

Marlborough Town Council



Full Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 3 October 2022 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7.30pm

PRESENT	Councillor Lisa Farrell	Town Mayor
	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	
	Councillor Andrew Ross	
	Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Jo Waltham	
	Councillor Richard Allen	
	Councillor Kymee Cleasby	
	Councillor James Sheppard	
	Councillor Caroline Thomas	
	Councillor Mark Luson	
ALSO		
PRESENT	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News

PRAYERS

Councillor Fogg opened the meeting with prayers.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Stewart Dobson had submitted two questions via the Town Clerk, being unable to attend the meeting in person.

In relation to the Herbert Leaf charity: would the Town Council confirm that any money spent on re-instating the Charity will not be taken from the capital sum in the Charity? And would great care be taken to ensure that the original wishes of Herbert Leaf be followed in the use of the Charity? I believe the original Charitable Objects to be: For the Benefit of the inhabitants of Marlborough. In the past Trustees tried to fund different local clubs and organisations. Mr Dobson hoped that the new Trustees will find it possible to use the money wisely for the people of Marlborough for many years to come.

The **Town Clerk** confirmed that legal costs involved with reinstating the Charity had been paid by the Town Council and not taken from the capital sum. The second question would be addressed at agenda item 17.

Mr Dobson's second question was whether two plaques could be found, restored, and refitted to the gates at the entrance to the Recreation Ground in Salisbury Road. The plaques showed the Marlborough Coat of Arms and commemorated a presentation by the Marlborough Branch of the Royal British Legion. The **Town Clerk** would investigate.

CRIME AND DISORDER

No officer was present at the meeting. The **Town Mayor** asked for a senior officer to attend a future meeting to answer questions.

Councillor Sheppard confirmed that Wiltshire Police had agreed to send a speed watch team to the Port Hill stretch of the A346.

ACTION POINT: The Town Clerk to write to Wiltshire Police on behalf of the Mayor and Councillors to ask for a senior officer to attend Full Council meetings to allow Members to ask questions, and to request an update on actions taken to deal with ongoing antisocial behaviour at The Acres as discussed at the Full Council meeting held 20 June 2022.

TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Councillor Cleasby referred to Action Log item 95 (Antisocial behaviour at The Acres) and asked whether the proposed meeting had yet been organised, as there was still an issue for residents and it wasn't apparent whether any police action had been taken. The **Town Clerk** agreed to follow up the next day. **Councillor Sheppard** also agreed to take up the matter with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The **Town Mayor** was concerned about waiting times for ambulances, the length of time that ambulances waited outside Great Western Hospital before patients could be admitted; and how the actual times compared to the statutory targets, and to understand the reasons for such long waits. Discussion points included:

- Response time targets for ambulances were set at 8 minutes for Category 1 calls and 18 minutes for Category 2
- Whether, with many patients unable to be discharged due to lack of suitable onward care, bed blocking hindered admittance leading to delays outside A&E
- Other parts of the country were more badly affected with longer waiting times
- The triage system at the Kennet & Avon Medical Partnership (KAMP) was recommended for urgent health issues, and might be a better starting point than calling an ambulance in appropriate situations
- That processes at the local surgery were not always easy to understand, e.g. booking a blood test
- That NHS representatives had presented at the Area Board in the past
- Appreciation for the hard work and care given by all health staff

ACTION POINT: to invite a representative from NHS Foundation Trust/Great Western Hospital to attend a future Full Town Council meeting; and to arrange a private meeting with a representative from KAMP

169/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Heath, Davies and Shantry**.

170/22 DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations.

171/22 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Town Mayor** reminded Members that Mop Fairs would take place on 8 and 15 October; **Councillor Cleasby** expressed an interest in attending the opening ceremony.

172/22 MINUTES

Members asked for an update for Minute No. 71/22 (i) – “to review the benefits of Visit Wiltshire and Great West Way memberships and defer a decision on renewal until after that review” to be added to the next meeting agenda.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 20 June 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

173/22 ACTION LOG

Members noted the Action Log.

174/22 TOWN SIGNAGE PLAN

Members noted the Tourism Officer's update report.

175/22 eCOMMS POLICY

RESOLVED: that the Electronic Communications and Social Media (eComms) Policy is adopted

176/22 WILTSHIRE COUNCIL'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING GROUP

Members noted the Town Clerk's report. All were welcome to attend the next meeting, taking place at St Peter's Church at 3pm on 7 October.

RESOLVED: that **Councillor Lisa Farrell** is elected to represent the Town Council at the Health & Wellbeing Group

177/22 STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and the Chair of Staffing, **Councillor Cleasby**, answered questions about proposed amendments to the Sub Committee's duties and powers under the Scheme of Delegation.

RESOLVED: that the proposed amendments A-D be adopted, and to delegate to the Town Clerk to clarify the wording of amendment A

178/22 CIVIC WORKING PARTY

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered reforming a Civic Working Party.

RESOLVED: (i) to form a Civic Working Party (CWP) to work with relevant Council Officers in the planning, implementation and review of the Council's civic events

RESOLVED: (ii) that the CWP will be accountable to the Full Town Council

RESOLVED: (iii) that the CWP should include other relevant partners or third parties per event

Members present who volunteered to join the working party were **Councillors Fogg, Barrett-Morton, Hall, Sheppard, Luson** plus the **Town Mayor** (and that each Town Mayor should always be a member).

179/22 BANK RECONCILIATIONS

RESOLVED: that **Councillors Cooper** and **Sheppard** were elected to sign bank reconciliations, to be signed quarterly or as near to the Finance and Policy Committee meetings as is practical

180/22 COST OF LIVING

Members noted a report provided by **Councillor Cleasby** and the notes of a recent collaborative meeting of interested support parties. Members considered what role the Town Council might take to support residents who may be impacted by the current cost of living crisis. Discussion points included:

- Whether the Town Council should act as a co-ordination point to bring all support organisations together, similar to during the Coronavirus pandemic
- The importance of presenting information in a clear and understandable way
- Whether a co-ordination role should be created; whether an Officer or community volunteer could fulfil this role, and whether it should be paid
- Whether the Area Board could be approached to fund a co-ordinator role

RESOLVED: (i) that **Councillors Cleasby, Luson** and **The Town Mayor** are nominated to a partnership working party in support of a community response to support residents who may be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis

RESOLVED: (ii) that Marlborough Town Council primarily adopts an enabling and coordinating role in the community response

It was agreed that the proposal to agree how to provide support be deferred until after the next meeting of the partnership group.

181/22

PRECEPT 2023/24

Councillor Thomas, Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee, explained a proposal and asked Members to consider the parameters of the percentage increase for the 2023/24 precept against the uncertainties and impact of the cost-of-living crisis. She was asking this ahead of the start of the annual budgeting cycle in order that each Committee could go into the planning stages with a broad principal agreement in mind.

Discussion points included:

- The proposal was made with the intention of acknowledging difficult financial times for residents, and to consider whether the Council should agree in principle to minimise the impact on residents via the 2023/24 precept
- Whether to set a target maximum percentage increase (e.g. 2-3%)
- Whether it was practical to set a percentage limit before budgets had been drafted and costs were known
- Some costs for the Council were not yet known, e.g. a nationally agreed pay settlement for staff, contractor or service costs (e.g. public toilet cleaning contractor), fuel etc
- Whether services and/or projects would have to be reduced, cut or postponed so the Town Council could meet set costs (e.g. staff), and whether this would have a negative impact on services provided to residents
- Whether setting a low % increase now would drive the Council budget into a deficit
- Whether setting a low increase this year would lead to high increases in future years
- Some Members expressed support for deferring projects in order to prioritise the impact on residents
- Some Members supported the principle to keep the budget as low as possible, but not to cap the budget to a set percentage before the planning stage had started and future costs could be better understood
- Communication would be important, to explain why difficult decisions might have to be taken, for example deferring projects to improve play areas or other optional costs for 2023-24

RESOLVED: that, with the cost-of-living pressures in mind, the Town Council intends to increase the precept by the absolute minimum necessary for the Council to achieve a balanced budget and fulfil its responsibilities to residents in 2023-24, and for the Council and its Committees to plan their priorities in 2023/24 with this in mind

182/22

OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Lusson gave a verbal update on the most recent meeting of the Allotment Association, where thanks had been expressed to the Grounds team. Help may be required from Officers to resolve some allotments which had lain fallow for a while, and to request that no further 'out of parish' applicants be accepted onto the waiting list so that local people who wanted to grow their own food could be prioritised. It was noted that any surplus produce was donated to the Community Fridge.

183/22

COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following Committees: **Planning** – 16 May, 6 June, 27 June, 25 July and 15 August 2022; **Amenities and Open Spaces** – 25 April 2022; **Finance and Policy** – 14 March 2022 and **Property** – 4 April 2022.

184/22 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

No questions had been submitted.

PART 2

185/22 HERBERT LEAF CHARITY

Members noted the Town Clerk's update report and considered a proposal to develop the Herbert Leaf Trust into a sustainable charity, and for the Herbert Leaf Working Party (HLWP) to continue its work to this effect. Discussion points included:

- It was not clear why accounts had ceased to be provided after 2007 leading to the charity being removed from the Charity Register in 2009
- Setting up a charity would allow the fund to attract donations and gift aid
- Whether the purpose in the bequest that the funds be used for the benefit of the Marlborough community was vague and would need clarifying; for example, whether to provide money to community groups or whether individual bursaries could be included given Herbert Leaf's interest in education
- **Councillor Allen** was happy to dedicate more time to obtaining further details from the Charity Commission if Members agreed
- Whether it would be appropriate and/or quicker to establish a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Whether the actual value of the fund was decreasing in real terms the longer it went unused
- Whether to transfer the funds to other, existing charities now to enable the money to be put to good use as soon as possible
- Whether to create a permanent charity in order to honour the bequest and legacy of Herbert Leaf

RESOLVED: for the Herbert Leaf Trust to be developed into a sustainable charity, and for the Herbert Leaf Working Party to continue its work to this effect

186/22 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 9.36 pm

Signed:

Town Mayor

Date: