

UNADOPTED

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL
held remotely via Zoom on
Wednesday 22 April 2020 at 6.00 pm**

Councillors

Participating

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
J O'Donnell
C Palmer
D Roberts
P Smith
S Taylor
P Tuthill
D Watkins

Absent

Cllr N Mills

In attendance

Linda Blake - Town Clerk
Louise Wall - Minute Clerk

Approximately seven members of the public
at various times during the meeting

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 during the meeting. The meeting commenced at 6.06 pm.

156. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

157. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Cllr Palmer – Trustee of Community Action
- Cllr Lowton – Team Leader at Malvern Hills Food Bank

158. 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 4 March 2020

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation.

159. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that due to the Coronavirus pandemic, all events had been cancelled for the foreseeable future and therefore he had not been on any official engagements and had no upcoming appointments in his diary.

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He also explained that the office continued to be closed with staff working from home where possible, and one member of staff being seconded to work with Community Action, whilst Operations staff continued their work in the cemetery and on essential operational duties.

The Mayor explained he had needed to call a meeting of the Emergency Decision Making Panel the previous week to discuss the Covid-19 information leaflet to be issued by Malvern Town Council and further details would be given in agenda item 10.

160. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk reported the following:

- Operations staff are working from 7.30 am until 1.00 pm to carry out burials in the cemetery as well as mowing duties and bin emptying/litter picking. The earlier start means that they are able to avoid more members of the public and adhere to social distancing guidelines more easily.
- The cemetery has been busy but this has been for burials only, as interments of cremated remains have largely been postponed. It remains open for pedestrian access only, with vehicles only allowed to enter for funerals.
- Play areas remain closed whilst parks and green spaces are open.
- All Town Council events have been cancelled until the end of June with ongoing review of the situation.
- The Town Clerk is looking at ways to adapt the layout of the offices and the working practices of the office staff, in readiness for a return to work when the lockdown restrictions are lifted.

161. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Report CL01/20 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that certain changes to Standing Orders had been suggested by CALC / NALC to reflect the change to holding meetings remotely via Zoom.

The amendments listed in the report were discussed and the Town Clerk explained how voting would work whilst meetings were held remotely. Although it was possible to hold a secret ballot, this would be a difficult and lengthy procedure and so it was suggested that secret ballots would not be held for the time being.

It was **RESOLVED** that Malvern Town Council adopt the additions and amendments to Standing Orders as detailed in report CL01/20, for use in remote meetings as held by Malvern Town Council for the period up to 7 May 2021.

The Mayor announced that he would be altering the order of business so that agenda item 8 would now be taken.

162. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr Samantha Charles presented her Notice of Motion requesting a special grant of £2,000 to be awarded to the Brook Farm Community Association. She explained that this project aims to give immediate help to those in the Pickersleigh and Poolbrook areas who were being affected by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Sarah McCarten-Williams of the Brook Farm Community Association, which operates out of the Octagon Centre, then made a presentation on their response to the Covid-19 crisis in Malvern.

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Brook Farm Community Association began in 1991 with the aim of providing support and leisure activities for local people, especially those living in social housing adjacent to the Octagon Centre. Services provided are a clothing exchange which offers free children's clothes; a twice-monthly youth club; the Thursday project (a drop-in café providing light meals, held bi-weekly) and delivery of food parcels to those most in need. Although many people served by the Octagon Centre are from the immediate area, these services are open to the whole community of Malvern.

At the moment, food is donated from a number of supermarkets, but the special grant requested would be used to buy additional fresh food and any other essentials required.

Members asked questions on how people could access these services and how the food was allocated to ensure a fair use policy. They also asked what timescale Sarah thought the money would be used for and whether there was an overlap with the local food bank's work.

Sarah explained that the Octagon Centre has a website with a simple form that people can complete if they need help. There are also other agencies that can refer people to the centre, and the association is registered with the Here 2 Help campaign. There is a weekly list made of requests for help and these are answered in order. Although the Malvern Hills Food Bank provides good support across Malvern, the Brook Farm Community Association provides further local support which is easily accessible. She predicted the grant could enable the association to provide the extra fresh food supplies for up to approximately twelve weeks.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a Special Grant of £2,000 to the Brook Farm Community Association towards the costs of running The Octagon Project, which will provide food parcels for residents in Malvern, especially in Poolbrook and Pickersleigh, who have experienced sudden loss or reduction of income due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Chairman now reverted to the original agenda order, starting with item 7.

163. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr Peter Smith presented his Notice of Motion requesting funding of £3,750 towards a fountain/water feature in Rose Bank Gardens to mark the 200th anniversary of Jenny Lind's birth.

Cllr Smith noted that this particular project would contribute towards the ongoing improvement of Rose Bank Gardens, which are an important asset in the town, attracting many visitors from not just the local area, but further afield and abroad.

Jenny Lind is an important part of Malvern's history, and it would be very fitting to mark the 200th anniversary of her birth with the unveiling of a water fountain in Rose Bank Gardens. If the money is awarded, a design will be drawn up to include a seating area, and with the feature being situated on the grassed area next to the 99 steps.

Members noted their appreciation of the work that Cllr Smith continues to put in to bring these projects to life, all for the enjoyment of Malvern, and agreed that this

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project could play an important part in bringing people back to Malvern when travel restrictions are lifted.

It was **RESOLVED** to award funding of £3,750 to support the project marking the 200th anniversary of Jenny Lind's birth which would go towards a fountain/water feature in Rose Bank Gardens.

164. NOTICE OF MOTION

Cllr Neil Morton presented his Notice of Motion requesting an emergency grant of £10,000 to Community Action Malvern and District so that they may offset the cost of providing services supporting vulnerable and isolated members of the local community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cllr Morton explained that the costs incurred by Community Action are usually offset by the community transport and car service contracts with Worcestershire County Council and Malvern Hills District Council, as well as private hire fares. Even so, they are usually short of around £1,300 per month but this is evened out at the end of the year with income from fundraising activities.

However, at present these services cannot be provided, and therefore Community Action is now losing around £15,000 per month. Some Councillors felt that Community Action had a high level of reserves but Councillor Palmer explained that it was important not to run these down to a low level as this may leave them in a particularly precarious situation and may mean that they cannot function effectively once normal life resumes.

Members were very supportive of the work that Community Action carries out and of awarding them a grant. Some questioned whether Community Action would receive a similar level of support from the District and County Councils, bearing in mind that they are usually the main sources of income. District and County Councillors present at the meeting thought that this support would be forthcoming but that it may take time, due to the vast number of organisations needing support at this time, and the administrative problems this was causing.

Councillor Charles proposed that this grant should in fact be increased to reflect the amount of money that their Chief Executive Officer has stated they are losing per month.

It was proposed to amend the resolution as follows:

That Malvern Town Council approves the award of an emergency grant of £15,000 to Community Action Malvern and District to help offset the cost of providing this support service.

Following a vote, this proposed amendment fell.

A further amendment was proposed that after the original funding has been given, Community Action would be given the opportunity to reapply for a further amount, if required. This was supported by Councillors.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**

- i. That Malvern Town Council recognises the work that Community Action Malvern & District are doing to support vulnerable and isolated members of the local community during the current Covid-19 pandemic.
- ii. That Malvern Town Council approves the award of an emergency grant of £10,000 to Community Action Malvern & District to help offset the cost of providing this support service with the option to apply for further funding later in the year if required.

165. TOWN COUNCIL CORONAVIRUS LEAFLET

Report CL02/20 was noted.

The Town Clerk explained that following communication from the local Royal Mail delivery office, an offer had been made to deliver the leaflet during the week commencing 27 April, using their door-to-door service for a cost of £1,700, but that time constraints had meant that a decision had to be made ahead of the full council meeting.

Therefore, the Mayor had called a meeting of the Emergency Decision Making Panel which had agreed to go ahead with the terms and costs as per report CL02/20. The leaflets will be delivered next week to all WR14 postcode addresses and two sectors of WR13.

166. ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING DATE AND BUSINESS

Report CL03/20 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that due to the current Covid-19 situation, there were new regulations for town and parish councils which came into force on 4 April, which affected the requirements for holding an annual council meeting. There were three possible options as tabled in the report and members were asked to consider these and agree a date for the next annual council meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to hold the next annual council meeting on Wednesday 12 May 2021, with all appointments remaining in place for a further twelve months,

167. REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT WITH RENT AND FEES

Report CL04/20 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that she had been contacted by three organisations requesting some form of payment holiday or support during these extreme and unusual circumstances.

It was felt that whilst there may be support available through Government or elsewhere, the Town Council should help where it can.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- i. Support the café at Victoria Park Pavilion by waiving the rent until it is able to reopen.
- ii. Support Malvern Ramblers Cricket Club by waiving the rent for six months.
- iii. Support the football clubs which hire the pitches by issuing a credit note for the fees already paid for the second half of the season (January to May), to be presented against next year's season's fees.

168. PLANNING LOG OF RECENT APPLICATIONS

Report CL05/20 was received and accepted.

Planning application number 20/00249/S106 was noted to have had some modifications submitted. Although concerning the affordable housing stock, these modifications were actually to modify the housing plan, reducing the size of the affordable housing clusters within the development. The number of affordable houses being provided had not changed. Due to this confusion, Cllr Charles had asked for the application to be heard by committee.

Cllr Smith left the meeting at 8.17 pm

169. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

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It was agreed that the date of the next meeting of Full Council would be Wednesday 20 May 2020 at 6.00pm, to be held remotely via Zoom.

The meeting finished at 8.19 pm.

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(Chairman)

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