

- Gathering interest from retailers about a potential “Shopwatch” scheme and addressing shoplifting generally
- Gauging interest from licensees about a potential “Pubwatch” scheme

PRESENTATION BY ASTER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Josh Dear, Regional Head of Housing – Wiltshire at Aster Housing Association and Claire Allsop, Lettings Manager at Wiltshire Council explained Aster’s lettings policy and answered questions. Matters arising included:

- Whether a local connection could be considered as a higher priority
- That people with the highest need were encouraged by Homes4Wiltshire to bid for the most suitable property to meet their need regardless of location or risk being discharged of any duty to provide them with accommodation
- Whether giving more ranking to a local connection was more a matter for Wiltshire Council to address; Aster’s duty was to provide housing to people in greatest need. In some cases, a Local Authority policy could specify that offers to local people were the highest priority
- Whether using the same policy for large conurbations and rural areas was appropriate because distances between neighbourhoods and access to public transport could vary greatly. Wiltshire Council did not have specific ‘local’ letting plans although other local authorities did which were signed off with Aster (e.g. to specify only families, working people etc). This was suggested as something to follow up with the local authority rather than housing associations – Wiltshire Council would need to create the plan and then agree it with Aster
- A detailed written reply would be sent to explain the housing stock in the area: Aster currently has approx. 450-500 units in the Marlborough parish, and around 1,800 in the Marlborough postcode area
- Josh did not have the figures to answer questions about the rate of turnover of properties in Marlborough and suggested a follow-up email to ask for this information
- As of June, there were around 4,500 people in Wiltshire on the register at band 1, with the highest demand being for 1-bed units but this information would be more accurate if obtained from Wiltshire Council. **Councillor Davies** noted that Wiltshire Council was not using bed and breakfast accommodation, and reminded Members that it had an ambition to have 1,000 new council houses
- An explanation of the criteria that lead to decisions to sell off properties when they become naturally vacant and will not be able to meet government energy efficiency targets of EPC or above (especially listed buildings and non-traditional or single cavity builds)
- Last year Aster had sold 1.2% of its overall housing stock; in Marlborough this was 1.5%. It was building new units in other Wiltshire towns; York Place was the only planned affordable development in Marlborough. Plans from the new government to build on ‘grey/green’ belts might provide more opportunity to build new housing stock in Marlborough
- Aster was not given specific requirements to provide quantities of homes in any particular area

The **Mayor** thanked them for attending and for answering so thoroughly.

Josh Dear and Claire Allsop left the meeting

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Councillor Hall referred to work starting this week to create a footpath from a Toucan crossing at Salisbury Road to the Beechcroft development and asked when the link to the main cycle path would be completed. **Councillor Davies** explained that there was a permissive path through the Beechcroft site: currently it leads to the old station platform which is temporarily fenced off. An ongoing Sustrans feasibility study was examining plans to connect the cycle route to MARL30 and would likely result in a bid for Active Travel funds. Improvements to the MARL30 path were being funded from S106 monies linked to the development of the old resource centre at Cherry Orchard, and when complete would provide a 3m wide dual-use path.

157/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Farrell, Sheppard, Thomas and Luson**.

158/24 DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

159/24 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was wonderful news that the two apprentice vacancies had been filled: Emma Cook had been appointed to the Level 3 (A-level equivalent) Information Officer Apprentice position for 18-months, starting 16 September. Matthew Powell had been appointed to start on 1 October as the Level 6 (degree-level) Youth Worker Apprentice.

Councillors and members of the public had an opportunity to put questions to Councillor Richard Clewer, Leader of Wiltshire Council, at an 'Ask the leader' event at the Town Hall at 7pm on 17 September.

After speaking to site workers, the **Mayor** provided an update on the roadworks at A346 Salisbury Road starting 2 September: the traffic lights would not be in place all the time during the works, and were 'intelligent' types, learning about traffic (numbers, size, times of heavy flow) and adjusting accordingly. **Councillor Davies** addressed the apparent conflict between the consultation date and the start of the roadworks: the consultation was a technical requirement mainly relating to the layout of the road at the Toucan crossing – zigzags – and the timing was unfortunate due to delays in finalising land ownership issues.

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire and Swindon, Philip Wilkinson, had accepted an invitation to attend the next Full Council meeting (4 November). An update on the former police station at George Lane had been requested at the last meeting: the original buyer had pulled out. A new buyer had been found and it was hoped the sale would be completed in November.

160/24 ACTION LOG

There were no outstanding actions.

161/24 FLORENCE & WALTER JOHN CHARITABLE TRUST

Councillors Ross and Hall agreed to take on the role of Trustees to the charity.

162/24 GRAVE DIGGING – ADJACENT GRAVES POLICY

RESOLVED: that the Grave Digging Policy (Adjacent Graves) is adopted

163/24 LAND AT RABLEY WOOD VIEW

Members considered an approach from the owners of five properties at Portfield Road to purchase land due to be transferred to the Town Council from GreenSquare Accord. Discussion points included:

- The land in question was a very small strip along the boundary between the properties and the open space (described as “*an overgrown hedge and scrub*”) and would not reduce the area to be made available for public amenity
- Whether there would likely be a high cost due to legal fees, and who would pay for this
- If the Council agreed to sell, that it should be at no cost to the Town Council
- That the land was not currently designated as Common land; if it was sold the remaining parcel of land would still be bigger than the area near the Cemetery
- Whether any covenants should be applied for the future, e.g. that the land should never be built upon
- Whether to set up a working party to consider the implications and make a recommendation to Full Council
- That the approach was for a number of individual purchases, not a single group purchase and was an unbroken strip

RESOLVED: that the request is agreed in principle, and to set up a Working Party comprising the Chairs or Vice Chairs of the Planning Committee, Finance and Policy Committee, Amenities and Open Spaces Committee and the Town Clerk to recommend the Council’s terms of sale and/or negotiating position

Eight members of the public left the meeting

164/24 MARLBOROUGH MARKET

Members noted the update report. The **Mayor** was pleased that over 300 people had responded to the market survey so far, although the trader survey wasn’t doing so well. Surveys would close on 13 September – Members were asked to share this information with their networks and encourage people to respond.

The Mayor and **Deputy Mayor** would be attending the market on Saturday 7 September to speak to traders and customers directly – any other Members were welcome to join them. **Councillor Fogg** confirmed he would be there as a regular customer. **The Mayor** would also be attending the market on Wednesday morning.

165/24 BANKING IN MARLBOROUGH

The Mayor provided a verbal update and Members discussed:

- Lloyds Bank had offered training and equipment to customers ahead of the branch closure in November and would attend Marlborough Library one day a week after that time using a private room to meet with customers. Staff would be trained to help those customers who struggle to use technology
- The Post Office was to take over counter duties: there were concerns about whether there was capacity to meet the needs of everyone who would want to use it
- Whether the Post Office would be able to provide all banking services, e.g. transferring money between accounts, discussing mortgages or savings accounts – not everyone would be able to use online services to do this
- According to Cash Access, Marlborough did not meet the criteria for a banking hub as Nationwide and the Post Office were available to banking customers

- **Councillor Davies** and the **Mayor** were still trying very hard to arrange a meeting with Cash Access and the Post Office
- Business customers would suffer from an inability to deal with cash
- The Area Board was looking at providing education for older people in using technology for banking services

166/24 VE DAY 8 MAY 2025

RESOLVED: that in principle the Town Council supports a VE Day event on 8 May 2025 and refers the matter to the Civic Working Party for further planning

167/24 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

No questions had been submitted.

168/24 OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no updates.

169/24 COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED: that, in accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, the minutes of the following Committee meetings were noted: **Planning** on 20 May, 10 June, 15 and 29 July 2024; **Property** on 29 April 2024 and **Finance and Policy** on 22 April 2024

170/24 COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Councillor Fogg** and seconded by **Councillor Ross** 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 8.24 pm

Signed:
Town Mayor

Date: