

UNADOPTED

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL
held remotely via Zoom on
Wednesday 20 May 2020 at 6.00 pm**

Participating

Councillors

N Morton (Chairman)
L Lambeth (Vice Chairman)
C Bovey
S Charles
J Dallow
C Hooper
N Houghton
J Leibrandt
L Lowton
R McLaverty-Head
P Mewton
N Mills
J O'Donnell
C Palmer
P Smith (joined meeting at 6.20 pm)
S Taylor
P Tuthill
D Watkins

In attendance

Linda Blake - Town Clerk
Louise Wall - Minute Clerk

One member of the public

The Chairman ensured everyone who had joined the meeting was able to hear the proceedings and be heard, and explained how Councillors would be given the opportunity to speak and vote during the meeting. The meeting commenced at 6.05 pm.

170. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

171. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Cllr Mills – allotment holder
- Cllr Taylor – has received a referral for work through Age UK and therefore will not participate in the discussion at agenda item 9.

172. 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 22 April 2020

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation.

173. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he had been on the Malvern Views Sunday radio show for the second time along with Councillor Houghton. They had discussed the importance of promoting local shops on the high street and updated members of the public on Town Council operations and activities in recent weeks. The Mayor reported that although all engagements had been cancelled, he remained busy responding to queries from members of the public.

174. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

County Council

Cllr Paul Tuthill reported on the following:

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service – have been receiving fewer calls than usual but many of the ones they respond to are garden fires that have got out of control. The crews are practising for putting out fires on the hills, which are expected due to the very dry weather recently.

Malvern Recycling Centre – now open, and after initial problems with queues on the A449, people are now being asked to queue in the Highways Depot as a holding space before being allowed in. If the holding car park is full, you will be told to come back later, thus avoiding disruption on the A449.

Worcestershire Royal Hospital – A concerted effort has been made by all staff to discharge patients as quickly as possible. This, along with an increased use of technology and the co-operation of doctors and consultants has meant that there are beds available if needed for Covid-19 patients, with only about half of the beds being currently occupied. There has also been a drive to provide end-of-life care where necessary outside of the A & E department.

Cllr Peter Smith joined the meeting at 6.20 pm

Cllr James O'Donnell reported that scheduled highway resurfacing works and repairs are now being undertaken as normal.

District Council

Cllr Cynthia Palmer said she was pleased to report that funds from MHDC were getting through to support businesses and community organisations, and that a meeting of the planning committee held by Zoom had worked well.

Cllr Neville Mills reported that the construction works at the site on Lower Howsell Road had re-started and there are now road works on the same road.

Cllr Samantha Charles had attended a meeting regarding the re-development of the site at Qinetiq and a condition of the planning permission had been agreed that would see barrier access at Longridge Road. This would hopefully stop this road becoming a through route for traffic. She also congratulated the refuse collection team for their continued efforts with all collections being carried out as normal. She envisages that online training and meetings may be the way of the future for councils and could help to save money.

175. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS / REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Clive Hooper (CALC) had attended a virtual meeting of the CALC Executive Committee at which the National Chairman, Sue Baxter, had given an interesting report. Two items of interest were that Worcestershire and Warwickshire County Councils are exploring the possibility of holding joint training session in the future,

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and an initiative for a forum to be held for larger councils, which could be attended by clerks and one representative of each council. It was noted that Malvern's Town Clerk had already attended one of these meetings. Meetings are to be held on Zoom for the foreseeable future.

Cllr Cynthia Palmer reported that Malvern Hills Trust had now reopened their car parks in line with Government advice; however, the toilets at British Camp and Wyche Cutting remain closed, due to a lack of manpower at Herefordshire Council being available to maintain them.

176. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Neil Morton read out the question presented by Cllr Nick Houghton and the answer given by the Town Clerk.

Cllr Morton stated that he would be contacting the Economic Portfolio Holder at MHDC to discuss assistance to local businesses and Town Councillors were asked to contact the Town Clerk with any thoughts or ideas if they were interested in taking part in a task and finish group.

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

The Town Clerk reported as follows:

Town Council Operations

The operations staff will resume normal working hours from next Tuesday. A full risk assessment has been carried out to ensure that safe working practices are being followed.

Mowing and strimming continues in Town Council-owned areas of the town. Parks and open spaces continue to be open but play areas remain closed, in line with Government advice.

Vehicle gates at Great Malvern Cemetery are now open, with members of the public being relied upon to ensure safe social distancing in the cemetery car park and elsewhere in the cemetery. Numbers of mourners are still limited and the chapel remains closed.

The provision of hanging baskets and summer bedding will continue as normal with deliveries scheduled for June. Along with the flags that were put up for VE Day, it is hoped that enhancing the town in this way will help encourage visitors back into the area.

Projects

Basketball courts – this project has inevitably been delayed but it is hoped that groundworks will now commence in June, although this is dependent on the availability of stone from the quarries.

Victoria Park Pavilion – this project has been progressing well with a recent meeting between the task and finish group and the architect seeing further development of ideas. New concepts are being drawn up and a survey of the site will be carried out this week. The task and finish group will then meet again to refine ideas for presentation to Full Council.

The café tenant has agreed to an extension of the lease until the end of October 2020.

Administration

Office staff will begin a phased return to working from the offices as from Tuesday 26 May. Initially, this will be on a rota basis of two mornings per person per week,

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with home-working making up further hours and this will be increased over time and as safe to do so. Desks have been moved to observe safer distances and the building will remain closed to the public, to ensure the safety of staff.

Meetings of committees will recommence shortly, with Policy and Resources committee being held on 3 June, and Operations and Planning committee on 10 June, both by Zoom.

Finance

The quarterly accounts will be presented to Policy and Resources committee at their meeting in June, and are expected to show a healthy position with an underspend of approximately £30,000, general reserves at £263,000 and savings made from cancellation of events projected at between £13,000 and £20,000. Although there will have been some loss of rental income, this will not adversely affect income overall and recent cemetery income has seen a substantial increase.

Following the Town Clerk's report, Cllr Palmer asked if there was an update on the old allotment site in Elgar Avenue. This project had encountered problems with planning but it is hoped that some alternative ideas for affordable housing may help to obtain planning permission. However, this will be discussed at a later full council meeting.

178. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr Nick Houghton presented his Notice of Motion requesting a special grant of £10,000 for Age UK, Malvern and District. The grant would be used to support Age UK in carrying out their work in the local community during the Covid-19 crisis.

A full discussion then took place, with members agreeing that Age UK carry out vital work in the community and the following points made:

- It was not clear in the application how the total project cost had been calculated and how the amount requested of £10,000 had been reached.
- If granted, and bearing in mind grants awarded at the last full council meeting, would a precedent be set with other organisations coming forward to ask for similar amounts?
- A number of Councillors expressed concerns as to whether the grant would be used exclusively for residents of Malvern as Town Council grants should support Malvern Town residents only.
- Age UK has a healthy level of reserves and therefore are there other organisations more in need of a grant?
- The Town Council will save money that would have been spent on events and this should be used for the good of the community via grants such as this.
- Age UK usually raises approximately 80% of its funding through their charity shops, which are currently closed, and therefore income has reduced dramatically since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis.
- The Town Council is not providing direct help to residents during this pandemic but as Age UK and Community Action are the two organisations that have been promoted by the Town Council as able to help, they should be supported financially by MTC.

Cllr Houghton assured members that the funds, if awarded, would only be used in the local area and he suggested that it could be made clear that any funds not

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used for this particular application would be returned to the Town Council in line with the current grants policy.

Cllr Peter Smith proposed an amendment to the recommendation which was seconded by Cllr Palmer, as follows:

This motion proposes that a Special Grant of £3,000 be awarded to the Age UK Malvern and District to enable them to have a long-term positive impact on older peoples' health and wellbeing in Malvern town.

A vote on the proposed amendment was held and the motion failed. Council then voted on the original motion and

It was **RESOLVED** that a Special Grant of £10,000 be awarded to the Age UK Malvern and District to enable them to have a long-term positive impact on older peoples' health and wellbeing in Malvern town.

179. **BANK MANDATE/PAYMENT AUTHORISATIONS**

Report CL01/20 was received and accepted.

The Chairman proposed to consider all points of the recommendation together.

- 1) It was **RESOLVED** that signatories for the management of the Town Council's bank account, in accordance with legal and operational requirements, be:
 - Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Malvern Town Council
 - Chairman and Vice Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee
 - Chairman and Vice Chairman of Operations and Planning Committee
- 2) It was **AGREED** that the following members would be signatories to approve internet banking schedules as frequently prepared by Officers of the Council:
 - Mayor of Malvern Town Council
 - Deputy Mayor of Malvern Town Council
 - Cllr Ronan McLaverty-Head
 - Cllr Clive Hooper
 - Cllr Nick Houghton
 - Cllr David Watkins
 - Cllr Samantha Charles
- 3) Council noted and confirmed the following ongoing resolutions with respect to its bank accounts:
 - a) Two from the approved signatories in 2.1 above are required to issue instructions for changes to the Council's bank account.
 - b) The key contact for managing the bank account and allocating user permissions is the Town Clerk.
 - c) The Town Clerk (or in their absence, the Operations Manager) is fully empowered to act on behalf of the Council to ensure the smooth running of the Council's bank accounts, subject to all previous authorisation permissions being adhered to.

Cllr Peter Smith did not take part in the vote on this recommendation as his connection with the meeting had been lost, and he did not rejoin the meeting.

180. **PAYMENT OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS / MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANISATIONS**

Report CL02/20 was received and accepted.

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It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following subscriptions and to authorise the Town Clerk to pay subscriptions as required:

| <u>Organisation</u> | <u>Estimated Cost</u> <u>2020/21</u> |
|---|---|
| Worcestershire CALC/NALC | £2,483 |
| Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy | £338 |
| LAVAT Consulting VAT Forum | £250 |
| Local Government Employers | £468 |
| Institute of Cemetery Management | £95 |
| Cotswold Line Promotion Group | £15 |
| Caring for God's Acre | £50 |
| Total | <u>£3,699</u> |

Cllr Paul Tuthill left the meeting at 7.20 pm

181. ITEMS FOR REVIEW PROCESS 2020/21

Report CL03/20 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that the items of business listed a) to k) on the report had been identified as requiring consideration during the year and this agenda item was to agree delegation of the tasks to the various committees and task and finish groups. .

Task and Finish groups already in existence would continue until their task was completed.

Cllr Morton requested that item j), guidelines for Councillors regarding bullying and harassment, be of a high priority.

It was **RESOLVED** to delegate a review of the following items, with any recommendations to come back to Full Council for ratification:

- a) Review and confirmation of arrangements in respect of insurance and insured risks (new contract due August 2020) – Policy and Resources Committee
- b) Review of the Council's grants scheme to include small, large and special grants – Policy and Resources Committee
- c) Review of internal controls and the effectiveness of measures to prevent and detect fraud and corruption (as required by the AGAR) – Audit Committee
- d) Review of the Council's events for 2020/21 and 2021/22 (taking into account the Covid-19 pandemic) – Operations and Planning Committee
- e) Review of Town Council's environmental policy (noting work of Environmental Panel) – Operations and Planning Committee
- f) Assessment of the risks facing the Town Council and the appropriate steps to manage these risks – Policy and Resources Committee
- g) Review of Town Council objectives, both short and long term – Task and Finish Group to be set up
- h) Review of Town Councils employment policies and procedures (possible requirements from Covid-19 pandemic) – Policy and Resources Committee, private session

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- i) Review of Equality and Diversity Policy – Policy and Resources Committee
- j) Bullying and Harassment – guidelines for Councillors (a recently discovered gap in policy) – Policy and Resources Committee
- k) Health and Safety Policy – Operations and Planning Committee

182. PLANNING LOG OF RECENT APPLICATIONS

Report CL04/20 was received and accepted.

Cllr Morton asked members to look at and consider all applications in their wards and make their views known, whether it be in support of or against an application.

He also raised planning application 20/00513/FUL, 36 Longridge Road, Malvern, as he had concerns over whether there would be adequate space on the building plot for the proposed four dwellings.

Cllr Charles agreed, as a District Councillor, to request that this application go to the planning committee.

Other members had also raised concerns over the availability of space at this location, and therefore,

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would submit an objection on behalf of Malvern Town Council as the number and type of dwellings proposed for the site at 36 Longridge Road, Malvern, was inappropriate.

183. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting of Full Council would be Wednesday 17 June 2020 at 6.00pm, to be held remotely via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 7.36 pm.

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(Chairman)