

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the **Annual Parish Meeting** which was held on **Monday 11th April, 2011** in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Marlborough at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT	Councillor A. Ross	Town Mayor
	Councillor G. Loosmore	Chairman – Property
	Councillor Mrs E. Fogg	Chairman - Staffing
	Councillor A. Kirk Wilson	Chairman – Amenities and Open Spaces
	Councillor R. Pitts	Chairman – Finance and Policy
	Councillor Mrs E. Fogg	Chairman – Planning
	Mr. Liam Costello	Town Clerk
	Mrs Sue Fry	Office Manager
	Mr Nigel Kerton	Wiltshire Gazette and Herald
	Mr. G. Adams	Advisor
	Plus 39 Members of the Public including Councillors.	

1. **NOTICE OF MEETING**

The Town Mayor reported that notices advertising this meeting had been displayed at –

Town Council Office Notice Boards
Town Hall Notice Boards
Manton Notice Board
The Library Notice Board
Town Council Website

2. **MINUTES**

That the Minutes of the Parish Meeting held on the 12th April, 2010 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor Councillor A. Ross

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Mayor asked for matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting of 12th April, 2010

There were no comments.

4. **REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR**

Councillor N. Fogg gave a report on behalf of himself and Councillor Mrs P. Dow. (copy attached)

5. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Mayor gave his report. (copy attached)

6. **REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

Planning – Councillor Mrs M. Rose gave her report. (copy attached)

Staffing – Councillor Mrs E. Fogg gave her report.

Amenities and Open Spaces – Councillor A. Kirk Wilson gave his report (copy attached)

Property – Councillor G. Loosmore gave his report (copy attached)
Mr. A. Bumphrey gave a presentation on works in the Town Hall.

Finance and Policy – Councillor R. Pitts gave his report (copy attached)

7. **DETAILS OF PRECEPT**

The Chairman of Finance and Policy, Councillor R. Pitts announced that Marlborough Town Council's Precept for 2011/2012 would be £389,000.

8. **AVAILABILITY OF ANNUAL REPORT**

The Town Clerk reported that the Annual Report will be available for inspection at the Town Council Offices, 5 High Street, Library and Local Information Point and Local Press from the 2nd week of June 2011.

9. **MATTERS OF PAROCHIAL INTEREST**

Councillor S. Dobson – Mr. Chairman, it goes without question that the Council has a duty to maintain this fine building. Previous Councils have a fine record in this respect. However I believe the proposed Town Hall project begs the two following questions –

1. With regard to the Town Hall project will the Town Council promise to produce a robust detailed business plan to ascertain whether there is enough public support for such a large expenditure of public money before proceeding with legally binding contracts.

2. As the project is estimated to cost well in excess of £1 million pounds and bearing in mind that Councillor Pitts has told us tonight that Council reserves are £326,000, the Mayor has also stated that such a project will not increase the Precept where will the necessary money to fund the scheme come from and would such a scheme generate a large enough increase in Town Hall income to cover the current annual deficit of some £45,000 and the additional cost of making loan repayments for any money that may have to be borrowed?

Councillor R. Pitts – the public consultation will provide figures, these figures will also be published as part of the Annual Report and answers to these questions will also be published.

Mr. J. Cooper – before the public consultation a comprehensive business plan should be put in place.

The Mayor – these comments will be noted.

D. Smithers – one of the problems when letting the Town Hall has always been the lack of parking, St. John's now have very good facilities along with ample parking.

Councillor G. Loosmore – we will be looking at ways of marketing the Town Hall, this will be included in the business plan.

Mr. D. Smithers – the lettings on the Town Hall are down this year.

The Mayor – the Town Hall is the responsibility of this Council we will be looking at ways to increase the it's usability.

Mr. S. Pascal – you need to go back to basics, how will we get people in to the Town. A sign is need at the Salisbury Road, War Memorial informing visitors where the High Street is. The parking also needs to be addressed.

The Mayor – thanked Mr. Pascal for his comments.

Mr. M. Ward – will the Council be selling any of its assets the proceeds to be used to help fund the proposed Town Hall project.

The Mayor – the Council will not be selling any of its assets it is hoped that the rent revenue collected from these properties will help fund the project.

Councillor Mrs E.M. Hannaford-Dobson - £68,000 has been written in to the budget each year to help fund this project.

In the plan presented to the Council it showed a new mezzanine floor above the Court Room with a staircase from the lobby of the Town Hall to access it. The proposed expensive new lift will not service the mezzanine floor. This would seem to raise the following questions;

- A. how will disabled, or elderly resident of this town access their own town hall staff?
- B. Does the proposed new floor meet the lawful requirements of the Council to make all new working environments accessible to disabled applicants for any post advertised?

The Mayor – these comments have been noted.

Mr. Webber - will residents be given a free vote after the consultation has taken place, although consultations very rarely give a true reflection of the feelings of the general public.

Councillor R. Pitts – the consultation that took place regarding the play area at Salisbury Road was very successful. A consultation allows for an open democratic decisions to be made.

Mr. Webber – can you confirm that a vote will be taken.

Councillor R. Pitts – a consultation will take place first.

Mrs V. Compton - will this Council adopt a Riparian Ownership Policy in order to protect the River etc.

The Mayor – confirmed that the Council will adopt a policy.

Mr. D. Smithers – why is the Annual Parish Meeting no longer advertised in the local paper.

Mr. M. Ward - although we have been informed that this meeting was advertised at the Library there was no evidence of this following a recent visit. What is the contract sum for the works currently being carried out and how is this being funded.

Councillor R. Pitts -

Mr. G. Yelland – will everyone present be given written replies to questions that have been asked but not answered this evening. It would appear that the next time the public will be able to vote will be at the next elections. We would like assurance that a public vote will be taken prior to any consultation or works being carried out.

Mr. N. Kerton – We, a minimum of ten electors of Marlborough Town, exercise our right to ask for a formal referendum to be organised by the Wiltshire Electoral Returning Officer, in the event of the Town Council deciding to proceed with the scheme for the Town Hall which includes providing a lift to the present unused upper floors to provide dressing rooms and storage space for archives etc., a mezzanine floor in the Court Room where it is proposed to relocate the Town Council Offices. While there is no out and out objection at present because we are not aware of what is precisely proposed we are aware that costings of £918,700 have already been circulated among Councillors.

We instruct the Council to hold a referendum if it decides to proceed with this scheme to see whether or not the Towns people support such a major project at a time when most local authorities are cutting back and reducing services.

The Mayor

Mrs Val Compton – expressed her anger at the level of accusations and rudeness aimed at the Councillors, all of whom are volunteers.

I am not slow to let Councillors know when I disagree with them and have done so on numerous occasions, but the behaviour at this meeting is totally unacceptable. I would like to point out that the Town Council business is carried out in public if people were sufficiently interested in Council business then they should attend the meetings, although very few ever do. The minutes are also available for people to read either at the Library, on the website or at the Council Offices. Why will people not wait until after the consultation before asking for a referendum, which may well then be superfluous to requirement.

The Mayor – thanked Mrs Compton for her comments.

The Town Clerk – advised that the consultations should be carried out and then another Parish Meeting be held, residents could then decide if they still wished to call a referendum.

Mr. D. Nicol – could options not be included within the plans that would allow for work to be carried out in progressive stages over a number of years.

The Mayor – thanked Mr. Nicol for this suggestion.

Councillor Mrs E.M. Hannaford-Dobson – would the Mayor confirm that he would present to the residents of the Town the full costs of the proposed alterations to the Town Hall before any binding decision is made.

The Mayor – stated that he would reply to this question in writing but that this would be part of the consultation.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm