

Marlborough Town Council



Full Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 26 January 2026 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Emily Trow	Town Mayor
	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	
	Councillor Lisa Farrell	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Caroline Sadler	
	Councillor Peter Morgan	
	Councillor Caroline Wrench	
	Councillor Nicholas Awbery	
	Councillor Kim Wakeham	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
ALSO		
PRESENT	Councillor Jane Davies	Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough West
	Sgt. Deborah Laycock	Wiltshire Police
	Mathilde Scheepers	Chair, Marlborough Youth Council
	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News
	Three members of the public	

MOMENT OF QUIET REFLECTION

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

On behalf of the **Jubilee Centre**, **Jane Davies** asked whether the Town Council would write to Wiltshire Council to ask them to withdraw the proposal in the forthcoming budget that would see the community transport budget line removed. Without that budget, services such as Link and Kennet Community Transport will be jeopardised and may be unable to continue. The impact to the Jubilee Centre would be dire as it relies on these services to bring members in. Although the centre can continue to provide lunches and assistance to members, with no transport options people will

not be able to use it: she feared that if the budget goes through it could mean the end of the Jubilee Centre.

Mark McFarland, Secretary, Marlborough Link reinforced Jane's question, and had already written to Wiltshire Council. In 2025 Marlborough Link (one of 43 Link schemes across Wiltshire) made 3,939 trips, using 3,254 volunteer hours and covering 39,267 miles. Over 70% of the trips were related to health appointments. Although Marlborough Link could probably survive with a reduction in funding, the background support that comes with it is vital (e.g. DBS checks, liaison with other Link groups). He asked for these issues to also be raised with Wiltshire Council.

Mr McFarland agreed to provide a copy of the letter from Link to Wiltshire Council to the Mayor.

Andrew Tatum, Kennet Community Transport (KCT) also asked the Town Council to write to Wiltshire Council on behalf of all the organisations represented at the meeting. The KCT minibus mainly provides services to the elderly, all focused on the Jubilee Centre. The service is staffed by volunteers and operates 3 days per week, providing about 12 hours of journeys between the Jubilee Centre and homes in Marlborough and surrounding towns and villages. It just about breaks even for fuel costs as the Jubilee Centre pays KCT £90 per week for the service provided, but is reliant on the bus grant to cover other costs. KCT also provides services for Mercy homes and other care/nursing homes. Without the KCT service, housebound or care home residents may not have any other opportunity to get out.

Councillors asked questions for clarification and discussion points included:

- There are two grants at risk: the community transport scheme (current budget approx. £115,000 covering 43 areas) and the Link scheme funded separately. Wiltshire Council's budget was over £500M.
- Wiltshire Council had not provided a reason for the proposed withdrawal of funding for community transport; Community First had signalled it may be related to meeting a shortfall in the overall transport budget
- KCT receives about £3,000 per annum from Wiltshire Council – about a third of its overall income
- Community First hosts the Wiltshire Link scheme, with 43 member groups
- There was already signposting to the Wiltshire Connect bus service by Community First
- The Jubilee Centre has a passenger assistance escort who is able to enter homes to help people get to the KCT minibus – this is not available with Wiltshire Connect
- Whether Wiltshire Council should audit all services and work out which offers the best value
- Whether Wiltshire Council realises the impact this budget cut will have on so many vulnerable people
- Whether to co-ordinate with neighbouring parishes to respond to Wiltshire Council

- The Town Clerk would raise the matter through the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) which communicates with all parishes

The Mayor agreed to write to the Cabinet Member and Leader of Wiltshire Council on behalf of the town and all organisations represented at the meeting.

Three members of the public left the meeting

CRIME AND DISORDER

Sergeant Laycock summarised the quarterly report that had been provided by **PC Steele**. Discussion points and answers to questions included:

- The 'Further Action Taken' (FAT) statistics for Marlborough were above average for the county
- A good Shop Watch meeting had taken place in the previous week
- People should remain vigilant to high value burglaries in rural areas
- To contact the team to suggest any locations or groups for community engagement visits
- The Neighbourhood Harm Reduction unit had the sole purpose of talking to young people about drugs and related criminal activities. The Swift programme was for children coming to the attention of police but not yet with a record, where a PCSO mentor would work with them to help them make good choices, especially where there may not be a good adult role model in their home environment
- The NPT does what it can in terms of neighbourhood policing, within the funding available.

Sergeant Laycock left the meeting

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Councillors Shantry expressed frustration with highways – both the condition, with many potholes causing damage to vehicles, and massive holdups caused by poorly executed utility works. Rather than being asked to continually report highway faults he would like to see a more proactive approach and asked whether a delegation from Marlborough could meet with a named officer to discuss the issues.

Councillor Davies shared his frustration and offered to send him a link to the Council's intervention standards. The Council had spent £10M and £12M on road repairs in previous years and Cllr Davies believed it would add an additional £5M above the money provided by National Highways in the next budget. Some roads had benefitted from full resurfacing (e.g. the Pewsey road). The combination of rain and frost turns cracks in the highway into potholes: Parish Steward teams work with contractors to patch potholes but proper repairs require warm and dry weather. She described the Council's recent 'green' rating for road maintenance as laughable. All areas of the county had similar problems, both with potholes and traffic congestion (Devizes was given as another example). She encouraged Cllr Shantry to meet with Martin Smith, the Cabinet Member for Highways. She and Cllr Cleasby had already done so, as well as meeting with Ian Thorn (Leader of the Council). Both had also

intervened with Thames Water during the recent traffic problems caused by a lane closure.

Marlborough sat at a crossroads of two major routes (A4 east/west, A346 north/south). Although a study¹ had shown that nothing could be done locally to improve traffic flow it did provide evidence that a broader strategy was required. Dualling the A350 may help take traffic off Marlborough's roads, and a National Highways study had indicated there may be some mitigation money to help Marlborough. Cllr Davies would continue to lobby for depriming the A346. She was also campaigning to introduce a lane rental scheme, whereby utility companies would pay up to £2,500 per day when they work on the highway. This should encourage them to work efficiently rather than using the lowest cost contractors, which often caused delays in handovers between tasks.

Councillor Farrell asked what checks were made by officers following roadworks, and whether works by utility companies were signed off by Wiltshire Council. There were particular risks for cyclists and motorcyclists due to the current poor condition of roads. **Councillor Davies** confirmed that officers did check, but don't have the manpower to check every job. Nationally, about 40% were inspected: she could ask what the figure is for Wiltshire.

Councillor Farrell asked whether Wiltshire Councillors could help with the proposed closure of Ramsbury Fire Station, which was a great concern. This was a decision for Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service: Councillor Davies suggested that Councillor Farrell contact **Councillor Sheppard** who is the Wiltshire Councillor for Aldbourne and Ramsbury and may be able to intervene.

Councillor Morgan asked whether Wiltshire Council would take account of residents needs and ensure that waste and recycling services were fit for purpose? He also asked whether the Mayor would be prepared to write to Wiltshire Council to submit the feedback from residents. A poll of Manton residents about the proposed changes had highlighted:

- That council tax bills were going up above inflation but critical services were being cut
- Concerns that a 3-weekly collection would result in rubbish piling up, a detrimental impact on the street scene and attract rats
- Residents did not want a booking system for the Household Recycling Centre (HRC)
- Scepticism about a 3-weekly food waste collection

Councillor Davies replied that the introduction of food waste collections was a national requirement and it was not possible for Wiltshire Council to get out of its obligations. She agreed that closing two HRC sites without offering alternatives was a mistake, although Cabinet was still open to discussions with Hills. She hoped they could find a way to keep sites open or settle their differences. The Lower Compton HRC attracted about 8,000 visits per year, raising concerns of the impact this would

¹ <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/traffic-study>

have on traffic if these journeys came to Marlborough in future. She could see the benefits to officers from centralising the system but was personally opposed to the proposed changes as they did not represent the needs of residents. She would continue to try to work constructively to get changes made to the proposals.

The **Mayor** agreed to write a letter to the leader of Wiltshire Council to submit the Town Council's feedback about the proposed changes to kerbside and HRC waste management systems, and the closure of two HRCs.

Councillor Davies left the meeting

352/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Cleasby, Sheppard, Luson and Beaumont**. **Councillor Wrench** would need to leave the meeting at 8pm.

353/25

DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

354/25

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The nomination window for the 2026 Community Champions Awards would go live on 27 January. The deadline for nominations was 6 March, with decisions to be made at the Full Council meeting on 23 March. The awards would be presented at the Annual Town Meeting on 27 April. All relevant information would be circulated to Councillors.

355/25

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 15 December 2025 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

356/25

ACTION LOG

Members noted the action log: there were no updates available for outstanding actions.

357/25

TOWN PROMOTIONS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Members considered a proposal by **Councillor Wrench** to form a new committee to oversee the development and management of the positive promotion of the town and cultural experiences within it, to be named Town Promotions and Culture Committee. Discussion points included:

- Support for the proposal
- Suggested matters that it could address included assessing what Marlborough could offer to the recently announced 'Town of Culture' award, and assistance with acquiring cultural assets for the town
- Membership: Committee membership was limited to Town Councillors so it would not be possible for the Youth Council to have membership. However, although it would not have any voting rights, any Committee agendas could be shared with the Youth Council providing an opportunity for them to provide feedback

RESOLVED: (i) to create a Town Promotions and Culture Committee

Proposed by **Councillor Farrell** and seconded by **Councillor Wrench** and

RESOLVED: (ii) that members of the Town Promotions and Culture Committee for 2025-26 would be **Councillors Fogg, Farrell, Hall, Wrench** and **Wakeham**

Councillor Wrench left the meeting

358/25 MARTYNS LAW

Members noted the Deputy Town Clerk's report outlining the purpose, current status and considerations of Martyn's Law and the implications it would have on town-council run events to ensure compliance.

359/25 CEMETERY EXTENSION CONSULTATION

Members noted the Town Clerk's update report on the consultation to extend the cemetery. Key dates were on-site consultation events on 28 March (10:00-12:00) and polling day on 16 April (08:00-20:00). **Councillors Hall** and **Cooper** would both be attending on 28 March. More help would be appreciated, and any Councillors available to help at either event were asked to make this known to the Town Clerk.

Of the members present, **Councillors Shantry** and **O'Brien** agreed to help on 28 March and **Councillor Farrell** on 16 April.

ACTION: any Councillors able to support consultation events on 28 March or 16 April to contact the Town Clerk

360/25 OUTSIDE BODIES

Marlborough Business Network – a meeting took place the previous week and Matt Powell, the Town Council's Youth Worker, had given a well-received presentation to the group about the work experience scheme. This had also been circulated to all members: the scheme presented a great opportunity to find work experience placements for local young people.

361/25 COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: Planning on 8 December 2025; Amenities and Open Spaces on 13 October 2025 and Property on 29 September 2025.

PART 2

362/25 HERBERT LEAF CHARITY

All members of the Council are Trustees of the Charitable Trust.

Trustees noted the Town Clerk’s report and considered the recommendation by the Finance and Policy Committee to draft a policy that provides extra detail on the Herbert Leaf Trust, to which the Council can refer when making decisions.

RESOLVED: to form a working party to develop the policy or policies that enable clear decision making about funds in the Herbert Leaf Charitable Trust comprising **Councillors Hall, Sadler and Wakeham**

363/25 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 8.20 pm

Signed:

Town Mayor

Date: