

Marlborough Town Council



30 November 2021

To: Councillors serving on the Finance and Policy Committee – Councillors Noel Barrett-Morton, Kymee Cleasby, Jane Davies, Nicholas Fogg, Mervyn Hall (Vice Chair), Guy Loosmore, Andrew Ross (Chairman), James Sheppard and the Town Mayor, Councillor Mark Cooper

Dear Councillor

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

You are **summoned** to attend a meeting of the **Finance and Policy Committee**, which will be held on **Monday, 6 December** immediately following the **Planning Committee** and not before **7.30pm** in the **Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall**.

Yours sincerely

Richard Spencer-Williams

Mr Richard Spencer-Williams, PSLCC

Town Clerk

This meeting will be held in accordance with the latest Government Covid Safety Guidelines, and managed according to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974(2)e.

There will be twenty places for members of the public to attend. If members of the public wish to attend they should notify the Town Clerk of this by noon on the Friday prior to the meeting. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Organisations and interest groups are asked to send one delegate.

All those in attendance at the meeting will be required to wear a face mask when moving around the Town Hall unless exempt, or when seated.

If members of the public wish to attend and ask a question they should also notify the Town Clerk of this by noon on the Friday prior to the meeting and provide their question in writing at the same time. Some members of the public may not be allowed to attend if all the allocated seats are taken.

If members of the public wish to ask a question, but not attend, they can provide the question in writing to the Town Clerk by noon on the day of the meeting, and a written response will be provided.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with Standing Order 3(f), members of the public may ask questions of the Committee. The time allocated for this should not exceed 10 minutes and be limited to 1 question per person unless directed otherwise by the Chairman. A full response may not be possible without further research, and the Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of interest or requests for dispensation

3. Chairman's announcements

4. Minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2021

5. Action Log

To note and review the Finance and Policy Action Log

6. Tourism Officer Report

To note and consider the Tourism Officer Report

7. Dark Skies Festival Report

To note the Dark Skies financial report

8. Finance and Policy Budget 2022-23

To consider the Finance and Policy Committee's budget requirements for 2022-23

9. eComms Policy

To consider the draft eComms Policy for adoption

10. Merchants House Lease

To consider the Merchants House request for an extended lease or asset transfer

11. Merchants House Allocated Funds

To consider the redesignation of allocated funds to the Merchants House

12. Heritage Development

To consider how the Committee can further the development of Marlborough's Heritage

**Marlborough Town Council
Finance & Policy Committee**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance & Policy Committee**, which was held on **Monday, 25 October 2021** in the Assembly Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7.54pm

PRESENT:	Councillor Andrew Ross	Chairman
	Councillor Mark Cooper	Town Mayor
	Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Kymee Cleasby	
ALSO		
PRESENT:	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Administrator
	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

- 248/21 APOLOGIES**
Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Fogg, Loosmore** and the Tourism Officer, Belinda Richardson.
- 249/21 DECLARATIONS**
Councillors Ross and **Hall** – agenda item 9 – Museum and Heritage Asset Funding – non-pecuniary interest.
- 250/21 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
There were no announcements.
- 251/21 MINUTES**
RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 14 June 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman
- 252/21 QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL REPORTS 2021-22**
The Town Clerk’s overview report was noted.
- 253/21 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2020-21**
Members noted the External Auditor Report and Certificate which had raised no issues and thanked the Town Clerk and Office Manager for an excellent job on achieving a clean audit.
- 254/21 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**
Members noted the internal audit report which raised no issues. There was one recommendation related to Risk and Insurance which had already been actioned by

the Town Clerk. It was also noted that since the closure of the local branch of Barclays Bank, the Town Clerk and Office Manager were sharing cash deposit runs to branches in Chippenham and Devizes.

255/21

TOURISM UPDATE REPORT

The Tourism Officer's report was noted and discussed. Questions or comments included:

- Whether Marlborough was primarily a shopping and/or dining destination
- Whether heritage assets could be more prominent in the tourism offering, for example developing the Town Hall into a destination
- Whether there was enough focus on Marlborough College, and in particular the Mound which was the smaller twin of Silbury Hill and located within its grounds and currently a hidden asset. With its links to the Avebury landscape and being at the heart of the Town Crest, Members felt it should be a crucial element of 'brand Marlborough' and asked whether an offering based on it could be developed for 2022
- Improving access to the Visitor Information Point at Coopers Corner and the lack of a physical Tourist Information Centre
- Whether the Tourism Officer could follow up the desire to reinstate National Express services to the town
- Appreciation for the great strides the Tourism Officer had taken to improve relations with local businesses, particularly since the start of the pandemic

256/21

MUSEUM AND HERITAGE ASSET FUNDING

a) Members considered a proposal by **Councillor Ross** for £1,000 (Heritage budget code 4317) to be given to the Marlborough Museum under the Local Government Act 1972 s145 (1)(d) in support of asset acquisition of heritage items, including Maton paintings:

- There were several 17th century paintings of Marlborough by George Maton in the Council Chamber
- A local antique dealer had emigrated to Canada some years ago, taking some Maton paintings and an early line drawing of the Town Hall with him
- Two Maton paintings were now for sale and had been offered back to the town by the owners initially via an approach to the Town Council, which had involved the Merchants House and Marlborough History Society
- It was proposed that the Museum in the Merchants House was the appropriate place for these paintings as that they would be on view for residents and visitors
- The Museum within the Merchants House had no budget other than that provided by the Town Council
- Offers for the paintings had been accepted at £250 each, with a price yet to be agreed for the line drawing

RESOLVED: that £1,000 be provided to Marlborough Museum for the acquisition of heritage items including Maton paintings

Councillors Ross and Hall did not vote

b) Members considered the Council's approach to heritage development with a view to informing the Development and Action Plan. Matters arising included:

- That the Town Council owned some significant heritage assets
- An inventory of assets had been compiled some years ago by archaeologist Kim Wakeham
- Assets were stored in various locations with no real register to bring them all together
- Whether there was an opportunity to use the Merchant's House software (MODES) to include records of the Town Council's assets; whether there were cost or resource implications; whether remote access can be obtained by Town Council staff
- Whether a visual record of shops on the High Street could be compiled, perhaps refreshed every 25 years as a record of social history
- Drawings and photos were stored at the Museum but there was no space to display them
- That there were some drawings in the entrance corridor at the Town Council offices recording the High Street in different eras
- Whether social media, e.g., Facebook, could be used to share and promote photos as 'Marlborough Memories'
- Whether the existing Marlborough Pictures Facebook group could be expanded
- Whether there were issues with copyright
- Whether to create a new section on the Town Council's website for history and heritage
- Whether all ideas could be carried forward based on resource capacity
- Whether there were opportunities to involve volunteers/young people
- To create a regular agenda item to discuss heritage ideas, and that non-Members should also be invited to consider suggestions

RESOLVED: to investigate whether the Merchants House MODES software can be used to record Town Council assets

257/21

DARK SKIES

Members noted the budget update report for the Dark Skies Festival. The **Chairman** had spoken to the Assistant Town Clerk who was confident that it would run under budget.

RESOLVED: to defer Dark Skies Budget consideration to the next meeting

258/21

TOWN COUNCIL BRANDING AND CORPORATE IMAGE POLICY

Members considered the adoption of a policy for Town Council branding and corporate image purposes. Discussion points included:

- **Councillor Cleasby** asked for clarification of scope and definition: was this about having a prominent and consistent brand identity on staff/councillor clothing, lanyard, vehicles, parks, and street furniture or did it go beyond to

reflect 'Brand Marlborough' for example tourism offerings, town entrance signs etc?

- That it was important that the grounds staff and vehicles in particular were clearly identifiable as Marlborough Town Council to raise awareness with residents about the work they do and the parks/play areas the Town Council was responsible for
- That all vehicles, including tractors and mowers, should carry clear branding
- That in some of the town's open spaces there was no signage to indicate that the space was looked after by the Town Council
- That badges and/or clothing should be adapted to easily identify Town Council personnel taking part in, or managing, events
- Whether to agree to quick wins in the short term and develop a broader strategy for later agreement and the creation of a plan
- That the Tourism Officer was already working on improving signage around the town
- Whether to have a one-off discussion/workshop to define a distinct brand/personality based on answers to the question "what does Marlborough mean?" that could then be reflected in all brand updates, and that the Tourism Officer would be the ideal person to lead it
- That it would be important to gain the input of staff as well as Councillors
- That **Councillor Cleasby** had experience in running branding workshops and would share material that could be helpful
- That funding would need to be identified: two budgets exist for Personal Clothing (£779) and PPE (£781)
- Whether to prepare a draft policy for the next meeting

ACTION POINTS:

1. Town Clerk to draw up 'quick wins' actions (e.g., litter bins, clothing, vehicles)
2. Town Clerk to discuss ideas with staff
3. Councillor Cleasby to circulate a document to send on to staff and Councillors (and possibly external organisations)
4. Councillor Cleasby to suggest suppliers for enamel badges
5. Town Clerk to draft a policy for consideration at the next meeting with a view to presenting to Full Town Council
6. Councillor Ross to call an extraordinary meeting if required

259/21

TRACTOR REPAIRS UPDATE

Significant repairs were ongoing to two tractors with a total expected cost of £9,515 (ex VAT). Earmarked Reserves allocated to Open Spaces Machinery stood at £15,197. A third tractor, a Ford 1920 model, was not used and could be sold, raising an estimated £5,500. Members were asked to agree to the sale in order to offset maintenance costs for the remaining two vehicles.

RESOLVED: (i) that the Ford 1920 tractor should be offered for sale

RESOLVED: (ii) that the funds raised by the sale of the Ford 1920 tractor should be added to the Earmarked Reserves for Open Spaces Machinery

260/21

ECOMMS POLICY

The existing Social Media policy was out of date, limited in scope and needed to be replaced. Members were asked to reconsider the draft electronic communications policy first presented in June. A working party had been set up as requested but the meeting had been cancelled due to lack of attendance and no subsequent feedback had been forthcoming. The **Chairman** asked Members to reconsider how this matter could be progressed.

ACTION POINT: The Town Clerk to circulate the draft one more time requesting input with an updated document to be agreed at a future meeting

261/21

DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLAN

Members considered which items from recent action plan workshops should be adopted by the Finance and Policy Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Finance and Policy Committee should adopt the following items for the next Council term:

- Civic services and program
- Eco-tourism
- Cultural development and events
- Affordable rented accommodation
- Heritage
- Devolution of services
- Business and employment development
- Resourcing and finance

262/21

STANDING ORDERS

Members considered amendments to Standing Orders for recommendation to Full Town Council.

RESOLVED: to approve the amendments to Standing Orders and recommend adoption by Full Town Council

262/21

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE PROTECTION POLICY

Members agreed that its primary role in relation to the Council's adaptation of services and activities against the Environment and Climate Protection Policy was largely one of scrutiny, and that it should become a regular agenda item.

263/21

GRANT APPLICATION

RESOLVED: to award a grant of £500 to Wiltshire Sight to provide support services to approximately 300 Marlborough residents

The meeting closed at 9.34 pm

Signed: Date:
Chairman

Description	Minute Number (click to open link to the minutes)	Source	Owner	Status	Meeting or Start Date	Due Date	Notes
Branding & Corporate Image: draw up 'quick wins' actions (e.g., litter bins, clothing, vehicles)	258/21	Finance & Policy Committee	Town Clerk	In Progress	25/10/2021		Town Clerk met with key staff and discussed. Hi-Viz vests have been purchased with MTC on back, bin stickers can be put on all bins, new bin at Manton to have MTC crest. Lanyards and ID tags to be actioned.
Branding & Corporate Image: discuss ideas with staff	258/21	Finance & Policy Committee	Town Clerk	In Progress	25/10/2021		As above
Branding & Corporate image: draft a policy for consideration at next meeting with a view to presenting to Full Town Council	258/21	Finance & Policy Committee	Town Clerk	In Progress	25/10/2021		Expect to present at next Committee meeting.
Electronic Communications Policy: circulate the draft one more time requesting input with an updated document to be agreed at a future meeting	260/21	Finance & Policy Committee	Town Clerk		25/10/2021		Re- circulated on 2.11.21. Cllr Cleasby fed back. On agenda for 6.12.21

Summary – This report asks members to note actions taken thus far to continue to deliver the Marlborough Tourism Strategy, as set out in January 2020, and to consider a proposed plan for the way ahead since my last update in January 2021

Background

At the Full Council Meeting in January 2020, councillors noted and approved a revised and finite version of the Marlborough Tourism Strategy. Resulting objectives have been progressed where possible to mitigate the impact of lockdown and the challenges of the Covid-19 virus and working part-time, within the limits of an 18-hour week.

As the virus starts now to shift from pandemic to endemic, the tourism industry remains challenged, with international trade groups yet to return. By contrast, domestic trade this year has been strong especially with regards day visits and those en route to the Southwest on holiday. Staffing concerns with both visitor attractions and in the hospitality sector continue to be a problem.

Visit Wiltshire reports a recent surge in social media followers and increased visitors to its website with Marlborough being the 4th most visited product page (behind Castle Combe, Cotswold Water Park and Longleat). It also reports how Marlborough has recently increased travel trade activity both domestically and internationally, where the town is now being sold via 3 large UK based Destination Marketing Companies in the USA, Netherlands, Germany, and Scandinavia.

Current situation

Five priorities were outlined in the action plan concluding the Marlborough Tourism Strategy. Work done to address these since January 2021, current plans and future goals are as follows:

Developing the product and visitor offer

Ongoing

- Working with Great West Way to provide bookable tours with the Merchant's House and St Peters Tower
- Working on a local tour with Marlborough College – this was successfully piloted on October 21st with 18 guinea pigs from across the board in Marlborough. I am currently in discussion with the marketing team at the College, following up on feedback, with a view to launching limited tours in 2022
- Working with Transition Marlborough and ARK on a year-round nature trail
- Working with Marlborough College on the possibility of an annual "Mound Day," whereby visitors would be allowed in to walk the Mound
- Working with GWW and WC on the possibility of providing overnight parking in George Lane for Camper Vans and focusing on the retail/eatery benefits
- Working with North Wessex Downs to take part in its Walking Festival in 2022

- Working with Nick Baxter on historic walks through Marlborough

Completed since Jan 2021

- Equipped the Visitor Information Point in George Lane - now fitting a timer mechanism in the door, with a plan to opening it (unmanned) between 10 and 4 daily
- Secured the Coach Friendly Status award on June 21st 2021
- Produced a Marlborough promotional Food and Drink video and an Accommodation video in the spring and just finished an Events video which will be launched on social media in Jan 2022, publicizing what is on throughout the year ahead

Improving coordination

Ongoing

- Continue to work with and communicate with the High Street, relaying information on grant funding, addressing concerns over signage and canvassing opinions, most recently on the Green Badge Scheme
- Working with VW and GWW to establish better trade contacts/coach contacts. Exhibiting in partnership with GWW in a nationwide travel trade show to be held in Twickenham in January 2022. Also studying online this autumn, in an 8-session travel trade training course

Completed since Jan 2021

- Re-established Tourism Forum – met face to face in September with representation from Summer School, Marlborough College, North Wessex Downs, LitFest, Parade Cinema, St Peter’s Church, Vale of Pewsey tourism, Merchant’s House, and Visit Wiltshire/Great West Way
- Gave a talk to U3A on why Tourism matters in Marlborough

Marketing and information

Ongoing

- Planning GWW workshops to better explain concept to local stakeholders
- Working on town’s signage following review in January 2020
- Working on White Horse leaflet to celebrate our own cleaned up chalk figure – plan to launch it in Jan 2022
- Plan in motion to take over Great West Way social media sites in January 2022 (weekend 7th/8th/9th) and flood them with sumptuous images of Marlborough

Completed since Jan 2021

- 50 Things to Do in Marlborough leaflet launched in Spring
- Food and drink and accommodation lists revised and updated
- User-friendly illustrated map printed
- New bracket sign installed outside No 5 High Street
- Sat the CIM Institute of Marketing “Marketing Principles” exam and passed, with distinction. Now starting work on a Digital module

Branding and Identity

Ongoing

- There is more work to be done on developing a consistent and uniform Marlborough brand – most obviously through a complete signage overhaul. Attended Branding Course

with Visit Wiltshire in November – with an online one hour follow up option to discuss branding ideas to be scheduled in the future

Knowledge and Understanding

Ongoing

- Working on promoting big events of 2021 (the cinema launch, Lit Fest, Dark Skies, and the Marlborough White Horse clean up).
- The aim is next to link data, where possible, from these events and combine it with visitor information from the likes of the Premier Inn and the Summer School to enable us to conduct seasonal visitor surveys and improve understanding of visitor types, needs and behaviour going forward.

Financial implications

Expenditure to date this year continues within budget.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note this update and provide any useful feedback.

Tourism Officer
23 November 2021

To note the Dark Skies financial report

NB - we are still awaiting some final invoices/figures and so a final detailed budget and a full report on the festival c/w statistics and feedback will be presented to the next available Full Council meeting in 2022

	EXPENDITURE		
	Expected excl VAT	VAT	Total
Marketing and Comms	£ 3,100.00	£ 620.00	£ 3,720.00
Museum of the Moon	£ 8,400.00	£ 1,680.00	£ 10,080.00
Rigger/site visit/transport for MoM	£ 780.00	£ -	£ 780.00
Insurance for the MoM	£ 100.00	£ 20.00	£ 120.00
Speakers/talks /activities	£ 4,866.30	£ -	£ 4,866.30
Volunteer Costs & refreshments	£ 350.00	£ 70.00	£ 420.00
Box office	£ 420.00	£ -	£ 420.00
Venues & Accommodation	£ 350.00	£ -	£ 350.00
Other/Covid Contingency	£ 750.00		
Total expected expenditure	£19,116	£2,390	£20,756

(both orgs can reclaim VAT)

INCOME	
Ticket Sales	£ 760.00
NWD	£ 4,000.00
MTC	£ 3,000.00
Arts Council England	£ 14,800.00
The Royal Astronomical Society	£ 1,000.00
WC Local Youth Network	£ 1,478.00
BAA	£ 500.00
Nineveh Trust	£ 1,360.00
TOTAL	£ 26,898.00

IN KIND COSTS		
Venues	£ 3,000.00	Venues: Town Hall, Youth Centre, Blakett Observatory, MC Chapel, Mem Hall
NWD Staff time	£ 4,323.00	33 days @ £131/day
MTC Staff time	£ 7,590.00	66 days @ £115/day
MC Staff time	£ 2,500.00	10 days @ £250/day
Volunteers -general	£ 750.00	40 @ 3 hours/each @£6.25/hour
Volunteers - specialists services	£ 7,500.00	30 @ 1 day each @250/day
Councillors time	£ 5,000.00	2 x Cllrs 10 days each @£250/day
In-kind Income Total	£30,663	
Combined Total	£57,561	

		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual YTD	Budget	
1010	INCOME-MISCELLANEOUS	100	10,444	100	1664	100	
1176	PRECEPT RECEIVED	723,257	723,257	744,373	744,373		
1190	BANK INTEREST	1,200	572	1,000	17	1000	
1191	MARKET INCOME	1,500	0	1,500	777	1500	
	Total Income	726,157	734,273	746,973	746,831	2600	
4001	SALARIES/NI/SUPERAN	221,157	209,186	216,896	126,126	236,416	5% INCREASE / NI
4005	HR SUPPORT	2,700	2,556	2,700	2,681	2,700	
4009	TRAVEL	1,000	-36	1,000	54	500	
4010	STAFF MOBILE PHONES	2,000	3,200	3,000	1,995	3,200	
4011	BUSINESS RATES	8,000	6,238	8,200	6,238	8,200	
4022	PETTY CASH	1,000	675	1,000	182	700	
4023	STATIONERY/PUBLICS.	2,500	1,801	2,500	907	2,200	
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	5,000	4,367	5,000	3,342	5,000	
4025	INSURANCE	15,000	13,754	16,000	11,912	16,000	
4026	PHOTOCOPIER	5,000	4,487	5,000	2,434	5,000	
4028	POSTAGE	600	501	500	282	600	
4029	NEWSLETTER	1,650	1,630	2,000	600	1,800	
4038	MAINTENANCE	1,000	2,703	2,000	540	2,000	
4041	TRAINING STAFF	5,000	1,815	5,000	508	5,000	
4046	TOURISM	5,000	3,857	5,000	1,023	5,000	
4055	PROFESSIONAL	7,000	2,605	7,000	560	7,000	
4057	AUDIT FEE	4,000	2,935	4,000	2,505	4,000	
4059	BANK CHARGES	500	536	600	306	600	
4063	OFFICE GENERAL	500	290	500	289	500	
4064	ARCHIVE STORAGE	460	417	460	245	460	

		2020-21		2021-22		2022-23
		Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual YTD	Budget
4067	CCTV	3,000	504	3,000	2,344	3,000
4071	OFFICE EQUIPMENT	1,000	1,142	1,000	1,121	1,200
4075	SOFTWARE & FEES	7,720	7,964	8,000	4,868	8,000
4076	HEALTH & SAFETY	500	89	500	221	500
4153	EVENTS	2,000	1,020	2,000	518	2,000
4154	SWITCH ON EVENT	5,000	0	6,000	69	6,000
4224	YOUTH COUNCIL	500	0	500	0	500
4228	WEBSITE/BROADBAND	2,500	300	2,500	1,036	2,500
4301	FIRE EXTINGUISHERS	300	189	300	0	300
4308	IT EQUIPMENT LEASE	5,500	2,853	7,000	1,681	5,000
4309	IT SUPPORT PACKAGE	2,500	540	2,500	0	2,500
4311	RECRUITMENT	300	406	300	0	300
4317	HERITAGE PROJECT	1,000	1,000	1,000	0	1,000
4336	DARK SKIES	3,000	250	3,000	1,683	0
4152	REMEMBRANCE DAY	2,000	91	2,000	467	2000
4061	CHRISTMAS LIGHTS	14,000	12,972	15,000	257	15,000
4151	GRANTS	6,600	6,600	7,000	0	7,000
4100	MAYORS ALLOWANCE	3,400	1,700	3,400	1,439	3,400
4101	MAYORS TRAVEL	650	0	650	51	650
4102	MAYOR MAKING EXPS	1,800	0	2,000	2,000	2000
4078	TRAINING-COUNCILLORS	500	150	1,500	30	1500
4103	MEMBERS TRAVEL	500	0	500	0	500
4105	CIVIC HOSPITALITY	3,000	719	2000	71	2000
4110	TOWN CRIER/MACE BEAR	1,200	486	1200	260	1200
4113	INSIGNIA FUNDS	2,000	1,616	2000	1,018	2000
4012	WATER/SEWERAGE CHGS	510	182	520	123	530
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,500	3,368	3000	1,752	3500
4015	GAS	1,000	377	1000	303	1000
4020	TELEPHONE	6,000	6,536	7000	3,708	7000
	Total Expenditure	376,547	316,571	374,726	187,749	388,956

Purpose

To consider for adoption the draft eComms Policy

Background

1. This draft Policy was first re-presented to the Finance and Policy Committee on the 25.10.21 when it was resolved to re-send to the working party to offer feedback on amendments.

Current Status

2. The draft policy is now re-presented to the Committee for consideration and recommendation to Full Council for adoption.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the eComms Policy is referred to Full Council for adoption.

Town Clerk 26.11.21

(Please see Appendix 1 for draft eComms (Policy))

Purpose

To consider the Merchant's House request for an extended lease or asset transfer

Background

1. The Chair of Trustees for the Merchant's House Trust has written to request that the lease for 132 High Street be extended to a term of 50 years. This is because their potential funders require greater security of tenure.
2. Furthermore, it has also been requested that the Town Council might be prepared to transfer the freehold over, and for this to be held by the Trust in perpetuity.

Considerations

3. The current lease agreement has a seven-year term and is set to run for four and a half years.
4. It should be noted that the Trust;

- owns 133 High Street
- pays a nominal rent of £1 per annum
- has leased 132 High Street since 31st March 1998
- has invested around £740,000 in conservation, and improvement works in the property
- has recently invested £80,000 on the roof, and expects to fund further works to the roof at a cost of £70,000
- has now launched an appeal to raise funds and have the interest of a number of charitable donors who they believe would be receptive to their applications; subject to a more secure tenancy arrangement.

Recommendation

5. The Committee is asked to consider this matter and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

Town Clerk 26.11.21

ITEM 11

MERCHANTS HOUSE ALLOCATED FUNDS

Purpose

To consider the redesignation of allocated funds to The Merchant's House

Background

1. The Merchant's House Trust is holding £844 in restricted funds from MTC for brown tourist signs (20/2/17), a project that has not gone ahead.

Proposal

2. Cllr Ross has asked the Committee to consider whether Marlborough Town Council would allow these funds to be re designated by The Merchant's House for other purposes.

Recommendation

3. The Committee is asked to consider this matter and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

Town Clerk 26.11.21

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

Marlborough Town Council uses online tools to provide and communicate information easily, clearly, effectively, appropriately and in a timely manner to the people, businesses, and agencies it works with and serves.

The Council has a website, social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) accounts, YouTube channels and uses email to communicate. For a full list see section **Error! Reference source not found.**

The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications and over time may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these change this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

The Council's website and social media accounts intend to provide information and updates regarding Council meetings, news, services, events, and activities within our Parish as well as information for tourists, and to promote our town positively.

It is important to ensure that the Council balances the opportunities presented by social media platforms with its duties to service users and partners, its legal responsibilities, and its reputation. For example, the Council must be mindful of its duty to safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to provide a framework of good practice to ensure that:

- 2.1. Users know what to expect from Council online platforms and how to communicate online with Marlborough Town Council.
- 2.2. The Council is not exposed to security, legal or governance risks.
- 2.3. The reputation of the Council is not adversely affected.
- 2.4. Users can clearly distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the Council.
- 2.5. Council Representatives (as described in 3.1) are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy covers the use of electronic mail, websites, social media, and networking applications by Council employees, elected Members, partners or other third parties (including contractors and volunteers) acting on behalf of the Council. These groups are referred to collectively as "Council Representatives."
- 3.2. Where individuals, including those from partner organisations or volunteers, are involved and are acting on behalf of the Council, they will also be expected to comply with relevant Council policies.

- 3.3. This policy covers online and social networking applications including, but not limited to, blogs (for example, WordPress), online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services (for example, YouTube), videoconferencing (for example, Zoom) and social networking and micro blogging applications (for example Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok).
- 3.4. This policy applies to all uses of electronic communications used for any Council-related purpose and regardless of whether they are hosted corporately or not and must be considered where Council Representatives are contributing online in an official capacity to sites provided by external organisations.
- 3.4. All Council Representatives should bear in mind that information they share online, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Equal Opportunities and other legislation.
- 3.5. Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not addressed by this policy.

4. Terms of Use of Online Media

Council Representatives must adhere to these Terms of Use. These apply to all uses of social networking applications by all Council Representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public-facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on corporate networks or not.

Comments made on social media platforms sometimes lack transparency or clear audit trails: for example, a @username may be an alias with no contact information provided such as an email address. In addition, users tend to 'share' and comment on posts across multiple sites and profiles. This means it is not always possible to see all comments relating to a topic or post (for example, if someone has shared and commented on a private profile).

For these reasons, the Town Council will never use social media to enter into debates, discussions to answer questions raised by the public other than to answer simple service-related questions (for example, "*How do I apply for an allotment?*"). Proper routes to raise questions with Council include Public Question Time at any Council meeting or via the Town Council office (in writing, by email or by telephone), or by contacting a Councillor. Contact details for Officers and Councillors are published on the Town Council's website.

Official Council profiles and pages will be managed by staff on behalf of the Town Clerk and will only be used to share information or promote events or tourism. They will not be used to enter into discussions, debates, or answer questions other than simple service questions.

Where individuals, including those from partner organisations or volunteers, are involved and are acting on behalf of the Council, they will also be expected to comply with relevant Council policies.

All Terms of Use apply to all types of online communication irrespective of platform.

- 4.1. All proposals for using online communications as part of a Council service (whether they are hosted by the Council or by a third party) must be approved by the Town Clerk first.
- 4.2. Use of online applications which are not related to any Council services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) do not need to be approved by the Town Clerk. However, Council Representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out below.

- 4.3. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. The Council expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.
- 4.4. Posts must not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, hateful, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, or racially offensive.
- 4.5. Posts must not be used for actions that would put the Council Representatives in breach of Council codes of conduct or policies relating to Elected Members or staff.
- 4.6. Council profiles, pages or posts must not be used for party political purposes or specific campaigning purposes as the Council is not permitted to publish material which 'in whole or part appears to affect public support for a political party' (LGA 1986).
- 4.7. All users need to be aware that applications may be closed, or commenting suspended, for a defined period before local or national elections in order to comply with legislation which affects local authorities.
- 4.8. Council profiles, pages or posts must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests or personal campaigns.
- 4.9. Council profiles, pages or posts must not be used for the promotion of commercial ventures.
- 4.10. Any contributions made by Council Representatives should be professional and uphold the reputation of the Council.
- 4.11. Members, if using their own social media account profiles, must ensure that they state they are either speaking in a personal capacity or simply providing details of works undertaken or policies agreed by Marlborough Town Council and not speaking on behalf of the Council.
- 4.12. Council Representatives should not post to, or comment on, Marlborough Town Council social media sites as their comments may be perceived to reflect the views of Marlborough Town Council and could lead to unnecessary debate in the public domain and/or leave the Council exposed to reputational risk. They can however do this if they have cleared the content in advance with the Town Clerk or his or her delegated officer, for example, the Mayor or Chair of a Committee may be asked to comment on a matter of public interest. Comments should always represent a corporate or consensus view. Any comments deemed to be in violation of this will be hidden and/or removed (see section 7 'Enforcement').
- 4.13. Members may interact with Town Council social media channels simply to show support, for example to 'like' a post, or to share stories to other platforms with neutral comments, or to add neutral or benign comments to a post, for example to say "well done" against a good news story.
- 4.14. Council Representatives should think very carefully before posting to other social media platforms with wide readership, for example the Facebook page called Marlborough Notice Board. If they do so they should make it clear in their statement that their comment reflects their own personal views and is not representative of Marlborough Town Council unless this has already been cleared by the Town Clerk or is signposting to information already published on the Marlborough Town Council website or other channel.

5. Transparency

It is important to ensure that members of the public and other users of online services know when an email account, website or social networking application is being used for official Council purposes. To assist with this, all Council Representatives must adhere to the following requirements:

- 5.1. Officers and Elected Members must only use their email account or website in the @marlborough-tc.gov.uk domain for user accounts which will be used for official Council purposes.
- 5.2. Council Representatives should identify themselves as such where appropriate on social networking applications and in official email accounts (for example, by providing additional information in user profiles and/or to add an email signature with "*Councillor myname, Marlborough Town Councillor*")
- 5.3. The use of the Council's logo or other branding elements should be used where appropriate to indicate the Council's support. The logo should not be used on social networking applications which are unrelated to, or are not representative of, the Council's official position.
- 5.4. Official complaints procedures must be published in a prominent place which is easily accessible to others.

6. List of Applications

Marlborough Town Council has a range of online tools that will be to convey and share information to the public, to tourists or for press announcements.

- 6.1. Email – all official accounts will only use the @marlborough-tc.gov.uk domain. Officers and Elected Members have email address which are listed on the Town Council Website. In addition, there is a general enquires address: enquiries@marlborough-tc.gov.uk
- 6.2. Website - <https://marlborough-tc.gov.uk/>
The Town Council's website is the 'landing page' or hub for all council-related information. It provides information about services, useful links for the community and tourist information. It is a repository for information, for example agendas and minutes of meetings; venue hire prices; contact information and from time to time may be used to host public consultations or other relevant items of business.
- 6.3. Facebook @MarlboroughTC is the main Marlborough Town Council Facebook page. From time-to-time subpages will be created, for example @marlboroughdarkskiesfest to promote the 2021 Dark Skies Festival and used in partnership with the North Wessex Downs AONB, and @MarlboroughinBloom to showcase the town's entry into RHS South West in Bloom.
- 6.4. Twitter : @MTCWilts
- 6.5. Instagram : @VisitMarlborough; used exclusively as a tourist information page
- 6.6. YouTube: Marlborough Town Council is the main channel, with sub channels for Marlborough Dark Skies Fest and Visit Marlborough UK tourist information.
- 6.7. Sending a message/post to us via social media will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Town Clerk or via the general enquiries email address and/or any Members by emailing or writing to us.

- 6.8. We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:
- Obscene or racist content
 - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
 - Potentially libellous statements
 - Plagiarised material, any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
 - Private, personal information published without consent
 - Commercial promotions or spam
 - Alleges a breach of a policy or the law
- 6.9. The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy, or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited available resources. Any information posted on our Social Media pages not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from pages. The Council may post a statement that *'A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed.'* If the post alleges a breach of a Council policy or the law, the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the police as soon as possible.
- 6.10. SMS (*texting*). Council Representatives are reminded that this policy may also apply to text messages.
- 6.11. Video Conferencing, e.g., Skype, Zoom. Council Representatives are reminded that this policy also applies to the use of Video Conferencing.

7. Enforcement

- 7.1. In accordance with the published complaints procedure¹, any breach of the terms set out in this policy could result in the application or offending content being removed, and/or the publishing rights of the responsible Council Representative being suspended.
- 7.2. The Town Clerk reserves the right to require the closure of any applications and/or removal of content published by Council Representatives which may adversely affect the reputation of the Council or put it at risk of legal actions.
- 7.3. Any communications or content published that causes damage to the Council, any of its employees or any third party's reputation may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct to which the Council's Disciplinary Policy applies.

8. Complaints

Complaints should be made in line with the Town Council's Complaints Procedure which is available from the Town Council website.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if any areas require improvement.
Policy adopted: xxxxdatexxxxxx

This policy is based on established good practice and guidance from the Society of Local Council Clerks.

¹ Available at <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/corporate>