

UNADOPTED

MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

held in the Council Chamber, Malvern Hills District Council, Avenue Road
on Thursday 9 February 2023, at 6.00 pm

Councillors

Present

N Houghton (Chairman)
K Aksar
C Fletcher
C Hooper
J Leibrandt
F Matthews-Jones
D Mead
N Mills
C Palmer
A Stitt
D Watkins

Absent

C Bovey (apologies)
L Lambeth
L Lowton
R McLaverty-Head (apologies)
J Satterthwaite (apologies)
J Wilkinson (apologies)

Also in attendance

L Blake – Town Clerk
L Wall – Minute Clerk

Cllr Natalie McVey (WCC)
Cllr Beverley Nielsen (WCC)
One member of the public
One member of the Press

133. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from Councillors Caroline Bovey, Ronan McLaverty-Head, Jack Satterthwaite and Josie Wilkinson were **NOTED**.

134. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

135. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Mayor declared that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 January 2023 were confidential and therefore would be received in private session at the end of the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ian Hopwood, Chair of the Malvern-Mariánské Lázně Community Partnership (MMLCP) informed members that a small delegation of people from Mariánské Lázně, including their Mayor, would be visiting Malvern from 3 to 5 March to mark ten years of the partnership. The MMLCP hope to organise a reception for the visitors on Saturday 4 March which it was hoped that the Mayor of Malvern would attend. Mr Hopwood therefore asked if he could meet with the Town Clerk and Mayor to discuss the visit and reception. He also informed the meeting of two other events, the opening of the spa weekend in May and a concert on 30 June at Elmslie House.

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136. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reminded members in attendance of the Peaks Challenge Walk on 29 April, with an early bird discount on tickets until the end of February. Hills Ford were the main sponsor of the event which would pay for medals and t-shirts, whilst Sean Austin of Austin & Co was sponsoring the dog rosettes.

The Mayor hopes to complete his charity paraglide this weekend and sponsorship of this could be made via the JustGiving page.

137. **UPDATE ON TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Town Clerk gave the following update on recent Town Council operations and activities:

Elections

Full Town Council elections are being held on 4 May and nomination papers for vacancies on the Town Council are now available on MHDC's website as well as the Electoral commission website. Councillors were reminded that whilst the Town Council will still have twenty seats, these would now be split over nine wards rather than six and anyone standing for election should ensure that nomination papers are completed with the new ward name. The deadline for receipt of nomination papers is 4pm on 4 April.

The period of purdah or now-named 'publicity during pre-election period' commences on 27 March; during this period, proactive publicity relating to candidates involved directly in the elections is restricted and the Town Council must restrict its decision making and press releases to "business as usual" matters.

All current Town Councillors retire from office on 9 May except for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who continue in office until the Annual Council meeting on 18 May.

Officers have prepared an A5 leaflet about becoming a councillor for Malvern Town which will be distributed by the Town Crier and made available on the Town Council website.

Town Council Ward Boundaries

The Town Clerk has asked the District Council about the availability of more detailed ward maps and these will be passed onto MTC as soon as they are available.

Operational Projects

January has been a busy period for the operations team with the completion of works to raise the entranceway bed at Rosebank Gardens which will now be planted with forty 'Precious Ruby' bush roses, and ongoing works to the bus shelter outside Rosebank Gardens including the installation of the metal cladding onto the rear wall. New hoop-topped fencing has also been installed along the eastern boundary of the gardens. There are some new bins currently being installed around town in response to public requests.

138. **REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE**

County Councillors

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Cllr Karen Hanks had sent a written report which had been circulated to councillors.

Cllr Beverley Nielsen had also sent a written report which she read through at the meeting.

- Benches to be installed at the memorial Wood off Goodson Road and works carried out to stream and surrounding area.
- Hallow Field to be assessed by RSPB project manager for suitability for potential wetland creation on the large river side field for migratory wading birds.
- Bee Together Pollinator Programme - young pupils are planting up gardens at their schools with pollinator friendly plants whilst learning more about invertebrates. This is run jointly by MHDC and Buglife with all plants supplied by Link Nurseries.
- Highways Update – various projects are ongoing, including
 - WCC disabled access review of Malvern Town
 - VAS awaited for Worcester Road
 - Speed survey has been requested for Pound Bank Road
 - More regular emptying of drains on St Ann's Road and additional road sweeping agreed
 - MHDC Active Mobility Officer appointed to gain Capability Funding from Active Travel England and upgrade/improve cycle accessibility.
- Malvern Hills College - MHDC continues with WCC to do all it can to facilitate progress towards a deal on this facility.

Cllr Natalie McVey reported the following:

- Highways – street lights being replaced and footways resurfaced, and where roadworks were causing disruption, alternative bus services were running. Bollards installed in Somers Park Avenue to combat parking problems.
- Whippets Brook near to Bronsil Drive has now been cleared and made safer for walkers.
- Along with Cllr Hanks, funding support increased for Community Fridge at Ascension Church with purchase of new freezer and boiler.
- Provision of free period products for visitors and players at Malvern Town Football Club.
- Continuation of art workshops with local artists.
- Meeting planned with Ukrainian families now in Malvern to find out their experience of support given for education.
- Under SWEP (severe weather emergency protocol) emergency shelters open again for anyone sleeping rough to attend whilst temperatures are particularly cold.

District Councillors

Cllr Kaleem Aksar – although the petition for a Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Summerfield Road had been submitted to the Highways department at Worcestershire County Council, along with the Town Council's letter of support, this

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had been turned down as there was no current policy for LTNs. However, Cllr Aksar will continue to request this.

Cllr Cynthia Palmer – the budget has now been agreed at Malvern Hills District Council with a 2.9% increase on council tax, equivalent to approximately £5 on a Band D property.

Cllr Neville Mills – has been supporting Malvern Men's Sheds and the Community Fridge project with his district councillor funds. He has also received complaints from residents regarding the amount of dog fouling, litter and broken glass in Victoria Park and on the football pitches at Lower Howsell, which has passed on accordingly.

139. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Town Councillors

Cllr Nick Houghton – has been in correspondence with district council over provision of DDA equipment in the new play area in Priory Park.

Outside Bodies

Cllr Clive Hooper – the CALC Executive Committee had met at the end of January to discuss and agree a reserves and investment policy, and report on the current financial position which was broadly in line with the budget. It had also been agreed to increase CALC subscriptions by 5%.

Cllr Neville Mills – had attended Community Action's AGM after Christmas and forwarded a report to the district council.

140. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Clive Hooper had submitted a question regarding the formation of a community engagement strategy, and this had been answered – there will be an item on the agenda of the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting regarding this.

141. CONFIRMATION OF CASUAL VACANCY IN CHASE WARD FOLLOWING NON-ATTENDANCE

Report CL01/23 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that it was a matter of procedure to issue a Notice of Vacancy following the council's declaration of the seat being vacant.

It was **RESOLVED** to declare a casual vacancy in Chase Ward due to the disqualification of Cllr James O'Donnell following a period of non-attendance exceeding six months.

142. VICTORIA PARK TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Report CL02/23 was received and accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** to disband the current task and finish group, review its membership and elect six members to serve on a new Victoria Park Task and Finish Group.

Membership was **AGREED** as:

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- Cllr Clive Fletcher
- Cllr Clive Hooper
- Cllr David Mead
- Cllr David Watkins
- Cllr Josephine Leibrandt
- Cllr Freya Matthews-Jones

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the terms of reference for the new Task and Finish Group as attached to the report.

143. **MALVERN TOURISM SIGN**

Report CL03/23 was received and accepted.

The report set out the recommendation made by the Malvern Tourism Sign Task and Finish Group at its meeting on 13 December.

The Mayor explained that this item had been deferred from the previous Full Council meeting to allow councillors time to visit Rosebank Gardens and review the suggested location for the Malvern tourism sign. The debate was therefore to remain focussed on if the recommended location should be approved.

The report also noted that if the location for the new sign was agreed as behind the new wall created as part of the Jenny Lind fountain project, then the Jenny Lind sculpture would need to be moved – the suggested place was next to the commemorative plaque already installed near to the 99 steps.

A robust discussion followed. A vote was taken which resulted in an equality of votes. The Mayor chose to cast his casting vote to approve the recommendation.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations from the Malvern Tourism Sign Task and Finish Group following the Full Council resolution to install a 'Malvern' sign in Rosebank Gardens and as detailed in the report.

144. **PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON LAND ADJACENT TO ADAM LEA PLAY ARE (MILL LANE)**

Report CL04/23 was received and noted.

The Town Clerk informed members that Poolbrook Village Hall had been booked for Monday 27 February for the public consultation, to run from 3.30pm until 7pm with the aim of enabling as many people as possible to attend. Information would be on display and volunteers to help on the day would be welcomed. A questionnaire will be issued both electronically via the Town Council's website and available at the consultation.

Councillors were invited to put forward additional suggestions for elements of the public consultation and for further ideas on how the land should be used but none were forthcoming.

It was **RESOLVED** to note plans for the public consultation on land adjacent to Adam Lea play area being transferred to the Town Council.

The Mayor left the meeting and therefore the Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

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145. SUPPORT FOR LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD IN SUMMERFIELD ROAD

The Town Clerk gave an update on the possible implementation of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) in the Summerfield Road area. Following a resolution at a previous meeting, a letter had been sent to Cllr Mike Rouse, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways & Transport, expressing the Town Council's support for this idea. However, the response received was that Worcestershire County Council did not have a policy priority to implement LTNs.

Cllr Aksar, who had presented a petition of residents' signatures in support of the LTN said that he would pursue the matter, but asked for help from the County Councillors present.

Cllr Leibrandt pointed out that these issues were not just restricted to the immediate area and an LTN could impact on a wider area as it moved traffic and pollution elsewhere.

It was **NOTED** that the Town Clerk will arrange a meeting with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cllr Aksar to discuss the next steps.

The Mayor, Cllr Nick Houghton, returned to the meeting and took back the chair.

146. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023/24

Report CL05/23 was received and noted. It was suggested that all meetings, as far as possible, were held on a Wednesday to aid with the dispatch of agendas and reports, and to make it easier for councillors to remember when meetings are being held.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the calendar of meetings 2023/24 as listed.

147. OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Report CL06/23 was received and accepted.

The Chair of Operations and Planning Committee, Cllr Cynthia Palmer, presented the recommendation from the meeting held on 25 January 2023.

Cllr Hooper informed the meeting that he had received correspondence from a resident who was concerned that the vehicle may be so quiet as to pose a risk to anyone blind or partially sighted. Cllr Hooper asked if the new vehicle would comply with regulations stating that an acoustic sound system must be fitted to quiet electric vehicles to prevent them being too silent.

The Town Clerk answered that as the new vehicle was classed as an agricultural vehicle, the regulations do not apply, but operations staff are always mindful of users of public spaces, safety of everyone, and speeds are limited.

The purchase of an electric vehicle was noted to be in accordance with the Town Council's environmental policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to award the contract to supply a Corvus Terrain EX4 Utility Vehicle at a cost of £28,769.

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148. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 2 March 2023 at 6.00 pm in Malvern Hills District Council Chamber.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **AGREED** to resolve pursuant to **Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

149. 28-30 BELLE VUE TERRACE

The minutes from the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 18 January 2023 were circulated and Councillors given time to read through the document.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meeting be approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings, and these were signed by the Mayor:

- Extraordinary Full Council meeting held on 18 January 2023.

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update to the meeting which was **NOTED**.

The meeting finished at 7.42 pm.

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(Chairman)