

## **Melksham Town Council**

### **Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Monday 27th November 2023**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillor S Crundell (Town Mayor)  
Councillor P Alford  
Councillor P Aves  
Councillor G Cooke  
Councillor G Ellis  
Councillor J Hubbard  
Councillor S Mortimer  
Councillor S Rabey  
Councillor Stokes  
Councillor J Westbrook

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mike Sankey, Wiltshire Councillor

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Hugh Davies	Head of Operations
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk

One member of the public and one member of the press was present and one member of the public was virtually present

#### **Public Participation**

Colin Goodhind.

Asked questions on the Dog Park. What expertise and/or consultation was employed? What was the sign-off process and how was that linked to authorisation and payment for the installation? What involvement, even if only minimal, the councillor tabling the motion had? Several requests had been made and councillors had been copied in but no answers had been received. He expressed the view that these questions were relevant to any council project involving public money.

He asked for a commitment that he would receive a response and it would be made public. The Committee Clerk advised that he was unable to give a commitment on when but a response would be made. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell referred to the emergency motion which would go some way towards answering the questions.

Joe McCann

Was the statement of 22nd November 2023 the view of the Council or the Clerk. The Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell advised that the Council had not voted on it and it was therefore the view of the Clerk.

**622/23 Apologises**

Apologies were received from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Price.

**623/23 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**624/23 Questions from Councillors**

Questions had been received from Councillor Westbrook and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Price. In the absence of the Town Clerk, The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell advised that answers would be circulated by email once available.

Councillor Hubbard asked about mechanisms for passing on information in the event of sickness. The Town Mayor advised that this would be under discussion by the Staffing Committee and noted that the Locum Clerk would soon be retiring.

For the benefit of members of the public, Councillor Westbrook read out her questions.

**625/23 Minutes**

Councillor Ellis requested an amendment to 604/23 so that 'asked a follow up question' is replaced with 'repeated his question'.

Councillor Aves requested an amendment to 607/23 so that 'PSCO' is replaced with 'PCSO' and 'raining' is replaced with 'training'.

Councillor Aves requested an amendment to 610/23 so that the second reference to 'Councillor Hubbard' is replaced with 'Councillor Oatley'

Councillor Hubbard requested an amendment to 612/23 so that the wording 'Councillor Hubbard re-iterated that we are still not accurately recording our spends against budget codes' is inserted between the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs.

At the instruction of the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell the above amendments were made by hand and the minutes of 30 October 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

**626/23 Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell made the following announcements.

- The maintenance shed has now been demolished
- The Amenities Team has been undertaking restorative work to the poplar trees in King George V

- The Amenities Team has fixed the fire door, drainage and guttering behind the Assembly Hall to reduce risk of flooding
- There has been a general tidy up around the town
- Water refill point installed in April has saved an estimated 2889 single use plastic bottles
- A thank you to all involved in Remembrance Sunday

Councillor Hubbard, through the chair, expressed his thanks to the Amenities Team for clearing leaves in Laburnum Drive that were leaving a resident housebound.

## **627/23 Reports from Unitary Councillors**

Councillor Alford commented on efforts that were made to co-ordinate the various road closures and roadworks, in order to minimise disruption. He also advised that there was a 'meet the leader event' on Tuesday at the Campus.

Councillor Hubbard asked members to promote the FUEL event running over the Christmas break. He also advised that he had been appointed the local government director/trustee to The National Youth Agency.

## **628/23 Virements Requested by Head of Operations**

The Head of Operations gave his report.

There was discussion on the various items.

Councillor Mortimer indicated her view that KGV drainage should be coded 221/4106 from ear-marked reserves.

Councillor Hubbard asked if the new wi-fi system could be installed in the Town Hall and Assembly Hall at the same time as work is done on CCTV.

Concerns were raised about future management of the Assembly Hall.

It was generally felt that work on the Assembly Hall kitchens should be put on hold.

Councillor Mortimer raised the question of taxing the café building. The Town Mayor. Councillor S Crundell asked the Head of Operations to investigate the matter and bring it back to the next full council meeting if necessary.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor S Crundell and

### **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to**

- (i) obtain a quote and authorise payment of up to £2500 to be able to undertake works so that the wi-fi in the park, Town Hall and Assembly Hall are all utilising the same system.

- (ii) put Assembly Hall kitchen repairs on hold
- (iii) code drainage works as 221/4106
- (iv) approve other virements as requested.

**629/23 Budget 2024/2025**

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

**RESOLVED** to hold an informal full council budget meeting on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm.

Members who cannot attend on that day can send in their priorities.

**630/23 Biodiversity Policy**

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell suggested that it should be policy for the Town Council to increase planting. Councillor Hubbard questioned whether the policy was statutory and did the council therefore have power to make changes. The Committee Clerk suggested if the matter was referred to Environment and Climate Working Group, he would clarify the issue with the Locum Clerk before the meeting.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to refer the matter to the Environment and Climate Working Group to consider the policy and action plan and come back to the next full council meeting with suggestions for actions to take and smart objectives.

**631/23 East Melksham Community Hall**

Councillor Westbrook outlined the situation and there was discussion on the proposed site and the situation with Verbena Court.

The position was noted. Councillor Hubbard asked for a written update on when application was submitted, or if not yet submitted, when it will be and how can members access information about what has been submitted.

**632/23 Blue Pool/Assembly Hall**

There was discussion on what was required.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Councillor Aves and the Committee Clerk draft a brief for architects, to then be circulated to members for comment. Any suggestions for architects to be forwarded to the Committee Clerk who is delegated to circulate the brief to architects.

**633/23     Splashpad**

There was discussion on the best option for resurfacing, timing of resurfacing and usage of the splashpad.

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

**RESOLVED** to approve the resurfacing of the splashpad with the non-porous option funded from Major Projects and to instruct the budget group to allocate £5000 a year to a sink fund for the management of the splashpad.

**634/23     Motion on Social Media Policy**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to record and share all full council, committee and subcommittee meetings (excluding confidential sessions) to Facebook and for those videos to be kept online for no less than eighteen months after the meeting.

There was a short adjournment for a comfort break.

Councillor Alford left the meeting at 9pm.

**635/23     Social Media Policy**

Councillor Ellis had concerns on the policy and felt it should be seen by an expert.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Councillor Ellis, Councillor Hubbard, Councillor Stokes and the Communications and Events Officer work on a policy to bring back to council.

**636/23     Economic Development and Planning Committee**

The minutes were received.

**637/23     Finance Administration and Performance Committee**

The minutes were received.

**638/23     Staffing Committee**

The minutes were received.

**639/23     ECWG Notes**

The notes were received.

**640/23     Recommendation of Environment & Climate Working Group**

The matter was discussed and it was agreed that all councillors would and should consider all aspects and impacts of decisions.

Councillor Hubbard suggested a standardised report form be introduced including reference to financial, environmental and safeguarding implications and that the matter be brought back to the next full council meeting, with a view to introduction by the start of the next council year. The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell expressed the view that this was a sensible course of action.

**641/23     ECWG Terms of Reference**

It was agreed to refer back to Environment and Climate Working Group to tighten up the terms of reference before referring back to full council.

**642/23     Events Working Group Notes**

The notes were received.

**643/23     Melksham Community Support (MCS) Service Project**

The reports were received. Concern was expressed that it was originally agreed that the service would be available to any resident of Melksham, regardless of age. It was agreed that Age UK Wiltshire be invited to address a meeting of council before year 2 funding was allocated.

**644/23     Operation Awake**

Noted.

**645/23     Melksham Carnival**

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

**RESOLVED** that the Melksham Carnival 2023 grant be rolled over and added to the 2024 major grant.

**646/23 Appointment of a Representative to Wilts & Berks Canal Trust**

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Ellis as representative to the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust.

**647/23 Emergency Motion, Dog Agility Equipment**

Councillor Hubbard read out his motion and there was discussion on the motion and possible solutions.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that

- The equipment be removed.
- Proper advice and guidance from a qualified organisation/individual is obtained as to its suitability. It is noted that, despite Council being previously advised otherwise, such advice is available from The Kennel Club.
- Any changes to the equipment in size and scale are completed prior to reinstallation.
- All appropriate signage is installed and clearly visible to the public prior to installation.
- A full investigation is undertaken to clarify whether the necessary steps were taken to ensure that the equipment procured was suitable and fit for purpose. Whilst there were example images of equipment provided with the quotes presented to council on 28th March, these contained no sizing information.

Meeting Closed at: 9.50 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**