

# Marlborough Town Council



## Full Town Council

### Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 3 November 2025 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

---

<b>PRESENT</b>	Councillor Emily Trow	Town Mayor
	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	
	Councillor Lisa Farrell	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Councillor Caroline Wrench	
	Councillor Nicholas Awbery	
	Jane Davies	Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough West
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
<b>ALSO</b>		
<b>PRESENT</b>	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News
	Nine members of the public	

---

Members held a minute's silence to remember former Mayor, Robin Notton, and held his sons, Charles and David, in their thoughts.

#### **MOMENT OF QUIET REFLECTION**

Members paused to reflect on how best they can serve their community as well as considering former Mayor Andy Ross, as he recovers from a recent illness.

#### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**Nigel Kerton** – following his question at the previous meeting concerning the whereabouts of the chains removed from The Green, he asked the same question about chains removed from the posts around the Wiltshire Regiment war memorial at London Road, and railings and gates that had been removed from the boundary between the two cemeteries at Marlborough Common. These had been laying on the ground for some months. He asked where they had gone; if there had been income from selling them from scrap, whether the income was shown in the council's

accounts; and whether permission had been sought from the Bishop or Dean of Salisbury to remove the gates.

The **Town Clerk** replied that some of the cemetery fencing had been removed before his time at the Town Council. Other sections were loose and presented a health and safety risk: he had instructed the Grounds Team to remove them and they had been collected and removed at no cost to the Council. This was more efficient for the Council rather than scrapping them, saving staff time and labour. He was unable to speak for the chains at the 7<sup>th</sup> Wilts memorial. **Mr Kerton** stated that scrap metal had never been at a higher price, and once again questioned why there had been no income. The **Town Clerk** explained that scrap metal did not attract a high enough price: setting up a trade account and diverting staff from their work to transport and dispose of it would not be cost efficient. The safety risk from the railings had been removed, the Grounds Team had safe access for hedge maintenance and could focus on their core tasks when they were already very stretched.

The **Mayor** drew attention to the Town Clerk's report at agenda item 8 providing an update on his investigations into the chains at The Green, as well as information provided by Wiltshire Police.

**Milly Carmichael** spoke on behalf of a small group of residents concerned about the future of Postern Hill Campsite in Savernake Forest (agenda item 9) and asked: In light of known limitations to development (water, power, hard standing) at the campsite which they understood had been part of the reason for not renewing the lease, would the Town Council work with residents to request that Forestry England explore a more sustainable camping provision and a longer lease to help secure its future? **Members** reassured her that the Town Council was very keen to secure the future of the campsite and would give their full support to whatever was needed. This would be discussed in detail later in the meeting.

## **CRIME AND DISORDER**

No representative was able to attend the meeting, but a quarterly Police report had been circulated and an update report had been provided.

**Councillor Farrell** asked for her comments to be conveyed to Wiltshire Police:

- How many of the incidents reported were drug-related?
- There was known drug dealing at the Recreation Ground
- Adult males had been witnessed taking photographs of young girls aged 10-12 playing at the Recreation Ground

All had been reported to police, but **Councillor Farrell** asked what rights the volunteers had to deal with such situations and to keep the kids safe. She herself had challenged people about the above, which resulted in her later being confronted by drug dealers in the High Street. She had asked for a meeting with police to discuss the issue but so far due to operational demands or staff availability this had not been possible.

**ACTION:** Contact Wiltshire Police to request a meeting to discuss what could be done.

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

**Councillor Farrell** asked whether Wiltshire Council had the ability to create a clause to prevent housing associations selling off social housing stock. She was also concerned that people bidding for homes in Marlborough were offered homes elsewhere in the county, when people with no connection to the town were successful.

**Councillor Davies** did not believe a clause was possible. Wiltshire Council (WC) itself does not own any housing stock in the area. Full Council recently voted that it would not sell a council house that it owned without replacing it. She and **Councillor Cleasby** had spoken at the meeting. Cllr Davies had followed up in writing to the Cabinet Member for Housing pointing out the need to retain the same percentage of social housing because it was being depleted. Legally WC could not prevent housing associations selling property they deem uneconomic to repair. Buying two new properties in other towns with the proceeds of one sale in Marlborough doesn't help Marlborough people when social and family networks disappear, and this then has an associated cost to WC when child or adult social care is needed to replace missing family support.

*A member of the public joined the meeting*

**Councillors Davies** and **Cleasby** replied to **Councillor Farrell's** second point, people were offered housing based on banding (need): while a local connection was a criteria, emergency need would be prioritised above that hence homes being offered to people regardless of preferred town/village. This would ensure officers met their statutory obligations around housing. There was extreme pressure on the system and not enough housing available. Following Cllr Farrell's attendance at a previous WC meeting, the Leader of the Council had written to housing associations as agreed.

Housing associations had no legal obligation to replace housing stock in any particular area. Wiltshire Council does, but only within Wiltshire, not specific towns or villages. There was a commitment by the Cabinet Member for Housing to involve the local member in these situations, but as there was no Wiltshire Council owned housing in Marlborough that did not apply here. The issue rested with the housing associations, and that was why Councillor Cleasby had asked for a proposal to be added to the agenda for this meeting (item 12).

**Councillor Davies** had taken a motion to Full Council to amend WC's policy on fly posting, as well as asking for an amnesty now to ask for exemptions for local charity, church or community groups to avoid them receiving unexpected fines or having their notices removed.

*Councillor Davies and one member of the public left the meeting*

245/25

## **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Luson, O'Brien, Sadler** and **Morgan**.

**246/25 DECLARATIONS**

**Councillor Farrell** – agenda item 6 – Marlborough Area Youth Forum – pecuniary interest.

**Councillor Hall** – agenda item 6 – Marlborough Area Youth Forum – non-pecuniary interest.

**Councillor Cooper** – agenda item 7 – Kennet Place Community Garden – non-pecuniary interest.

**247/25 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor echoed other Councillors' good wishes to former Mayor Andrew Ross, wishing him a speedy recovery from a recent illness.

This weekend is Remembrance Sunday. She hoped as many Councillors as possible would attend. There had been a Councillor briefing last week: anyone with questions should contact the office. It was also hoped as many as possible would attend the Armistice Day commemorations on 11 November. Both were robed events.

Robin Notton's funeral was taking place on 12 November at St George's Preshute at 2.30, followed by interment at Marlborough Cemetery.

An extraordinary Full Council meeting was taking place on 10 November to consider two candidates for co-option to the vacant East Ward Town Councillor position.

The Christmas Lights market and switch-on event was coming up, on 28 November. The Mayor encouraged Councillors to volunteer to help with marshalling and road closures. Volunteers should let the Deputy Town Clerk know their availability.

As Councillor Cleasby was unwell, the Mayor had agreed to move item 12 (Housing Working Party) up the agenda to allow her to leave the meeting early (*discussed after the Action Log (249/25), minuted at 256/25*).

**248/25 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held 1 September 2025 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

**249/25 ACTION LOG**

Members noted the updated action log.

Regarding Avebury, **Councillor Cleasby** would follow up the question of parking restrictions during Summer Solstice. **Councillor Shantry** had noticed changes to the parking arrangements at the Avenue, reducing available space.

**ACTION:** **Councillor Cleasby** to investigate the changes in public parking space at West Kennet Avenue (*B4003*), Avebury

## 250/25 MARLBOROUGH AREA YOUTH FORUM

*Councillors Farrell and Hall did not vote on the following item and withdrew from the debate*

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered a request from **Councillors Shantry** and **Wrench** to reduce the Council's hire charges for the Community & Youth Centre to the Marlborough Area Youth Forum. Discussion points included:

- The proposal requests a reduction in rent for the 2 sessions per week to a fixed amount – of £500 or £1,000 per annum, reviewed every 3 years
- The current hire charges for the full year are over £5,000
- The proposal had been considered by the Property Committee, which agreed it could absorb the loss of income within its budget
- The Finance & Policy Committee agreed there should be a charge, and that the agreement should be for a fixed term that falls within a single council term, e.g. 3 years, at which point the agreement can be reviewed
- Whether to set a figure now, or ask the Finance and Policy Committee to set the final figure (between £500-£1,000) as part of the annual budget cycle

**RESOLVED:** that the request for a 3-year, fixed price reduced rent of £500-£1,000 for the Marlborough Area Youth Forum is agreed, final amount to be determined in the annual budgeting process

*Three members of the public left the meeting*

## 251/25 KENNET PLACE COMMUNITY GARDEN

*Councillor Cooper did not vote on this item*

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered a request for the Town Council to apply to Wiltshire Council for a community asset transfer to take on the Kennet Place 'community garden'. Discussion points included:

- That the volunteers, and particularly Mrs Compton, had done a wonderful job transforming a shabby verge into an award-winning community garden
- General support for the request
- Wiltshire Council had not yet confirmed whether an asset transfer was required, or whether a s142 licence would suffice
- There could be significant legal costs associated with an asset transfer
- That Wiltshire Council is the owner of the whole strip of land, including the part used by Krumbz café
- Whether the café had a formal pavement licence: other nearby premises were required to comply with strict rules about using outside space
- Whether a transfer of ownership would present any risk to the café business, which Councillors wished to avoid
- That the Town Council would be reluctant to take on the flood defences
- Lack of clarity on boundaries

- The area was designated as a protected green space in the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan

During a suspension of Standing Orders, Mrs Compton answered questions and advised that the Town Council had assisted in setting up the current arrangement (approximately 2013-2014). It was likely there were maps and documents relating to this in the Town Council's archives that could answer some of the questions raised about boundaries. It was also noted that the owner of the land had riparian responsibility for the river bank and half of the river bed.

While there was general support to take on the land, the Town Clerk advised that more clarity was required around the flood defences, the type of agreement needed with Wiltshire Council and the arrangement with the owner of the café before taking a formal decision.

**ACTION:** Research the Town Council's archive files regarding Kennet Place

**RESOLVED:** to conduct further research and revisit the request once there was more clarity

*A member of the public left the meeting*

**252/25**

**CHAINS ON THE GREEN**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and that it may be reasonably assumed that in or after 2010 the chains were deemed to be of low value, a health and safety risk, and therefore disposed of.

Members thanked the Town Clerk, and whilst appreciating Mr Kerton's stated concerns agreed that there was no evidence of any conspiracy around the disposal of the chains.

**RESOLVED:** to accept the Town Clerk's report and take no further action

**253/25**

**POSTERN HILL CAMPSITE**

Members noted the Town Clerk's update report on Postern Hill Campsite. Following the request during public question time, discussion points included:

- Land Registry documents were required before the Town Council could apply to register the site as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), as agreed at a previous meeting following requests from members of the public
- Other nearby parish councils had a similar interest in the future of the campsite, as did community interest groups
- The site is not for sale, or likely to be. The owner is the Savernake Estate.

During a suspension of Standing Orders, **Milly Carmichael** explained that since the original meeting when an asset of community value had been discussed there had been further developments within the community. The lease for the campsite had been fairly short term, and public demand called for more water, hard-standing,

power hook-ups and showers, which the site operator would be required to fund. The short lease period, combined with the high costs of improving the site and the restrictions in an SSSI site with nearby ancient trees had contributed to the decision not to renew the lease.

The original approach from the community to ask for an ACV had been an attempt to protect the site so that it would continue to be available for camping. The community was now asking for the Town Council's support for them to engage in conversations with Forestry England to develop the site in a more sustainable way: there was growing demand for off-grid camp sites. The Forestry England website about Savernake states that it is "looking forward to sharing how they would keep camping going" but provides no detail.

**Neil Goodwin** suggested the Town Council should try once more to ask Forestry England to send a representative to a meeting so that they could answer questions from Councillors and the public. The **Town Clerk** had already done this, and the invitation had been declined.

**RESOLVED:** (i) Once the revised draft Forest Plan was available (stated as in the 'winter'), to invite Forestry England to present the proposals at a future Council meeting

**RESOLVED:** (ii) To work with all interested parties (parish councils and community action groups) and invite them to attend the meeting with Forestry England

*Two members of the public left the meeting*

**254/25 AGAR CONCLUSION OF AUDIT**

Members noted the Conclusion of Audit for the 2024-25 Annual Governance and Accountability Review (AGAR).

**255/25 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT**

Members noted the first interim internal audit report.

**256/25 HOUSING WORKING PARTY**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered a proposal by **Councillor Cleasby** seconded by **Councillor Trow** to create a Housing Working Party to provide focus, continuity and accountability on housing matters:

**Proposal**

1. To note that the Council has previously declared a housing emergency
2. To recognise that:
  - Social housing stock is being sold off and not replaced
  - No new social or affordable homes are being built in the Marlborough area
  - Housing associations must be held accountable for their existing local stock

- The Council needs a formal mechanism to make strong, structured representations and suggestions to Wiltshire Council on housing matters
3. To establish a working party with the following purposes:
- Monitoring local housing need, including data on affordability, availability and homelessness
  - Mapping existing housing stock and understanding ownership, condition and changes to social housing numbers
  - Engaging stakeholders such as Wiltshire Council, housing associations, developers and community groups
  - Identifying opportunities for new social and affordable housing
  - Making representations to Wiltshire Council and national consultations
  - Supporting residents and ensuring housing issues are followed up appropriately
  - Reporting to Full Council on progress and recommendations
  - To agree that membership shall be 2-4 Town Councillors, the Town Clerk (or nominated officer), and up to 3 invited community or housing representatives (non-voting)
  - To meet quarterly or as required

**Councillor Cleasby** explained that she had made the proposal against a background of social and affordable housing in Marlborough and the surrounding area not keeping pace with need - and in fact diminishing - as housing associations continue to sell off uneconomic properties without replacing them in the same area. She and other Councillors were contacted almost daily by residents seeking help with finding suitable accommodation. While the Town Council has no legal powers to force housing associations to change their policies, it can reinforce existing laws (e.g. the percentage of homes within developments of 10 or more to be made available as affordable), gather data to understand the situation and effect on the community, work with others to influence housing associations by presenting a strong case and working with developers to identify potential opportunities.

Discussion points included:

- The Town Council has a moral, if not a legal, obligation to do whatever it can to support families to remain in the town where they were born
- The town will not flourish if we lose workers because they can't afford to live here
- The town's geographic location and position within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape means there is very little opportunity to build new homes. Therefore, it is important to develop a strategy to address meeting the need, using resources such as the Neighbourhood Plan and Wiltshire Local Plan, taking into account the preservation and conservation of the countryside
- The proposal is not about building lots more houses, it is about stopping the decline of social and affordable housing being sold off and identifying potential new opportunities (e.g. the former Police Station at George Lane)

**RESOLVED:** to set up a Housing Working Party as proposed, to consist of **Councillors Cleasby (Chair), Farrell, Hall, Trow, Wrench, Awbery** and the **Town Clerk** (or nominee) and up to three invited non-voting community or housing representatives

*Councillor Cleasby and one member of the public left the meeting*

**257/25 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Members noted a communication from Wiltshire Council about a forthcoming Community Governance Review.

**258/25 OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Councillor Farrell:**

- The Youth Council was now up and running, and she was disappointed that no members had attended the meeting this evening. She was working closely with the Youth Worker, Matt Powell, to get it running – there was now a Chair, Vice Chair and a Committee with students from St Mary’s, St John’s, Preshute School and Marlborough College
- Had visited the Jubilee Centre and introduced herself to the new manager

**259/25 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following Committee meetings: Planning – 26 August, 15 September and 6 October; Property – 28 July; Amenities & Open Spaces – 16 June and Finance & Policy – 30 June 2025.

**260/25 COMMON SEAL**

Proposed by **Councillor Fogg** and seconded by **Councillor Farrell** 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 8.39 pm

Signed: .....  
Town Mayor

Date: .....