

Marlborough Town Council



17 January 2023

Dear Councillor

Full Town Council

I hereby **summon** you to a meeting of **Marlborough Town Council** which will be held on **Monday, 23rd January 2023 at 7pm** in the **Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall**.

Yours sincerely

Richard Spencer-Williams

Richard Spencer-Williams, PSLCC

Town Clerk

This meeting will be held in the Court Room at the Town Hall according to the latest Government Covid Safety Guidelines, and managed according to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974(2)e.

There will be thirty places for members of the public to attend. If members of the public wish to attend they should notify the Town Clerk of this by noon on the Friday prior to the meeting. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Organisations and interest groups are asked to send one delegate.

If members of the public wish to attend and ask a question they should also notify the Town Clerk of this by noon on the Friday prior to the meeting and provide their question in writing at the same time. Some members of the public may not be allowed to attend if all the allocated seats are taken.

If members of the public wish to ask a question, but not attend, they can provide the question in writing to the Town Clerk by noon on the day of the meeting, and a written response will be provided.

PRAYERS

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with Standing Order 3(f), members of the public may ask questions of the Council. The time allocated for this should not exceed 10 minutes and be limited to 1 question per person unless directed otherwise by the Chair. A full response may not be possible without further research, and the Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given.

CRIME AND DISORDER

A Officer from Wiltshire Police will be invited to give a report and answer questions from Councillors and members of the public (not to exceed 10 minutes)

PRESENTATION BY KENNET AND AVON MEDICAL PARTNERSHIP

A Presentation by Dr Hook from the Kennet and Avon Medical Partnership followed by Q&As from Councillors

TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Not to exceed 10 minutes

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**
2. **Declarations of interest**
 - a) To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Marlborough Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011
 - b) To consider any dispensation requests received by the Town Clerk
Members are reminded that they are obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of a change to disclosable interests, or a new interest as defined in Appendices A and B of the Code of Conduct within 28 days of becoming aware of it. These should be passed on to the Town Clerk to register online.
3. **Mayor's Announcements**
4. **Minutes**
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 12 December 2022
5. **Action Log**
To note and review the Action Log
6. **Tourism Report**
To receive and consider an update report from the Tourism Officer
7. **Civic Working Party**
To receive a verbal update from the Civic Working Party

8. Code of Conduct Respect Campaign

To consider the 'Positive Conduct Positive Democracy' campaign launched by Wiltshire Council

9. Councillor Training

To consider the training needs of Councillors for 2023 24

10. Staff Christmas Gratuity

To consider a proposal for the Council to fund the Staff Christmas breakfast

11. Outside Body Reports

12. Committee Minutes

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, to note the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 5 December 2022; **Amenities and Open Spaces** 10 October 2022. These minutes have been approved by committees and circulated to Members and are available to download from <https://marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/calendar-of-meetings-2022-23> or from the Town Council offices. Other meetings have taken place, but minutes are not yet approved so remain in draft form.

12 Members' Question Time

13 Common Seal

To authorise the fixing of the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

Marlborough Town Council



Full Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 12 December 2022 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	Chair
	Councillor Andrew Ross	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Richard Allen	
	Councillor Kymee Cleasby	
	Councillor Jane Davies	
	Councillor James Sheppard	
	Councillor Caroline Thomas	
	Councillor Mark Luson	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
ALSO PRESENT	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
	Two officers	Wiltshire Police
	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News

As neither the **Town Mayor** nor the **Deputy Mayor** was able to attend Members **RESOLVED:** that **Councillor Fogg** would chair the meeting

PRAYERS

Councillor Fogg opened the meeting with prayers.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

CRIME AND DISORDER

PC Rideout explained current and recent focus for the community team and answered questions:

- Multiple patrols had been carried out at a makeshift 'den' near the salt depot/old railway line and officers had spoken with schools about antisocial

behaviour. Wiltshire Council's environmental enforcement team would remove the structures within the next few weeks.

- Operation 'Elf' would see increased high visibility street patrols to deter and combat shoplifting
- Arrests had been made in Waitrose leading to charges at court
- Regular patrols following reports of drug use and alleged dealing at Plume of Feathers garden
- Operation 'Scrambling' would see stops on vehicles with trailers in rural areas to check for farm machinery thefts
- Following a road traffic accident fatality linked to alcohol, licence checks at pubs as well as checks on drivers were being conducted
- **Councillor Lusson** asked for details about a recent incident where it was believed an elderly lady had been hit by a vehicle in the High Street; if true, this reinforced the need for a safe crossing point
- **Councillor Allen** drew officers' attention to an increase in cyclists using the pavement in George Lane, creating hazards for pedestrians. Signage had been erected in Devizes in response to a similar issue
- The team was still short of resource. More officers would be recruited in January and April 2023

ACTION: provide details of recent incident in High Street

The officers left the meeting

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Cycle path: Wiltshire Councillors provided updates on the planned extension:

- Work at Marlborough Business Park should progress in 2023/24 following resolution of legal matters with the landowner
- Sustrans was considering two routes (the old railway line or Blenheim Road)
- An application for funding had been made to the Department of Transport
- Development plans for the former Resource Centre at Cherry Orchard, to include a confirmed location for a wider path, were still at the planning stage
- A proposed Toucan crossing at Salisbury Road was dependent upon other works being completed

Traffic survey and modelling:

- Whether, to share information about potential Atkins surveys, contact could be made with Bradford on Avon Town Council/Wiltshire Councillors
- Whether details were available about a different approach taken at Corsham

ACTION: Wiltshire Councillors to confirm the appropriate Wiltshire Councillor to contact for Bradford on Avon to allow information to be shared

South coast to M4 strategic study:

- The National Highways report had not yet been published but was expected very soon
- Wiltshire Council would start a highways review in 2023 as part of the local plan which would include freight movements

- Whether outcomes and actions following a summer 2022 meeting in the Collingbournes were available
- An ‘all things road’ meeting for Marlborough on 23 February was being planned and would be publicised in January

298/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Rev. Novis**, the **Town Mayor** and **Councillors Loosmore, Barrett-Morton, Heath** and **Waltham**

299/22 DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations.

230/22 TOWN MAYOR/CHAIR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had not provided any announcements.

It was good news that two vehicles had been purchased for the on-demand community bus scheme. The principles of how it would operate had been agreed, with the route requested by the first person to call the scheme taking priority, with others collected if the route allowed. It was hoped that the service would commence in March 2023. **Councillor Fogg** asked whether a representative could be invited to present at a future meeting, and for help publicising the scheme.

ACTION: arrange a presentation about on-demand bus services at a future meeting

231/22 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 7 November 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair

232/22 ACTION LOG

Members noted the updated action log. Verbal updates/comments included:

#114: a meeting date with Kennet and Avon Medical Partnership had been agreed for 9 January 2023.

#121: a meeting had taken place between Homes4Wiltshire, Aster, the Town Mayor, Councillors Davies and Thomas and the Town Clerk to discuss Marlborough’s housing needs. Discussion points included:

- Properties were assessed when they became vacant and if they did not meet the SAP rating were offered for sale if considered too expensive to repair
- The need for housing, especially for families, outlined in the draft Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan had been noted and would be a key tool to help progress the conversation about the need for more homes in Marlborough
- Housing associations invested in homes in Wiltshire when unsuitable properties were sold: to meet the county-wide need, more homes could be provided elsewhere for the cost of buying/building one in Marlborough, where housing was expensive. This was not helpful where families, the vulnerable or elderly wished to remain in Marlborough

- The wellbeing or health impacts of moving people away from familiar surroundings and/or support networks
- Whether numbers of social homes in Marlborough now and 10 years ago could be obtained
- Housing needs were assessed by Homes4Wiltshire; the role of housing associations was to provide as many homes as possible in Wiltshire
- The meeting had been positive and had opened a conversation which should be continued. It was hoped a future Town Council meeting could include a presentation/discussion with an officer from Homes4Wiltshire

233/22 COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

Members noted the agreed priorities and financial implications for 2023-24.

Councillor Thomas thanked the Town Clerk for the clear presentation of the information and flagged to Members that the Finance & Policy Committee had added a fourth priority: to support the Town Council in terms of making financial information as straightforward as possible to aid decision making.

Members also noted that consideration of climate change and environmental impact had already been agreed as being integral to all services and new projects (*Environment and Climate Protection Policy Statement Adopted: 28.06.21*). To reinforce this, it would be stated as a separate priority on future years' priority lists.

234/22 CIVIC WORKING PARTY AND CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and a progress update from the Civic Working Party (CvWP). They also considered the CvWP terms of reference and an approach to the Coronation of King Charles III. Discussion points included:

- It was disappointing that only one Councillor had been able to attend the most recent CvWP meeting
- Whether the onus for progressing the civic programme should be on the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor with support from the Town Clerk and Civic Secretary
- Whether to encourage community activity to help plan events for the Coronation

RESOLVED: (i) that the Civic Working Party takes a lead role in the King's coronation event, adopting a similar approach to the Platinum Jubilee, with planning starting in January 2023

RESOLVED: (ii) that the Terms of Reference of the Civic Working Party were agreed, with particular emphasis on the role of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be actively engaged in leading the civic programme

RESOLVED: (iii) that the preferred date for a planned event to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III would be the Bank Holiday Monday, 8 May 2023

235/22 TOWN CENTRE WORKING PARTY

RESOLVED: to delegate authority to progress the tender process for the Town Signage Plan to the Town Centre Working Party in conjunction with the Town Clerk

236/22 HERBERT LEAF TRUST

Members noted the update report on progress made by the Herbert Leaf Working Party, and considered a proposal to move the Trust to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), proposed objects, outcomes and constitutional recommendations.

RESOLVED: that the Working Party was thanked for making a good start to defining an approach to managing the Herbert Leaf bequest; proposals would be considered by Full Council after the HLWP meeting on 10 January 2023 when next steps and 'the objects' would be clarified

237/22 MAKE SOMEONE WELCOME

Members noted the Town Clerk's report about the Centre for Independent Living 'Make Someone Welcome' campaign.

RESOLVED: (i) to support the Make Someone Welcome Campaign, and to make a pledge to make the doorbell at the Town Council's 5 High Street office more accessible to wheelchair users

RESOLVED: (ii) to ask the Town Centre Working Party to embrace the Make Someone Welcome Campaign and identify opportunities to make further pledges

238/22 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2023/24

Members considered the annual budget and precept for the year 2023/24. The Chair of the Finance and Policy Committee, **Councillor Thomas**, recommended a proposed precept increase of 3.21% in the light of maintaining services to residents and progressing projects against a background of high inflation, a cost-of-living crisis causing difficulties for residents, and rising energy and other running costs for the Town Council. Discussion points and questions arising included:

- Whether the proposed increase would be too low to maintain services and/or support people in need
- Three scenarios had been considered with the main difference in the recommended option being a reduction in budget for bedding plants and bringing the Town Hall maintenance budget down in line with the 2020/21 figures
- How staff costs had been calculated, and how actual spend would be managed (e.g. staff costs associated with the Coronation of King Charles III)
- How projected income figures had been calculated
- Whether there would be any impact on the Town Council's reserves
- Heritage budget, and a more general discussion about heritage assets. A proposal to increase the heritage budget line to £3,000 failed, attracting 2 votes for with 6 against and 3 abstentions

RESOLVED: that the total net budget and precept requirement to levy to Wiltshire Council for 2023/24 is £827,301 representing a 3.21% precept rise equating to a Band D figure of £231.11 pa

The **Chair** asked whether a discussion could be arranged at a future meeting to consider how best to manage heritage assets owned by the Town Council.

Thanks were conveyed to the Town Clerk, Office Manager and all involved in drawing up the budgets.

239/22

OUTSIDE BODIES

Marlborough Kids Meals: Councillor Cleasby reported that more referrals were coming in all the time. Numbers had increased by 75% since the summer, rising from 9-10 families to 40 families now in need of hot food and food support on a weekly basis.

Marlborough Area Poverty Action Group (MAPAG): Councillor Thomas reported that, alongside Marlborough Kids Meals, 77 x £40 Tesco vouchers were being distributed to households in need. The **Town Mayor** was organising food parcels, working with Marlborough College, the Jubilee Centre and Marlborough Youth Football Club.

Councillor Thomas let Members know about a new Marlborough Area Youth Forum, with **Councillors Hall, Thomas** and the **Town Mayor** as trustees. It was recruiting for a youth worker.

Allotment Association: Councillor Lusson reported on recent team tidy days at St Johns Close and Stonebridge allotments, a manure delivery from a local farmer for Elcot Lane allotments and that a new Facebook Admin had been found. He believed there were currently 26 people on the waiting list for allotments. The next meeting would take place in February.

240/22

COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 17 October and 14 November, and **Finance & Policy** – 24 October 2022.

241/22

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

No questions had been submitted.

242/22

COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Councillor Ross** and seconded by **Councillor Hall** and

RESOLVED: that the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council be affixed to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

The meeting closed at 8.51 pm

To note and review the Action Log

Ref	Description	Minute #	Source	Assigned to	Status	Meeting or start date	Notes
93	Police to check when risk assessment will be conducted, enabling Traffic Enforcement to begin at Port Hill	Crime & Disorder	Full Town Council	Sgt Cole/ PCSO Camilleri	In Progress	20 June 2022	<p>Email requesting update sent 18.7.22 by Town Clerk. Police confirmed they will not proceed in enforcement work as the location does not fit with their criteria. 19 8 22; WC Traffic Surveys informed they were to liaise with Police re: better collaborative working. 22 8 22 WC referred onto Highways / LHIFG for traffic calming. NOW PLANNING ISSUE.</p> <p>3.10.22: Cllr Sheppard contacted the PCC: a speed watch team would attend; Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk investigating if pole can be erected for purpose of using SID at this location.</p> <p>2 12 22: the distance between the start of the 30mph speed limit coming up Port Hill, and the proposed location for the SID column only measures 110-120m. WC SID criteria states that SID's should be installed at least 200m within the limit.</p> <p>Unable to install a pole at this location.</p>
114	To invite a representative from NHS Foundation Trust/Great Western Hospital to attend a future Full Town Council meeting; and to arrange a meeting with a representative from KAMP	Questions to/from Wiltshire Councillors	Full Town Council	Town Clerk	In Progress		<p>Email invitation sent to KAMP 11 8 22; KAMP positively acknowledged the invitation; awaiting confirmation of date from KAMP (7 11 22 or 9 1 23). KAMP attending 9 1 23 (on agenda).</p>

124	Get details of incident in High Street w/c 5 Dec - elderly lady hit by car?	Crime & Disorder	Full Town Council	Wiltshire Police	In Progress	12 December 2022	
125	Which Wiltshire Councillor for Bradford on Avon to contact to discuss Atkins traffic survey	Questions to/from Wiltshire Councillors	Full Town Council	Cllrs Davies, Thomas or Sheppard	In Progress	12 December 2022	
126	Arrange presentation about on-demand bus services to a Planning or FTC meeting	230/22	Full Town Council	Town Clerk	In Progress	12 December 2022	Invitation sent 10 1 23

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ask members to note actions taken thus far to continue to deliver the Marlborough Tourism Strategy as set out in January 2020, and to consider an update on progress since the last update in February 2022.

Current situation

Three main priorities were outlined in the action plan concluding the Marlborough Tourism Strategy. Recent work done to address these, current plans and future goals are as follows:

Priority number 1: Developing the product and visitor offer

Nature Trail

Working with Transition Marlborough and Action for the River Kennet (ARK) on a year-round nature trail - quotes for robust signs have been obtained and the go ahead was given at the Finance & Policy Committee meeting on April 24th, 2022. Words have been written, a designer commissioned to carry out the artwork and an aluminum interpretation panel ordered (with anti-graffiti coating). Installation expected by March, in time for the apple blossom.

'Mound Day'

Following on from the success of a Royal Connections Tour organised in conjunction with the College and held over the Jubilee weekend, I am now working with Marlborough College marketing department on creating an annual "Mound Day," whereby visitors will be allowed into College grounds to walk the Mound. This is scheduled to be trialed May 29th, 2023 (Bank Holiday Monday) when we will be operating 4 bookable timeslots with spaces for up to 200 people.

Marlborough Walks

Working with North Wessex Downs on creating two Marlborough walks for the 2023 Walking Festival in June – one with Nick Baxter (Wiltshire History Man); the other with Anna Forbes (ARK). Both walks follow differing sections of the nature trail mentioned above, the idea being to help promote that as well as being part of the popular walking festival.

Heritage Experience

Working with the National Trust to create a Heritage package that includes the stones at Avebury, Silbury Hill and the West Kennet Long Barrow, shuttle bussing visitors in and out of Marlborough.

Wedding Fair

Working on a Wedding Fair to take place in the Town Hall in Autumn 2023, with the working title "*Marry Me in Marlborough*" – the idea being to both help local businesses and boost the Town Hall as a more marketable venue.

Kings Coronation

Working with the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk on plans to celebrate the King's Coronation including events on the day itself and a pre coronation town clean-up which will involve motivating the businesses, removing graffiti and sprucing up the High Street planters.

Visitor Information Point

The (unmanned) Visitor Information Point in George Lane has now been fitted with a timer mechanism and continues to be open between 10am and 3pm daily.

Priority number 2: Improving Coordination

High Street – Business and Resident Engagement

Continue to work with and communicate with the High Street stakeholders, relaying information on grant funding, addressing concerns over signage and canvassing opinions, most recently with the Town Centre survey.

Town Guide

A new Marlborough Town Guide is under way, to be produced by Bamboo House Publishing in the spring, with an estimated readership of over 20,000, aimed at residents and visitors alike. There will be a total of 14 editorial pages to be written up, promoting the Town Hall as a venue and including a pub trail through Marlborough.

Marlborough Business Network

Attended Marlborough Business Networking event in November (hosted by McFarlane Property). Booked in to attend the next one in January (hosted this time by The Parade Cinema) and am planning for MTC to host the one after that in the Town Hall with the provisional date of March 16th – to include promotion of the Town Hall as a venue.

Priority number 3: Marketing and information

Town Signage

Working on a town signage overhaul. Quotes have been obtained and Full Council approval given at a meeting on November 7th, 2022. The tender decision is scheduled for February 1st in conjunction with the Town Centre Working Party.

Visit Wiltshire

Instagram takeover of the Visit Wiltshire account took place over the weekend of 6/7/8 January 2023, where I took the opportunity of showcasing Marlborough in a variety of posts, flooding its site with images of the town's restaurants, shops, events, open spaces and nearby attractions. This was well received, with over 200 "likes" per post and attracted several new followers to our own [@VisitMarlborough](#) account. The posts generated a lot of engagement and we received 10.8k reach across the weekend, mainly from feed posts, and 735 total likes.

Marlborough Summer School

Helped Marlborough Summer School course for a week, taking part in interviews for their marketing campaigns and offering general moral support.

Possible Future Projects

- To explore ways to encourage the concept of electric bike hire and bike trails (electric and non-electric)
- To open the Town Hall cells and create a virtual tour, with an app/audio guide and potentially to link up with The Merchant's House on a ghost theme

- Plan to start a monthly podcast, conducting interviews with key figures in the town
- Exploring the idea of a satellite Visit Marlborough site, to go alongside MTC website
- Produced a new White Horse leaflet to celebrate our own cleaned up chalk figure and launched it in the summer

Financial implications

Expenditure to date this year continues within budget.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note this update and provide any useful feedback.

Tourism Officer

12 1 23

ITEM 7

CIVIC WORKING PARTY

To receive a verbal update from the Civic Working Party.

ITEM 8

CODE OF CONDUCT RESPECT CAMPAIGN

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to appraise the Council of the 'Positive Democracy Equals positive Conduct Charter' initiated by Wiltshire Council and ask Members to principally support the initiative.

Overview

The 'Positive Democracy Equals positive Conduct Charter':

'To help galvanise and inspire councillors, clerks and everyone else who plays a key role in ensuring local democracy is a force for good, we are launching our Positive Conduct equals Positive Democracy Charter. This isn't intended to be a mere box-ticking document or an empty gesture, but a call to action for people to sign, with one key pledge at the heart of it – "I pledge to be a positive conduct ambassador in my role and embody and promote high standards in public life." Everyone who puts their name to our charter will be making a commitment to conduct themselves in the best way possible way, all to the benefit of our local communities. We know that positive conduct is happening throughout the county already, and we want to build on that and help make it even better if we can. You can find a link to our pledge at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/positive-conduct-democracy. You can digitally sign it and save it or print it off. When you have signed it, please email governance@wiltshire.gov.uk to let us know, providing your name, role and the council you represent. We'd also encourage you to take a picture of yourself with the charter to put on your website, newsletters and social media. Once you've confirmed to us you have signed the pledge, we will send you an email signature banner that you can proudly display should you wish to. Thanks for your support Wiltshire Council Governance Team [Positive Conduct Equals Positive Democracy Toolkit.pdf \(wiltshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Considerations

The Council has its own 'Code of Conduct' ([FINAL \(marlborough-tc.gov.uk\)](https://marlborough-tc.gov.uk)), which is underpinned by the Local Government Association (LGA) Model Councillor Code of Conduct ([Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 | Local Government Association](#)), and the [Nolan Principles](#), which Councillors are expected to uphold.

Proposal

It is proposed that the Council as a whole states its principal support for the 'Positive Democracy Equals positive Conduct Charter' and invites individual Councillors and the Town Clerk to pledge their support for this initiative thereafter. NB: this is not a proposal seeking individual declarations at the Full Council meeting, but this proposal does not preclude such declarations.

Town Clerk 12 1 23

ITEM 9

COUNCILLOR TRAINING

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ask Members to consider their training needs for 2023 24 in relation to their respective Council roles.

Current Status

In 2022 23 there was little or no take up of training by Councillors. This may have been due to the fact many Councillors have a great deal of experience and do not feel the need, or time commitment may hinder take up.

Considerations

Some introductory Councillor training workshops are offered by Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), but these offer limited places and are often very quickly booked up, and where Councillors have attempted to book it has been too late. WALC also offer a number locally delivered training workshops; <https://www.wiltshire-alc.org.uk/training/>. There are other freelance training providers who also offer needs-led training workshops.

It could be that Members consider there are one or two core training needs that several or all members would benefit from such as:

- Planning
- Charing meetings
- Standing Orders, and Governance
- Biodiversity and Council legal duties
- Equality and Diversity
- Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors and Clerks
- Understanding Wiltshire Council organisational structure

Financial Implications

The training budget set aside for Councillors in 2022 23 was £1,500, with £30 being spent. The budget for 2023 24 will be £750.

Proposal

Members are asked to consider their training needs, if any, and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

Town Clerk 12 1 23

ITEM 10

STAFF CHRISTMAS GRATUITY

Proposal

The Mayor would like to propose that the Council principally pay for the staff Christmas breakfast in future years.

Financial Implication

The total cost would be circa. £200 (2022 total cost was £192).

Members are asked to consider the proposal and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

ITEM 11

OUTSIDE BODIES

An opportunity for Members to provide verbal updates on recent engagements with outside bodies.

ITEM 12

COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, to note the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 5 December 2022 and **Amenities and Open Spaces** - 10 October 2022. These minutes have been approved by committees and circulated to Members and are available to download from <https://marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/calendar-of-meetings-2022-23> or from the Town Council offices. Other meetings have taken place, but minutes are not yet approved so remain in draft form.

ITEM 13

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

Questions to be submitted to the Town Clerk by midday on the day of the meeting and not to exceed 10 minutes

ITEM 14

COMMON SEAL

To authorise the fixing of the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

POSITIVE CONDUCT equals POSITIVE DEMOCRACY toolkit

For Councillor and Clerks

Join our mission to help Wiltshire
be the leading county on positive
conduct and democracy

Wiltshire Council

A white wavy line graphic located below the Wiltshire Council text.

Introduction from Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of Wiltshire Council

Welcome to our Positive Democracy equals Positive Conduct toolkit.

As local councillors, clerks and officers we are in a privileged position to represent our local communities throughout the county – something that on occasion can be forgotten in the hustle and bustle of local government and politics.

Given that position, the public rightly have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent them in a fair, transparent and professional way. I personally don't think we should ever stop learning and developing, and the aim of this campaign and toolkit is to support you to build on the good work already happening in the county so that you can be as effective in your role as possible, which ultimately will benefit our communities.

We are all passionate about Wiltshire and doing our best for our constituents and local residents – that's why we do what we do – but it is important that this passion is harnessed in a positive way. As I said, there are lots of great examples of positive conduct and really effective local government throughout the county, and we wanted to share with you some of that best practice so we can exchange ideas and learn from each other. We certainly won't be dictating to you, but we hope you learn things that will help you in your role.

Within this toolkit you will find some simple hints and tips, and a round-up of key information and links that we think will prove to be useful if you're not already aware of them. You will also find information about our Positive Conduct equals Positive Democracy Charter, which we encourage you to sign to help us demonstrate our collective commitment to positive conduct.

We want this campaign to encourage a regular and open two-way dialogue, so if you have any thoughts or ideas, please do get in touch at governance@wiltshire.gov.uk; we'd love to hear from you.

Thanks for all your support.

Cllr Richard Clewer

Leader, Wiltshire Council



Positive Conduct equals Positive Democracy Charter

To help galvanise and inspire councillors, clerks and everyone else who plays a key role in ensuring local democracy is a force for good, we are launching our Positive Conduct equals Positive Democracy Charter.

This isn't intended to be a mere box-ticking document or an empty gesture, but a call to action for people to sign, with one key pledge at the heart of it – "I pledge to be a positive conduct ambassador in my role, and embody and promote high standards in public life."

Everyone who puts their name to our charter will be making a commitment to conduct themselves in the best way possible way, all to the benefit of our local communities.

We know that positive conduct is happening throughout the county already, and we want to build on that and help make it even better if we can.

You can find a link to our pledge at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/positive-conduct-democracy. You can digitally sign it and save it or print it off. When you have signed it, please email governance@wiltshire.gov.uk to let us know, providing your name, role and the council you represent.

We'd also encourage you to take a picture of yourself with the charter to put on your website, newsletters and social media. Once you've confirmed to us you have signed the pledge, we will send you an email signature banner that you can proudly display should you wish to.

Thanks for your support.

POSITIVE CONDUCT equals POSITIVE DEMOCRACY charter

THIS CHARTER HAS BEEN AGREED BY

I pledge to be a positive conduct ambassador in my role
and embody and promote high standards in public life

SIGNATURE



DATE

Wiltshire Council

Positive conduct hints and tips

The guidance in this section addresses the main areas that tend to feature in the complaints against councillors that Wiltshire Council receives. Further information is provided in the extensive list of links included in the Resources section.

When the code applies

Under the Standards Regime, councillors can be considered to be acting in one of three roles:

1. Acting in a private capacity – here the code of conduct does **not** apply
2. Acting as a councillor and therefore in a **public** role, but not representing the council – the code of conduct **does** apply
3. Acting in an official capacity on behalf of the council – the code of conduct **does** apply.

Determining which of these applies is not always straightforward and care should be taken to be clear about which role one is acting in. Councillors can be considered to be acting in their councillor capacity even if, for example, they are not at a council meeting, not representing their council on official business or if they do not use their “Cllr” title when signing off an email.

To help you avoid issues in your written correspondence, please encourage your council to adopt dedicated council email addresses for its members. These should be used only in that capacity, with members’ personal email addresses reserved for personal correspondence. This provides clarity and transparency for everyone.

Respect

As a councillor, part of the role is to sometimes challenge and disagree with ideas, opinions and policies in a robust manner. However, if we are seen to be making a personal attack on an individual or group, we may fall foul of another section of our Code, even if “respect” isn’t a specific requirement within it.

Remaining respectful can be difficult when we are being challenged in a way that we find obnoxious or rude. However, the public may expect their elected representatives to hold themselves to a higher standard. Rude and offensive behaviour from just one councillor lowers the public’s expectations and confidence in all councillors.

However, councillors, clerks and officers should not tolerate people being abusive, intimidatory or threatening towards them. Where this is the case, they are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and if appropriate report the person to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police.



Using social media

It can be tempting to be curter and challenging on social media than one might be in the real world. A simple good rule of thumb is, if you wouldn't say it in person or on the telephone, then don't say it on social media. The internet has given us access to digital citizenship in a society of different ages, genders and cultural beliefs. We need to take responsibility in the part we play when we interact and behave with others online.

The law of defamation is potentially a dangerous one and the digital world has only increased this. People can be sued for defamation by saying or writing anything that will "lower a person in the estimation of right-thinking people". Councillors have some limited protection and to allow them freedom of speech they are given qualified privilege in council meetings. But these protections only apply if they honestly believed what they said was not motivated by malice.

Registering and declaring interests

Breaches of the Code relating to interests often arise from a failure to fully understand the regulations (and to follow them within prescribed time limits), rather than a deliberate conspiracy to hide something. However, even accidental errors can still lead to breaches of the Code of Conduct, reputational damage to the councillor and to their council. They also harm democracy as a whole, as undisclosed conflicts of interests can have a major impact on the public's trust in its elected officials.

It is recommended that all councillors carefully read their Code of Conduct's requirements on interests, as well as the relevant guidance from central Government. The latter is contained in a useful document titled, "Openness and transparency on personal interests: guidance for councillors", and a link to it is included in the Useful Resources section.

If you are in doubt about your level of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest, **do declare**. Better to be safe than sorry.

Regarding predetermination, councillors are not predetermined simply because they have expressed an opinion on a matter before, but they do need to be seen to keep an open mind. To prevent issues occurring, avoid making emphatic statements about proposals, such as "I could never support this project" or "I will fight this all the way".



Planning

Although Wiltshire Council is responsible for determining planning applications, the views of the local council are an important part of the consultation process and establishing its view should be done openly and transparently wherever possible. Be clear in what the formal view of your council is, and who will be responsible for providing it.

Planning can often be controversial and emotive for residents and councillors, and being open in discussing the issues can prevent entrenchment of views and escalation, which can lead to dysfunctional infighting.

If you have your own application or live adjacent or very near to an application, please consider whether it is appropriate to be involved in any formal meetings or discussions about the application. Be clear about the capacity in which you are acting - you can still respond as a member of the public. Councillors whose employment is in the planning arena should take particular care to be clear at all times what role they are acting in.

Always stick to discussing the planning merits of applications, not the individuals concerned.

Chairing meetings



The Chairman's role makes them the face of their council and accordingly they tend to have more contact with members of the public about local issues. Chairmen should therefore take particular care to understand the requirements of their council's code.

Many Code of Conduct complaints relate to Chairmen's actions during meetings, with complainants alleging that they have been dismissed, disrespected, verbally abused or bullied on occasions.

Here are a few quick tips to help councillors avoid such situations and allegations:

1. Get to know your council's standing orders, so you know them without having to look them up. This will make you a more confident Chairman and one who operates consistently within your own council's procedures. Although flexibility can be a good thing, applying meeting procedures consistently helps everyone to know what to expect and helps avoid some feeling unfairly treated or disenfranchised.
2. If someone in the meeting is expressing their view in an overbearing or aggressive way, acknowledge this in a neutral, non-judgemental manner without taking sides. For example, you could say something like, "You appear to be passionate about the idea of...') or you could say to others, "Mr/Mrs Smith has presented their view very clearly... what do others think?"
3. Maintain your assertiveness while avoiding displays of unnecessary emotion or unhelpful behaviours, such as irritators like, "I think what I've said is very reasonable".
4. Most importantly, be empathetic, expressing that you understand people's situation, needs and feelings even if you disagree with how they want something to be addressed.

Acting early

If you identify a potential conduct issue it is generally better to try to address it early. Small issues can quickly spiral and factions can become entrenched. This can make it very difficult for a council to transact even it's normal, everyday business. Such situations are unpleasant and stressful for the members involved, give a bad impression of local politics and inevitably lead to poorer representation for residents.

If you identify a potential conduct issue and don't know what to do, councillors can contact the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) and clerks the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC) (see the Resources section below for details).

The Wiltshire Council's Complaints Team are happy to advise on the complaints process.



Useful resources

Click on the blue links to view the webpages

General Code of Conduct matters

[Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011](#)

This sets out upper tier council's legal duties regarding the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct and the handling of code of conduct complaints.

[Openness and transparency on personal interests: guidance for councillors - GOV.UK](#)

This guide from the Ministry of Communities, Local Government and Housing gives practical information for councillors on how to be open and transparent about their personal interests.

[Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020](#)

The Local Government Association (LGA) Model Councillor Code of Conduct is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

[Guidance on Member Model Code of Conduct Complaints Handling](#)

This LGA guide assists monitoring officers to carry out investigations but also assists councillors in understanding the process.

[Complaints about Standards and Member Conduct - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

A guide to the Ombudsman's role in regard to Code of Conduct complaints.

Related information and skills

[Councillor workbook: handling complaints for service improvement | Local Government Association](#)

This workbook:

- takes councillors through the complaints process and their role in it
- provides an overview of the ombudsman and what type of complaints they deal with
- directs you to sources of information for monitoring complaints
- explains how to use complaints to drive service improvement
- signposts sources of information for complaints that are outside your council's remit.

[Councillor workbook: councillor/officer relations | Local Government Association](#)

This workbook provides pointers on how councillors and officers can build constructive and collaborative relationships.

[Councillors' guide to handling harassment, abuse and intimidation | Local Government Association](#)

Practical steps that you and your council can undertake to protect yourself as a person in a public position.

[Practical advice for handling physical abuse and personal security | Local Government Association](#)

Practical steps that you and your council can undertake to protect your physical wellbeing as a person in a public position.

[Probity in Planning for Councillors | Local Government Association](#)

This guide clarifies how councillors can get involved in planning on behalf of their communities in a fair, impartial and transparent way.

[Openness and Accountability – ...ask your council](#)

A guide to people's rights to attend and report on council meetings.

[What are The Nolan Principles? – Leading Governance](#)

An article about the Nolan Principles; how they came about, what they mean and their status 25 years on.

[Councillor workbook: facilitation and conflict resolution | Local Government Association](#)

This workbook covers the key skills needed in relation to facilitation and conflict resolution.

[Basics on communicating with residents, colleagues and officers | Local Government Association](#)

Sets out background information on communications in general for councillors, building on the code of conduct.

[Chairing skills – Councillor Workbook | Local Government Association](#)

This workbook for councillors covering the key skills needed in relation to chairing meetings.

General local council information

[Powers and Duties of Local Councils | WALC](#)

A handy summary of the key legal powers and duties of town and parish councils.

[The Good Councillors Guide – ...ask your council \(2016\)](#)

A handy and informative guide to being a town or parish councillor.

[Councillor workbook: Being an effective ward councillor | Local Government Association](#)

This workbook covers the key skills needed to help you to be most effective in your role.

[Digital citizenship: support and resources for councillors | Local Government Association](#)

A wide range of resources to help councillors in their online communications.

[Online and hybrid meetings | Local Government Association](#)

A resource hub that will help run your online and hybrid meetings.

[Model Standing Orders – ...ask your council](#)

A model set of standing orders, which confirm a council's internal organisational and administrative procedures.

Governance Toolkit - ...ask your council

A useful resource, particularly for clerks, providing a wide range of information on governance, roles and responsibilities, public engagement, managing information and elections.

Organisations and contacts

Wiltshire Association of Local Councils

Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) supports and advises parish, town and city councils in Wiltshire and Swindon as they support the communities in which they serve.

Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

A professional body offering support, training and skills to local council clerks and senior council employees.

National Association of Local Councils (nalc.gov.uk)

A national body that represents the interests of 10,000 local (parish and town) councils in England and works in partnership with county associations to support, promote and improve local councils.

Town and Parish Council Details | Wiltshire Council

A list of contact details for town and parish councils in Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council Complaints Team – complaints@wiltshire.gov.uk

Wiltshire Code of Conduct matters

Making a complaint to Wiltshire Council

How to submit a Code of Conduct complaint to Wiltshire Council.

Wiltshire Council's Protocol 11 – Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints

This sets out Wiltshire Council's process for assessing Code of Conduct complaints.

Wiltshire Council's Code of Conduct Complaints Assessment Criteria

The criteria Wiltshire Council uses for assessing Code of Conduct complaints.

Register of interests | Town and Parish Council | Wiltshire Council

Councillors can register their disclosable pecuniary interests on the Wiltshire Council website [here](#).

Wiltshire Council's own Code of Conduct and Guidance

Wiltshire Council's Planning Code of Good Practice

This gives advice to Wiltshire Councillors to help preserve the integrity of the Planning system as open and fair to all parties.

Wiltshire Council



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