

**MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
FULL TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the **Full Town Council** held **Monday, 1 September 2020** at
6.30pm via videoconference

PRESENT: Councillor M. Cooper
Councillor B. Castle
Councillor P. Dow
Councillor N. Fogg
Councillor A. Ross
Councillor N. Barrett-Morton

Councillor P. Cairns
Councillor S. Price
Councillor D. Heath
Councillor V. Hillier

Town Mayor

Councillor M. Hall

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs S. Parker
Mrs D. Whitehall
Councillor S. Dobson
Mr N. Goodwin
Plus 7 members of the public

Town Clerk
Administrator
Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East
Marlborough.News

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

132/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kirk Wilson, Loosmore, Farrell and Wilson.

133/20 DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

134/20 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was good to welcome staff and students back to Marlborough's excellent schools this week, and the Mayor wished everyone, including parents, the best of luck with the return after such a long break due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

135/20 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Full Town Council held 10 August 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

136/20 FUTURE MEETINGS

During the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, the current advice is that where councils can hold meetings remotely, they should. Where there is a need to hold face-to-face meetings they should be managed within the social distancing and safer workplace guidance from government as well as guidance on the safe use of council buildings. The Local Authorities and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 allow local councils to meet remotely until 7 May 2021.

Members considered whether future meetings of the Town Council and its standing committees should be resumed in the Town Hall. They noted the restrictions would include:

- Room capacity - meetings would have to take place in the Assembly Room
- Facemasks would need to be worn and windows kept open where possible

- No roaming or shared microphones would be allowed
- The social distancing spacing requirements would limit the layout allowing for a maximum capacity of 30 persons
- Councillors would all have to sit at separate tables, facing forward towards the Chair and Town Clerk, with members of the public sitting at the back
- Hybrid meetings were not yet being held by local councils due to the high cost of technology requirements

In considering whether to resume face-to-face meetings Councillors discussed:

- A strong desire to meet in person as soon as it was safe to do so
- Whether to trial a meeting in the Town Hall for a future Committee meeting
- Whether to arrange informal “drop-in” videoconferencing sessions to allow Councillors to hold discussions outside the formal setting of scheduled meetings
- Whether to delegate a decision on how and when to resume physical meetings to the Town Clerk and Town Mayor, working within National Association of Local Councils (NALC) guidelines
- That NALC advice was that it was not yet safe to resume physical meetings
- Most town and parish councils continued to hold their meetings remotely
- Acceptance that conditions and guidance could and would change regularly
- The capacity of the Town Hall might mean having to turn members of the public away from meetings, which would not be the case with videoconferencing
- Those Councillors with full-time jobs appreciated the efficiency of holding meetings by videoconference
- Videoconferencing also helped alleviate pressure on staff, who could use the time normally associated with preparing for and running physical meetings more efficiently on other duties
- Whether, once conditions allowed, to hold face-to-face meetings for more formal meetings such as Full Town Council, but to also continue the use of videoconferencing for other meetings such as working parties
- That each Councillor’s personal circumstances must be taken into consideration (e.g. the need to self-isolate or shield) and that face-to-face meetings should only be resumed when all members felt comfortable to attend
- That staff involved with face-to-face meetings should also be consulted
- Whether hybrid meetings could be investigated and trialled

A proposal for Full Town Council to take the decision on when to resume face-to-face meetings failed.

RESOLVED: (i) to delegate the decision on when to resume face-to-face meetings to the Town Clerk and Town Mayor, following NALC guidelines

RESOLVED: (ii) that the Town Clerk will schedule a series of drop-in videoconference meetings to allow Councillors to catch up and hold discussions informally

137/20 COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Cllr. Castle** and seconded by **Cllr. Dow** 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 7.02pm

Signed: Date:
Town Mayor