

Marlborough Town Council



Full Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 23 June 2025 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Emily Trow	Town Mayor
	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	
	Councillor James Sheppard	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Abi Beaumont	
	Councillor Peter Morgan	
	Councillor Caroline Wrench	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
ALSO PRESENT	Two members of the public	

MOMENT OF QUIET REFLECTION

The **Town Mayor** asked Members to take a moment to reflect on why they were here, consider the people of the town and especially anyone who was struggling, and how they could help them.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Val Compton asked whether the Town Council would consider applying to Wiltshire Council to request a community asset transfer of the roadside verge better known as the 'Waterfront Garden' in Kennet Place and answered questions about how it might be maintained in the future.

Councillor Wrench joined the meeting

The **Town Mayor** thanked her and accepted the suggestion for future consideration. For anyone interested, Mrs Compton left a scrapbook in the keeping of the Town Clerk documenting the history of this piece of adopted highway and how it had transitioned into its current form.

David Jackson asked the Town Council whether it would consider using land at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground near the Marlborough Community & Youth Centre available for a community project to erect a shed similar to those in Highworth, Pewsey and Corsham, and answered questions. Details of intended use and specifications were still to be confirmed. Members agreed to accept the idea in principle but would need a clear proposal from Mr Jackson, which would be passed to the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee for consideration.

Mrs Compton and Mr Jackson left the meeting

CRIME AND DISORDER

No officer was available to attend the meeting but a written report would be provided soon.

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Councillor Shantry asked why all car parks in and around Avebury (e.g. at Silbury Hill and lay-bys on the A4) had been closed at summer Solstice. As this was an important occasion at this world heritage site, he asked if there was a reason that people wishing to join the commemorations were being discouraged.

Councillor Sheppard explained that in the past a few people had spoiled it for the many – parking vehicles on land, often on private farms, and then not moving on after the event, causing damage, cost and distress. The only way to stop it was to remove all parking, and enforcement had been issuing tickets to vehicles parked on grass verges or where cones had been removed and people had parked anyway.

Councillor Cleasby understood the reasons but agreed it was a shame not to have a way of safely welcoming people to this important landmark on one of its most important days of the year.

ACTION: Wiltshire Councillors to investigate whether a compromise could be reached for future years

69/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from **Councillors Farrell, Hall, Luson and Sadler**.

70/25

DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

71/25

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were asked to reply to the Town Clerk's recent meeting request, calling an extraordinary Full Council meeting on 7 July at 7.30pm to interview a co-option candidate for the west ward councillor seat. It was important to respond to confirm who would be present at the meeting, which will follow the staffing committee meeting.

- 72/25 MINUTES**
RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 12 May 2025 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor
- 73/25 ACTION LOG**
Members noted the updated action log.
- #276: overcrowded housing: **Cllr Cleasby** reported that there had been no progress for the family in question. This had become part of a wider discussion about housing in general, and she had received some information from Marlborough St Mary's explaining how many families were affected by the same issue. She would pass the information to the Town Clerk.
- 74/25 INTERNAL AUDIT 2024/25**
Members noted the final internal audit report for 2024 25, where there had been no issues or outstanding recommendations.
- 75/25 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25 SECTION 1**
RESOLVED: that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved and signed by the Chair and Town Clerk
- 76/25 ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2024/25 SECTION 2**
RESOLVED: that the Annual Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) were approved and signed by the Chair and Town Clerk
- 77/25 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: INFORMAL CAR PARK**
Members considered the indicative plan of the proposed informal car park on the Common and a recommendation from the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee (**15.4.25, Min.No.467/25**) 'that the current plan for an informal car park is supported in principle, and the Town Council should look to incorporate material changes that would be required to the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan (MANP) into a wider review of the MANP informed by future updates to the National Planning Policy Framework and Wiltshire Local Plan, and to recommend this to Full Town Council'. Discussion points included:
- National and Wiltshire planning policies were currently being reviewed and so were in a state of flux, meaning this was not a good time to review the MANP
 - There were already big projects under way for the Council this year – the workshop extension, cemetery extension, and taking on open space and a play area at Rabley Wood View
 - Whether it was feasible to review the MANP at the current time
 - The MANP was only 2 years old and was a robust document that could be used to defend planning decisions. Taking it into review might weaken its strength in that context

- Whether the proposed location would be best to assist people who worked in the town, or whether another location should be considered, e.g. immediately at the top of Kingsbury Street
- That more publicity/signage was required to raise awareness that the current informal car park is a Town Council car park, available to anyone all year round, and not part of the Rugby Club
- Whether the Grounds Team had the capacity to take on another project this year
- Only 10% of the expected cost was budgeted for; funding it could add a 9% burden on the taxpayer via the precept
- Sensitivity to more activity at The Common: a recent training ground had created public controversy; a planned Cemetery Extension would also require public consultation
- Whether the public would support more erosion of common land
- That the Town Council was the custodian of the Common on behalf of the owners, the registered electors/tax payers of Marlborough Parish

RESOLVED: that Members recognised the need for more car parking but this is not the right time to review the Neighbourhood Plan. When it is due for review, MARL5 and its wording should be incorporated into that process

78/25 STANDING ORDERS – MAYOR AS ‘EX OFFICIO’

RESOLVED: to amend Standing Orders to clarify that the Town Mayor becomes ‘ex officio’ with full voting rights on all standing committees, including Planning

79/25 VICTORIAN CEMETERY AND ARBORETUM

RESOLVED: that the request to create a Charitable Incorporated Organisation for the Victorian Cemetery and Arboretum with a Town Council Trustee is approved

80/25 PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY

Members noted the Council’s Press and Media Policy and the eComms Policy.

The **Town Mayor** had added this to the agenda to remind everyone of the Council’s policies on communications. There had recently been occasions where individual Councillors had acted independently to communicate with residents concurrently with similar conversations taking place via the Town Clerk, leading to confusion. It was important that Members followed the processes at all times so that communications from the Town Council were unified and clear. They should always go via the Town Clerk or check with the Town Clerk before replying as a Town Councillor.

Councillor Sheppard agreed that the Town Clerk speaks on behalf of ‘corporate Marlborough’.

Referring to social media, the **Mayor** asked Members not to tag her on posts on public pages such as Marlborough Notice Board on Facebook – it draws attention to her personal account and had resulted in unpleasant and unwanted approaches. This should be considered the case for all Members, and she asked people not to tag others in this way without first seeking permission.

ACTION: Town Mayor to write to all Members, especially those not present tonight, to reinforce the importance of these two policies

81/25

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

Councillor Morgan had submitted a question:

"I note that there were no prayers said at the start of today's meeting. I would like to propose that saying prayers within the official business of this Council is brought to an end.

I would suggest to you that religious worship... many residents disengage with local politics because they feel disconnected by aspects which have become increasingly antiquated. Council prayers may contribute to this feeling of alienation in an increasingly religiously diverse and irreligious society where a significant majority are no longer C of E or even Christians. Such an antiquated custom today can be exclusive and unwelcoming to visitors in this Chamber. I believe this issue is a component of several reasons why this Council finds it difficult to persuade new and especially young candidates to stand as prospective Councillors. We must aim here for an environment that is open, inclusive and welcoming to all whatever their beliefs."

Councillor Morgan gave examples from research and findings where other councils had separated prayers from official business or moved away from prayers altogether, ending with:

"As we look forward to a new era of keeping Marlborough special, I would like to suggest that we attract new forward-looking talent by making our own house fit for purpose."

Councillor Cleasby responded:

- Disagreeing with most of the points stated
- A decision whether to hold prayers or have a Chaplain is in the gift of the Mayor
- Would object to not being allowed to say a prayer should the Chair wish to do so
- Other Councils in Wiltshire retained the custom of saying prayers
- That people did not have to join in with the prayers
- Disagreeing that it was an outdated custom
- That young people were becoming more spiritual

Councillor Fogg: on a point of order asked whether there was a question for the Mayor to respond to? It sounded more like a proposal that should be put forward properly for consideration, otherwise if there was no question Members could only note the item.

Councillor Morgan's comments were noted.

82/25

OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Cooper (Chair, Amenities & Open Spaces): **The Allotment Association** was in the process of being restructured into three separate associations, one for each

site. A recent meeting had taken place with Stonebridge Lane allotmenters to move this forward and would be followed up at a second meeting in September.

Councillor Morgan left the meeting

Councillor Wrench had recently attended her first **Marlborough Area Board** meeting and had been inspired by a truly communal meeting where all were open to discussion and ideas.

Councillors Shantry and **Fogg** had attended a **Business Networking Meeting** and had been impressed with the White Horse Book Shop summer school, offering classes until August in various topics, which went some way to compensating for the loss of Summer School at Marlborough College. Proposals to widen it for next year were already being pursued, to extend beyond the normal topics offered at the book shop, e.g. rugby and football camps in collaboration with local groups. **Councillor Wrench** confirmed that the Business Networking group was now very strong with 100 registered businesses taking part. It meets monthly and provides an important opportunity to liaise with local businesses.

Councillor Fogg and the **Town Mayor** encouraged Members to attend the Maton painting exhibition, running at **The Merchant's House** until 28 June.

Councillor Wrench commented on 'Marlborough Music Month', and asked whether the Town Council should consider following up with each of the organisers to discuss learnings and get feedback.

83/25

COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: Planning – 14 April and 19 May 2025, and Amenities & Open Spaces – 15 April 2025

84/25

COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Councillor Fogg** and seconded by **Councillor Cooper** 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 8.34 pm

Signed:
Town Mayor

Date: