



2025

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL



Full Council Agenda

Monday 20th October 2025



Town Hall,
Market Place,
Melksham,
Wiltshire
SN12 6ES

01225 704187
towncouncil@melksham-tc.gov.uk

www.melksham-tc.gov.uk



MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall,
Market Place,
Melksham,
Wiltshire
SN12 6ES

CEO Miss Hayley Bell, Assoc CIPD, CertHE, FSLCC

01225 704187

towncouncil@melksham-tc.gov.uk

Monday 13th October 2025

Dear Councillors S Rabey (Town Mayor), J Westbrook (Deputy Town Mayor), P Alford, P Aves, E Calland, R Cleary, J Crossley, M Drewett, G Elson, A Griffin, J Oatley, T Price, C Stokes, A Westbrook

You are summoned in accordance with the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, Sch 12, paras 10 (2)(b) to a meeting of the Full Council of Melksham Town Council for the transaction of the business shown on the agenda below.

Monday 20th October 2025 to be held at 19.00 in the Council Chamber, Melksham Town Hall, Market Place, Melksham, SN12 7ES.

The quorum for Full Council is 8.

Public Participation.

Members of the public and the press may attend this meeting in person or join the meeting on teams via the following link <https://tinyurl.com/bdffn53h>. Public participation will take place near the start of the meeting.

Each speaker is limited to three minutes, with a total public session of 20 minutes. Members of the public are requested to send their question to CEO@melksham-tc.gov.uk by noon on the working day before the meeting. You should still attend the meeting, in person or online, to ask your question.

No decisions will be made on matters not already on the agenda. The Council may ask the public and press to leave if confidential matters need to be discussed.

The Seven Principles of Public Life.

All members are reminded of their duty under the code of conduct to uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Hayley Bell – CEO

Full Council Terms of Reference

1. Membership: All 15 elected members of the Town Council.

The following matters shall be reserved for decision by Full Council, but the appropriate Committee(s) may make recommendation for the Council's consideration:

- 1.1 The Precept demand
- 1.2 Borrowing money
- 1.3 Making, amending or revoking Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Duties and Powers of Proper Officer provisions
- 1.4 Making, amending or revoking by-laws
- 1.5 Making of Orders under Statutory Powers
- 1.6 Matters of principle or policy
- 1.7 Addressing recommendations in any report from the Internal and External Auditors
- 1.8 Nomination of members of all proper and sub committees
- 1.9 New powers or duties
- 1.10 Prosecution or defence in a Court of Law
- 1.11 Nomination or appointment of representatives of the Council to any enquiry on matters affecting the town
- 1.12 To receive and adopt the Annual Accounts
- 1.13 To receive and sign off the Annual Internal & External Audit and Return
- 1.14 To receive reports referred to the Town Council from the various Committees/Sub-Committees
- 1.15 To set up Working Groups as necessary
- 1.16 To receive reports and consider recommendations from Working Groups set up by Full Council
- 1.17 To appoint representatives on outside bodies or joint bodies
- 1.18 To confirm the appointment of the Town Mayor/Deputy Mayor
- 1.19 To confirm the schedule of meetings of the Town Council/Committees and Sub-Committees for the ensuing year
- 1.20 To receive petitions and deputations from members of the public or any organisations
- 1.21 Any other matters not delegated to a Committee or Sub-Committee or referred to the Council by Committees or Sub-Committees

Full Council

1. Apologies. **19.00– 19.01**

To receive apologies for absences

(Local Government Act, 1972 s.85)

2. Declaration of interests. **19.01 – 19.02**

To declare an interest relating to the business of the meeting.

(Melksham Town Council Code of Conduct)

3. Minutes **19.02 – 19.05**

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting

(Local Government Act 1972, s. 12)

4. Public participation **19.05 – 19.25**

To allow public participation, 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes allocation.

(Local Government Act 1972, s. 12)

5. Questions from Councillors **19.25 – 19.30**

(Melksham Town Council Policy and Local Government Act 1972)

6. Town Mayor's Announcements **19.30 – 19.35**

7. Police Report **19:35 – 19:45**

To note the Melksham Neighbourhood Team Report

8. Reports from Unitary Councillors **19.45 - 19.55**

Unitary Councillors to report on any matters affecting Melksham which have been discussed at Wiltshire Council meetings.

Councillor Alford

Councillor Griffin

Councillor Hubbard

Councillor Stokes

Councillor J Westbrook



9. Melksham Adventure Centre Association

19:55 - 20.00

A request has been received for Melksham Town Council to appoint a representative to Melksham Adventure Centre.

For decision.

10. Melksham Bloomers

20:00 – 20.05

To acknowledge and recognise the work of Melksham Bloomers towards the award of Gold at the Britain in Bloom (South West) Awards

11. East Melksham Community Centre

20.05 – 20.15

Background

The development of a community centre East of Melksham remains a priority for both the Town and Parish Councils, with significant funding already identified.

Funding Overview

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):
 - o £315,000 £315,029.04 from the Acorns/Hunters Wood development , currently held under a legal agreement for transfer from the Parish to the Town Council.
 - o Over £100,000 £135,990.84 calculated by MWPC in CIL received by the Town Council from the Acorns/Hunters Wood development. TBC
 - o £637,457.04 s106 funds received by the Town Council for the Community Centre from the Acorns/Hunters Wood development

The legal agreement for the £315k includes for accrued interest too, that is also detailed in the side agreement between Melksham Town Council and Wiltshire Council.

Current Status

The decision was deferred from the 31st March 2025 Full Council meeting due to the outgoing administration. No formal resolution has been made since, the matter being raised in early February 2025.

Recommendation

That Melksham Town Council affirms its commitment to delivering a community centre East of Melksham in partnership with the Parish Council and agrees to pool the available funds S106, CIL from the East of Melksham development, and CIL from Acorns/Hunters Wood into a joint project fund on the land secured on the Blackmore Farm development PL/2025/11188 in January 2025 and not on the land adjacent to Spa Surgery/Angelica Avenue

12. Community Development Committee

20.15 – 20.15

The committee considered a suggestion that December Grants be considered in a stand alone meeting from 6pm to 7pm before the Community Development Meeting at 7pm.

For approval.

13. Football Provision and Asset Transfer Opportunity - Champion Drive 20.15-20.25

Background

A meeting was recently held between representatives of Wiltshire Council (including the CEO and relevant officers), Wiltshire FA, Street Scene, and Melksham Town Council to explore the potential asset transfer of a site to Melksham Town Council. This discussion was prompted by interest from Future of Football, who are seeking additional land to establish junior satellite facilities.

The Wiltshire Playing Pitch Strategy highlights a clear shortfall in football provision within Melksham, particularly for youth and grassroots development. The proposed site offers a strategic opportunity to address this gap and enhance community sports infrastructure.

Opportunity

Should Melksham Town Council consider including the site within its existing park leases, it would open the door to:

- Funding discussions with Wiltshire FA for pitch improvements
- Facility grants to upgrade or develop changing rooms and support amenities

- Collaborative planning with Future of Football to meet local demand

Recommendation

That Melksham Town Council:

1. Continues discussions with Wiltshire Council, Future of Football, and Wiltshire FA to explore the feasibility of the asset transfer. Full Council receives a formal report outlining the above for consideration at a future Full Council meeting.

14. Three-Year Partnership with Age UK (Starting April 2026)

20.25-20.35

Background

Age UK delivers essential services to older residents in Melksham, including wellbeing activities, social support, and outreach. A multi-year commitment will provide stability for service delivery and allow Age UK to plan effectively for future needs.

For Melksham Community Support (MCS), this would equate to an initial annual payment of £12,730 plus £% year 2 and 3.

Recommendation

Melksham Town Council confirms renewing a three-year partnership with Age UK, beginning April 2026, to support ongoing community services, with a provisional annual inflationary uplift of **3%**.

15. Commitment to Becoming a Living Wage Employer

Purpose

To outline the benefits and implications of Melksham Town Council committing to become a Living Wage Employer and seeking formal accreditation through the Living Wage Foundation.

Background

The Real Living Wage is independently calculated by the Living Wage Foundation and reflects the actual cost of living in the UK. As of October 2025, the rate is:

- **£12.60/hour** across the UK

This is distinct from the statutory National Living Wage, which is currently £12.21/hour for workers aged 21 and over. The Real Living Wage is voluntary but widely recognised as a benchmark for fair pay.

Current Position

Melksham Town Council pays above the statutory minimum for most roles. However, it is not currently accredited as a Living Wage Employer. Accreditation would publicly affirm the Council's commitment to fair pay and responsible employment practices.

Transitioning to the Real Living Wage would ensure these staff members receive a fairer rate aligned with the cost of living, reinforcing the Council's commitment to ethical employment.

Recommendation to Council

That Melksham Town Council commits to becoming a Living Wage Employer from April 2026, ensuring all directly employed and regular contracted staff are paid at least the Real Living Wage, and seeks formal accreditation through the Living Wage Foundation with the appropriate annual fee.

16. Renewal and Expansion of Section 96 Licence for Roundabouts 20.35- -20.45

Background

Melksham Town Council currently holds a Section 96 Licence under the Highways Act 1980, which permits Parish, Town, and District Councils to plant and maintain highway verges, including roundabouts. These licence have now expired, and a renewal is required to continue maintenance and enhancement activities.

The Council has successfully maintained several roundabouts under this agreement, contributing to improved visual appeal and civic pride. In addition, the licence supports the Council's ability to manage grass cutting, planting, and roundabout advertising in line with agreed standards.

Proposal

To renew the existing Section 96 Licence with Wiltshire Council and include the new number of roundabouts covered under the agreement. This expansion will allow the Council to:

- Take on additional maintenance responsibilities internally
- Enhance the appearance of key gateway locations
- Promote roundabout sponsorship and advertising through a structured process

Recommendation

That Melksham Town Council:

- Renews its Section 96 Licence with Wiltshire Council for the planting and maintenance of highway verges and roundabouts.
- Commits to internal delivery of grass cutting and maintenance services
- Continues to develop and implement a formal process for roundabout advertising in line with the licence terms

This renewal and expansion will strengthen the Council's role in managing public spaces and generating modest revenue through sponsorship, while maintaining high standards of presentation across the town.

17. Motions from Councillors

20.45 – 21.05

17.1 Allotments

For decision.

17.2 White Ribbon

For decision

18. Policies

21.05 – 21.45

18.1 Acceptable Use of Email and Internet Policy

For adoption

18.2 Awarding the Freedom of the Town Policy

For adoption

18.3 Community Engagement Policy

For adoption

18.4 Co-Opting Policy

Full Council on 14th July 2025 considered the draft Co-Option Policy and made the following comments

- Introduction – paragraph 3 amend to read “A copy of the vacancy notice must be sent to the Returning Officer at Wiltshire Council so that the progress can be monitored.”
- Clause 4 – Remove the requirement to attend at least one full Council meeting as an observer as this requirement will considerably slow down the process.
- Clause 5 - says what happens if not enough candidates come forward to fill vacancies but does not say what happens if the Town Council vote doesn't fill all vacancies.
- Clause 5 - concerns that not allowing abstentions is not lawful.
- Change Parish Council to Town Council
- Put policy in same format as all other policies.

It was resolved that councillors would review the policy and email any comments or suggestions to the committee clerk. No further comments have been received. The comments made at the meeting have been incorporated as tracked changes.

Recommendation. Melksham Town Council formally approves its Co-option Policy and proceed to promote and implement the co-option process at the December Full Council meeting

18.5 Flag Flying Policy

For adoption

18.6 Pre-Application for major Developments Policy

For adoption

18.7 Publication Scheme Policy

This was before Council on 14th July 2025 when the following amendments were requested.

- Council obliged to have a register of items that have been requested under the Freedom of Information Act. This should be referenced here or as another sub paragraph
- No reference to GDPR

The Town Mayor and Chair Councillor Rabey requested that councillors email their comments to the committee clerk. No further comments or suggested amendments have been received.

For decision on adoption of the policy.

18.8 Lone Working Policy

To note that a Lone Working Policy exists

18.9 Fly Posting Policy

To note that this policy is not put forward for re-adoption as responsibility and powers to fine sit with Wiltshire Council

19. Committee Minutes

21.45 – 21.45



**MELKSHAM TOWN
COUNCIL**

19.1 Economic Development and Planning

To receive the minutes of the Economic Development and Planning Committee meetings held on 12th August 2025 and 2nd September 2025.

[Link to 12th August 2025](#)

[Link to 2nd September 2025](#)

19.2 Finance, Administration and Performance

To receive the minutes of the Finance Administration and Performance Committee meeting held on 28th July 2025

[Link](#)

19.3 Community Development

To receive the minutes of the Community Development Committee meeting held on 16th June 2025

[Link](#)

19.4 Amenities & Facilities

To receive the minutes of the Amenities & Facilities Committee meeting held on 9th June 2025

[Link](#)

20. Items to Note

21.45 – 21.46

20.1 Age UK Wiltshire

To note, and to congratulate Age UK Wiltshire on winning the Community Foundation Joint Project Award.

20.2 Fair Trade

To note the response of Melksham Without Parish Council to an invitation to join Melksham Town Council in this project.

“Whilst the parish council think the Fairtrade principle is sound and support it in principle, at present they do not want to commit their staff or councillors to a Fair Trade steering group and additional work.

“With regards to promoting to shops and cafes in the parish, there is a limited amount, and many are national brands such as Greggs, Starbucks, Tesco etc that are going to have standard corporate approaches to this sort of thing. The community run café in Whitley is very committed to providing local produce, and one of their founding principles, so unlikely to look to provide Fairtrade products over local products.

“The parish council are happy to find out more about what being a fair trade town actually means from other towns/parish councils, and review again as the project progresses; but not for them at present.”

20.3 Wiltshire Council Corporate Plan

To note that Wiltshire Plan 2025 - 2035: A Community Centred Approach was issued on 9th October 2025.

21. Confidential Session

21.46 – 21.46

For resolution.

“That, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during

consideration of the following item(s) of business, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

22. Blue Pool and Assembly Hall

21.46 – 22.00

For discussion of presentation from Architects

23. Public Toilets

To receive a report from the CEO and for decision if appropriate

Melksham Adventure Centre Association



Registered Charity Number: 276692

Andrew Meacham/ To whom it may concern
Committee Clerk
Melksham Town Council
Melksham
Wiltshire

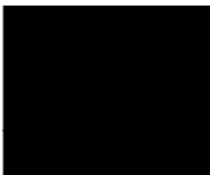
19 September 2025

Dear Andrew

On behalf of Melksham Adventure Centre, we would like to enquire which councillor will be representing the Town Council at our committee meetings? Is it possible for this point to be included on the agenda for the next full Council meeting?

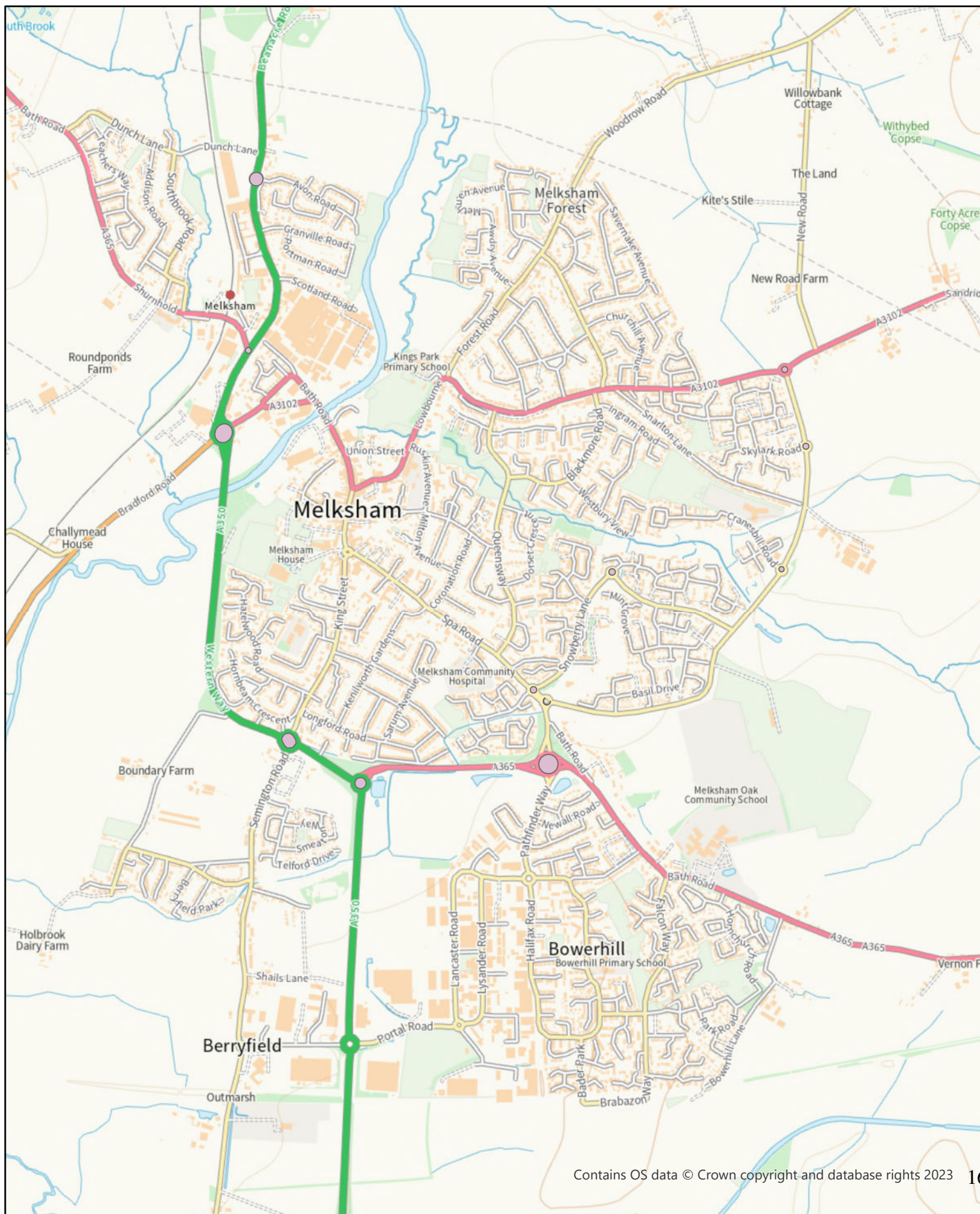
For your information, whoever the Council chooses will be more than welcome to attend our next committee meeting on Wednesday 22nd October 2025 at the Adventure Centre, 8pm.

Kind regards



Melksham Adventure Centre Association





MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

Proposed by: **Cllr Gillian Elsom**

Seconded by: **Cllr Phil Alford**

Dated: **12th August 2025**

1. Purpose of the motion

To preserve Melksham's allotments in light of new powers given to councils to sell off the land.

This Council notes:

That allotments are a vital community asset, providing green space, promoting healthy living, and supporting residents who do not have access to their own gardens.

That demand for allotments in Melksham remains high and continues to grow.

That recent policies introduced by the Labour Government increase the possibility of councils being able to dispose of allotment land more easily.

This Council believes:

That allotments must be protected for current and future generations.

That any move to sell off or repurpose allotment land would be a betrayal of local residents and their right to access shared green space.

That the Government should be doing more – not less – to protect allotments and support local authorities in preserving community land.

That selling off allotment space for housing is not in the interests of the people of Melksham.

This Council resolves to:

Publicly reaffirm its commitment that Melksham Town Council will not request the sale of any allotment land under its control.

Write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to express concern about the increased risk to allotments under current Government policy and to request stronger protections for these vital community assets.

Encourage other local councils and town/parish bodies across Wiltshire to take similar action to protect allotment land.

Promote awareness among residents about the importance of protecting allotments and the current risks they may face.

Promote Melksham's allotments and the benefit of outdoor exercise and growing healthy, nutritious food particularly amongst those without access to a private garden.

Investigate the feasibility of an event with allotment holders such as an 'allotment open weekend' and local children to learn about growing food and the benefits of allotments and gardening, incorporating the Melksham and Bradford on Avon Primary Care Network and schools.

2. Background (Including previous resolution/s made and date/s if applicable)

Melksham has a number of allotments which provide important outdoor and activity space, particularly for people who do not have access to gardens.

Recently the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has given councils powers to sell off allotments to raise funds.

In recent years the Melksham Town Council precept has risen significantly above the rate of inflation and, coupled with a declining jobs market, there are pressures on local economies which would see a rise in the precept increase pressure on Melksham residents.

3. Current Situation

Melksham has a series of allotments which are very popular and well tended. They provide valuable outdoor space and a way for people to grow their own food.

4. What financial implications are there?

The policy of not selling off allotments to developers would remove a potential source of income should the council not balance its budget.

5. How does the motion link to Town Council policies and core values?

- **Community Focus:**

This promotes the well being and needs of the Melksham community

- **Inclusivity:**

Allotments provide opportunities to those without access to outdoor space

- **Quality of Life:**

Access to outdoor space increases QoL for residents, particularly older people who can remain active which helps to prevent sarcopenia – a leading cause of reduced quality of life in later years.

- **Forward-thinking and Dynamic:**

We are taking a proactive step in light of recent changes to the council's powers.

6. What risks are there? (Provide a risk assessment)

None – this is to maintain our existing allotments

7. What crime and disorder implications are there?

None

8. What environmental and biodiversity considerations are there?

This will have a positive impact on our environment and biodiversity

9. What safeguarding concerns are there?

None

10. Motion wording

11. Does the motion impact/ support any previous decisions of council?

Potentially but this is a new situation

12. Confirmation that the item under consideration has not been discussed by Council within the preceding six months. If it has, has there been a material change and what is this?

The law has changed

13. Please summarise any specific recommendations you have in relation to next steps

The next steps are to ensure that our allotments in Melksham are not sold off and remain as vital community assets

Office Use:

Date of receipt by Proper Officer:

Date of proposed council
meeting for motion

Date/s of relevant resolutions:
(record full resolution/s here)

Motion accepted by Proper
Officer:

Motion rejected by Proper
Officer:

Reasons for rejection:

MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Proposed by: **Rhys Cleary**

Seconded by: **Maverick Drewett**

Dated: **12/10/25**

Purpose of the motion

To formally commit Melksham Town Council to the principles of the White Ribbon Promise, namely:

- To speak out against all forms of men's violence against women, and to contribute to raising awareness locally that violence and abuse are never acceptable;
- To promote respectful relationships, equality, and non-violence within our community;
- To encourage councillors, staff, partners, and residents to make the White Ribbon Promise themselves, and to embed its principles into council policy, events, and communications;
- To ensure that Melksham Town Council takes a visible and ongoing role in supporting survivors, challenging violence, and fostering a safer environment for everyone.

Background (Including previous resolution/s made and date/s if applicable)

At the last Full Council meeting, several councillors shared personal experiences of online abuse, much of which has been directed at women. This raised serious concern about the disproportionate impact of online harassment on women in public life.

That discussion also highlighted the broader rise in misogynistic hate crime and gender-based harassment, both nationally and within the South West. Although misogyny is not currently recognised as a specific hate crime category in law, its effects are real, pervasive, and often underreported.

In Wiltshire, hate crime reporting has increased in recent years. The year ending March 2022 saw 902 recorded hate crimes in Wiltshire and Swindon, up from 753 the previous year. More recent figures show that in 2024–25, 823 hate crimes were recorded by Wiltshire Police.

Nationally, research shows that nearly half of women who have experienced online abuse report that the abuse was sexist or misogynistic, and over a quarter received threats of sexual or physical harm.

These trends demonstrate that misogynistic harassment and abuse - particularly online, are not isolated incidents but reflect systemic patterns of gendered hostility that too often go unchecked.

Given the volume and intensity of abuse reported by councillors and constituents, and the wider national pattern, there is clear justification for Melksham Town Council to adopt a formal stance and embed commitments such as the White Ribbon Promise into its practices and culture.

Current Situation

While we already have a Code of Conduct and have signed the Civility and Respect Pledge, this motion would extend that commitment into the wider community, showing that Melksham is a town that stands firmly against Violence Against Women and Girls.

What financial implications are there?

None

How does the motion link to Town Council policies and core values?

- **Accountable:** By publicly committing to stand against violence towards women and girls, the Council demonstrates accountability for fostering a culture of respect, equality, and safety within both the organisation and the wider community.
- **Efficient:** Tackling harassment and promoting respect within the community helps prevent conflict, supports wellbeing, and contributes to a more positive and effective working environment for councillors, staff, and residents alike.
- **Caring:** The White Ribbon Promise reflects compassion and care for those who have experienced violence or abuse, showing that the Council stands with survivors and supports proactive prevention.
- **Integrity:** Making and upholding this pledge is a clear demonstration of honesty, ethical leadership, and moral responsibility, living out our values, not just stating them.
- **Inclusivity:** The commitment promotes equality and respect for all, helping to create a community where everyone — regardless of gender — can live, work, and participate free from fear and discrimination.

What risks are there? (Provide a risk assessment)

Minimal risks

What crime and disorder implications are there?

None.

What environmental and biodiversity considerations are there?

None

What safeguarding concerns are there?

None

. Motion

That Melksham Town Council:

1. Formally signs the White Ribbon Promise, committing to never use, excuse, or remain silent about violence against women and girls.
2. Embeds the principles of the White Ribbon campaign into Council policy, communications, and community engagement activities.
3. Publicly affirms that Melksham is a town that stands for respect, equality, and safety for all.

. Does the motion impact/ support any previous decisions of council?

No

. **Confirmation that the item under consideration has not been discussed by Council within the preceding six months. If it has, has there been a material change and what is this?**

No prior discussion has been had

. **Please summarise any specific recommendations you have in relation to next steps**

- If approved the council to sign the pledge in the meeting - <https://www.whiteribbon.org.uk/promise>

Office Use:

Date of receipt by Proper Officer:

Date of proposed council meeting
for motion:

Date/s of relevant resolutions:
(record full resolution/s here)

Motion accepted by Proper Officer:

Motion rejected by Proper Officer:

Reasons for rejection:



Melksham Town Council

Councillors Acceptable Use of Email and Internet ~~and Tablet~~ Policy

Date Adopted:

Date Due For Review:



~~COUNCILLORS ACCEPTABLE USE OF EMAIL, AND INTERNET AND~~ ~~TABLET ACCEPTABLE USE~~ POLICY

~~Use of tablet devices and dedicated email accounts will enable councillors to access information on the move, take advantage of Wi-Fi and contribute to the reduction in paper and printing costs.~~

1. Introduction

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, it is important that Melksham Town Council (hereinafter “the Council”) ensures that its data is kept secure. Councillors are required to comply with this Policy.

Please note that additional instructions may be issued from time to time regarding the use of Council-owned computers or systems.

This policy sets out general rules for the acceptable use of digital systems:

- How we use the facilities made available to us reflects on the council.
- Reminds us of our responsibilities to handle personal and sensitive information properly and that customers’/constituents’ e-mail addresses themselves may be personal information
- To consider before sending confidential or sensitive information via email
- Describes how and when personal use of e-mail and internet is permissible
- Requires us to remove personal e-mail from the Council’s systems
- Prohibits the use of Council e-mail addresses on public websites for non-business purposes
- Sets out the circumstances in which the Council may monitor communications.

2. IT Devices

Includes ~~workstations, laptops, smartphones, tablets and any other portable device.~~ any council owned electronic device, issued for the purpose of council business.

Your computer password is an important piece of confidential information and you should treat it that way. Do not share it with others, and make sure that it is not written down anywhere where an unauthorised person can find it.

You must not delete any ~~of the tablet~~ software installed and must not install any software without permission from the ~~Town Clerk~~CEO.

You must take care of ~~the tablet~~any device issued and ensure that it is safe and secure at all times. Any loss of the equipment must be reported immediately so that the device can be disabled.

3. Email

All email correspondence should be dealt with professionally and diligently. Emails are subject to the Data Protection Act 2018 and Freedom of Information requests.

All Councillors should use their adopted official email address for **ALL** Council email communications. No Councillors will use any other email address (including any personal email address) for **ANY** Council email communications.

~~Councillors consent to receive Notices of Meetings and other correspondence regarding Council business by electronic means.~~

When using your Council email account, you should be mindful of the fact that any email that you send will be identifiable as coming from the Council. You should therefore take care not to send anything via email that may reflect badly on the Council. In particular, you must not send content of a sexual or racist nature, junk mail, chain letters, cartoons or jokes from your Council email address.

Using a Council email address to send inappropriate material, including content of a sexual or racist nature, is strictly prohibited. Should you receive any offensive or inappropriate content via email you should delete it. Councillors should inform the ~~Town Clerk~~CEO of this as soon as possible so that they can ensure that it can be fully removed from the system.

The use of a Council email account for bullying or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

You should also take care that emails will be seen only by the person intended. Particular care should be taken when sending confidential information that the email has been correctly addressed, marked 'private' and not copied into those not authorised to see the information. Sending confidential information via email without proper authorisation or without taking sufficient care to ensure that it is properly protected will be treated as misconduct.

In cases where you are sending an email to more than one personal account you should blind copy all recipients to avoid a data breach.

While a reasonable amount of personal use of email is perfectly acceptable, your email remains the property of the Council and you should not use your Council email to send or receive any information that you regard as private. The Council may, in the course of its operation, read emails that you have sent or received - although in the absence of evidence of wrongdoing the Council will try to avoid reading personal emails if possible.

Setting up and Closing an Email Account

~~The Town Clerk (or other designated person) will set up a new email account as required~~New email accounts will be set up by the officer or outside consultant, authorised to do so by the CEO. For new Councillors, this will normally be within 48 hours of being elected as a Councillor and for any other position, it will normally be within seven days.

When Councillors cease to be part of the ~~Town~~ Council, their email account will be closed down and all emails (sent or received) will be archived.

4. Internet Use

Councillors with access to the internet on Council-owned devices should use that ~~they~~ access responsibly.

Councillors must not use the internet to view or download offensive or sexually explicit material or material which promotes gambling, discrimination of any kind or the threat of violence.

Councillors must not download any software, plug-ins or extensions on to Council-owned devices unless this is first cleared by the Town Clerk.

Councillors must not use Council-owned devices to download music, video or any other entertainment content.

Firewalls and anti-virus software may be used to protect the Council's systems. These must not be disabled or switched off without the express authorisation of the Town Clerk.

If inappropriate material is accessed accidentally, Councillors must report this immediately to the ~~Town Clerk~~[CEO](#).

5. Social Media

Councillors behaviour on any social networking or other internet site must be consistent with the behaviour required of being a representative of the Council generally.

Councillors should take particular care not to behave in a way which reflects badly on the Council. Inappropriate or disparaging comments about the Council, colleagues or the town should be avoided.

Social media interactions can be copied and widely disseminated in a way that you may not be able to control, the Council will take a particularly serious view of any misconduct that occurs through the use of social media.

Councillors should not operate a social media account or profile that purports to be operated on or on behalf of the Council without express permission of the Council.

6. Personal/ Business Use

The Council's communications facilities are provided for the purposes of Council business. A certain amount of limited and responsible personal use by users is also permitted.

Although the Council's e-mail facilities are provided for the purposes of Council business, you may occasionally want to use them for your own personal purposes. This is permitted on the condition that all the procedures and rules set out in this policy are complied with. Be aware, however, that if you choose to make use of council facilities for personal correspondence, you can expect very little privacy because the council may need to monitor communications.

Under no circumstances may the Council's facilities be used in connection with the operation or management of any other business or for commercial activity. The facilities should also not be used by councillors for general party-political activity and, in particular, must not be used for campaigning or election activities. They may, however, be used for correspondence within the political group, general political research, casework as a councillor and similar activities. If you have any doubts, please ask.

You must also ensure that your personal e-mail use:

- does not take priority over your responsibilities as a councillor;
- is minimal;
- does not cause unwarranted expense or liability to be incurred by the Council;
- does not have a negative impact on the council in any way; and;
- is lawful and complies with this policy.

After being read, personal e-mails should be either deleted or forwarded to a personal e-mail account and then deleted. You should note though that e-mail is backed up on a regular basis and deleting it from the live system will not necessarily result in it being deleted for good. If you make personal use of our facilities for sending and receiving e-mail you will be treated as having agreed to abide by the conditions imposed for their use, and consented to the council monitoring your personal e-mail in accordance with this policy. If you do not agree or consent to this, then you must not use the system to send or receive personal e-mail.

7. What happens if the policy is breached?

If rules and procedures are not followed, then use of the Council's facilities may be curtailed or withdrawn. Serious breaches of this policy may amount to a breach of the Code of Conduct and the withdrawal of permission to use the Council's equipment for personal purposes.

Some aspects of this policy also deal with matters which amount to criminal offences under the Computer Misuse Act.

If there is anything in this policy that you do not understand, please ask for clarification.

~~Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council on 22 March 2021~~
~~To be reviewed April 2023~~



Melksham Town Council

Awarding the Freedom of the Town Policy

Date Adopted:

Date Due For Review:



AWARDING THE FREEDOM OF THE TOWN POLICY

1. Introduction

The origins of Freemen in England go back in history to the guilds of the medieval merchants and craftsmen whose influence helped to found and stabilise urban communities. Freemen enjoyed a special status in boroughs which usually included the right to trade and vote at elections for, and sitting on, the Borough Council. The power to vote at parliamentary elections was usually confined to Freemen - the right to become a Freeman being dependent upon birth, purchase or by apprenticeship to a master craftsman who was himself a Freeman. The Municipal Corporations Act 1835 removed these privileges.

The Honorary Freedom of Boroughs Act 1885, (now replaced by the Local Government Act of 1972, section 249), permitted Councils to give the title of Honorary Freeman to 'persons of distinction and any persons who have rendered eminent services to the Borough'. This is the authority for the election of such Honorary Freemen today.

The title of Honorary Freeman is the highest honour that a Council can bestow although it carries no privileges and is purely an honour to recognise the significant and valuable services rendered to the Town by that person. However, those successful will be able to use the title of 'Freeman' and receive invitations to major civic events. Their name will also be displayed on a roll of honour in a prominent position in a civic building.

2. Procedure

2.1 A nomination can be made by a councillor or any resident of Melksham by sending notification to the Town Clerk. Nominations ~~can be submitted by post or email~~ should be submitted via the online form but a printed form can be supplied if required

2.2 Councillors will be notified of the nomination and asked to advise if they are in agreement and if they will be attending the special meeting.

2.3 Nominee to be contacted to make sure they would accept the honour.

2.4 A special meeting of the full council will be arranged, far enough ahead for a scroll to be ordered.

2.5 Agenda will be advised in the normal way ~~through Modern Gov~~

2.6 The nominee will be invited to attend the meeting.

3. At the Meeting

3.1 The ~~Town Mayor or Deputy Mayor~~ Chair of the Special Meeting will read out the motion and seek a proposer and seconder.

3.2 Members will vote and the motion will require a two-thirds majority of members present.

3.3 Once approved, the scroll will be signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk and presented to the nominee.

3.4 Pictures can be taken following the presentation for publication on the Council's social media and, if appropriate, releasing to the press.

Application form ~~attached as Appendix A~~ can be obtained by following this link:-

<https://forms.office.com/e/EQWtg7j6uc>

or by scanning this QR code

Freedom of the Town Nomination Form





Melksham Town Council Community Engagement Policy

Date Adopted: TBC
Date Due For Review: TBC



1. This policy guides Melksham Town Council's communication and public engagement, ensuring clear channels between the Council and the community.

2. Aims

- 2.1. The policy sets out the role of community engagement and its importance, and how Melksham Town Council will:
- 2.2. work more closely with residents, and business and community groups
- 2.3. engage with as many people as possible in decision making, monitoring services and planning for the future
- 2.4. use a wide range of approaches to community engagement so residents feel encouraged to share their views, ideas, and concerns.
- 2.5. use the views of the residents as an integral part of the decision-making process; and
- 2.6. ensure that residents have opportunities to be heard at every stage

3. Objectives

The Council is committed to building positive relationships with all parts of the community, based on trust, openness, and honest conversation.

- 3.1. The Council's objectives include:
 - 3.1.1. making it easier for people to share their thoughts and ideas by creating new ways for them to get involved
 - 3.1.2. improving residents' understanding of the role of the Council and Councillors
 - 3.1.3. improving engagement so more people feel involved in their area; and
 - 3.1.4. improving satisfaction with council services.
- 3.2. Engagement should be both meaningful and purposeful and those involved should be able to understand how their views were considered.

4. Principles

When engaging with the community the council will consider:

- 4.1. *Inclusivity*: Engage a diverse range of voices, especially underrepresented groups.
- 4.2. *Proportionality*: Tailor engagement methods to the scale and impact of the decision.
- 4.3. *Transparency*: Be clear about the purpose, scope, and influence of engagement.
- 4.4. *Consistency*: Apply the principles across all our committees and projects.

5. Melksham Town Council and Community Engagement

- 5.1. The Town Council will encourage people in the community to get involved in these ways:

Letting people know what decisions are coming up and how they can share their views or get involved before decisions are made. Methods used to ensure engagement might include: the Town Council website, social media, local media, notice boards, newsletters, posters, surveys (paper, in-person and online), reports, and word of mouth.

 - 5.1.1. all meetings of the Town Council and its committees are open to the public and press with time reserved for residents to speak. Residents can access agendas for meetings via the Town Council web site and notice boards. Information is available to explain the procedure for residents wishing to speak at meetings
 - 5.1.2. planning applications are considered at meetings of the Economic Development and Planning committee. Equal opportunity is given to applicants/supporters and objectors
 - 5.1.3. the Town Clerk and designated officers are available to provide impartial information and support to anyone seeking advice to encourage more involvement especially from the

harder to reach members of the community who may not engage with electronic information.

- 5.1.4. details of how to contact the Clerk are displayed on the council website and notice boards
- 5.1.5. the Town Council will publish a calendar of annual council and committee meeting dates
- 5.1.6. the Town Council will be open and accountable in its dealing with residents and the community
- 5.1.7. the Town Council will be receptive to requests from residents or communities and will attempt to be flexible in order to ensure their opinions are known not only to the council but also to other organisations. This may be by including an item for discussion on an agenda or allowing a local group to put their opinions into an official report undertaken by the council.

6. Communication

6.1. Melksham Town Council is committed to improving community engagement by:

- 6.1.1. continuing current activities and services while strengthening relationships with community groups, especially by developing ways to incorporate feedback from underrepresented people and organisations.
- 6.1.2. actively reaching out and staying open to any reasonable possibilities that help share information with the community and encourage more participation, particularly from groups that are hard to connect with
- 6.1.3. considering the holding of public meetings when dealing with controversial issues that affect a particular community
- 6.1.4. considering the use of consultations and surveys, when necessary and appropriate, and making the results available
- 6.1.5. identifying and embracing opportunities to work with other local community groups when the need arises
- 6.1.6. publicising the positive results that have been achieved from working relationships between the council and other community groups to encourage new relationships / partnerships to be formed and to raise community spirit
- 6.1.7. promoting elections, the importance of the democratic process and the value of being a councillor.

7. Provision of Information to the Community

Melksham Town Council will make available to the community information relating to who we are, what we do, what we spend and how we spend it, how we make decisions, our policies and procedures and the services we offer.

7.1. Information will be provided to the community in the following ways:

- 7.1.1. contact details for the Clerk and all Councillors are displayed on the council's website
- 7.1.2. the council's website address is widely published, and the site contains much of the information an individual might wish to know about the work of the Town Council, its officers, and councillors, including meeting minutes, policy documents, financial statements, the annual report and how to contact anyone associated with the council.
- 7.1.3. Information such as agendas are published on the Town Council's notice boards as well as on its website.

8. Freedom of Information

8.1. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the council website.

9. Outcomes

- 9.1. The outcomes which the Town Council is striving for and against which the success of this policy will be measured are:
 - 9.1.1. improved communication through the establishment of new channels of engagement
 - 9.1.2. improved understanding by residents of the role of Councillors and getting the best from them
 - 9.1.3. improved engagement with local communities, with more people feeling that they are involved in decision-making
 - 9.1.4. improved satisfaction with the service provided by the council.



Melksham Town Council

Co-Option Policy

Date Adopted:

Date Due For Review:



Co-Option Policy

PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the procedure to ensure compliance with [Local Government Act 1972, s89](#) and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members of the Council. The co-option process is managed entirely by the Council, and this policy ensures a fair and equitable approach is maintained.

Once a Councillor vacancy has arisen the notice must be displayed as soon as practicable, but in consultation with [Wiltshire Council](#), [Elections Team](#) to check the dates. However, if the vacancy has arisen due to a death, it is courteous that the notice is not displayed until after the funeral has taken place.

A copy of the vacancy notice must be sent to the [Returning Officer](#), ~~Wiltshire Unitary Council, address at Wiltshire Council~~, so that the progress can be monitored.

The vacancy notice must be displayed on the Council Website and noticeboards for 14 working days (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, bank holidays or national days of mourning). During this time 10 electors may request an election by writing to the Returning Officer.

After the 14 days, the Returning Officer will notify the [Clerk](#) in writing of the outcome. An election will only take place if 10 electors have requested it in writing.

If no election has been requested, then the Council must co-opt to fill the vacancy – unless it is within 6 months of the forthcoming Council ordinary elections. The next ordinary elections will be in May 2029.

If a vacancy occurs within 6 months of the Council's forthcoming ordinary elections, then the election will not be held, however, the vacancy may be filled by co-option if wished, but the Council is not obliged to.

1. CO-OPTION

The co-option of a councillor may occur in two situations:

- When an **ordinary vacancy** arises following the four-yearly local elections due to insufficient candidates standing for election.
- When a **casual vacancy** arises and no by-election is called.

A. Ordinary Vacancy

An ordinary vacancy occurs when there are fewer valid nominations than seats available during the regular four-year election cycle. Any validly nominated candidates are elected unopposed, and the remaining vacancies (provided the Council is quorate) can be filled by co-option. If necessary, **Wiltshire Council** may step in to appoint or call an election.

B. Casual Vacancy

A casual vacancy arises if:

- A councillor fails to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
- A councillor resigns.
- A councillor dies.
- A councillor becomes disqualified.
- A councillor fails to attend any Parish Council or committee meetings, or other council-related meetings, for six consecutive months.

The Council must notify **Wiltshire Council**, advertise the vacancy, and allow electors **14 working days** to request an election (excluding weekends and bank holidays). If ten or more electors from the relevant ward (or the parish, if not warded) request an election, Wiltshire Council will arrange a poll, with the Parish Council bearing the cost.

If no election is requested, the Parish Council is permitted to fill the vacancy by co-option. [Local Government Act 1972, s89.](#)

2. CONFIRMATION OF CO-OPTION

Once the Electoral Services Office at Wiltshire Council confirms that no election has been requested, the vacancy may be filled by co-option.

Electoral Services
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
BA14 8JN

elections@wiltshire.gov.uk

0300 456 0112

The Clerk will:

- Advertise the vacancy (on the Council website and noticeboards) for a period determined by the Parish Council (usually four weeks);
- Notify Wiltshire Council that the co-option process is underway.

This also applies to ordinary vacancies where insufficient nominations were received, but the Council remains quorate.

3. ELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATES

To be eligible for co-option, a candidate must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of a member state of the EU.
- Meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Be an elector of the parish.
 - Have lived in the parish or within three miles of it for the past 12 months.
 - Have worked in the parish during the past 12 months.
 - Have rented or owned land/property in the parish for the past 12 months.

Disqualifications include (but are not limited to):

- Holding a paid position under the Council.
- Being declared bankrupt.
- A criminal conviction resulting in a prison sentence of three months or more (whether suspended or not) within the past five years.
- Disqualification due to corrupt or illegal electoral practices.

[The Local Government \(Disqualification\) Act 2022](#)

4. APPLICATIONS

Applicants must:

- ~~Attend at least one full Council meeting as an observer.~~
- Submit a short covering letter.
- Confirm eligibility by completing the statutory eligibility.

Once applications are received:

- The next appropriate Full Council meeting will include an agenda item to consider the applications and proceed with co-option.
- Copies of eligible applications will be distributed to councillors at least three clear days prior to the meeting.
- All applications will be treated confidentially by the Clerk and councillors.

5. AT THE CO-OPTION MEETING

- Each candidate will be invited to speak for up to five minutes to introduce themselves and explain their interest in joining the Council.
- This will occur in the public session unless personal discussions require exclusion of the public and press in accordance with relevant legislation.
- The Chair should place the names of those properly nominated into alphabetical order and take a vote. Councillors only have one vote each.
- Voting will take place immediately after the candidate presentations. Each candidate must be proposed and seconded before voting.
- Voting is conducted by show of hands unless a recorded vote is requested in line with [Standing Orders](#).
- An absolute majority (more than 50% of votes) is required. If no candidate receives a majority in the first round, the candidate with the fewest votes will be eliminated and further rounds will follow until one candidate secures a majority.
- ~~No abstentions are permitted; all councillors present must vote.~~ The Chair may use a casting vote if a deadlock remains after two rounds.

If co-opted, a successful candidate will:

- Sign a [Declaration of Acceptance of Office](#) at the meeting or before the next meeting.
- Complete and return a [Register of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests](#) form to the Monitoring Officer at Wiltshire Council within 28 days.

If not enough candidates come forward to fill vacancies, or insufficient candidates are able to obtain an absolute majority to fill all vacancies, the co-option process will continue with re-advertisement.



FLAG FLYING POLICY

1. General

Flags are traditionally flown by the Melksham Town Council for a variety of reasons, typically to show allegiance or support or respect or to celebrate. The Town Council will always endeavor to be sensitive to the views of all sectors of its community and will never use flags for political purposes.

2. Union Flag

It is Melksham Town Council's policy to fly the Union flag permanently at full mast above the Town Hall except on those occasions detailed below when it may be flown at half-mast.

3. Half Mast

The Union flag will be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:

- On the death/funeral of the Sovereign, another member of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister or other dignitary as advised by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport ("DCMS") and/or special commands from the Sovereign.
- On the death/funeral of a serving officer in the Armed Forces from the Town.
- On the death/funeral of a serving Town Councilor, local Unitary Councilor or local Member of Parliament.
- As a mark of respect, mourning and solidarity following atrocities, natural disasters or other acts resulting in significant loss of life in countries with which the Town Council has a twinning affiliation (currently France (Avon) and Poland (Elblag)).

- At the discretion of the Town Mayor, to commemorate local civic and community dignitaries who have recently passed away.

4. National Flag of England

The National flag will be flown on the secondary flagpole on St George's Day (23rd April) and, at the discretion of the Town Council, to celebrate and support the national team in sporting events of significance.

5. Merchant Navy Flag

The Merchant Navy flag will be flown on 3rd September each year at the discretion of the Town Council, to honor the brave men and women who kept our 'island nation' afloat during both World Wars and celebrated our dependence on modern day merchant seafarers.

6. Other Flags

The Commonwealth flag will be flown on the secondary flagpole on Commonwealth Day each year - (second Monday in March).

The Pride flag will be flown throughout June to celebrate and support LGBTQ and their social movements.

7. Overseas Visitors

Whenever possible, the relevant national flag will be flown from the secondary flagpole when the Town Council formally receives visitors from overseas.

8. Exceptions

Ordinarily and in the interests of impartiality, the flag of another nation or cause will not be flown. However the Town Mayor in liaison with the Town Clerk may exercise discretion or seek a motion from Council to determine when the Town Council will fly its flag(s) at half-mast and/or fly the flag of another nation state or cause as a mark of

respect from the Council and the community in particular circumstances that are deemed to be appropriate.

9. Other Occasions

Ad hoc requests to fly flags that are not covered by this policy will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and will be determined by the Town Mayor in liaison with the Town Clerk.

Adopted by Full Council on 28 June 2021.

To be reviewed June 2023.



Melksham Town Council

Flag Flying Policy

Date Adopted: <insert>

Date Due For Review: <insert>



FLAG FLYING POLICY

1. General

1. Melksham Town Council flies flags to indicate allegiance, express support, show respect, or mark significant events. The Council aims to consider the perspectives of all community members and does not use flags for political objectives.

2. Union Flag

- 2.1. Melksham Town Council will fly the Union flag permanently on the primary flagpole (left hand side) above the Town Hall.
- 2.2. The Town Hall's secondary flagpole (right hand side) will usually display the Wiltshire flag or a 2nd Union flag, but these may be replaced by other flags as described below.

3. Half Mast

- 3.1. The Union flag will be flown at half-mast on the following occasions:
 - 3.1.1. On the death and until the funeral of the Sovereign, another member of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, ex-Prime Minister or other dignitary as advised by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport ("DCMS") or following special commands from the Sovereign.
 - 3.1.2. On the death and until the funeral of a serving officer in the Armed Forces from the Town.
 - 3.1.3. On the death and until the funeral of a serving Town Councillor, local Unitary Councillor or local Member of Parliament.
 - 3.1.4. As a mark of respect, mourning and solidarity following atrocities, natural disasters or other acts resulting in significant loss of life in countries with which the Town Council has a twinning affiliation.
 - 3.1.5. At the discretion of the CEO, to commemorate local civic and community dignitaries who have recently passed away.

4. National Flag of England

- 4.1. The National flag may be flown on the secondary flagpole on St George's Day (23rd April) and, at the discretion of the CEO, to celebrate and support the national team in sporting events of significance.

5. Armed Forces Day

- 5.1. On the last Saturday of June, the Armed Forces Day flag may be flown from the secondary flagpole.

6. Merchant Navy Flag

- 6.1. The Merchant Navy flag may be flown on 3rd September on the secondary flagpole to honour the brave men and women who kept our 'island nation' supplied during both World Wars and to acknowledge our dependence on modern day merchant seafarers.

7. The Commonwealth Flag

- 7.1. The Commonwealth Flag may be flown on the secondary flagpole on Commonwealth Day (second Monday in March).

8. The Pride flag

- 8.1. The Pride flag will be flown from the secondary flagpole throughout June to celebrate and support LGBTQ and their social movements.

9. Overseas Visitors

- 9.1. Whenever possible, the relevant national flag will be flown from the secondary flagpole when the Town Council formally receives visitors from overseas. Currently the council have national flags for:

France

Germany

Ukraine

Combined Union & Ukraine Flag

10. Olympic Flag

The Olympic flag may be flown on the secondary flagpole during the Olympics.

11. Other Flags & other occasions

- 11.1. Should a request to fly or lower a flag fall outside the terms of this policy, the CEO is empowered to make a decision on behalf of the council.

12. Respect for flags

- 12.1. Flags that are worn or discoloured will be replaced as a mark of respect except when their historical significance is acknowledged. Discarded flags should be disposed of carefully either by carefully cutting up or burning them in accordance with established practices related to flag handling.



Melksham Town Council

Pre-Application Policy for Major Developments

Date Adopted:

Date Due For Review:



PRE-APPLICATION POLICY FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. Introduction

Melksham Town Council recognises that pre-application discussions play an important role in major planning applications and welcomes the desire of developers to consult both the Council and the public more widely. However, the Council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the need to avoid any appearance of secretive negotiations or collusion with developers.

2. Pre-Determination

In all meetings with developers, Councillors are reminded of the critical importance of not pre-determining their position on any future application. It is noted, however, that expressing a pre-disposition, for example of either 'welcome in principle' or 'concerns', is permissible.

3. Individual Councillors' Discussions

If individual Councillors are approached by developers for informal discussions of possible future applications, all such requests should be notified to the Town Clerk and referred to a public meeting of the Full Council.

4. Pre-Application Public Consultations

The Council will, in general, encourage developers to carry out a local public consultation before submitting plans for major developments. Developers will be asked to provide:

- assurance that submission is either already scheduled or firmly planned;
- an accessible venue with suitable scheduling to allow a wide range of people to attend;
- sufficient publicity to reach all likely interested parties in a timely manner;
- a genuinely open mind and willingness to adapt plans in response to feedback.



Melksham Town Council Publication Scheme Policy

Date Adopted: 04/04/2022

Date Due For Review: April 2025



MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLICATION SCHEME POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the council. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.
- 1.2. The scheme commits a council:
 - 1.2.1. To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the council and falls within the classifications below.
 - 1.2.2. To specify the information which is held by the council and falls within the classifications below.
 - 1.2.3. To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
 - 1.2.4. To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
 - 1.2.5. To review and update on a regular basis the information the council makes available under this scheme.
 - 1.2.6. To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
 - 1.2.7. To make this publication scheme available to the public.
 - 1.2.8. To publish any dataset held by the council that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the council is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the council is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under the terms of the **Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015**, if they apply, and otherwise under the terms of the **Freedom of Information Act** section 19. The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the **Freedom of Information Act**. The term 'relevant copyright work' is defined in section 19(8) of that Act.
- 1.3. The Council is obliged to have a register of items that have been requested under the Freedom of Information Act.
- 1.4. The Council will only release information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (UK) and the Data Protection Act 2018
- 1.5. **Who we are and what we do:** Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
- 1.6. **What we spend and how we spend it:** Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, and contracts.

- 1.7. **What our priorities are and how we are doing:** Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections, and reviews.
- 1.8. **How we make decisions:** Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.
- 1.9. **Our policies and procedures:** Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.
- 1.10. **Lists and registers:** Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the council.
- 1.11. **The services we offer:** Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions, and media releases. A description of the services offered.
 - 1.11.1. The classes of information will not generally include:
 - 1.11.1.1. Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
 - 1.11.1.2. Information in draft form.
 - 1.11.1.3. Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage or is difficult to access for similar reasons.
- 1.12. **The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available:** The council will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.
 - 1.12.1. Where it is within the capability of the council, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, the council will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.
 - 1.12.2. In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
 - 1.12.3. Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where a council is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.
 - 1.12.4. Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

2. Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme

- 2.1. The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the council for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.
- 2.2. Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge. Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.
- 2.3. Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:
 - 2.3.1. photocopying;
 - 2.3.2. postage and packaging;
 - 2.3.3. the costs directly incurred because of viewing information.
- 2.4. Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.
- 2.5. Charges may also be made for making datasets (or parts of datasets) that are relevant copyright works available for re-use. These charges will be in accordance with the terms of the **Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015**, where they apply, or with regulations made under section 11B of the **Freedom of Information Act**, or with other statutory powers of the public authority.
- 2.6. If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

3. Written requests

- 3.1. Information held by the council that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the **Freedom of Information Act**.

4. Appendices

- 4.1. Appendix 1 – Information available and methods of publication.
- 4.2. Appendix 2 – Schedule of charges

Appendix 1

Information available under the model publication scheme

Information to be Published	How the Information can be Obtained
WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO <i>(current information only)</i> Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.	
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website/ Hard copy
Contact details for Town Clerk and Council members	Website/ Hard copy
Location of main Council office and accessibility details:	Website
Staffing structure	Website/ Hard copy
WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT <i>(current and previous financial year as a minimum)</i> Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audits.	
Annual Return and report by auditor	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Copies available on request
Finalised budget	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Copies available on request
Precept	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Copies available on request
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	See "Our Policies and Procedures" section below
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Details available on request
Members' allowances and expenses	No ordinary members allowance is paid; the Mayor receives an annual allowance. Details available on request. Expenses can be paid in certain circumstances.
WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE AND HOW WE ARE DOING Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.	
Annual Report (current and previous year as a minimum)	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
5 Year Strategic Plan	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS <i>(current and previous council year as a minimum)</i> Decision making processes and records of decisions.	
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings, and parish meetings)	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy

Agendas of meetings (as above)	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
Minutes of meetings (as above) NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
Reports presented to council meetings NB this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
Responses to consultation papers	Included in minutes (see above)
Responses to planning applications	Included in minutes (see above)
Byelaws	The Council has not enacted any byelaws
OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (current information only) Written protocols, policies, and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.	
Policies and procedures for the conduct of Council business: • Procedural standing orders • Financial Regulations • Committee and sub-committee terms of reference • Code of Conduct • Policy statements	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: • Employee Handbook • Health and Safety policy • Recruitment policies (including current vacancies) • Policies and procedures for handling requests for information • Complaints' procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Available for viewing at Council Office on request Website/Hard Copy

Document management policy (records retention, destruction, and archive)	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	See Appendix 2
LISTS AND REGISTERS <i>(currently maintained lists and registers only)</i>	
Assets register	Available for viewing at Council Office Website/Hard Copy
Register of members' interests	Available via our website or from the Wiltshire Council website: http://services.wiltshire.gov.uk/TownAndParish/ROI
THE SERVICES WE OFFER <i>(current information only)</i> Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses.	
Information available on request.	

Enquiries or requests for information detailed above should be made to:

The Town Clerk
Melksham Town Council
Town Hall, Market Place
Melksham, Wiltshire
SN12 6ES

Telephone: 01225 704187
Email: towncouncil@melksham-tc.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Schedule of Charges

Charges correct at March 2022.

Type of Charge	Description	Basis of Charge
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 10p per sheet of A4 single sided and 20p per sheet double sided (black & white) 25p per sheet of A3 single sided (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2nd class stamp

** The actual cost incurred by Melksham Town Council.*