

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

**held in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern
on Wednesday 1 November 2023 at 6.00 pm**

Councillors

I Dawson (Chair)
C Fletcher (Vice-chair)
N Houghton
M Jones
J MacLusky (from 6.08pm)
K Newbigging

Absent

M Birks (apologies)
C Lee (apologies)
R McLaverty-Head (apologies)

Also in attendance

Linda Blake - Town Clerk
Louise Wall – Minute Clerk
Cllr Clive Hooper (Mayor)

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were **NOTED** from Cllr Birks, Cllr Lee and Cllr McLaverty-Head and from Cllr Julie MacLusky for lateness.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

35. 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 4 October 2023

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Hannah James, Managing Director and Diane Thomson, Assistant Manager from Jack's Place Care CIC attended the meeting to inform councillors of the work they do, following the deferral of their application to the large grants scheme, 1st round, for a grant of £2,500.

Cllr MacLusky joined the meeting at 6.08pm

The centre is based in Berrow at the foot of the Malvern Hills. It recently changed from a limited company to a Community Interest Company (CIC) to help with funding applications. Eighteen regular day care clients attend, eleven of whom live in Malvern and they are picked up and dropped off by community bus. Activities vary from planting, painting, games, looking after the animals, and going out on trips. Future plans include increasing the number of clients, purchasing a second bus and putting on workshops. Hannah and Diane finished by inviting councillors to visit Jack's Care Place to see the work they carry out.

The applicants stated that they no longer required the funds for the cabin as per the application form as the cabin had been removed and it was suggested that another application could be submitted to the second round of large grants in February.

Hannah James and Diane Thomson thanked the committee and left the meeting.

36. LARGE GRANTS SCHEME, 1ST ROUND 2023/24 JACK'S PLACE CARE CIC

This item was withdrawn.

37. LARGE GRANTS SCHEME, 1ST ROUND 2023/24 – PERFECT CIRCLE THEATRE GROUP

Perfect Circle Theatre Group had applied for a large grant of £2,240 at the previous meeting of Policy and Resources Committee but members felt that more information was required on the purpose and benefit of the grant. Lee Farley, Director, had been invited to attend one of three committee meetings being held before Christmas but unfortunately due to the fact that theatre group rehearsals are on a Wednesday night, he was unable to attend until 7.45pm.

Committee **AGREED** that this application could not be considered without more details being provided and therefore Perfect Circle Theatre Group should be asked to resubmit their application in the next round of grant applications in early 2024.

38. REVIEW AND PRIORITISATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A task and finish group had been set up to review the Town Council's aims and objectives but due to work commitments, holidays and other engagements, it had proved impossible to get a date agreed for the task and finish group to meet.

To increase the chances of achieving quorum, Cllr Houghton volunteered to join the group, which would now comprise Cllrs Marilyn Birks, Clive Fletcher, Melanie Jones and Nick Houghton.

A date for the meeting was agreed as Monday 13 November at 5.30pm.

39. DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

Report PR02/23 was received and accepted.

A draft policy had been put together by officers and if agreed, would replace the Bullying and Harassment policy for employees. Members felt that overall it was an improvement on that policy, more robust, and encompassed behaviours beyond bullying and harassment.

It was **NOTED** that there were some minor spelling errors and these were to be amended.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Dignity at Work policy as amended be adopted by Malvern Town Council.

40. QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS – 2ND QUARTER TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Management Account for the 2nd quarter to 30 September 2023

Report PR03/23 was received and accepted and the Town Clerk presented the quarterly accounts for the second quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

Committee received the management accounts.

The Town Clerk then gave a brief summary of the accounts which showed that there was a surplus balance of £37,171 being put into General Reserves. This was ahead of the budgeted deficit for the quarter of £5,389 by £42,560 after taking account of any transfers to or from Earmarked Reserves. In summary, this is an underspend against budget of £42,560 for the second quarter of the 2023/24 financial year.

The management accounts showed variances of £23,181 under budget against administration and £6,157 under budget against operational costs. The Town Clerk outlined the main variances of these which were details in the report.

There had been an underspend of £35,130 against the Asset Renewal and Refurbishment budget.

Year to date

For the year to date, there was an underspend against budget of £38.887.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the quarterly accounts for the second quarter, ending 30 September 2023.

41. BUDGET DISCUSSION DOCUMENT 2024/25

The budget discussion document was issued for members to give the Town Clerk some policy guidelines on how the budget will be put together.

Members discussed each item on the document, using last year's figures and reasonable assumptions to suggest budget figures for 2024/25. It was assumed that Belle Vue Building will be sold and work on the new building at Victoria Park will commence during the financial year, resulting in six months' running costs for each building.

1. Level of inflation to include within the budget

| | |
|--|------|
| • NNDR (business rates) | 5% |
| • Fuel | 4% |
| • Utilities | 0% |
| • Contracts | 2% |
| • Inflation | 6.7% |
| • Cost of living increase on salaries (set nationally) | 6.5% |

2. Grants Budget

| | |
|--|---------|
| Small Grants, no change | £5,000 |
| Large Grants, increased to | £18,000 |
| Community Support Grants: CAB | £16,000 |
| Community Support Grant to Community Action removed. | |

3. Events Budget

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| Including: | | |
| | Bands in the Park | £7,500 |
| | Mayor's Bonanza | £9,500 |
| | Christmas Lights Switch On event | £6,000 |
| | Malvern in Bloom | £7,000 |
| | Christmas Lights | £16,508 |
| Budget for 2024/25 | | tbc |

4. Suggestions for additional expenditure or income

None

5. Contingency fund

To remain at £20,000

6. Malvern Town Council Tax Base

- 2024/25 – 11,118

It was noted that due to the number of houses being built recently, it was likely that the tax base would increase

7. Precept Level 2024/25

- Council Tax Band D - £68.09
- Precept level to aim for 2024/25

It was noted that whilst the aim was to keep any increase low, costs and inflation should be set at a reasonably level to avoid any reduction in services

Cllr Houghton left the meeting at 7.55pm

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

42. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 22 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.

43. ADMINISTRATION STAFFING RESOURCES

Report PR05/23 was circulated to members of the committee.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the post of Communications and Events Officer should be made a full-time position with hours increased from 25 hours per week to 37 hours per week.

.....(Chairman)