

Marlborough Town Council



Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held
Monday, 16 March 2026 in the Council Chamber, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Mark Cooper	Chair
	Councillor Emily Trow	Town Mayor (<i>ex officio</i>)
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Caroline Wrench	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present and no written questions had been received.

425/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Farrell, Luson, Sadler, Morgan** and the **Grounds Manager**.

426/25

DECLARATIONS

Councillor Cooper – agenda item 10 (allotments) – non-pecuniary interest.

427/25

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair thanked Members for their support in the past year where the Committee had made good progress, especially towards extending Marlborough Cemetery.

Interviews for a new member of the Grounds Team were taking place on 19 March.

The Grounds team had started to help with preparing the turf areas at the play area at Hawthorn Meadow.

The Chair read out an email from Marlborough Common parkrun: "I just wanted to let you know that lots and lots of people were very complimentary about how The Common looked on Saturday. The runners and walkers really appreciated the paths

being trimmed and even though it was a bit gloomy, the whole Common looked great. We really appreciate the work your teams do”.

The Chair read out an email from Sue Hine, the Parish Clerk for Mildenhall in response to the Committee’s decision not to support a request to extend the Town Council’s litter bin collection to Minal Parish (*Min. No. 350/25 at the meeting held 19 January 2026*): “Thank you for your email and I apologise for the delay in replying. Obviously we are disappointed and whilst understanding point 2 we feel that the distance between Marlborough and Mildenhall is particularly small and that the problem we are experiencing is largely from Marlborough residents which would not be the case with the other parishes. I have read the minutes and thank Nigel for his comments regarding costs and size of bins which is helpful. Councillors have already voted to increase the size of the Church Lane (Mild 21) and Werg bins (Mild 12) to 60L capacity. At this stage I am not sure whether Councillors would be happy at increasing the number of bins on the border with Marlborough. Thank you for your consideration of our issue and I may be in touch further in the future.”

Having been a Town Councillor for nine years, including one year as Deputy Mayor, two years as Mayor and several years as chair of this Committee, **Councillor Cooper** would not be seeking nomination to return as Chair in municipal year 2026-27 although he hoped he would still be a member. He encouraged anyone interested in becoming Chair to consider putting their name forward.

428/25

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 19 January 2026 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair

429/25

ACTION LOG

Members noted the updated action log.

430/25

STONEBRIDGE MEADOW

Following a recent meeting of the Management Committee, **Councillors Shantry and O’Brien** provided a summary of topics discussed:

- Dog waste was still a problem
- An open day was being planned for August where members of the public and dog walkers would be invited to attend. This would also provide a vehicle to reiterate the reasons why dogs should be walked on leads within nature reserves
- The ground was too wet for the grounds team to begin the usual mowing routines including creating mown paths and the amenity area. It was hoped this could commence in April
- Budgets for both the Town Council and Action for the River Kennet (ARK) were forecast to be underspent at the end of the financial year
- Beavers had been observed in the Kennet at Kintbury: it was possible they may be spotted as far upstream as Marlborough at some point in the future
- Whether to include an item about antisocial behaviour at an Area Board meeting, perhaps in June

- The boardwalk on the north side of the river had reached the end of its life and had been removed. A crowdfunding campaign had been launched with around £4,000 of the £40,000 target raised so far. Other routes of funding were also being explored, including the possibility of obtaining a grant from Thames Water

431/25 **GROUNDS MANAGER'S REPORT**

Members noted the Grounds Manager's report with no matters arising.

Councillor Cooper had visited the Cemetery on Sunday (Mother's Day) and it was looking excellent. **Councillor Shantry** also commented on the amazing display of daffodils at the Victorian Cemetery & Arboretum.

The Chair noted that we were lucky to have so many open spaces in Marlborough and Manton, and he asked for the Committee's appreciation to be passed on to the Grounds Team for the work they do in looking after them all.

432/25 **TREE REPORT**

Members noted the report on the Council's trees, and that the priority works listed had now been completed.

433/25 **VICTORIAN CEMETERY & ARBORETUM**

Councillor Sadler was unable to attend the meeting but had provided a written report, which the **Town Clerk** read out. Key points were:

- A Planning Group meeting took place on 6 February where various aspects of plant and regular ground maintenance were discussed. Two cuts last year had made the grass healthier.
- It was suggested that a member of the Friends take photos for each season for social media.
- A reduction of height of some trees would take place in March.
- Paths to be improved from April when the weather is better.
- A Bat box had been acquired and Hedgehog boxes would also be ordered. Members discussed whether an Owl box was necessary, as owls may already be using trees for nesting.
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): all discussed and agreed the aims of the CIO. **Councillor Sadler** would be the Town Council Trustee. An initial Trustee meeting took place on 10 March and a further Planning Group meeting was scheduled for 23 March to confirm the roles and responsibilities of both the CIO and the Volunteer group (e.g. clarity on funding for each), and to sign the CIO.

Councillor Shantry had recently attended a volunteer work day at the Victorian Cemetery & Arboretum. A question had been raised about the Community Champion awards and whether volunteer groups were eligible for nomination rather than individuals. The **Town Clerk** confirmed that they were, but it was too late to submit nominations for the 2026 awards which closed on 5 March.

434/25 ALLOTMENTS

Councillor Cooper and the **Town Clerk** met with allotmenters from Elcot Lane and St John’s Close on 3 March, and a meeting for Stonebridge allotments was taking place on 17 March. It had been agreed that the Elcot Lane/St John’s Close group would meet once a year. One issue that had been discussed was the lack of a water supply at St John’s close. The potential for a rainscape project had been discussed.

435/25 BUDGET REPORT

Members noted the budget position at month 10, and the Town Clerk explained that where expenditure was over budget, the additional spend had been covered either from CIL funds, ear marked reserves or the general reserve in the case of the purchase of new vehicles for the Grounds Team. These replaced leased vehicles, so would be a one-off cost and their life was expected to be 5-7 years.

436/25 CEMETERY REPORT

Members noted the most recent grants of exclusive rights of burial that had been issued, and recently approved memorials and inscriptions.

As this was his last meeting as Chair, **Councillor Cooper** thanked Committee members, the Town Clerk and office and grounds staff for their support, and **Councillor Shantry** thanked the Chair for his service.

The meeting closed at 7.23 pm

Signed:
Chair

Date: