

UNADOPTED

MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

held at The Eden Centre, Grovewood Road, Malvern
on Tuesday 21 December 2021 at 6.00 pm

Councillors

Present

N Houghton (Chairman)
C Hooper (Vice Chairman)
J Ashington-Carter
L Lambeth
C Fletcher
J Leibrandt
D Mead
C Palmer
J Satterthwaite
P Smith
S Taylor
P Tuthill
D Watkins

Absent

C Bovey (apologies)
L Lowton (apologies)
R McLaverty-Head (apologies)
N Mills (apologies)
N Morton (apologies)
J O'Donnell
A Stitt

Also in attendance

L Blake – Town Clerk
L Wall – Minute Clerk
Cllr Beverley Nielsen, WCC

118. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllrs Caroline Bovey, Lou Lowton, Ronan McLaverty-Head, Neville Mills and Neil Morton were **NOTED**.

119. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

120. 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, and they were signed by the Mayor:

- Full Council meeting 25 November 2021.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

121. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that the Christmas lights switch on event had been held, albeit at a later date and on a smaller scale. He thanked Cllr Palmer and Cllr Watkins for their help in the grotto during the Christmas Festival and presented Cllr Watkins with a gift for his efforts as Father Christmas.

The Mayor informed members that one hundred festive cheer bags were now being distributed and thanked those who had donated, including Morrisons and Co-op supermarkets.

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Finally, the Christmas wreath competition held for the traders had been judged by Cllr Palmer and the Mayor, and the winners presented with certificates and prizes.

122. UPDATE ON TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The Town Clerk reported that all Town Council services and operations were continuing as usual but that there was a plan in place should more covid restrictions be introduced.

NALC are lobbying central government to allow meetings to be held remotely but until a decision was reached, meetings would still have to be held in person to be legal.

123. BUDGET 2022/23

Report CL1/21 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk presented to Full Council recommendations in respect of the proposed budget and precept level for 2022/23 and explained that the budget had been challenging, with expenditure patterns different to the norm because of the ongoing effects of covid. The budget had been put together with suggestions from the Operations and Planning Committee, the Budget Working Party, and Policy and Resources Committee, with the aim to keep any increase in the precept between 1% and 2%.

The Town Clerk then explained the main points of the proposed budget.

- The re-forecast was very close to the original budget, with a small amount of £467 being put into reserves.
- Some savings made on projects meant that the resurfacing of the cemetery road had been brought forward into the current financial year.
- Within the budget there are a number of different assumptions being made. These include inflationary increases on salaries, utilities and business rates. The Town Clerk explained that salary costs make up over 50% of the Town Council's budget and therefore any national increases on salary costs have a significant effect on the budget.
- There are also assumptions being made about the timing of progress on council resolutions such as the sale of Belle Vue Terrace and the new building at Victoria Park and these are made based on the best information currently held.
- A precept of £701,500 as recommended by Policy and Resources Committee would result in an increase in the council tax charge of 1.1%, or 68p, from the current year. This is based on the estimate from MHDC of the minimum tax base for Malvern in 2022/23.

Cllr Hooper, Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, thanked the Town Clerk for her excellent summary of the proposed budget and for managing to keep the precept increase to 1.1%, and the members of the Budget Working Party and Policy and Resources Committee for their input.

There were no questions from members of the council regarding the proposed budget.

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It was **RESOLVED** to accept the following:

- i. The re-forecast for 2021/22 which results in a small underspend and therefore a balance being put into reserves of £467 for the financial year.
- ii. The budget for the financial year 2022/23 which shows a net expenditure of £713,752 *not* taking into account any movements in Earmarked Reserves and £701,252 taking into account movements in Earmarked Reserves.

It was **RESOLVED** that the precept for 2022/23 should be set at £701,500.

124. **VICTORIA PARK PAVILION TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL**

Report CL02/21 was received and accepted.

The Mayor read out the four recommendations put before Full Council and opened the floor for discussion. Comments made included the following:

- Could a public consultation be held properly if there was a lockdown or other restrictions in place in the New Year which would make it difficult for people to attend an open day, and therefore should recommendations ii and iii be delayed?
- It was important to show commitment to Modulek even if the public consultation was delayed.
- Deferring either or both of recommendations ii and iii would only mean delaying the project further and would not gain anything. The proposals had been put forward by the Task and Finish Group in good faith and after much deliberation.
- The public consultation could be carried out effectively by online and other means, even if no event was held in person, and if carried out properly would mean no deferment was necessary.
- An online public consultation may not be well utilised and would not allow as many people to respond as a walk-in event.
- The proposed payment to Modulek was not just for a public consultation but also to get the project moving with building design, plans and reports being produced ahead of a planning application and would show commitment to them as a supplier.
- Recommendation 3 could be amended to allow for a possible timing issue in a public consultation.

Cllr Jack Satterthwaite proposed that recommendations ii and iii as below should be deferred until the situation with the pandemic allowed a full public consultation.

- ii. An order to the value of £35,000 be submitted to Modulek to cover assistance with public consultation; detailed building design and building regulation plan checks; site surveys and reports; and planning design, submission and consultation works.
- iii. Victoria Park Pavilion Task and Finish Group be delegated to carry out a public consultation on the new building at Victoria Park to be undertaken in January/February 2022.

After a vote, this proposal failed.

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Cllr Hooper proposed an amendment to recommendation iii as follows:

- iii. Victoria Park Pavilion Task and Finish Group be delegated to carry out a public consultation on the new building at Victoria Park to be undertaken **as soon as practicable, if possible** in January/February 2022.

Council **RESOLVED** to accept this amendment.

A proposal to consider the four recommendations separately failed and therefore all recommendations were considered together in one vote.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

- i. Modulek be appointed as the chosen supplier for a new two-storey building at Victoria Park.
- ii. An order to the value of £35,000 be submitted to Modulek to cover assistance with public consultation; detailed building design and building regulation plan checks; site surveys and reports; and planning design, submission and consultation works.
- iii. Victoria Park Pavilion Task and Finish Group be delegated to carry out a public consultation on the new building at Victoria Park to be undertaken as soon as practicable, if possible in January/February 2022.
- iv. All queries and requests for information relating to the Victoria Park Pavilion project from both Councillors and members of the public will be directed to and answered by the Task and Finish Group.

125. **EMERGENCY DELEGATIONS**

Report CL03/21 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that the recommendation had been put forward to mitigate problems should there be a period when the Council could not hold legal meetings because of covid restrictions. The suggestion was that all important and emergency decisions required to be taken in the absence of meetings would be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Emergency Decision Making Group. This would be a temporary arrangement until either remote meetings became possible or the covid restrictions were relaxed once again.

Cllr Hooper, Town Council representative at CALC, reiterated that this was a matter of concern for many local councils and NALC continued to lobby on behalf of councils to allow some flexibility in holding meetings virtually. He suggested that if delegations were given, the Town Clerk could write on behalf of the Town Council in support of this move.

It was **RESOLVED** that in the event of a period of time when Malvern Town Council is unable to hold legal meetings, all important and emergency decisions required to be taken in the absence of meetings will be delegated to the Town Clerk who will consult with the Emergency Decision Making Group.

126. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 3 February 2022 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting finished at 6.50 pm.

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(Chairman)

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