

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 25th September 2023

PRESENT:

Councillor S Crundell (Town Mayor)
Councillor S Mortimer
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Cooke
Councillor J Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor T Price (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public was present virtually and one member of the press was present

OFFICERS:	Heather Parks	Locum
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk

Public Participation

Joe McCann asked for updates on a number of items.

- CCTV Mobile Deployment Cameras. Has anything happened since they have been returned to the Council. The Locum Clerk advised that they are back in the office and she cannot report on anything else having been done.
- High Pavement. This was referred to LHFIG. Has anything been reported back. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell asked the Locum Clerk to chase.
- Maintenance Shed demolition. The Locum Clerk advised that notice has been received from Wiltshire Council today and Melksham Council will not be speaking to the contractors. The Locum Clerk was unable to give a timescale.
- Sensory Garden. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell said that he had raised this with Head of Operations and the Amenities Team would be working on the Sensory Garden but timing would depend on what was agreed by Asset Management and Amenities Committee.
- Recording of meeting 26 June 2023. Joe had asked for a copy of the recording and was advised that the recording held was about 10 minutes long. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell consulted with the Locum Clerk and the Committee Clerk and advised that the recording did not exist and the reason was not known.

Apologies were received from Councillor Forgacs, Councillor Goodhind, Councillor Oatley and Councillor Rabey.

567/23 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Price declared an interest in relation to agenda item 14 Lighting to Forest Community Centre as a resident of Bowmans Court. Councillor Price remained in the meeting and took part in the debate on this item.

568/23 Questions from Councillors

Councillor Mortimer submitted questions, shown below with the answers given.

Q1: When and where is the other cycle repair kit to be installed?

A1: At the Pavillion when the refurbishment has finished.

Q2: When is the deficit of the budget 2023/24 going to be transferred to Ear Mark reserves ie agreed Precept support?

A2: Accountant has confirmed that the sum can be transferred if and when, ie, towards the end of the financial year when it is known for certain that there will be a deficit.

Q3: How many picnic blankets do we have left?

A3: Twelve.

Q4: When is the double gate in the dog park going to be replaced so that it opens safely on to hard ground and also allows for safe entry for buggies and wheelchair users?

A4: We are waiting on the fencing contractors availability.

Q5: Do we have any equipment for cleaning the street gutters?

A5: If you mean surface cleaning, the Amenities Team have recently been doing this. If you mean below the surface, then no.

(Councillor Aves confirmed Amenities Team had been clearing with shovels and a wheelbarrow).

569/23 Minutes

Councillor Hubbard pointed out that at the Full Council meeting on 17 July 2023, he had requested that his "Questions from Councillors" be recorded in the minutes in full. The Locum Clerk said she would amend the minutes and they would be submitted to a subsequent meeting for approval.

The minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 17 July 2023 and the Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 17 August 2023, having previously been

circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

Councillor Hubbard referred to Public Participation on 17 July 2023 and asked if Natasha Gardner had received a written reply. The Locum Clerk confirmed that a written reply had not been provided.

570/23 Conclusion of audit year ended 31 March 2023

This item was deferred to a later date, as the document had not been supplied to the Council at the time of the meeting.

571/23 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell advised that there was a Wiltshire Local Plan consultation event on 4 October 2023 between 3pm to 7pm at the Melksham Community Campus. He urged councillors to attend and asked councillors to encourage residents in their wards to attend.

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell, on behalf of the council, thanked the Amenities team for the floral displays around the town.

572/23 Police Report

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell summarised the police report, which was noted.

573/23 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Hubbard reported the following

Wiltshire Council had received £10million in funding for road improvements. It is planned to split the funding across all 18 community areas. He advised that Wiltshire Council is responsible for over 2500 miles of roads and, due to rising costs, has funding for about 67 miles of full resurfacing. The question of repairing pavements adjacent to the road at the same time has been discussed but the tarmacs used are of different types.

Ofsted are inspecting Childrens' Services this week

Councillor Hubbard has been appointed Deputy Chair of the Local Government Association Children and Young People's Board.

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell congratulated Councillor Hubbard on his appointment and also asked about a report that Wiltshire Council had received £1million funding for EV Charging Points. Councillor Hubbard had seen the report. He

had not yet been able to follow up on this but was able to explain why the report said that nearly half the sum would be spent on staff.

574/23 Accounts

574/23.1 Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/07/2023

This item was deferred. Councillor Mortimer felt Budget Headings and Financial Statements should be approved by Finance Committee before coming to full council.

Councillor Alford arrived during discussion of this item at 7:30pm.

574/23.2 Monthly Financial Statement 31 July 2023

This item was deferred.

574/23.3 Unity Payments

Councillor Mortimer raised some queries which the Locum Clerk will discuss with the Finance Officer and provide a response. Subject to that, the item was received.

574/23.4 Unity Receipts

The item was received.

574/23.5 Lloyds Payments

Councillor Hubbard raised a query on water rates, which was resolved. The item was received.

574/23.6 Lloyds Receipts

Councillor Hubbard raised a query on Rock 'n' Roll Night. It was suggested that "b" stood for bar. Locum Clerk will check this. Councillor Mortimer made an observation about room hire. Subject to this, the item was received.

574/23.7 Petty Cash Payments

This item was not discussed.

574/23.8 Petty Cash Receipts

This item was not discussed.

575/23 Motion to create a Project Scrutiny Subcommittee

Councillor Westbrook set out the details of her motion. The motion was discussed and some councillors expressed the view that a project manager was needed.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that project plans be incorporated into Finance, Administration and Performance Committee. The agenda for Finance, Administration and Performance Committee include a standing item for the Clerk to present updated project plans for each of the current projects being undertaken by the Council, in line with the suggestions outlined in Councillor Westbrook's Project Plan Template.

Councillor Westbrook agreed to provide training to officers.

576/23 Policy Review and Adoption

577/23 Grants Application Policy

There was discussion on whether the date should be removed from the policy to avoid the need to approve every year if there are no changes.

There was discussion on the question of how room hire within grants should be dealt with.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard and seconded by Councillor Mortimer to amend the policy as follows

"There are three grant types:

- Room hire grants enable the Town Council to fund room hire in both the Town Hall and the Assembly Hall for a specified number of events, *which will be paid by means of a voucher from the Town Council.*
- Regular grants are for applications for less than £1000, which can be applied for quarterly *and will be paid by means of either a cheque or bank transfer.*
- Major Grants are awarded annually for up to four years at a time; this offers financial assurance to larger organisations operating within Melksham Town. Applications for major grants must be received by 30 September of each year in order to be considered in the Town Council's budget for the following financial year. Major grants will only be awarded to organisations based in the town, *and will be paid by means of either a cheque or bank transfer.*

It was proposed by Councillor Ellis and seconded by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell to amend the policy as follows

Under section 5. Ineligibility – Grant applications originating from national organisations or *national* charities.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to adopt the Melksham Town Council Grant Application Policy 2023-2024 with the amendments.

Councillor Hubbard asked the Locum Clerk to ensure that all policies have a version number on it.

578/23 Awarding Freedom of Town Policy

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to amend the policy so that 3.2 reads “Members will vote and the motion will require a two-thirds majority of members present”, and to adopt the policy with that amendment.

Councillor Hubbard asked if the nomination form could be more exciting. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell asked that the town crest should be on the nomination form.

579/23 Dog Agility Area

It was believed that funding was to come from unspent funds from play equipment and agreed that any such funds would now be back in General Reserves.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to move the balance of the sum upto £20000 from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserves.

580/23 Joint Panel Accountability and Government Practitioners' guide

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell temporarily left the meeting and the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Tom Price took over as chair.

Councillor Mortimer asked for guidance on what sections were relevant to the Town Council. Councillor Hubbard asked for a report to come to Finance, Administration and Performance setting out what the Town Council needs to do and concentrate on.

The Joint Panel Accountability and Government Practitioners' guide was received and noted.

581/23 Lighting to Forest Community Centre

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell asked whether the item should be discussed without Councillor Oatley present to comment on consultation with residents of

Bowmans Court. Councillor Price spoke on the question and consultation and also an alternative option of non-solar bollard lighting.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to proceed with company A for 4 high level lights at a cost of £7400 exc. VAT, subject to the council sending a letter to residents of Bowman Court setting out the proposal and the matter being returned to full council to consider the result of such consultation.

582/23 BMX Pump Track

There was discussion on proposed sites and the way forward.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the matter be put out to tender for a BMX Pump Track to be installed in Melksham at a site to be confirmed with the winning tender. Tender to include as suggestions, but not limited to Forrester's Park, next to Skate Park in KGV, Hazelwood Road play area and Burnet Close play area.

There was a discussion on sources of funding.

583/23 Appointment of Councillor Westbrook to Committee

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Westbrook to Community Development Committee and Economic Development and Planning Committee.

584/23 Report to Accompany Financial Statements

There was a discussion on the matter. The Locum Clerk confirmed she would speak with the Finance Officer and prepare a report.

585/23 Committee Minutes

Councillor Price asked for it to be noted that he is not a member of Community Development Committee and for the record to be amended.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the committee minutes en bloc.

585/23.1 Asset Management and Amenities Committee

Received.

585/23.2 Community Development Committee

Received.

585/23.3 Economic Development and Planning Committee

Received.

585/23.4 Finance Administration and Performance Committee

Received.

586/23 Staffing Committee

Received.

587/23 Working Group Minutes

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to receive the Working Group notes en bloc.

588/23 Assembly Hall Working Group

Received.

589/23 Environment & Climate Working Group

Received.

590/23 Events Working Group

Received.

591/23 Assembly Hall & Blue Pool

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell stated the meeting should not go into confidential session yet as the document submitted to Wiltshire Council is confidential but the decision does not have to be.

592/23 Updating report

The updating report was received.

593/23 Asset Transfer

It was generally felt that a decision could not be made at this meeting.

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

RESOLVED to leave all options on the table and make no decision pending receipt of the structural engineers report. Councillor Alford abstained.

594/23 RIBA Competition

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell proposed an Architecture Prize to obtain blueprints and options for use of the building.

There was discussion, after which the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell withdrew his proposal.

Councillor Hubbard asked for the plans that were put before the old council to come before the current council. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell asked the Locum Clerk to try to find the plans.

595/23 Confidential Session

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

RESOLVED to discuss the following item in Confidential session pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; the Council, by resolution, may exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings. In view of the sensitive nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw.

The recording of the meeting was stopped.

596/23 Neighbourhood Plan

597/23 Local Green Space Designation

598/23 Approval of Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Ellis gave a summary of the site information.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve in principle the Neighbourhood Plan.

Meeting Closed at: 9.50 pm

Signed:

Dated: