

**UNADOPTED**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL**

**in the Park View Meeting Room, Victoria Park Road, Malvern Link  
held on Wednesday 13 November 2024 at 6pm**

**Councillors**

Present

M Birks (Chair)  
S Austin  
C Bovey (from 6.20pm)  
A Cherry  
I Dawson  
C Fletcher  
E Green  
J Green  
C Hooper  
N Houghton  
M Jones  
L Lowton  
J MacLusky (from 6.03pm)  
R McLaverty-Head  
K Newbigging  
D Watkins

Absent

J Leibrandt (apologies)  
D Mead (apologies)  
F Matthews-Jones (apologies)  
S Meager

**Also in attendance**

L Blake – Town Clerk  
L Wall – Minute Clerk  
  
Cllr Beverley Nielsen, Great Malvern Ward,  
Malvern Hills District Council, (MHDC)  
Cllr Neville Mills, Link Ward, (MHDC)  
Cllr Paul Bennett, Pickersleigh Ward,  
(MHDC), (from 7pm)  
Olha Kraievska, (MHDC)  
Elaine Fraser, Community Builder (MHDC)  
Martin Hill, Skatepark Focus Group  
Liam McLelland, Skatepark Focus Group  
Ian Hopwood, Malvern Mariánské Lázně  
Community Partnership (MMCLP)  
Deborah Fox, CEO, Malvern Hills Trust  
(MHT)  
Member of the Press (from 6.15pm)

**87. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from Cllrs Josephine Leibrandt, David Mead and Freya Matthews-Jones were **NOTED**.

*Cllr Julie MacLusky joined the meeting at 6.03pm*

**88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**89. 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, to be signed by the Mayor:

- Full Council meeting 9 October 2024.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Proposal to set up a Twinning Agreement with the Korosten Community in the Ukraine

Olha Kraievska and Elaine Fraser, of MHDC updated the meeting on the progress of the Korosten Malvern Twinning Association (KMTA) which now had a constitution,

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bank account and had elected key officers. A meeting had been held with Korosten Council who were very keen to further relations with Malvern. There are over 400 Ukrainian people now living in Malvern and although currently only fifteen are from Korosten, the remainder are happy to focus on just the one town to further a twinning agreement and bring the two communities together.

### ***A member of the Press joined the meeting at 6.15pm***

#### Victoria Park Skatepark Facility

Martin Hill and Liam McClelland, members of the Town Council's skatepark focus group, attended the meeting to explain their interest in supporting the new skatepark project. With the recent increase in the popularity of skateboarding, they feel a new skatepark will bring lots of people into Malvern, encourage physical activity and bring the community together. They have experienced many skateparks around the country, some better than others, and they stressed the importance of getting the design right to provide the best facilities possible for all ages and abilities.

### ***Cllr Caroline Bovey joined the meeting at 6.20pm.***

#### Malvern Mariánské Lázně Community Partnership

Ian Hopwood updated the meeting on an event to be held by the partnership during Midsummer Malvern week in June 2025, when the International Festival of Culture will include choirs and dance groups from the Czech Republic and other European countries. The Mayor of Mariánské Lázně will attend along with other dignitaries. Fundraising will take place to fund the events and visits.

## **90. PRESENTATION FROM DEBORAH FOX, CEO, MALVERN HILLS TRUST**

Deborah thanked the Town Council for the valuable feedback submitted on the recent consultation. Approximately 500 pieces of feedback had been received from members of the public and organisations about the proposed governance changes. All responses had now been analysed by a working group and collated into a report, along with the Trust's response to each and this was now available for public viewing via the Trust's website.

The report includes full details of changes made by the Trust in response to the feedback received, including:

- Concerns over the loss of representation – the number of board members would be reduced to twelve (as suggested by the Town Council), with a trustee as a named point of contact in each local area
- the General Power would be redrafted to state when and how it could be used
- Replacing the term 'membership organisation' to 'Supporters Group' to make it clear that the group would have no role or influence on the Trust's decision-making.
- Removing the provision to allow fencing for animal health reasons as this had not been supported by commoners and others.
- There would be a six-month break period between taking down an area of temporary fencing for grazing and reintroducing fencing over the same land.

The Trust will also look at strengthening the language of the Bill to reflect concerns about licensing activities on its land, which could lead to commercialisation such as hay-making.

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As part of the Town Council response, councillors had asked to be kept informed of progress. Deborah Fox informed the meeting of the following dates:

- AGM – Thursday 14 November 2024
- Special Board Meeting – Wednesday 20 November 2024
- Private Bill lodged at Parliament – 27 November 2024
- Available to view online – from 4 December 2024

Some people had queried the cost implications of the consultation, but the Trust felt that it had been a necessary step in the process and had provided valuable feedback which had been acted upon. Consultation outside of the parliamentary process was also cheaper and more effective as the Trust reached out directly to people with concerns.

Deborah Fox finished by saying that stakeholder engagement and land management were equally important, and the Trust would continue to engage and work with the public to keep them informed.

### 91. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made a presentation to Cllr David Watkins of a framed portrait of him and his family which had been taken at the Mayor's Bonanza. She thanked him especially for his efforts in helping to bring the building of the new community hub to fruition.

Prior to the meeting, the Mayor had circulated a list of engagements she had attended since the beginning of October and thanked staff, in particular Lyndsey Davies and Amy Bromage for organising the Remembrance commemorations including the planting of crosses at the Field of Remembrance, the 'Poppies for Paddington', and the services on Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day.

The Mayor also thanked councillors who had helped on the day with road closures or attending the services.

Councillors were asked to help if they could at the Christmas Light Switch-on event on 23 November, where there would be many activities, workshops and events taking place and a Town Council stall promoting warm spaces.

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

The Town Clerk reports on Town Council operations and activities as follows:

#### Community Hub Building

The new café at the Community Hub is now open every day, closing around 5pm when it gets dark. These hours will extend as the days draw out again. Permanent planting has now been put in the beds at the front of the building, with roses to be planted in the raised beds to the northeast corner, in the next couple of weeks.

#### Heartstart Training

The community hub hosted World Restart A Heart Day on Wednesday 16 October facilitated by the team from Heartstart Malvern who held training sessions from 8am until 8.30pm. All Town Council staff and some councillors took part in the training which was a very useful mix of CPR and how to use a defibrillator. The event and the new community hub featured on Midlands Today. Free sessions will continue to be held on a monthly basis.

#### Operations

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Autumn works have been very much centred on getting all areas tidy ahead of winter. Mowing, strimming, hedge trimming, clearance works in Rose Bank Gardens and the thankless task of clearing leaves from many areas have all been undertaken in the past weeks.

### Pump Track at Adam Lee

Full planning permission has now been granted for the pump track but with several pre-commencement conditions to fulfil before works can commence. These include a biodiversity gain plan alongside a habitat management and monitoring plan for a period of 30 years. These documents are being prepared at present and will need to be submitted to MHDC for approval.

Clarke and Kent contractors have visited the site and are very keen to get started. Site access and general conditions mean that they are happy to commence works during the winter months and therefore it is hoped that the track build can commence in early 2025.

### Remembrance

The Town Clerk thanked all staff and volunteers who assisted with the Remembrance commemorations. This is one of the harder events to co-ordinate due to the sheer number of groups involved and the need to get the timings, order and sense of occasion absolutely right. A special mention was given to Lyndsey Davies who does a great job of co-ordinating the very many elements of Remembrance.

### Christmas

The next big event is the Great Malvern Christmas Light Switch On, probably the largest event that the Town Council runs. This year the Town Council is managing the event in its entirety with many activities being held throughout Great Malvern from 10am until 6pm. The all-important light switch on will take place at 5.30pm.

The Christmas Lights Contractor will be putting up Christmas Lights this Saturday in all areas of the town. Christmas trees in Malvern Link and Great Malvern will be erected next Monday and dressed later in the week. There will also be a smaller tree in Barnards Green for the second year running as well as a tree in the Community Hub.

### General

It was noted that the Operations Manager is away from work at the moment. Charles is a key member of staff and councillors were asked to bear with staff as they negotiated a very busy period of events without him.

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

Reports from Cllr Malcolm Victory and Cllr Karen Hanks had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

### Cllr Beverley Nielsen, MHDC, Great Malvern ward and WCC Malvern Langland

Cllr Nielsen reported that the issue she was most frequently contacted about by residents was highways. She thanked the Town Council for looking after the rotation of vehicle activated signs, including a new solar-powered VAS in Townsend Way. Cllr Nielsen also reported that she had met with residents of Abbey Road to discuss solutions to car parking problems and congestion, asked for verges and gulleys to be cleared in her ward, a new sign had now been installed by Splash warning

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motorists of families crossing, and red bat lights had been installed on Wells Road. Some pavements had been refurbished in Graham Road, Charles Way and on the Worcester Road.

### ***Cllr Paul Bennett joined the meeting.***

#### Cllr Paul Bennett, MHDC, Pickersleigh Ward

Cllr Bennett reported that he was in the process of trying to find out how many empty houses there were in the area and gain more feedback on housing conditions, as these were key issues for people living in Pickersleigh. He had made contact with officers at Platform to make sure they were not getting away with things. Platform's headquarters have moved to Cambridge which he felt was a serious issue, being so remote from Malvern.

Cllr Bennett also reported that he had joined Malvern Hills Trust as there were lots of concerns over what is happening with the governance and the bill that is going forward to parliament.

He stated he had been a great supporter of the Town Council's skatepark and pump track and had some suggestions to put forward that would be helpful to make sure that mistakes were not made. He would like the district council to put some funding towards these two projects and hoped it would become a priority if there was a new administration there. Cllr Bennett said he would keep everyone informed of possible governance changes at MHDC in the next week.

#### Cllr Neville Mills, MHDC, Link Ward

Cllr Mills reported that he had been trying to improve engagement with police support officers and had met with them at Malvern Vale recently. There would be another meeting on Saturday morning in Victoria Park which everyone was welcome to attend.

## **94. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Nick Houghton, Malvern Hills Council for Community Action – Malvern Men's Shed, part of Community Action, had been awarded an increased grant by the Town Council, and had held a number of open days. CA were looking at further funding options and how they could increase the bus drivers' wages from the minimum wage to a living wage. He finished by saying that Community Action were very grateful for the Town Council's support.

Cllr Marilyn Birks reported that she had attended a meeting at Citizens Advice South Worcestershire (CASW) to find out people's priorities when moving to Malvern. The resulting report provided much information about the Malvern Hills area but was also broken down to show Malvern in particular and this had been circulated as part of the meeting's reports pack.

## **95. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

There were no members' questions.

## **96. PROPOSAL TO SET UP TWINNING AGREEMENT WITH THE KOROSTEN COMMUNITY IN THE UKRAINE**

Report CL01/24 was received and accepted.

Members were in support of the proposal to create a twinning agreement with Korosten in the Ukraine. However, they felt that the proposed reserve of £1,000 may not be sufficient and it was **AGREED** to increase this to £1,500.

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It was **RESOLVED** that Council approve the creation of a twinning agreement with Korosten in the Ukraine.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the terms of reference for a twinning agreement between Malvern Town Council and Korosten Malvern Twinning Association (KMTA).

It was **RESOLVED** to allocate a twinning reserve of £1,500 to help launch the agreement with funds to be available from 1 April 2025.

### 97. **VICTORIA PARK SKATEPARK FACILITY**

Report CL02/24 was received and accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** that tenders are sought for the design and installation of a concrete skatepark facility to be situated in Victoria Park and with a budget of approximately £200,000.

### 98. **ROSE BANK GARDENS BUS SHELTER**

Report CL03/24 was received and accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate the three “Elgar” paintings in the alcoves of the bus shelter outside Rose Bank Gardens.

### 99. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Report CL04/24 was received and accepted.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-chair of Operations and Planning Committee Cllr Marilyn Birks presented the recommendation from the meeting held on 23 October 2024.

#### **Minute 40 – Review of charges for sports pitches 2025/26**

Following a request from Full Council, Operations and Planning Committee had reviewed the proposed charges for sports pitches 2025/26. Although the suggested increase appeared to be quite large, it was explained that there had been few or no increases in charges in recent years. Furthermore, a comparative exercise had been carried out which showed that the proposed charges would be in line with others in the area. Even with the suggested increase, charges would still only cover a small proportion of operational costs for the upkeep of the pitches and changing rooms.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the charges for junior football teams as follows:

- 1) Hire of junior football pitch (season) from £127 to £195
- 2) Hire of changing rooms junior (season) from £110 to £195

Football teams using the Town Council’s pitches and facilities would be informed of the grants scheme for possible help in funding at their clubs.

#### **Minute 41 – Vehicle/Machinery Replacement Fund 2025/26**

It was **RESOLVED** to take funding of £22,000 from the vehicle/machinery replacement fund to purchase a new John Deere X940 mower.

It was further **RESOLVED** to increase the amount placed into the vehicle/machinery replacement fund to £25,000 per year as from 2025/26.

### 100. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Report CL05/24 was received and accepted.

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The Chair of Audit Committee, Cllr David Watkins, presented the recommendations from the meeting held on 30 October 2024.

### **Minute 18 Review of Income Received and Controls in Place**

It was **RESOLVED** that Council notes that the controls in place for income received are robust and fit for purpose with a clear and thorough audit trail.

### **Minute 19 Review of Bank Reconciliations**

It was **RESOLVED** that Council notes that the procedures used for bank reconciliations are both robust and fit for purpose with a clear audit trail.

## **101. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Report CL06/24 was received and accepted.

The Chair of Policy and Resources Committee, Cllr Iain Dawson, presented the recommendation from the meeting held on 6 November 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Financial Regulations as attached to the minutes of the same meeting.

## **102. NOTICE OF MOTION – SUPPORT FOR A BOOKING SYSTEM AT NEWLANDS HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRE**

Cllr Marilyn Birks presented a notice of motion asking Council for support for an initiative to introduce a booking system at the household recycling centre at Newlands.

She said that there are often queues of traffic trying to get into the centre at peak times, leading to road jams affecting traffic in both directions. Cllr Birks felt that a booking system, as used in neighbouring counties, could alleviate some of these problems.

Cllr Jude Green seconded the motion.

Councillors were divided in their thoughts on this matter, with some agreeing a booking system could work and would help stop traffic jams, whilst others felt that even with booking system being in place, some people would still turn up at the centre without a booked timeslot, and would have to be turned away – and there was little or no room for this.

***Under Standing Order 3(x) the Chair proposed to extend the meeting. A vote was taken and it was agreed to extend the meeting for fifteen minutes.***

Councillors did agree that most of the queuing problems were caused when the vehicle for the container transfer is on the site, but enquiries made to the recycling centre had confirmed that the timing of the lorry could not be guaranteed and therefore it would not be possible to limit its arrival to a short time span.

Councillors also agreed that the retail park was a big contributor to the traffic problems and the whole area, including the roundabout needed to be redesigned. This was an issue for the Country Council.

Councillors voted on the three recommendations together and the motion fell.

## **103. NOTICE OF MOTION – REPORTING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUP/STANDING ORDERS**

Cllr Lou Lowton presented her notice of motion to Council, asking for support for the reporting back of the staffing committee task and finish group to Full Council by 18 December 2024 at the latest. She informed Councillors that the task and finish

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group had held several meetings and matters were progressing well, with a set of terms of reference now agreed for recommendation, and one further meeting due to be held the following week. The motion would ensure that if the group could not report to the Full Council meeting on 16 December, it would have to do so at the meeting on 18 December.

Cllr Jude Green seconded the notice of motion and said that if members of the task and finish group could not make the arranged meeting, then they should arrange for a substitute to attend in their place.

Cllr Birks clarified that substitutes are not usually allowed for task and finish groups but in the case of the staffing committee task and finish group, one had previously been allowed by the Town Clerk to enable a meeting to be held. However, this was an exception and standing orders relating to this would be reviewed in the near future and made clear.

The four recommendations were taken individually and in turn.

1. It was **RESOLVED** that Full Council commits to delivering the recommendations of the staffing committee task and finish group to the December Full Council meeting on December 18th, at the latest.
2. It was **RESOLVED** that in order to achieve this, the task and finish group meeting must take place on or before November 20th, with substitutions permitted if necessary and if no member of staff is available to attend, a recording of the meeting would be passed on the next day.
3. It was **RESOLVED** that, if necessary, space would be given on the agenda, at the December full council meeting on December 18th for the task and finish group to report back.
4. It was **RESOLVED** that Full Council agrees to send Standing Orders to Policy and Resources Committee for urgent clarification on:
  - a. Notice periods for motions and meetings
  - b. Substitution rules for committees and task and finish groups
  - c. Notice required for agendas and reports prior to meetings

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

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Monday 16 December 2024 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting finished at 8.15pm.

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(Chairman)