

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Amenities & Facilities Committee

on Monday 9th February 2026

PRESENT: Councillor A Westbrook Chair
Councillor J Oatley Vice Chair
Councillor P Aves
Councillor J Crossley
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor S Rabey
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE

OFFICERS Hayley Bell CEO/Town Clerk
Dave Elms Amenities Manager
Jasmine Green Partnership Officer
Andrew Meacham Committee Clerk

PUBLIC Two members of the public were present and one member of the public and Councillor Cleary were present virtually

42/25 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Whitlock, who was substituted by Councillor Rabey.

43/25 Declaration of Interest

Councillor A Westbrook and Councillor J Westbrook declared an interest in relation Item 8 Splashpad because they are respectively the mother and sister of the expert who advised on the Splashpad. It was confirmed that the expert provided his advice free of charge.

Councillor A Westbrook and Councillor J Westbrook remained in the meeting and took part in the debate on this item.

44/25 Minutes

The minutes of 17th November 2025, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair Councillor A Westbrook.

45/25 Public Participation

Q. Splashpad running costs. For openness and transparency would the Council consider using separate cost centres for the KGV and the Splashpad. Budget for 2026/27 shows costs centre for King George V, including the Splashpad. Total budget is £48k but how much is for the Splashpad?

A. Plan for 2026/27 was for Splashpad to have separate cost centre and cost code for 2026/27. CEO will check with RFO.

Q. Public Toilets. Budgeted weekly costs for running public toilets in Market Place, Bath Road and KGV is shown on the pie chart as 12 pence per week or £6.24 per annum. Residents are asking when Church Street toilets will be re-opened. Well maintained toilets are beneficial for trade and the economy. It encourages visitors to stay longer and to come in the first place, I appreciate there would be a cost in getting the Church Street toilets up and running again, but businesses in the town may be willing to contribute. I think the letter “Disgraceful Precept Rise” in the last issue of the Melksham News speaks for many residents about being willing to pay for nice clean toilets. Every £1 on residents council bill raises approximately £6000 for the Council. I think residents would consider this money well spent. Opening Church Street toilets should be a priority. Are Councillors willing to consider using any of the earmarked reserves and/or getting sponsorship to get the toilets up and running again? This would greatly benefit residents of all generations and visitors and businesses. It would also prevent desperate men from peeing round the side of Church St toilets.

A. There is no budget this year for Church St toilets as it was not prioritised over play areas which are in a desperate state. The Community Toilet Scheme has been put forward. There have been ridiculous costings up to £100k in the past. It would not be a priority but it may be that officers could look as costings later in the year, to be considered for next years budget. Do not think it could come out of reserves. General reserves have been used in the past leaving a problematic low reserve. The building is owned by Wiltshire Council and would require an Asset Transfer. The matter would be put on the agenda of the next meeting for discussion.

Councillor Crossley arrived at 19:10, during public participation.

46/25 Melksham Town Council Play Parks

The Chair Councillor A Westbrook spoke to the item.

Members discussed the leases. The CEO confirmed that MTC was looking at long-term leases or alternatively the possibility of asset transfer.

Members discussed the consultation and the following suggestions were made

- The question “Which Park should be priority?” should be asked before “What should be done?”
- Every part of Town should have one play area prioritised, with a 4th location decided by council.
- Councillors to spend some time in play areas to meet residents.
- Grant funding sources should be investigated.
- Consultation should go to schools.
- QR codes should be utilised.
- Accessible play equipment should be available in all play areas.
- Responses to be accepted after the close of consultation, as this is a rolling program.

It was proposed by Councillor A Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to work with Melksham News to produce a community consultation document on all Melksham play areas. Closing date for consultation to be 31st March 2026 and results to come back to the next Amenities & Facilities meeting on 20th April 2026.

47/25 Motion of Speedwell Close Play Area

The Chair advised that the proposer was not able to attend and asked for the item to be deferred to the next Full Council meeting. There was opposition to the deferral as Amenities & Facilities was the appropriate forum.

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED not to defer the item.

The motion was discussed. Councillor Oatley explained the thinking behind the motion and suggested that, notwithstanding the vote not to allow deferral to Full Council, that the committee do allow deferral to the next Amenities and Facilities meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Oatley, seconded by Councillor A Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to defer the motion for consideration at the next Amenities & Facilities meeting.

48/25 Memorial Bench & Tree Policy

It was proposed by Councillor A Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Crossley and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to amend paragraph 3.2 of the policy to read: -

“The council recognises that in some areas of the town that have a special significance for the donor/person being remembered, there may already be a sufficient supply of seating. In this instance, the council may be able to offer the opportunity to replace an existing bench that is coming towards needing to be replaced, or allow the donor to adopt an existing bench for the placement of a suitable plaque for ¼ of the price of a new bench, plus the cost of a plaque.”

49/25 Splashpad

The Chair, Councillor A Westbrook, thanked the Amenities Manager for his work on the problems with the Splashpad.

The report was noted.

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

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept the quote of Topline for the injection system and Splash for recommissioning and maintenance.

50/25 Public Toilets

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Oatley and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to temporarily change the closing time of the Bath Road and KGV public toilets to 18:00, to be in place until 21st March 2026.

51/25 Wiltshire Town Programme

The update was noted.

It was proposed by Councillor Oatley, seconded by Councillor A Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to

- approve the installation of festoon lighting in Melksham Market Place
- not approve at this stage festoon lighting along Riverside Walk
- to request the CEO to come back to the next meeting with alternative ideas for the remainder of the Wiltshire Town Programme fund.

52/25 Assembly Hall Report

The Chair thanked the Deputy Assembly Hall Manager for his efforts to keep the Assembly Hall running during the process to employ a new manager. Other officers were also thanked for their support to the Deputy Assembly Hall Manager.

The report was noted.

53/25 Other Items to Note

The Chair thanked all involved for work on 31a Market Place and residents for their patience while the public toilets were not available.

The Chair also thanked the Community Officer for creating the Play Area Map.

The report was noted.

Meeting closed at: 20:45

Signed

Dated