.

**315/22 Garden Licence Policy**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to adopt the Garden Licence Policy.

**316/22 Clackers Brook Habitat Improvement Works**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust improvement works to Clackers Brook and to request that the soil from the bund would be used to provide an additional facility for the young people of Melksham, i.e. a BMX track.

**317/22 Hire Rates for Melksham Town Hall**

The report of the Head of Operations of Operations was received.

Members discussed different rates of hire charges for the Town Hall similar to those at the Assembly Hall, day and evening rates and the target income needed to cover costs.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to ask the Head of Operations produce a proposal for approval at the next Full Council meeting scheduled for 25 July 2022, including average income from Town Hall hires over the previous three year period and a formula to drive the rate of charges for hire of the Town Hall compared with other local hire rates.

**318/22 Wiltshire Council Reopening High Streets Safely: Dressing Award**

The report of the Communications Officer was received.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported on a meeting held with City Dressing for temporary additions to the high street, confirming that legacy items were not allowed, the European brief is extremely restrictive and timescales are short.

Members noted that the £10,000 grant covered all three items proposed.

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

**RESOLVED** to instruct the Deputy Town Clerk to approve the use of the City Dressing award at a cost of no more than the £10,000 to be awarded for the temporary provision of lamp banners, a pop-up park and an animal trail.

**319/22 Park Signage**

The report of the Communications Officer was received.

Members considered the example park sign and requested three amended sample signs be produced to include the town crest, QR Codes, increased font size, and more appropriate What Three Words.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to delegate to the Town Clerk the progress this further with three option templates to be produced for Council approval at the meeting scheduled for 25 July 2022 which would include QR codes, the town crest and more appropriate What Three Words.

**320/22 Items for Information**

The Town Clerk explained that the extra 10% CIL funding from the Neighbourhood Plan would be used on projects that would benefit both Melksham Town and Melksham Without Parish, and that the CIL Working Group would be required to come up with schemes on which projects to fund for approval by both councils.

Councillors Hubbard, Ellis and Mortimer agreed to be representatives on the CIL Working Group, with Councillor Oatley as substitute.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to receive:

- the minutes of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust Branch Meeting held on 3 May 2022, the Branch Officer's report for April 2022 and On the Button for April and May 2022.
- the notes of the Wiltshire Swindon & Oxfordshire Canal Partnership meeting held on 3 March 2022 and
- the dates of the Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Wiltshire Local Performance and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

**321/22 Motions from Councillors**

**322/22 Motion for the Introduction of an annual Public Visioning Day**

The Motion for the introduction of an annual Public Visioning Day had been withdrawn by Councillor Price.

**323/22 Motion for Banning Mobile Phones in Meetings**

The motion from Councillor Price for the banning of the use of mobile phones during council meetings was received.

Members discussed whether this request should be advisory rather than a mandatory rule, policing/enforcing the use of mobile phones in meetings, codes of good practice, respect for members and for the committee business.

The Town Clerk confirmed that councillors and members of the public are lawfully allowed to report on social media, the proceedings of council meetings.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to defer this item and invite the mover to have further discussions with the Town Clerk.

9.58 pm.

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

**RESOLVED** that in accordance with Standing Orders the meeting would continue after 10.00 pm.

**324/22 Motion to Improve Communications and Team Working**

Councillors Aves and Hubbard suggested that the motion should not be undertaken in confidential session as it was about working practices of the Town Council.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to bring the motion into the public session of the meeting.

The Motion from Councillor Goodhind was received.

Councillor Goodhind explained that his motion was in four parts and that the implementation of Sharepoint would improve communications, act as a tool to track progress/delays on projects and improve team working. Members

considered duplication of work, training on the system and recognised increased workload for officers.

Councillor Hubbard left the meeting at 10.27 pm.

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

**RESOLVED** to approve points 1,3, and 4 of the motion and

It was proposed by Councillor Aves, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to arrange an Extraordinary Full Council meeting to address the issues relating to point 2 of Councillor Goodhind's motion to improve communications and team working.

**325/22 Confidential Session**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that in view of the sensitive nature of the business to be transacted the press and public were requested to withdraw.

**326/22 East of Melksham Community Centre**

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk was received.

The Town Clerk explained that officers were exploring a variety of options to progress the East of Melksham Community Centre build.

Members considered various sites and the benefits to the community.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to request officers to pursue the proposed alternative site for the construction of a Community Centre.

Meeting Closed at: 10.55 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**