

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 30th January 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor S Crundell (Town Mayor)
Councillor S Mortimer (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Cooke
Councillor J Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor C Houghton
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor L Lewis
Councillor J Oatley
Councillor S Rabey

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor M Sankey – Wiltshire Council

OFFICERS:	Linda Roberts	Town Clerk
	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Patsy Clover	Deputy Town Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: One member of the public and press was present.

415/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Forgacs, Goodhind, and Price.

416/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

417/22 Questions from Councillors

No questions were raised.

418/22 Minutes

The minutes of 19 December 2022, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

419/22 Town Mayor's Announcements

No announcements were made by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

420/22 Police Report

Members received an update report from PC James Twyford.

421/22 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Alford provided an update on the following topics:

- A cabinet meeting on 31 January to discuss the proposed 5% increase for 2023/2024 to the council tax charged by Wiltshire Council
- A change to Wiltshire Council's social housing allocation policy has been proposed. Those leaving care and joining the social housing register and under occupiers looking to downsize will automatically move to band 1 – being the highest priority band
- Recent heavy rain has identified two areas of flooding – Shaw School and the A350 at Beanacre. Poor maintenance and a failure to keep the water courses clear has led to flooding and a pressure back up.

Councillor Hubbard advised members that 4Youth had been awarded £50,000 per annum for five years from the National Lottery Community Fund.

422/22 Lighting in East Ward

Due to the interest from the public in this agenda item the Town Mayor, Councillor Crundell, proposed that this matter be heard before the budget.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders allowing members of the public to speak.

Joe McCann wished to thank Councillor Lewis for her hard work and bringing the matter to the attention of the Town Council. He understood that the issue was not the Council's problem in the first instance but appreciated their support for what could be a quick result.

Councillor Sankey wanted to add his support to all those calling for lighting in the east of Melksham including the landowner, Forest and Sandridge school, the local police, local residents, and those who had responded to the consultation.

He explained that no concerns had been raised by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and that work could go ahead under permitted development, suggesting that the scheme could

be financed using the Community Infrastructure Levy and solar farm monies to quickly deliver a scheme which would provide a major community benefit.

Councillor Lewis confirmed that she had carried out the research requested and was investigating any ecology issues on the pathway highlighted in 'yellow' in the agenda pack.

Councillor Rabey spoke in her capacity as chair of the Environment and Climate Working Group requesting that any ecology work was reported to the Working Group for consideration.

It was noted that option 2 included a warranty for the lights and that options 1 and 2 used batteries, adding that the Town Council's Amenities Team could change the batteries when required. The ability to control the PIRs and the effect on insects and wildlife was discussed.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to proceed with option 2, delegating responsibility to the Town Clerk to liaise with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. If Wiltshire Wildlife Trust identified any problems the item would be brought back to Full Council on 27 February. If Wiltshire Wildlife Trust had no objections, then the project should proceed. Funding for the project to come from solar farm monies.

423/22 2023/2024 Draft Budget

Members considered the draft budget proposal for 2023/2024. Members acknowledged the current cost of living crisis and the difficulties this placed on residents and the council's desire to be fair to residents at this time by not adding any further financial burden on their residents. After a lengthy discussion a zero% increase was achieved. After some discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Alford, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the precept for 2023/2024 be set at £999,784, representing a zero% rise for a band D property. The budget deficit would be met as follows:

General Reserve - £70,000

Precept Support Fund - £20,000

Solar Farm - £10,000 - (set aside for the Sandridge Road/Maple Close highway project in conjunction with Wiltshire Council Highways).

General Reserve – balance - £31,306.

424/22 Assembly Hall Survey

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to task the Assembly Hall Working Group with making a recommendation to Full Council after clarifying the results of Community First's Assembly Hall survey report.

425/22 Melksham Community Support - Age UK funded post, Service Level Agreement and Job Description

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to support the proposed post, jointly with Melksham Without Parish Council, to a value of £11,500.

426/22 Wiltshire Council Surplus Property Procedure - Melksham House

It was noted that an expression of interest wouldn't commit the Town Council to anything with Wiltshire Council regarding Melksham House but would enable engagement regarding possible options for the building.

Councillor Hubbard was concerned that the document contained no information about any financial obligations which may arise should the Town Council decide to take on Melksham House.

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

RESOLVED to submit an expression of interest to Wiltshire Council regarding Melksham House.

Councillor Hubbard requested that his vote against the proposal was recorded in the minutes

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to create a Melksham House Working Group, appointing the following councillors as members:

Councillor Aves
Councillor Ellis
Councillor Mortimer
Councillor Cooke
Councillor Oatley

427/22 Neighbourhood Plan

428/22 Letter to Melksham Town Council from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group re green space designation

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the areas of land identified as suitable for local green Space designation as part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

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

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

429/22 Confidential Session

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

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

430/22 Payment for HR Services

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the invoice for payment.

Meeting Closed at: 10.03 pm

Signed:

Dated: