

# Marlborough Town Council



## Full Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 6 November 2023 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

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<b>PRESENT</b>	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	Town Mayor
	Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	
	Councillor Jane Davies	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Emily Trow	
	Councillor Bethany Kohrt	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
<b>ALSO PRESENT</b>	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News

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### PRAYERS

The **Town Mayor** opened the meeting with prayers.

### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

### CRIME AND DISORDER

No officer was able to attend the meeting, but the Neighbourhood Policing Team had provided a Quarterly Police Report (Q3).

**ACTION:** clarify when/for how long the Police Touchdown Point in the George Lane car park had personnel on site (as opposed to the enquiry point being open to the public).

### PRESENTATION: FORESTRY ENGLAND

Presentation postponed to January due to illness.

## **QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS**

**Councillor Davies** answered questions about plans to refurbish Marlborough Leisure Centre: a new manager had been appointed and was looking for someone to take on the café so that it could reopen. She had no definite update on the refurbishment itself but had great expectations for an improved facility.

The **Mayor** welcomed **Councillor Bethany Kohrt** to her first meeting.

### **307/23 APOLOGIES**

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

### **308/23 DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

### **309/23 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor had recently attended:

- a memorial service for Roger Ellis, former Master of Marlborough College and a great friend to the Town Council
- the funeral of Bob Ratcliffe, former cricket professional at Marlborough College who also played for Lancashire
- Priory Gardens to plant an apple tree to increase the stock of the Marlborough Community Orchard
- The opening of Bay Meadows Nature Reserve
- Marbella International Business Lunch where he had made a speech

The Mayor had been contacted by Shirley Ludford, DL, concerning progress with Swindon 105.5 Community Radio. Ofcom had offered the opportunity to broadcast via a DAB digital licence addition to FM and internet. There was still an intention to set up a channel for Marlborough-related content, providing an opportunity for training local individuals, groups and Council members. The priority was to establish a place for a small transmission box and placement of an aerial, and the offer of the Marlborough Community & Youth Centre for this was being followed up.

**ACTION:** circulate background information to Members

### **310/23 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meetings held 11 September and 18 September 2023 were approved as true records and signed by the Town Mayor

### **311/23 ACTION LOG**

Members noted the updated action log.

#159: Marlborough Community & Youth Centre: the **Town Clerk** had a productive meeting with Wiltshire Council (Mike Dawson) on 2 November and a better understanding of how to progress had been established. The **Town Clerk** would write a formal letter to request an asset transfer from Wiltshire Council.

### 312/23 SPECIAL MOTION

Members considered a special motion put forward by eight Councillors to reconsider Minute 203/23 of 11 September 2023 resolving to reconvene Full Council meetings in the Council Chamber. The motion proposed that these meetings be held in the Court Room or Assembly Room for reasons of space, health, wellbeing and comfort of Members, staff and members of the public. Discussion points included:

- Regret to move out of the Council Chamber, in use for Town Council meetings for more than 100 years
- Whether the reasons given were weak
- The motion allowed everyone to express their views prior to a vote
- The Chamber could and would still be used for meetings where numbers attending were lower

**RESOLVED:** that Full Council meetings will convene in the Court Room or Assembly Room until such time as the risks associated with the Council Chamber are addressed

### 313/23 MARLBOROUGH HOUSING EMERGENCY

Members considered whether to declare a housing emergency due to the lack of affordable homes and social housing in Marlborough. **Councillor Cooper** introduced the discussion:

- Many young people could not afford to stay in the town where they were born and where their family connections may go back several generations
- Increasingly impossible for many people to buy property in Marlborough
- Rental costs in Marlborough often too high for local families/young people
- Social housing stock being sold off, reducing availability

Discussion points included:

- Whether to seek feedback from different groups in the town
- Whether to link to the Town Centre Working Party
- Whether to discuss with the Community Support Forum
- That it was a shame that people with local connections often lose out to others from out of the area due to greater need or different criteria with social housing association allocation
- Benefits to families that remain in the same area, where members can provide mutual support
- Different providers had different policies: White Horse Housing Association was praised for adding weighting to people who had lived or worked in the area for 16 years
- Whether a landowner could work with the Town Council to provide a proper community asset
- Planning rules, including in the Neighbourhood Plan, stipulated 40% affordable homes for new build developments. This was still not practical in addressing the issue as it would mean for every 4 affordable homes created, another 6 would need to be built for the open market
- It would be important to apply the principles in the planning process and when considering planning applications

- Since a change to the law in 2015, it was easier for housing associations to sell off stock that could not easily be upgraded to meet environmental/efficiency criteria
- There was no legal obligation for housing associations to replace social housing when/if they sold off or redeveloped existing social housing sites

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council declares a housing emergency for affordable and social housing in Marlborough, and will work with other organisations to find a way forward

**314/23 REENACTMENT EVENT**

**Deputy Mayor, Councillor Cleasby**, proposed a Civil War re-enactment event for July 2024, during her Mayoral year:

- The Jubilee and Coronation events had really brought the community together
- To celebrate something of historical importance that happened in the town and create a sense of pride
- To provide education for children
- To raise the profile of the town to boost the economy and tourism
- The English Civil War Society know the town well, having staged similar events in 2014 and 2019
- Sponsorship and ticketed events could help with the costs
- Whether the Town Council would underwrite the cost by ~£20K prior to getting sponsorship in place

**RESOLVED:** to consider the proposal in more detail and refer to the Finance & Policy Committee to consider budget requirements

**315/23 CONCLUSION OF AUDIT (AGAR) 2022/23**

Members noted the conclusion of audit and external auditor certificate for the 2022/23 accounts with no issues found.

**ACTION:** pass on thanks to all involved, especially the Office Manager and Town Clerk

**316/23 COMMITTEE MEMBER**

**RESOLVED:** that **Councillor Emily Trow** is elected to the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee for the remainder of the municipal year

**317/23 SALISBURY ROAD RECREATION GROUND**

Members considered recommendations from the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee for proposed actions in response to reports of antisocial behaviour at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground. Discussion points included:

- Proposed car park barrier:
  - whether ANPR was a realistic option given the cost
  - likely objections from local residents who use the car park
  - likely objections from parents who use the car park as a drop-off point for school runs
- Youth Councils had been set up in the past, but proven difficult to sustain

- The Town Council's role in addressing issues of antisocial behaviour and taking steps to make sure the Rec is seen as a safe place for all, including young people
- Getting the right partnership response, including schools, police, youth service provider and parents would be the most important way to move forward

The Town Clerk would be happy to take on the lead role for partnership working.

**Councillors Hall, Cleasby, Trow and Kohrt** volunteered to get involved.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Council supports A&OS resolutions to:

- (i) Set up a youth council to represent the experience of young people using the Recreation Ground and other open spaces to the Council, partners and the community
- (ii) Seek to create the right partnership response including the police, schools, youth service providers and parents to ensure the right culture setting for the Recreation Ground
- (iii) Seek to utilise the Community and Youth Centre more for the benefit of children and young people

**318/23**

### **CEMETERY EXTENSION**

Members considered a proposal from the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee to consult with the 'commoners' and relevant parties about whether to conduct a land swap of a parcel of land adjacent to the cemetery on Marlborough Common with the land parcel adjacent to Rabley View to be handed to the Council by GreenSquare Accord in May/June 2024, for the purpose of extending Marlborough Cemetery.

Discussion points included:

- It was important to ensure enough space for Marlborough people to have the option to be buried in their home town and near their relatives
- To take on lessons learned from a previous consultation about Marlborough Common, and limit the consultation to "Commoners" (the adult voting population of Marlborough East and West Wards) as well as statutory consultees, e.g. Natural England
- A consultation was a requisite part of the DEFRA process to proceed with the wider Cemetery Extension project

**RESOLVED:** to go to public consultation with the 'commoners' concerning a land swap of Common land to enable Marlborough Cemetery to be extended

**319/23**

### **WILTSHIRE COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL TAX CHANGES**

Members considered whether to make a corporate response to a Wiltshire Council consultation about proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Discussion points included:

- The principle of the proposed changes was a good one, as it would provide more relief for households experiencing financial hardship
- The consultation end date was 27 November
- The proposed changes would affect the tax base, which may affect the precept
- The tax base would need to be taken into account to finalise the Council's budget and precept for 2024-25

- It was unlikely that the tax base information would be available prior to the consultation end date
- It was difficult to take a view or respond without the required information being available

**RESOLVED:** that Marlborough Town Council supports the principles behind the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and requests further detailed information

**320/23      OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Councillor Davies**, already the Marlborough Town Council representative to the Jubilee Centre, had recently also been accepted as a full member of the Jubilee Centre Committee.

**Councillor Cleasby** advised that the cost of living group had been renamed to the Marlborough Community Support Forum.

**321/23      MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been submitted.

**322/23      COMMITTEE MINUTES**

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: Planning – 22 August, 4 September and 25 September 2023; Property – 17 July 2023, Finance and Policy – 30 July 2023 and Amenities and Open Spaces – 10 July 2023.

**323/23      COMMON SEAL**

Proposed by **Councillor Barrett-Morton** 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 8.14pm

Signed: .....  
Town Mayor

Date: .....