

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

**in the Park View Meeting Room, Victoria Park Road, Malvern Link
held on Wednesday 22 January 2025 at 6pm**

Councillors

Present

M Birks (Chair)
J Green
C Bovey
J Leibrandt
D Mead
D Watkins
F Matthew-Jones
R McLaverty-Head
J MacLusky
C Hooper
E Green
A Cherry
I Dawson
C Fletcher
M Jones (from 6.20pm)

Absent

K Newbigging (apologies)
S Austin (apologies)
L Lowton (apologies)
S Meager

Also in attendance

L Blake – Town Clerk
C Porter – Operations Manager
J Winkworth – Minute Clerk
Cllr Paul Bennett, Pickersleigh Ward,
(MHDC)
Member of the Press

It was agreed to delay the start of the meeting due to a localised car accident.

The meeting commenced at 6.05pm.

The Chair, Cllr Marilyn Birks, led Full Council in a minute's silence to pay tribute to the late Cllr Nick Houghton and to think about the significant contributions he had made towards the Council and the Community over the years as both Councillor and Mayor.

105. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from Cllrs Karen Newbigging, Sean Austin and Lou Lowton were **NOTED**.

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

107. 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 13 November 2024.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillor Paul Bennett, Trustee of Malvern Hills Trust (MHT)

Cllr Bennett attended the meeting and updated Full Council regarding the Private Bill which the MHT had now submitted to Parliament.

Cllr Bennett encouraged the Town Council to submit its own petition on the proposed Bill.

108. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prior to the meeting, the Mayor had circulated a list of engagements she had attended since November.

The Mayor informed councillors about the forthcoming Quiz night in aid of Cube Youth. The event was originally planned for last year, but due to the storms it was cancelled. The rescheduled date is Friday 21 March 2025, and the Mayor encouraged everyone to put the date in their diaries and support this charity event.

Cllr M. Jones joined the meeting at 6.20pm

109. UPDATE ON TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

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

Christmas Light Switch On.

The weather was sadly not very kind for the Christmas Light Switch On, but thanks to the immense efforts of Lyndsey, Amy and the Operations Team, a rapidly altered event, where as many activities as possible were held indoors, was held. Father Christmas was busy in his grotto all day, various circus themed events and activities took place and indoor market stalls were put into Great Malvern Library and the Coach House Theatre.

When the time for switching on the lights came, the weather held up for the parade up Church Street and the official switch-on on Belle Vue Island.

Approximately £1,200 was raised for the Mayors' Charity Cube Youth. The event was well attended taking into account the weather and thanks were expressed to all of those who took part and volunteered on the day.

Bike Pump Track

Reports to fulfil the pre-commencement planning conditions have been completed and a decision is anticipated in early February. After this, officers will contact the contractor to schedule a date for construction as soon as possible.

Planning Permission for Elgar Avenue

Following the Council decision on this matter, a planning consultant has been appointed and has started work on preparing a planning application.

Elgar Paintings

The Elgar paintings are due to be replaced in the Bus Shelter outside Rose Bank Gardens within the next week.

Twining

The official twinning agreement was signed on Tuesday 7 January. The Korosten Twining Group are in the process of organising a welcome event on Saturday 8 March from 10:30. This has only been arranged recently, so more details will follow.

110. 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 Paul Bennett, MHDC, Pickersleigh Ward

Cllr Bennett made a plea for a laptop for a Ukrainian Student. Councillors were asked to provide suggestions where help may be available and to contact Tim Marsh at the Help Centre or Elaine Fraser.

111. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Hooper had submitted a report prior to the meeting as MTC's CALC representative.

Cllr Birks updated the Council on discussions with First Bus Company about the improvement of bus services within Malvern.

Cllr Dawson had no further information to report from Poolbrook Village Hall and was not aware of who the Trustees were either since the AGM last year. Cllr Mead agreed to update Cllr Dawson with information from the AGM.

112. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were no members' questions.

113. BUDGET 2025/26

Report CL01/24 was received and accepted.

Cllr Dawson as Chair of Policy and Resources presented the recommendations from the budget report.

The proposed underspend for the 2024/25 financial year had meant that officers were proposing to move two projects from 2025/26 into the current year including the new toddler play area at Victoria Park.

The proposed increase on the precept level is 4.75%. Malvern Hills District Council had now provided the Council Tax base figures for 2025/26, and this figure has increased. The increase on a Band D Council Tax bill for Malvern Town will therefore be £2.94 or 3.9%.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the following:

- i. The re-forecast for 2024/25, which brings expenditure fairly close to budget, with an underspend for the year and a balance being put into reserves of £7,412.
- ii. The budget for the financial year 2025/26 – attached as 'Proposed Budget 2025 – 2026' This shows a net expenditure of:

£1,067,781 *not* taking into account any movements in Earmarked Reserves and other funding

UNADOPTED

£867,782 taking into account movements in Earmarked Reserves and other funding

- iii. The precept for 2025/26 should be set at £867,850. This reflects an increase of 4.75% from the precept level in 2024/25.

114. **EXPENDITURE ON BASKETBALL EQUIPMENT FOR VICTORIA PARK**

Report CL02/24 was accepted.

Malvern Hoops Campaigners have been very pro-active in raising 50% of the funding required for new basketball equipment and have approached the Town Council for match funding.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council approve funding of £1,117.15 for equipment to refurbish the basketball courts at Victoria Park.

115. **RESPONSE TO MALVERN HILLS PARLIAMENTARY BILL**

Report CL03/24 was accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** that Malvern Town Council should submit a petition to the House of Lords, with its views on the Private Parliamentary Bill deposited by the Malvern Hills Trust. (MHT)

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk are delegated to submit the Petition summarising the main points from the response to MHT dated July.

116. **SALE OF LAND AT DUKES MEADOW**

The Town Clerk updated Full Council on the status of the sale. The new paperwork has been drawn up and signed by the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor. A covenant has been put in place that should the school no longer require the land then it would be offered back to the Town Council in the first instance.

117. **STAFFING COMMITTEE**

There was no discussion based on the staffing committee agenda item. The intention is to bring it back to Full Council for further discussion in February or March.

118. **NOTICE OF MOTION – TWINNING WITH MARIÁNSKÉ LÁZNĚ**

Cllr Caroline Bovey presented a notice of motion asking the Town Council to amend the Mariánské Lázně Community Partnership into an official twinning agreement and put aside funding for the annual costs.

Following discussions regarding funding to be set aside, an amendment was proposed to remove the second point and encourage all Twinning Groups to apply for a grant when required.

It was **RESOLVED** that the second point regarding funding would be removed.

It was **RESOLVED** that Malvern Town Council would agree to amend the Mariánské Lázně /Malvern Community Partnership into an official twinning agreement.

119. **NOTICE OF MOTION – NAMING OF THE COMMUNITY HUB, VICTORIA PARK IN MEMORY OF NICK HOUGHTON**

Cllr Anne Cherry presented a notice of motion to name the Community Hub after the late Nick Houghton. She explained that this proposal had the support of Nick's husband and family and was to recognise his work and contributions to the Town Council during his time as both a Councillor and as Mayor.

UNADOPTED

Cllr Cherry then stated that she wished to put forward an amendment.

Following debate, Council accepted the amended motion, and it was **RESOLVED** that:

Cllr Nick Houghton should be remembered in some significant way and the decision on what is the best way for Nick to be remembered and honoured should be sent to the March meeting of Operations and Planning Committee for discussion and then for presentation to Full Council at a later date.

120. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 6.00pm.

The meeting finished at 7.50pm.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC It was **AGREED** to resolve pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies **UNADOPTED (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.

121. Council noted the Town Clerk's verbal update on Rosebank Gardens.

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(Chairman)