

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL  
held remotely via Zoom on  
Wednesday 17 June 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  
P Smith  
S Taylor  
P Tuthill  
D Watkins

Apologies

S Charles

**In attendance**

Linda Blake – Town Clerk  
Louise Wall – Minute Clerk

Three members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone and ensured that all could hear the proceedings and be heard.

**184. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence received from Cllr Charles were **NOTED**.

**185. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mills – item 10, street naming request, worked at RRE

Cllr Smith - item 10, street naming request, worked at DERA/Qinetiq

Cllr Houghton - item 10, street naming request, works at Qinetiq

**186. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Minute 179 Bank Mandate/Payment Authorisation**

It was **AGREED** that Point 3) a) should read “Two from the approved signatories in 1) above are required to issue instructions for changes to the Council’s bank account”.

It was **RESOLVED** that with the inclusion of the above amendment, 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 20 May 2020.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no Public Participation.

The Mayor announced that agenda item 9 would now be taken ahead of item 4, Mayor's Announcements, due to the fact that Reverend Philip Johnson was in attendance to speak on this item.

**187. NOTICE OF MOTION**

Reverend Philip Johnson outlined the request for a special grant of £2,500 to support Malvern Link and Cowleigh PCC with their "Local Places, Local Faces" project, which aims to provide a weekly programme of local interest for those residents who are disconnected from the outside world, and are housebound either through long-term illness, disability or general old age.

The project will see films being made of the local area, such as a 'virtual walking experience' of being on the hills, interviews with local people and local performances. These films will then be given once a week via DVD or audio cassette to those people who request them, and this will also be available to residents from the wider area of Malvern.

The filming equipment will also be used by Northleigh School who have shown an interest in participating in this project.

Members questioned whether this sort of project was too late in the lockdown and how long it would go on for. Rev'd Johnson explained that this was not just for the lockdown period as the residents who would benefit were mostly permanently housebound. However, the project would probably continue until mid-September when the equipment will be used with the youth project at Dyson Perrins School.

There were further questions with regard to the exact costings for the project and why the camera was such an expensive item. Reverend Johnson outlined a full breakdown of costs.

Most Councillors were in favour of this project, its immediacy and the fact that it aims to combat the very real problem of social isolation. It also recognises the fact that many do not have access to technology, and that DVD and audio cassettes are still required to pass information on to some Malvern residents.

It was **RESOLVED** that a Special Grant of £2,500 be awarded to support Malvern Link and Cowleigh PCC with their "Local Places, Local Faces" project.

***The Mayor announced that the meeting would revert to the original order of business, starting with agenda item 4.***

**188. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There have been no civic functions for the Mayor to attend, but he has been busy dealing with complaints from residents over Platform Housing and their lack of communication in implementing new policies, something which he will continue to try to help with. Platform Housing Group is an amalgamation of Waterloo Housing and Fortis Living, making it one of the largest housing associations in the Midlands.

The Mayor asked Councillors to be mindful of the content of emails they send and ensure that any emails sent are necessary and that information is accurate and up to date.

**189. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE**

County Councillors

**Cllr Paul Tuthill** reported on the following:

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service – most callouts are now for garden fires at domestic properties and people are asked to take care. The Malvern Hills have fortunately not seen any major problems with fires. The Draft Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) has now been published which explains how services are to be provided into the near future by the fire service and does not include any station closures, which is good news.

The West Midlands Ambulance Service has reported a reduced number of callouts, with the number of car accidents being lower; however, those that do happen are generally more serious.

A meeting of The Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust this week will see a discussion held on how the Covid-19 crisis has been handled.

Malvern Recycling Centre – double yellow lines to be painted outside the recycling centre have been requested, to help with traffic flow.

**Cllr James O'Donnell** explained that the reopening of the high streets on Monday had gone ahead although only a limited amount of measures to ensure social distancing had been put in place. WCC Highways Department had been asked to temporarily suspend the parking spaces on Church Street, so that pedestrians could use the area for passing, sadly this has not happened due to County policy.

Members expressed their disappointment that once again, despite appeals and requests made to the Highways Department, it had been to no avail.

District Councillors

**Cllr Cynthia Palmer** reported a sharp rise in unemployment in the area in the month of May, and payment of £17.1 million on 1,500 grants for local businesses. There had also been some roadshows to help residents in Powick and Tenbury with problems caused by flooding.

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

**Cllr Neville Mills** reported that the pressure put on Highways Department had resulted in the speed signage problem being resolved in Church Road.

**191. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

None.

**192. UPDATE OF TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Town Clerk reported as follows:

Town Council Operations

The offices are now being staffed every day and the rising numbers of telephone calls are being answered directly. At present, staff come in on a rota basis to limit

contact but the new spacing of desks means that hours can now be increased. Councillors can visit the offices but are asked to give notice of time of arrival.

The newsletter had been printed despite a tight timetable, and will now be delivered to approximately 10,000 households with the All About magazine. Cllr Smith congratulated the Council staff on an excellent newsletter.

Following a recent planning application in Pickersleigh Grove on which the Town Council had provided a response, a number of Councillors had raised the issue of the protection of Hayslan Fields. After discussion with the Mayor, it has been agreed that Hayslan Fields will be listed for discussion on the next Council agenda.

The cemetery is open for the usual hours but the chapel remains closed.

Hanging baskets have now been put up around the town and troughs planted. Many of these have been provided free of charge in an effort to brighten the town centre as it reopens. The bedding planting is a little behind schedule but plants are due to arrive during the week commencing 22 June.

Generally, projects have been help up slightly by the Covid-19 crisis but all are expected to be delivered by the end of the financial year.

#### Computer System

The Town Clerk outlined the recent issue with the Council's computer system which had become infected by a ransomware virus. Some data has been lost but discussions with the Information Commissioner have concluded that there has not been a risk to public data.

It was recognised that this was an unforeseen and exceptional occurrence but in view of the risk to the Council's IT system caused by an increase in hacking activity at present, the Mayor tabled an emergency motion that a review of systems and procedures should now take place.

It was **RESOLVED** to set up a task and finish group with Cllrs Morton, Houghton, Lowton and O'Donnell and the Town Clerk as members to review the Town Council's IT security systems and procedures.

#### **193. NEW STREET NAMING REQUEST – FORMER QINETIQ SITE AT ST ANDREWS ROAD**

Report CL01/20 was received and accepted.

Cllr Mills had already circulated some suggestions for street names based on the names of famous admirals which would celebrate the naval history of the site but it was felt that as this was quite a large task, it would be best left to the Ward Councillors.

It was **RESOLVED** that this item be delegated to Chase Ward Councillors for discussion and decision.

#### **194. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report CL02/20 was received and accepted.

Cllr Hooper requested that a letter of thanks be sent to ex-Councillor Jeremy Thomas for his efforts in his role as a Town Councillor and Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Cllr Hooper then presented the recommendations in order.

### **Quarterly Accounts**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the Quarterly Accounts for the fourth and final quarter, ending 31 March 2020.

### **Town Council Grants Scheme**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept all of the recommendations en bloc as follows:

- A. It was **RESOLVED** that the small and large grants scheme should be run twice during the year, once in its current time slot with grants being awarded in September and then again in February/March.
- B. It was **RESOLVED** that the Special Grants scheme should be removed and replaced with an Emergency Grants scheme. Emergency grants would be for exceptional circumstances only, where the need for funding could not have been foreseen and applications to the Emergency Grants scheme should be scrutinised and scored by Officers in a similar way to small and large grant applications before being considered by Full Council.
- C. It was **RESOLVED** that small grants should remain for amounts up to and including £500 and that large grants would have an advisory limit of between £501 and £2,500 inclusive unless there was a specific reason for this to be exceeded.
- D. It was **RESOLVED** that applications should not be disallowed because an organisation has applied for funding previously. Each application should be clearly considered on its merits and the frequency of applications should only be considered if there is a demand for grant funding above the budgeted funds for that year.
- G. It was **RESOLVED** that a formal review of grants awarded should take place at a Policy and Resources Committee meeting rather than just being noted at Full Council so that councillors can play a part in monitoring grant awards and that more stringent monitoring of emergency grants should take place to ensure the money is spent appropriately.
- H. It was **RESOLVED** that the budget of £7,000 for special grants for 2020/21 now be split between the small and large grants budgets with a recommended budget of £10,000 for small grants (rising from £6,000) and £18,000 for large grants (rising from £15,000); and that there will be no budget for emergency grant applications as any applications made to that particular scheme will be determined on merit and the funds would be approved by Full Council to come out of reserves;

and it was further **RESOLVED** that the proposed changes to the Town Council Grants Scheme should be reviewed in twelve months' time to assess their effectiveness.

## **195. OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

It was **RESOLVED** to agree a budget of £2,000 to carry out refurbishment works to the hallway and stairs leading to the two flats at the rear of Belle Vue Terrace.

**196. DISCUSSION GROUP – REOPENING OF TOWN CENTRE**

The Town Clerk presented report CL04/20 which was noted. The discussion group had already held some informal meetings at which ideas for promoting the re-opening of the town centres were put forward.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree a budget of up to £200 for the printing of banners to be put up around the town centres, welcoming people back to the shopping centres and reminding them of the social distancing measures.

**197. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting of Full Council would be Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 6.00 pm, to be held remotely via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 7.55 pm.

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(Chairman)

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