

Malmesbury Town Council

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting

Held in Malmesbury Town Hall on **Tuesday 25th May 2021** at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Mayor Councillor P Smith

Councillors: C Doody, J M Exton, P Exton, L G Grant, R P Jones, K Power, C Ritchie, F Smith, F Vandelli, E Whatton

ALSO PRESENT: Claire Mann (Acting Town Clerk), Gill Davie (Minutes)

MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A newsletter will be produced after the Government restrictions are lifted on June 21 to enable a group photo of the Council to be included with all Councillors in their robes. The newsletter will contain a pen portrait of each Councillor. The Acting Town Clerk will co-ordinate the production and distribution of the newsletter.
- The Mayor's Robing Ceremony will take place on June 3rd and will be a scaled down event because of the current limits on meetings. Councillors, ex-Mayors, and the current Mayor's family will be invited.

FC/21/10 **Declarations of interest:** None

FC/21/11 **Apologies:** Cllrs G Davies, K Davies, W Jones, R Sanderson

FC/21/12 **Public Questions on items of business included on the agenda:** None.

FC/21/13 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on April 29th, 2021.**

Resolved: the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on April 29th, 2021 were received and adopted as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr P Smith **Seconded:** Cllr P Exton

FC/21/14 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Community & Town Promotion Committee meeting held on April 15th 2021.**

Resolved: the Minutes of the Community & Town Promotion Committee meeting held on April 15th, 2021 were received and adopted as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Power **Seconded:** Cllr Vandelli

FC/21/15 **To receive and adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on May 4th, 2021.**

Resolved: the Minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on May 4th, 2021 were received and adopted as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr P Exton **Seconded:** Cllr Ritchie

FC/21/16 To receive and adopt the minutes of the Extraordinary Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 4th May 2021.

Resolved: the Minutes of the Extraordinary Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on May 4th, 2021 were received and adopted as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Grant

Seconded: Cllr Vandelli

FC/21/17 To note and consider any further action on Covid 19 emergency funding, following the response from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to our further enquiries on the Government and Wiltshire Council's allocation of funding based on previous Government advice.

Cllr Ritchie provided an update on communications between Malmesbury Town Council and the Ministry since May 2020 regarding the allocation of emergency funding for Town and Parish Councils made via Wiltshire Council. He confirmed that these funds were no longer ring fenced and it would be Wiltshire Council's decision about how the funds are allocated.

Resolved: to ask the Policy and Resources Committee to consider whether any further action should be taken on the Covid 19 emergency funding

Proposed: Cllr Ritchie

Seconded: Cllr Smith

FC/21/18 Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan: To note and consider action, if any, on the following:

- (i) **James Gray MP has not offered dates to meet Malmesbury Town Council to discuss the future of Neighbourhood Planning as requested by the Planning & Environment Committee and Full Council**

Cllr Ritchie provided the background to the current planning issues, including the cross Wiltshire group of up to 40 town and parish councils working together on neighbourhood planning issues. While James Gray has been supportive in the press, he is refusing to meet to explore common interests.

Resolved: that the Planning & Environment Committee at their meeting next week consider the implications of the Government's proposals in the Planning White Paper for the future of the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan and the view of James Gray MP that these proposals make neighbourhood planning redundant. The Planning & Environment Committee to return proposals to Full Council on how to progress this.

Proposed: Cllr Ritchie

Seconded: Cllr Grant

- (ii) **James Gray MP's comments on 17th May 2021 that the government's Planning Bill announced in the Queen's Speech on May 11th, 2021 "risks taking the right to decide on development away from local people in favour of pre-set goals and targets. If not handled well, that not only has a negative effect on local democracy, Neighbourhood Planning for example becomes redundant".**

James Gray has confirmed the Government's proposals as announced in the Queen's Speech risk making Neighbourhood Planning redundant. An email from James Gray to Malmesbury Town Council of the 20th May 2021 was tabled with

this agenda item. This email contains comments about the conduct of Malmesbury Town Council, particularly with involving the Liberal Democrats in their campaign on planning issues. Cllr Grant explained he had invited Sir Ed Davey to come to Malmesbury to understand further the planning issues in Malmesbury. However, the Council remains open to meeting anyone who can help make progress in this matter which is of some importance to the residents of Malmesbury.

Resolved: that the Policy & Resources Committee consider the comments made by James Gray MP on the conduct of Malmesbury Town Council in Para 3 of his email of 15.55pm on the 20th May which he has asked to be tabled at this meeting and to propose to the next Full Council (15th June) what steps, if any, should be taken in response to these comments

Proposed: Cllr Ritchie

Seconded: Cllr Grant

(iii) To confirm membership of the Joint Parish Working group

Resolved: to nominate Cllrs Doody, P Exton, R P Jones, Grant, Power, Ritchie on to the Joint Parish working group, and to ask for an update from the group at the next Full Council meeting on June 15th

Proposed: Cllr Power

Seconded: Cllr Doody

Resolved: to nominate Cllrs P Exton, Power, Ritchie as members of WALPA

Proposed: Cllr Grant

Seconded: Cllr Power

FC/21/19

Covid 19 and High Street measures: to note and consider further action, if any, on the latest Government guidance on the Covid 19 roadmap, the High Street survey which is underway and grant funding opportunities to support the future operation of the High Street and local businesses.

Cllr Ritchie explained that the restrictions are due to be removed on June 21st with an announcement expected on June 14th to confirm this. At that stage, the bollards and the planters on the High Street will be removed. Given this short timeframe, it is necessary to work closely with Wiltshire Council to make this transition as smooth as possible. The High Street survey is currently being undertaken with 200 responses received so far. The deadline for responses is June 1st. Policy & Resources will discuss the results and feedback their conclusions to Highways in Wiltshire Council who have the final decision. More grant funding to support the return of the High Street could be available from Wiltshire Council and consideration is being given to seating around the Town Hall, Market Lane and improving the use of Birdcage Walk.

FC/21/20

Local Governance: To note and consider action, if any, following the request to confirm the submission made by Malmesbury Town Council concerning future arrangements for the operation of parish councils in and around Malmesbury

Cllr Grant explained that it is anticipated that within the next 6-8 weeks Malmesbury Town Council will be asked if it wants to continue with the proposals made in 2019 regarding boundaries in and around Malmesbury. This has implications for any future awards of Community Infrastructure Levy on new developments. It also has economic consequences where residents make no contribution but consider themselves resident in Malmesbury.

FC/21/21

To receive an update from the Wiltshire Councillor, Gavin Grant

- Area Board Management Group has met. Cllr Grant has been appointed as Vice-Chair. He is also the representative on the Local Youth Network, which provides funding for the Rise Trust. The Town Team are seeking funding for a new Town Guide from the Community Area Grants.
- The Community & Safety Forum had a useful and productive meeting this week involving the police and the Rise Trust.
- The election for the PCC has been declared null and void and will be rerun on August 19th.
- Cllr Grant has given notice to the Head of the Northern Area Planning that he intends to call in applications for development at Park Road and Filands
- Wiltshire Council have taken legal advice over the landslip at the Maltings, and it is hoped that this will lead to a favourable outcome.

Questions were raised over the Waitrose steps which have been closed for over a month. When asked Waitrose have said quotes are being obtained for their repair.

Resolved: that the Mayor will write to Waitrose seeking clarification and speedy resolution of repairs to the steps.

Proposed: Cllr Ritchie

Seconded: Cllr Grant

The meeting closed at 8.15pm