

**UNADOPTED**

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

**in the Park View Meeting Room, Victoria Park Road, Malvern Link  
held on Wednesday 4 March 2026 at 6pm**

**Councillors**

Present

M Birks (Chair)  
S Austin  
C Bovey  
A Cherry  
H Clements  
I Dawson  
C Fletcher  
E Green  
C Hooper  
J Leibrandt  
L Lowton  
J MacLusky  
R McLaverty-Head  
D Mead  
K Newbigging  
N Wanklin  
D Watkins  
W Whittaker  
D Ward  
M Jones (6.32pm)

Absent

None

**Also in attendance**

L Blake, Town Clerk  
J Winkworth, Minute Clerk  
Malvern Gazette Reporter  
Councillor C McSweeney, WCC  
Councillor N McVey, MHDC & WCC  
6 members of the public

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Full Council meeting and informed those present that Agenda item 15 had been withdrawn prior to the meeting.

**168. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

It was **NOTED** that Cllr Mel Jones would be arriving late to the meeting.

**169. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**170. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

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

- Extraordinary Meeting 14 January 2026
- 11 February 2026

## UNADOPTED

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Mayor welcomed the members of Victoria Park Bowling Club present and explained they would have up to five minutes per speaker to address Council.

#### Captain Don Handy

Mr Handy was unhappy that Victoria Park Bowling Club had not been consulted about the location of the new Skatepark and made the following points.

- He felt that there should have been more consultation regarding the location of the skatepark, particularly as the proposed location was 15m from the bowls club boundary.
- He stated that they had been informed that a planning application would be required, yet the local papers had said planning permission was not required
- He stressed that the bowls club are not against the skatepark, but their objection is the location as it was too close to their facility. They feel that there will be noise from the skateboarders hitting the concrete as well as a visual impact from the skateboarders being able to look in whilst they are bowling
- Mr Handy also expressed concerns about the safety of the access Road which is used frequently during the summer. The bowling club are concerned that young children on scooters would access the path and not consider any cars

#### Colin Lowe

Mr Lowe, a member of the Bowling Club had recently attended the consultation meeting held at the Community Hub and was surprised to find that it wasn't a consultation meeting it was a design meeting with the contractor. Mr Lowe felt that the location was a 'done deal'.

He informed Councillors that he had been told at the consultation meeting that the club's comments would be taken away and that a meeting would be scheduled to discuss these further. Mr Lowe felt a meeting was required to express the clubs concerns fully and are awaiting a date for said meeting.

In response, Cllr Cherry thanked Mr Lowe and Mr Handy for coming along to the Full Council meeting and as Chair of the Skatepark Focus Group, she would be happy to meet with the members of the Bowling Club to discuss the matter further.

Cllr Newbigging supported this suggestion and would be happy to attend the meeting too, but felt it would be more productive once the Town Council are in receipt of a design from the successful contractor.

#### Mr Peter Storey

Mr Storey, also a member of the Bowling Club, concurred with his fellow Bowling Club members.

Mr Storey pointed out that on previous occasions, there had been items thrown into the Bowling Club area whilst their games were taking place, and this posed safety concerns.

Cllr Marilyn Birks thanked them all for attending the meeting.

## UNADOPTED

### 171. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed committee that there had been many 'nonchain' events taking place including:

- Lyttleton Well – Project for free meals
- Chinese New Year in the Community
- Town of Culture – an online survey is now available on MHDC website with a closing date of 18 March as the Expression of Interest involving the town's "story" needs to be lodged by 31 March.
- Joint Councillors meeting – Devolution issues were discussed
- High Sheriff Awards – local community members received awards at the recent celebratory event at Malvern Theatres. An award was given to Steve Tyrrell who was nominated by the Town Clerk having volunteered for the Town Council for many years.
- Mayor and Town Clerk are due to attend The House of Lords, Tuesday 10 March 2026 at 2pm
- Cllr Satinder Bell, Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing will be visiting on Friday 13 March 2026 for a tour of assets and to meet with key partners afterwards

### 172. UPDATE ON TOWN COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### Victoria Park Play Area Refurbishment

The order has been placed for the play area refurbishment at Victoria Park, and confirmation of the Legacy Grant Funding for the project has also been received. Timescales for the work are due soon with some works commencing before the end of March. The build period should be around 6 weeks, and no works will take place during the Easter period. A 3D plan will be circulated in due course.

#### Skatepark

Following feedback from the design consultation evening, the contractors are due to submit a design in due course. Once this has been received the Town Clerk and Councillors will meet with the Bowling Club and communicate the proposal accordingly.

#### Malvern in Bloom

Following an initial online bloom seminar, we can confirm that the first judging session will take place on 22 July 2026.

National Finals – a seminar to meet the National judges will take place in the week commencing 9 March. Confirmation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage judging date won't be issued until mid-April.

With demands for the National Finals being much higher, the Town Council are looking to attract volunteers and local groups to take part in the event this year. There will be a steering group meeting taking place at the Community Hub from 7pm on Wednesday 11 March 2026.

Cllr Mel Jones arrived at 6.32pm.

## UNADOPTED

### 173. REPORTS BY COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

**Cllr Chris McSweeney** reported that at a recent County Council meeting there were discussions regarding the budget and in particular Council Tax. WCC are in a difficult financial position and to balance the budget, an increase of 8.98% was voted on and approved.

Cllr McSweeney has met with Safer Neighbourhood teams regarding community matters.

Cllr Birks thanked Cllr McSweeney for the offer of funds from his divisional funds towards Town Council initiatives. It is much appreciated.

#### **Cllr Natalie McVey**

##### MHDC

Cllr McVey reported the following

- The House Martin Tower at End Hill Way on Malvern Vale has been installed and there will be a community launch at 3pm on Friday 13 March.
- Following a successful pilot, a plan is being worked on to allow children and families access to the sports pitch at Malvern Vale during the Easter Holiday.
- Cllr McVey has met with MHDC Officers from Planning, Urban Design and National Landscapes and developers, Barrett Wilson about the Cales Farm development to make sure it's the best it can be.
- At the MHDC Council meeting last Friday, as well as agreeing the council tax freeze, the NPPF was discussed. Cllr McVey reported that she had a range of concerns about the 'build, build, build' narrative coming from government and in the framework itself not least because no Environmental Assessment of the impact of this policy change has been made available.

##### WCC

- The main issue from the County Council is the 9 hour meeting during which the proposed 8.98% Council Tax increase was approved. Cllr McVey has been responding to residents' concerns about how they will manage financially, and signposting to relevant charities and third sector organisations.
- Since the meeting, it has transpired that the Liberal Democrats have submitted a vote of no confidence in the Reform Leader which will be debated at the next council meeting in May.
- Osborne Court, a specialist facility for adults with additional needs, is threatened with closure and it appears that Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust, who operate the facility, have made the decision to withdraw funding. It is understood that the immediate plan is for a retendering process to be undertaken by WCC so that a new provider can be commissioned to run the service.

##### **Highways issues.**

- Later this year, a section of Worcester Road will be sided out, so that footway works can be completed in a couple of phases. There are no dates for this yet, but this is an early warning from the WCC Highways Liaison Officer.
- Residents have reported considerable damage to grass verges on Knapp Way, caused by vans and lorries. This has been reported and Natalie has enquired about a solution to help prevent this.

## UNADOPTED

### SEND

- Cllr McVey supported the Cabinet Members recommendation to turn down £5.4m from government to be allocated across mainstream schools in favour of building the new Malvern Free SEND school. She believes this is the best option for children and young people who cannot be educated in mainstream education.
- The SEND White Paper, which was due to be published in the Autumn, was published last week. It emphasises “Right Support, Right Place, Right Time” outlining a vision of consistent national standards, earlier intervention, and clearer expectations for parents and schools.
- Finally, Cllr McVey has funded 3 ‘Cut It Out’ Domestic Violence awareness sessions:  
Thursday 19 March 10-12 at Malvern Vale Community Centre  
Monday 13 April 10-12 Salvation Army / Newtown Club  
Wednesday 22 April 10-12 West Malvern Village Hall

Cllrs Chris McSweeney and Natalie McVey left the meeting at 6.46pm

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

Cllr David Mead updated the Council regarding the development at Old Barracks Street Store is beginning to move forward, hence the road closure at Court Road.

There were no further reports from outside bodies.

Cllr Watkins expressed his disappointment that the Town Council had not received any reports from those councillors representing outside bodies where a fee is paid for membership.

### **175. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None.

*Under Standing Order 1a, the Chair changed the order of business so that Agenda Item 14 was brought forward as the next item for discussion.*

### **176. NOTICE OF MOTION – STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Report CL06/25 was received and accepted.

Cllr Whittaker led the discussion on his Notice of Motion relating to the Staffing Committee.

Cllr Wanklin supported the notice of motion and had nothing further to add to the motion and the information already submitted by Cllr Whittaker.

There followed a lengthy debate amongst councillors.

Cllr Whittaker put forward an amendment to Part 2 of the Notice of Motion as follows:

That Council will elect 5 Staffing Committee members from the 7 existing members.

This amendment fell.

Further discussions took place around the number of members and the timing of the election of new members and whether this should take place at Annual Council.

The Chair then moved the committee to make a decision on the first point of the proposed resolution

Full Council **RESOLVED** to reduce the number of members serving on the Staffing Committee from 7 members to 5 members.

## **UNADOPTED**

There followed further discussions amongst Councillors.

Cllr Mead proposed an alternative amendment to Part 2 of the motion 'That the newly constituted Staffing Committee will start from the new Council year in May 2026 when a new committee of 5 members will be selected at Annual Council. This amendment was seconded by Cllr McLaverty-Head.

Full Council **AGREED** to approve this amendment, and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that the newly constituted Staffing Committee will start from the new Council year in May 2026 when a new committee of 5 members will be selected at Annual Council

For clarification the Town Clerk confirmed that each committee is determined annually in May, as per the Terms of Reference.

Cllr Whittaker left the meeting at 7.30pm

Cllr MacLusky left the room at 7.31pm.

The Council resumed discussion of business at Agenda Item 9.

### **177. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

Report CL01/25 was received and accepted.

Cllr Green left the room at 7.32pm.

Following a review of the calendar of meetings, Full Council **RESOLVED** to accept the meeting dates for 2026/2027.

It was **NOTED** that Cllr MacLusky and Cllr Green were not present for the vote.

### **178. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Report CL02/25 was received and accepted.

#### **MINUTE 26 - REVIEW OF TENDERING PROCESS**

Following a review of the Tendering process, Full Council **RESOLVED** to accept the that:

- i) Electronic Submission would be allowed for all tenders

And

- ii) When deciding evaluation criteria, equality and inclusion would be considered and included where relevant

Following a request for an amendment to remove the word 'by' from the third recommendation point below, Full Council **RESOLVED** that:

- iii) Two references should be requested for all those submitting a tender

#### **MINUTE 27 - REVIEW OF CONTROLS TO MEASURE WHETHER AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE BEING COMPLETED**

Full Council **RESOLVED** to note and approve the review of controls to measure whether aims and objectives are being completed, as carried out by Audit Committee.

**UNADOPTED**  
**MINUTE 28 - REVIEW OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENTS AND THE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE BEHIND THESE**

Full Council **RESOLVED** that the supporting evidence behind the annual governance statements would continue to be reviewed annually.

**MINUTE 29 - REVIEW OF AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS AND REFERENCE**

Full Council **RESOLVED** that:

- i) Audit Committee should be renamed Audit and Scrutiny Committee and should incorporate scrutiny work within its remit.
- ii) Membership of the Audit Committee should remain at 5 members, but this should be a mix of members from both Policy and Resources and Operations and Planning with at least two members from each committee.
- iii) Members of the Audit Committee should revise the current Terms of Reference to include work relating to both Audit and Scrutiny and make a recommendation for consideration by Full Council on 8 April 2026.

It was noted that following the resolutions above, the Terms of Reference for Policy and Resources Committee would need amending, and this will be brought forward to the April meeting of Full Council.

**179. ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

Report CL03/25 was received and accepted.

It was suggested that an additional clause should be added to the Job Description at point 8, and all other points would move down, to read as follows:

- To work with the Community Engagement Sub Committee to facilitate, develop and implement an ongoing work programme in line with the Council's Strategic aims. This work may include, but is not limited to, the warm spaces free meals project, provision of facilities for young people, best use of development of Town Council assets and properties, community needs relating to health and wellbeing and the Sherrard's Green project.

Following the addition of this clause, Full Council **RESOLVED** to note the approval received from MHDC for Section 106 funding to employ and manage a part time Community Development Officer and to give approval for the recruitment and appointment of a suitable person to fill this role.

Cllr Austin left the room at 7.52pm and returned at 7.54pm.

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

**180. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION CONSULTATION**

Report CL04/25 was received and accepted.

Full Council **AGREED** to delegate the Local Government Reorganisation Consultation to Cllrs Cherry, Hooper and Clements who would work alongside the Town Clerk to answer the questions and submit a response by 26 March 2026.

Cllr Newbigging left the room and returned shortly thereafter at 7.56pm.

**181. NPPF CONSULTATION**

Report CL05/25 was received and accepted.

**UNADOPTED**

Full Council **RESOLVED** to delegate the NPPF Consultation to a smaller group of Councillors to answer and submit the Town Council response by the deadline of 10 March 2026.

Cllr Cherry left the room at 8pm.

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

It was **AGREED** that the date of the next meeting of Full Council would be Wednesday 8 April 2026 at 6.00pm.

Cllrs Green and Lowton left the meeting at 8pm, along with the remaining member of public.

**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.

**183. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the private session of the meeting held on 11 February 2026 be accepted as an accurate record.

**184. ROSE BANK GARDENS UPDATE**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update regarding Rose Bank Gardens.

The meeting finished at 8.08pm.

.....(Chair)