

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 27th February 2023

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Three members of the public were in attendance. Two members of the public in attendance via Zoom.

OFFICERS:	Linda Roberts	Town Clerk
	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

The Town Mayor invited Adrienne Westbrook forward to address Council.

Adrienne reminded advised Council how the Splashpad was funded as she had become aware that some did not know. It was funded from Solar Farm monies and a European Union grant. Adrienne confirmed that no precept had been used toward the cost of the Splashpad. Whilst acknowledging many of the projects from the KGV Masterplan had been delivered; it does not reduce the Council's commitment to the work in KGV. The new administration had voted to abolish the KGV Sub Committee but Adrienne remarked that nothing is happening now in KGV and in order to get the work done that the sub-committee should be reformed.

The Town Mayor invited Ian Cardy forward to address Council.

Ian remarked on the serious problems facing the world, the country and Melksham in relation to CO2 and climate change. Our attention to biodiversity is very poor and some actions taken by the Council are disappointing. The planned nature area in KGV is now a dog run so any benefit planned for biodiversity have gone.

Lighting in the park will increase CO2, including the manufacture and installation of said lights.

Why is the Sensory Garden not going to be done? It will benefit all and increase biodiversity. Sensory gardens are of enormous benefit to the community but instead of the original plans there will be lamp posts.

The Environment and Climate group is not very successful with meetings cancelled, hence the tree planting did not get started until January, we have lost two years of tree planting. The Environment and Climate Committee appear to be breaking up with many resignations. Council needs to confirm it will do something about biodiversity in the town.

431/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Cooke, J Crundell, Forgacs and Lewis.

432/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

433/22 Questions from Councillors

There were no questions from Councillors.

434/22 Minutes

The minutes of 30 January 2023, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

435/22 Town Mayor's Announcements

There were no Town Mayor's announcements.

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell requested that agenda item 25.4, Sensory Garden, would be heard next to allow the resident in attendance to raise their points at the beginning of the meeting rather than wait until near the end of the meeting.

436/22 Sensory Garden

This agenda item was brought forward and debated as the first item of business to allow David Walker to address Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that Standing Orders be suspended to allow David Walker to speak.

David explained that he had been involved in the working group which had worked on the plans for the creation of a Sensory Garden in KGV. He advised Council that his own garden had been in the 'Melksham, Open Gardens Day'. He explained that the working group had included people who added value to the Sensory Garden Plans who had explored how the Sensory Garden could benefit people with sensory impairment or disability and that it was a shame that plans had been shelved; adding that the

Spiritualist Garden does not satisfy the sensory need as had been suggested in a news article in the Melksham Independent News.

A Sensory Garden is a space for everyone to enjoy including young children and families using KGV. David explained that it can be difficult for carers trying to provide mental and emotional stimulation to those they look after. The Sensory Garden is what residents deserve and not to deliver one would be a disservice to the town.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Councillor Mortimer advised she had been under the impression a Sensory Garden should be a 'quiet' space yet the planned location was next to a busy road. Councillor Price stated that the original budget of £80,000 was too high but he would support a smaller budget to get it completed.

Councillor Aves stated that the spoil is a problem; wild flowers could be planted relatively easily and quickly.

Councillor Hubbard reminded members that the original budget was £25,000 and the Sensory Garden should be delivered at a budget more in line with the original estimate. Councillor Rabey wished to see it done properly, there are lots of ideas and mood boards and the scheme for the Sensory Garden has been discussed in detail.

Councillor Ellis noted that at agenda item 15 the motion for a BMX pump track was to be discussed and the motion suggested that hardcore material would be required for the BMX track. Could the projects be done together, ie spoil from the bund at the sensory garden be relocated to the BMX track and therefore provide some costs savings.

Councillor Alford suggested that the millennium mosaic would add significant cost and could it be incorporated elsewhere?

Councillor Goodhind asked where the Council were with the preparation of the tender.

Councillor Hubbard suggested that the original planned budget of £25,000 as part of the KGV masterplan should be followed and to explore what could be delivered for this budget. Then the Sensory Garden could be improved year on year with further features. A timeline of two years with a phased approach to elements should be drawn up.

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

RESOLVED to get a costed plan for a budget of £25,000 for delivery over a two-year staged period.

The Police Report was noted.

438/22 Reports from Unitary Councillors

No reports.

439/22 Interim Internal Audit Report 2022/2023

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and approve the Internal Audit Report and to note the actions taken on the recommendations contained therein.

440/22 Authorities for Town Council Bank Accounts

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to add Councillors Houghton and Oatley to the list of members approved to carry out bank reconciliations.

441/22 Assembly Hall Bank Account

The Town Clerk reported that the switching of bank accounts was in accordance with the Town Council's Investment Policy.

Councillor Hubbard advised that Treasury Management should be delegated to officers with the Council approving the treasury reports.

442/22 Financial Risk Assessment and Reserves Policy

Councillor Hubbard requested that as the revisions to the Financial Risk Assessment and Reserves Policy were not highlighted and therefore easily identifiable that adoption of the two financial policies be deferred.

443/22 Investment Strategy

This agenda item was deferred to another meeting of the Council.

444/22 Broadcasting of meetings via Zoom and Virtual Meetings Policy

The policy attached in the agenda was one relating to previous meeting legislation which allowed council meetings to take place virtually. The legislation had since been rescinded so no changes to the policy were required.

445/22 Suez Communities Fund - England

Councillor Aves suggested that the Town Council could apply for funding from the Suez Communities fund for the sensory garden. It was noted that the Town Council would need to provide 11% of the project costs (as the applicant).

Councillor Alford suggested that Council note the funding is available and that officers would consider grant funding opportunities for Town Council activities and projects.

446/22 Motions from Councillors

BMX Pump Track – Motion from Councillor Hubbard

Members discussed the motion in detail and made the following points:

- Members supported the idea but a better location would be in Forest (East Ward)
- It was suggested that the location of Burnett Play Area was not the best it is a large play area which was well used
- A better location Methuen Park
- Methuen already has a cycle track
- There was overall support but the best location needs to be determined
- The lease agreement on Methuen Play Area would need to be checked
- Undertake an exercise to explore other potential sites in the town that may be suitable for a BMX track facility in conjunction with JB Extreme Landscapes who can provide advice on the best location
- Funding to come from the Solar Farm monies

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to

Support the principle of installing a BMX Pump Track at a suitable location in the Town to be determined from guidance offered by JB Extreme Landscapes

That the Town Clerk is instructed to arrange site visits with JB Extreme Landscapes to fully assess available sites. That JB Extreme Landscapes draw up a design/tender document on the council's behalf to be used as the start the tender procurement exercise for the facility.

Such work to be structured in a way that will not preclude JB Extreme Landscapes from being able to tender for the job should they wish to do so. (subject to auditors' advice)

To report back to council, not after July 2023 on the outcome of the above steps with a fully costed proposal for the project to be placed for tender, with the aim of having the new facility open for Easter 2024.

447/22 Accounts

447/22.1 List of Payments to 31 December 2022

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the list of payments to 31 December 2022.

447/22.2 Petty Cash to 31 December 2022

The Petty Cash payments for months 5,6,7,8 and 9 were noted.

447/22.3 Monthly Financial Statements to 31 December 2022

The monthly financial statements for month 5,6,7,8 & 9 up to 31 December 2022 were noted.

The Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Mortimer noted that the miss postings identified still required amendment.

448/22 Cash Book Reports to 31 December 2022

The cash book reports to 31 December 2022 were noted.

448/22.1 Detailed Income & Expenditure Report as at 31 December 2022

The detailed Income and Expenditure Report as at 31 December 2022 was noted.

449/22 Earmarked Reserves to 31 December 2022

The ear marked reserves to 31 December 2022 were noted.

450/22 Committee Minutes

450/22.1 Asset Management and Amenities Committee

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Crundell, seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Mortimer to receive the minutes of the Asset Management and Amenities Committee meetings held on 17 October 2022 and 5 December 2022 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2023 and to approve the recommendation from the Asset Management and

Amenities Committee made at its meeting on 6 February 2023.

To approve the quote from Contractor one for reparatory works to the fencing in the Park. Payment was to be made initially from the replacement play equipment budget, with a recommendation to Full Council that the expenditure be vired from the green spaces ear marked reserve.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the virement of funds from the Green Spaces ear marked reserve to fund the reparatory works to the fencing in KGV playing field.

451/22 Community Development Committee

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Community Development Committee meeting held on 23 January 2023.

451/22.1 Economic Development and Planning Committee

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meetings held on 10 October 2022, 14 November 2022, 12 December 2022 and 9 January 2023 and the draft minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meeting held on 13 February 2023.

451/22.2 Finance Administration and Performance Committee

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Finance Admin and Performance Committee meetings held on 26 September 2022 and 28 November 2022 and the draft minutes of the Finance Administration and Performance Committee meeting held on 23 January 2023.

452/22 Staffing Committee

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Staffing Committee meetings held on 8 November 2022, 16 November 2022 and 29 November 2022.

453/22 Working Group Notes

454/22 Assembly Hall Working Group

The notes of the Assembly Hall Working Group meeting held on 27 September 2022 and the draft notes of the Assembly Hall Working Group meeting held on 15 November 2022 were received.

455/22 Assembly Hall Working Group Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Assembly Hall Working Group had previously been approved by council.

456/22 Appointment of a new Representative

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Oatley would become a member of the Assembly Hall Working Group.

457/22 Environment and Climate Working Group

The notes of the Climate & Environment Working Group meetings held on 19 October 2022 and 18 January 2023 and the draft notes of the Climate & Environment working Group meeting held on 15 February 2023 were received.

Members discussed the recommendation made at the 18 January 2023 working group meeting that any projects with an effect on ecology, biodiversity or climate should be referred back to the Climate & Environment Working Group for input.

Members stated that it is the responsibility of the Council to consider the implications on ecology, biodiversity and climate. Working Groups are formed to do a specific task and it would be for the Council to decide whether any decision on these matters should be referred for input from the working group.

458/22 Appointment of a new Representative and Chair

The appointment of a new Chair and representative of the Environment & Climate working group was deferred to the Annual Meeting scheduled for Monday 15 May 2023.

459/22 Tree Planting

Following the advice of the contactor, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell, seconded by Councillor Oatley and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to postpone the tree planting until the beginning of the next planting season, November 2023.

460/22 Events Working Group

There were no notes to receive.

461/22 Civic Awards Working Group

The working group membership had previously been approved.

462/22 Melksham Community Support - Age UK funded post, Service Level Agreement

Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell, seconded by Councillor Oatley and

RESOLVED to approve the Service Level Agreement and fund the post to a maximum of £11,500.

The job description for the jointly funded post was received and noted.

It was also noted that the service would be supported by a grant of £5,000 from the Area Board.

463/22 East of Melksham Community Centre

The East of Melksham Community Centre would be deferred to later meeting.

464/22 Neighbourhood Plan

Following a recommendation from the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell it was **RESOLVED** to bring item 22, Neighbourhood Plan immediately following the Sensory Garden agenda item.

The draft notes of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meeting held on 20 November 2022 were received. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping report was noted.

465/22 Neighbourhood Plan Terms of Reference

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the revised Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference.

466/22 Town Centre Master Plan

Cooper Tires Closure

Referring to the closure of Cooper Tires, Councillor Price reminded Council that the factory had been in the town for 100 years. Councillor Price suggested that the historic items housed in and at the factory should be kept and preserved and possible displayed in a trail around the town. Councillor Price added that the formation of a small working group to work with those affected by the closure; to work on retaining any historic memorabilia items would be useful. The working group could also work with some employees, share opportunities for employment which may arise and assist in the organisation of a Job Fair. The working group should also liaise with the Economic Development team at Wiltshire Council.

Retaining important heritage and memories before they are lost is essential. Importantly the Council should be involved in any S106 negotiations which may arise from development of the site in the future and working with Wiltshire Council's Spatial Planning team long in advance of any planned development of the site.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to form a Cooper Tire working group comprising of Councillors; Alford, S Crundell, Ellis, Mortimer, Price and Rabey.

Town Centre Masterplan

Vaughan Thompson of Place Studios addressed Council on the next steps for the draft Town Centre Masterplan and Place Studio's proposal to assist.

Vaughan explained that the Neighbourhood plan is a local policy framework and within it is a policy to protect, promote sustainability and vitality of the town centre. The Town Centre Masterplan will provide direction, vision and strategy.

The made Neighbourhood Plan; currently under review is focusing on key issues, site allocations and the progression and commitment of a Town Centre Masterplan, for which the steering group have secured significant technical support from AECOM who have worked on and suggested a set of priorities for the town centre. The priorities are currently going through a thorough and effective public engagement process, already

positive feedback is being received. The results from the engagement exercise will be woven into the draft Town Centre Masterplan.

The Neighbourhood Plan will provide policy support and the Masterplan will be supported by Neighbourhood Plan policies. When finalised in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan it will need to move forward into delivery.

The Masterplan will be a 'sister' document to the Neighbourhood Plan; specifically, about the town centre. The proposal is to extend Place Studios support in the same package as the Neighbourhood Plan costs. There would be four streams of work:

- Strategy
- Partnerships
- Projects to move forward
- Town planning

The support will ensure that the development of the town centre is what the Town Council agrees and approves. The role for Place Studios will be to add further support to the Town Council to enable the Masterplan to move forward.

In answer to questions from members about how tangible were the benefits of a Masterplan Vaughan stated that the current Neighbourhood Plan is already working for the town. Having a Masterplan shows the Town Council are being proactive, that all the ducks are in a row with a strategy and that the Town Council would get listened to first. If the Town Council does nothing, then nothing will happen. It cannot be ignored that there are big changes in the world of retail. The newly opened Campus is an additional asset in the town centre. There is clearly a desire to hold onto Cooper Tires heritage. These are good examples of what a Masterplan can do in managing development and harnessing change. To ensure the Masterplan is strong it must have delivery commitments and resource.

Councillor Aves stated that the town needs this Masterplan; there are changes on the horizon and we must have something. With the radically changing town centres there is value in having a Masterplan to consider and adapt to those changes.

The Town Mayor, Councillor Crundell supported the offer of support in the next phase of the draft Town Centre Masterplan subject to detailed information on phases of work and budgets.

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

RESOLVED to approve the offer of further support on the draft Town Centre Masterplan from Place Studios subject to detailed agreement on phases of work and budget required.

Councillor Hubbard suggested that a day of training is arranged for councillors as there is a lack of understanding of what a Town Centre Masterplan is and what it can achieve.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to request a training session by Place Studios to aid members understanding of what a Town Centre Masterplan is, the benefits of having one and what they can deliver.

467/22 Closed churchyard

To be deferred to another meeting of the council.

468/22 Tender Evaluation Panel

To be deferred to another meeting of the Council.

469/22 King George V Park

The following Agenda items of business were not transacted prior to 10pm, the end of the Council meeting. 25.1 Maintenance building, 25.2, Car Park and 25.3 Adventure Centre; they will be deferred to another meeting of the Council.

469/22.1 Maintenance Building

Deferred to another meeting of the Council.

469/22.2 Car Park

Deferred to another meeting of the Council.

470/22 Adventure Centre

Deferred to another meeting of the Council.

471/22 Items for Information

472/22 Wilts & Berks Canal Trust

The minutes of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust AGM and branch meetings held on 17 January 2023 and the January Branch meeting were noted.

473/22 Dorset & Wilts Fire and Rescue Authority meetings

The dates of the meetings of the Dorset & Wilts Fire and Rescue Authority Local Performance Scrutiny meetings were noted as:

- 2 March 2023
- 1 June 2023
- 31 August 2023
- 29 February 2024
- 5 June 2024

Meeting Closed at: 10.00 pm

Signed:

Dated: