



# **MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

## **FULL COUNCIL MEETING**

### **REPORTS**

**For meeting on Wednesday 13 December 2023  
at 6.00 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace,  
Malvern**

# MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk  
28-30 Belle Vue Terrace  
Malvern  
WR14 4PZ  
Tel: 01684 566667



7 December 2023

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## MEETING OPEN TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

### To all Members of Malvern Town Council:

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of Malvern Town Council to be held on Wednesday 13 December 2023 in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern commencing at 6.00 pm for the transaction of the business shown on the Agenda below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda Blake'.

Linda Blake  
Town Clerk

No.	Agenda Item
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To note apologies for absence.</li></ul>
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other disclosable interests.</li></ul>
3.	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b> <p>To receive and confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous Full Council meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ 8 November 2023 – already issued</li></ul>
<b>Public Participation</b> <p><i>The Meeting will be adjourned for public participation when the Chairman will invite members of the public to present their questions, statements or petitions submitted under the Council's Public Participation Procedure.</i></p>	
4.	<b>Mayor's Announcements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Verbal report</li></ul>
5.	<b>Update on Town Council Operations and Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Verbal update by the Town Clerk</li></ul>
6.	<b>Reports by County and District Council Representatives in Attendance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Verbal reports or written submissions as appropriate.</li></ul>
7.	<b>Town Council Ward Reports/Representatives on Outside Bodies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Verbal reports</li></ul>
8.	<b>Members Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The Chairman will invite members who have written in with questions to present them to Council.</li></ul>

<b>9.</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b> ➤ Report CL01/23 to follow
<b>10.</b>	<b>Notice of Motion – Malvern Tourism Signs in Malvern Link and Barnards Green</b> ➤ Cllr Nick Houghton and Cllr Ronan McLaverty-Head
<b>11.</b>	<b>Notice of Motion – “Happy to Chat” benches</b> ➤ Cllr Julie MacLusky and Cllr David Watkins
<b>12.</b>	<b>Operations and Planning Committee Recommendations</b> The Chair of Operations and Planning Committee to present any recommendations for approval by Council from the meeting held on 29 November 2023 ➤ Report CL02/23 to follow
<b>13.</b>	<b>Victoria Park Task and Finish Group Recommendations</b> The Chair of Victoria Park Task and Finish Group to present any recommendations for approval by Council from the meeting held on 7 December 2023 ➤ Report CL03/23 to follow
<b>14.</b>	<b>Heart of England in Bloom/Britain in Bloom 2024</b> ➤ Report CL04/23 to follow
<b>15.</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b> ➤ Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00 pm

**MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF  
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

**held in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern  
on Wednesday 8 November 2023, at 6.00 pm**

**Councillors**

**Present**

C Hooper (Chair)  
S Austin  
C Bovey  
A Cherry  
I Dawson  
C Fletcher  
N Houghton  
M Jones (from 6.06pm)  
J Leibrandt (from 6.07pm)  
L Lowton (from 6.17pm)  
J MacLusky  
F Matthews-Jones  
R McLaverty-Head  
D Mead  
D Watkins

**Absent**

M Birks (apologies)  
J Green (apologies)  
C Lee (apologies)  
S Meager (apologies)  
K Newbigging (apologies)

**Also in attendance**

L Blake – Town Clerk  
C Porter – Operations Manager  
L Wall – Minute Clerk  
  
Cllr J Raine, Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC)  
  
Cllr N McVey, MHDC and Worcestershire County Council (WCC) (from 6.15pm)

**90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were **NOTED** from Councillors Marilyn Birks, Jude Green, Chris Lee, Simon Meager and Karen Newbigging. Apologies for lateness were **NOTED** from Councillor Lou Lowton.

**91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**92. 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 11 October 2023.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**93. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that he had attended the following engagements:

- Elgar Chorale and Priory Choir fundraising concerts, raising funds for new Priory choir robes
- Worcestershire CALC AGM – no matters of concern had been raised
- St Richard's Hospice AGM where he spoke to trustees and volunteers

- ARCOS Christmas card shop opening – annual event raising funds for various charities
- Great Malvern Station – closure of Lady Foley's tea rooms after 39 years, Mayor gave a speech of thanks
- Citizens Advice Bureau, Prospect Close – the Mayor was introduced to the Princess Royal during her visit, and he spoke to staff and volunteers at the CAB. The Town Council supports the CAB with an annual grant.
- Eden Centre - Local History Museum talk about their research and archive work, including storage materials.

***Cllr Mel Jones joined the meeting at 6.06pm***

***Cllr Josephine Leibrandt joined the meeting at 6.07pm***

#### **94. UPDATE ON TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Town Clerk reported that since the last Full Council meeting, much work had been carried out and centred on two big upcoming projects – the sale of the building at Belle Vue Terrace and plans for the new Community Hub building at Victoria Park.

Other Town Council operations were ongoing, and these included:

Remembrance Commemorations - an Armistice Day service will be held in Great Malvern Priory from 10.40am, and on Remembrance Sunday, there will be a joint service in The Priory from 10am, a parade from The Post Office down to the Library marching off at 10.45 and then a short ceremony at the war memorial including a two minute silence at 11am followed by the laying of wreaths.

Purple Lights for Pancreatic Cancer - The Buzzards sculpture in Rosebank Gardens and the faces of the North Malvern Clock Tower will be lit purple as from next Monday. There will be a photoshoot by the buzzards on Monday 13 November at 5pm to publicise this campaign and everyone is welcome.

##### Operations

- The cemetery tour was a great success and raised funds for St Richard's Hospice
- The new rainwater harvest tank has been installed in the cemetery
- Repair works to play areas at Victoria Park and Dukes Meadow have taken place
- Spring bedding has arrived and has been planted
- The entranceway bed in Rosebank Gardens has been cleared ready for new roses to be planted
- Refurbishment works to the bus shelter on North Malvern Road have taken place
- The new electric vehicle will hopefully be arriving next week

The Mayor thanked Lyndsey Davies in the office and other staff for their work in organising the Remembrance events so well.

#### **95. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE**

No written reports had been submitted. Cllr John Raine did not wish to make a verbal report.

**96. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr David Mead, MHDC Councillor for Barnards Green reported that:

- He had met with Friends of Malvern Cemeteries and discussed the works they would like to carry out at Great Malvern Cemetery
- He has a meeting planned with Citizens Advice Bureau at the end of the week
- He continues to monitor the situation at the Sunshine Centre regarding its possible relocation
- The enforcement of planning matters at the site of the former barrack stores at Qinetiq was ongoing

**97. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None.

**98. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON EVENTS**

Report CL01/23 was received and noted.

The Town Clerk informed members of the arrangements in place for the Christmas Lights switch on events, in Great Malvern, Malvern Link and Barnards Green.

A tree would be erected in all three centres this year and dressed between 20 and 22 November. Lights along shop fronts in all three areas would be checked and powered up during the same week.

***Cllr Natalie McVey joined the meeting at 6.15pm***

The Christmas Festival would take place in Great Malvern on 25 November, organised in partnership with other organisations including Malvern Hills District Council and Great Malvern Priory. There were lots of activities planned, and Father Christmas would be in his grotto all day, with some further help required from councillors to manage the queues.

Town Council staff will be working all day to manage road closures, oversee the grotto and manage the stage on Belle Vue island.

A contribution has also been made to fund the Christmas event in Malvern Link on 1 December.

***Cllr Lou Lowton joined the meeting at 6.17pm***

***It was agreed to return to agenda item 6 "Reports by County and District Council Representatives in Attendance" to allow Cllr Natalie McVey to make her report.***

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

- As Malvern Hills District Councillor for West Ward, Cllr McVey reported that:
  - There was an enforcement issue around Broadlands Drive development where lorries had been queuing outside residents' properties
  - She had been working with policing teams and WCC to get extra street lighting in the Belmont Road area where antisocial behaviour was causing concern
  - A session for hairdressers, tattoo artists and beauticians to help spot signs of domestic violence was held at the district council and was very

well attended. Positive feedback had been received and it was hoped that a similar session would be held in 2024.

- She had used some of her divisional funding to pay for the inflatable whale at the storytelling festival in Priory Park. The festival drew a lot of people into town and the whale provided an immersive storytelling experience for children and parents on the subject of plastic pollution
- There was an upcoming online session providing information and advice to hosts of Ukrainian families
- In her new role of Armed Forces Champion she would be laying a wreath at the Remembrance Commemorations on Armistice Day on behalf of Malvern Hills District Council. She thanked everyone for the hard work they had put into making sure the commemorations run smoothly
- As Worcestershire County Councillor for Malvern Trinity Division, Cllr McVey reported that:
  - Cowleigh Bank had finally reopened following the completion of roadworks
  - Safety issues on Cowleigh Road continue to be addressed, including installation of extra drainage
  - A new deer warning sign had been erected on Leigh Sinton Road following a request from local children
  - Funding of £3.5 million had been promised to WCC to improve bus services in the area, Cllr McVey would be attending a meeting regarding the reinstatement of services in Malvern Vale
  - She had awarded funding to a primary school library

#### **100. EMERGENCY DECISION MAKING PANEL**

The Chair reported that a meeting of the Emergency Decision Making Panel had been held on 12 October to consider written communications from a member of the public. The panel concluded that certain of the Town Council's policies had been breached. As a result, a letter had been sent to the individual concerned, noting the breach, and indicating how any future communications should be made.

#### **101. OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report CL02/23 was received and accepted and the Chair of Operations and Planning Committee, Cllr David Mead, presented the recommendations from the meeting held on 18 October 2023.

##### **Minute 44 – Review of Charges for Town Council Operational Services 2024/25**

It was **RESOLVED** that a 6.7% increase be applied to all cemetery charges for the year 2024/25, with resulting figures being rounded down to the nearest pound.

It was **RESOLVED** that the allotment charge for a 125 square metre plot be increased from £36 to £40.

It was **RESOLVED** that a 4.5% increase be applied to all sports charges for the year 2024/25, with resulting figures being rounded down to the nearest pound.

##### **Minute 45 – Operational Projects – Budget 2024/25**

Cllr Mead explained that due to matters which would arise from Agenda Item 14, Victoria Park Task and Finish Group, the £40,000 recommended to be allocated for

the future play area refurbishment at Victoria Park would be removed from the proposed Operational Projects 2024/25.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the following operations projects be included in the Council's budget for 2024/25:

Relocate zip wire, remove swing set, remove toddler climbing frame, remove hedgerows and old fence at Victoria Park play area.	£20,000
Install new Equality Act compliant swing set and roundabout to expand and improve play facilities at Adam Lee.	£20,000
Install new gateway entrance and replacement fencing at Adam Lee	£6,000
General bus shelter repairs	£3,000
New bins	£3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£52,000</b>

#### **Minute 46 – Vehicle/Machinery Replacement Schedule for 2024/25**

It was **RESOLVED** that £15,000 be included in the Council's Vehicle/Machinery Replacement Budget for 2024/25 for the purchase of a replacement tractor.

#### **102. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report CL03/23 was received and accepted and the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee, Cllr Iain Dawson, presented the recommendations from the meeting held on 1 November 2023.

#### **Minute 38 Dignity at Work Policy**

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Dignity at Work Policy as an update to the Council's current anti-harassment and bullying policy for employees.

#### **Minute 40 Quarterly Accounts, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter to 30 September 2023**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the quarterly accounts for the second quarter ending 30 September 2023.

#### **Minute 44 Administration Staffing Resources**

It was **RESOLVED** 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.

#### **103. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00 pm.

#### **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.

#### **104. VICTORIA PARK TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Report CL04/23 was circulated at the meeting and councillors were given time to read it thoroughly.



UNADOPTED

The Victoria Park Task and Finish Group had met on 6 November and made recommendations to Full Council.

The recommendations were discussed and **RESOLVED**.

The meeting finished at 6.55pm

.....  
(Chairman)

DRAFT

**A REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK TO  
A MEETING OF MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL  
to be held in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern  
on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00 pm**

**BUDGET 2024 - 2025**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present to Full Council, recommendations in respect of the proposed budget so that Council can discuss and agree the precept level to be set for the financial year 2024/25.
- 1.2. This report presents to Full Council a proposed budget for 2024/25 and incorporates suggestions made at the Operations and Planning Committee meeting on 18 October as well as the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 1 November. Finally, a recommendation for the precept level was made by Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting on 6 December 2023.

**2. SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Full Council is recommended to consider the following for the 2024/25 budget.

- i. **The re-forecast for 2023/24 which brings expenditure close to the budget, with a small underspend for the year and a balance being put into reserves of £324.**
- ii. **The budget for the financial year 2024/25 – attached as ‘Proposed Budget 2024 – 2025’ This shows a net expenditure of:**  
  
**£939,280 *not* taking into account any movements in Earmarked Reserves**  
  
**£828,280 taking into account movements in Earmarked Reserves and other funding**
- iii. **The precept for 2024/25 should be set at £828,500. This reflects an increase of 9.4% from the precept level in 2023/24.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The first stage in the annual budgeting process is to prepare the re-forecast. Officers carried out a review of the expenditure forecast for the current financial year taking into account the actual level of expenditure to 30 September 2023 and then forecasting the expected levels of expenditure for the final two quarters of the current financial year.
- 3.2. For the second consecutive year, there have been several challenging aspects to both the re-forecast and budget process this year. The budget for 2023/24 was set with the assumption that the Town Council offices would remain in the building on Belle Vue Terrace whilst also acknowledging that the Council’s objective was still to try and sell

the building and to build a new Community Hub at Victoria Park. The actual position has been an ever-changing one with assumptions, timescales and predicted costs changing daily even up to the present.

- 3.3. At the meeting on 1 November, Policy and Resources Committee noted that whilst the aim was to keep any increase low, costs and inflation should be set at a reasonable level to avoid any reduction in services.
- 3.4. Councillors are asked to note two significant factors which will affect the budget for 2024/25
- i) Policy and Resources Committee agreed that an increase of 6.5% should be applied in respect of the national cost of living increase. This has a significant impact on the overall budget and when calculated accounts for approximately 4.6% of the proposed precept increase.
  - ii) The budget contingency amount for 2024/25 has been increased to reflect several large projects scheduled for the year including the new community hub building in Victoria Park and works in Rose Bank Gardens.
- 3.5. In preparing the budget, the Town Clerk and Operations Manager have reviewed the re-forecast for 2023/24 in detail, looking at expenditure requirements for each individual cost heading, whilst also including recommendations put forward at the Operations and Planning Committee meeting on 18 October and the Policy and Resources meeting on 1 November, other recommendations for expenditure put forward through Committees and / or Council during the year. The latest developments in respect of the sale of Belle Vue Terrace and the new Community Hub building at Victoria Park, have also been factored in, with changes occurring as recently as Friday 1 December.
- 3.6. Policy and Resources Committee considered the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the proposed budget at their meeting on 6 December. Several small changes were recommended and have been incorporated into both the figures and this written report. Committee members noted that whilst this level of increase was not ideal, when taking into account current project commitments, it is important to have a realistic and measured budget.
- 3.7. Policy and Resources Committee are presenting the Proposed Budget for 2024 - 2025 (attached to this report) which includes the level of precept required to balance expenditure taking into account service needs, inflationary increases, the likely timetable for large projects and Council resolutions.

This budget considers the following factors:

- Inflationary factors on items such as fuel and utilities.
- The National Local Government pay agreement and associated increases.
- Committee recommendations to keep the events budget at a similar level but to slightly increase the grants and donations budget for 2024/25.
- An Asset Renewal and Refurbishment budget for the year, including the installation of a bike pump track and play area improvement works at Adam Lee.
- Purchase of a replacement tractor.
- Officers have sought to keep running costs as low as possible, whilst continuing to provide the highest standard of service.
- The overriding aim is to keep any precept increase as low as possible.

- 3.8. Following the failure to sell 28-30 Belle Vue Terrace in 2022/23 and some large variances against the anticipated budgetary position, the budget for 2023/24 included a prudent and neutral position with regards to circumstances for the financial year, assuming that income and expenditure in respect of Belle Vue Terrace building would continue as this was considered to at least be indicative of Council offices being operated throughout the budget year.
- 3.9. Strategic budget assumptions for 2024/25 have been included in the proposed budget as follows:
- i) Belle Vue Building will be sold in early January 2024, after which the Town Council will become a tenant of the first-floor offices, but no longer have responsibility for the building.
  - ii) The new Community Hub building at Victoria Park will be constructed between February 2024 and May 2024.
  - iii) A public works loan board loan would need to be taken out in April 2024.
  - iv) The Council will take steps to advertise and award a lease for a new café at Victoria Park as soon as possible. The tenant will pay rent and be responsible for costs associated with their area of the building.

#### **4. FORMAT**

- 4.1. The format of the budget statements is in line with the quarterly reporting system and shows the annual budget and re-forecast for 2023/24 and the proposed budget for 2024/25.
- 4.2. Please note that all budget figures are rounded, and this may cause any apparent small addition anomalies in the figures.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL RE-FORECAST FOR 2023/2024**

- 5.1. The National Local Government salary increase was finally agreed in November 2023 and will be included along with backpay in salary payments for December 2023. This has resulted in an increase of approximately 7% against the total salary budget, although this additional cost has been slightly offset by a vacancy on the administration team which has yet to be filled.
- 5.2. The re-forecast for 2023/24 shows expenditure being approximately £17,000 under budget against Administration. There will be lower-than-expected income during the financial year due to the sale of Belle Vue Offices, as well as an overspend against legal and professional fees and IT expenses. These costs, will, however be more than offset by savings against salaries, with a job vacancy still to be filled, lower insurance costs due to the increase in premium not being as large as anticipated and civic events due to the cancellation of the Mayor's Bonanza and Health and Well Being Fair during the year.
- 5.3. The operational re-forecast for 2023/24 shows an overspend for the year of approximately £9,000 against budget. A lower amount of income is forecast to be received both within the cemetery and at Victoria Park and the National Local Government salary increase averaging at 7% for Town Council staff has resulted in

an overspend against salary costs. This has been slightly offset by a projected underspend against grounds maintenance costs relating to items such as tree works, lining paint and bedding plants, but other cost headings are largely in line with budget.

5.4. There has been a 50% overspend against Asset Renewal and Refurbishment in the re-forecast. Despite savings being achieved against some projects, there have been a number of additional projects costs incurred during the year. These include

- Planning permission being submitted for the new community hub building at Victoria Park and some costs anticipated in respect of landscaping / utilities ahead of the build date.
- Works to improve car parking at Monksfield Lane allotment site were approved during the year at a cost of £4,350.
- The new “Malvern” tourism sign was installed in Rose Bank Gardens and monies will be taken from general reserves.
- Final works to refurbish the bus shelter outside Rose Bank Gardens were completed in this financial year, with earmarked funds being used.
- Officers have opted to bring forward the project to carry out adjustments to Victoria Park play area to facilitate the location of the new building. This is required to fit in with the new onsite works timetable as well as to relieve pressure on the budget for 2024/25.
- Overall, an overspend of £44,613 is forecast against Asset Renewal and Refurbishment.

## 6. **RE-FORECAST 2023/24**

	<b>2023/24 Budget</b>	<b>2023/24 Re-forecast</b>	<b>Underspend/ (Overspend)</b>
Administration and Events (Net)	403,162	385,784	17,378
Operations (Net)	262,413	271,158	(8,745)
Budget Contingency Fund	20,000	-	20,000
Asset Renewal / Refurbishment	89,750	134,363	(44,613)
Asset Renewal / Replacement Fund			
Additions	20,000	20,000	-
Releases	(28,750)	(28,750)	-
Special Expenditure	8,000	8,470	(470)
Expenditure before Financing	774,575	791,025	(16,450)
Financing Income	(7,600)	(15,785)	8,185
Total Costs after Financing Costs	766,975	775,240	(8,265)
<b>Less</b>			

Net Release of Earmarked Reserves	(10,000)	(18,564)	8,564
Net Costs Covered by the Precept	756,975	756,676	299
<b>Less</b> Precept	(757,000)	(757,000)	-
(Increase)/Decrease in General Reserves	(25)	(324)	299

## **BUDGET 2024/25**

### **7. INFLATION ASSUMPTIONS**

- i. General Inflation has been built into the budget at 6.7%. This is slightly lower than last year's figure of 8% but reflects the inflation rate for September 2023, as announced in October. It is difficult to predict this figure into the future given current economic uncertainty and instability, but it does not have a large impact on the overall budget.
- ii. An increase in NNDR (Business Rates) has been included at 5%.
- iii. It should be noted that staff salaries made up approximately 67% of the 2023/24 budget, therefore any inflationary increases on salaries have a significant impact on the overall budget and precept level. An average increase of 7% has been incurred during the current year as a result of the National Local Government salary increase, which was slightly above the 6% included in the budget. It should be noted that this increase is set nationally. An increase of 6.5% on all staff salaries has been included in the 2024/25 as agreed by Policy and Resources Committee.
- iv. Policy and Resources Committee suggested that inflation against utilities should be set at zero, (5% for water), a 4% increase assumed for fuel costs and 2% for contracts.
- v. One-off and individual outside purchases have been assessed by officers on an individual basis.

### **8. BUDGET SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL FIGURES (Form Ref 1)**

	<b>Revised Forecast 2023/2024</b>	<b>Proposed Budget 2024/2025</b>	<b>(Increase)/ Decrease In costs</b>
Ongoing Running Costs	656,942	725,893	(68,951)
Budget Contingency Fund	0	60,000	(60,000)
Asset Renewal and Refurbishment	134,363	132,000	2,363

Vehicle / Machinery Replacement Reserve	(8,750)	5,000	(13,750)
Special Expenditure	8,470	8,700	(230)
Finance Costs	(15,785)	7,687	(23,472)
Movements in Reserves	(18,564)	(111,000)	92,436
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b><u>756,676</u></b>	<b><u>828,280</u></b>	<b><u>(71,604)</u></b>

- 8.1. Costs are proposed to increase by £71,604 when compared with the revised forecast for 2023/24.
- 8.2. Expenditure on administration services has increased by approximately 15% from the re-forecast in the 2024/25 budget. This largely relates to inflationary increases for the nationally agreed salary increase, an assumption that the administration team will be fully staffed for the year and recognises that income will fall as a result of the movement of the Town Council offices to Victoria Park during the year. Operational costs are expected to rise by 4%. It should be noted that an increase in the budget contingency fund of £60,000 has been included in 2024/25 to cover additional costs which may be incurred for Victoria Park and Rose Bank Gardens.
- 8.3. Officers have carried out detailed reviews of all costs being incurred, but with inflationary increases unavoidable and certain expenditure required to ensure a good quality of service delivery, it has proved very difficult to make any further cuts.
- 8.4. The Ongoing Running Costs are broken down into Administration Costs (Form Ref 2) and Operation Costs (Form Ref 3)

## **9. ADMINISTRATION COSTS (Form Ref 2)**

- 9.1. The budget at £443,825 for 2024/25 shows an increase in costs of £58,041 from the current year's re-forecast of £385,784 and an increase of £40,663 from the original budget for 2023/24.
- 9.2. It should be noted that the new community hub building at Victoria Park and all associated costs and income will be included in the administration budget, with expenditure relating to the recreational areas of the park remaining under operational costs.
- 9.3. **Income**

With the sale of 28-30 Belle Vue Terrace and the move to new premises at Victoria Park during the year, income will fall in the 2024/25 financial year.

Income of £25,750, is broken down as follows:

Rent from Community Hub Café	15,000
Rent from Community Hub Meeting Room	7,500
Income from Hanging Baskets	2,000
Malvern in Bloom and Other Sponsorship	1,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>£25,750</b>

The budget assumes that 28-30 Belle Vue Terrace will be sold ahead of the 2024/25 financial year and therefore no further income will be received. The budget also assumes that the new community hub building will be constructed and finished by summer 2024 and that income will start to be received from the café and meeting room for at least some of the financial year.

#### 9.4. **Salaries**

Costs for the 2023/24 re-forecast are under budget. An increase on salaries of 6% had been included for the current financial year, but when The National Employers for Local Government announced the pay settlement for the year in mid-November, it was approximately 7% averaged out across all staff. This overspend has been offset by a vacancy for a Communications and Events Officer with the position remaining unfilled since July 2023.

The administration salary budget for 2024/25 has been set at £199,083 and includes the following provisions:

- An administration team of 4 full time equivalent staff members alongside the Town Clerk.
- A 6.5% increase on all salaries from 1 April 2024. This is governed by the Local Government Employers National agreement and is not at the discretion of the Council.
- Following a recent Council agreement, the Events and Communications Officer post has now been made a full time post.
- A review of staff salaries is due to take place in the next financial year, but there are currently no major changes expected and therefore budget costs are based upon current staff hours and paygrades.

#### 9.5. **Overtime**

A very small amount has been spent on overtime during the current year and with most administration staff on contracts allowing for time in lieu to be claimed back, rather than receive payment for overtime, no costs have been anticipated for 2024/25.



9.6. **Employment Related Costs**

Employment-related costs at £46,692 have been under budget, again due to the ongoing staff vacancy during the 2023/24 financial year. The amount included in the budget at £59,605 is an increase against both the original budget and re-forecast and reflects both inflationary increases on salaries as well as the employment of a full-time Events and Communications Officer from 1 April 2024. Employer pension contributions will remain at 20.2%.

**Temporary Staff**

Once again, there has not been a budget included for this cost heading as when the office is fully staffed with 5.0 full time equivalent staff members, it should be possible to cover staff holidays and short-term sickness absence.

9.7. **Recruitment Costs**

There have been no recruitment costs incurred during the current financial year as jobs can be advertised using online sites at nil charge. A small amount of £50 has been included in the 2024/25 budget to cover the recruitment of one member of staff during the year.

9.8. **Utilities**

The re-forecast for 2023/24 is slightly under the original budget. Although inflationary factors have resulted in a large increase in utility costs, it is anticipated that Belle Vue Terrace will be sold before the end of the financial year, thus reducing costs. It is incredibly difficult to estimate the budget for 2024/25 as this will include utility costs for the new building and offices at Victoria Park. The presence of PV panels at this location should reduce costs but as these are unknown at this time, an estimate of £10,000 has been assumed.

9.9. **NNDR (Business Rates)**

NNDR costs have been over the budgeted level for 2023/24, the increase in costs was 5% against a budget assumption of 4% and in addition charges have been incurred for the middle flat which is currently empty. The budget for 2024/25, at £10,000 is an estimate of charges whilst the Council remain as a tenant at Belle Vue and then when the administration offices are moved to Victoria Park.

9.10. **Cleaning**

The re-forecast for cleaning costs is £1,604 under budget, largely due to reduced costs for the fourth and final quarter when the Council will be a tenant at Belle Vue, rather than the landlord. Cleaning costs for 2024/25 have been increased to £8,500 and cover general cleaning costs, the hygiene contract, cleaning materials and rubbish removal, once again to cover the period that the Council remain as a tenant in Belle Vue and also when the offices move to Victoria Park.

9.11. **Maintenance / Hire of Buildings**

Re-forecast costs against this budget heading are approximately double that in the original budget. Although maintenance costs will be lower than anticipated, there will

be costs incurred for leasing the current office space for the fourth quarter of the year. The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £13,950 to allow for the rental of office space and the Council chamber for a period before relocation to Victoria Park as well as some costs for signage, relocating security and fire systems and setting up new contracts at Victoria Park.

**9.12. Telephones**

The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £3,420 and therefore at a similar level to both the re-forecast and original budget. There are no changes anticipated for usage of landlines and internet and therefore costs should remain stable.

**9.13. Stationery, Postage, Office Supplies**

Costs have been lower than anticipated in this financial year with expenditure on photocopying charges and stationery being under budget. The budget for 2024/25 year has been set at £2,310, at a level between the original budget and the re-forecast.

**9.14. Public Relations and Advertising**

Costs have been higher than anticipated this year, due to an increase in printing costs for the quarterly newsletter during the year. The budget for 2024/25 at £6,150 will allow for four editions of the newsletter to be printed and distributed and website maintenance costs are anticipated to remain at a similar level to the current year.

**9.15. Insurance**

When setting the budget for 2023/24, the Council's insurance brokers advised officers to allow for a large increase in the premium due to industry-related factors forcing the cost of Council insurance premiums up. It was pleasing news when the contract renewal in August 2023 resulted in only a small increase and therefore budget savings. The budget for 2024/25 at £22,500 allows for another small increase in premium, although officers are mindful that the sale of Belle Vue Terrace may reduce premiums further.

**9.16. Grants and Donations**

Re-forecast costs at £35,511 are £6,539 under the budgeted amount as there will be no community support grant paid to Community Action following their departure from Belle Vue Terrace in November 2023 (no rental will be received either as this was a reciprocal agreement). The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £39,150 which recognises no further grant payments to Community Action and all other grant funding at a similar level except for large grants, which Policy and Resources Committee have suggested should be increased from £10,000 to £18,000.

The budget for 2024/25 includes the following.

Malvern Citizens Advice Bureau	£16,000
Small Grants	£5,000
Large Grants	£18,000

Other Miscellaneous	£150
<b>Total</b>	<b>£39,150</b>

**9.17. Events**

The events budget for the current year shows a projected underspend of approximately £11,194. This underspend is largely due to the cancellation of the Health and Wellbeing Fair in May and the Mayor's Bonanza in August.

Officers have critically reviewed the budget for 2024/2025 in the light of budget constraints. Costs for Christmas Lights will increase as a result as having dressed trees in Great Malvern, Malvern Link and Barnards Green as well as additional lights on Belle Vue Island. A reduced budget of £5,000 is suggested for the Mayor's Bonanza, along with £7,000 for the 18-week bands in the park programme and an additional £500 for Malvern in Bloom to cover higher costs for hanging baskets and troughs. Costs for the Health and Wellbeing Fair have been reduced to reflect cost savings by having an indoor event. All other costs have remained at a similar level.

Event	2024/25 Budget
Bands in the Park (to include Brass Bands, Rock and Pop, a Steel Band and Jazz / Country / Blues styles)	£7,000
Malvern in Bloom	£7,500
Christmas Light Switch On	£6,050
Erection and dismantling of Christmas lights, repairs and electricity costs.	£17,700
Mayor's August Bonanza	£5,000
Armed Forces Day	£500
Remembrance	£500
Health and Wellbeing Indoor Event	£250
Mayor's Charity Walk	£1,000
Events General	£1,000
Town Crier	£300
<b>Total</b>	<b>£46,800</b>

**9.18. Election Costs**

Following Full Council elections in 2023, of which only one ward was contested, it is assumed that there will be no further costs in 2024/25.

**9.19. Training**

There has been a very small overspend in the current re-forecast as a result of new councillors undertaking training. A budget of £1,000 for training is once again being proposed for 2024/25; to include both staff and councillor training.

**9.20. Legal and Professional**

The re-forecast for 2023/24 displays an anticipated overspend of £21,238. This is due to fees incurred in connection with marketing Belle Vue Building as well as legal costs in connection with the land slippage in Rose Bank Gardens. It is hoped that costs will return to a more normal level in 204/25 and Officers are proposing to set the budget at £8,250 with audit fees at £3,250, general legal fees at £5,000 respectively.

**9.21. Consultation Fees**

The re-forecast includes £350 for a public consultation on the skateboard park at Victoria Park which will take place during the final quarter. No further budget has been allocated for 2024/25.

**9.22. Leasing Costs**

The contract for the lease of a colour photocopier was due for renewal in 2023 and therefore costs were increased from £1,400 to £1,500 to cover a possible increase. With a move of offices scheduled for summer 2023, officers decided to extend the existing contract by a year, thus reducing costs in the re-forecast. An amount of £1,500 has again been put in next year's budget to cover an increase in costs following a change of lease agreement in 2024.

**9.23. IT Expenses**

Re-forecast costs for the current financial year are £2,721 over budget due to increasing costs for SAGE support, data protection licences and email exchange accounts. Costs for the IT maintenance contract have remained in line with the original budget.

The budget for 2024/25 at £12,317 has included an increase in contract costs for the IT maintenance contract as well as continuation of the same level of monthly licence costs for SAGE, Data Protection and Microsoft Office 365.

**9.24. Office Equipment**

There has been limited expenditure in the current year and the 2024/25 budget for office equipment has been set based on re-forecast costs for the franking machine lease, whilst including £10,000 to allow for new office furniture in the community hub building. This replaces the ageing furniture currently used whilst supporting staff welfare.

**9.25. Councillor Expenses**

Costs for Mayoral and Councillors' Expenses have been low during the current year, with a re-forecast of £1,970 against the original budget of £3,350.

The budget for 2024/25 includes £500 for Councillors' expenses and £3,000 for the Mayor's Allowance.

**9.26. Other Expenses**

The re-forecast at £11,445 is just £248 below the original budget.

The 2024/25 budget at £11,115 covers various costs including subscriptions as agreed at Annual Council £3,735, Bank Charges £1,600, Staff Welfare £1,050, Health and Safety Expenditure £2,500, Payroll Bureau costs £1,500, Mayoral Photograph at £340 and other miscellaneous at £390.

It should be noted that costs for the hire of a meeting room are no longer required as the Council will use its own facilities at Belle Vue Terrace and then at Victoria Park.

**10. OPERATION COSTS (Form Ref 3)**

10.1. The re-forecast net cost for operations is £271,158 representing an overspend of £8,745 against the original budget for 2023/24 of £262,413. The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £282,068, this is an increase of £10,910 from this year's re-forecast but reflects anticipated increases against salaries and grounds maintenance costs. Councillors are also asked to note that costs for the building at Victoria Park will now sit in the Administration side of the annual budget.

10.2. The operation costs are summarised over the following headings:

Allotments	Form Ref 5
Cemetery	Form Ref 6
Maintenance of Other Town Council Grounds	Form Ref 7
Leisure and Recreation	Form Ref 8
Miscellaneous Services	Form Ref 9

10.3. Comment is made against the budget for each of the above headings.

10.4. Committee should note that operational wages are included in the cost of Maintenance of Other Town Council Grounds.

## **11. INCREASE ON CHARGES FOR SERVICES**

Following a recommendation from Operations and Planning Committee, Full Council agreed that the following rises in charges should be included in the budget for 2024/25:

- i) A 6.7% increase be applied to all cemetery charges for the year 2024/25, with resulting figures being rounded down to the nearest pound.
- ii) Allotment charges for a 125 square metre plot be increased from £36 to £40.
- iii) Sports charges should be increased by 4.5% for the year 2024/25, with resulting figures being rounded down to the nearest pound.

## **12. ALLOTMENTS (Form Ref 5)**

	<b>Re-Forecast 2023/24</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b>
Income	5,746	6,456
Costs	1,392	1,602
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(£4,354)</b>	<b>(£4,854)</b>

### **12.1 Income**

It has been agreed that allotment charges will be increased from £36.00 for a 125 square metre plot to £40 in 2024/25. An annual payment of £250 will continue to be received from Monksfield Allotment Association, because the site is self-managed.

### **12.2 Utilities**

Re-forecast costs have been above budget during the year due to a water leak and therefore the budget for 2024/25 has been set at the same level as in 2023/24 when it is hoped that costs will return to a more normal level.

### **12.3 Maintenance**

Maintenance costs are under budget in the re-forecast, as there have been minimal works required at both Knapp Way and Goodwood Road. Officers have kept the same maintenance budget for 2024/25 to ensure that works can be carried out during the year to keep both sites in good order.

**13. CEMETERY (Form Ref 6)**

	<b>Re-Forecast 2023/24</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b>
Income	69,379	74,028
Costs	24,094	25,286
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(£45,285)</b>	<b>(£48,742)</b>

**13.1. Income**

The Operations and Planning Committee reviewed cemetery charges and following a recommendation to Council, it has been agreed to increase all charges by 6.7% for the period 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025.

The re-forecast level of funeral income has been slightly lower than expected in this financial year against an original budget of £71,500. Officers have included a budget of £74,027 for 2024/25, which includes a 6.7% increase on re-forecast income.

**13.2. Utilities**

The re-forecast for utility costs is largely in line with budget. The cost of electricity is under budget, but both gas and water costs in the cemetery have increased more than expected. The proposed budget for 2024/25 has applied an inflationary increase of 5% against water costs.

**13.3. NNDR (Business Rates)**

The 2023/24 budget included an allowance for an increase of 4% in NNDR, but when bills were received, the increase was 5%. An increase of 5% on business rates has been applied against re-forecast costs for the 2024/25 budget as recommended by committee and in line with other sites.

**13.4. Cleaning**

Costs have remained close to budget during this financial year and have been kept the same for the 2024/25 budget.

**13.5. Maintenance of Buildings**

Re-forecast costs are £810 against a budget of £1,200 and include alarm related costs and a small amount of building maintenance.

The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £900 to cover £450 for alarm costs and £450 for building maintenance works. Larger scale refurbishments are scheduled through the Council's asset refurbishment project budget as required and there have been two larger projects connected to cemetery buildings in the current year.

**13.6. Communication Costs**

An overspend of £164 is predicted against communication costs in the current year. The budget for 2024/25 has been reduced to £500 as officers have been reviewing the current telephone and broadband charges and will be moving the contract to a new provider to reduce costs.

**13.7. Grounds Maintenance**

Skip Hire and Rubbish Removal	5,000
Bedding Plants	1,250
Tree / Grounds Maintenance	750
Materials and Consumables	500
Small Sundry Equipment and Hire	550
Fuel and Oil	5,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13,250</b>

Expenditure on Grounds Maintenance is forecast to be under the budget of £14,050 by £1,770. There have been underspends against skip hire, rubbish removal, bedding plants and fuel and oil costs during the year.

The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £13,250 which is £800 lower than this year's budget due to savings on the annual bedding tender and less fuel and oil being used following the switch to using electric tools.

**13.8. Training Costs**

The Operations Manager has scheduled operational staff training for the final quarter of this financial year. Training remains an essential part of staff development and therefore the training budget has been kept at £1,000 for 2024/25 to fully commit to the on-going training courses required by operational staff and in particular new staff members.

**13.9. Other Expenses**

The 2023/24 re-forecast at £445 is the Council's Institute of Cemetery Management subscription as well as organist's fees. Officers have set the budget for 2024/25 at £450 which is the same as the original budget but with a small increase against subscription costs.

**14. MAINTENANCE OF OTHER TOWN COUNCIL GROUNDS (Form Ref 7)**

The budget of £321,750 for net expenditure on maintenance of other Town Council grounds in 2024/25 includes the total salary cost of grounds maintenance staff. This represents an increase of £16,701 against the re-forecast but allows for an inflationary



increase on salaries, non-domestic rates and fuel as well as an increase in grounds maintenance costs.

	<b>Re-Forecast 2023/24</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b>
Income	9,722	8,750
Costs	314,501	330,230
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>304,779</b>	<b>321,480</b>

#### 14.1. **Income**

Re-forecast income is expected to be approximately £700 above budget. Although sponsorship income and receipts from the Lengthsman scheme have been lower than anticipated, a payment for access across land has resulted in additional income.

The budget for 2024/25 is suggested at £8,750. This includes £3,300 of income from the Lengthsman scheme, a reduced amount for sponsorship and similar income for both mowing and maintenance works at Great Malvern library.

#### 14.2. **Staff Salaries**

The budget is based on 8 full-time staff members, including an Operations Manager and an additional 4 part-time staff.

Costs in the 2023/24 re-forecast are £8,216 above the original budget. The National Local Government salary agreement was finalised in November and has resulted in an average increase against salaries of 7%, higher than the 6% included in the original budget. The operational team has been fully staffed throughout this financial year.

The operational salary budget for 2024/25 has been set at £238,000 and includes the following provisions:

- A fully staffed operational team of 7 full time staff alongside the Operations Manager
- A 6.5% increase on all salaries from 1 April 2024. This is governed by the Local Government Employers National agreement and is not at the discretion of the Council.
- Part time staffing requirements such as weekend football, the clock winder, gate keepers at Great Malvern Cemetery and at the basketball courts.
- A member of operational staff now works at the Sunday Music in the Park concerts during the summer.
- Benchmarking of staff salaries has been agreed by Policy and Resources Committee. No amounts have been included for this review as the results are unknown. Budget costs are based upon a projection for current staff hours and paygrades.

**14.3. Overtime**

Overtime for the current year is forecast to be £2,879 under budget due to the cancellation of several Town Council events during the year. The Town Clerk and Operations Manager have carefully reviewed the overtime requirements and budget for 2024/25 and feel that a budget of £10,500 is what is required to cover the overtime required for call out duties, early morning watering during the summer and staffing a full calendar of events in 2024/25.

**14.4. Employment Related**

Employment-related costs have been £6,405 above budget. This overspend is linked to the local government salary increase and due to an additional member of operational staff joining the pension scheme during the year. The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £54,124 which takes into account that Town Council Employer pension fund contributions will remain at 20.2% as from 1 April 2024.

**14.5. Temporary Staff**

There have been no temporary staffing costs during the 2023/24 financial year as the operational team have been fully staffed and able to cover absences due to holiday and sickness. Officers have included a reduced amount of £500 in the budget for 2024/25 as this will cover a week of emergency cover should it be required.

**14.6. Staff Travelling**

Staff travelling costs are forecast to be under budget for the 2023/24 year, but the budget for 2024/25 has been kept at £1,600 in line with the original budget.

**14.7. Telephones**

The mobile phone contracts for Operational staff were reviewed in early 2023 when some staff opted to use their own phones rather than carry a second council owned phone. The original budget for 2023/24 was slightly under the amount required and therefore the budget for 2024/25 has been set at £636 in line with re-forecast costs. No change in contract price is anticipated.

**14.8. Grounds Maintenance**

The re-forecast for 2023/24 is expected to be £3,549 under budget for the year. There have been underspends and therefore savings against bedding costs, tree maintenance and general miscellaneous maintenance.

The budget for 2024/25 is suggested at £8,760. This allows for slightly lower costs for annual bedding plants with more permanent planting being used, whilst keeping other costs at a similar level to the current financial year.

Planting and Bedding Costs	1,250
Rose Bank Gardens Maintenance	500
Tree Maintenance	5,500

Miscellaneous Maintenance	500
Roundabout General	150
Materials and Consumables	860
<b>Total</b>	<b>£8,760</b>

#### 14.9. **Equipment Running Costs**

Equipment running costs are forecast to be slightly under budget for the current financial year as a result of lower-than-expected hire costs and fuel requirements. The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £9,750 with a reduced budget for grave digger hire and lower costs for plant fuel and oil as a result of the switch to electric tools.

#### 14.10. **Vehicle Running Costs**

Vehicle running expenses are forecast to be slightly over budget following higher-than-expected costs for the maintenance of the Mitsubishi truck during the year. Fuel costs have been lower than expected as inflationary rises have not been as high as anticipated. The budget for 2024/25 at £6,360 is lower than both the original budget and the re-forecast with lower fuel costs reflecting the introduction of an electric vehicle during the year.

### 15. **LEISURE AND RECREATION (Form Ref 8)**

	<b>Re-Forecast 2023/24</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b>
Income	7,648	7,738
Expenditure	16,746	15,311
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>£9,098</b>	<b>£7,573</b>

#### 15.1. **Income**

Leisure and Recreation income is projected to be approximately £5,000 under budget for the 2023/24 financial year. This is due to the loss of projected income from Victoria Park from an ice cream tender as well as lower than anticipated football income.

The income budget for 2024/25 has been set at £7,738 which is a similar level to the re-forecast. This includes football income from Dukes Meadow and Lower Howsell, rental from the bowls club at Victoria Park, ATC at Dukes Meadow and Malvern Ramblers Cricket Club. All income from the new community hub at Victoria Park has been included in the administration side of the budget.

Full Council agreed that there would be an increase of 4.5% on sports hire charges in the next financial year. This has been included in the budgeted figures.

**15.2. Utilities**

Re-forecast costs at £3,755 are £534 under the original budget and reflect the rebilling of utility costs at Dukes Meadow to a football team during the current financial year.

The budget for 2024/25 has been set at the much-reduced level of £875. The budget allows for utility costs at Lower Howsell pavilion but assumes that all costs relating to the new building at Victoria Park are in the administration budget. It is also assumed that utility costs at Dukes Meadow will be covered by the football team who have a lease agreement at the pavilion.

**15.3. NNDR (Business Rates)**

Re-forecast costs are lower than anticipated due to lower bills in respect of Victoria Park. The budget for business rates in 2024/25 has been set using an inflationary increase of 5% against re-forecast costs. NNDR is payable for pavilions at Lower Howsell and Dukes Meadow as well as the car park at Victoria Park.

**15.4. Maintenance of Buildings**

Maintenance work at Dukes Meadow has resulted in a small projected overspend in the re-forecast for the year. The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £500 to cover works at Lower Howsell and Dukes Meadow pavilions only.

**15.5. Grounds Maintenance**

Re-forecast costs for Grounds Maintenance at £6,114 are £781 under the original budget for the year. There have been savings made against line marking paint and pitch maintenance, but otherwise other costs are in line with those expected.

An increased budget of £7,395 is proposed for 2024/25. This will cover pitch maintenance at Lower Howsell and Dukes Meadow, purchase of lining paint, as well as a slightly increased play area maintenance budget.

Pitch Maintenance Costs	600
Sports Equipment Costs	50
Lining Paint	1,185
General Repair and Maintenance to Play Areas	5,460
Materials and Consumables	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,395</b>

**15.6. Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment of play areas is an essential item in the annual budget. Re-forecast costs at £66 per site will result in an overspend of £91 for the year. The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £1,016 which includes an increase of £2 per site.

**16. MISCELLANEOUS (Form Ref 9)**

- 16.1. Re-forecast costs are fairly close to budget and include gas lamp maintenance, repairs to Barnards Green clock, bus shelter maintenance as well as electricity costs for various clocks, bus shelters and the former fountain area at Hampden Road in Malvern Link.

The budget for 2024/25 has been reduced to £6,610 to include ongoing gas lamp maintenance costs alongside estimated utility costs for all of the sites, many of which are on an unmetered supply costing.

**17. ASSET RENEWAL PROGRAMME (Form Ref 10)**

**17.1. Current Financial Year:**

Expenditure is now forecast at £134,363 against the original budget of £89,750. This is a 50% overspend against budget, but includes some projects carried forward from previous years and others agreed by Full Council during the year. The main variances are as follows;

- Operational Projects as agreed by Operations and Planning Committee on 18 October, included works for adjustments to the current play area at Victoria Park to facilitate the location of the new community hub building. The latest schedule of works has made it necessary to carry out these adjustment works earlier than anticipated and therefore bring costs into the re-forecast for 2023/24. The latest estimate of costs is £12,000 and the bringing forward of this amount has the added benefit of reducing pressure on the budget for 2024/25.
- Expenditure of £25,000 is forecast for the Victoria Park Community Hub project. This includes £15,000 of funds which have been spent on obtaining planning permission and a further £10,000 which is due to be spent on works connected to landscaping and utility connections during the final quarter.
- Council agreed during the year to carry out works to improve car parking areas at Monksfield Lane and these were completed at a cost of £4,350.
- Final works to refurbish the bus shelter outside Rose Bank Gardens were carried out during this financial year with funds released from Earmarked Reserves to offset the cost.
- The Malvern Tourism sign was installed in Rose Bank Gardens during the first quarter, again with funds being taken from Earmarked Reserves.
- Projects to refurbish the cemetery lodge and construct a new timber building in the cemetery yard will be completed during the final quarter savings achieved against budget.

**17.2. Proposed Budget 2024/25:**

An asset renewal and refurbishment budget of £117,000 is proposed for 2024/25 following recommendations from Operations and Planning Committee and approval by Full Council.

Adam Lee	Installation of new bike pump track	£85,000
Adam Lee	Install new EA compliant swing set and roundabout to expand and improve play facilities at Adam Lee.	£20,000
Adam Lee	Install new gateway entrance and replacement fencing at Adam Lee	£6,000
Bus Shelter	General bus shelter repairs	£3,000
Bins	New bins	£3,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£117,000</b>

**18. VEHICLE / MACHINERY REPLACEMENT FUND**

- 18.1. The budget for 2023/24 included the fourteenth year of the accruals fund towards the replacement of vehicles and machinery. This fund is designed to put funds aside year on year for replacement of large items such as vehicles and machinery and to smooth the precept by eliminating the need for large funds to be raised in one year.
- 18.2. The 2023/24 budget allowed for an increased amount of £20,000 to be placed into the reserve to build funds up in preparation for several large purchases in future years. £28,750 will be released from this reserve during the year to offset the purchase of the new electric vehicle.
- 18.3. Operations and Planning Committee agreed the following for the 2024/25 budget year.
- The amount being put into the Vehicle /Machinery replacement reserve should remain at £20,000.
  - Funds should be released during the year for the purchase of a new tractor at £15,000. The fund smooths expenditure and reduces the chances of large precept increases being required in the future.

**19. CONTINGENCY FUND**

- 19.1. The Council introduced a budget contingency fund into its annual budget in 2018/19 to cover any additional, emergency, or unforeseen expenditure during the year.
- 19.2. Although no specific funds have been used from this fund during the current financial year, officers have increased the budget contingency to £60,000 for 2024/25. This may seem like a large increase, but it is felt prudent to include this amount as a contingency as it will allow funding to cover likely extra expenditure which may be incurred for works related to the new community hub building at Victoria Park as well as works in Rose Bank Gardens.

## 20. SPECIAL PENSIONS EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING COSTS

- 20.1. The re-forecast of £8,470 is £470 over the budgeted amount. The budget for 2024/25 has been set at £8,700 to allow for an inflationary increase against special pension costs. These are payable for the life of the pension.
- 20.2. Interest received from the Town Council's investments has been increasing throughout the year in line with nationally rising interest rates. The re-forecast for interest received is more than double that anticipated in the budget and officers have included £15,000 within the 2024/25 budget which allows for a slight fall in interest rates next year.
- 20.3. The budget for 2024/25 needs to include loan repayment costs as a loan from the Public Works Loan Board is part of the financing of the new building at Victoria Park. Estimated repayment costs have been included from April 2024 and amount to £22,687 over the year.

## 21. RESERVES / OTHER FINANCING

- 21.1. An amount of £111,000 has been assumed in the budget to include releases from reserves, along with use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 monies to offset the costs of projects during the year.
- 21.2. When setting the level of precept, it is essential to consider the amount of Reserves held by the Council. CIPFA guidelines state that it is highly desirable at year end for a council to hold 25% of its precept in general reserves. This is because at year end the Council will have three months (25% of the year) before the next part of the precept is received to fund further expenditure. Slight fluctuations around this 25% level may be acceptable if the levels of Earmarked Reserves are high, but Council should be mindful that the purpose of Earmarked Reserves is to be spent on specific projects. As such they should not be substituted for General Reserves which hold no specific purpose and are floating funds waiting to be spent on budgeted expenditure or on any emergency expenditure.

## 22. CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL TAX BASE AND ITS IMPLICATION ON A BAND D CHARGE

- 22.1. A Band D equivalent Council Tax Charge is calculated as follows:

Malvern Town Council precept

divided by

The Tax Base (which is the number of Band D equivalent households in Malvern Town)

- 22.2. In 2023/24, the Band D Council Tax Charge was calculated as follows

Precept	£757,000	
	<hr/>	
Council Tax Base	11,117.83	= £68.09

- 22.3. The Council have not yet been given the Council Tax Base figures for 2024/25, but if the precept increases by 9.4% and there are no changes to the tax base, the Council Tax charge will be

Precept	£828,500	
	<hr/>	
Council Tax Base	11,117.83	= £74.52

This is an increase of £6.43 for the year or 9.4%

Changes in the Council tax base are very hard to predict, particularly in the current economic situation. It seems very likely that given the houses being built within the town that the Council tax base may increase, thus spreading the precept over more households and reducing the charge, however if individuals suffering hardship begin to claim Council tax relief, then this reduces the Council tax base.

- 22.4. The increase in tax base in 2023/24 was approximately 240 and should a similar increase occur again, the Council tax charge would be

Precept	£828,500	
	<hr/>	
Council Tax Base	11,358	= £72.94

This is an increase of £4.85 or 7.1%

## **23. CONCLUSION**

- 23.1 Members are asked to consider the recommendations at 2. of this report.
- 23.2 The Proposed Budget for 2024/25 includes a suggested precept level of £828,500 which is put before the committee for debate and decision. A precept level of £828,500 represents an 9.4% increase on a Band D Council Tax Charge. Should there be any increase in house numbers in the Town Council area, the actual Band D household charge will reduce, and the percentage increase will be less. It is hoped that up-to-date tax base information can be provided soon.
- 23.3 The overriding aim of the budget process is to keep any increase in Council tax as low as possible, whilst ensuring that quality of service delivery is maintained. Councillors are asked to be mindful of the extent of possible expenditure in relation to large projects which will be taking place in 2024. This will have the effect of reducing the Council's reserves and therefore a prudent and sensible precept level must be set to avoid any further pressure on expenditure and service delivery.
- 23.4 Officers have worked to keep costs as low as possible, but Committee is asked to be mindful that many overhead costs and in particular salary costs are increasing and precept decisions have to be made by balancing the need to cover running costs, the scale and scope of large capital projects, the use and level of general reserves and setting an overall budget which is sustainable when looking at the long-term financial future of the Town Council.

Author: Linda Blake  
Town Clerk



**MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**  
**PROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025**

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## BUDGET SUMMARY

PROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
<b>ONGOING REVENUE COSTS</b>						
Administration (Net)	443,825	166,245	124,087	95,452	385,784	403,162
Operations (Net)	282,068	131,800	76,181	63,177	271,158	262,413
Budget Contingency Fund	60,000	-	-	-	-	20,000
<b>TOTAL ONGOING REVENUE COSTS</b>	<b>785,893</b>	<b>298,045</b>	<b>200,268</b>	<b>158,629</b>	<b>656,942</b>	<b>685,575</b>
<b>ASSET RENEWAL / REFURBISHMENT</b>	<b>132,000</b>	<b>41,613</b>	<b>30,750</b>	<b>62,000</b>	<b>134,363</b>	<b>89,750</b>
<b>VEHICLE / MACHINERY REPLACEMENT FUND</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>
	(15,000)	-	(28,750)	-	(28,750)	(28,750)
<b>SPECIAL PENSIONS EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>8,700</b>	<b>4,235</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>2,117</b>	<b>8,470</b>	<b>8,000</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE before financing</b>	<b>931,593</b>	<b>353,893</b>	<b>209,386</b>	<b>227,746</b>	<b>791,025</b>	<b>774,575</b>
<b>FINANCING COSTS:</b>						
Interest Received	(15,000)	(7,385)	(4,200)	(4,200)	(15,785)	(7,600)
Loan Repayments	22,687	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL FINANCING COSTS</b>	<b>7,687</b>	<b>(7,385)</b>	<b>(4,200)</b>	<b>(4,200)</b>	<b>(15,785)</b>	<b>(7,600)</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE after financing</b>	<b>939,280</b>	<b>346,508</b>	<b>205,186</b>	<b>223,546</b>	<b>775,240</b>	<b>766,975</b>
<b>(FROM) EARMARKED RESERVES</b>						
OTHER FUNDING	(111,000)	(18,564)	-	-	(18,564)	(10,000)
<b>TO EARMARKED RESERVES</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>PRECEPT</b>	<b>(828,500)</b>	<b>(378,500)</b>	<b>(189,250)</b>	<b>(189,250)</b>	<b>(757,000)</b>	<b>(757,000)</b>
<b>BALANCE (TO) / FROM RESERVES</b>	<b>(220)</b>	<b>(50,556)</b>	<b>15,936</b>	<b>34,296</b>	<b>(324)</b>	<b>(25)</b>

ADMINISTRATION AND  
EVENTSPROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
INCOME	25,750	26,294	11,368	52	37,714	60,122
EXPENDITURE:						
Salaries	199,083	80,298	44,192	40,015	164,505	176,927
Overtime	-	-	59	-	59	600
Employment Related	59,605	23,496	12,208	10,988	46,692	52,304
Temporary Staff	-	-	-	-	-	-
Recruitment.	50	-	-	-	-	50
OCCUPANCY						
Utilities	10,000	8,836	8,100	-	16,936	18,925
Rates	10,000	5,614	2,807	2,807	11,228	9,159
Cleaning	8,500	4,071	1,850	625	6,546	8,150
Maintenance of Buildings	13,950	964	669	3,750	5,383	2,630
COMMUNICATION COSTS						
Telephones	3,420	1,848	925	719	3,492	3,692
Stationery, Postage	2,310	746	565	565	1,876	2,960
Public Relations and Advertising.	6,150	3,640	1,520	1,520	6,680	5,658
INSURANCE	22,500	9,639	5,250	5,250	20,139	37,000
GRANTS & DONATIONS	39,150	11,798	10,213	13,500	35,511	42,050
CIVIC EVENTS.	46,800	16,526	19,184	5,004	40,714	51,908
OTHER COSTS:						
Election Costs	-	5,500	-	-	5,500	15,000
Training	1,000	501	150	400	1,051	1,000
Legal & Professional	8,250	4,863	20,812	3,813	29,488	8,250
Consultancy Fees	-	-	-	350	350	350
Leasing	1,500	680	340	340	1,360	1,500
IT Expenses	12,317	5,951	3,060	3,060	12,071	9,350
Office Equipment	10,525	251	126	125	502	775
Mayors & Councillors Expenses	3,350	295	838	837	1,970	3,350
Other Expenses	11,115	7,022	2,587	1,836	11,445	11,696
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION COSTS.	469,575	192,539	135,455	95,504	423,498	463,284
NET ADMINISTRATION COSTS	443,825	166,245	124,087	95,452	385,784	403,162

## OPERATIONS SUMMARY

PROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
INCOME	96,971	36,748	28,868	26,879	92,495	99,179
EXPENDITURE:						
Normal pay	238,000	103,767	64,832	55,880	224,479	216,263
Overtime	10,500	5,692	2,349	880	8,921	11,800
Employment Related	54,124	27,465	15,161	12,742	55,368	48,963
Temporary Staff	500	-	-	-	-	1,000
Staff Travelling	1,600	679	350	350	1,379	1,600
OCCUPANCY						
Utilities	9,855	2,392	3,884	6,150	12,426	12,956
Rates	9,761	4,648	2,325	2,323	9,296	10,195
Cleaning	132	66	33	33	132	125
Maintenance of Buildings	1,400	1,009	211	212	1,432	1,700
COMMUNICATION COSTS						
Telephones	1,136	798	401	401	1,600	1,340
Stationery, Postage	-	-	-	-	-	-
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	33,455	11,196	10,629	6,900	28,725	35,305
EQUIPMENT RUNNING COSTS	9,750	5,694	2,480	1,920	10,094	10,854
VEHICLE RUNNING EXPENSES	6,360	4,847	1,326	1,440	7,613	7,189
OTHER COSTS:						
Training	1,000	-	-	750	750	1,000
Risk Assessment	1,016	-	993	-	993	902
Other Expenses	450	295	75	75	445	400
TOTAL OPERATION COSTS	379,039	168,548	105,049	90,056	363,653	361,592
NET OPERATIONAL	282,068	131,800	76,181	63,177	271,158	262,413

OPERATIONS: ANALYSIS BY  
SERVICEPROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
ALLOTMENTS	(4,854)	111	70	(4,535)	(4,354)	(4,249)
CEMETERY	(48,742)	(20,370)	(12,645)	(12,270)	(45,285)	(45,323)
MAINTENANCE OF OTHER TOWN COUNCIL GROUNDS	321,480	147,402	84,555	72,822	304,779	298,729
LEISURE AND RECREATION	7,573	2,469	2,275	4,354	9,098	5,997
MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES	6,610	2,188	1,926	2,806	6,920	7,259
TOTAL OPERATION COST BY SERVICE	282,068	131,800	76,181	63,177	271,158	262,412

## ALLOTMENTS

PROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
INCOME	6,456	265	-	5,481	5,746	5,851
EXPENDITURE:						
Normal pay						
Overtime						
Employment Related						
Temporary Staff						
Staff Travelling						
OCCUPANCY						
Utilities	1,052	326	70	846	1,242	1,052
Rates						
Cleaning						
Maintenance of Buildings						
COMMUNICATION COSTS						
Telephones						
Stationery, Postage						
GROUPS MAINTENANCE	550	50	-	100	150	550
EQUIPMENT RUNNING COSTS						
VEHICLE RUNNING EXPENSES						
OTHER COSTS:						
Training						
Risk Assessment						
Other Expenses						
TOTAL OPERATION COSTS	1,602	376	70	946	1,392	1,602
NET OPERATIONAL	(4,854)	111	70	(4,535)	(4,354)	(4,249)

## CEMETERY

PROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>74,028</b>	<b>30,879</b>	<b>19,250</b>	<b>19,250</b>	<b>69,379</b>	<b>71,500</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>						
Normal pay						
Overtime						
Employment Related						
Temporary Staff						
Staff Travelling						
<b>OCCUPANCY</b>						
Utilities	4,818	1,499	1,495	1,685	4,679	4,606
Rates	4,236	2,017	1,008	1,009	4,034	3,996
Cleaning	132	66	33	33	132	125
Maintenance of Buildings	900	487	161	162	810	1,200
<b>COMMUNICATION COSTS</b>						
Telephones	500	482	241	241	964	800
Stationery, Postage	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>GROUNDS MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>13,250</b>	<b>5,663</b>	<b>3,592</b>	<b>3,025</b>	<b>12,280</b>	<b>14,050</b>
<b>EQUIPMENT RUNNING COSTS</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>VEHICLE RUNNING EXPENSES</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>OTHER COSTS:</b>						
Training	1,000	-	-	750	750	1,000
Risk Assessment						
Other Expenses	450	295	75	75	445	400
<b>TOTAL OPERATION COSTS</b>	<b>25,286</b>	<b>10,509</b>	<b>6,605</b>	<b>6,980</b>	<b>24,094</b>	<b>26,177</b>
<b>NET OPERATIONAL</b>	<b>(48,742)</b>	<b>(20,370)</b>	<b>(12,645)</b>	<b>(12,270)</b>	<b>(45,285)</b>	<b>(45,323)</b>

## MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

Ref: 7

MAINTENANCE OF OTHER  
TOWN COUNCIL GROUNDSPROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
INCOME	8,750	3,622	4,400	1,700	9,722	9,040
EXPENDITURE:						
Pay	238,000	103,767	64,832	55,880	224,479	216,263
Overtime	10,500	5,692	2,349	880	8,921	11,800
Employment Related	54,124	27,465	15,161	12,742	55,368	48,963
Temporary Staff	500	-	-	-	-	1,000
Staff Travelling	1,600	679	350	350	1,379	1,600
OCCUPANCY						
Utilities						
Rates						
Cleaning						
Maintenance of Buildings						
COMMUNICATION COSTS						
Telephones	636	316	160	160	636	540
Stationery, Postage						
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	8,760	2,564	2,297	1,150	6,011	9,560
EQUIPMENT RUNNING COSTS	9,750	5,694	2,480	1,920	10,094	10,854
VEHICLE RUNNING EXPENSES	6,360	4,847	1,326	1,440	7,613	7,189
OTHER COSTS:						
Training	-	-	-	-	-	-
Risk Assessment						
Other Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL OPERATION COSTS	330,230	151,024	88,955	74,522	314,501	307,769
NET OPERATIONAL	321,480	147,402	84,555	72,822	304,779	298,729



LEISURE AND  
RECREATIONPROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
INCOME	7,738	1,982	5,218	448	7,648	12,788
EXPENDITURE:						
Normal pay						
Overtime						
Employment Related						
Temporary Staff						
Staff Travelling						
OCCUPANCY						
Utilities	875	179	1,788	1,788	3,755	4,289
Rates	5,525	2,631	1,317	1,314	5,262	6,199
Cleaning	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maintenance of Buildings	500	522	50	50	622	500
COMMUNICATION COSTS						
Telephones						
Stationery, Postage						
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	7,395	1,119	3,345	1,650	6,114	6,895
EQUIPMENT RUNNING COSTS						
VEHICLE RUNNING EXPENSES						
OTHER COSTS:						
Training						
Risk Assessment	1,016	-	993	-	993	902
Other Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL OPERATION COSTS	15,311	4,451	7,493	4,802	16,746	18,785
NET OPERATIONAL	7,573	2,469	2,275	4,354	9,098	5,997

## MISCELLANEOUS

PROPOSED BUDGET 2024 - 2025

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Actual to 30/09/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/12/23	Quarter Forecast to 31/03/24	2023/2024 Revised Forecast	2023/2024 Annual Budget
INCOME	-	-	-	-	-	-
EXPENDITURE: Normal pay Overtime Employment Related Temporary Staff Staff Travelling						
OCCUPANCY Utilities Rates Cleaning Maintenance of Buildings	3,110	388	531	1,831	2,750	3,009
COMMUNICATION COSTS Telephones Stationery, Postage						
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	3,500	1,800	1,395	975	4,170	4,250
EQUIPMENT RUNNING COSTS						
VEHICLE RUNNING EXPENSES						
OTHER COSTS: Training Risk Assessment Other Expenses						
TOTAL OPERATION COSTS	6,610	2,188	1,926	2,806	6,920	7,259
NET OPERATIONAL	6,610	2,188	1,926	2,806	6,920	7,259

## ASSET RENEWAL / REFURBISHMENT

PROPOSED BUDGET 2024-25

	Proposed Budget 2024/2025	Half Year Actual 2023/2024	Quarter Forecast 2023/2024	Quarter Forecast 2022/2023	Revised Forecast 2023/2024	Annual Budget 2023/2024
LITTER BINS	3,000	-	-	-	-	-
BUS SHELTER REPAIRS	3,000	-	-	-	-	-
LEISURE & RECREATION						
New Pump Track at Adam Lee	85,000	-	-	-	-	-
Improvement of Play Area at Adam Lee	20,000	-	-	-	-	-
Works at Victoria Park Play Area	-	-	2,000	10,000	12,000	-
Victoria Park Community Hub Project - additional works	-	15,019	-	10,000	25,019	-
Refurbishment of Jamaica Crescent Play Area	-	-	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
	-	-	-	-	-	-
GROUPS MAINTENANCE PROJECTS	-	-	-	-	-	-
Works to improve car parking areas at Monksfield Lane	-	4,350	-	-	4,350	-
Fencing and Footpath Works - Western boundary of Rose Bank	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adam Lee Car Park and Fencing	6,000	3,375	-	6,000	9,375	12,000
Refurbishment of Bus Shelter outside Rose Bank Gardens	-	8,812	-	-	8,812	-
Malvern Sign in Rose Bank Gardens	-	4,288	-	-	4,288	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-
CEMETERY						
Refurbishment of Cemetery Lodge Ground Floor and Toilets	-	-	-	6,000	6,000	8,000
Timber Building in Cemetery Yard	-	-	-	10,000	10,000	15,000
	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE:	-	-	-	-	-	-
Replacement Tractor	15,000	-	-	-	-	-
Replacement vehicles/trailers	-	-	28,750	-	28,750	28,750
New Electric Tool Package	-	5,769	-	-	5,769	6,000
<b>TOTAL ASSET RENEWAL</b>	<b>132,000</b>	<b>41,613</b>	<b>30,750</b>	<b>62,000</b>	<b>134,363</b>	<b>89,750</b>



**RESOLUTION MOVED ON NOTICE – Standing Order 9**

**A Meeting of Malvern Town Council**

**to be held on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00pm**

**in the Council Chamber, Malvern Town Council, Belle Vue Terrace**

**NOTICE OF MOTION – MALVERN TOURISM SIGNS IN MALVERN LINK  
AND BARNARDS GREEN**

**Proposed Resolution**

- 1) Malvern Town Council should support the installation of MALVERN LINK and BARNARDS GREEN tourism signs to be installed in Malvern Link and Barnards Green

The Town Council is asked to consider:

- i. Installation of a tourism sign for both Malvern Link and Barnards Green.
  - ii. Allocation of a working budget of £6,000.
- 2) Once a design is created, agree a location for the tourism signs within Malvern Link and Barnards Green.

**Background**

Due to the huge success of the MALVERN sign in Rose Bank Gardens it seems fitting to install a sign in both Malvern Link and Barnards Green, albeit a little smaller in size. This is an amazing and inexpensive way to promote the smaller Malvern Town centres. The locations in Malvern Link and Barnards Green are sometimes seen as the poor relations and everything centres around Great Malvern; this Notice of Motion goes some way to further promote other parts of Malvern. We have spoken to local businesses in the Link and they are in favour but would like the sign to say 'Malvern Link' and not just 'The Link'.

A proposed design is included within this Notice of Motion and it is anticipated that the height of each sign would be approximately 18 inches.

**Financial Implications**

Estimated costs for the two tourism signs would be in the region of £6,000

Proposer - Cllr Nick Houghton (Chase Ward)  
Seconder - Cllr Ronan McLaverty-Head (West Ward)

3 December 2023



*Example sign*



**RESOLUTION MOVED ON NOTICE – Standing Order 9**

**A Meeting of Malvern Town Council**

**to be held on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00pm**

**in the Council Chamber, Malvern Town Council, Belle Vue Terrace**

**NOTICE OF MOTION – “HAPPY TO CHAT” BENCHES**

**Proposed Resolutions**

1. That Council supports the introduction of “Happy to Chat” benches in Rose Bank Gardens and Victoria Park.
2. That Council supports the funding and installation of a plaque for one bench in each location.

**Background**

The idea for the ‘Happy to chat’ bench, (as reported by the BBC) began when a Cardiff woman called Allison Owen-Jones watched an elderly man sitting on a busy city centre park – alone and ignored by passers-by, too busy to greet him. She didn’t know if the man wanted company or wanted to be alone.

Allison’s solution was to tie a sign to the bench that would open the avenues for people. “I didn’t want it to sound too vulnerable, so I wrote ‘Happy to Chat bench. Sit here if you don’t mind someone stopping to say hello’. All of a sudden, you’re not invisible anymore.”

After Allison began attaching laminated cards to benches, the idea was adopted by a Senior Citizens Liaison Team, then by local police forces; the concept has now spread across the USA, Canada, Australia and Switzerland. British councils that have adopted this policy range throughout Wales, the Midlands, Devon, Merseyside and Greater Manchester. Some example plaques are shown in Appendix A.

I was inspired to propose this resolution after a recent visit to Stratford upon Avon, where I sat on a ‘Happy to Chat’ bench by accident. After two minutes alone, I was joined by an elderly man and we had a lovely conversation. It really made my day. When I was a single mother, I rarely spoke to anyone outside of work for the first two years of my daughter’s life. I would have loved to have just had one conversation between ending work on Thursday to going back into the office on Monday, and I know that I would have made use of such a bench, if they had existed at the time.

Councillors will be aware of publicity about the health risks of loneliness, and I believe that our ‘Happy to Chat’ benches could play a small but very significant role in alleviating loneliness, and improving social connection and interaction, amongst the residents of Malvern.

Chronic loneliness can impact on memory, mental and physical health and is a major contributing factor behind financial exploitation of the elderly, and it’s not just the elderly who can benefit from a random “hello”.

A [BBC report](#) states that "some people may go days or even weeks without the simplest of human contact, so the 'Chat Bench' seeks to break down that social barrier and allow us to all say 'hello'." Age UK says more than a million older people say they always or often feel lonely. A review found 17% of older people talk to family, friends or neighbours less than once a week. For many, it is even more scarce than that.

Should Malvern Town Council support the installation of 'Happy to Chat' plaques on two benches, I believe we will be making a small but very significant attempt to mitigate against the deadly impact of loneliness upon our residents. The selection of benches in both Rose Bank Gardens and Victoria Park means that we are using Town Council owned areas in both Great Malvern and Malvern Link.

### **Financial Implications**

The cost of plaques would be between £20 and £100 depending on size and quality.

Proposer – Cllr Julie MacLusky (Upper Howsell Ward)  
Seconder – Cllr David Watkins (Link Ward)

4 December 2023





## Happy to chat bench



Sit here if you are happy for somebody  
to stop and say hello



**A REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK TO  
A MEETING OF MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

**to be held on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Malvern Town Council, Belle Vue Terrace**

**OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. For decision.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. Full Council is asked to consider the recommendations from the meeting of Operations and Planning Committee held on 29 November 2023 and listed below.

**Minute 59 Victoria Park Skateboard Park Refurbishment and Consultation**

It was **RECOMMENDED** to approve a public consultation for the future of the skateboard park in Victoria Park, to be carried out in February/March 2024.

**Minute 61 Lease of Dukes Meadow Pavilion**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the offer of a five-year lease should be removed. The football club would be asked to pay all outstanding bills and to submit a development plan ahead of a review date in August 2024 when a lease would be reconsidered.

**3. Background**

- 3.1. At a meeting of Full Council held on 12 September 2018, it was resolved that committees would approve their own minutes for accuracy with any recommendations from committee meetings being taken separately to be accepted by Full Council before being put into effect.
- 3.2. Full Council is therefore asked to consider the recommendations listed above as presented by the Chair or Vice Chair of Operations and Planning Committee and to approve, amend or refer back to committee as appropriate.
- 3.3. Councillors are reminded that the relevant reports as considered by committees when making their recommendations can be found within the papers distributed for the meeting and these will not be reissued.
- 3.4. If any councillor has any queries relating to a recommendation, it is suggested that they raise it with either the Town Clerk or Chairman of Committee before the Council meeting.

**4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. Please see individual committee reports.

**5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1. Please see individual committee reports for specific details.
- 5.2. Council decisions are supreme and therefore any changes to recommendations can be made with final agreement at Full Council.

End

Linda Blake  
Town Clerk

**A REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK TO  
A MEETING OF MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL  
to be held on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 6.00 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Malvern Town Council, Belle Vue Terrace**

**VICTORIA PARK TASK AND FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. For decision.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. Full Council is asked to approve the recommendations below following a meeting a Victoria Park Task and Finish Group held on Thursday 7 December 2023.
- i. Works required to remove the hedge alongside the play area, remove toddler climbing frame and swings and reposition the zip wire should be carried out as soon as possible ahead of onsite building works due to commence on 12 February 2024.
  - ii. Officers should be delegated to go out to tender for a new café tenant at Victoria Park with recommendations on the tender award being brought back to Full Council in March 2024.

**3. Background**

- 3.1. The order for a new modular community hub building at Victoria Park has now been placed with Modulek Ltd. Officers have been working closely with Modulek to sign off the phase one approval on design and onsite works are due to commence on 12 February 2024 with a completion date in May 2024.
- 3.2. Onsite works will necessitate Heras fencing being erected to create a safe space around the site area and ensure the safety of park and play area users. Initially costs for works required to the play area during this time were included within the budget for 2024/25 but the latest timetable of works means that these will need to be brought forward in order that the play area can continue to be safely used.
- 3.3. The new timetable for the building of the community hub also means that a tenant for the new café area within the building needs to be sought.
- 3.4. At their meeting on 2 December the Victoria Park Task and Finish Group discussed the tender specification for the new café with the following points being agreed:

**Style and scope of café**

- A barista style café serving good quality hot and cold snacks, hot and cold drinks and ice creams – suited to the needs of park users

**Length of lease and break clauses**

- A ten-year lease with break clauses and rent reviews at 3 years and 6 years.

**Lease to include**

- The café tenant will be required to completely fit out the café kitchen, provide all furniture inside and out, provide a canopy for the outside seating area and

to make arrangements for the disposal of waste and recycling of as much waste as possible.

Tender evaluation

- Business plan – 40%
- Fee offered – 40%
- Community value/locality of supplier – 20%

3.5. Officers will write a full tender document to be issued before Christmas and with a deadline for submissions to be returned in mid-February 2024.

**4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. The cost to remove the hedge and fencing to the eastern edge of the play area, remove toddler climbing frame and swings, and reposition the zip wire will be £12,000. This has been included in the re-forecast for 2023/24.
- 4.2. Rent received from the café tenant is a key part in ensuring that the community hub buildings secure income to help cover expenses and to reduce the net operating costs to the taxpayer of Malvern.

**5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1. The Town Council is the legal owner of Victoria Park.
- 5.2. The Council's Financial Regulations govern tender requirements for all contracts.

End  
Linda Blake  
Town Clerk

**A REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK TO  
A MEETING OF MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

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**HEART OF ENGLAND IN BLOOM / BRITAIN IN BLOOM 2024**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. For decision.

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. Council is asked to note the invitation to enter the National Britain in Bloom finals for 2024, but to regretfully decline due to resourcing pressures and costs which will compromise the quality of entry.

**3. Background**

- 3.1. Malvern received another gold award in 2023 for its entry into the Heart of England in Bloom competition. The award was picked up by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who attended the awards ceremony on 5 October.
- 3.2. Officers have recently been notified by the Chairman of the Heart of England in Bloom that Malvern has been put forward to enter the National Britain in Bloom finals, only being recently notified due to an administration error.
- 3.3. This recognition of achievement is an honour for the Town and certainly well-deserved after all of the hard work put in by Town Council staff, partnership organisations and volunteers, but officers believe that the timing and cost of this entry will be problematic as detailed below.
- 3.4. Entry into the Britain in Bloom Finals would necessitate extra resources, both in staff time and in terms of money. It would also require two separate judging dates one for the Heart of England in Bloom competition and then one for Britain in Bloom. These, from experience, can be 2 – 3 weeks apart and mean that once the Town has put in the work to get up to gold standard for the Heart of England in Bloom, work will need to continue to keep up the high standards and potentially tackle any problem areas until the national judges come.
- 3.5. The Town Council staff carry out a lot of work to ensure the “bloom route” looks at its best for judging. Whilst this obviously benefits the areas of the town which are on the route, it does mean that less is done in areas not on the route. These areas then subsequently need to be revisited after the judging to give them the attention they have missed. Having two judging dates instead of one will inevitably mean that these other areas will be less maintained for a longer period.
- 3.6. A very large factor to be considered in this decision, is the extent of Town Council commitments and workload for Spring / Summer 2024 exactly when the hard work needs to be put into setting up the Bloom route. The months of May and June will be when the new community hub building at Victoria Park is being finished, and landscaping and removal work will be undertaken by Town Council staff. There will also undoubtedly be snagging issues, contract changes and management for utilities and other services as well as the initial period of adjustment to the new environment and working conditions.

- 3.7. May, June and July will also be the months when several large projects such as the bike pump track, new skateboard park and works in Rose Bank Gardens are likely to take place, based on known time scales and weather conditions.
- 3.8. The Heart of England in Bloom competition on its own is a large undertaking for an organisation of Malvern Town Council's size and this will be difficult in 2024 for the reasons outlined above. Officers have experience of entering the national finals having done so in 2014 and the judges are far harder in their marking. The Council must be realistic about its resource and budget constraints and avoid spreading itself too thinly and the potential negative knock-on effects of this.
- 3.9. It is unfortunately not as simple as just buying in extra resources to solve this problem. MTC is lucky to have two officers who are very experienced and hold a lot of knowledge about how to "tick the boxes" in the Heart of England in Bloom campaign. It would therefore have to be Charles and Lyndsey who would need to manage and oversee any entry into Britain in Bloom as this resource cannot be substituted. This will involve a lot of extra work including attendance at seminars, at a time when they will also be needed as a key part of other projects. Officers have also been informed that more community involvement and projects with local schools and youth groups will be a key element of the 2024 finals. This work would have to commence early in the New Year and continue right up to the judging dates.
- 3.10. Time is also a key part to getting the bloom route ready and employment of more operational staff would be a financial burden as they would need to be engaged for enough time to allow them to learn what has to be done and be proficient with equipment and procedures. This cost could easily creep into tens of thousands.
- 3.11. Malvern is unique in the way it does Bloom, the Town Council and its staff lead the entry and volunteers back this up. In nearly all other cases of successful entries, a group of volunteers are the driving force with town / district / city councils supporting them and providing financial assistance. Stratford Upon Avon's budget for their Bloom campaign is in the region of £60,000, Malvern's is £7,500.
- 3.12. In summary, this is the wrong time to be entering such a demanding competition, however prestigious, due to resource and budget constraints already committed for 2024. If Malvern has ambitions to be in the National Finals in future years, work must start now to recruit more experienced volunteers as the driving forces behind the entry and also to secure more help from both District and County.
- 3.13. In 2024, with so many other commitments and an already tight budget, the Town Council must ensure that it prioritises its current commitments and the projects to improve the services and facilities of the local town which will provide benefits well into the future. This does however regretfully mean declining the invitation into Britain in Bloom for this year.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1. An entry into the National Britain in Bloom Finals would require an amount of additional funding, difficult to quantify but certainly significant in a year where the budget is already tight, and reserves will be used.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1. None pertaining to this report.

Authors of Report:

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