

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

**held in the Council Chamber, Belle Vue Terrace, Malvern
on Wednesday 6 March 2024, at 6.00 pm**

Councillors

Present

C Hooper (Chair)
M Birks (from 6.02pm)
A Cherry
C Fletcher
J Green
N Houghton
J Leibrandt (from 6.05pm)
L Lowton
J MacLusky
F Matthews-Jones
R McLaverty-Head
D Mead
D Watkins

Absent

S Austin (apologies)
C Bovey (apologies)
I Dawson (apologies)
M Jones (apologies)
S Meager (apologies)
K Newbigging (apologies)

Also in attendance

L Blake – Town Clerk
L Wall – Minute Clerk

Cllr John Raine, MHDC

137. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were **NOTED** from Councillors S Austin, C Bovey, I Dawson, M Jones, S Meager and K Newbigging.

138. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

139. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr Marilyn Birks joined the meeting at 6.02pm.

Cllr Birks raised a query over the accuracy of the minutes from public participation during the meeting held on 14 February 2024.

It was **AGREED** that a transcript of the section of the meeting recording covering public participation would be made to check the accuracy of the minutes.

It was **RESOLVED** that approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2024 be deferred to the next meeting of Full Council.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr John Raine had conducted a survey of interest in West Malvern which showed support for the return of the local magazine, 'The Hills Echo'. The first issue was due for print in April and a copy would be sent to the Town Clerk.

140. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on the following engagements that he had attended since the last meeting:

19 February – Great Malvern Traders Group meeting
20 February – skatepark consultation

- 24 February - Ukrainian Remembrance event with Cllrs Fran and Malcolm Victory
- 25 February - Ross-on-Wye Town Council Civic Service
- 1 March - Christchurch, World Day of Prayer
- 3 March - Pershore Town Council Civic Service

141. UPDATE ON TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The Town Clerk reported as follows:

New Community Hub at Victoria Park

The six modules making up the new community hub had been delivered to Victoria Park on the previous day and had been lifted into place. Works would now take place to fit out the interior. Cllr Mead, the Operations Manager and Town Clerk had been able to walk through the building and were pleased to see how spacious it felt inside. Cllr Mead (Chair of the Victoria Park Pavilion Task & Finish Group) thought that it would be a great asset to the community and a much-improved environment for staff.

There had been some negative comments in the press regarding the temporary closure of the play area but this would be addressed with equipment replaced or updated shortly. Any queries regarding this should be referred to the Town Clerk.

Skatepark Consultation

The public consultation event held on Tuesday 20 February was well attended with a number of local residents and some very enthusiastic potential park users. A number of interesting ideas were raised and discussed, and the survey would remain open until 22 March after which the results would be reviewed and possible options and costs investigated. Over 260 responses had been submitted so far.

Jenny Lind

The sculpture of Jenny Lind in Rose Bank Gardens had now been removed and passed on to contractors employed by MHDC who would be relocating it to an area of Priory Park.

Town Council Vacancy

MHDC had confirmed that there had been no request in St Joseph's Ward for a by-election and therefore the Council would advertise the vacancy to be filled by co-option, hopefully by the next council meeting.

Operations Update

- New storage unit at Great Malvern Cemetery had been put into place
- New litter bin installed in Barnards Green
- Apple trees planted in Greenfields Road as part of the Coronation Community Orchard Project
- New signage erected in Great Malvern Cemetery and Rose Bank Gardens

142. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

Written reports had been submitted by Cllr Fran Victory, (MHDC, Link ward) and Cllr Malcolm Victory, (MHDC Barnards Green ward and WCC Malvern Chase division) prior to the meeting, and these had been circulated to members.

143. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Nick Houghton, Chase ward – reported that he was still involved with ongoing discussions with MHDC over the lack of accessible equipment in the new Priory Park play area. A meeting was due to take place with Cllr Cynthia Palmer and Cllr Beverley Nielsen following a survey of the area, to discuss what could be done to rectify the situation.

144. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

None.

145. REQUEST TO TWIN WITH KOROSTEN COMMUNITY IN THE UKRAINE

Report CL01/24 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk reminded members that at the previous Full Council meeting, a presentation had been made regarding a proposal to twin with the Korosten community in Ukraine. Support for this twinning association would come from the Ukrainian community in Malvern, Malvern Hills District Council who employ two Ukraine liaison officers and fund a community building post, as well as local host families.

It was **RESOLVED** to support in principle the development of a twinning connection between Malvern and the Korosten community in Ukraine.

It was **RESOLVED** that initial steps would be taken to establish a twinning steering group of interested parties, draft terms of reference and a structure for how a twinning group would work ahead of a final decision by Full Council. Councillors Lou Lowton and Ronan McLaverty-Head were nominated to support this process.

146. DRAFT CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/25 – RECOMMENDATION FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report CL02/24 was received and noted.

At its meeting on 14 February, Full Council had resolved to start all meetings at 6.30pm but following the meeting a contractual issue had been raised, and therefore to comply with standing orders when reconsidering a decision, the matter had been referred to Policy and Resources Committee.

Policy and Resources Committee has staffing responsibilities and considered the matter at its meeting on 28 February, at which they recommended to reverse the decision made on 14 February to change the start times for 2024/25 in light of legal advice. Meeting times would therefore revert to the usual start time of 6pm.

The Town Clerk had sought legal advice from CALC. The advice, sent from the HR advisor for Worcestershire CALC and NALC stated:

“The question is ‘can the Council move the start time of its meetings back thirty minutes?’

Start and finish times of work do need to be written into the contract and this has been the case since April 2020, the fact that employees started working for the council before then is irrelevant. This is a statutory change affecting all employees including current ones, as such it automatically affects everyone’s contract. The employees in question have a reasonable expectation for the meeting to start at the current times, if the council wishes to change that term of the contract they need to do so by mutual agreement and so the vehicle for that, this may require a process of consultation based on a sound business case, if the employees are not happy to implement the change straight away.”

Members discussed at length whether the decision made at the Full Council meeting on 14 February had been a legal one and agreed that even if councillors were in favour of a later start time for meetings, it had been wrong not to consult with staff first.

The Chair asked for a named vote.

It was **RESOLVED** to reverse the decision made on 14 February to change the start times of meetings for 2024/25 in light of legal advice. Meeting times would therefore revert to the usual start time of 6pm and this matter could be considered again in six months' time in line with standing orders.

For: Cllr Houghton, Cllr Watkins, Cllr Matthews-Jones, Cllr Fletcher, Cllr Mead, Cllr Cherry, Cllr McLaverty Head.

Against: Cllr Lowton, Cllr MacLusky, Cllr Leibrandt, Cllr Green, Cllr Hooper, Cllr Birks.

147. RESPONSE TO DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS – WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL/MALVERN PARISH

Report CL03/24 was received and accepted.

Members were asked to review and consider the new electoral arrangements for Worcestershire County Council, and in particular the draft recommendations for revised electoral arrangements for Malvern Town. A table in the report showed the proposed changes in each ward. The deadline for responses was 18 March.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mead, Cllr Hooper and Cllr Birks would formulate a representation by forwarding comments to the Town Clerk for submission on behalf of the Council.

148. NOTICE OF MOTION – ID BADGES TO BE WORN AT TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS/DISPLAY OF TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATION DISPLAY POSTER

Cllr MacLusky presented her notice of motion proposing that ID badges be produced and worn by Town Councillors at events so that members of the public could easily identify individuals as members of the Council. It was also suggested that a large poster be produced showing what the Town Council does, for display at events.

Cllr MacLusky had volunteered at the annual Christmas Festival, when she noticed that many people were not aware of the Town Council's involvement and she felt that steps could be taken to better identify the Council's role in events.

- 1) It was **RESOLVED** that Council supports the production and wearing of ID badges by Town Councillors when supporting events involving public engagement and that these badges should identify individuals as members of the Town Council, including names but not the wards represented.
- 2) It was **RESOLVED** that Council supports the funding and wearing of these badges at events run by the Council.
- 3) It was **RESOLVED** that officers are asked to produce a draft laminated display poster, detailing what the Town Council does/is responsible for, to be situated prominently at public events, e.g. next to the Mayor's charity stall or outside Santa's Grotto at the Christmas Festival, and next to the bandstand at the summer Bands in the Park events.

149. AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Report CL04/24 was received and accepted.

Full Council **NOTED** that systems and controls were in place to comply with the Council's Health and Safety policy.

150. EMERGENCY DECISION MAKING GROUP

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update to members from the meeting of the Emergency Decision Making Group, held on 15 February 2024.

The group had discussed a response to two complaints received regarding the Council's lack of comment on a planning application. It was agreed that Operations and Planning Committee and Full Council had been correct in its decision making, and there was no further comment to be made. The Town Clerk had responded to the correspondence accordingly.

151. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 10 April 2024 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting finished at 7.42pm

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(Chairman)

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