

# Marlborough Town Council



## Property Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Property Committee held Monday, 4 April 2022  
in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 8.03pm

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**PRESENT** Councillor Guy Loosmore Chairman  
Councillor Mark Cooper Town Mayor  
Councillor Mervyn Hall  
Councillor Jo Waltham  
Councillor Jane Davies

### ALSO

**PRESENT** Richard Spencer-Williams Town Clerk  
Dawn Whitehall Corporate Services Officer  
Councillor James Sheppard  
Neil Goodwin Marlborough.News

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### **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions.

### **457/21 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Fogg, Farrell, Allen and Cleasby.**

### **458/21 DECLARATIONS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **459/21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

As this was the last meeting of the municipal year the Chairman took the opportunity to thank Members, the Town Clerk and staff for their support.

### **460/21 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held 24 January 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman

### **461/21 ACTION LOG**

Members noted the updated action log. The Town Clerk gave a verbal update for #63: bus shelters – the Grounds Manager had agreed to provide a proposal for better maintenance of bus shelters for the Committee to consider.

### **462/21 BUDGET**

Members noted the Property Committee budget report to Month 11. It had been difficult to predict a budget at the start of the year with Coronavirus restrictions in place so it was good to see that Town Hall income was at 97.7% of budget and income from the George Lane public toilets and the Community Centre were above budget.

#### **463/21 TOWN COUNCIL PROPERTIES**

Members noted the Office Manager's update report. The **Town Clerk** had received notice from a commercial tenant with an exit date of 16 June. The formal lease had expired at the start of the pandemic and the Town Council had supported them during a difficult period with a rolling 'tenancy at will' agreement. A meeting was arranged with the letting agent after which the Town Council would be able to discuss next steps with the property.

#### **464/21 VENUE BOOKINGS**

The **Chairman** thanked the **Town Clerk** for providing a report comparing bookings for the Town Hall and Community Centre over a 3-year period. This highlighted the impact the Coronavirus restrictions made in 2020/21 and at the start of 2021/22 so it was encouraging that hirings were recovering, especially given that hirers behaviour had changed because of the pandemic. Bookings were looking positive going forward. Discussion points included:

- Whether it was possible to understand calculate the available capacity, and compare current/future bookings to the available capacity as a percentage
- Acknowledgement that there would always be some down time for maintenance, cleaning etc, and that some events such as weddings needed more set up/clear down time
- A recognition that the limitations of some physical aspects of the Town Hall (e.g. the size of the bar area) may affect bookings. Members had previously discussed a study to identify how facilities could be extended and improved to make the building even more attractive to potential hirers
- Whether there were alternative ways to handle bookings

**RESOLVED:** to provide a report to the next meeting to show hirings vs available capacity

#### **465/21 TOWN HALL MARKETING**

Members held an open discussion about marketing the Town Hall. Discussion points included:

- **Councillor Hall** reminded Members that in 2019/20 a Town Hall Marketing Working Group had been active. In 2020 it had commissioned professional photographs and produced a brochure as well as focusing on marketing the building as a wedding venue. The **Town Clerk** confirmed that the brochure was available on the Town Council website as well as in hard copy on request
- Whether the Town Council had taken a stand at a recent wedding fair held in the Town Hall
- Whether the Town Council should be targeting wedding fairs to market the venue

- Whether to offer tours/open days for potential hirers to view the whole building, and discuss options
- Whether to hold open days to give residents and visitors the opportunity to view items such as the maces and explore the whole building once or twice each year
- Whether to prepare marketing mailshots targeted to businesses, churches, hotels or other audiences
- The Climate Action Day on 2 April had made the building accessible to the public; there had been enquiries on the day about potential hiring. The **Mayor** noted that it had been good to see the front staircases being used
- Having access to the balcony following refurbishment made a great difference: it had been used very effectively at the Christmas Lights Switch-on and could present an opportunity for the public to take photos from it and/or have 'selfies': use of the balcony was already being planned for the Platinum Jubilee High Street Party
- Whether to offer a 'pop up' museum while The Merchant's House was closed

The **Town Clerk** reminded Members that illness had affected staff capacity in recent weeks; he would review future bookings with the Office Manager. He and the **Tourism Officer** had discussed a potential 'twilight event' to showcase the Town Hall to business hirers; he would follow this up.

The **Chairman** agreed to discuss ideas at the next meeting.

#### 466/21 THE MERCHANT'S HOUSE

Members noted a report about a structural issue which had resulted in The Merchant's House being closed for tours and events, although the shop remained open.

**Councillor Hall** confirmed that the planned free access open day in March had been postponed but would be rearranged. A survey had identified issues in two places; he would attend a Building Committee meeting within the next few days to get more information.

*Councillor Sheppard left the meeting*

#### 467/21 TOWN HALL ROOF INSULATION

Members considered a report and recommendations for the insulation of the Town Hall roof. Discussion points included:

- In previous years the gas bill had been around £12,000 – it would be much higher following recent energy cost increases
- The estimated cost of the project was predicted to pay back within 6-7 years
- **Councillor Waltham** asked for kW use over the past 3 years so she could calculate the CO<sup>2</sup> savings
- This would be the Town Council's first big project towards reducing its carbon footprint
- A desire to complete the project before the winter

- Whether to inspect the roof insulation in all Town Council properties (commercial and residential); a climate audit would include this if one were to be commissioned

**RESOLVED:** (i) to instruct the Town Council’s architect to prepare a technical specification in preparation for seeking quotations/invitations to tender

**RESOLVED:** (ii) to audit all Town Council properties to identify opportunities to improve roof insulation

**468/21 PUBLIC TOILETS**

Councillor Hall proposed a trial of a card (cashless) payment system for the public toilets. Discussion points included:

- Healthmatic had confirmed that a cashless system was available
- General use of cash was declining
- A 20p slot meant the price for use was fixed
- A cashless system would allow for price adjustments
- It was important to continue to take cash: not everyone uses contactless payment
- Whether to delegate a sum to the Town Clerk to commission a trial

**RESOLVED:** that a trial of cashless payment for the public toilets was agreed and a quote for a trial at one or two cubicles be considered at the June meeting

**469/21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential or commercial nature of the business to be transacted

*Mr Goodwin left the meeting*

**470/21 RENT REVIEW**

**RESOLVED:** that the recommended lease arrangement and annual rental rate were agreed

The meeting closed at 9pm

Signed: ..... Date: .....  
Chairman