

**MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
FULL TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Full Town Council which was held on Monday, 29 June 2020 via
videoconferencing at 7pm

PRESENT:	Councillor M. Cooper	Town Mayor
	Councillor B. Castle	
	Councillor N. Fogg	
	Councillor A. Ross	
	Councillor A. Kirk Wilson	
	Councillor N. Barrett-Morton	
	Councillor L. Farrell	
	Councillor M. Hall	
	Councillor P. Cairns	
	Councillor S. Price	
	Councillor A. Wilson	
	Councillor D. Heath	
	Councillor V. Hillier	
ALSO PRESENT:	Mrs S. Parker	Town Clerk
	Mrs D. Whitehall	Administrator
	Fr. J Blacker	Mayor's Chaplain
	Councillor S. Dobson	Wiltshire Councillor – Marlborough East
	Mr N. Goodwin	Marlborough.News
	Mr S. Carreck	The Hungerford & Marlborough Adviser
	Mr M. McLoughlin	Gazette & Herald
	Plus 5 members of the public	

PRAYERS

Fr. Blacker opened the meeting with prayers.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mrs Waltham: referred to agenda item 5 about the safe re-opening of the High Street and asked whether Wiltshire Council would allow cafes to have temporary licences in order to place tables and chairs on the pavement as had been done already in some parts of West Berkshire. **The Mayor** thanked her and said this would be discussed later in the meeting. **The Town Clerk** confirmed that legislation had recently been passed to speed up the consultation period of this type of licence so the process could be completed within 5 days, with the licence fee capped at £100.

Cllr Dobson: repeated a question he had asked at previous meetings, asking for an update on when the Leaf Bequest would be reinstated. He hoped it would be soon and would be happy to help. **The Mayor** said that the Town Council would provide a written reply with an update, and that he would be happy to discuss the matter further once the letter had been received.

Mr Goodwin: asked whether Councillors had experienced any issues using the Household Recycling Centre (HRC), either with using the advanced booking system or having difficulties using the facility due to staff not being able to assist with placing items in the skips. He was concerned this might lead to an increase in fly tipping or bonfires. **The Town Clerk** suggested that the two Wiltshire Councillors present (**Cllrs. Dobson and Fogg**) may like to address these concerns.

CRIME AND DISORDER

Sgt. Gareth Edwards had sent his apologies, so no update was available.

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Cllr. Dobson provided updates about Wiltshire Council:

- Wiltshire Council was reducing the number of Chief Executives from two to one and as of 1 July 2020 Terence Herbert would be the sole Chief Executive. A second tier of directors would provide any required cover
- Financial pressures resulting from the COVID pandemic meant that Area Boards and Community Area Transport Groups (CATG) would not make any capital grants in the current year, although revenue grants would still be considered
- In response to **Mr Goodwin's** question about the Marlborough HRC, **Cllr. Dobson** had visited the previous week and noted a gentleman struggling with a large mattress. Although staff were unable to help him carry it, they had advised him to leave it at ground level for them to dispose of later. He was also pleased to report that the HRC was now accepting building rubble

Cllr. Fogg had circulated an update prior to the meeting which included that he had been elected as the new Chairman of the Marlborough Area Board. He also warned that the Town Council must be prepared for the impact of the current financial crisis in local government. The pandemic had caused a large deficit across the board, not just for Wiltshire Council and it was likely that extra services may fall to the lower tiers.

48/20

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Dow and Loosmore

49/20

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations.

50/20

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor thanked Councillors, staff, friends and residents for their kind words and messages of support following his father's death. It had been a huge comfort to him and his mother to receive the cards and flowers. His father, Maurice Cooper, loved Marlborough and was proud to be mayor twice in 1989-90 and 2000-01. Also, that Coopers Meadow was named after the family. He was involved with many groups in the town and a memorial service would be held when restrictions allowed.

The Mayor again expressed his own thanks and those of the Town Council for the efforts of community volunteers since the start of the pandemic restrictions in March. Thanks went especially to Clare Harris for coordinating the scheme and to Sue Fry and Dawn Whitehall for helping to administer it all. Also, to Councillors Farrell, Hillier, Wilson and Cairns who volunteered their services too. Most of all, appreciation was passed to more than 300 volunteers who gave their time to help Marlborough's elderly and vulnerable. Manton Residents Association and its volunteers had contributed hugely to looking after those in the village too.

Over the last few weeks and even before lockdown, the Council had received comments about the excellent work done by Nathan Walker who is contracted to I D Verde to keep the High Street and its surrounding areas litter free. The Mayor commended him for all he was doing for the town.

51/20

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 11 May 2020 were approved as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

52/20

SAFE RE-OPENING OF THE HIGH STREET

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk about proposals under the Re-opening the High Street Safely Scheme, administered by Wiltshire Council (WC), to temporarily widen High Street pavements. This was to make it safer for pedestrians and make social distancing easier as COVID restrictions are lifted. Highways Officers had asked for preferred areas for these changes prior to a final design being agreed by Wiltshire Council. After gauging views of local businesses and following two meetings with Councillors, retailers and those in the hospitality sector, recommendations had been put forward for Full Council to consider. Also, for consideration was what measures could be taken to help compensate for the temporary removal of any free parking spaces as well as what else could be requested under the scheme to support the High Street.

Widening the pavements

The **Town Clerk** gave an update on follow-up which included:

- That productive meetings had taken place with representatives from shops, pubs, cafés and other businesses and recommendations from the second meeting had been set out in her report. A Wiltshire Council Officer dealing with economic recovery in Wiltshire had also been at this meeting to give advice on the scheme
- At the most recent meeting, the Tourism Officer was asked to visit cafes, restaurants and pubs to identify whether there was appetite for space in front of their premises for tables and chairs for outdoor service. Seven had responded that this would be of help to them. Others were planning to use gardens and car park space to serve customers outside and responses were awaited from four others. Some would not be re-opening at all
- Highways Officers had commented that it would not be possible to widen pavements in The Parade or Kingsbury Street in the same way and these areas could be looked at later. Some of those in the hospitality sector in The Parade had expressed an interest in partial pedestrianisation in the future
- Some premises already had the requisite licenses in place for providing service on the pavement, others would be able to take advantage of new legislation that would speed up the application process

The discussion then included:

- Whether creating a café atmosphere in the High Street would increase footfall
- During road closures for the Jazz Festival and other events, a good atmosphere had been created in the Parade and Members questioned why partial pedestrianisation could not be looked at in the short term
- Whether there was scope for partial pedestrianisation from the bulge in the High Street and into the retail section of Kingsbury Street where pavements were particularly narrow
- That it would be a scheme similar to that in Malmesbury, with bollards marking out additional pedestrian space
- Whether Waitrose could be approached to request a delay to the reopening of the front entrance as it might create a very busy pinch point – the current arrangement of customers using the rear entrance was working very well
- Banks would also welcome additional pavement space to accommodate queues
- Whether bus stops, the taxi rank and disabled parking bays could be retained
- Whether retaining existing parking bays would create pinch points for queues and pedestrians
- A desire to help shops and businesses

- Highways Officers had confirmed that, even with the scheme in place, changes to the layout could easily be made
- Whether to introduce pedestrian lanes.

RESOLVED: (i) to widen the pavements along the full length of both sides of the High Street to allow for the free and safe flow of pedestrians past queues and pinch points

The **Town Clerk** confirmed that Highways Officers would take the final decision on the viability of the scheme and that it was likely to be a given that the bus stops, taxi rank and disabled spaces would remain. It was also again noted that the layout of the scheme could be adjusted once in place if problems arose.

Compensating for the loss of free parking spaces

Members were very mindful that widening the pavements would result in the temporary loss of 30-minute free parking spaces and had already discussed concerns about this with some of the High Street traders.

The Town Clerk pointed out the options which included:

1. To use the Town Council's free allocation of spaces (often used for major events) to help support retailers.

This comprised 1,196 spaces for whole days. It was unlikely that this scheme would be offered to the town in 2021/22 and unused spaces could not be carried over into future years. There was flexibility in which car parks this could be used, for example, the central High Street parking area or another Wiltshire Council car park and could be any day of the week. Some retailers had asked that this not be used on a Saturday, preferring to encourage trade on other weekdays.

2. For the Town Council to pay for 'first hour free' parking in Wiltshire Council car parks, this would cost more than £337,000 for one year, representing 47% of the precept (*the Town Council's annual income from the taxpayer*) so was not tenable. The cost to offer this for two months in George Lane car park was £13,300, so might be a possibility.

Members felt it was unlikely, in the current financial situation, that Wiltshire Council would offer free parking in its car parks and were reluctant to pay for it from Town Council funds.

3. Creating temporary free car parks in Town Council-managed spaces such as The Common or Recreation Ground.

Some members had expressed strong feelings against reducing the amount of green, recreational space available to residents.

4. Car parks not managed by the Town Council which were currently not being used had been explored but, discounted now that businesses were re-opening following lockdown (e.g. the Leisure Centre and the Castle & Ball).
5. A parking ticket redemption scheme similar to Devizes and Melksham. Shoppers pay for parking and receive two tickets, one to display in their vehicle and one which offers a discount for them to redeem their parking fee with participating retailers. It would take 3-4 weeks to set up and could be a long-term incentive for Marlborough.

The Tourism Officer had been asked to gauge initial feedback from retailers on this potential scheme and this had been positive. Councillors recognised that this could be a long-term solution for people using pay & display parking at a comparatively small cost to participating retailers.

RESOLVED: (ii) to use the Town Council's allocation of free parking days and to pursue the parking ticket redemption scheme and to delegate to the Town Clerk to identify the best pattern of location and timing to support trade, adjusting the scheme if necessary

Additional measures under the Re-opening the High Street Safely Scheme to support a COVID safe High Street

The possibility of the installation of hand sanitizer stations had been popular with some retailers, although it was recognised that they may be subject to abuse.

Clear signage was also discussed, particularly at the entry points to the town on the A4 and A346 to show through traffic that Marlborough was open for business and COVID safe

Members also discussed whether to add pavement markers or arrows to highlight safe distances.

RESOLVED: (iii) to request additional funding for hand sanitizer stations and signage, and to delegate to the Town Clerk to identify the best locations and quantities

53/20

RETURNING TO A NEW NORMAL

Councillors noted a report from the Town Clerk and considered recommendations about re-opening Town Council buildings and facilities.

The **Town Clerk** gave a verbal update on the latest legislation and government guidance affecting Town Council services, facilities and buildings.

Deep cleans of all buildings would take place w/c 6 July 2020 starting with the Town Hall ahead of a planned wedding (now permitted for up to 30 people from 4 July). Hand sanitizer and PPE stations were already in place and the Grounds Team was working to inspect and clean all play equipment prior to re-opening on 4 July. The play area at Manton would close again on 12 July for work to begin to upgrade the play equipment.

Members considered the following recommended actions:

- That decisions on whether Town Council-led events should go ahead should be made three months ahead of the scheduled event date
- That once the office at 5 High Street is COVID safe (following a deep clean), it reopen to the public for an initial 4 hours a day (10:00-14:00, Mon-Fri)
- That staff should continue to work towards preparing all buildings for re-opening and being COVID safe in readiness for lifting of restrictions
- To open both access points to Priory Gardens from 6 July
- Once the Town Hall and Marlborough Community & Youth Centre have been deep cleaned and are COVID safe then these can be opened, but only in line with government guidance
- That Town Council play areas are inspected and prepared for opening on Saturday, 4 July, in line with government guidance
- That staff should continue to work from home where they can
- To provide an update on latest guidance and review all decisions at the next Full Town Council meeting on 20 July 2020.

RESOLVED: to take all recommended actions towards re-opening Town Council buildings and facilities

54/20 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019/20

Members noted the final Internal Audit Report for 2019/20

55/20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20

RESOLVED: that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is approved for signature by the Town Mayor/Chairman of the Council

56/20 ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2019/20

RESOLVED: that the Annual Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is approved for signature by the Town Mayor/Chairman of the Council

57/20 EAR MARKED RESERVES

Members considered a recommendation from the Finance & Policy Committee of 16 March 2020 to approve Ear Marked Reserves for 2020/21

RESOLVED: that Ear Marked Reserves were agreed for 2020/21

58/20 SKATE PARK LIGHTING

Members considered a report by the Assistant Town Clerk following a consultation about installing floodlights at the Skate Park. Main points were:

- 161 responses had been received
- 73% (117) were in support of the floodlights
- 74% (121) believed the proposed switch-off time (suggested as 9pm in the darker winter months) was appropriate
- Of 19 near neighbours who had responded, 3 were in support of the lighting, 14 did not support the proposal and 2 had no preference
- A number of comments had been received, including concerns about anti-social behaviour and impact on those living near by

Discussion points included:

- Lights had been promised to skaters for many years and had been requested from as far back as 1987
- The lights would not be necessary during summer, but would allow skating to continue in the late afternoon and evening during the darker winter months
- Neighbours' concerns were noted
- Whether reports of anti-social behaviour in the past had included issues at the skate park, or whether the Marlborough Community & Youth Centre (MCYC) car park was the issue
- Some neighbours had said they would support the lights if anti-social behaviour could be addressed
- No suggestions had been forthcoming when issues had been discussed with neighbours of MC&YC
- Whether a barrier could be installed to close the car park overnight
- Whether lighting would help improve safety and deter anti-social behaviour
- No concerns had been raised from Coombe End Court
- Whether the police could be asked to increase the frequency of patrols in the area
- That the timings of the lights were not fixed and could be changed, switching them off earlier if necessary, or to be set not to come on at all

- To make it clear that persistent anti-social behaviour after the installation may result in lighting time being reduced or withdrawn.

RESOLVED: that the results of the Acoustic Survey and Public Consultation were noted and to go ahead with next stages of the project and to consult with the local police to request increased patrols and to review this decision after the lights were in place.

59/20

OUTSIDE BODIES

Members noted the Town Clerk's report and considered whether to continue with representational roles from 2019/20 which were:

Outside Body	2019/20 Representative
Marlborough and District Chamber of Commerce	Cllrs. A Kirk Wilson and G Loosmore
Market Towns Forum	The Town Mayor and Cllrs G Loosmore and N Barrett-Morton
Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)	Cllr S Price Reserve: Cllr B Castle
The Richmond Fellowship	Cllr B Castle
Marlborough Area Board	The Town Mayor and Cllr P Cairns
Community Area Transport Group	The Town Mayor Reserve: Cllr P Cairns
Marlborough and District Link Scheme	Cllr B Castle
Marlborough Fire Station Liaison	Cllrs P Dow and L Farrell
Emergency Flooding/Snow Wardens	Cllr P Cairns Reserve: Cllr A Kirk Wilson
Transition Marlborough	Cllrs P Cairns and G Loosmore
2293 Air Training Corps	The Town Mayor and Cllr N Barrett-Morton
Kennet Community Transport	Cllrs A Kirk Wilson and D Heath
Sports Forum	The Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor
Local Youth Network	Cllr S Price Reserve: Cllr L Farrell
Christmas Lights Switch-on Event	The Town Mayor and Cllrs H Forbes and A Wilson
Neighbourhood Plan	The Town Mayor and Cllr P Cairns
Great West Way	The Town Mayor, Cllrs L Farrell and D Heath
Lansdowne Monument	Cllrs D Heath and P Cairns
Stonebridge Management Committee	Cllrs B Castle, P Cairns and D Heath
Allotment Association	The Deputy Mayor and Cllr L Farrell
Schools Liaison Group	Cllr L. Farrell
Marlborough Youth Council	Cllr L. Farrell

Changes agreed were:

Community Area Transport Group: Cllr. Hall and Reserve: Cllr. Cairns
 Sports Forum: Deputy Mayor and Cllr. Hillier
 Christmas Lights Switch-on: The Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cllr. Hillier
 Neighbourhood Plan: Cllrs Hall and Cairns

RESOLVED: to continue with representational roles to outside bodies with four amendments

60/20

COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, the following approved minutes were noted: **Planning** – 24 February, 16 March and 26 May 2020; **Amenities & Open Spaces** – 3 February 2020; **Finance & Policy** – 13 January 2020

61/20

MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

No questions had been submitted.

62/20

COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Cllr. Castle** and seconded by **Cllr. Fogg** 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

Wiltshire Councillor, Cllr. Dobson, interjected, addressing the Mayor to express his disgust that Standing Orders had not been suspended during agenda item 5 – Safe re-opening of the High Street – to allow the public to speak. He had strong views which he said he would make known in the press.

No request to suspend Standing Orders had been made to the Mayor by Cllr Dobson or any member of the public either before or during the meeting.

63/20

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 nature of the business to be transacted

All members of the press and public left the videoconference

64/20

TOWN COUNCIL-OWNED PROPERTIES

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk about decisions made under the Scheme of Delegation in relation to Town Council-owned properties.

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm

Signed: Date:

Town Mayor