

UNADOPTED

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

held on Wednesday 18 December 2019

Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern at 6.00 pm

Councillors

Present

N Morton (Chairman)
L Lambeth (Vice Chairman)
C Bovey
J Dallow
C Hooper
N Houghton
J Leibrandt
L Lowton
P Mewton
N Mills
D Roberts
P Smith
S Taylor
J Thomas
P Tuthill
D Watkins

Absent

S Charles (apologies)
R McLaverty-Head (apologies)
J O'Donnell (apologies)
C Palmer (apologies)

In attendance

Linda Blake - Town Clerk
Louise Wall - Minute Clerk
Charles Porter – Operations Manager

107. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from:

- Cllr S Charles – another meeting
- Cllr R McLaverty-Head – holiday
- Cllr J O'Donnell – family commitment
- Cllr C Palmer – family commitment

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Cllr N Mills – allotment holder.

109. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Minute 96

Cllr Hooper requested that an addition be made to the end of minute 96 of the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019 in order to fully reflect the comments made by Paul Robinson.

"In the discussion which followed, Mr Robinson expressed his willingness to receive and respond to full details of the specific concerns which had been noted

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about the state of the town's pavements and concerns about the Highways Department's perceived shortcomings. He also noted that he would welcome the opportunity to return on a future occasion to address the Council if that were so wished."

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meeting as amended be approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings and they were signed by the Mayor:

- Full Council meeting 6 November 2019

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Simon Nicholls expressed his concerns that the two-minute silence on Remembrance Sunday did not seem to be correctly observed by the town and had this year taken place in the afternoon rather than at 11.00 am as observed by most. He asked whether the council would commit to holding the Remembrance observations at the correct time of day in the future.

The Mayor explained that the Remembrance committee took a decision on timings based on the availability of the cadets, who form the main part of the parade. As they are busy in Worcester in the morning, an afternoon service has always been held in Malvern, the exception being in 2018 for the 100 year anniversary. He invited Mr Nicholls to join the committee so that he could have an input into any future arrangements.

Karen Humphries, Chair of the Trustees at Malvern Cube spoke in support of the following Notice of Motion and explained that the volunteers at the Cube were finding it difficult to keep up with the grass cutting required in the grounds of the Cube and therefore were approaching the Town Council to ask for help.

The Cube is run almost entirely by volunteers with just one paid member of staff. The buildings and grounds are used for many activities by over 3,000 people each month. Small areas of grass are kept mown by the volunteers with a push mower but help is requested to cut the large areas of grass by Town Council staff. It is thought this will take no longer than an hour one or twice a month and would only be for the period between 1 April and 30 September 2020 with a review to follow before any further decisions are taken.

110. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr Josephine Leibrandt presented the Notice of Motion and stated this would show the Town Council's support for the contribution that the Cube makes both to the Malvern community and also to the Heart of England in Bloom campaign.

Whilst most members were very supportive of this proposal, there was some concern about setting a precedent and whether this proposal constituted a grant in kind and should fall under the Council's grants scheme.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the current grant scheme did not support "grants in kind" as it was designed for the payment of monies.

It was agreed to amend the proposal in order that any future application would need to be reflected in Town Council accounts as a grant in kind.

It was **RESOLVED** that Malvern Town Council assists Malvern Cube by cutting their grass twice a month during the period 1 April 2020 until 30 September 2020.

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Each cut will be scheduled as part of the regular Town Council grass cutting rounds in order to secure maximum efficiency of man-hours and machinery.

This agreement similar to a grant in kind, would be for one year only and be reviewed in October 2020 as part of the Malvern Town Council annual grant process.

111. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor had attended the following events:

- The quiz which had raised £388.50 and he thanked Cllr Houghton, Clare Lawrence and Linda Blake for their help
- Remembrance and Armistice events in the town, and thanked councillors for their help
- The Christmas lights switch on event which had been very successful, with special thanks to Morgan for supplying the Routemaster bus and a Morgan car for the parade
- The Christmas charity concert, which some councillors had attended
- The opening of the new bus shelter on Poolbrook Common – it is looking good and the Mayor recommended members to go and have a look at the design that they chose
- The Chase High School awards

The Mayor is attending the liaison meeting with MHDC on Thursday this week and will report back to the next meeting of Full Council.

The comments on the SWDP review had been submitted following comments from one councillor, and the Mayor urged members to read the report and the comments, so that if they were questioned on it by residents, they would be well-prepared.

Finally, the Mayor reminded everyone that his charity gala was to be held on 28 February 2020. Tickets available from Clare in the office.

112. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Christmas Lights Switch on – Great Malvern

The Town Clerk reported that this had been an incredibly successful event despite the rather inclement weather with over £1,000 raised for charity - a Town Council record. The new style Santa's Grotto on Morgan's Route master bus was especially popular.

Street Naming

Following a number of street naming requests, Barley Drive and Heather Close were suggested by Chase Ward Councillors for land at Mill Lane and these have now been accepted.

Damson Close has been put forward by North Malvern Ward Councillors for Broadlands Drive development and is currently being considered.

Two street names for land at the former Walshes yard in Chase Ward have been suggested – Hawberry and Whitethorn are still being considered.

SWDPR

The Task and Finish Group met with Peter Hamilton, planning consultant and a draft document was circulated first to members of the group and then secondly to all councillors last Friday.

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The Town Council representation on the SWDP review preferred options consultation was submitted on Monday ahead of the deadline. A strategic housing and employment land availability assessment or "Call for Site" for Elgar Avenue was also submitted.

113. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

County Councillors – Cllr Paul Tuthill

- As Vice Chairman of the Fire Authority, Cllr Tuthill had been on a tour of the new station at Kidderminster. He reported that it was a very impressive building and there was also a chance to see the new compact fire engine. At 7 ½ tonnes, it is smaller than standard appliances, and will be used in urban areas where access is limited, and in rural areas such as Herefordshire, with one going to Bromyard.
- The Acute Trust is now out of special measures.
- The Enforcement Officer had been out to Lower Howsell Road and following the appointment of a new area manager, this area is looking much better.
- The Dyson Perrins bus service which had been put on following requests from members of the public had not been used despite going round Malvern twice a day. This was very disappointing.

District Councillors – Cllr Caroline Bovey

Cllr Bovey had visited the newly developed Malvern Town Football Club and found it to be very impressive with much improved facilities.

Town Council Ward Reports/Representatives on Outside Bodies

Cllr Leibrandt and Cllr Dallow had attended the Friends of Priory Park meeting held recently and designs were now being developed to include not only the play area but also the pond and re-establishing local wildlife.

114. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no Members' Questions.

115. BUDGET 2020/21

Report CL01/19 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk presented to Full Council recommendations in respect of the proposed budget and precept level for 2020/21. The budget has been put together to include input from Operations and Planning Committee, the Budget Working Party, Policy and Resources Committee and Officers of Malvern Town Council.

The Town Clerk then answered members' questions, and thanks were given to the Town Clerk for a very clear presentation.

Council **RESOLVED** to accept the following:

- The re-forecast for 2019/20 which results in a balance being put into reserves of £23,269 for the financial year.
- The budget for the financial year 2020/21 which shows a net expenditure of £686,699 *not* taking into account any movements in Earmarked Reserves and £682,699 taking into account movements in Earmarked Reserves.

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It was **RESOLVED** that the precept for 2020/21 should be set at £682,890. This represents an increase of £19,890 or 3% from last year or an approximate 2.5% increase on a Band D Council tax charge.

116. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL DISPATCH PROCEDURES**

Report CL02/19 was received and accepted.

Members were asked to review the current procedures for dispatch of council papers and then consider the proposed options for the future.

The Mayor noted that this review followed a trial period and asked each member for his or her comments. A summary of these is as follows:

For

- The current system of dispatch is easy and members are happy to continue as is.
- Having a separate email address keeps private messages separate from Town Council business which is preferable.
- It is important from an environmental point of view to not print out large volumes of paper.

Against

- Some Councillors do not want a separate email address and have not been accessing their Town Council messages; they wish to be able to choose which email address to use
- Concerns that paperless dispatches are not read by many councillors
- Large financial reports are difficult to read on screen and paper copies would be useful for more complicated reports

Other comments

It was suggested that a training session be arranged with the IT company so that help could be given in forwarding council emails to personal email accounts.

It was suggested that the annual printing allowance of £30 per councillor be increased.

Individual tablets have been priced and some councillors would like to use one of these whilst others were happy to carry on using their own.

The use of the projector during meetings was found to be useful in viewing larger reports.

The Town Clerk reported that the current system of dispatch by electronic means saved a lot of time in the office, especially on a Friday afternoon when previously, it could take a long time to print everything out and post.

This decision needs to be taken by Council but it would be preferable for there to be one system for everyone, whatever that may be.

The Mayor reminded members that the decisions to get new council email addresses for everyone and the switch to paperless council dispatches had been made by Full Council

Given the number of issues raised, Cllr Morton informed members that it would be sensible for him and the Town Clerk to prepare proposals to bring to the next Full Council meeting for decision in February. The current system would be continued until then.

Cllr Thomas left the meeting at 7.45pm

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117. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Report CL03/19 was received and accepted.

In Cllr Palmer's absence, Cllr Bovey presented the recommendations from the Audit Committee meeting held on 18 November 2019 and these were voted for together.

- i. It was **RESOLVED** that the current internal audit contract is extended by a further three years to include the financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** that allotment fees should be held at £36.00 per 125 square metre plot for the year 2021/22 but the 10% discount should be scrapped to simplify the invoicing and administration process. Allotment holders would be given 15 days to pay their invoices, after which a £25 late payment fee would be incurred.

118. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Report CL04/19 was received and accepted.

As Cllr Jeremy Thomas, Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee, had left the meeting, Cllr Hooper presented the recommendations from the minutes of the meetings held on 27 November and 11 December and these were voted for separately.

27 November 2019

The draft budget had already been accepted during discussion on agenda item 10 and minuted at point 115.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council's Complaints Procedure was accepted with no amendments being required.

11 December 2019

It was **RESOLVED** that the long term aims and objectives be accepted with amendments as agreed by the committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the current Freedom of Information Policy be accepted in its current format with minor changes to the publication schedule to reflect more items now being available on the council's website and an increased copy charge of five pence per sheet.

It was **RESOLVED** that the current Data Protection Policy be agreed and accepted in its current format until its next review in twelve months' time.

It was **RESOLVED** that the current Communications and Publicity Policy for Councillors be agreed and accepted in its current format until its next review.

119. OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Report CL05/19 was received and accepted.

Cllr Lynne Lambeth presented the recommendations from the Operations and Planning committee meeting held on 4 December 2019 and these were voted for separately:

It was **RESOLVED** that additional funding of £12,000 to cover the increase in costs of the basketball project would be taken from existing reserves in the Asset Repair and Development Fund.

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It was **RESOLVED** that all street naming requests are automatically referred to the relevant ward councillors without being brought to Operations and Planning Committee first.

120. VICTORIA PARK PAVILION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

As Cllr Thomas, Chair of the Victoria Park Pavilion Task and Finish Group had left the meeting, the Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the project, and informed members that an invitation to tender for architect's services had now been issued, six responses received with tenders to be received by 31 January 2020.

It was hoped that works on the pavilion may be able to commence in autumn 2020 with a completion date in late 2021.

121. ENVIRONMENTAL PANEL ACTIVITIES

The environmental panel had split into four groups and held meetings during December. Each group was led by a different Town Council who reported as follows:

Energy, Cllr Morton – meeting was well attended and useful ideas had been put forward. A list of 'green' companies was being put together and a further meeting would be arranged for January.

Ecology, Cllr Taylor – there had been lots of enthusiasm at the meeting which was a brainstorming exercise and a further meeting would be held in February at a venue to be confirmed.

Emissions and Waste, Cllr Houghton – the meeting had been good but it was important to keep focussed and this must be kept in check at future meetings.

Education, Cllr Roberts – this group were concentrating on the third part of the mission statement and felt that their main job would come after the other three groups had made some resolutions, in educating others to carry these out.

122. MALVERN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DELIVERY ACTION STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

There had been a resignation from this group and therefore councillors were asked if they would like to join; there were no volunteers at the meeting.

It was **NOTED** that this was a large and ongoing project and the group is currently producing a formalised implementation plan to work from.

123. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting of Full Council would be Wednesday 5 February 2020 at 6.00pm.

The meeting finished at 8.05 pm.

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(Chairman)