

Committee to prepare the main recommendation to Full Town Council – and this would be publicly available. The 2.9% precept for the current year was not the highest in the county. A Band D property's precept was £187.97/year – an increase of £5.30 or 44p/month on the previous year.

Stewart Dobson, Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East – asked what progress had been made in reinstating the Leaf bequest and whether any meetings had taken place to consider how this could be used. The **Town Clerk** would provide a written response and confirmed that this was included in the Action Plan 2017-2021 for this Council's term.

296/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Kirk Wilson.

297/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

298/18 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

299/18 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Full Town Council meeting held 10 September 2018 were approved as a true record and signed by the Mayor

300/18 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WILTSHIRE COUNCIL: WARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Members considered a response to a consultation about the Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council (WC) being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The LGBCE was minded to recommend that 98 Councillors should be elected to Wiltshire Council in the future.

Town Councillors also considered the response to the consultation put forward by WC which recommended that, to meet the requirements set by the LGBCE, the Marlborough Area Board be made up of 3 seats rather than the current 4 seats. The West Selkley Division would be lost with its parishes being absorbed within other divisions as part of WC's solution to meeting the LGBCE rule that all divisions are within a variance of 10% of 4,263 electors:

Aldbourn/Ramsbury takes in both of the Ogbournes and loses Broad Hinton and Winterbourne Bassett to the Royal Wootton Bassett & Cricklade Area Board

Marlborough East takes in Mildenhall and Savernake and the new Salisbury Road development and some of Churchfields

Marlborough West takes in the rest of the current West Selkley Division (Preshute, Avebury, Berwick Bassett, East Kennett, Fyfield, West Overton and Winterbourne Monkton). Froxfield will move to the Pewsey Area Board

Discussion points included:

- The proposed changes would reduce representation at the Area Board to 3 members, with a quorum of 3. A suggestion that a deputy from another area (e.g. Tidworth) could act as a substitute was unacceptable as the deputy would have no political mandate for the Marlborough area
- Whether the proposal was politically motivated
- The proposals appeared to contravene the Electoral Commission's principle that the pattern of division should reflect the interests and identity of local communities: Members questioned whether there was really common interest between small

villages and Marlborough, seeing the issues for these communities as being distinctly different

- Members questioned the rationale of choosing the Marlborough Area Board as the only option for Wiltshire Council's target reduction from 99 to 98 Councillors
- Whether the Marlborough area's voice at Wiltshire Council would be diminished
- Whether the proposed number variance for the three proposed wards was above average (based on 4,264 electors) meaning the Marlborough Area would be less well represented when compared to other areas of Wiltshire
- Whether there were alternative ways to redraw the boundaries, still meeting the number requirements
- Town Councillors had a responsibility to represent the interests of the people of the town
- While understanding the concerns of neighbouring parishes, the Town Council should limit its response to the interests of the residents of the parish of Marlborough
- That Marlborough Town Council should propose a solution where Marlborough maintains two Wards and two Wiltshire Councillors

RESOLVED: In considering proposals for new divisions to meet electoral equality as required by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as part of its Electoral Review of Wiltshire Council, Marlborough Town Council insists on retaining the distinctiveness of the town of Marlborough and both of its Marlborough East and West divisions. Also that boundaries should be redrawn for a rural division to better represent the interests and identities of local communities in outlying rural parishes.

The Town Council would object to proposals (including that put forward by Wiltshire Council) that involve:

- i) any changes that would impact on the distinctiveness of the town of Marlborough or its unified status
- ii) any division which combines rural and urban parishes - a breach of the LGBCE's legal criteria of reflecting the interests and identities of local communities
- iii) any changes that would result in a deficit of democratic representation for the town of Marlborough
- iv) any proposals resulting in a quorum on a Wiltshire Council Committee (Area Board) as low as 3 with a substitution process involving division Members from outside of the Community Area. This is unacceptable.

301/18

COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Cllr. Castle** and seconded by **Cllr. Dow** and

RESOLVED: that the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council be affixed to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

The meeting closed at 7pm

Signed: Date:
Town Mayor