

UNADOPTED

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

**in the Park View Meeting Room, Victoria Park Road, Malvern Link
held on Wednesday 25 June 2025 at 6pm**

Councillors

Present

M Birks (Chair)
I Dawson
D Watkins
A Cherry
S Austin
C Fletcher
C Bovey
J MacLusky
J Leibrandt
C Hooper
N Wanklin
R McLaverty-Head
E Green
J Green
K Newbigging (6.02pm)

Absent

D Mead (Apologies)
M Jones (Apologies)
L Lowton

Also in attendance

L Blake, Town Clerk
J Winkworth, Minute Clerk
Cllr N McVey, MHDC County Councillor

22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from Councillors David Mead and Mel Jones were **NOTED**.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors declared interests relating to agenda items as below:

Cllr Sean Austin – Agenda Item 16 – Member of Malvern Pride Committee

Cllr Clive Hooper – Vice-President of Malvern Civic Society, Agenda item 18 – Grants, St Richards Hospice was his chosen charity within the Mayoral Year.

Cllr Karen Newbigging – is an allotment holder

24. Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes from the meeting noted below are approved and adopted as a correct record of the proceedings:

- Annual Council meeting 14 May 2025

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

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Cllr Karen Newbigging arrived at 6.02pm.

25. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor noted that her engagements were on the increase and planned to report fully at next month's full council meeting.

The Mayor's engagement to date include:

- Charity Cheque Presentations in Priory Park for the Mayoral Year 24/25 to Cube Youth and Heartstart.
- First Bus meeting along with Town, Parish, District and County Councillors present. This resulted in a request for a task and finish group to be set up. The Mayor will update the councillors with further information in due course.
- Malvern Priory Letter of Support – following a recent letter of request for support, the Mayor met with the Vicar of the Priory shortly after receipt and explained the decision behind MTC not supporting the request. It was noted that Councillors were given the opportunity to support individually.
- Meeting with Baroness Jacqui Smith at the Help Centre in Pickersleigh Road
- Unveiling of a plaque for Theatre of Small Convenience

PCSO's hours - a letter of reply has been sent and the Mayor is awaiting a reply from PCSO Tudge and Inspector Dave Wise who has also been liaising with the Mayor. Hopeful that Police will attend a Full Council meeting in July.

A liaison meeting is due to take place Thursday 26 June between MHDC and MTC where the topics for discussion are Devolution, South Worcestershire Development Plan and Rose Bank Gardens

The Mayor informed councillors of a forthcoming informal meeting regarding Devolution, Wednesday 2 July at 6pm. Ideal opportunity for all Councillors to attend and ask questions.

The Mayor also put out a plea to all Councillors regarding Bands in the Park. There are a few dates during July, August and September which require volunteers for stewarding and the Councillors stand. Please inform the office accordingly if you are able to volunteer.

26. **UPDATE ON TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Town Clerk reported as follows:

Pump Track at Adam Lee

There had generally been good feedback regarding the new Pump Track since it's recent opening. Works to install new fencing and new gateway is under way but unfortunately there has been a delay with the gate supplier. Having a lockable car park area should help to discourage any overnight anti-social behaviour.

Works to improve the drainage by the pump track have also now been carried out and at the top of the Pump Track area, new stone has been laid to create a robust hard standing area for the bikers.

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New play area Adam Lee

New play equipment is due to be installed at Adam Lee including a DDA Roundabout, Swings, Zip Wire and Climbing frame.

Toddler Play Area – Victoria Park

The Toddler Play area has now been completed. There will be an extension to the patio area adjacent to the café commencing 7 July 2025.

Children's Fitness Equipment

There have been 6 pieces of equipment installed on the office side of Victoria Park. This will complement the adult fitness equipment already on site.

Skatepark

A meeting has taken place to view the 5 tenders received for the Skatepark. 3 companies have been shortlisted and invited to attend a presentation on 3 July 2025. Planning will then be sought if applicable, funding will be secured, and installation date will be later this year or early 2026

Sale of Land at Elgar Avenue

Hydraulic Modelling report has now been received. Flooding implications and climate change assessment over the next 40 years, looking with planning consultant and a report will be submitted to next council.

Operations Team

The team are very busy with summer bedding at present. Hanging baskets and troughs have been erected and put in place and the team are very pleased with the quality of the plants. Summer watering has now commenced.

Admin Team

There is a lot going on in the office at present with Year End, Audit and lots of event planning taking place.

Nick Houghton's Memorial

The unveiling of the memorial will officially take place on Saturday 28 June in Rose Bank Gardens.

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

The Mayor noted Cllr Malcolm Victory's report; much about Malvern Wells, but Geraldine Road is due to be resurfaced.

Cllr Nielsen had sent a note via text to the Mayor. The Mayor confirmed that Cllr Beverley Nielsen had been given the portfolio holder for Economy and Tourism.

Edith Walk design has commenced, consultation will be on its way. Cllr Bennett is also due to update regarding zebra crossings within this area and parking spaces available during the daytime. Edith Walk is currently closed, 5 day closure in place.

The Mayor informed full council that work on Belle Vue Island is due to take place and the finish date is November. There is concern regarding the Town Council's Christmas Light Switch-on event, therefore the Mayor will arrange to speak with the Council to find out more information.

Cllr Natalie McVey was present at the meeting and gave an extensive report regarding the following items:

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- MHDC Local Government Report
- Church Street and Edith Walk
- Local Plans
- Community Legacy Fund
- Malvern Vale
- Community Builders
- Poverty Truth Commission
- WCC – Pupil Safety at Northleigh Primary School
- Bike Bus
- Leigh Sinton Road VAS
- Pavement improvements
- We are Men United
- Friday Bus, Community Action

Cllr McVey confirmed that she has been elected as Chair of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

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

Cllr MacLusky updated the committee regarding a memorial plaque for the Railway Workers, following a Notice of Motion last September. There is only one other memorial in the country based in Otley, West Yorkshire.

Cllr MacLusky would like to approach local schools to discuss the topic and see if there would be any interest in running an Art Competition to design a memorial.

Cllr Watkins had concerns about all of the recent road repairs that have hindered residents. Cllr McVey noted that West Malvern had recently suffered with emergency road closures which can't be helped. The Mayor had also approached Karl Perks regarding this matter. Awaiting a reply currently.

Cllr Hooper reported back from CALC AGM that recently took place. Cllr Hooper has been elected as Chair. Discussions had taken place regarding the following areas:

- Devolution and Unitary Authority
- Information has been circulated to clerks regarding the community arts and culture grant. Individuals can apply as well as groups
- Changes in email addresses to a .gov – September webinar due
- Transfer of assets and Unitary Authorities

29. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

There were no members questions.

30. **TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE TO SURVEY ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN WORCESTERSHIRE**

Report CL01/25 was received and accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** that Full Council, after consideration, would submit the following answers in relation to Shaping Worcestershire – Council Changes Survey 2025:

1. In what capacity are you responding? Parish/Town Council
2. Which borough/city/district is your Parish/Town Council in? Malvern Hills District Council

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3. How aware are you of plans for reorganising local councils in Worcestershire?
Very Aware
4. How well do you understand each of the two proposed options for Worcestershire?
Options for answers: One Unitary Council covering all of Worcestershire and Two unitary councils – one for North Worcestershire and one for South Worcestershire.
Very well for both options
5. Based on the information provided, which option do you currently prefer? Two Unitary Councils – one for North Worcestershire and one for South Worcestershire
Reasons for choice –
 - i) The North and South of Worcestershire are two very distinct different areas with the South being very rural and the north more urban. These distinct areas should have their own unitary authorities.
 - ii) Democracy should be kept closer to home.
 - iii) The Councils in South Worcestershire already have a close working relationship and share services, therefore it seems very sensible to continue this with the design of the new Unitary Authority for the area.
6. Thinking of the outcomes the Government expects us to consider when deciding how we restructure councils in Worcestershire, which of the potential options do you think would best deliver each?

	One unitary authority	Two unitary authorities	Both options	Neither option	Don't know
Improving local services		Yes			
Saving money and delivering value	Yes				
Making local government simpler			Yes		
Supporting local identity		Yes			
Stronger community engagement		Yes			

7. Thinking about how your local councils are currently organised, which three things from the list below matter most to you?
The three chosen options were:
 - Impact on the local community and local identity
 - Infrastructure planning (e.g. roads, schools, health)

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- Maintaining or improving local services and council-owned facilities, such as community centre, sports grounds, arts centres, museums etc.
8. County and district/borough/city councils are responsible for a number of service. Which, if any, local services are you concerned about being affected by reorganisation? Choose up to a maximum of five services.
- The five chosen options were:
- Adult social care, such as support for people with disabilities, or care for the elderly
 - Education and children's services such as looked-after children, those with special educational needs or disability (SEND), fostering and adoption
 - Homelessness support
 - Planning and related services
 - Sports, leisure and cultural facilities (leisure centres, community centres, theatres, museums etc)
9. Do you have any other comments, suggestions, or concerns about the proposed reorganisation?

Malvern Town Council are very concerned about the financial settlements associated with the re-organisation and that the needs of the rural areas will be overshadowed by the needs and requirements of the larger urban areas. The Malvern Hills Area could be perceived to be more affluent as a whole, but those suffering from poverty in our area have the same needs as those in poverty in any other areas and should not be marginalised or ignored.

It would be better to split the region into two separate councils rather than one larger area with too large a population.

There are also concerns relating to the number of elected representatives on the new Unitary Authority and in particular that the option of one unitary will result in more responsibility and more workload falling on fewer people and thus create weaker representation.

There is also a strong feeling that the Towns and Parishes within Worcestershire should have an enhanced role in this process so that consideration can be given to where assets and services will be best delivered and by whom.

Cllr Green left the room during this section (Qu. 6) and returned shortly after.

31. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Report CL02/25 was received and accepted.

Minute 5 Annual Internal Audit Report – Financial Year ending 31 March 2025

It was **RESOLVED** that Full Council accepted the Council's Internal Auditor's report for 2024/25.

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Minute 6 Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Controls

It was **RESOLVED** that full council agreed a satisfactory review of the risks faced alongside the system of internal control which had been completed during 2024/25.

32. YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2024/25

Report CL03/25 was received and accepted.

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk for the narrative and hard work carried out with the work involved in compiling the report.

A summary was given by the Town Clerk covering the following areas:

- Key Financial Implications – 2024/25 forecast a small surplus of £220, surplus at 31 March being £44,915
- Income has been fairly close to budget across all departmental areas. Lower than anticipated income from the new Community Hub and has been offset during the year for the sale of equipment, vehicles and land
- A small underspend has occurred against administration costs.
- Operational expenditure is nearly £27,000 under budget. Salary costs have been lower due to vacancies on the operational staff team. Pleased to report that both vacancies have now been filled with the latest new member of staff commencing week of 30 June.
- Special Expenditure is approximately £115,000 under spent for the year. Largely due to Adam Lee Pump Track and new entranceway. This won't have a long lasting effect though
- Contingency Budget Fund of £60,000 has been used to cover building regulatory costs at the new hub as well as Rose Bank Gardens

It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Year End Accounts for the Financial Year 2024/25.

33. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/25

Report CL04/25 was received and accepted, and the recommendations taken separately:

- i. Council **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** Section 1 of the AGAR - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 and **ENSURED** it was signed and dated by the Chair and Deputy Town Clerk.
- ii. Council **CONSIDERED** and **APPROVED** Section 2 of the AGAR – Accounting Statements 2024/25, **APPROVED** the Accounting Statements by resolution and ensured they were signed and dated by the Chair.
- iii. Council **NOTED** the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25 as page 3 of the AGAR.
- iv. Council **AGREED** that the fully completed AGAR for 2024/25 should then be submitted with the appropriate supporting information to the external auditor no later than Monday 30 June 2025. Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR along with the Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounts are as yet unaudited must also be published on the Town Council website before Tuesday 1 July 2025.

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Cllr Karen Newbigging left the room at 7.27pm.

34. **ADMINISTRATION FOR MAYORAL/TOWN COUNCIL INITIATIVES**

The Town Clerk outlined the recommendation to Full Council and asked if they would approve the provision of officer administrative support for the following initiatives:

- a) Provision of Warm Spaces
- b) Traffic and Buses
- c) Meetings of Chairs of local parishes
- d) Councillor get togethers (MHDC/WCC/MTC)
- e) Support for High Sheriff Awards

Cllr Karen Newbigging returned to the room during this item.

It was **RESOLVED** that the committee agree to the administrative support for the aforementioned initiatives with it being noted that this should not cause any unreasonable increase in workloads.

35. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Report CL06/25 was received and accepted.

Minute 59 Review of Protocols and Practices

It was **RESOLVED** that all meetings should be recorded.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the draft minutes from meetings would be sent for consideration by the chair, but any final say on draft minutes to be submitted, remained with the clerk/minute taker until they are discussed at the next meeting at which point all councillors can have an input on their accuracy.

Dates and format of Sub-Committee meetings

It was **RESOLVED** that informal meetings (working party style) to discuss ideas ahead of formal recommendations being made should be able to take place and be organised on an adhoc basis. When policy recommendations are ready to be formulated then a more formal meeting with an agenda, officers present and minutes being taken, should take place ahead of submission of these recommendations to a committee or to Full Council.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the formal meetings of sub-committees should be communicated to all councillors as part of the weekly memo.

Publication of draft minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that draft minutes would be publicised within 15 working days of the meeting. The Mayor reminded all chairs that the draft minutes must be turned around fairly quickly and comments sent back in short period of time.

Correspondence/Communication

It was **RESOLVED** that a full response to requests for information, complaints, clarification and replies to questions that come in from members of the public, town

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councillors, district or county councillors, stakeholders etc. would be given within 20 working days and if this was not possible, an explanation would be given and a timeframe for response detailed.

Minute 60 – Review of Standing Orders

It was **RESOLVED** that Notices of motions should be able to be submitted to committees as well as full council.

Standing Order 3b

It was **RESOLVED** that Standing order 3b include a definition of clear working days, this item had been returned to Policy and resources many times.

The Town Clerk clarified that words in bold within standing orders are mandatory and cannot be changed.

Following a **RECOMMENDATION** from the Policy and Resources committee, it was **RESOLVED** that the footnote on page 18 of Standing orders should be included at the end of 3b but not in bold type and read:

The Council will in best practice use its own definition of clear working days for this purpose.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the full set of Standing Orders, Appendix A, were adopted by the Full Council.

It was **NOTED** that the section on responsibility for staffing matters would be updated in due course to reflect the new staffing committee.

Under Standing Order 3X, Councillor Anne Cherry proposed that the meeting be extended until 8.15pm. A vote was taken and the extension agreed.

36. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OPERATIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Report CL07/25 was received and accepted.

Cllr Anne Cherry reported on the recommendations as Cllr Mead had sent his apologies to the meeting.

Minute 6 – Update and Review of Performing Right Society (PRS) charges for 2025/26

It was **RESOLVED** that Malvern Town Council would absorb the PRS fees for exercise to music classes until March 2026 and that room hire charges would be increased for those that require a PRS Music Licence from April 2026 and this increase would be included as part of the overall review of room hire charges.

Minute 7 – Christmas Light Switch On – Update for 2025 and Five Year Timetable of Dates

It was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of dates for the five-year period 2025 to 2029 as listed below:

- Saturday 22 November 2025, Great Malvern and Friday 28 November 2025, Malvern Link

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- Saturday 21 November 2026, Great Malvern and Friday 27 November 2026, Malvern Link
- Saturday 20 November 2027, Great Malvern and Friday 26 November 2027, Malvern Link
- Saturday 25 November 2028, Great Malvern and Friday 1 December 2028, Malvern Link
- Saturday 24 November 2029, Great Malvern and Friday 30 November 2029, Malvern Link

Minute 10 – Review of Process and Timetable for Allotment Charges

It was **RESOLVED** that the invoicing period should change from 15 calendar days to 15 working days, giving allotment holders longer to pay their invoices. Non-payment after this will result in a £25 late payment charge, after which final payment terms before a tenancy is then terminated would be increased from 10 days to 10 working days.

Minute 12 – Refurbishment of Victoria Park Play Area

It was **RESOLVED** that a public consultation would be carried out on the new play area equipment for Victoria Park in order to assess user needs and requirements as well as to provide evidence of support for this project.

Cllr Julie MacLusky left the room for a short time at 7.55pm and returned at 7.57pm.

37. **NOTICE OF MOTION – MALVERN PRIDE 2025**

Report CL08/25 was received and accepted.

Cllr Anne Cherry put forward the notice of motion for the upcoming Malvern Pride festival to display 50 flags provided by Malvern Pride during the period 21 July to 4 August 2025.

The Chair passed around examples of the flags to be flown which were the rainbow flag and the progress flag.

Cllr Cherry stated further that it was important for all areas and all sections of people in Malvern are recognised and included, incorporating the whole community of Malvern. There would be a mixture of flags interspersed within the Malvern area and the operatives team would take down and erect the new flags with no direct costs.

There followed a discussion by members of the committee over the discussions around last year's Notice of Motion.

Cllr Bovey requested that the council moved to a vote on this item and this was **AGREED**.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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1. Malvern Town Council would support the Malvern Pride event to be held in Priory Park on Saturday 26 July 2025 by:
 - i. Promoting the event on the Malvern Town Council website and social media.
 - ii. Flying of 50 Pride Flags in Church Street, Belle Vue Terrace and Worcester Road, Barnards Green and Malvern Link (flags to be provided by Malvern Pride). Malvern Town council Operations Team to undertake the flag swap to fly Pride flags between Monday 21 July and Monday 4 August.
2. That members of this Council support and encourage friends, residents and businesses to support the Malvern Pride event.

38. **REPRESENTATIVE ON POOLBROOK VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE**

Report CL09/25 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Poolbrook Village Hall committee is still in place and that they were keen for a representative to attend meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr David Mead would be the Town Council representative on Poolbrook Village Hall Committee.

39. **REVIEW OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY GRANT RECEIVING BODIES 2024**

Report CL10/25 was received and accepted.

It was **RESOLVED** that reports were submitted by groups and organisations who were awarded a grant from the Town Council in March 2024.

40. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Report CL11/25 was received and accepted.

Cllr Leibrandt informed the council of the recommendations, and each were voted on individually.

Minute 6 – setting of work plan, actions and timetable for the year

It was **RESOLVED** that the first item of work of the committee would be reviewing the staffing structure and job descriptions for all staff members and that this information should be provided to all committee members.

It was **RESOLVED** that separate meetings should take place with Operational and Administrative Staff to discuss staff roles and their training and development needs. Councillors Cherry and Mead were nominated to speak to members of the operations team and Councillors Green and Newbigging were nominated to speak to staff who work in the office.

It was **RESOLVED** that the work programme should also include

- Review of training and development and any current plans in place.
- Review of appraisals and the creation of a new appraisal policy.

41. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 30 July 2025 at 6.00pm, in the Park View Meeting Room.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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.

42. ROSE BANK GARDENS UPDATE

This agenda item has been deferred and will be discussed at a future council meetings.

The meeting finished at 8.13pm

.....(Chairman)