

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Asset Management and Amenities Committee meeting held on Monday 9th October 2023

PRESENT: Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor S Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor J Oatley
Councillor S Rabey
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S Mortimer
Councillor C Stokes

OFFICERS:	Linda Roberts	Town Clerk
	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk

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

188/23 Appointment of Chair for the Meeting

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell as
Chair of the meeting.

189/23 Public Participation

Joe McCann of Melksham Independent News asked the following:

- An update on mobile CCTV. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell advised a written response would be provided. Joe asked for a response now. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell advised there was no further update but a written reply would be supplied.
- Dog Agility Area. Can the Council confirm that the Dog Park is safe. The Town Clerk advised that she was able to confirm this as she has liaised with The Kennel Club who have seen the equipment and she is working on a statement and signage. It should be noted that the equipment installed is not a competition agility course. It is for individual owners to assess whether their dog can manage the equipment.
- Maintenance Shed Demolition. Town Clerk has a statement to issue. The contractor will advise a date for demolition in the next three weeks.

- Breastfeeding Awareness Posters. Town Clerk does not have full information but will ensure Communications Officer contacts Joe.
- Missing meeting. Why was recoding taken down from Facebook. The Town Clerk advised she did not know.
- Locum. Has the position been advertised? Town Clerk confirmed role had not been advertised and a staffing review was underway. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell stated that public participation was not the appropriate forum for staffing matters but confirmed the Locum Clerk was not here permanently

190/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Chair of the Committee and Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Price who was substituted by Councillor Westbrook, Councillor Forgacs who was substituted by Councillor Alford, Vice-Chair of the Committee Councillor Goodhind who was substituted by Councillor Rabey and Councillor Cooke.

Councillor Mortimer advised that she understood she was substituting Councillor Cooke. The Town Clerk advised that she was not aware of this. Councillor Alford asked if Councillor Mortimer could substitute in any event. The Town Clerk confirmed that she should be advised beforehand but that Councillor Mortimer could substitute. Councillor Mortimer declined.

191/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

192/23 Minutes

The minutes of 7 August 2023 having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair and Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell.

193/23 King George V Park

Councillor Hubbard commended the report and the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell read out a statement from the Chair of the Committee Councillor Price.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow Paul Weymouth to speak and answer questions.

Councillor Hubbard asked about the entrance from Lowbourne and path from the carpark. Paul advised that there would be light overspill from the festoons and road but a spur would be possible.

There was discussion on the existing street lights on the path past the Adventure Centre.

Councillor Oatley arrived at 7:25.

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell asked about a spur outside the Cricketers Café with colour changing lights. Paul advised it would be better to have separate lighting powered from Pavilion as that would allow Craig to have control.

Councillor Mortimer asked about the route from the car-park to the Adventure Centre. It was pointed out that this was covered by Part 3 of the quote.

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell informed the committee that as the matter had gone to tender passing a resolution tonight would be against the procurement policy and financial regulations.

The Town Clerk, reading from the advice received stated

“The Council must ensure it follows its own procedures for the award of contracts as dictated by the Council’s adopted financial regulations.”

The Town Clerk commented that the advice that she asked the internal auditor about was right and sound and he noted that “..the councillor in his statement said he feels the quotes given is a very fair price. What is he basing that statement on? Where are the comparative quotes to confirm that price for the particular set of lights is fair, competitive and value for money. The Council has a duty to ensure it achieves best value at all times and without a comparison there is no way to confirm that.”

The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell asked councillors to think about the risk of a qualified audit. He then put the matter out for debate.

There were questions and discussion on existing quotes, the need or otherwise for fresh quotes, the criteria for deciding “best value” and the possible consequences of a qualified audit. Possible solutions were suggested and discussed.

The time -scale for installation was discussed.

Councillor Hubbard commented that whatever decision the committee made it would be against the council’s rules. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell noted that it was the Asset Management and Amenities Committee that asked Light Fantastic to look at options and the Asset Management and Amenities Committee that forced the quotation into the public domain.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard seconded by Councillor Rabey and

RESOLVED to proceed with quotes for main route, secondary route, fence mounted solar lights to the Adventure Centre Track and renovate the existing lights on

the path past the Adventure Centre as suggested in the report of Light Fantastic. (6 for, 1 against, 1 abstain).

194/23 Church Street Toilets

The notices were noted. Councillor Westbrook felt it should be considered as temporary signage.

195/23 Verbal Reports - Head of Operations

Head of Operations drew attention to the written reports submitted as late additions.

Town Hall as ceremonial venue for weddings. A three-year licence would cost £1900 and could probably charge about £3000 for each wedding package. The committee asked for a clear and detailed business plan with market research before the matter came back for decision.

Water Troughs. One trough installed and two more ready to be installed. Quote received for water supply to bottom end of Awdry Avenue allotments. The committee was not happy to spend the majority of the budget on one site. The committee asked for an audit of all allotment sites to include existing facilities and what facilities are required, such as raised beds and ¼ sized plots.

Assembly Hall roof repairs. Paul Seemayer has shown two local contractors the exact site of two leaks and there is one more contractor to do a site visit, after which quotes will be submitted for 6/12/18/24 month solutions. Head of operations with chase Structural Engineer's report.

Sensory Garden. Taken back in house but some work will need to be done by contractors. The idea of purchasing a chipper rather than hiring was raised and the committee requested this be costed.

Flower troughs in town. The possibility of replacing with Street Trees or tiered "wedding cake" type planters. It was noted that trees would remove the need for annual replanting and would have a cooling effect.

Eco-Loos. Seem to be over teething problems and working well. It is intended to make one suitable for disabled use Cleaned and restocked every day. Waste disposal has changed from bags to a pit with worms.

Meeting Closed at: 8.15 pm

Signed:

Dated: