

**MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL  
FULL TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of **Marlborough Town Council** which was held on **Monday, 18 January 2021** at  
7 pm via videoconference

---

<b>PRESENT</b>	Councillor Mark Cooper Councillor Bryan Castle Councillor Mrs Peggy Dow Councillor Nicholas Fogg Councillor Andrew Ross Councillor Alexander Kirk Wilson Councillor Guy Loosmore Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton Councillor Mervyn Hall Councillor Peter Cairns Councillor Susie Price Councillor Andy Wilson Councillor Donald Heath Councillor Vanessa Hillier Councillor Jo Waltham	Town Mayor
<b>ALSO PRESENT</b>	Mrs Shelley Parker Dawn Whitehall Councillor Stewart Dobson Fr. John Blacker Inspector Tina Osborn Councillor Jane Davies Councillor James Sheppard Neil Goodwin Sue Round Plus 16 members of the public	Town Clerk Administrator Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East Mayor's Chaplain Wiltshire Police Wiltshire Councillor – West Selkley Wiltshire Councillor – Aldbourne & Ramsbury Marlborough.News Marlborough.News

---

**PRAYERS**

Fr. Blacker opened the meeting with prayers.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

**Mark Thomas, Chris Musgrave and Gary Sharp (Marlborough Rugby Football Club (MRFC))** referred to item 7 (Strategy for the Common). Questions were:

- To raise concerns that the recommendations of the Working Party could take some time to implement, and hope that, if a decision was made quickly regarding the request for additional training space, MRFC could still have the work completed by 22 September.
- Were any anticipated timelines available?
- How did this relate to local elections currently expected to take place in May?
- How would it relate to a likely need for a flora & fauna survey to be carried out during the spring or summer months?
- A belief that planning consent had not been required when the area adjacent to Marlborough Cemetery had been levelled in 2015: if this was the case, why had there been a suggestion that it may be required this time?

- Whether the Working Party's suggested question for public consultation was written in a way that could create a negative perception. Would the Town Council please consider an alternative such as "do you support the creation of an additional grass training area on The Common for the use of MRFC/MYFC for around 250 hours per year"?

**The Mayor** would defer answers to the appropriate point in the agenda but, reiterated his appreciation of the work the two clubs had done for young players, and hoped the Town Council would continue to have a positive relationship with both. The recommendations from the Working Party were just that – recommendations for Full Council to consider.

**Caroline Thomas** referred to agenda item 8 (Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)) and asked for an explanation of the process whereby projects were considered for CIL money; what type of cost/benefit analysis was undertaken and how they were prioritised.

The **Town Clerk** confirmed that where possible the use of CIL money was matched to the Town Council's project plan and/or a list drawn up of potential projects in the town to benefit from S106 and CIL funds. The suggestions put forward at item 8 had been discussed during budget setting for 2021/22 and proposed as legitimate expenditure under CIL criteria and costs that would otherwise be met by the precept. The Town Clerk would respond more fully in writing with more detail about the CIL criteria.

**Councillor Jane Davies** asked whether the Town Council would consider applying for Area Board funding to purchase one or more additional Speed Indicator Devices. **The Mayor** thanked her for the suggestion.

#### **CRIME AND DISORDER**

**The Mayor** welcomed **Inspector Tina Osborn** to the meeting, who gave an update including crime statistics where 45 crimes and 51 incidents had been reported in December. She drew attention to priority activities for the local team focusing on intelligence around drugs, anti-social behaviour, policing patrols and speed checks. Dog thefts had featured in news and social media reports: the reality was that in the past year in the Wiltshire area there had been 8 cases of dogs being taken. Whilst these were still more incidents than the police would ever like to see, the Inspector wanted to reassure Councillors and the public that this was not an epidemic for our area.

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

**Councillor Fogg** referred to the ongoing consultation about the draft Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan (MANP) and asked how binding the plan would be; whether it required the authorisation of the Town Council, the referendum stage and whether Councillors would have an opportunity to discuss it.

**Councillor Hall (Chairman of the MANP Steering Group)** set out the process which was that after a period of public consultation known as Regulation 14, the plan would be submitted to Wiltshire Council (Regulation 15) where there would be further consultation and an independent examination (this stage was Regulation 16). After this the Plan would be subject to a referendum for agreement and if the Plan was voted in then it would be formally 'Made.' The **Town Clerk** confirmed that as the qualifying body, the Town Council had already discussed the Plan and along with the two other participating parishes (Mildenhall and Savernake) had cleared the Pre-Submission Document (draft Plan) for the Regulation 14 consultation. All Councillors were able, of course, to comment independently on the document.

**Councillor Dobson** asked about progress with the Leaf Bequest: whether the funds were attracting interest; how soon the funds could be accessed to help people in the town, and whether it would be resolved before the Town Clerk left the Council. Whilst there was a similar question at agenda item 15 (Members Question Time) the Town Clerk agreed to get

back to him to let him know the amount of money in the account. After 20 years, the situation with the Council's other charities was that a specialist charity solicitor was dealing with them.

**389/20 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillor Farrell**.

**390/20 DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest.

**391/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor wished a happy and hopeful new year to everyone.

Lockdown – The Mayor reiterated his thanks to volunteers who were again stepping up for a third lockdown and the Assistant Town Clerk was regularly liaising with them to offer support and guidance, making sure they had PPE, etc. Some new volunteers had come forward too. Some changes were made to accommodate the loss of some lead volunteers across the 16 different zones. Feedback was that some zones remained quiet, with just a few regular shops whilst others had been consistently active since March 2020.

Local Plan/Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan – Wiltshire Council's Local Plan Review was out for consultation until Tuesday, 9 March 2021. The Planning Committee would be forming its response at a future meeting. There would be live online consultations across Wiltshire and the one for Marlborough was on Monday, 25 January at 7pm. The Mayor encouraged everyone to feedback on this. As importantly, the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan consultation was launched on 18 January and he reminded everyone that our Plan was some way further down the line in terms of identifying sites and housing numbers. All its policies were based on evidence and community need and it would influence Wiltshire's Local Plan.

**392/20 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held 14 December 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

**393/20 TOWN MAYOR 2021/22**

**Councillor Barrett-Morton** proposed **Councillor Mark Cooper** for Town Mayor for 2021/22 and **Councillor Fogg** seconded the nomination

**RESOLVED:** that subject to re-election to Marlborough Town Council **Councillor Mark Cooper** will be Town Mayor for 2021/22

Cllr Cooper thanked his fellow Councillors for their support over the course of the year and for voting him as Mayor Elect

**394/20 DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR 2021/22**

**Councillor Mervyn Hall** proposed **Councillor Andy Wilson** for Deputy Town Mayor for 2021/22 and **Councillor Ross** seconded the nomination

**RESOLVED:** that subject to re-election to Marlborough Town Council **Councillor Andy Wilson** will be Deputy Town Mayor for 2021/22

Cllr Wilson thanked his fellow Councillors for voting him as Deputy Mayor Elect and for their confidence in him to continue as Deputy for a second term

**395/20 STRATEGY FOR THE COMMON**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered recommendations from the newly formed Working Party set up to consider a strategy for The Common. **The Mayor** reminded all present that there had been a very lengthy and full debate at the previous meeting and for this reason he did not intend to suspend Standing Orders. There were six recommendations to consider, bearing in mind the topics raised during Public Question Time.

Though it was set out that all actions would take place in tandem, **Councillor Price** was keen to understand how the timelines of each would relate to each other and therefore to know when a decision on the request for a training area could be taken.

**RESOLVED:** (i) that the Terms of Reference of the Working Party were approved

Each of the six recommendations was then considered in turn.

#### Flora and fauna

- There had been disagreement and opposing opinions on the biodiversity value of the area preferred by MRFC at the previous meeting
- An alternative location for the training area had also been discussed
- It was hoped that an independent survey of the whole Common would not only provide valuable information about the entire Common, but also help to resolve outstanding questions about specific sites. One possible route was to work with Wiltshire Council's Ecology Officer
- Whether it was necessary to survey the whole Common to be able to answer the MRFC request for a small area to be made over for training
- Whether, if planning consent were to be needed to create a new training area, a requirement of planning would be to provide a biodiversity report
- Whether in broader terms, as the Town Council had a responsibility as guardians of the Common it was not unreasonable to undertake a biodiversity survey to more fully understand the value of the habitat than it was possible to do without one. Undertaking this properly would add value and should help to find a way forward

**RESOLVED:** (ii) to commission a survey of the flora and fauna of The Common from an independent organisation

#### Costs of levelling land for a new training area

- Whether it was necessary to obtain three quotations when MRFC were prepared to pay for levelling at its preferred site
- Whether any company would be prepared to provide a quote to the Town Council if the work was being commissioned and funded by MRFC
- That MRFC's argument against the site preferred by the Town Council's Grounds Manager had been partly based on an anticipated higher cost, and for this reason the club had not sought a detailed estimate for that cost
- Whether, as the Town Council had an overarching responsibility for The Common, it had a public responsibility for any works undertaken and should be seen to obtain best value. The normal procedure for any council project was to obtain three quotations and this should help answer questions about the likely cost rather than relying on one figure provided by MRFC
- Whether MRFC should be asked to share the detailed cost information it had received
- That obtaining a number of quotations for both sites might benefit MRFC

**RESOLVED:** (iii) that three quotations should be obtained for necessary works for the levelling of the ground for training areas at both the possible centrally located position and the one suggested by the Grounds Manager adjacent to Frees Avenue

**RESOLVED:** (iv) that the Town Council should generally look to increasing sporting facilities where possible

**RESOLVED:** (v) all identified users of The Common (formal users as well as regular hirers – Mop Fairs, circuses, Civil War re-enactors, car boot sales etc) should be approached about their forward plans in terms of use of The Common

**RESOLVED:** (vi) that proper agreements should be in place for all formal users of The Common

### Public Consultation

There was debate both about the wording of the recommended question, and whether one question was sufficient or would appear satisfactory to the public who wished to be consulted. The Working Party's recommended question was:

*“Do you support the provision of an additional training facility on Marlborough Common for use by Marlborough Rugby Football Club and Marlborough Youth Football Club for use on a Saturday and Sunday”*

- Members noted comments during Public Question Time about whether the wording could be perceived as negative
- Whether the Town Council, which represented the taxpayers of Marlborough and Manton, should limit the consultation to people within the parish and exclude outlying villages
- Whether the consultation outcome would be at risk of being influenced by lobbying
- That a consultation was not the same as a referendum; whether the responses should be used to inform the Town Council which would make a final decision, or whether the outcome should be seen to be binding
- Why a consultation with only one question had been proposed
- Whether more background and context would or should be provided to support the question
- Debate and suggestions about alternative ways to word the question, including stating clear timings, the duration of the playing season, the inclusion of words such as 'permanent' and 'facility'
- Whether the Working Party had taken into consideration the guidelines that existed for local government consultations
- Whether the Town Council should insist on the Frees Avenue location in consideration of the impact on Marlborough Model Flying Club

The **Town Clerk** clarified

- That the Town Council had undertaken a number of consultations in the past (on topics such as 20mph speed limit, Neighbourhood Plan, lighting for the skatepark) and had a consistent and clear process for them
- That it would be possible to analyse the results by postcode as long as postcodes were requested which would give a wider view and enable a breakdown of different area responses
- That it would be beneficial to ask the age range of those being consulted which would also then enable a breakdown of the ages of respondents
- That a consultation was only advisory and should not be seen as a referendum. The outcome would help the Town Council to formulate its decision

**RESOLVED:** (vii) that a public consultation should take place asking the following question: “Do you support the provision of an additional permanent training facility on Marlborough Common for use by Marlborough Rugby Football Club and Marlborough Youth Football Club for use on Saturday and Sunday mornings during the youth football season for a total of 250 hours per year”

**RESOLVED:** (viii) to delegate to the Town Clerk, Town Mayor and the Chair of the Working Party to agree the structure of the public consultation

**The Mayor** thanked **Councillor Fogg** and the Working Party members for their work in dealing with a topic where there were so many strong views. He was confident that by working together a solution would be reached that would be acceptable to all users of the Common.

*Some members of the public left the meeting*

396/20

### **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)**

Councillors noted the Town Clerk’s report and considered the allocation of CIL funding.

After receiving an additional CIL allocation of £12,445 on 8 January connected to the Premier Inn at the Salisbury Road development, the unallocated CIL balance was £28,577, of which £16,132 had been ring fenced for Skatepark lighting and towards additional funding for Jubilee Field, Manton.

To help reduce precept costs for 2021/22 it had been suggested during the budget setting round that the Town Council legitimately fund small projects from unallocated CIL funds.

**RESOLVED:** (i) to allocate a contribution of £7,500 towards the building of a new bridge at Stonebridge Meadow

**RESOLVED:** (ii) to allocate a contribution of £2,000 towards the final stages of the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan

**RESOLVED:** (iii) to allocate a contribution of £5,000 towards new fencing at land at Tin Pit

This totalled £14,500 leaving a balance of £14,077 of unallocated CIL monies remaining.

397/20

### **BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING 2021/2022**

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered a recommendation from the Finance and Policy Committee for budget and precept requirements for 2021/22.

**The Mayor** thanked all Committees for their hard work in driving down original budgets to a figure equivalent to a precept increase of 3.75%. **Councillor Ross** (Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee) explained that the detailed budgets had been carefully debated to arrive at a level which he believed to be fair and reasonable, in line with inflation set against a background where the tax base had reduced to a point which would require an increase of 0.81% just to stand still.

If agreed this would be a smaller increase than for the last few years and the lowest figure that could realistically be achieved in order for the Town Council to continue to operate effectively against a background where the financial impact of the Coronavirus pandemic had resulted in:

- income being (and likely continuing to be) much reduced through a combination of loss of income

- a reduction in the Tax Base as more people qualified for the Council Tax Reduction again due to the impact of COVID and
- increased costs to make buildings and working practices/services COVID secure and uncertainty about how long these costs would continue.

**RESOLVED:** that Committee Budgets were agreed and that a net budget and precept requirement to levy to Wiltshire Council for 2021/22 be £744,373 representing an increase equivalent to 3.75% for a Band D property equating to £214.11 per annum

398/20

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

**RESOLVED:** that the Annual Risk Assessment was approved

399/20

**TOURISM**

Councillors noted a report by the Tourism Officer about actions taken to deliver the Marlborough Tourism Strategy.

**The Mayor** thanked the Tourism Officer for her hard work and achievements in difficult circumstances. **Councillor Price** welcomed that the Tourism Officer and Administrator were working towards marketing qualifications and suggested using some of the Tourism budget to outsource the creation of a strong brand image to a graphic design specialist.

400/20

**THE VICAR'S LIBRARY – BODLEIAN LIBRARY**

Councillors noted the Town Clerk's report and considered a request to support the filming of rare books on permanent loan to the Bodleian Library in Oxford. This rare collection of 17<sup>th</sup> century and earlier documents was bequeathed to the Mayor and Corporation of Marlborough by William White in trust for the use of the Vicar of St Mary's, and deposited on permanent loan to the Bodleian in 1985. A volunteer at the Merchants House was seeking the support of the Town Council to make a short film about the books to raise awareness of the collection. Comments included:

- Some members had been lucky enough to have seen the collection – **Councillor Fogg** had been Mayor at the time of the transfer of the documents to the Bodleian
- The collection was not on public display in Oxford, but was accessible to scholars
- Whether, when the time was right, a visit to view the collection could be arranged for interested Councillors
- There was strong support for this proposal as the film would raise awareness of the library and allow people to learn about the collection, perhaps via The Merchant's House website
- Whether the description 'permanent' loan was accurate
- Whether it might be possible to retrieve one or two documents for occasional display at The Merchant's House if the right conditions could be created

During a **Suspension of Standing Orders**, Cllr Dobson confirmed that he too had visited the Bodleian Library as had former Mayor, Marian Hannaford-Dobson. He also supported the proposal that local awareness was raised about this remarkable collection.

**RESOLVED:** that Marlborough Town Council fully supports this exciting project which will raise awareness of this important bequest and that the Town Council representatives to the Merchants House Trust will help in terms of how the film can be accessed possibly via the Town Museum

401/20

**OUTSIDE BODIES**

**RESOLVED:** that **Councillors Hall** and **Farrell** were nominated to represent Marlborough Town Council at the Marlborough Football Facility Project.

Councillors noted that Sarah Nicholls had been appointed Chair at the North Wessex Downs AONB and Michael Thorpe was the new Chair for Kennet Community Transport.

*Some members of the public left the meeting*

**402/20 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

In accordance with paragraph 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the **Planning Committee** of 7 December 2020; the **Amenities and Open Spaces Committee** of 16 November, the **Property Committee** of 5 October and the **Finance and Policy Committee** of 21 September.

**403/20 MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

**Councillor Castle** had submitted a question to ask "***Whether the Town Clerk can finalise the Leaf Bequest before she leaves***"

The **Town Clerk** replied that she would do her best to achieve this.

**Councillor Castle** also asked about the whereabouts of a memorial board to **Councillor Cripps**. The **Town Clerk** confirmed that it was in her keeping and the question of whether to display it in the Town Hall could be discussed at a future meeting.

**404/20 COMMON SEAL**

Proposed by **Councillor Castle** and seconded by **Councillor 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

**405/20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and members of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the commercially confidential nature of the business to be transacted

*All remaining members of the press and public left the meeting*

**406/20 TOWN COUNCIL-OWNED PROPERTY**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered future plans for a Town Council-owned building.

**RESOLVED:** to conduct research and seek costings into a proposal for the repurposing of the Salisbury Road Workshop to be used as a Heritage Centre

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Chairman