

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL
held remotely via Zoom on
Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 6.00 pm**

Councillors

Present

N Morton (Chairman)
L Lambeth (Vice Chairman)
C Bovey
S Charles
J Dallow
C Hooper
N Houghton
J Leibrandt
L Lowton
P Mewton
N Mills
J O'Donnell
C Palmer

P Smith
S Taylor
P Tuthill

Apologies

R McLaverty-Head
D Watkins

In attendance

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

Duncan Bridges, CEO Malvern Hills Trust
Several members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone and ensured that all could hear the proceedings and be heard. The meeting started at 6.07pm.

198. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence received from Cllr McLaverty-Head and Cllr Watkins were **NOTED**.

199. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mills – item 4: Cllr Mills declared a personal interest as his wife was standing for co-option. The Chairman notified Cllr Mills that he would not therefore be allowed to take part in the vote at item 4.

200. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings, to be signed by the Mayor in due course:

- Full Council meeting 17 June 2020.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation.

201. VACANCY IN PICKERSLEIGH WARD – CO-OPTION OF ONE COUNCILLOR TO MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

Report CL01/20 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk outlined the process for the co-option of a councillor to Pickersleigh Ward and informed members that one candidate had withdrawn prior to the meeting whilst another had not returned the requested statement and was not in attendance at the meeting. The vote would therefore be between three candidates with a successful candidate requiring more than 50% of the votes in order to be co-opted.

The remaining three candidates then addressed Full Council in turn, and answered subsequent questions that had been submitted by councillors prior to the meeting. These were put to candidates via the chair.

Cllr Cynthia Palmer requested a secret ballot and this followed, and votes were counted.

The Town Clerk announced that Jack Satterthwaite was the successful candidate and had been co-opted as Town Councillor for Pickersleigh Ward.

202. ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Because the meeting was being held by Zoom, the Town Clerk read out the declaration of acceptance of office and Jack Satterthwaite accepted it verbally.

It was **NOTED** that arrangements will be made for a signed copy to be returned to the office.

The Mayor welcomed Cllr Satterthwaite to the meeting and thanked the other candidates for their applications and interest in the town council.

Duncan Bridges, CEO of The Malvern Hills Trust joined the meeting.

203. MALVERN HILLS TRUST

Duncan Bridges, CEO of The Malvern Hills Trust updated members on the activities of the Trust over the past few months. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Trust had been operating at a reduced capacity having furloughed some staff. During the initial period of lockdown, there had been a marked reduction in the number of people using the hills. Car parks had been closed but staff had continued with basic maintenance and it was noticeable that wildlife had flourished.

As lockdown eased and travel restrictions were lifted, the hills had been inundated with visitors, some of whom unfortunately left litter, started fires and camped illegally. A lot of staff time was taken up dealing with these issues, which have since lessened, as there has been a wider opening up of other facilities.

It also became apparent that as people had to change their habits, areas that had previously been little used were now busier and suffering trample damage. Plans to upgrade pathways in these areas such as the woodland in Townsend Way were underway.

Charities Commission Scheme

The Trust had received a response from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport on 12 March stating that it was felt the preferred option for updating the Malvern Hills Acts was by Private Bill. Since then, there had been no real progress but the Trust will be investigating costs and options available to proceed

over the coming months. Mr Bridges thanked the Council for submitting a response to the consultation, saying that it had been a worthwhile process and that generally responses were supportive and in agreement.

Land Management Plan

The consultation on the Land Management Plan is open until 31 August. Mr Bridges advised that although the document was quite lengthy, it was worth reading and he would value any feedback from councillors present.

Members then asked Mr Bridges various questions with the following information being given in response.

Car parking permits are available online or from the office which is still operating on reduced hours; the library will also issue permits once they have enough staff in place, but permits are no longer available from the Tourist Information Centre.

The Trust has a mowing policy and Part 3 of the Land Management Plan has details of how all of the Trusts grassland is managed and is available on the Trust's website. Timing and frequency of mowing the commons, verges and other areas depend on factors such as the location of the area, user requirements, and safety (in the case of verges) etc. Generally, grass areas are mowed between two and six times a year, with wildlife conservation very much in mind.

There had been no definitive outcome to the governance review as the Board has been unable to meet during recent months.

Mr Bridges stated that the Trust had not received an application for an easement over land at the Mayfield Road development.

The Mayor thanked Mr Bridges for coming to the meeting and said that the information provided was a great help. The Mayor asked him to pass on the Council's thanks to all of the Trust's workers who had continued to keep the hills open to members of the public, and clean and tidy.

Mr Bridges commented that there were many members of the public who often voluntarily litter-picked on the hills and he would like to thank them also.

Mr Bridges left the meeting.

204. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor has not had any civic functions to attend, but has continued to deal with residents' enquiries and complaints, particularly over plans to remove the sauna and steam room at Splash.

The Mayor reported that Cllr Dean Clarke, district ward member for Hallow, will continue as Chairman of Malvern Hills District Council for another year.

The Mayor will shortly be sending a letter to the Leader of MHDC regarding the ongoing lack of progress in moving the fountain from Malvern Link. Cllr Mills informed the Mayor that Cllr Aksar had reported that quotations for the work were already being obtained and Cllr Palmer said she had emailed Link ward district councillors over this matter.

205. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk reported that Town Council operations and services are now all running as normal but with social distancing measures in place, both in the layout of the offices and in the way that the operations team are carrying out their work. The Town Council offices will remain closed to the public for the time being as the design of the building does not allow suitable access or room for meetings taking into account social distancing. The office staff have been taking a large number of telephone calls from members of the public with general enquiries and it is clear that people are appreciative of this service. NALC has also strongly recommended that meetings should continue to be held remotely for the foreseeable future.

Special Grant

The Chairman of Age UK Malvern and District had written and asked the Town Clerk to pass on his thanks to all members of the Council for the Special Grant of £10,000 to support their work through the Covid-19 pandemic. The money had been used to help establish specialist services such as companionship for the bereaved and befriending to care home residents amongst other things and a full report will be given later in the year.

Town Council Events

The Town Clerk reported that it had been decided to cancel the planned Alternative Bands and Bands in the Park dates for August due to strict regulations imposed by MHDC for use of Priory Park and the difficulties in producing a satisfactory risk assessment with social distancing requirements in mind. Officers will shortly be looking at whether events scheduled to take place later in the year can go ahead. The Field of Remembrance can be safely held with schools attending in specified time slots, and there had been a favourable response so far to this.

Refurbishment of the Flats at Belle Vue Terrace

This has now been completed and a lettings agent has indicated that the high quality refurbishment may increase the rent potential of both flats by approximately £75 each per month.

Basketball Courts

Groundworks have started on the basketball courts and the concrete surfacing is due to be poured next week. If all goes well with the transportation and installation of the new surfacing then a launch date of mid-September could be possible.

Telephone box by Rose Bank Gardens

The Town Clerk thanked Cllr Peter Smith for volunteering to paint the telephone box outside of Rose Bank Gardens – he has done an excellent job.

Re-opening of Town Centres

Following the resolution made at the last Council meeting, three banners were printed and erected in the town to welcome people back to shopping areas and remind them of social distancing. Town Council officers have continued to work with officers from MHDC in relation to bike rack locations and hand sanitiser locations.

206. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCECounty Councillors

Cllr James O'Donnell: at a meeting of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, it had been discussed how climate change could be tackled in the local community, with each tier of local government having a part to play. It had also been reported that 42% of the total number of street lights had now been converted to LED lanterns, which should represent a saving of 2,104 kw.

Cllr O'Donnell also reported that Sophie Jackson was the new Town Council Recovery Officer who would be happy to hear from councillors and feedback information to WCC. The Town Clerk informed members that Sophie Jackson had already met with the Town Council Events Officer.

Cllr Paul Tuthill: reminded members that the Fire Services Draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is available on its website and can be commented upon. He also reported that the effects of the pandemic have seen a change to the way in which doctors are working and the ACUTE hospitals have noted that the waves of demand have been suppressed by those not wishing to go to hospital.

District Councillors

Cllr Neville Mills: road works on Lower Howsell Road continue to cause aggravation for residents and there is a petition to get a consultation of residents for parking at Redlands/Cromwell Road area.

Cllr Cynthia Palmer reported that the homeless who had been accommodated in hotels during the Covid-19 crises now needed to find alternative accommodation, and asked members to contact her if they knew of a suitable building or business. Two successful grant bids had been received for Tenbury flood relief and £2 million for an extension to the science park.

Cllr Samantha Charles has reported three cases to enforcement at MHDC: Mill Lane where there has been a generator making a loud noise throughout the day and so Highways have been asked to allow access to use the mains power; Malvina Court where works are starting at 6am and Qinetiq with works starting at 7am. Both of these times were considered far too early and disruptive to residents. Police have been monitoring the Guarlford Road for excessive speeding. Permission has been given for an electronic speed awareness sign to be erected, and Worcestershire County Council should be providing this.

207. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Clive Hooper has attended a CALC meeting remotely where the lengthsman scheme was discussed as well as councillor training, which will also be carried out remotely until further notice. CALC are now looking for new accommodation, possibly in Upton, for their headquarters, the old site now having come to the end of its lease.

208. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

A Member's Question had been received by the Town Clerk, answered and circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting.

It was **NOTED** that the original letter would be re-sent to Paul Robinson with concerns expressed on behalf of the council over the delay in response.

209. HAYSLAN FIELDS

Members held a discussion on what could be done to protect the future of Hayslan Fields for the community and residents of Malvern. Hayslan Fields is in the Malvern Neighbourhood Plan as a green space and is also excluded from development in the SWDPR meaning that it has protection until 2040.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk writes to Malvern St James to ask if they would be willing to release the land to protect it for the people of Malvern in the future, either by gift or sale.

210. TOWN COUNCIL EXPENDITURE UPDATE

Report CL02/20 was received and **NOTED**.

Full Council **NOTED** the change to expenditure on fencing for the new basketball courts from £7,783 to £9,930 due to a misunderstanding on the original specification.

Full Council also **NOTED** forthcoming expenditure in Great Malvern Cemetery relating to costs to rectify a grave digging error.

211. OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Report CL03/20 was received and accepted. Cllr Charles, Chairman of the Operations and Planning Committee presented the recommendations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following events be held in 2021:

22 April 2021	Earth Day event
1 May 2021	Health and Wellbeing Fair and Mayor's Peaks Challenge
May to September 2021	17-week Bands in the Park programme
27 June 2021	Armed Forces Day event in Priory Park
July to August 2021	Alternative Bands in the Park performances
1 August 2021	The Mayor's Bonanza.

It was also **RESOLVED** that the purchase of new play equipment from Urban Recreation (company A) be approved as per the quotation.

212. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Report CL04/20 was received and accepted. Cllr Hooper, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee presented the recommendations and explained that any changes to policies mentioned in the recommendations were listed in the Policy and Resources minutes.

Cllr Hooper proposed to accept all recommendations en bloc.

- i. It was **RESOLVED** that Policy and Resources Committee will review and scrutinise applications to the Emergency Grant scheme to decide which awards should be made before asking Full Council to approve the necessary expenditure.
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** that with the changes made as suggested at the meeting, Full Council adopts the Town Council grants scheme application forms, marking criteria and timetable.
- iii. It was **RESOLVED** that with the changes made as suggested at the meeting, Full Council adopts the “Malvern Town Council Zero Tolerance Policy on Harassment and Abuse of Councillors”.
- iv. It was **RESOLVED** that with the change made as suggested at the meeting, Full Council adopts the “Malvern Town Council Information Technology Users Policy”.
- v. It was **RESOLVED** that with the changes made as suggested at the meeting, Full Council adopts the “Malvern Town Council Equality and Diversity Policy”.

213. VICTORIA PARK PAVILION TASK AND FINISH GROUP

In Cllr Watkins’ absence, the Town Clerk gave a verbal update on the Victoria Park Pavilion Task and Finish Group and informed the meeting that two concepts had been proposed, incorporating ideas from the task and finish group, and these were a) to replace the current pavilion with a new building offering similar facilities such as a café and changing rooms, b) a new building that included the previous items but also offered office and meeting space, with the idea that the Town Council could move premises. Because of the difficult time associated with the pandemic, the task and finish group had most recently decided that it would be best to put the project on hold. The Town Clerk reminded Councillors that the task and finish group was a small non-decision making group to gather ideas and information before presentation to Full Council.

214. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting of Full Council would be Wednesday 26 August 2020 at 6.00 pm, to be held remotely via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 8.17 pm.

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(Chairman)