

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

**held in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern
on Wednesday 4 October 2023 at 6.00 pm**

Councillors

I Dawson (Chair)
C Fletcher (Vice-chair)
S Austin (substitute for Cllr Houghton)
M Birks
M Jones (from 6.10pm)
J MacLusky
K Newbigging

Absent

N Houghton (apologies)
C Lee
R McLaverty-Head (apologies)

Also in attendance

Linda Blake - Town Clerk
Louise Wall – Minute Clerk
Cllr Clive Hooper (Mayor)
Chris Bassett, Coach House Theatre
Tony Palmer, Men’s Shed
Richard Potter, Men’s Shed

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from Cllr Nick Houghton and Ronan McLaverty-Head were **NOTED**. Cllr Nick Houghton had substituted Cllr Sean Austin.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 4, Small Grants Scheme, 1st Round 2023/24

- Cllr Marilyn Birks – has worked with the programme development manager at Everybody Dance

Agenda item 5, Large Grants Scheme, 1st Round 2023/24

- Cllr Marilyn Birks – member of the Coach House Theatre
- Cllr Karen Newbigging – member of Malvern Joggers, which uses the facilities at Malvern Rugby Club
- Cllr Clive Fletcher – member of the Coach House Theatre
- Cllr Iain Dawson – member of Malvern Rugby and Football Club

Agenda item 6, Phoenix Theatre Collection, request for change of purpose of grant

- Cllr Marilyn Birks – knows the founder of Phoenix Theatre Collective

27. 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 these were signed by the Chairman:

- Policy and Resources Committee meeting 7 September 2023.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None. However, it was agreed that those attending the meeting in support of grant applications would speak under the relevant agenda item.

The Chairman announced that under Standing Order 1a he would be altering the order of business so that agenda item 5 'Large Grants Scheme, 1st Round' would be brought forward.

28. LARGE GRANTS SCHEME, 1ST ROUND 2023/24

Report PR02/23 was received and accepted.

Six qualifying large grant applications had been received. It was agreed that each application would be discussed before considering each award.

Malvern Theatre Players £2,390 – Mr Chris Bassett, Company Manager of the Coach House Theatre explained that the amount applied for was to fund free child tickets (up to age 14 years) for an outdoor performance of The Secret Garden in the summer 2024, as well as Christmas show tickets for disadvantaged children and a dementia-friendly Christmas show, and a small amount for publicity materials. The overall aim was that theatre would be made more accessible and available to those who may not ordinarily be able to afford or access performances.

Members questioned whether the performances would still be able to go ahead if a part grant was awarded, and how the events would be advertised.

Mr Bassett answered that the performances would be able to go ahead, but only if the additional funds could be gained from the Theatre Players. Advertising would be across all platforms but the council would only be billed for actual money spent.

Mr Bassett left the meeting at 6.15pm.

Malvern Men's Shed £1,800 – Tony Palmer explained how the Men's Shed movement began in Australia and quickly spread to twelve countries. The UK currently has over 900 groups, all providing a meeting space for predominantly men, but also for women. It had been proven that men in particular find it difficult to cope with loneliness and isolation, which can follow retirement, divorce or bereavement. The Malvern Men's Shed has seen improvement in the mental health and wellbeing of attendees through its friendly and inclusive atmosphere. The grant would enable the purchase of a dust extraction system to improve the air quality, a table saw to replace an older one that had been donated but was not very safe, and a pyrography kit – a portable 'heated pen' that burns decorative patterns into wood.

Members asked how many people attended the Men's Shed, and across what age range, how it was linked to Community Action and how they would manage if the grant was not awarded.

Mr Palmer answered that the Malvern Men's Shed had 52 members ranging from age 60 to 85, but anyone over the age of 18 is welcome. If the grant was not awarded and the purchases could not go ahead, the Men's Shed could still operate but the air quality would be a concern.

Mr Palmer and Mr Potter left the meeting at 6.40pm.

What Makes You Different, Makes You Beautiful (WMYDMYB) £1,960 – no one from the organisation had attended the meeting but the grant application was to fund a wellbeing group family trip to Drayton Manor Park at Christmas, paying for coach hire and 52 entrance tickets. The charity's main aim was to see children with disabilities accepted within their community.

It was questioned how a trip to the theme park would aid this but members generally felt that being at the park itself was a type of integration, and it was important for the children and families, especially those who may be disadvantaged financially, to be able to take part in these activities.

Malvern Rugby and Football Club £2,500 – no one from the Rugby Club was in attendance at the meeting but the application was to fund the replacement of broken slabs in the outdoor space thereby improving safety of those using the club.

It was pointed out that the club's reserves were high but only £33.11 would be contributed by the club to the overall project cost of £2,533.11.

However, members agreed that the club space should be safe for people to use, not just rugby club members but also other groups who hired the facilities. It was confirmed that the project cost included labour and materials, not just the purchase of the slabs.

Jack's Place Care CIC £2,500 – no one from Jack's Place Care attended the meeting. The day care centre is for adults with learning difficulties based in Berrow. Although this is outside the Malvern area, the Town Clerk informed members that they could still award a grant if sufficient numbers of Malvern residents would benefit, and subject to the application generally being satisfactory. The grant would fund refurbishment and redecoration of the clients cabin room, fitting it out with furniture, toilet facilities and some funding towards refreshments for visitors.

It was noted that reserves for this organisation were high. Members questioned who owned the field that the centre was sited on, and what timeframe covered the build of the centre.

Perfect Circle Theatre Group £2,240 – there were no representatives from the theatre group at the meeting. The application stated that the grant was for a one-off project that was linked to an annual programme and would fund workshops, bursary spaces and specific research on neurodiversity.

Members noted that theatre can play an important part in wellbeing but that this project could overlap with other theatre offerings in the area, and questioned who would benefit from this project. It was felt that more clarity was required on the purpose and benefits of this grant.

Members then considered the award of grants as follows:

It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £990 to The Coach House Theatre, being £520 for the Christmas show(s) for children, £320 for the dementia friendly Christmas show and £150 for publicity. The Coach House Theatre to be invited to apply to the 2nd round of the scheme in early 2024 for a grant of £1,400 for the performance of The Secret Garden.

It was **AGREED** to defer an award to Perfect Circle Theatre Group and to invite Lee Farley, Director of the group to attend a meeting of Policy and Resources Committee to explain what is involved in the annual National Theatre Connections Programme, and how this additional project fitted alongside this. Councillors also wished to know more about how the project benefits existing theatre members and Malvern residents.

It was **AGREED** to defer an award to Jack's Place Care CIC so that more details could be obtained including confirmation of who owns the field in which the cabin is sited, over what timescale the cabin had been built and exactly how many Malvern residents would benefit.

It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £1,800 to Malvern Men's Shed.

It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £1,960 to What Makes You Different Makes You Beautiful.

It was **AGREED** to award a part-grant of £1,250 to Malvern Rugby and Football Club leaving the club to match-fund the other 50% of the project cost.

29. SMALL GRANTS SCHEME, 1ST ROUND 2023/24

Report PR01/23 was received and accepted.

Four qualifying grant applications had been received.

Everybody Dance £500 – the grant would support a new project to put on ‘Tea Dances’ in Malvern over a twelve-month period, covering the cost of venue hire and refreshments. The tea dances would be aimed at elderly people living with dementia and long-term health issues and encourage interaction between them and younger people.

It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £500 to Everybody Dance.

Engage Malvern £500 – the application related to Malvern Festival of Ideas, and would be used to purchase equipment necessary to deliver a branding approach including festival flags, stage branding, signage, banners, backdrops, posters and printing.

It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £500 to Engage Malvern

The Elgar Chorale of Worcester £500 – a grant of £500 would contribute towards the cost of putting on a concert on 14 October which would be fundraising for new choir robes for the Priory choirs.

It was **AGREED** to reject the application as committee did not feel it offered enough benefit to Malvern residents as a whole.

Under Standing Order 3(x) it was agreed to extend the meeting by a further 15 minutes.

Zest for Life Conversation and Laughter £487.86 – the grant would purchase a panini maker and panini papers, to provide paninis to those attending the regular Zest for Life Conversation and Laughter sessions at the Octagon Centre.

It was **AGREED** to award a grant of £487.86 to Zest for Life.

30. PHOENIX THEATRE COLLECTIVE – REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF PURPOSE OF GRANT

Report PR03/23 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that the original grant award had been for a half-term holiday club in October 2022. However, a letter received by the council in August 2023 detailed how the grant had been spent on a different workshop. Grant rules state that if the award is not spent on the original purpose then a request for change of purpose must be applied for, to ensure a clear and transparent audit trail is in place.

The request for a change of purpose of grant was **AGREED**.

31. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 1 November 2023.

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.

32. **OPERATIONAL STAFF – BENCHMARKING EXERCISE**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report and following committee discussion, it was **AGREED** to approve the Town Clerk carrying out a benchmarking exercise regarding Operational Staff.

The meeting finished at 8.15 pm.

.....(Chairman)

DRAFT