



was a dangerous point for pedestrians to cross. She would email colleagues in the Community Speed Watch team and the Town Clerk would follow up on the report he had already shared with police

- It was surprising that no reports of antisocial behaviour had been received for any of the town's open spaces: CCTV had identified that people were using the Rec and Skatepark but nothing untoward had been seen. Perhaps the cold, early dark evenings were a factor
- There was no evidence of any "county lines" activity in the town

## **QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS**

**Councillor Sheppard** gave an update on a request for improved signage for the one-way stretch of the High Street near St Peters Church. The advice from the Wiltshire Council Highways Engineer was that the request for a new sign should be submitted via the Community Area Transport Group for funding purposes.

### **379/21 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Barrett-Morton, Farrell, Allen, Davies and Thomas.**

### **380/21 DECLARATIONS**

**Councillor Hall** – agenda item 9 – Merchant's House Lease – non-pecuniary interest.

### **381/21 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillors and members of the public were encouraged to attend an informal community engagement event taking place in the Town Hall on Tuesday, 18 January 2022 to identify ways that the whole town could celebrate HM Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee year.

On 5 January the Mayor and Town Clerk had attended a videoconference meeting with Wiltshire Council's Chief Executive, Richard Clewer to discuss devolution and a community asset transfer of Marlborough Community & Youth Centre (MC&YC), which had less than 3 years of a 7-year lease remaining. Salient points had been:

- COVID still dominated the agenda for Wiltshire Council officers
- It was expected that more information would be available by March 2022
- The Mayor had emphasised the Town Council's very strong desire to secure the MC&YC for the community. That had been recognised by Mr Clewer
- The Chief Executive had shown he was keen to engage with local councils
- The Mayor had been given the impression that while the timeline might be an issue, it was likely that the request to transfer the asset to the Town Council would be granted.

**Councillor Sheppard** confirmed that Wiltshire Councillors were also pushing for the transfer. He believed the delay was due to process and the impact of COVID on the workload for Officers, not that Wiltshire Council was reluctant for the transfer to take place.

### **382/21 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meetings held 13 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 were approved as true records and signed by the Town Mayor

**383/21 ACTION LOG**

The action log was noted. Updates included:

**Councillor Cleasby** asked for clarification about how the log was updated, and for an action (already completed) to be added to record submitting a Freedom of Information request to Wiltshire Council seeking details of contractual arrangements with Aster Homes (*raised at Full Town Council Meeting, 13 December 2021, Questions to and from Wiltshire Councillors*).

New Workshop: a site meeting had taken place at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground and a draft alternative plan for the redevelopment of the existing workshop was being prepared by the Town Council's agent.

**384/21 PRIORY GARDENS GATE**

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and recommendations to lock the Figgins Lane gate to Priory Gardens for a trial period (from February half term to June half term) at 4.30pm in winter months and 6pm in summer months. Discussion points included:

- Time of closing: 6pm and 7pm were suggested as well as later in the evening
- To clarify what time the High Street entrance is locked
- Whether both gates should be locked at the same time
- Some members did not support the principle to lock the gate at all
- The potential impact on staff and staff costs if a later time were to be agreed
- An acknowledgement that people could still gain access to the garden after the gate is locked, e.g. by climbing the wall
- That nuisance/antisocial behaviour had been caused by all kinds of people in the park at different times; whether it was unfair to lay the blame at schoolchildren
- That locking the gate would send a clear message that members of the public should not be in the park after the gate is locked
- If agreed it would provide a clear policy for staff (lock, or retreat and report)
- A locked gate will aid the police with enforcement related to antisocial behaviour and therefore the police are in favour of locking the gate
- Whether a trial would lead to a cultural change
- To conduct the trial prior to the busy summer months
- To review after the trial period
- That partnership working would be key to success (the Town Council, schools, police – to inform/educate/enforce)
- That the results of the trial would be reported back to Members so they could decide whether to continue with the routine

**ACTION POINT:** to clarify what time the High Street entrance to Priory Gardens is normally locked

**RESOLVED:** to accept the recommended trial period of February half term to June half term to lock Priory Gardens (4.30pm winter/7pm summer) and to synchronise the time that both entrance gates are locked

### **385/21 PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS AND TREE PLANTING**

Members noted that an informal public engagement event to gather ideas for the town's celebrations was taking place in the Town Hall on 18 January between 7-8pm, and considered the formation of a working party and opportunities for tree planting:

#### Working Party

It was noted that 4 Military Intelligence Battalion was keen to be involved as well as other community representatives who could be signed up at the event on 18 January. Additionally, all Councillors were invited to attend the event and also to join the working party. **Councillors Waltham, Cleasby and Lusson** agreed to join the working party and it was also believed the **Deputy Town Mayor** was interested.

#### Tree Planting

Members had an open discussion to offer up initial ideas of opportunities for tree planting to be fed into the planning process. Suggestions/comments included:

- To create a copse on land owned by the Town Council at Tinpit
- Questions about what type of tree were proposed, size and budget available
- That native trees were recommended as much as possible
- That location and soil type would guide which types of tree, e.g. Tinpit was on a flood plain
- Long lived trees would leave a long term legacy
- Various locations had already been discussed by the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee
- Whether to plant an avenue of trees at Marlborough Common
- Whether to aim for 70 trees to match the 70 years of the Platinum Jubilee
- Whether to plant more trees at Marlborough Cemetery; the Victorian Cemetery was notable for its mature trees
- Other locations already suggested included Stonebridge Meadow, Coopers Meadow and the Salisbury Road Recreation Ground
- Other groups/organisations known to be looking at options for tree planting and/or keen to be included in planning were:
  - Action for the River Kennet (ARK) – 15 locations identified
  - Marlborough St Mary's School
  - Transition Marlborough - adding more fruit trees at Community Orchard locations
  - Barton Park and College Fields Residents Association
- Whether to select specimens to highlight Marlborough's international links, e.g. Marlborough New Zealand, Massachusetts (and/or many other Marlboroughs around the world)
- Ideas from the public would be encouraged
- Whether to plant a copse with a use/grow, sustainable lifecycle

- That June was not necessarily the best time to plant trees
- Whether to approach family members associated with the original planting of trees at Frees Avenue
- Whether trees could be obtained from the Woodlands Trust, and that these were likely to be whips
- Whether to follow the official calendar of events for the Queen's Jubilee Year and plant trees at significant points rather than all at one time

The Mayor thanked everyone for their suggestions which would be fed in to the planning process.

### **386/21 DEVELOPMENT AND ACTION PLAN**

The Mayor and Councillors thanked the Town Clerk for creating a comprehensive and detailed document to capture all the ongoing, aspirational, or planned projects and services for the Council for its 4-year term. Members would now need to consider the content, how to prioritise the aims, estimate timescales and resources, and ownership for each as well as how to take each item forward to completion.

Discussion points included:

- Some items were already in progress, others were aspirational ideas
- More work would be required to clarify resourcing requirements for each activity
- Expert advice may be required to estimate time and resource requirements
- Whether to tie actions to the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan
- Whether to set a limit of 5 live projects at any one time, with a priority list to select new projects as live ones were completed
- There were many items where the Town Clerk and staff would require more input from Council before being able to action them on its behalf
- Whether to allocate items to Committees to progress with the Town Clerk overseeing overall progress of the plan
- Whether individual Committees and/or working parties should carry out the prioritisation, identifying distinct projects and picking the top 5 with the highest priority project completed before the next starts
- Whether climate and environmental impact should be overseen by the Planning Committee or be an overarching principle for all, and whether more focus around actions should be defined, e.g. to focus on the Town Council's carbon footprint

**RESOLVED:** (i) each Committee to debate the action plan and identify priorities for items within its remit

**RESOLVED:** (ii) each Committee to agree a clear list of projects, in priority order, to be actioned one at a time. Also to review existing ongoing work, check that it is still relevant against the Service Delivery Plan framework and to allocate resource in line with availability

### **397/21 MERCHANT'S HOUSE LEASE**

Members considered the Merchant's House Trust's request for an extended lease or asset transfer.

The Town Clerk had sought legal advice about the request from the Town Council's solicitor. Two considerations had been highlighted:

- The Solicitor advised the Town Council to obtain a market valuation of the building to enable it to make a more informed decision
- To allow the Solicitor a short time to complete his consideration of the wording of the lease and for the Town Council to review it before giving an answer to the Merchant's House Trust.

The Town Clerk was meeting the solicitor the next day (on 18 January) so this should not cause a long delay. If agreed, the Town Council could make its decision based on further legal advice at an early Extraordinary Full Town Council meeting or the Full Council meeting on 28 February. An alternative would be to support the extension in principle subject to confirmation from the legal team, and to delegate signing to the Town Mayor, Town Clerk and Chair of Finance & Policy. Discussion points included:

- Several members would prefer to follow the Solicitor's advice and delay a decision for a short while
- Whether the building had any commercial value due to its listed building status as well as being noted as a building with national historic status
- Whether a delay would materially impact the ability of the Trust to proceed with grant applications
- Whether the Town Council would ever want to take the building back from the Trust
- Whether it was right to commit a future Council to such a long term
- Whether to agree a 25-year lease but include a safeguarding clause allowing an option to review the terms including but not limited to rent, without altering the 25-year timescale of the lease
- That any funding secured by the Trust would benefit all parties

**RESOLVED:** (i) that Marlborough Town Council agrees a 25-year term for a lease extension for the Merchant's House Trust  
and

**RESOLVED:** (ii) to principally support and extend the lease subject to confirmation from the Town Council's legal team advising a satisfactory lease arrangement that incorporates a 'rent review' clause to provide for the needs of the Town Council and the Merchants House Trust, and to delegate execution to the Town Clerk, Town Mayor and Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee

398/21

### **eCOMMS POLICY**

Members considered adopting the draft Electronic Communications Policy as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee (**6 December 2021: Min. No 327/21 RESOLVED: to recommend the draft Electronic Communications Policy to Full Town Council for adoption to replace the limited Social Media Policy currently in place**). Discussion points included:

- **Councillor Waltham** had sent an email to the Town Clerk raising a number of concerns and questions of clarification relating to the policy. Mostly these related to scope and whether the policy could be interpreted as restricting freedom of speech (i.e. did the policy apply to an individual using electronic communications generally, or to specific situations when acting on behalf of the Town Council), and the implications of other clauses if the former was the case.
- All Councillors were urged to use their Town Council email accounts for Council correspondence
- Whether GDPR refresher training should be arranged
- Whether the policy aimed to protect staff and councillors rather than restrict them
- That some clarification was required before the policy could be adopted

**ACTION POINT:** To arrange a meeting between **Councillor Waltham**, the **Town Clerk** and **Webmaster** to review in detail the points raised, and to revise the draft policy

**RESOLVED:** to re-present a revised eComms policy to a future meeting

399/21

### **TOWN MAYOR 2022-23**

One nomination had been submitted to the Town Clerk.

Proposed by **Councillor Hall** and seconded by **Councillor Cooper** and

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Mayor for 2022-2023 will be **Councillor Lisa Farrell**

340/21

### **DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR 2022-23**

One nomination had been submitted to the Town Clerk by Councillor Barrett-Morton. As he was unable to attend, on his behalf it was proposed by **Councillor Waltham** and seconded by **Councillor Fogg** and

**RESOLVED:** that the Deputy Town Mayor for 2022-2023 will be **Councillor Donald Heath**

341/21

### **COMMITTEE VACANCIES**

The resignation of Councillor Hillier had created vacancies for the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee and the Staffing Sub Committee.

**RESOLVED:** (i) that **Councillor Lusson** be appointed to the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee

**RESOLVED:** (ii) that **Councillor Hall** be appointed to the Staffing Sub Committee

342/21

### **OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Councillor Hall** called for a replacement Town Councillor Trustee for the Merchants House Trust following the resignation of Councillor Hillier.

**RESOLVED:** that **Councillor Sheppard** is appointed as a Town Councillor Trustee to the Merchants House Trust

**343/21 COMMITTEE MINUTES**

In accordance with para. 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 20 September, 4 October, 25 October, 15 November and 6 December 2021; **Amenities and Open Spaces** – 15 November 2021 and **Finance and Policy** – 14 June and 25 October 2021.

**344/21 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been submitted to the Town Clerk.

**345/21 COMMON SEAL**

Proposed by **Councillor Fogg** and seconded by **Councillor Ross** 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 9.16 pm

Signed: .....

Town Mayor

Date: .....