

## **Melksham Town Council**

### **Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting meeting held on Monday 25th March 2024**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillor S Crundell (Town Mayor)  
Councillor T Price (Deputy Town Mayor)  
Councillor P Aves  
Councillor J Crundell  
Councillor G Ellis  
Councillor A Griffin  
Councillor J Oatley  
Councillor S Rabey  
Councillor C Stokes  
Councillor J Westbrook

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Sarah Askew	Communications Officer
	Gloria Delves	Communications and Events Officer
	Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** No members of the public or press were present.

#### **28/23 Welcome from the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell welcomed members of the public and press to the Annual Town Meeting and informed those present that this was an opportunity for the Town Council to report progress made over the last year, hear from organisations that have benefitted from grants this year and give members of the public an opportunity to ask questions to Councillors, local Police and organisations present.

#### **29/23 Minutes**

The Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting held on 13 March 2023 were approved and signed by the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell.

#### **30/23 Report of the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell took the opportunity to reflect on the past year and the achievements of the Town Council and the Officer Team.

He made specific mentions of the following

- The coronation of King Charles III and how, despite the weather, the community came together to celebrate and make the event something special.
- The Christmas Light Switch-on and thanked Paul Weymouth, the Christmas Lights Group, Councillors, Officers and other involved in a magical event.
- The work of the Amenities Team.
- The work to bring lighting to KGV. He thanked Craig for his work with the Council to bring a new facility to the park in the shape of Jack's Kitchen.
- The Melksham Joint Neighbourhood Plan and the work done by those involved.

Beyond these specific events the Mayor thanked all those councillors, officers, community groups and volunteers who work hard for the benefit of Melksham and to make every event throughout the year a success.

Looking ahead the Mayor mentioned the new CCTV to be installed in the town centre, refurbishment of playgrounds, installation of a BMX track, widening of the footpath opposite Texaco on Sandridge Road and the referendum on Joint Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2.

### **31/23 Policing in Melksham**

This item was advanced up the agenda. Sgt. Rutter spoke on Wiltshire Police Community Commitment which sets out Wiltshire Police priorities – safer public spaces, violence in the community & burglary – and how they will deal with them.

### **32/23 Reports of Wiltshire Councillors**

Councillor Oatley spoke of the Health and Wellbeing Group, the Forest Community Centre and how the community had rallied round the community centre after the fire. He also expressed his appreciation to all residents.

### **33/23 Reports from Councillors/Chairs of Town Council Committees**

#### **Councillor Price as chair of Asset Management & Amenities.**

It has been a challenging year but thanked everyone who has helped shape Melksham in the last year. He thanked Paul Weymouth and the Melksham News for their input with the lights in KGV, Colin Goodhind and Councillor Hubbard for their support of the café project and the Amenities Team for their hard work.

#### **Councillor Rabey as Chair of Economic Development & Planning.**

It has been a mixed year with some planning applications that it was easy to take a view on, and some that required more time, thought and discussion. On the whole, Wiltshire Council decisions have accorded with Melksham Town Council.

#### **Councillor Rabey as Chair of Community Development.**

There have been some fantastic initiatives in the past year, including the Coronation of King Charles III and the Christmas Lights Event. The committee is looking to bring new events to the town in the coming year.

**Councillor Rabey as Chair of Finance, Administration and Performance.**

Has only recently become chair. There have been challenges with grants but things should be clearer over the next twelve months.

There was a break for refreshments and a presentation from officers to the Town Mayor, Councillor S Crundell of a deerstalker hat.

**34/23 Reports from Major Grant Recipients.**

Councillor Westbrook gave a brief report on behalf of the chair of the Food & River Festival, Adrienne Westbrook.

**35/23 Community Groups**

The following community groups spoke.

**British Cactus and Succulent Society – Wiltshire Branch.**

Derek May. Short presentation and thanked MTC for the grant that allowed them to have their annual show at the Assembly Hall.

**Cat Action Trust N & W Wilts.**

Tracy McPhail. Explained how she became involved with the Trust. They currently have 6 foster families and two spares. 59 cats were rehomed last year and there are currently 4 on the website. Most of their funding comes from legacies and shop takings. Any assistance people can offer would be gratefully received.

**Melksham Gardener's Society.**

Barbara Cropp. Thanked MTC for the grant. Group has 96 members and meets at Rachel Fowler on the last Tuesday of the month. Non-members are welcome to attend the shows.

**Melksham Lions.**

Phil Gaskell. The group exists to help local community groups and charities. MTC grant was used to buy a new gazebo. The old one needed 6-8 people to put up. This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and events are planned to celebrate.

**Melksham Remembers and Melksham & District Historical Association.**

Paul Carter. Showed copies of Around Melksham in Old Photographs, which has had a new print run and Melksham's War, which evolved from a WW1 centenary presentation. Copies are available to purchase in the Tourist Information Centre.

A copy of each book was presented to Melksham Town Council.

**Wessex Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre.**

Sarah Folker. Handed out some leaflets on the work of the group. Based in Warminster and cover Wiltshire and Dorset. Grant from MTC used to set up a singing group.

**36/23 Open Forum/Questions from Electors**

Paul Carter asked if there was a maintenance program for the lights in the KGV. The Amenities Team would monitor the lights as part of their normal rounds and replacement bulbs were relatively inexpensive.

Paul also asked whether it would be beneficial for a Mayor to serve a full four year period rather than changing after two. The Mayor, Councillor S Crundell pointed out that Melksham Town Council mayor is not an executive position. The Mayor is the civil head and the chair of full council meetings but is not the leader of the council. He also noted that Melksham had a relatively young council or working age and he felt it appropriate that the Mayor should stand down after two years. Councillor Ellis felt it important to empathise that councillors are all volunteers

There were no more matters raised and the Town Mayor Councillor S Crundell thanked all those present, reminded them that meeting agendas were published on the Melksham Town Council website and all were welcome to attend.

Meeting Closed at: 8.35 pm

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:**