

# Marlborough Town Council



## Full Town Council

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday,  
8 January 2024 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

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<b>PRESENT</b>	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	Town Mayor
	Councillor Andrew Ross	
	Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton	
	Councillor Lisa Farrell	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	Deputy Mayor
	Councillor Jane Davies	
	Councillor Caroline Thomas	
	Councillor Mark Luson	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Emily Trow	
	Councillor Bethany Kohrt	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
<b>ALSO</b>		
<b>PRESENT</b>	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News
	Plus 6 members of the public	

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### PRAYERS

The Town Mayor opened the meeting with prayers.

### PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

### QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

**Councillor Hall** asked whether there would be a full enquiry into what had caused the river surge leading to the flood on 5 January. **Councillor Thomas** believed the Environment Agency would conduct a review to understand what happened, although given the amount of flooding incidents across the whole country this may take some time.

**Councillors Davies and Thomas** praised the work done in response to the flood on 5 January, and thanked Town Council staff. They asked questions including whether there was a flood plan or emergency resilience plan; were there Flood Wardens; whether to review the number of gel sacks or cones and other first-line response equipment (e.g. tabards, walkie-talkies, signs) held by the Town Council. The **Town Clerk** confirmed the flood plan formed part of the emergency plan and that Wiltshire Council had a copy.

**Councillor Cleasby** had taken up the role of Flood Warden in a previous term but had had to step back from the role. She had personally set up an online fund seeking donations to support people without flood insurance and asked whether the Town Council could administer it.

**Councillor Ross** confirmed that a Community Emergency Plan had been covered in the previous council term, and that Scottish & Southern had presented to the Council about services and resources available during emergencies.

The **Town Clerk** was in close liaison with Wiltshire Council officers, and the Town Council staff team had met earlier that day to review the situation and agree further actions, including discussing how to engage the wider community after receiving offers of help from volunteers. Targeted communications would continue. The team had also reached out to replenish its stock of gel sacks.

It was agreed that Councillors should be involved in a review as soon as possible and the **Town Clerk** agreed to circulate relevant information and set up an extraordinary meeting for the following week.

### **365/23 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Cooper, Sheppard and Shantry**.

### **366/23 DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

### **367/23 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The **Mayor** thanked staff who had made huge efforts during the flooding on Friday with very little notice – they had gone well beyond the call of duty. With flooding in mind, he questioned whether the site in the emerging local plan near Elcot Lane, allocated for a housing development, should be reconsidered in the light of the risk of building near a river, and the impact of the built environment in contributing to flooding. It was however good news that the requirement to build a set number of houses without referring to local conditions had been revoked.

The Marlburian Club magazine had an interesting article about Herbert Leaf, a former Mayor and great benefactor to the town, having left a bequest that was still active. He asked whether the photograph used, which showed him in his Mayoral robe with the maces, might be used to replace the current photograph in the Council Chamber.

### 368/23 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held 6 November 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

### 369/23 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024 25

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and thanked all involved in preparing the budget.

**Councillor Thomas**, Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee, explained the background to the preparation of the budget (including ongoing cost of living crisis; inflation; local government pay increases; staff costs). In addition to maintaining existing services, Councillors were asked to consider new or aspirational projects or areas of service delivery.

Potential additional costs from proposed developments, events and projects were:

- Town Hall 'hidden room' feasibility study - £3,000
- Youth work apprenticeship and provision - £30,000
- Re-enactment event - £20,000

In arriving at the recommended budget to put forward, the Finance & Policy Committee had included the Town Hall study, reduced the youth work by 50% to start mid-year and excluded the re-enactment event for 2024 25 based on uncertainty of likely actual costs, having not had sight of a detailed costed proposal.

The recommended budget for Councillors to consider therefore totals £890,930, representing a 6.54% rise on the current Band D household. This would make the Town Council precept for a Band D property £246.97 per annum, which is an additional £15.27 per household above 23/24.

Members debated the re-enactment event and whether to include it. Comments included:

- The event would bring the town together and celebrate its history
- It aligned with one of the Town Council's priorities - heritage
- It was hoped that financial sponsorship could be obtained
- No decision had been taken not to host the event; the proposal was not to include it in the 2024 25 budget year
- No other town wide events were planned for 2024 25; whether it was important to have an event each year
- Any costed proposal would need approval by Full Council prior to going ahead, but if it wasn't in the budget it couldn't be proposed
- Whether the Heritage Ear Marked Reserve could be used should a costed proposal come forward during the year
- That the youth work had also been reduced: youth work would provide benefit all through the year rather than a one-off event

**RESOLVED:** that Committee Budgets are agreed as proposed, and that a net budget precept requirement to levy to Wiltshire Council for 2024/25 be £890,930

The precept increase is equivalent to 6.54% for a Band D property (£246.97 per annum; an increase of £15.27)

**370/23 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** – 23 October 2023 and **Finance and Policy** – 31 October 2023.

**371/23 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been submitted.

**372/23 COMMON SEAL**

Proposed by **Councillor Ross** and seconded by **Councillor Barrett-Morton** 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 7.45pm

Signed: .....

Town Mayor

Date: .....