

Marlborough Town Council



Full Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 24 June 2024 in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	Town Mayor
	Councillor Emily Trow	Deputy Mayor
	Councillor Andrew Ross	
	Councillor Lisa Farrell	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor Jane Davies	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Caroline Sadler	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
ALSO		
PRESENT	Rev. Chris Smith	Mayor's Chaplain
	Reuben Davies	Mayoral Scout
	Nicky Mason	Stonewater Housing Association
	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News
	Two members of the public	

PRAYERS

Rev. Chris Smith opened the meeting with prayers.

MAYORAL SCOUT

The **Town Mayor** introduced **Reuben Davies** to the Full Town Council meeting. The Mayor was keen to involve young people by appointing a Mayoral Scout and congratulated Reuben on being the very first Marlborough Scout to be put forward for this role, which would include accompanying the Mayor at civic events. This was a new concept for Marlborough, although there were Mayoral Scouts at other towns and cities around the country. She hoped the Marlborough appointment would become a tradition to take forward. As well as learning about civic life, the role would also help Reuben towards his Challenge badge.

Reuben would soon be taking up an academic scholarship at Marlborough College. This meant his studies would prevent him fulfilling the role for the whole year. The

Mayor thanked him for attending the meeting, looked forward to involving him over the next couple of months and to meeting his successor.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Amy Levin (market trader) – felt it was important for market traders to be included in any discussions about the market’s future and prospects, and asked whether this was something the Council would consider. The **Town Mayor** confirmed that it would; there was an agenda item later in the meeting.

Three people left the meeting

CRIME AND DISORDER

No officer was able to attend the meeting, but a written report had been provided and was tabled for Members.

PRESENTATION

Nicky Mason, Head of Partnerships at Stonewater Housing Association gave a presentation on their lettings policy and answered questions. Points of note included:

- Stonewater has 130 properties in Marlborough, all of which are let out
- Homes are allocated in the ratio 75% (plus) via Wiltshire Council’s housing register, with up to 25% leeway for direct lettings by Stonewater (e.g. rehoming in the case of emergency). In reality, this usually creeps closer to 95% via the local authority
- Eligibility has two stages: (1) Homes4Wiltshire policy (2) Stonewater policy (a hard copy would be made available)
- There were some differences between eligibility policies, e.g. Stonewater’s policy allows under-occupancy by one room to allow for family growth: the local authority policy does not
- Members asked questions about Stonewater’s policy on disposals, in particular a specific example, which Nicky offered to follow up if the details could be provided. It was noted that they sometimes sell properties to local authorities
- Stonewater purchases properties on the open market
- The balance between disposals/acquisitions is managed at a national level, not by town
- **Councillor Farrell** asked that the need for 3-bedroom properties be taken into account by Stonewater
- **Councillor Davies** reminded Councillors that Wiltshire Council has an ambition to build 1,000 new houses in 5 years to increase its stock of social housing, and this included a development at Cherry Orchard

Nicky Mason left the meeting

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Councillor Farrell asked whether any progress had been made in ascertaining the status of the former Police Station site in George Lane, and whether the Police and

Crime Commissioner (PCC) could attend a meeting to explain the benefits of closing this building for the police officers or anyone else. The **Town Clerk** confirmed that the PCC was on his list of people to invite to present to Council.

Councillor Davies confirmed that Wiltshire Council was investing over £2M in upgrading Marlborough Leisure Centre and welcomed **Councillor Sadler's** suggestion to involve the community in smartening up the appearance of the front of the building.

75/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Fogg, Hall, Shantry, Thomas, Luson** and **Kohrt**.

76/24 DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

77/24 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Mayor asked Members to support the upcoming Health and Wellbeing Open Day at St Peters on 6 July, and to publicise the event among their networks.
- Two apprentice positions at the Town Council were open for application and the Mayor asked Members to share this information. Marlborough was doing something quite bold and important for the town in creating these opportunities.
- The Mayor intended to provide an update on the banking situation in the town at the next Full Council meeting and asked anyone with information to provide it to her or the Town Clerk no later than 23 August.
- The Mayor was looking forward to the Marlborough Festival taking place 12-14 July which offered a great mix of music, food, theatre and more. Some events were free. A lot of businesses were involved, and she asked Members to support the festival and promote it among their networks.

78/24 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 28 May 2024 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

79/24 ACTION LOG

Members noted the updated action log.

80/24 INTERNAL AUDIT 2023/24

Members noted the internal audit report for the 2023-24 financial year.

81/24 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24 SECTION 1

RESOLVED: that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved

82/24 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24 SECTION 2

RESOLVED: that the Annual Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved

83/24 VISITORS AND TOURISM

Members noted the update report providing an overview of current and ongoing visitor and tourism work being undertaken by the Town Council.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk be appointed to represent the town and Council's interests at the emerging Wiltshire Local Visitor Economic Partnership (LVEP)

84/24 GREAT WEST WAY

Members considered whether to rejoin Great West Way.

Councillor Farrell had asked for the agenda item, concerned that perhaps Members had not done enough research into the benefits of membership prior to the decision not to renew membership as part of budget discussions in 2022. Feedback she had received from some businesses and members of the public was that the Council may have rushed into this decision: this agenda item was an opportunity for Members to discuss the merits of membership. Discussion points included:

- There was a good representation of Marlborough at Visit Wiltshire (VW)
- Great West Way (GWW) was separate to Visit Wiltshire: Marlborough was currently shown 4 times on its site despite its membership lapsing in April, so the town still received some benefit from GWW
- Staff did a good job in showing off what Marlborough has to offer on the Town Council's tourist information section of the website and social media channels
- The decision not to renew had been taken against a background of coming out of Coronavirus restrictions; a cost-of-living crisis and a desire to reduce the tax burden on residents as much as possible; a perception that membership did not represent good value for money at that point in time; and whether the gap created by withdrawing could be plugged by other methods of promoting the town
- There were two tiers of membership: Designated Destination Ambassador (the Town Council's previous membership) at £2,019 + VAT per annum, or Gateway Ambassador at £532 + VAT per annum, both were a 3-year commitment
- The benefits of including the branding, e.g. on town signs and tourism leaflets
- The benefits of encouraging tourism and promoting town events
- A presentation to the 28 February 2022 Full Council meeting by the Chief Executive of VW/GWW about the then-current status, future plans and tourism opportunities of the GWW touring route had been somewhat lacklustre
- Members were happy to listen to those in the town who felt there would be benefit in rejoining
- Whether the onus was on GWW to demonstrate the benefits
- Whether GWW/VW could have done more to help its members prepare for the return of tourism after the Covid restrictions were lifted

- That withdrawing from GWW would cut off the town's source of visitors (and revenue) by those arranging tour parties from overseas, particularly in Europe
- Whether to rejoin at a lower level (Gateway Ambassador) and then discuss the benefits and opportunity of upgrading with GWW
- Whether the Gateway Ambassador membership would include the town's inclusion in promotion to overseas tour organisers; and to ask this specifically to GWW

RESOLVED: to join the Great West Way Gateway Ambassador scheme at £532+VAT and to investigate the value in upgrading to Designated Destination Ambassador for consideration at a future meeting

85/24 WILTSHIRE TOWNS PROGRAMME

Members noted the update report and considered the proposed 2024-25 and 2025-26 Wiltshire Towns Programme funding application.

RESOLVED: to use the 2024-26 Wiltshire Towns Programme funds to commission services to carry out a community consultation resulting in a 'vision document' with a primary lead focus "to enhance and improve the pedestrian experience of Marlborough Town Centre – with a focus on access, space and place"

86/24 CIVIC WORKING PARTY

RESOLVED: to reestablish the Civic Working Party membership

Councillor Farrell agreed to join the Civic Working Party.

87/24 FLOOD PLAN

Members noted the update report on the Council's Flood Plan. Discussion points included:

- A great deal of pride in what had been achieved, and a recognition of the contribution of everyone who had taken part
- 15 flood warden volunteers had been recruited with training ongoing
- Strong partnership working was in place with all relevant agencies
- A meeting on 12 June - *The Marlborough Flood: Understanding the Bigger Picture* - had been very well attended with good engagement from residents
- 19 October had been set for a Flood Fair at the Town Hall (details to follow), intended to provide practical ideas and solutions for residents such as how to prepare for flooding and ways to prevent flood damage

Marlborough's strong response to the flood had been recognised more widely. For example, Council officers had been asked to participate in regional events such as a top-level emergency services review, and Marlborough was to be used by the Environment Agency in a pilot model / location to trial a new Local Authority *Rapid Adaptation Pathways Assessment* (RAPA) toolkit. RAPA is a methodology used to quickly assess and respond to the risks and challenges posed by climate change.

The **Town Mayor** asked that the minutes should record Councillors' thanks to the Town Council **staff** involved, to **Councillor Lusson** who had chaired the working party and to residents and everyone else who had been involved.

88/24 STAFFING COMMITTEE

Members noted the update report on recruitment for Level 3 Apprentice Information Officer and Level 6 (degree level) Apprentice Youth Worker positions.

89/24 THE MARKET

Members considered how the Town Council can best support the sustainable development of Marlborough market:

- Whether to set up a dedicated working party (membership to include Marlborough Town Council, market traders, retailers and town centre organisations and other relevant stakeholders) or to add the market to the remit of the Town Centre Working Party
- **Councillors Trow** and **Sadler** volunteered to join the Town Centre Working Party
- **Councillors Farrell, Trow** and the **Town Mayor** volunteered to join a Market Working Party; members not present would be asked to express their interest in becoming members

RESOLVED: to set up a specific working party to include engagement from the Council, market traders, High Street traders, retailers and organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to:

- (a) establish the current situation
- (b) identify the need, problems and opportunities in respect of the market
- (c) develop a plan for a sustainable and vibrant market

90/24 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

RESOLVED: that the revised Complaints Procedure be adopted as presented

91/24 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

No questions had been submitted.

92/24 OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Farrell had attended a second meeting with the heads of schools where they had discussed a need to support children moving from primary to secondary school by creating safe zones for them across the town.

93/24 COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following meetings: **Planning** – 18 March, 8 April and 7 May 2024 and **Amenities and Open Spaces** – 15 April 2024

94/24 COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Councillor Ross** and seconded by **Councillor Farrell** 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 8.16 pm

Signed:
Town Mayor

Date: