

**Melksham Town Council**  
**Minutes of the Full Council**  
**on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

PRESENT:                   Councillor S Rabey                   Town Mayor  
                                  Councillor J Westbrook           Deputy Town Mayor  
                                  Councillor P Alford  
                                  Councillor P Aves  
                                  Councillor E Calland  
                                  Councillor J Crossley  
                                  Councillor M Drewett  
                                  Councillor G Elson  
                                  Councillor A Griffin  
                                  Councillor J Oatley  
                                  Councillor T Price  
                                  Councillor C Stokes  
                                  Councillor A Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE

OFFICERS                   Hayley Bell                   CEO  
                                  Andrew Meacham           Committee Clerk

PUBLIC One member of the press was present and five members of the public were present virtually

**203/25           Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Cleary and Councillor Whitlock.

**204/25           Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**205/25           Minutes**

The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor J Westbrook asked for it to be clarified that questions recorded as being directly from the Decartaret family were in fact collated by her from various conversations with the family.

The minutes of Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair and Town Mayor Councillor Rabey.

**206/25           Public Participation**

PP 1 – Does the Civility and Respect Pledge cover members of the public and press? CEO confirmed it does.

Recently become aware of punchbag in council building with his face on it. Photograph was shown.

Officer apologised for a bad joke. Matter will be investigated.

PP2 – There were two items on the CCTV report for action. One is being actioned. What was happening about the upgrade to the wireless network?

A. Conversations being had with Smart Integrated Services. Council is looking at the overall whole picture of the CCTV to ensure it is right. Currently looking at procurement of cards. Wifi will be looked at next.

### **207/25            Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions.

### **208/25            Town Mayor's Announcements**

Mayor and Councillor Griffin were at the first Meet Your Councillors event at the Assembly Hall on Saturday. Event went well. 7 residents with a variety of Town Council and Wiltshire Council issues which the Mayor, Councillor Griffin and relevant ward councillors will take action on. A very positive event.

It was confirmed by officers that a further event would be arranged.

### **209/25            Reports from Unitary Councillors**

Councillor J Westbrook.

Budget meetings next week. Two days set aside. Quarter 3 deficit of 6.9 million has been closed, with a surplus or around £200k. Significant work done to stabilise finances. Majority of Wiltshire Council budgets are statutory. Need to ensure core responsibility and needs of residents.

Area Board Review. Attended meeting where changes to Area Board discussed. No proposal at this time to change funding, just how it is funded. Review mainly around structure, delivery and potential alternative funding routes not the amount of funding. Consultation shows people like the local element and see it as a valued forum. Meetings too long and formal with limited community participation.

Councillor Stokes

Recent Government announcement on SEND Funding for local authorities. Will fund approximately 90% of SEND budget deficits. Wiltshire Council were looking at £106 million deficit. Wiltshire Council are 20<sup>th</sup> lowest funded council in the country.

Councillor Griffin.

LHFIG. Union Street consultation on traffic management and parking going out in the next few weeks. Yellow lines and other parking controls going into place on Skylark once the weather improves.

Recycling Centres. Bowerhill Recycling Centre operated by FCC Environment and there are no plans to change the arrangements. Proposal for pre-booking visits to Household Recycling Sites, which be going to consultation. Residents have expressed their concerns. Councillor Griffin does not believe there is a problem with queuing at the Bowerhill site.

Parish Stewards. Proposal to realign the responsibilities of Parish Stewards. Cannot see the benefits.

Councillor Alford.

Parish Steward. Budget proposes removal of £800000 funding. Councillor J Westbrook stated that the method of funding has changed rather than the budget being cut.

Emergency Grant (for things such as gel sacs, salt, emergency flooding signs). Being withdrawn in proposed budget.

Planned withdrawal of community funding for Link will not be going forward.

Transport funding for 16-18 year olds with Education, Health and Care Plans being consulted on with a view to remove. Councillor Stokes commented that this would be on a case by case basis.

Quarter 3 report. Significant overspend in departments that has been covered by taking over £4million out of reserves and using a one off VAT refund. Expected £16 million demand next year unmet in budgets.

## **210/25 East Melksham Community Centre**

The CEO gave a verbal update.

## **211/25 Volunteering Policy**

Concerns were raised about what is and is not covered in the policy

- Scope of policy. For volunteers across all departments? Seasonal volunteers?
- Do we pay expenses or not. Should be stated.
- Volunteer agreement.
- Commitment on time.
- What happens if a volunteer becomes inactive
- Lone working and out-of-hours working
- Protocol for volunteers put in contentious situations
- Conduct on social media and access to social media and web site
- Safeguarding – training, DBS checks, harassment, young volunteers, dignity at work

- Volunteers under 18. Are they allowed? If so, what do we expect re parental consent

## **212/25 Freedom of Information Policy**

Concerns were raised about what was not covered in the Policy

- Charging over 14 hours. Should be over 18 hours.
- No reference to vexatious, repeated and unreasonable requests
- Duty to assist and to clarify requests
- Subject access request – refer to there being a separate policy
- Says how we would like FOI's submitted. Should specifically state that we will **only** accept requests in those ways.
- FOI requests, when do we log them and which committee do they report to.
- Retention Policy – link in the FOI Policy
- Retention Policy fully review the document and retention dates in line with documents being kept.
- Who signs off complex refusals.

It was proposed by Councillor Alford, seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor J Westbrook and

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to adopt the Volunteering Policy and Freedom of Information Policy as is, with the amended policies to come back to council.

## **213/25 Financial Regulations**

Amendments were suggested

- Best Value – Where to seek a one local Melksham Supplier.
- Make the £4,999 all figures excluding vat
- Major infrastructure to always have three quotes to come back to the full council.
- Contracts and services to be included

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the suggested amendment, subject to the points above being incorporated.

## **214/25 Motion on Melksham Town Council Play Areas.**

Councillor Alford spoke to the motion and it was debated.

Councillor Griffin put forward a friendly amendment that the unspent funding from 2025/26 be placed in an earmarked reserve for play areas. Councillor Alford felt unable to accept this

friendly amendment as the earmarked reserve would not be specified as being for the play areas in the motion.

There was discussion on the consultation process.

The motion was put to a vote and was defeated with abstentions.

#### **215/25          Calendar of Meetings 2026/27**

Concerns were raised.

- Has there been liaison with Melksham Without Parish Council – CEO advised there had not.
- Grant meetings are not mentioned
- Full Council on 26<sup>th</sup> October. This is half-term. Several councillors work in schools and need to sync holidays with school holidays
- Community Development 21<sup>st</sup> December. If there is a grants meeting on the same day, this will be too close to Christmas
- Full Council 27<sup>th</sup> July which is Summer Holidays, but this could not be avoided

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the calendar with the amendments for grants and December meeting.

Councillor Price left the meeting, having apologised to the Chair.

#### **216/25          CIL**

The CEO gave a verbal update.

The item was noted.

#### **217/25          CCTV Update**

The CEO gave a verbal update.

The item was noted.

#### **218/25          Cemeteries Task & Finish Group**

Councillor Alford spoke to the item.

Councillor A Westbrook asked whether information from a visit to Semington Crematorium had been shared? The CEO said she would chase.

It was proposed by Councillor Alford, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

**RESOLVED** to write to Wiltshire Council requesting that the decision not to provide a cemetery extension be reversed and that the cemetery remain open to new burials.

**219/25          Resolutions**

The item was noted. Councillors without access to Sharepoint were asked to speak to officers.

**220/25          Sir David Attenborough**

The letter was noted.

**221/25          Town Hall Maintenance**

The item was noted. Councillor Oatley asked if the chamber curtains could be replaced as part of the maintenance programme.

**222/25          Area Board Review**

The item was noted.

**223/25          Melksham Health & Wellbeing Meeting Notes**

The item was noted.

Councillors asked if appointing a rep to the group could be added to the list of Outside Bodies for the Annual Meeting.

**224/25          Age UK Report**

The item was noted.

**226/25          Shurnhold Fields**

The item was noted.

Councillors asked that signs be put up to indicate progress.

**227/25          Economic Development & Planning**

The minutes were received.

**228/25          Finance, Governance & Performance**

The minutes were received.

**229/25          Personnel**

The minute were received.

**230/25 Working Groups and Task & Finish Groups**

The minutes were received.

Meeting closed at: 21:05

Signed .....

Dated .....