

UNADOPTED

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

**in the Park View Meeting Room, Victoria Park Road, Malvern Link
held on Wednesday 4 September 2024 at 6pm**

Councillors

Present

M Birks (Chair)
S Austin
C Bovey
A Cherry
I Dawson
C Fletcher
E Green
C Hooper
N Houghton
M Jones
J Leibrandt (from 6.03pm)
L Lowton
J MacLusky (from 6.05pm)
D Mead
K Newbigging

Absent

J Green (apologies)
F Matthews-Jones
R McLaverty-Head (apologies)
S Meager
D Watkins (apologies)

Also in attendance

L Blake – Town Clerk
C Porter – Operations Manager
L Wall – Minute Clerk
Fred Moroni, Executive Director, Malvern
Theatres
Christopher Wayman, CEO Worcestershire
CALC
Member of the Press

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from Cllr Jude Green, Cllr McLaverty-Head and Cllr Watkins were noted.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

Cllr Josie Leibrandt joined the meeting at 6.03pm

59. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Cllr Hooper raised an amendment to minute 48, 'Town Council ward reports/representatives on outside bodies' to alter the last sentence from:

"There was a pilot scheme of six councils who would set up guidelines, and develop a programme."

to:

"There was a pilot scheme involving eight councils, set up by Worcestershire CALC to promote health and well-being initiatives."

It was **RESOLVED** that with this amendment, 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 31 July 2024.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

Cllr Julie MacLusky joined the meeting at 6.05pm

60. PRESENTATION FROM FRED MORONI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MALVERN THEATRES

Fred Moroni, Executive Director of Malvern Theatres attended the meeting to make a presentation on the redevelopment of the theatre following the successful award of £20 million funding to the district council. The aim of the project is to deliver a world-class facility and transform the visitor economy, but also to strive for equality and opportunity, to increase wellbeing for people, and to make peoples' lives better.

The project has been divided into phases. Phase 1 is now complete and has provided the new entranceway, disabled access to the theatre and a new 'changing places' toilet facility. Almost 9000 people had attended a ticketed event in the last year, around 2,500 had gone to a film screening or live performance, and half had participated in a class or workshop.

When the studio opened last September 17 regular classes were offered each week during term time, rising to 21 in the summer, and from September there will be 26 classes on offer each week.

Discounted tickets had allowed almost 20,000 people under the age of 26 years to attend the theatre in the past twelve months. A pilot scheme has been helping schools with transport costs, by way of a £100 cashback payment when booking 40 or more tickets for certain productions.

BFI funding meant that the theatre had been able to offer free cinema tickets to primary school children and it was an aspiration that no child in the Malvern Hills district would leave primary school without having had the opportunity to go to Malvern Cinema for free as part of a school group.

Studio one is now full and is operating at full capacity.

Phase 2 of the project would see further expansion of the site, with a second studio seating around 240, two new workshop spaces, a new dressing-room block for the Forum Theatre as well as new seats for that venue. There will also be a recording studio and an outdoor amphitheatre with a capacity of over 100. Finally, the steps on the park side of the building will be replaced and access improved.

Fred then showed members some display boards with images of the proposals and handed out leaflets showing upcoming productions at the theatre. Councillors asked a number of questions including use of the cinema, parking provisions, concessionary rates and getting in touch with hard-to-reach members of the community.

The Chair thanked Fred for attending and he left the meeting at 6.37pm.

61. PRESENTATION FROM CHRISTOPHER WAYMAN, WORCESTERSHIRE CALC

Christopher Wayman, Executive Officer at Worcestershire CALC had been invited to attend the meeting to talk about the roles and responsibilities of staffing committees.

He acknowledged that it could be a difficult subject to navigate and the association could provide help and advice. As a minimum, it was recommended that councillors read The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) The Good Councillor's

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Guide to Employment which provides practical guidance and is based on employment legislation and good practice.

Parish and town councils vary in size, but it is recommended that all have a staffing committee. Councillors who sit on a staffing committee should have a background in HR or undergo training in this area. Worcestershire CALC have an HR expert with 35 years' experience dealing exclusively with parish councils who could provide training.

The recommended size of a staffing committee depended on the size of the council, but a minimum number was three, and suggested sizes between 5 and 8, to enable effective discussion in meetings.

Christopher Wayman acknowledged that staffing could be a difficult topic and although it was often only considered when a problem arose, there should be a more permanent structure to be able to monitor various policies, and this could help take workloads off other committees, or stop items needing to go to full council.

Finally, Chris emphasised that staffing committees should enable a procedure of valuation and appraisals, looking at what happens in the workplace, trying to find out what issues might be coming in and facilitating staff to be more productive and looking at how someone can progress in their role.

He said it was not about capability, which was a completely different matter. A staffing committee should be there to help and support the staff.

Christopher explained that due to the size of Malvern Town Council, the staffing model was like a Christmas tree effect with the Town Clerk at the top managing other staff, and therefore it was the Clerk that would be the main point of contact for council on HR matters.

Christopher then answered various questions from the floor. Answers to questions included the following points:

- Benefits of a staffing committee are that a number of trained councillors are better prepared to deal with any issues that arise and that it can encourage a positive attitude towards staff from councillors.
- The negatives are that councillors can go on a staffing committee with the wrong attitude, trying to force discipline on staff or trying to protect staff for the wrong reasons.
- A staffing committee can report directly to council or sit as a sub-committee of Policy and Resources Committee.
- Training is important and a course length of about 2.5 hours would be about right. Training could be tailored and delivered specifically for Malvern.
- The Town Clerk and Operations Manager should carry out appraisals for all other staff, with the Clerk appraising the Operations Manager. The Mayor/Chair of staffing/Vice-chair of staffing could appraise the Clerk but Worcestershire CALC could provide assistance with an external appraisal of the Clerk.

The Chair thanked Christopher Wayman for his presentation.

The Chair announced that she would like to alter the order of the agenda, to bring forward agenda item 13

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62. NOTICE OF MOTION – ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR STAFFING TASK AND FINISH GROUP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Cllr Anne Cherry presented the notice of motion, explaining that staffing was an important issue and therefore as a meeting of the Staffing Task and Finish Group had failed to elect a chair, she felt that Full Council should be asked to make the decision.

Cllr Clive Fletcher had seconded the motion.

It was **AGREED** to take each recommendation separately and in order.

Recommendation 1

It was agreed to hold a secret ballot, and Cllr Lou Lowton was elected Chair of the Staffing Committee Task and Finish Group.

Recommendation 2

It was agreed to amend the wording from 'present at' to 'invited to' in the first line of the recommendation. With this amendment,

It was **RESOLVED** that Full Council mandate that a member of staff should be invited to every Staffing Task and Finish Group meeting as is the current standard practice. This is particularly important as staff representation should be present for all discussions concerning their employment status and or change of working practices or conditions. The Town Clerk should nominate a representative in her absence to give guidance on the legality of meetings and content and discussion.

Recommendation 3

It was **RESOLVED** that quorum for the Staffing Committee Task and Finish Group should be set at four (4).

Recommendation 4

It was agreed to amend the wording from 'an external body' to 'Worcestershire CALC' in the first line of the recommendation. With this amendment,

It was **RESOLVED** that any recommendations from the Task and Finish Group are reviewed by Worcestershire CALC to ensure recommendations are both legal and do not constitute a change in terms of employment practice or change of contract. This is because if recommendations approved by Full Council constitute a change in contract, a period of staff consultation is required by law before any changes are implemented.

Recommendation 5

It was **RESOLVED** that CALC Officer, Christopher Wayman be invited to the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group to act in an advisory role and to facilitate discussion.

Christopher Wayman and Charles Porter left the meeting at 7.37pm

63. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had compiled a list of engagements she had attended and this had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Mayor then thanked councillors and volunteers who had helped out at the Mayor's Bonanza, which had raised £2,300 for Heartstart Malvern.

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The Mayor reminded colleagues that there would be other events run by the Town Council taking place in the coming weeks such as Remembrance and the Christmas Lights Switch-on which would also need volunteers.

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

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

Community Hub Building

- Staff were settling in well to the new building, and the new telephone system had now been installed.
- The lease for the new café was completed on Tuesday with a target opening date in the middle of October.
- Landscaping works were continuing with the installation of two raised beds on the northeastern side of the building.
- Enquiries over use of the meeting room have been coming in, with a drama group, chair aerobics and a wake being some of the bookings already made.
- The new caretaker has started his duties this week.
- New outdoor fitness equipment given as part of the building contract will also be installed in the next few weeks, to be placed in the area of the trim trail and to include a table tennis table, a cross trainer and a rower.

Restart a Heart Day

This will take place on Wednesday 16 October from 8am until 8.30pm. This event will provide free CPR and defibrillator training by way of practical 90 minute training sessions which provide easy to learn life-saving skills. It will be a collaboration between the Town Council and Heartstart Malvern – all staff will take part and it was hoped that councillors would also attend. Booking was essential and a link would be included on the memo. The Mayor will open the day.

MHDC/MTC Councillor Get-together

Following discussions at the liaison meeting, and a meeting between the Town Clerk and the CEO of MHDC, a Malvern Councillor get together has been organised for Tuesday 29 October at 6pm.

This event will be a chance for District and County Councillors to look around the new community hub and for councillors at all 3 tiers of local government to meet each other and to discuss issues of common interest look. Light refreshments will also be provided.

Cemetery Tour

There will be a tour of the cemetery on Tuesday 1 October at 5.30pm, specifically for councillors. This will be a chance to learn about the workings of the cemetery both for interments and as a base for the Town Council's Operations Team.

Bike Pump track

The outcome of the planning application at Adam Lee is awaited.

Skatepark

Members of the skatepark focus group have been working on a specification for the new skatepark and officers from the Town Council have met with representatives from possible contractors in order to better understand the needs and scope of the project ahead. A meeting has now been scheduled to begin the tender design process.

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65. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

None.

66. TOWN COUNCIL WARD REPORTS/REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Karen Newbigging, MTC representative for Malvern Hills District Children and Young People's Partnership – there will be a meeting of the partnership on 25 September; Cllr Newbigging would raise any issues on behalf of councillors if they wished.

Cllr Clive Hooper, MTC representative for CALC, had attended a meeting in July when CALC were 1) encouraging councils to look at what they were doing to promote health and wellbeing, 2) encouraging councillors to attend training courses on planning matters, 3) encouraging councils to carry out regular tree surveys.

67. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were no members' questions.

68. NOTICE OF MOTION – INFORMATION BOARD AT STATION GARDENS TO COMMEMORATE THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY THOSE WHO CONSTRUCTED THE RAILWAY LINE AND COLWALL TUNNEL

Report CL01/24 was received and Cllr Julie MacLusky presented her notice of motion, seconded by Cllr Emma Green.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council supports the re-purposing of an abandoned informational board to the left of the steps leading from Great Malvern Railway Station up into Station Gardens.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council supports the funding of the repair and re-purposing of this display board at a cost of approximately £350.

69. NOTICE OF MOTION – INITIATIVE TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF 'HAPPY TO CHAT' TABLES IN THE TOWN'S CAFES

Report CL02/24 was received and Cllr Julie MacLusky presented her notice of motion, seconded by Cllr Marilyn Birks.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that Council supports an initiative that will encourage the Town's cafes to allocate one table, where suitable, as a 'Happy to Chat' space.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council would simply support this initiative, provide publicity and supporting materials; café owners would be free to adapt the idea to suit their businesses.

70. POLICY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Report CL04/24 was received and accepted.

The Town Clerk explained that it was good practice to review Town Council policies on a regular basis, and a Task and Finish Group could carry out this task and make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to set up a task and finish group to carry out a review of Town Council policies that required updating, before reporting back to Policy and Resources Committee with suggested drafts.

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It was **RESOLVED** that the task and finish group would have three members as follows:

- Cllr David Mead
- Cllr Clive Hooper
- Cllr Nick Houghton

Further members could be added to the group included those Councillors who were not present at the meeting.

71. **AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Report CL05/24 was received and accepted.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair of Audit Committee, Cllr Marilyn Birks presented the recommendation from the meeting held on 24 July 2024.

Minute 13 Review of Risks Facing the Town Council

It was **RECOMMENDED** to approve the risk register for 2024/25, noting that whilst the move into the new community hub was now almost complete, there would still be a period of uncertainty whilst arrangements were put in place for its ongoing management.

Minute 14 Review of controls in place for payment processes

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Council notes the controls in place for payment processes are comprehensive and demonstrate a clear and thorough audit trail.

57. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Wednesday 9 October 2024 at 6.00 pm.

The meeting finished at 8.10 pm.

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(Chairman)