

## **Report No: 4**

### **Draft Report for Discussion:**

#### **Malmesbury Town Council – Proposed Changes to our Current Committee Structure**

##### **1. Situation**

1.1 MTC is about to take on sole responsibility for the Tetbury Hill Cemetery. As a consequence, the Joint Burial Committee is expected to terminate at the end of March 2019. We will need to decide where future responsibility for the Cemetery is placed but the obvious place, unless a separate Cemetery Committee is set up, is that it becomes the responsibility of the Town Hall and Facilities Committee. The Committee, which has six representatives from MTC, currently meets four times a year. Some significant decisions are required in respect of the Cemetery. These include whether operations will extend, as expected, into the expansion areas, if new services such as green burials and additional remembrance opportunities might be offered, pricing, the development of an environmental management policy and so on.

1.2 However, and in addition:

1.2.1 In the last 12 months MTC has taken over responsibility for two play parks from WC – Filands and Newton Grove. This means MTC is now responsible for five play parks. The management of play parks and open spaces, which also includes Cloister Gardens, Birdcage Walk, Cuckingstool Mead and St Aldhelm's Mead, currently rest with Town Hall and Facilities Committee.

1.2.2 The likelihood is that MTC will take over additional public space management responsibilities from WC in the years to come.

1.2.3 The Town Hall, itself, is becoming a more complicated and challenging resource to manage. For example, the addition of a new sound and light system in the Assembly Room means more focus must be placed on generating additional revenue and managing bookings. There are also number of development and refurbishments projects which have been slow to progress. At the same time aspects of Town Hall management – notably the operation of the John Bowen gallery and the TIC - is undertaken by Community and Town Promotion Committee, which can lead to overlap and complexity in decision making and accounting.

1.3 Taken together it can be anticipated that the effect of the changes in 1.2 above, plus responsibility for the Cemetery, might give the current Town Hall and Facilities Committee an overwhelming brief.

It is therefore timely to consider a change to MTC Committee organisation.

##### **2. Proposal**

2.1 To ensure the correct level of Councillor focus is consistently applied across all of the potential Town Hall and Facilities portfolio it is proposed that, with effect from the start of the new Council year – May 2019 - the current work of the Town Hall and Facilities Committee is divided between two new Committees:

###### **2.1.1 Outside Spaces Committee**

This would cover all MTC play park and public spaces and assets outside of the Town Hall and include the Cemetery. This has the advantage of bringing together responsibility for all 'outside works' and

the resources that tend them. Many management processes are common across the parks, outside spaces and cemetery and there is benefit in having a consistent asset management plan and approach to community engagement.

### **2.1.2 Town Hall Committee**

This would cover the operation and management of the Town Hall and ancillary buildings, including achieving contribution budgets for room hire, the cinema, sub lettings and associated activities and the new toilet project.

2.2 It is also proposed, taking account of the overlap between current committee responsibilities in point 1.2.3, in the description of the current situation, above, that the management of the John Bowen Gallery is transferred from Community and Town Promotion Committee to this newly defined Town Hall Committee, thereby enabling all Town Hall matters to be under the brief of one committee and Community and Town Promotion to maintain its focus on its principle objectives and activities. This would clarify revenue generation responsibility, enable the operation of a common booking system, ensure consistent good service to facility users, and support the development of a co-ordinated asset management plan and development plan.

***Question:** The proposal in 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 presupposes that our buildings – the lodge, toilet and chapel at the Cemetery, our rented storage unit at Park Road and our toilets at St Aldhem’s Mead become the responsibility of the Outside Spaces Committee. Is this the best approach or should we group and manage all our buildings together with the Town Hall and make them the responsibility of the Town Hall Committee?*

### **2.1.3 Community and Town Promotion Committee**

In addition, it is proposed that Community and Town Promotion Committee is given a specific additional objective to review and seek to develop youth services.

## **3. Financial Considerations**

3.1 There will be an increase in the overall number of MTC Committee meetings requiring officer support as the JBC, which has four to five meetings a year, will be replaced by a Parks and Outside Spaces Committee, which might be expected to meet nine times a year. However, the total committee time may not be more than if this change is not implemented as, otherwise, Town Hall and Facilities meetings would be expected to be longer.

3.2 Current budgets will need to be re-allocated to each Committee.

3.3 It also likely that this change to Committee structure will enable MTC resources to be managed in as timely and co-ordinated manner as possible, which may increase MTC operational efficiency and support overall cost management.

## **4. Operational Considerations**

The new Committee structure will require Councillor support. The net effect is that two Councillors may join one more committee than at present.

Campbell Ritchie

March 2019