

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

**held remotely via Zoom on**

**Wednesday 11 November 2020 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  
R McLaverty-Head  
P Mewton  
N Mills  
J O'Donnell  
C Palmer  
J Satterthwaite  
P Smith  
A Stitt

S Taylor  
P Tuthill  
D Watkins

Absent

Cllr S Charles

**In attendance**

Linda Blake – Town Clerk  
Louise Wall – Minute Clerk

Cllr Sarah Rouse, Leader MHDC  
Cllr Kaleem Aksar, Link Ward  
representative for MHDC  
Cllr John Raine, WCC and MHDC

Three members of the public

**243. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from Cllr Samantha Charles were noted.

**244. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Nick Houghton, item 15 – partner is owner of shop in Malvern and would not be taking part in the vote on this agenda item.

**245. 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 14 October 2020.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Sarah Rouse, Leader of Malvern Hills District Council, having seen the item on free parking on the agenda, had attended the meeting to explain the District Council's position regarding possible free parking in Malvern in the run up to Christmas.

Currently, there are plans to provide free parking for the three weekends before Christmas, starting on Saturday 5 December, from midday on Saturdays and all day on Sundays. Sarah explained that to provide more free parking was not a

straightforward matter, in that there would not only be a loss of income from the car parks, but also the inability to then claim any funds back from the Government.

Although Wychavon District Council will be providing more free parking, it is a council with much larger reserves, and also the area does not have as much free on-street parking as in Malvern where there are around 200 free spaces, or the ability to park for free in a supermarket car park such as at Waitrose.

Sarah also stated that research and surveys showed that there was no evidence to support the idea that free parking benefited the shops. It was more likely that free car parking spaces in the immediate town centre would be taken up by people who work in the town, thus making the spaces unavailable to anyone who wanted to shop. People had indicated that they would prefer to pay for good, well-lit parking areas rather than have free parking in badly maintained locations.

She finished by explaining that the District Council was concentrating on supporting the High Street in other ways and asked councillors present to let her know if they felt there was a lack of free parking in general, and asked whether the Town Council would consider funding further free parking. She also reminded Councillors that if there were problems with illegal parking, they should report it to MHDC for action.

***The Chairman announced that he would be altering the order of business so that agenda item 15 Parking in Malvern – Consideration of Support for Free Parking in Malvern could be brought forward and discussed.***

**246. PARKING IN MALVERN – CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORT FOR FREE PARKING IN MALVERN**

Report CL06/20 was received and accepted.

There was a lengthy discussion on the merits or otherwise of providing free parking and Members made the following observations and comments:

A number of Councillors felt that these were extraordinary times and that the traders were desperately in need of help and therefore free parking should be provided in these exceptional circumstances.

There is very little parking in Malvern, but the impact of free parking on the decision to shop somewhere is negligible.

You can park for free at Waitrose for 2-3 hours without having to shop there.

People who park at Waitrose do not necessarily walk into town, it is too far for the disabled. The Town Centre is in decline, whereas the retail park is thriving because of the free parking. Town centre traders and particularly independent shops should be supported this Christmas.

Agreement that people would pay for good parking. The spaces at Wilko are too small and so not used much. Not everyone knows about the free parking at Waitrose or about the location of free on-street parking.

Malvern Link is fortunate in that there is a lot of free parking including Victoria Park and the retail park, but parking is more difficult in Great Malvern.

Free parking had been offered in July, so why couldn't it be offered again? Christmas is a special time and independent shops need support.

Free parking doesn't encourage people to stop somewhere. However, many people do not know where the car parks in Malvern are located and better information on parking is something that needs addressing.

It was accepted that free parking all day would not solve the problems as local workers would take up the spaces.

Suggestion of "Free after Three" parking which could be brought in for weekdays and be for time-limited periods.

It was proposed that a letter be written to MHDC requesting free parking after 3pm on weekdays throughout December to encourage shoppers to drop in to the town and shop and a vote taken.

**It was RESOLVED that the Mayor would write to MHDC on behalf of the Town Council to request free parking after 3pm on weekdays in Malvern throughout December.**

**247. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that he and Cllr Tuthill had been to see the removal of the fountain in Malvern Link and that it had gone well, with the base stones now being stored before being relocated to Rosebank Gardens.

He had also attended the services for Remembrance Sunday and earlier today Armistice Day, along with Anthony Hartley-Woolley and Dean Clarke. The Mayor thanked the staff for helping to organise these events. Live streaming of both events had ensured that as many people as possible had still been able to be part of the commemorations. The Mayor had been interviewed on the local radio at the Priory and reported that people were pleased that the services had been held.

There is a liaison meeting soon with MHDC and the Mayor asked members to send him any matters they would like raised.

**248. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Town Council Events

Town Council events have once more been affected by Covid-19 restrictions in the second lockdown. Events for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day were scaled down to a limited number of attendees but Officers live streamed both of these events and there were approximately 25 viewers of the Armistice Day service. The Town Clerk thanked Officers for making this happen, and said that there was coverage on BBC Hereford and Worcester as Malvern Town Council was one of very few local authorities to run such an event.

The Christmas Light Switch On Event scheduled for 28 November has also been cancelled and a small switch on will take place and be live streamed.

Town Council Operations

All Town Council services are operating as normal, but there is a rota system in place with staff alternating work in the office with work at home, during usual office hours.

The strings of lights above the shops in Malvern have been switched on early this year following a request from the local traders ahead of the second lockdown. The Town Clerk thanked the Operations Manager and his team for getting this done at very short notice. All other Christmas lights will be erected and switched on as normal.

#### Review of the Government's Planning White Paper

The Task and Finish Group drafted a response to this consultation using input from South Worcestershire Councils and Malvern Civic Society. This draft response was circulated to all councillors for comments and the Town Clerk thanked Cllrs Hooper, Stitt and Smith for their responses and contribution to the final version. The Town Council's response was submitted via email on Thursday 29 October and a copy will be sent to Harriet Baldwin with a covering letter asking if she is in agreement with the comments made.

#### Christmas Tree for Malvern Link

Further to the Mayor's update about this project, the Christmas tree has been ordered and the new lights have already arrived. The tree and lights will be erected alongside the other Christmas lights in town ready for the end of November.

### 249. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

#### County Councillors

**Cllr James O'Donnell:** would be attending a meeting of the Full County Council the next day where Here2Help will be promoted, especially to those families struggling to buy food in the run up to Christmas. The Here2Help phone lines are manned five days a week but the website has many links to sources of help. There is also a lot of support available to businesses. There is also a drive to promote Active Travel with cycleways between Upton and Malvern being investigated.

**Cllr Paul Tuthill:** the Fire Service has been involved in three key areas to provide increased capacity being: distribution of PPE, extra ambulance drivers and being on standby should the mortuaries become overly busy.

The Health Authority continues to monitor the number of beds to be reserved for Covid admissions.

There will be new railway equipment to replace the old units on the Birmingham to Hereford line.

**Cllr John Raine:** a lot of work has been carried out on highways and footways particularly in Dyson Perrins and West Malvern but if any Councillors were aware of areas that still needed attention, they should contact him.

#### District Councillors

**Cllr Cynthia Palmer** congratulated the bin men on their continued service over the past few months, not having missed a collection and now sending a message if they are to be late. Malvern has recently had some good publicity in the Times, including articles on the Morgan factory and Malvern as a destination. The High Street Recovery Officer continues to promote the high street and is encouraging shops to have an online presence to continue trading during lockdown periods. Cllr Palmer is heading a task and finish group looking into poverty in the area and explained that fuel poverty was as bad as food poverty. The works at Splash continue and the Priory Park group is still active in its plans.

**250. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Cllr Clive Hooper** reported that the new Chief Executive Vic Allison had attended a meeting of CALC and given a very informative talk.

**Cllr Lou Lowton** reported that the food bank had been busier than ever since the second lockdown was announced and that fuel vouchers were extremely useful as some people had to choose between food and heating.

**Cllr Cynthia Palmer** explained that Community Action had not met since February but would shortly be holding their AGM. They have also been busy delivering food parcels on behalf of the food bank.

**Cllr David Watkins** mentioned that he was concerned at the lack of reports from the representatives on outside bodies over the past few months, and asked that representatives bring an update to the next meeting especially where the organisations have been in receipt of Town Council grants.

**251. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

None.

**252. NOTICE OF MOTION**

Cllr Hooper presented his Notice of Motion and said that he had been encouraged by talks held with District and County Councillors. Although the Town Council is unable to directly impose speed limits, it can ask WCC to do so.

Members were generally supportive of a lower speed limit in certain areas but felt more exact detail of the areas concerned was needed.

It was **RESOLVED** that this motion would be delegated to Operations and Planning Committee who would be asked to consider possible locations for the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit as put forward by ward councillors and make a final decision on areas to be submitted for consideration by WCC.

***Under Standing Order 3(x) it was agreed to extend the meeting by a further 30 minutes.***

**253. MAYOR'S CHARITIES – CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING**

Report CL01/20 was received and accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council would actively fundraise using a variety of available mediums with monies collected going towards supporting families

affected by the Covid-19 pandemic this Christmas through the provision of Festive Cheer boxes.

**254. IT TASK AND FINISH GROUP – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IT SERVICES CONTRACT**

Report CL02/20 was received and accepted.

The Chairman thanked members who had worked on the Task and Finish Group in carrying out the tender process and selecting a suitable company.

Members questioned whether the new equipment would still be comfortable for the staff to use and whether there would be adequate virus protection. Some members were also concerned over the cost but the Town Clerk explained that although costs would go up it was necessary to ensure the Town Council's data and equipment were both secure, as well as being flexible and efficient for users.

The three recommendations in the report were taken en bloc.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The Town Council should move to an online office solution and an "infrastructure as a service" (IaaS) utilising Office 365 for its infrastructure requirement (this excludes its accounting package which will continue with SAGE).
- 2) The computer hardware provided for staff should change from tower desktops to laptops, docking station and suitable monitors, keyboards and mice.
- 3) Council should commence a new IT support contract as part of these new arrangements to maintain an Office 365 suite to support administration and fulfil storage and backup requirements.

**255. VICTORIA PARK PAVILION TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Report CL03/20 was received and noted.

The Town Clerk advised that any decisions regarding the pavilion would come back to Full Council but at this stage, it was asked to note and approve the steps set out in the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- i. A second tender process should be carried out to research and evaluate a possible larger project with increased scope for community facilities
- ii. A full report should be made back to Council when possible to set out, detail and cost the two options available for a new pavilion at Victoria Park.

It was also **RESOLVED** that:

- iii. A tender for a mobile refreshment facility should be sent out to provide food and drink facilities now that the former tenant of the café has moved out.

**256. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report CL04/20 was received and accepted.

- 1) It was **RECOMMENDED** that Community Action be awarded a Malvern Town Community Support grant of £10,900 for the year 2021/22 and that it be included in the 2021/22 annual budget.
- 2) It was **RECOMMENDED** that the lease to Community Action to occupy the third floor at 28-30 Belle Vue Terrace be renewed for a period of three years.

**257. PLANNING CONSULTATIONS**

Report CL05/20 was received and noted.

**19/00542/FUL land at Beauchamp Road**

Cllr Stitt spoke about his concerns regarding this planning appeal. It was **AGREED** that the Town Council should raise its objections on the basis that the planning appeal does not sufficiently disprove the findings from MHDC which resulted in its refusal originally.

**Barrack Stores, QinetiQ**

The Chairman asked Cllr O'Donnell to request this application to go to committee.

**258. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting of Full Council would be Wednesday 16 December 2020 at 6.00 pm, to be held remotely via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 8.40 pm.

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(Chairman)