

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council

on Monday 28 September 2026

PRESENT:

Councillor S Rabey	Town Mayor and Chair
Councillor G Elson	Deputy Town Mayor and Vice Chair
Councillor P Alford	
Councillor P Aves	
Councillor E Calland	
Councillor J Crossley	
Councillor A Griffin	
Councillor J Oatley	
Councillor T Price	
Councillor C Stokes	
Councillor A Westbrook	
Councillor J Westbrook	
Councillor A Whitlock	

IN ATTENDANCE

OFFICERS

Hayley Bell	CEO/Town Clerk
Ian Cunningham	Community Officer
Andrew Meacham	Committee Clerk
Dave Elms (Online)	Amenities Lead
Amelie Huxtable (Online)	Accounts Administration Officer
Dominic Rutterford (Online)	Communications and Marketing Officer

PUBLIC

Two members of the press were present, and four members of the public were present virtually.

93/26 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Drewett.

94/26 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

95/26 Minutes

The minutes of 27 July 2026, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair Councillor Rabey

96/26 Public Participation

Q. KVG Masterplan has no costs associated with it. Is it intended to sign off as it is or will it come back to council?

A. Councillors being asked to consider signing off on scope of work and the direction to take. Will then need to be costed and brought back to Council.

Q. Any movement on Blue Pool gates?

A. Not as yet.

97/26 Questions from Councillors

Q. Are repairs to Market Place toilets completed?

A. Work is ongoing.

Q. Date for completion?

A. Hopefully this Friday. Will confirm by email when complete.

98/26 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor Councillor Rabey thanked all involved for the hard work and success of the Sham Jam Festival, with a special thanks to council staff and officers. People were talking about and enjoying the festival and visitors came from across Wiltshire and beyond. These events bring valuable income to local businesses and showcase Melksham. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive – variety of events, friendly and welcoming and people already looking forward to next year. High level of engagement from the community. Cost per resident for the festival worked out at 50 pence.

The Town Mayor thanked Sue Mortimer for raising £200 for the Mayor's charities by holding a raffle at the tea party.

99/26 Police Report

The report was received. It was noted that Sgt Chilton was unable to attend.

100/26 Reports from Unitary Councillors

Councillor Stokes

- More SEND spaces created.
- SEND White Paper gone through planning stage. Funding available for expert staff.

Councillor Alford

- Melksham Recycling Centre Booking System now up and running.
- Update issued on WC finances. Early forecast looked challenging. Projected overspend of £6.7 million. Savings can be managed and need to wait to see how it plays out.

Councillor J Westbrook

- Local Plan consultations have begun. Local Plan has massive impact on towns. MTC working in conjunction with MWPC. Meetings set up to engage directly with WC.
- Area Board. Looks like more funding available for local groups and charities.

Councillor Griffin

- Planning National Scheme of Delegation came into effect in July. Call ins no longer permitted. Schedule I applications (under 9 new houses) cannot be determined by committee. Schedule II applications presumed decision by officers unless meet “Gateway Test” requiring Planning Officer and Planning Committee Chair to agree that there is at least one significant economic, social or environmental issue.
- LHFIG Meeting. Progress made on proposed changes to traffic management outside Crown House.

101/26 Police and Crime Commissioner

Philip Wilkinson OBE, Police and Crime Commissioner gave a presentation to council. 4 years ago Wiltshire Police in special measures with lowest rating in country. Now in highest tier, while being the 3rd lowest funded force in the country. The PPC spoke to the future of Wiltshire Police with devolution and police reform and merger.

Councillors asked questions on various subjects.

- Balancing protection of the public with protection of officers
- Violence against women and girls
- Rural crime
- Cyber crime and balancing the response to cyber crime and traditional crime
- Anti-social driving
- Anti-social behaviour
- Collaboration with other forces
- Leadership of the force.

102/26

Dependants' Carers' Allowance – NALC Survey

Members discussed the merits of a Carers' Allowance and the possible cost. Officers advised that council was not being asked to take a position on whether to introduce an allowance, only on whether the law should be changed to allow Town and Parish Councils to do so.

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

RESOLVED to complete the survey and support in principle the option for Town and Parish Councils to introduce a Carers' Allowance.

103/26

Coffee Machine Procurement

The CEO spoke to the item. Members discussed the merits of leasing or ownership, type of machine, length of lease, the "break even" figures and using local suppliers.

It was proposed by Councillor Whitlock, second by Councillor Crossley and **RESOLVED** to approve the procurement of the Crew CM65 bean-to-cup coffee machine from Beanmachine under the five-year lease arrangement at £28.89 per week, with a total lease commitment of £7,511.40. The lease to be funded from the allocated Assembly Hall equipment budget.

In making the resolution members requested that future consumables be purchased locally where possible.

104/26

Flood Preparations

Councillor Price declared an interest as an employee of the Highways Maintenance Company and would be abstaining from the vote.

It was confirmed that stock would be available to local businesses and residents, subject to supply needs of MTC. Councillors asked if there were any community buy-in schemes to take advantage of bulk buying prices. Councillor Alford and Councillor Aves were nominated as flood wardens but it was agreed that all councillors who wished to should complete the training in order to be available to assist if required.

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

RESOLVED to

- Note Wiltshire Council's decision to end PEAS in March 2027 and its wider resilience programme.
- Note the Chief Executive Officer's request for road sweeping and gully cleaning and receive an update when Wiltshire Council Highways confirms its programme.

- Support the continued review of the joint emergency plan with Melksham Without Parish Council.
- Support the proposed community and business flood-preparedness session.
- Appoint Councillor Alford and Councillor Aves as Flood wardens, subject to appropriate training.

105/26 Local Plan

The CEO spoke to the item.

It was proposed by The Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Stokes and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to approve the initial submission, subject including the Wiltshire Metro.

106/26 KGV Masterplan

The Town Mayor Councillor Rabey left the room at 20:50 and the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Elson took the chair.

Councillor A Westbrook spoke to the item.

The Town Mayor Councillor Rabey returned to the room at 20:54 and resumed the chair.

Members discussed whether play area refurbishments should be prioritised over the LGV Masterplan and whether Assets & Facilities might be a better forum.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Oatley and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to refer the item to the Assets & Facilities Committee meeting on Monday 5 October for more in-depth discussion, before being returned to Full Council.

107/26 Festoon Lighting

It was proposed by Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and **RESOLVED** to approve the installation of festoon lighting from the Town Centre bridge to the lower end of King George V Park, based on the quotation provided by Light Fantastic of £4694+VAT as a preferred supplier.

108/26 Free Parking

Members noted the report and asked that the matter come back re-calculated with the removal of Lowbourn Car Park. Information on maintenance and operation costs would be helpful.

109/26 Melksham Town Council Brand Guidelines

The item was noted.

110/26 Power Supply to KGV

The CEO advised that conversations were being held and the matter would come back to council at a later date.

111/26 Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Community Committee meeting of 8 June 2026 and the Planning Committee meetings of 14 July 2026, 4 August 2026 and 25 August 2026 were received.

112/26 Procurement Working Group

Members were not in favour of a Working Group.

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Price and **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to make procurement an item on the Finance Committee Agenda.

113/26 Park Procurement

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

RESOLVED to go into confidential session.

Camera and microphones were turned off and members discussed the proposed designs of each provider.

Camera and microphones were turned on and it was confirmed that the meeting was now back in public session.

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** to

- note the procurement process, design development and community engagement undertaken for Dunch Lane and Riverside Play Parks.
- confirm Dragon Play & Sports Ltd as the preferred contractor, following verification that it achieved the highest compliant moderated score under the published award criteria, and notes that this decision approves the contractor rather than the initial submitted designs in full.
- approve a contract sum of £120,000 excluding VAT, funded from earmarked reserves.
- approve that payments are made through a staged approach linked to agreed project milestones, with each payment subject to satisfactory evidence of completion confirmed by the Operations Manager and authorised by the Responsible Financial Officer in accordance with the Council's financial controls.

- establish the approved design principles, project scope, budget, quality criteria and programme as the project baseline and delegates authority to the Chief Executive to approve changes within the tolerances and authority agreed by Council. The Operations Manager must record and assess every proposed change through the change log, including its effect on cost, time, quality, benefits, risks and procurement compliance. No change to project scope may be instructed or implemented without the Chief Executive's clear written approval. Any change outside agreed tolerances or delegated authority, including a material change to the competed requirement, approved budget or completion date, must be escalated to Council for decision before commitment.
- confirm officers do arrange a partnership meeting with the appointed contractor, PIPA Play and relevant Council representatives to review and amend all initial submitted designs so that the final proposals provide fully family-friendly, child-friendly and inclusive play areas, provided that all refinements remain within the competed scope, approved budget and procurement requirements.
- confirm that the project programme requires completion of all parks by 31 March 2027, and that officers take all reasonable steps within their delegated authority to avoid delay.
- confirm that Melksham Town Council works with Melksham News to provide clear and timely communications to residents throughout design development and project delivery.
- confirm that officers are delegated authority to progress and conclude discussions with Wiltshire Council regarding the reconfiguration of the Dunch Lane area of use, and to agree any associated non-material operational and design changes, so that the project timetable is not delayed, provided that the approved budget, procurement requirements and overall project scope are not materially altered.
- confirm that contract award remains subject to satisfactory due diligence, references, insurance, health and safety information, CDM arrangements, Equality Act review, final standards-compliant drawings and publication of all required procurement notices. 11.
- confirm that neither play park opens until an independent post-installation inspection has been completed, all high-risk or significant defects have been rectified, and the Council has received the health and safety file, certificates, warranties, asset register and O&M manual.

Meeting closed at: 21:40

Signed

Dated