

Marlborough Town Council



17 June 2025

Dear Councillor

Full Town Council

I hereby **summon** you to a meeting of **Marlborough Town Council** which will be held on **Monday, 23 June 2025 at 7pm** in the **Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall**.

Yours sincerely

Richard Spencer-Williams

Richard Spencer-Williams, PSLCC

Town Clerk

If members of the public wish to attend they should notify the Town Clerk of this by noon on the Friday prior to the meeting.

If members of the public wish to attend and ask a question they should also notify the Town Clerk of this by noon prior to the meeting and provide their question in writing at the same time. If members of the public wish to ask a question, but not attend, they can provide the question in writing to the Town Clerk by noon on the day of the meeting, and a written response will be provided.

Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Organisations and interest groups are asked to send one delegate. Some people may not be allowed to attend if all the allocated seats are taken.

MOMENT OF QUIET REFLECTION

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with Standing Order 3(f), members of the public may ask questions of the Council. The time allocated for this should not exceed 10 minutes and be limited to one question per person unless directed otherwise by the Chair. A full response may not be possible without further research, and the Chair may direct that a written or oral response be given

CRIME AND DISORDER

A member of Wiltshire Police will be invited to give a report and answer questions from Councillors and members of the public (not to exceed 10 minutes)

TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Not to exceed 10 minutes

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

- a) To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Marlborough Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011
- b) To consider any dispensation requests received by the Town Clerk

Members are reminded that they are obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of a change to disclosable interests, or a new interest as defined in Appendices A and B of the Code of Conduct within 28 days of becoming aware of it. These should be passed on to the Town Clerk to register online.

3. Mayor's Announcements

4. Minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 12 May 2025

5. Action Log

To review the Action Log

6. Internal Audit 2024 25

To note the final internal audit report for 2024 25

7. Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 Section 1

To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

- 8. Annual Accounting Statements 2024/25 Section 2**
To consider and approve the Annual Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
- 9. Neighbourhood Plan: Informal Car Park**
To consider the indicative plan for implementation of the informal car park on the Common
- 10. Standing Orders – ‘Mayor as Ex Officio’**
To consider the proposal to remove the Standing Order that makes the Mayor ‘ex-officio’ of the Planning Committee, and instate the Mayor as a full voting member
- 11. Victorian Cemetery and Arboretum**
To consider a request by the Friends of the Victorian Cemetery to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a Town Council Trustee
- 12. Press and Media Policy**
To note the Council’s press and media policy and online communications policy
- 13. Members’ Question Time**
Questions to be submitted to the Town Clerk by midday on the day of the meeting and not to exceed 10 minutes
- 14. Outside Bodies**
An opportunity for Members to provide verbal updates on their representational roles to outside bodies
- 15. Committee Minutes**
In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, to note the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 14 April and 19 May; **Amenities and Open Spaces** 15 April 2025. These minutes have been approved by committees and circulated to Members and are available to download from <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/meeting-dates-agendas-and-minutes-2024-25> or from the Town Council offices. Other meetings have taken place, but minutes are not yet approved so remain in draft form.
- 16. Common Seal**
To authorise the fixing of the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 12 May 2025

Marlborough Town Council



Annual Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Marlborough Town Council held Monday, 12 May 2025
in the Court Room, Marlborough Town Hall at 7pm

PRESENT	Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby	Town Mayor
	Councillor Emily Trow	Deputy Mayor
	Councillor Nicholas Fogg	
	Councillor Lisa Farrell	
	Councillor Mervyn Hall	
	Councillor Mark Cooper	
	Councillor James Sheppard	
	Councillor Kelvyn Shantry	
	Councillor Susannah O'Brien	
	Councillor Caroline Sadler	
	Councillor Abi Beaumont	
	Councillor Caroline Wrench	
	Richard Spencer-Williams	Town Clerk
	Dawn Whitehall	Corporate Services Officer
ALSO		
PRESENT	Neil Goodwin	Marlborough.News

PRAYERS

Councillor Cleasby opened the meeting with prayers.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr Goodwin reminded the Chair that he was awaiting a reply to his question on 8 April concerning the co-ordination of roadworks. The **Chair** confirmed that this had been raised at Wiltshire Council and she would follow it up.

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

It was clarified that a planning application for McCarthy and Stone to redevelop the former Police Station in George Lane will be on the agenda for the Planning Committee Meeting taking place on 19 May 2025.

1/25

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from **Councillors Luson, Morgan** and **Wiltshire Councillor Davies**.

2/25

DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

3/25

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

As she would cease to be Town Mayor at this meeting, **Councillor Cleasby** thanked all the Councillors for their support during the past year, acknowledging and appreciating the help each of them had given her at one time or another. She urged them to continue to work together apolitically and with good humour in the interests of the residents of Marlborough.

4/25

MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 8 April 2025 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor

5/25

ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR 2025/26

Proposed by **Councillor Cleasby** and seconded by **Councillor Farrell** and **RESOLVED:** that **Councillor Emily Trow** is elected Town Mayor for 2025/26

Councillor Cleasby stood down and **Councillor Trow** took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

6/25

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY TOWN MAYOR

Councillor Trow signed her declaration of acceptance of office.

7/25

ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR 2025/26

Proposed by **Councillor Trow** and seconded by **Councillor Cleasby** and **RESOLVED:** that **Councillor Mark Luson** is elected Deputy Town Mayor for 2025/26

As Councillor Luson was unable to attend the meeting the Town Clerk would arrange for him to sign the declaration of acceptance of office at a later date.

8/25

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

RESOLVED: that the Scheme of Delegation (updated 12 September 2023) is re-adopted for 2025/26

9/25

STANDING COMMITTEES

In accordance with Standing Order 6(k)iv Members consider nominations to Committees.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the **Planning** Committee will comprise all Town Councillors with the Town Mayor ex-officio, so unable to vote

- (ii) that the **Amenities & Open Spaces** Committee will comprise **Councillors Cooper, Farrell, Luson, O'Brien, Morgan, Sadler, Shantry, Wrench** and **The Town Mayor**
- (iii) that the **Finance & Policy** Committee will comprise **Councillors Beaumont, Cleasby, Fogg, Hall, Morgan, Shantry, Sheppard** and the **Town Mayor**, with one vacancy
- (iv) that the **Property** Committee will comprise **Councillors Beaumont, Cooper, Hall, Sadler** and the **Town Mayor**, with four vacancies
- (v) that the **Staffing** Committee will comprise **Councillors Cooper, Farrell, Fogg, Hall, Luson, O'Brien, Wrench** and the **Town Mayor** with one vacancy

10/25

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF STANDING COMMITTEES

In accordance with Standing Order 4(d)vii, Members considered nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs of Standing Committees. All Councillors voted for Chairs whereas only elected Committee members (see 9/25 above) voted for Vice Chairs

RESOLVED:

a) Planning Committee

- (i) that **Councillor Cleasby** is elected Chair of the Planning Committee for 2025/26, and
- (ii) that **Councillor Hall** is elected Vice Chair of the Planning Committee for 2025/26

b) Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

- (i) that **Councillor Cooper** is elected Chair of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee for 2025/26, and
- (ii) that **Councillor Farrell** is elected Vice Chair of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee for 2025/26

c) Finance & Policy Committee

- (i) that **Councillor Beaumont** is elected Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee for 2025/26, and
- (ii) that **Councillor Shantry** is elected Vice Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee for 2025/26

d) Property Committee

- (i) that **Councillor Hall** is elected Chair of the Property Committee for 2025/26, and
- (ii) that **Councillor Sadler** is elected Vice Chair of the Property Committee for 2025/26

e) Staffing Committee

- (i) that **Councillor Farrell** is elected Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2025/26, and

(ii) that **Councillor O'Brien** is elected Vice Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2025/26

11/25 STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED: that Standing Orders (as adopted on 20 January 2025) are re-adopted for 2025/26

12/25 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RESOLVED: that the Financial Regulations (as reviewed and adopted on 8 April 2025) are re-adopted for 2025/26

13/25 OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: that representatives to organisations and voluntary groups for 2025-26 are:

Group

Wiltshire Council Operational Flood Working Group
Wiltshire Area Localism and Planning Alliance
Transition Marlborough
Emergency Planning Working Party/Snow Warden
Local Highway and Footway Improvements Group
Marlborough Business Network
Wiltshire Association of Local Councils
The Richmond Fellowship
Marlborough Area Board
Marlborough and District Link Scheme
Marlborough Fire Station Liaison
Kennet Community Transport
Marlborough Sports Forum
Local Youth Network
Stonebridge Meadow Management Committee
Marlborough Community Support Forum

Marlborough Children and Young Peoples Partnership Forum (Youth Council)
Allotment Association
Tree Officer
Community Speedwatch

The Merchant's House Trustees
Museum Committee

Representative

Councillor Sheppard and the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk
Vacant

Councillor O'Brien
Councillors Cleasby and Hall

Councillors Hall and Morgan

Councillors Shantry and Cleasby
Town Clerk
Vacant
The Town Mayor and Councillor Wrench
Councillor Sadler
Councillors Sheppard and Beaumont
Councillor Sadler
Councillors Farrell and Wrench
Vacant
Councillors Shantry and O'Brien

Councillors Cleasby, Farrell and the Town Mayor
Councillors Farrell and Wrench and the Town Clerk

Councillors Cooper and Luson
Councillor O'Brien
The Town Mayor and Councillors Sadler and Farrell
Councillors Sheppard and Beaumont
The Town Mayor and Councillors Sheppard and Cooper

Patients Participation Group
24/7 & WC Bus Strategy Liaison
The Jubilee Centre

Councillors Morgan and Farrell
Councillor Fogg
Councillors Farrell, O'Brien and Wrench

- 14/25 APPEALS PANEL**
RESOLVED: that the Appeals Panel for 2025/26 will comprise **Councillors Cleasby, Sadler, Shantry and Sheppard**
- 15/25 ASSET REGISTER**
RESOLVED: that the register of insured land and assets (updated 31 March 2025) is approved
- 16/25 INSURANCE RENEWAL**
Members noted a report by the Town Clerk about insurance cover in respect of all insured risks.
- 17/25 MEMBERSHIPS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS**
Members noted a report by the Office Manager about staff memberships and subscriptions to other bodies and
RESOLVED: that current subscriptions and memberships are approved for 2025/26
- 18/25 RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEME**
RESOLVED: that the Risk Management Scheme (updated 15 May 2023) is re-adopted for 2025/26
- 19/25 INTERNAL AUDITORS**
RESOLVED: that Internal Auditors, Auditing Solutions Ltd, will continue to carry out the Town Council's internal audits in 2025/26
- 20/25 BANK MANDATE**
RESOLVED: that the Bank Mandate be amended to record the changes of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Policy Committee, all of whom together with the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer, Deputy Town Clerk or Office Manager (as authorised officer) will be signatories and always requiring that two (2) Councillors and one (1) officer sign all cheques and other orders for payment
- 21/25 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**
RESOLVED: that the calendar of meetings for 2025/26 is re-adopted
- 22/25 YEAR END BUDGET REPORT 2024/25**
Members noted the budget report for year ending March 2024/25, and that it would be scrutinised at the next Finance and Policy Committee meeting. The **Town Mayor** signed the year-end Balance Sheet and Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31 March 2025.

23/25 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

RESOLVED: that Marlborough Town Council adopts the General Power of Competence

24/25 COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para. 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, Members noted the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 17 March 2025, **Property** – 17 February 2025 and **Finance and Policy** 22 January 2025.

25/25 COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Councillor Fogg** 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 8.08 pm

ITEM 5**ACTION LOG**

To note and review the Action Log

Ref	Action	Owner	Min No. & status	Meeting date	Notes
276	Family of 4 in 1-bed flat: impact on children raised by school. Why are there empty 3-bed properties in Rabley Wood View? Cllr Farrell to circulate details of empty properties; members who wished to write in support should contact the Mayor for details; contact MP to ask him to write	Cllr Farrell and Mayor (Cllr Cleasby)	PQT In Progress	20.01.25	
278	Civic Working Party to consider reinstating annual Ale Tasting event	Civic Working Party	361/24 In Progress	20.01.25	On CWP agenda 26 3 25

ITEM 6**INTERNAL AUDIT 2024 25**

To note the Final Internal Audit report for 2024 25

Purpose

Members are asked to note the Final Internal Audit Report for 2024 25 (please see Appendix 1).

Town Clerk 9.6.25

ITEM 7 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2024/25 SECTION 1

To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

Please see Appendix 2

ITEM 8 ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 2024/25 SECTION 2

To consider and approve the Annual Accounting Statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

Please see Appendix 3

ITEM 9 MARLBOROUGH AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN INFORMAL CAR PARK

To consider the indicative plan for implementation of the informal car park on the Common

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ask the Town Council to consider the proposal in the *Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan (MANP)* to create an 'informal car park' on the Common, adjacent to the existing car park where the Marlborough Rugby Club (MRFC) clubhouse is located.

Background and Status

Amenities & Open Spaces Committee (AOS)

This matter was progressed by the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee on [13 January](#) 2025 when it resolved:

'that the A&OS Committee supports the creation of an informal car park subject to:

- (i) a minor revision to the wording of Policy 5 of the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan
- (ii) reinforcing the public availability of the existing informal car park
- (iii) an agreed communication plan
- (iv) an agreed costed plan'

The Amenities and Open Spaces Committee further considered this matter on [15 April](#) 2025:

Members considered an indicative plan for implementation of an informal car park on The Common. Discussion points included:

- *Timing and perception: residents were rightly protective of The Common. The recently opened training area, a proposed Cemetery extension and a new car park added up to a lot of activity there*
- *Cost: rough estimates were that it would cost up to £100,000. There was £10,000 set aside as an ear marked reserve and it would qualify for CIL funding*
- *The proposal in the Neighbourhood Plan was for 60 spaces*

- *Policy 5 as written in the Neighbourhood Plan included specifying that ‘there will be no permanent buildings or structures or other urbanising effects such as paved footways or landscape bunding’. To prevent unwanted vehicle access to other areas on the Common, some type of boundary would be required and bunding was the best solution in terms of visual impact on the landscape. This would require the Neighbourhood Plan to be revised, and the Town Clerk explained the process to revise the plan*
- *That a new Neighbourhood Plan working group would need to be created*
- *It was noted that the National Planning Policy Framework would be changing, and the Wiltshire Local Plan was not yet agreed. Members discussed whether the review of the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan (MANP) should be reviewed once both had been published, so that all implications for Marlborough could be understood*
- *Whether to take the project forward over the next few years, carrying out an internal review before entering a formal process once the MANP was ready to be reviewed*
- *Whether, with the project not being funded, it could turn into an ‘activity trap’ for the Town Council and should therefore be delayed (i.e. reviewing the MANP was a big job; and to consider whether £100,000 for 60 spaces represented good value)*

At this meeting the Committee resolved:

‘that the current plan for an informal car park is supported in principle, and the Town Council should look to incorporate material changes that would be required to the MANP into a wider review of the MANP informed by future updates to the National Planning Policy Framework and Wiltshire Local Plan, and to recommend this to Full Town Council’

[Draft minutes of a meeting of the Amenities & Open Spaces Committee held 15 April 2025.](#)

Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan

The MANP was adopted in March 2023. Policy MARL 5 ‘Improving Public Parking’ provides for an allocation of land adjacent to Marlborough Rugby Club, as shown on the Policies Map (Appendix 4, page 1), for an informal public car parking use. The proposal, as adopted by the MANP process, supports the provision of the following criteria:

1. There will be no permanent buildings or structures or other urbanising effects such as paved footways or landscape bunding
2. The car park comprises a grass grid, permeable surface only
3. Its use will be confined to cars and not any high-sided vehicle
4. Vehicular access to the car park is in a location and of a type to be agreed with the Highways Authority
5. The length and width of the car park shall retain a meaningful nib of land between its southern end and Hyde Lane and shall retain the continuous swathe between its eastern edge and Free’s Avenue
6. Any impact on the amenities of adjoining residents can be satisfactorily mitigated

[Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036 MADE March 2023](#)

On 10 March the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk met with the Wiltshire Council Neighbourhood Planning team for seek clarification and advice on what would be needed to proceed. They advised that:

- to amend the wording of *MARL 5 / Point 1* would mean a 'material change'.
- This would mean a review of the *MANP* and a re-run of *Regulations 14-16* depending on the extent and nature of the changes.
- Other policies, amendments or additions could be added in the process; these can be either 'minor', 'material' or 'substantial' - with the latter two requiring the 14-16 process.

Useful Link: [Reviewing your plan](#)

Construction and indicative costs

On 13 February the Town Clerk and Grounds Manager met on site to assess the identified area of land and clarify what a might need to be done to construct the informal car park (please refer to Appendix 4 page 2 for location map).

- The area measures 45 metres by 50 metres; total area covers 2,250 metres
- The ground is very un-even and would need to be landscaped, for which the council would need to hire an experienced relevant contractor.
- The **material costs** are estimated as follows:

Type one depth 150mm	£15,400
Membrane	£2,760
Car parking matting	£17,628
Topsoil 50.8 mm	£26,891
Grass seed	£150
Total cost	£62,629

Additional costs not accounted for:

landscaping contractor
Height barrier and installation

Considerations

- This project would mean amending the *MANP*, and as such instigate a review of the plan; and the Council would need to reconstitute a Steering Group and manage the neighbourhood planning process. Funds would need to be identified to secure professional support to advise on the process (grants may be available).
- The car park will need to be 'demarcated' in a way that the wider Common can be protected from unwanted vehicle access.
- What vehicles will this car park area be aimed at and how will it prevent unwanted vehicle use (e.g. 'high sided vehicles')?
- How the demarcation is achieved may then require planning consent under Section 38 of the Commons Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/26/section/38>
- There is an EMR of £10,000 for this project. Additional funds will need to be found to cover the cost of the materials, and labour prior to implementation.
- The grounds team would need some additional capacity and capability to help landscape the area.

Proposal

Members are asked to consider the matter and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

Town Clerk 11.6.25

ITEM 10

STANDING ORDERS – ‘EX OFFICIO’

To consider the proposal to remove the Standing Order that makes the Mayor ‘ex-officio’ of the Planning Committee and instate the Mayor as a full voting member of all committees.

Purpose

To consider the current status of the Mayor as an ex-officio member of the Planning Committee, with no voting rights.

Background

The definition of ‘ex-officio’ means a position held by virtue of holding another office. For example, the mayor of a town might be an ex-officio member of a committee due to their position as mayor, rather than being elected or appointed separately to that committee. This means the person automatically becomes a member of that committee based on the office they already hold.

Current Status

Currently, according to the Council’s Standing Orders, the Town Mayor is an ‘ex-officio’ member of just the Planning Committee, and they **do not** have voting rights. This is referenced under Standing Order 6(k)(iv), which states:

"The Planning Committee shall consist of fifteen Councillors plus the Mayor who will be ex officio and non-voting."

Equally the Mayor is automatically given a place on the other Committees, where they **do** have voting rights.

Considerations

Research into the practices of town councils across Wiltshire has revealed a mixed approach, but some do allow ex-officio members full voting rights (Calne & Malmesbury for example). Many do not even make reference to ex-officio members at all, and the debate on the Society of Local Council Clerks forum is mixed and very much open to interpretation.

Knowles on Local Authority Meetings – A Manual of Law & Practice (third edition) states:

"Unless the council determines otherwise, ex-officio members are full members of the committee, able to speak and vote. Whatever the local arrangement it should, of course, be regulated by formal standing order."

Proposal

In order to clarify the Council's governance arrangements, it is proposed that on all committees, the Mayor becomes 'ex officio' with full voting rights (to include the Planning Committee).

Standing Orders would have to be amended to reflect any change to the current practice.

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the proposal and decide whether they would like to retain current practice or adopt a new way forward, enabling the Mayor as an ex-officio member of all committees with full voting rights.

Town Clerk / Deputy Town Clerk 9.6.25

ITEM 11

VICTORIAN CEMETERY AND ARBORETUM

To consider a request by the Friends of the Victorian Cemetery to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with a Town Council Trustee.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to consider the request by the *Friends of the Victorian Cemetery* to set up a *Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)* in partnership with the Council.

Status

The *Friends of the Victorian Cemetery* have been working with the Council as part of a project group to create a cohesive plan for the *Victorian Cemetery and Arboretum* (as previously reported). The project group last met on 11 March when it was agreed that the project group would benefit from the capability to draw in external funding (where the Council is not able to), to help fund some of the project work e.g. masonry and restoration works. To this end it was agreed that a CIO would serve such a purpose.

Background and Status

The Amenities and Open Spaces Committee considered this matter on 15 April, where it resolved:

'that the Committee supports the request to create a Charitable Incorporated Organisation for the Victorian Cemetery with a Town Council Trustee, and that this should be recommended to the Full Town Council for ratification'

Therefore, Members are asked to consider the proposal presented by the *Friends of the Victorian Cemetery*.

Proposal

'The Friends of the Old Victorian Cemetery would be grateful if MTC would work in partnership with them, in setting up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.'

The aim of establishing a CIO would be to formally carry on and evolve the great work the Friends of the Old Victorian Cemetery has been undertaking for the past 10 years with the support of the Town Council. The FOVC are a small, mostly retired group of volunteers who aim to help conserve and enhance this beautiful cemetery for the benefit of the local community and visitors alike.

The group are very keen to increase the biodiversity of the cemetery and over the years have planted over 5000 bulbs, bluebells, fritillaries and crocuses, rattle seed to help increase wildflower growth and biodiversity.

In addition, being a member of The Friends of the Victorian Cemetery, has also given the retired community the opportunity to meet new people, combat loneliness, encourage friendships, exercise and be outside in a serene and peaceful environment.

If a CIO was formed, it would unlock more revenue streams and formalise the partnership between MTC and the Friends of the Old Victorian Cemetery, making the organisation more sustainable. As a CIO, it's aims would be;

- *heritage (including the preservation of monuments, commonwealth war graves),*
- *improving biodiversity*
- *encouraging health & wellbeing*
- *heritage and conservation education*
- *community involvement*
- *tourism.*

The CIO we would be looking to establish would be a 'Foundation CIO', in the name of, 'The Friends of the Old Victorian Cemetery'

- *This would consist of a minimum of 3 trustees – maximum of 12 trustees.*
- *Trustees to serve a minimum of 2 years but ideally 3 years.*
- *Appointed trustees have sole voting rights. (Members of the FOVC and project team would have no voting rights)*
- *A location for the principal office – ideally MTC to ensure continuity of the years.*

It is proposed that the Foundation CIO be a mutual partnership, and we initially have just 4 trustees, made up of the Town Clerk and a Councillor, representing MTC and the Founder and Treasurer of the FOVC. (Margaret Rose and Nicola Scotchmer), with the principal office/registered address, being the MTC offices in the high street.

We would be grateful if you could take this under consideration and confirm that MTC would be happy to propose 2 trustees (ideally for 3 years) and confirm that we are able to use the MTC office as our registered address to ensure the continuity of the FOVC.

We look forward to hearing from you and please don't hesitate to contact myself or Margaret if you require any further details.'

Nicola Scotchmer

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the proposal and instruct the Town Clerk accordingly.

Town Clerk 11.6.25

ITEM 12

PRESS AND MEDIA & ECOMMS POLICIES

To note the Council's Press and Media policy, and eComms Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to note the *Press and Media Policy* (please see Appendix 5.1) and eComms Policy (Appendix 5.2)

Town Clerk 11.6.25

ITEM 13

MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

Questions should be submitted to the Town Clerk by midday on the day of the meeting; not to exceed 10 minutes (see [Standing Orders, para. 12](#))

ITEM 14

OUTSIDE BODIES

An opportunity for Members to provide verbal updates on their representational roles to outside bodies

ITEM 15

COMMITTEE MINUTES

In accordance with para 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, to note the approved minutes of the following committee meetings: **Planning** – 14 April and 19 May 2025, **Amenities and Open Spaces** 15 April 2025. These minutes have been approved by committees and circulated to Members and are available to download from <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/meeting-dates-agendas-and-minutes-2024-25> or from the Town Council offices. Other meetings have taken place, but minutes are not yet approved so remain in draft form.

ITEM 16

COMMON SEAL

To authorise the fixing of the Common Seal of Marlborough Town Council to all documents necessary to give effect to the decisions of the meeting.



Marlborough Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2024-25 (Final Update)

Chris I Hackett
Consultant Auditor
For and on behalf of Auditing Solutions Ltd

Background

Statute requires all town and parish councils to arrange for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and systems of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2024-25 financial year, during our three visits which took place on October 2nd 2024, 5th February and 7th May 2025. We wish to thank the Office Manager and the Town Clerk for providing the records to enable us to complete our work.

Internal Audit Approach

In completing our review, we have continued to pay due regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential misrecording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts/AGAR. Our programme of cover is designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council's financial systems remain robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Internal Audit Report' which is part of the Council's AGAR and requires independent assurance over specified internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

Based on our work, the Council continues to maintain effective internal control arrangements. Our findings in each area examined are set out in the detailed report below. We have signed the Internal Audit Section of the AGAR assigning positive assurance against the control objectives.

We request that this report is presented to Members and that Members acknowledge receipt of the Report.

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Marlborough Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.

Detailed Report

Maintenance of Accounting Records & Bank Reconciliations

The Council uses the Rialtas software to maintain its accounting records (the Ledger). Two operational bank accounts are maintained at Barclays, the Business Current and Business Saver accounts which are accounted for in a combined cashbook (number one) in the Rialtas system. The Software Supplier, RBS, assist with the year-end closedown.

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in the cashbook or financial ledgers. During our three visits we have:

- Confirmed the External Auditor raised no issues on the 2023-24 AGAR requiring our follow up;
- Agreed the opening trial balance detail for 2024-25 as recorded in the Ledger to the closing detail contained in the 2023-24 AGAR;
- Ensured that the cost centre and nominal ledger income and expenditure coding structure remains appropriate for purpose;
- Checked to ensure that the Rialtas Ledger remained “in balance” at the date of our three visits by running a data check within the system to confirm the trial balance agreed to the nominal ledger;
- Noted from our review of invoices that the Council’s IT provider undertake Cloud back-ups of the Council’s information;
- Checked and agreed detail in the combined number one cashbook, examining and agreeing transactions in August and December 2024 and March 2025 as sample months to supporting bank statements;
- Agreed the combined Business Current and Business Saver Account bank reconciliation as at 31st July, 31st August, 30th November and 31st December 2024 and 28th February and 31st March 2025; and
- Noted that Member review of bank reconciliations is provided by reporting them to the Finance and Policy Committee.

Conclusions

The ledger was in balance at the time of each of our reviews and the accounts are regularly reconciled to the bank with no anomalous adjusting entries.

We have agreed the year-end balances to the AGAR.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust series of corporate governance documentation in place; consequently we:

- Have completed our examination of the Council's minutes, examining those for the Full Council and its Standing Committee meetings (except for Planning) held during the financial year 2024-25 with a view to identifying whether any issues exist that may have an adverse effect on the Council's future financial stability, both in the short and longer term;
- Note the Council continues to keep its corporate policies under review with Full Council adopting Standing Orders and Financial Regulations at the Meeting held in May 2024. Further that updated Financial Regulations were approved in April 2025 which took account of recent national guidance issued by NALC;
- Noted that the General Power of Competence has been adopted;
- Confirmed that the Council is posting all payments over £500 onto its website and doing this monthly, the latest posting at the time of our visit was for March 2025; and
- Confirmed the Council advertised its 2023-24 accounts for public inspection.

Conclusion and recommendation

The Council is maintaining its suite of governance arrangements and policies.

Recommendation from interim review.

R1 The Council should review its financial regulations in the light of recent NALC advice.

Response: This has now been done and approved by Council.

Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that:

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and approved budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate documentation, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- That Members are provided with, and approve, the regular schedules of payments made;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We confirmed with officers the controls over the processing of payments. We completed testing in this area examining a sample of all those supplier payments individually in excess of £2,500 together with a more random selection of every 35th cashbook transaction, irrespective of value, entered in the Cashbook for the period 1st April to 31st March 2025 to ensure compliance with the above criteria. Our sample comprised 87 payments, plus the regular payments to Wiltshire Council for non-domestic rates on Council buildings. It totalled £578,034 and equated to 63% of non-pay expenditure for the financial year. All payments in our sample were supported by invoices.

We reviewed briefly the tenders obtained in relation to a contract let recently for a new boiler at the Town hall noting four were received and that independent consulting engineers checked them.

We note that the Council sought quotes for work to refurbish the Flat at 3b Kingsbury Square. We reviewed briefly the supporting documentation.

We confirmed the VAT owing to the Council at the end of 2023-24 was recovered in May 2024 and reviewed the re-claims for the quarterly returns for 2024-25 confirming the funds were recovered and recorded in the cash book or in the case of the final quarter included in year-end debtors.

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on our sample payments are supported by invoices.

The Council's arrangements for approving payments include an authorisation sheet for officers and Members to initial confirming they have seen the invoices and approve them. At the time of our interim review this was not being initialled by Members. Members are now initialling the sheet.

'De-minimis' VAT rules allow organisations to recover input tax linked to exempt supplies subject to certain limits. To be below the de-minimis limits, the following two conditions must both be met: Input VAT attributed to exempt supplies must not exceed £1,875 for the quarter (£625 for a monthly return and £7,500 for an annual calculation). Input VAT attributed to exempt supplies must not exceed 50% of the total input VAT incurred in that quarter. To recover all the Council's input VAT on exempt supplies it is necessary to prove the related tax is de-minimis. It is common for Council's to have this calculation performed periodically, this had not been done recently at Marlborough at the time of our interim visit. We note at our final stage review that the Calculation has been performed for Marlborough and the outcome reported to HMRC. The Council may have to repay some VAT previously reclaimed, a response from HMRC is awaited.

Recommendations from the interim report

- R2** *Members should initial the authorisation sheets confirming they have inspected the related invoices. Response: This is now being done.*
- R3** *The Council should consider having its VAT de-minimis calculation performed. Response: This has now been done and reported to the HMRC.*

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

We have examined the Council's current insurance policy provided by Zurich running to the 16th June 2025, cover includes:

- Building insurance;
- Business interruption insurance
- Cover for equipment;
- Public liability cover of up to £15m;
- Hirer's liability cover up to £2m;
- Employer's liability £10m;
- Motor vehicle cover; and
- Fidelity guarantee £2m.

The Policy includes also an inspection contract to ensure the safety of plant such as play equipment.

We discussed arrangements for completing safety inspections of play equipment which are conducted regularly by trained Council staff, supplemented by periodic external inspections by Zurich.

We note Full Council adopted the 2024-25 Risk Management Scheme at the meeting in May 2024. The Risk Management Scheme identifies the Council's risks, assesses them and describes the controls in place to manage them. It includes a range of financial risks.

Conclusions

No issues arise from our work. The Council has arrangements for managing risks.

Budgetary Control & Reserves

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust procedure in place for identifying and approving its future budgetary requirements and level of precept to be drawn down from the Unitary Authority: also, that an effective reporting and monitoring process is in place. We also aim to ensure that the Council retains appropriate funds in general and earmarked reserves to finance its ongoing spending plans, whilst retaining appropriate sums to cover any unplanned expenditure. We note that:

Marlborough TC: 2024-25 (Final update)

7-May-2025

- Full Council approved the 2025-26 budget and precept at their meeting in January 2025 after initial consideration by the Finance and Policy Committee. Members were provided with a report outlining key issues such as cost pressures and planned projects. This was supported by a detailed schedule analysing income and expenditure by activity showing projections for 2025-26 and prior year comparators;
- Members continue to receive regular budget monitoring reports quarterly, which include income and expenditure reports and a balance sheet; and
- At 31st March 2025 the Council's reserves stood at £1,100,157 including earmarked reserves of £680,015 and a general reserve of £420,142. Spending in 2024-25 was £1,351,259 or £112,605 a month. The general reserve represents some 3.7 months spending. The Council is budgeting to spend £1,137,543 in 2025/26; and
- Outturn spending in 2024-25 was higher than the previous year reflecting the refurbishment work at the Town Hall and the construction of the Workshop.

Conclusions

No issues arise in this area, the Council has arrangements for managing and setting its budget.

Review of Income

The Council receives income, in addition to the Precept, primarily from Town Hall lettings, property rents, allotments, burial and associated fees, bank interest and specific grants & donations, together with expended VAT, which is recovered quarterly. During our three visits we:

- Agreed the first and second instalments of the 2024-25 precept received into the Council's accounts in April and September 2024 to the amount set and recorded in the Minutes of the Council and to remittance advices from Wiltshire Council and to the list of precepts issued by the Government;
- Tested the receipt of CIL to the remittance advice;
- Checked a sample of five burials in the year, confirming a certificate of burial or cremation was on file and agreeing the related income to the schedule of rates, the invoices raised and the amounts recorded in Rialtas;
- Reviewed the income arising from the letting of open spaces, checking for the income arising from the Circus hire that the invoice agreed to the schedule of rates and that the Circus provided a risk assessment and management agreement, the latter confirming that insurance was held by the hirer. We further checked a sports pitch hire confirming the rate per the invoice to the schedule of rates and that a booking agreement was held;
- Noted the Council received a grant from Wiltshire Council of £25,000, we agreed this to a remittance advice from Wiltshire Council;
- Test checked the receipt of interest from the CCLA account statements to the amount recorded in Rialtas;
- Town Hall hiring: We tested five lettings from the booking diary confirming booking forms were on file and agreeing the fee charged to the schedule of rates and the accounts;

- Reviewed income received against budget and the prior year and discussed the action being taken in respect of a tenant who was in arrears; and
- As noted previously in this report test checked a sample of three month's income from the bank statement to the cash book and checked the recovery of VAT.

Conclusion

Based on our work, the Council continues to maintain systems for collecting income.

Petty Cash Account

We are required, as part of the AGAR certification process, to consider the effectiveness of the Council's controls over any petty cash account or other cash holding in use.

The Council operates a limited petty cash account to defray sundry administrative expenses. The account is "topped up" as and when required with "round sum" cash withdrawals through the Barclays cash-point card. These transfers are recorded in the main cash book.

We agreed the physical cash held on the day of our first visit to the accounting records and test checked the payments in September 2024 to ensure that vouchers/till receipts were retained to support the expenditure.

Conclusion

There are no issues arising in this area.

Review of Staff Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme with regard to employee contribution percentages.

We have:

- Sample checked the calculation of back pay in respect of the national pay award which was paid in November 2024;
- For five staff paid in November checked the calculation of national insurance and tax and pension contributions;
- Confirmed the gross pay for two new staff per their November payslips to their contract of employment;
- Confirmed signed over time sheets are retained on file; and

- Completed our month-on-month trend analysis of payroll transactions per the cash book to enable us to confirm there are no material anomalies.

Conclusions

The Council is administering its payroll function. Part of the control environment is that Members counter sign the BACS payment listing each month. This is an important part of the control environment, at our interim visit we noted this has not happened every month, but we understand this is happening now.

Fixed Asset Register

The Governance and Accountability Manual requires all Councils to maintain a record of all assets owned. We note the Council retains an asset register which provides photographic information of the specific assets and that assets are valued at cost for the purposes of the disclosure in the AGAR as required by the accounting regulations. The asset register categorizes them, for example in to land and buildings, infrastructure assets etc.

We have reviewed expenditure in the financial year and checked for consistency with the additions to the Fixed Asset Register. We note the cost of the Workshop will be added in 2025-26 when the work is completed.

We have agreed the total value of the assets per the asset register to the amount recorded in Box 9 Section 2 of the draft AGAR.

Conclusion

No issues arise in this area of our work.

Review of Investments and Loans

We seek to ensure surplus funds are invested to earn interest until the funds are needed and if appropriate any loan transactions are conducted in accordance with the related agreement. As part of our audit we have:

- Noted the Finance and Policy Committee reviewed the Council's investment policy at their meeting in July and noted the Council invested £100,000 of surplus funds in to the CCLA in September 2024. We tested further transfer of £268,488 to the CCLA in February 2025; and
- Agreed the CCLA balance reported in Rialtas at 31st December 2024 and 31st March 2025 to the third party statement and agreed the year-end balance to the AGAR.

We tested interest as reported in the section on Income.

Conclusion

We have agreed the investment balance. The Council currently has no loans.

Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Governance and Accountability Manual requires all Councils to prepare annually a Statement of Accounts, which is now embodied in the AGAR and subject to external audit review and certification.

We have checked and agreed the detail in Section 2 of the draft AGAR to the underlying accounting records. Specifically, we have:

- Reviewed the debtors and creditors included in the year-end accounts testing as necessary to underlying evidence and listings;
- Agreed the fixed assets, cash and investments as stated to underlying third party evidence; and
- Agreed the draft AGAR to the Rialtas records.

In addition we have confirmed the Council made a return to the Charity Commission in respect of the Jubilee Field Charity.

Conclusions

We have duly signed off the Internal Audit Certificate in the year's AGAR providing a copy for the Clerk's necessary further action. We also take this opportunity to remind the Clerk of the requirements of the guidance notes in the preface to the year's AGAR in relation to the documentation that should be displayed on the Council's website, together with the need to ensure compliance with the timing requirements for publication of the Notice of Public Rights to examine the Council's documentation for the financial year.

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
Review of Corporate Governance		
R1	The Council should review its financial regulations in the light of recent NALC advice.	<i>This has now been done and approved by Council.</i>
Review of Expenditure		
R2	Members should initial the authorisation sheets confirming they have inspected the related invoices,	<i>This is now being done.</i>
R3	The Council should consider having its VAT de-minimis calculation performed.	<i>This has now been done and reported to the HMRC.</i>

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	✓		

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLIC ADDRESS <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/> ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,260,394	1,287,292	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	827,301	890,930	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	258,091	273,194	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	528,499	571,257	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	529,995	780,002	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,287,292	1,100,157	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,291,366	1,131,863	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	9,035,259	9,042,060	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

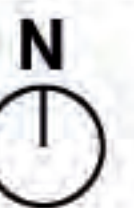
MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



**Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan
Submission Policies Map MARL5 - June 2022**



- MARL5 Improving Public Parking**
- Land Adjacent to Rugby Club**





Marlborough Town Council

Press and Media Relations Policy

1. Contact with the Press and Media

Marlborough Town Council welcomes enquiries from the press and media and recognises that this relationship helps the Council to communicate with residents and community. The aim of this policy is to set a framework to ensure that the Town Council is seen to communicate in a professional and objective manner.

Nothing in this policy is to be interpreted as preventing, or attempting to prevent, a Councillor from expressing a personal opinion through the media, for example by writing to a newspaper or posting an item on an internet site. However, Members must make it clear that any views expressed, where different from Council policy, are their own personal views.

Members should take care not to misrepresent and/or bring the Town Council into disrepute and must bear in mind their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct. At no time shall the personal views of Councillors (or Officers of the Council) be given to the press in a way which could be interpreted as the view of the Council as a whole.

Related policies include the *Code of Conduct* adopted by the Town Council in 2012 and under Section 4(1) of the Local Government Act 1986, the *Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity*.

The Council's approach to the media should be:

- lawful
- cost effective
- objective
- even-handed
- appropriate
- having regard to equality and diversity
- issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity

Communications with the press and media are likely to include press releases, briefings, publications and event promotion.

2. Town Council Press Releases

The Town Clerk is the point of contact for the press/media. The Town Mayor is also authorised to give the views of the Council to the press on any non-confidential subject discussed by Council.

An official Council press release is made on behalf of the Council as a whole. This will be drafted and issued by the Town Clerk and could include a quote from the relevant Councillor(s). The quote must be non-party political in nature and will normally be made by the Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor or the Chairman of the relevant Committee.

Marlborough Town Council Adopted 20th May 2019

Press Release Protocol

All official Council press releases should be to a standard format and include the Town Council logo and be drafted by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or relevant Committee Chair

- All official Council press releases will include a quotation from the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or relevant Councillor.
- Official press releases will not identify the political party or group affiliation of any Member(s) quoted in the release
- The Town Clerk is the first line of decision making in terms of what is newsworthy for official press releases. He/she shall make the final decision on whether a press release shall be issued, unless otherwise directed by the Council or a Committee. This will help to ensure timely reporting of information
- In years when elections take place, during periods from the issue of the Notice of Election until the day of the Election, no press releases will be issued quoting Council Members. During this time any quotes will be from the Town Clerk or other Officers
- The role of the Town Clerk is to advise and provide support and advice to Council members in communication activities.

3. Councillors and the Press/Media

Councillor press releases, statements or interviews (whether political or otherwise) are the responsibility of that Councillor who should make clear that the views therein are personal. They must not include the Town Council's logo, the name of a Council Officer, or a Council telephone number as a point of contact. It would be beneficial for copies of intended releases, especially those of a factual nature, to be provided to the Town Clerk.

Councillors and Officers must not disclose information that is of a confidential nature, this includes any discussion with news media organisations of any item that has been discussed under confidential items on the Council's agenda. It is noted that the outcome of confidential discussions may well not be confidential.

Councillors are reminded that they must not misuse Council resources for political or other inappropriate purposes. Should the Council receive a Freedom of Information request on a topic on which there is correspondence (email or written) from or with Members, normally that correspondence would have to be disclosed, unless it was exempt. The fact that the disclosure of the correspondence may prove embarrassing would not, of itself, prevent disclosure.

In addition, care should be taken when processing personal data. The Data Protection Act 1998 prevents the use of personal information other than for the purposes for which it was supplied. Members should bear this in mind when using any personal data which may be supplied to them by the electorate.

4. Responsibilities

The Council's Proper Officer for the purposes of this policy shall be the Town Clerk or such other employee as may be nominated by the Council from time to time. The decision of the Town Clerk as to the application of this policy shall be final. This policy should be reviewed annually

Marlborough Town Council Adopted 20th May 2019

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy



1. Introduction

Marlborough Town Council uses online tools to provide and communicate information easily, clearly, effectively, appropriately and in a timely manner to the people, businesses and agencies it works with and serves.

The Council has a website, social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) accounts, YouTube channels and uses email to communicate. For a full list see section 6.

The Council will always try to use the most effective channel for its communications and over time may add to the channels of communication that it uses as it seeks to improve and expand the services it delivers. When these change this Policy will be updated to reflect the new arrangements.

The Council's website and social media accounts intend to provide information and updates regarding Council meetings, news, services, events, and activities within our Parish as well as information for tourists, and to promote our town positively. None are intended to be used as discussion fora as this would exclude people who don't use the internet or social media. Ways to hold discussions with Councillors and/or the Town Council remain in person at the 5 High Street office, by phone, email (to the office or Councillors) or Public Question Time at any Council or Committee meeting.

It is important to ensure that the Council balances the opportunities presented by social media platforms with its duties to service users and partners, its legal responsibilities, and its reputation. For example, the Council must be mindful of its duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

2. Purpose

This policy aims to provide a framework of good practice to ensure that:

- 2.1. Councillors, staff and members of the public know what to expect from Council online platforms and how to communicate online with Marlborough Town Council.
- 2.2. The Council is not exposed to security, legal or governance risks.
- 2.3. The reputation of the Council is not adversely affected.
- 2.4. People can clearly distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the Council.
- 2.5. Councillors and staff (as described in 3.1) are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy covers the use of e-mail, websites, social media, and networking applications by staff, Councillors, partners or other third parties (including contractors and volunteers) when they are acting on behalf of the Council. It does not cover staff or Councillors when they are using personal e-mail or personal social media sites.
- 3.2. Where individuals, including those from partner organisations or volunteers, are involved and are acting on behalf of the Council, they will also be expected to comply with relevant Council policies.

- 3.3. This policy covers online and social networking applications including, but not limited to, blogs (for example, WordPress), online discussion forums, collaborative spaces, media sharing services (for example, YouTube), videoconferencing (for example, Zoom) social networking and other online applications (for example, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp groups).
- 3.4. This policy applies to all uses of electronic communications used for any Council-related purpose and regardless of whether they are hosted corporately or not and must be considered where people are contributing online in an official capacity to sites provided by external organisations.
- 3.4. Councillors and staff should bear in mind that information they share online, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Equal Opportunities and other legislation.
- 3.5. Use of social networking applications by staff in work time and/or for personal use only is not addressed by this policy.

4. Terms of Use of Online Media

Councillors and staff must adhere to these Terms of Use. These apply to all uses of social networking applications including, but not limited to, public-facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally facing uses such as email or social media regardless of whether they are hosted on corporate networks or not.

Comments made on social media platforms sometimes lack transparency or clear audit trails: for example, a @username may be an alias with no contact information provided such as an email address. In addition, users tend to 'share' and comment on posts across multiple sites and profiles. This means it is not always possible to see all comments relating to a topic or post (for example, if someone has shared and commented on a private profile).

For these reasons the Town Council will never use social media to enter debates, discussions to answer questions raised by the public other than to answer simple service-related questions (for example, "*How do I apply for an allotment?*"). Proper routes to raise questions with Council include Public Question Time at any Council meeting or via the Town Council office (in writing, by email or by telephone), or by contacting a Councillor. Contact details for Officers and Councillors are published on the Town Council's website.

Official Council profiles and pages will be managed by staff on behalf of the Town Clerk and will only be used to share information or promote events or tourism. They will not be used to enter into discussions, debates or answer questions other than simple service questions.

Where individuals, including those from partner organisations or volunteers, are involved and are acting on behalf of the Council, they will also be expected to comply with relevant Council policies.

All Terms of Use apply to all types of online communication irrespective of platform.

- 4.1. All proposals for using online communications as part of a Council service (whether they are hosted by the Council or by a third party) must be approved by the Town Clerk first.
- 4.2. Use of online applications which are not related to any Council services (for example, contributing to an online forum provided by a professional association) do not need to be approved by the Town Clerk. However, Councillors and staff must still operate in line with

the requirements set out below.

- 4.3. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. The Council expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.
- 4.4. Posts must not contain content that is knowingly unlawful, libellous, harassing, defamatory, abusive, hateful, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive.
- 4.5. Posts must not be used for actions that would put Councillors or staff in breach of Council codes of conduct or policies relating to Elected Members or staff.
- 4.6. Council profiles, pages or email accounts must not be used for party political purposes or specific campaigning purposes as the Council is not permitted to publish material which 'in whole or part appears to affect public support for a political party' (LGA 1986).
- 4.7. All users (Councillors, staff and public) need to be aware that applications may be closed, or commenting suspended, for a defined period before local or national elections in order to comply with legislation which affects local authorities.
- 4.8. Council profiles, pages or posts must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests or personal campaigns.
- 4.9. Council profiles, pages or posts must not be used for the promotion of commercial ventures.
- 4.10. Any contributions made by Councillors or staff should be professional and uphold the reputation of the Council.
- 4.11. Councillors and staff should avoid posting to, or commenting on, Marlborough Town Council social media sites as their comments may be perceived to reflect the views of the whole Council and/or could lead to debate in the public domain¹, and/or leave the Council exposed to reputational risk. They can however do this if they have cleared the content in advance with the Town Clerk or his or her delegated officer, for example, the Mayor or Chair of a Committee may be asked to comment on a matter of public interest. Comments should always represent a corporate or consensus view. Any comments deemed to be in violation of this will be hidden and/or removed (see section 7 'Enforcement').
- 4.12. Members may interact with Town Council social media channels simply to show support, for example to 'like' a post, or to share stories to other platforms with neutral comments, or to add neutral or benign comments to a post, for example to say "well done" against a good news story.
- 4.13. Councillors and staff should think very carefully before posting to other social media platforms with wide readership, for example the Facebook page called Marlborough Notice Board. If they do so they should make it clear in their statement that their comment reflects their own personal views and is not representative of Marlborough Town Council unless this has already been cleared by the Town Clerk, or is signposting to information already

¹ Please see the introduction, para. 4 for an explanation about the ways Town Council social media sites will and will not be used

published on the Marlborough Town Council website or other channel.

- 4.14. Councillors, if using their own personal social media account profiles, should be aware that anything they say *could* be construed by others as being ‘official’ Town Council comments even if not intended that way. If there is any doubt, please add clarification such as “...my own personal view”.

5. Transparency

It is important to ensure that members of the public and other users of online services know when an email account, website or social networking application is being used for official Council purposes. To assist with this, all Councillors and staff must adhere to the following requirements:

- 5.1. Councillors and staff must use their @marlborough-tc.gov.uk email account, and not their personal account, for all correspondence when they are communicating as a Councillor or staff member.
- 5.2. Councillors and staff should clearly identify themselves when using @marlborough-tc.gov.uk email accounts (for example, by providing additional information in their email signature with “*Councillor myname, Marlborough Town Councillor*” or “*Richard Spencer Williams PSLCC, Town Clerk*”) and similarly when speaking on behalf of the Council on social media/videoconferencing platforms etc.
- 5.3. The use of the Council’s logo or other branding elements should be used where appropriate to indicate the Council’s support. The logo should not be used on social networking applications which are unrelated to, or are not representative of, the Council’s official position.
- 5.4. Official complaints procedures must be published in a prominent place which is easily accessible to others.

6. List of Applications

Marlborough Town Council has a range of online tools that will be used to convey and share information to the public, to tourists or for press announcements.

- 6.1. Email – all official accounts will only use the @marlborough-tc.gov.uk domain. Officers and Elected Members have email addresses which are listed on the Town Council Website. In addition, there is a general enquires address: enquiries@marlborough-tc.gov.uk .
- 6.2. Website - <https://marlborough-tc.gov.uk/>
The Town Council’s website is the ‘landing page’ or hub for all council-related information. It provides information about services, useful links for the community and tourist information. It is a repository for information, for example agendas and minutes of meetings; venue hire prices; contact information and from time to time may be used to host public consultations or other relevant items of business.
- 6.3. Facebook @MarlboroughTC is the main Marlborough Town Council Facebook page. From time to time subpages will be created, for example @marlboroughdarkskiesfest to promote the 2021 Dark Skies Festival and used in partnership with the North Wessex Downs AONB, and @MarlboroughinBloom to showcase the town’s entry into RHS South West in Bloom.
- 6.4. Twitter : @MTCWilts
- 6.5. Instagram : @VisitMarlborough; used exclusively as a tourist information page

- 6.6. YouTube : Marlborough Town Council is the main channel, with sub channels for Marlborough Dark Skies Fest and Visit Marlborough UK tourist information.
- 6.7. Sending a message/post to us via social media will not be considered as contacting the Council for official purposes and we will not be obliged to monitor or respond to requests for information through these channels. Instead, please make direct contact with the Town Clerk or via the general enquiries email address and/or any Members by emailing or writing to us.
- 6.8. We retain the right to remove comments or content that includes:
- Obscene or racist content
 - Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
 - Potentially libellous statements
 - Plagiarised material, any material in violation of any laws, including copyright
 - Private, personal information published without consent
 - Commercial promotions or spam
 - Alleges a breach of a policy or the law
- 6.9. The Council's response to any communication received not meeting the above criteria will be to either ignore, inform the sender of our policy or send a brief response as appropriate. This will be at the Council's discretion based on the message received, given our limited available resources. Any information posted on our Social Media pages not in line with the above criteria will be removed as quickly as practically possible. Repeat offenders will be blocked from pages. The Council may post a statement that '*A post breaching the Council's Social Media Policy has been removed*'. If the post alleges a breach of a Council policy or the law, the person who posted it will be asked to submit a formal complaint to the Council or report the matter to the police as soon as possible.
- 6.10. SMS (*texting*). Councillors and staff are reminded that this policy may also apply to text messages.
- 6.11. Video Conferencing, e.g. Teams, Skype, Zoom. Councillors and staff are reminded that this policy also applies to the use of Video Conferencing.

7. Enforcement

- 7.1. In accordance with the published complaints procedure², any breach of the terms set out in this policy could result in the application or offending content being removed, and/or the publishing rights of the users being suspended.
- 7.2. The Town Clerk reserves the right to require the closure of any applications and/or removal of content published by Councillors or staff which may adversely affect the reputation of the Council or put it at risk of legal actions.
- 7.3. Any communications or content published that causes damage to the Council, any of its employees or any third party's reputation may amount to misconduct or gross misconduct to which the Council's Disciplinary Policy applies.

8. Complaints

Complaints should be made in line with the Town Council's Complaints Procedure which is available from the Town Council website.

² Available at <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/corporate>

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if any areas require improvement.

Policy adopted: 3 October 2022

10. General Data Protection

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Town Council's policies relating to data protection which are available at <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/council/corporate>

This policy is based on established good practice and guidance from the Society of Local Council Clerks.