

**MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
FULL TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Full Town Council** which was held Monday, 9 December 2019 in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Marlborough** at 7 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M. Hall Town Mayor
Councillor B. Castle
Councillor P. Dow
Councillor N. Fogg
Councillor A. Ross
Councillor G. Loosmore
Councillor N. Barrett-Morton
Councillor P. Cairns
Councillor M. Cooper
Councillor S. Price
Councillor A. Wilson
Councillor D. Heath

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs S. Parker Town Clerk
Mrs D. Whitehall Administrator
Councillor S. Dobson Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East
Fr J. Blacker Mayor's Chaplain
Sgt T. Holloway Wiltshire Police
Mr N. Goodwin Marlborough.News
Plus 20 members of the public

PRAYERS

Fr. Blacker opened the meeting with prayers

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Jo Waltham – had been pleased to see the GreenSquare plans for Rabley Wood View playground and asked the Town Council to consider the needs of children with disabilities, sensory needs or other special needs in the final design. **Town Clerk** referred to GreenSquare's online consultation, running until 16 December, for people to view the proposed designs, select their preferred options and provide comments. This was available via the Town Council's and GreenSquare's websites.

Fr. Blacker left the meeting

CRIME AND DISORDER

Sgt. Holloway – provided an update on policing and provided recent statistics for Marlborough. Points of note:

- Some personnel and boundary changes would take place in January with no major impact on Marlborough
- Recruitment and training would eventually result in additional officers for the region
- Operation Spruce was under way to focus on shoplifting during the Christmas shopping period
- Rural patrols and arrests were still a priority
- Recent speed check activity in London Road
- Priority Gardens patrols had been removed from the priority list due to a decrease in anti-social behaviour

Questions arising included:

- Figures for police personnel and how numbers compared to previous years: there were currently 960 in post, with a target of 975 by April. If this target was reached it would unlock promised funding for an additional 49 officers
- A request for more information following recent vandalism resulting in serious damage to two cars in the car park at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground
- A request for more information about a break-in at a High Street store

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Cllr. Dobson – had been asked by **Cllr. Farrell** at the previous meeting on 4 November to investigate the status of properties in Angel Yard. He confirmed that Nos. 16-29 were owned by Stonewater Housing Association. In the past four homes had been let to the mental health charity Together. That arrangement was no longer in place and all properties were now directly managed by Stonewater under long term tenancies and all were occupied. The remaining properties were in private ownership.

The long-promised November completion of the footpath to link the railway line path with the Salisbury Road business park had been delayed due to the heavy rains in October. The plan was now to complete this work in early spring 2020.

Cllr. Fogg – was happy to report that Post Office had reopened, and although the staff were courteous and helpful the service did appear to be under-staffed, putting pressure on staff and customers alike. He asked whether a representative could be invited to a future meeting to explain how the system works and provide some background to recent issues.

Complaints had been received about a sign erected at a restaurant in Kingsbury Street without planning permission and which had caused offence to some residents. **Cllr. Fogg** had mentioned this to a Planning Officer at Wiltshire Council but asked whether the Town Council should also write to the Planning Authority about the concerns raised by residents.

On a lighter note, **Cllr. Fogg** noted an article in the Merchant House Trust's Marlborough Journal about the reform of the Corporation of the Borough of Marlborough which reported that in 1833 Royal Commissioners for Marlborough found "*...nor could one find that as a municipal institution, the Corporation had for more than two centuries, been productive of any material benefit to the inhabitants of the town*". **Cllr. Fogg** congratulated the **Town Mayor** on leading a progressive and forward thinking Council in 2019.

382/19

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Kirk Wilson and Farrell.

383/19

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

384/19

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Since the last meeting there had been big events in the town: the Remembrance Parade on Sunday, 10 November went well with large crowds, Armistice Day with the evocative sound of an air-raid siren calling Marlborough to silence on 11 November and the Christmas Lights Switch-on on 22 November, which had been well attended with the new location of the stage providing a good format.

As this was the last meeting before Christmas, the **Mayor** took the opportunity to wish Councillors and staff a happy Christmas and reminded Councillors that, in January, it would be time to elect a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

385/19

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 4 November 2019 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

386/19

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk's report was noted. Questions arising included:

- Representative to the Marlborough Patients Liaison Group (Min.315/19): disappointment that no response had been received about representation on this body. The **Town Clerk** had been actively following up, but the normal contact was on maternity leave. It was hoped that an alternative contact had been found and this could be resolved soon.
- Citizen of the Year (Min.103/19): it was hoped to bring this to Full Council on 20 January 2020 for a decision on a way forward

387/19

CASUAL VACANCY – CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR (EAST WARD)

Following the resignation of Councillor Harry Forbes, Wiltshire Council confirmed that no requests were received to hold a by-election and that the Town Council was able to co-opt a new Town Councillor to represent the East Ward. Three candidates had come forward, all qualified under the Local Government Act 1972 s.79:

Mr Simon Bell
Mrs Vanessa Hillier
Mr Charles Johnston

Each candidate made a short presentation and answered questions prior to a vote to determine the successful candidate.

RESOLVED: that a paper ballot should be taken for the decision on the co-option of a new Councillor for the East Ward

RESOLVED: that Vanessa Hillier is co-opted as a Town Councillor for the Marlborough East Ward

The **Town Mayor** congratulated Mrs Hillier and thanked all the candidates for putting themselves forward. If they were still interested in standing, there would be another opportunity in May 2021 when this Council completed its four-year term.

Members of the public joined the meeting

388/19

PLAY AREA AT JUBILEE FIELD, MANTON

Members considered feedback from recent consultations, as well as the final design.

Feedback from the consultations had shown that young people, their parents and carers were very positive about the proposed design, with favourites being the zip wire and the range of ages catered for. Some residents, although pleased with the upgrade to the existing play equipment and appreciative of all the hard work done and funds raised by Manton Community Outdoors members, had concerns about the extent of the area feeling that it would dominate the field, and in particular would like the zipwire to be excluded from the scheme.

During a suspension of Standing Orders, the **Mayor** invited a representative from both Manton Community Outdoors (MCO) and Manton residents to make a statement.

Residents

Nick Ridley spoke on behalf of residents. Points included:

- Residents welcomed and fully supported the reinvention of the existing play area using natural materials
- Whether the proposals took into account that the field was quite a small area, a place with natural beauty within a conservation area: there was concern that the play area seemed to be taking double the existing size and the footprint was felt to be too large
- That the field was used by all ages, including the elderly, who enjoyed the walk to the river, where Action from the River Kennet had carried out many good works
- Whether the zip wire presented health and safety issues
- Concerns about noise and other side effects
- The land was bequeathed for the use of the village, with the Town Council as trustees – bringing in people from further afield to use the facilities would likely have a detrimental impact on traffic and parking for residents of the village
- Whether the consultations had been adequately promoted to all residents, particularly those not online
- An appeal to strike a balance that would be acceptable to all users

Manton Community Outdoors

Emma Tallini – spoke on behalf of MCO:

- The project had been 2 years in the making
- Consultation methods had included updates via Facebook, emails, a leaflet drop to 500 homes as well as a focus group and village consultations
- £67,500 had been raised for the project
- There had been overwhelming support for the project at the consultations and concerns raised had been considered, although it was acknowledged that no project would likely please everybody
- The design was based on requests received during consultation and included the addition of exercise equipment for adults
- That the zip wire had been the most popular item and there were topographic limitations about where it could be sited without the need to remove trees. However, as a concession, it would be possible to reduce the length from 30m to 20/25m
- A belief that the design was in keeping with the environment
- There was still space for dog walking and football
- Whether the field was currently under used: the project reflected a desire to bring it back to life for the community
- A desire to move forward to give local residents, school children and others living nearby the best options

The **Mayor** invited comments from Councillors which included:

Cllr. Cooper paid tribute to the MCO team who had worked so hard; they should be proud to have been able to raise so much money for the scheme. The project would go ahead, but it was important to address concerns raised. He suggested a further meeting with all parties involved to look again at the location of specific items (e.g. the zip wire, adult exercise equipment and the basketball hoop). He urged Members to defer a decision until the Full Council meeting in January to allow this final discussion to take place in order to find solutions and compromises that might satisfy all parties.

Other comments included:

- That despite initial misgivings by some Members the zip wire at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground was popular and no accidents or arising problems had been reported
- Whether the location of the oil pipe shown on the plans was accurate
- Whether an on-site meeting would be helpful for all parties
- Not to lose sight of the benefits for children and young people – if they had given their views and choices it was important to take them into account
- That the proposals included something for everyone, all age ranges including adults
- Whether additional land could be purchased
- A desire to review the layout to gain consensus by all parties
- It was not clear whether the objections represented a majority or minority of the Manton community

RESOLVED: to defer a decision to the meeting on 20 January 2020 and use the intervening time to hold a site visit and work with all parties (a representative each for residents and MCO together with the Project Manager and the Town Council) to try to gain consensus on a final layout.

13 people left the meeting

389/19

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members considered a response to a letter from Savernake Parish Council about Marlborough Town Council's interest in a Community Governance Review.

The **Mayor** reminded Members of the background:

- Wiltshire Council had received about 70 requests
- There were currently 252 parish council in Wiltshire, so mergers were likely in future
- The requests for larger areas (with more urgent needs) such as Chippenham would be taken forward first
- Marlborough's request would not be considered by WC within the remaining duration of this Council (to May 2021)
- Savernake Parish Council had rejected the proposal submitted by Marlborough Town Council
- Financial concerns would need to be taken into account as local taxation rates (the precept) varied greatly between larger and smaller parishes, even though residents of smaller parishes used the facilities of larger parishes. This disparity would be even greater once Wiltshire Council devolved services down to the parish level
- That Marlborough Town Council had merely expressed an interest in a review
- Whether it would be premature for Savernake to consult with parishioners
- Discussions were ongoing between Preshute Parish and Fyfield and West Overton Parish to explore a possible merger

RESOLVED: to respond to Savernake Parish Council to reiterate that the Town Council had only lodged an expression of interest at this stage and that it was unlikely that Wiltshire Council would consider the request for some years and the matter was not considered urgent at this time

390/19

ACTION PLAN 2017-2021

In September, about half-way through the Council's term, Members had met to review and update their list of projects and priorities. A public consultation on this updated document had been widely promoted over a 6 week period and online analytics indicated a healthy number of hits, no comments had been received from members of the public.

Members were now asked to consider adoption of the updated Action Plan and the next stage would be to build a vision and strategy to which it would be linked.

One amendment was suggested, to group all events together in one section of the document.

RESOLVED: to adopt the updated Action Plan with one amendment

391/19

BRITAIN IN BLOOM

Members noted an update report by the Assistant Town Clerk about the current situation and events subsequent to the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee meeting held 18 November and considered Marlborough's entry into the national Britain in Bloom competition:

- It was an honour for Marlborough to be invited into the national competition and alongside exciting projects such as Dark Skies and the Puppet Festival planned for 2020 would help put Marlborough firmly on the map and help to create civic pride as well as to attract visitors to the town
- There was currently no Marlborough in Bloom Committee, although two remaining members were working to reinstate it – both supported the town's entry into the national competition
- The Grounds Manager and his team were supportive of the entry
- While there was no MiB committee, this did not affect or inhibit the growing number of Marlborough's Neighbourhood Community entries into the competition
- Whether there would be an impact on workload for staff
- Whether the timing would allow early planning, helping alleviate previous years' pressures on staff just prior to judging day
- That, if agreed, there should be a review before deciding on entry into the competition in future years.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council will lead on both the South West in Bloom and Britain in Bloom competition entries in 2020 with a review after one year

392/19

OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr. Price had attended the Wiltshire Association of Local Council's AGM where it was agreed to continue to rotate meetings. She noted a rail budget for Wiltshire had been suggested for the agenda for the National Assembly. There had also been a helpful presentation about devolution of services.

Cllr. Cairns would take questions from the Stonebridge Management Committee to an Operational Flood working group meeting later in the week. He also reported that Transition Marlborough was currently reviewing its programme of work following the sad death of one of its driving members, Bridget Strong.

393/19

COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 7 and 28 October and 18 November, **Finance & Policy** – 23 September, **Property** – 7 October and **Amenities & Open Spaces** – 2 September.

394/19

MEMBER'S QUESTION TIME

No questions had been received.

395/19

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 8.51 pm

Signed: Date:
Town Mayor