

FULL TOWN COUNCIL

Marlborough Town Hall on Monday 19 July 2021 at 7pm

PRESENT: Councillor Mark Cooper
Councillor Nicholas Fogg
Councillor Andrew Ross
Councillor Guy Loosmore
Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton
Councillor Lisa Farrell
Councillor Mervyn Hall
Councillor Donald Heath
Councillor Vanessa Hillier
Councillor Jo Waltham
Councillor Kymee Cleasby
Councillor James Sheppard
Councillor Caroline Thomas

ALSO
PRESENT: Richard Spencer-Williams
Dawn Whitehall
Fr. John Blacker
PC Ellie Porter
Neil Goodwin
Plus 6 members of the public

Town Clerk
Administrator
Mayor's Chaplain
Wiltshire Police
Marlborough.News

PRAYERS

Fr. Blacker opened the meeting with prayers.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Joel Cunnane asked whether a timescale for a town centre plan could be added to the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan (MANP) to provide certainty that a plan would be prepared. He also offered to help, having previously provided a regeneration strategy as part of the public consultation process. The **Mayor** would make a note of the question for inclusion in the discussions at the appropriate agenda item.

Dominic Gregory asked whether the Town Council, having declared a climate emergency, appreciated the opportunities that existed to make Marlborough a green sustainable centre, perhaps with the title 'Marlborough Green'? He gave supporting examples and details. The **Mayor** was sure the recently formed Working Group would welcome any input and he would be welcome to join it and share his ideas.

A written question received from **Peter May** was read out in full by the **Town Clerk**. “The draft MANP was acknowledged to be vague in its reference to relocating the Medical Centre to an unspecified location at Barton Dene. The latest document is similarly vague and there appears to have been no progress with securing the agreement of Medical Centre management to a move. Given the length of time the MANP has been in its construction, what is it that is holding back an agreement to a move, why are the plans still so vague, where is the access road to the MC and the 40 houses and how many additional houses would be built if the Medical Centre is not moved to Barton Dene?”. The **Mayor** clarified that the plan had been set out as clearly as possible but the Town Council had no control over what the

Clinical Commissioning Group or Primary Care Trust did, or what landowners do. They would have to drive the project forward. A written response would be provided by the Town Clerk.

CRIME AND DISORDER

The **Mayor** welcomed **PC Ellie Porter** to the meeting. This was her first time attending and having moved to the Marlborough area from Trowbridge in April was not yet fully up to speed with the local situation. She answered questions as best she could, taking some away for a more detailed response. These included:

- No knowledge of any plans to increase policing in Marlborough to address increasing incidents of anti-social behaviour – incidents were dealt with on demand
- A request to repeat the recent patrols to ease congestion at Marlborough St Marys when schools returned in September
- That incidents were increasing in line with lockdown restrictions easing and were currently a bit less than normal. During lockdown, the types of incident had changed – fewer burglaries but more domestic incidents. A request to provide a more detailed update via the Town Clerk was acknowledged.
- To find out whether there were plans to prevent parking on byways and historic roads, and to 'move on' those who were using them
- Drugs and anti-social behaviour:
 - Agreement that simply moving on young people (12-14 years bracket) just moved problems around and did not address why children so young were using drugs;
 - whether there was any way to work together to prevent crime in future when their addiction becomes more expensive;
 - agencies the police already engage with;
 - whether more could be done to target low level drug dealers in order to cut off their suppliers;
 - that County Lines gangs were not a daily issue for the town but there may be an element of linkage to local dealers
 - whether there was an unwillingness to report incidents; whether there was a way to link the number of incidents to reported incidents;
 - The **Town Clerk** was happy to discuss opportunities to obtain strategic engagement to bring the police into discussions to try to get a Local Youth Network going for co-ordination and communications between agencies.
- Whether an email to provide a more detailed overview and update could be provided via the Town Clerk

QUESTIONS TO AND FROM WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Councillor Thomas had passed on questions asking for information about Wiltshire Council contracts with housing associations.

Councillor Sheppard had emailed the Cabinet Member responsible for Community Asset Transfers to ask about progressing discussions about the Youth Centre. Only a general reply had been forthcoming as the process was still being reviewed.

Questions included:

- Whether there was any way of finding out why sheltered accommodation and bungalows were standing empty in St Martins and not being re-let: residents were concerned that there may be plans to sell them, depleting social housing stock
- Whether the criteria to get on the Homes4Wiltshire list could be adjusted so that local people had a chance of getting on the list – perhaps flagging being a local family to add an additional criteria? Some households were unable to get on the list with existing criteria e.g. both being in work but on low wages, or being too old for a mortgage

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from **Councillors Allen** and **Davies**.

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DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

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MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wiltshire Council had issued a press release announcing that as national lockdown restrictions had now ended, it was removing all temporary social distancing schemes in towns throughout the county. The schemes would be removed in the coming weeks in Devizes, Marlborough, Malmesbury and Bradford on Avon, in that order, with work expected to begin in Devizes on 20 July. For Marlborough this would be for High Street: removal of pole cones and barriers, except those necessary to assist with business with additional seating capacity and Kingsbury Street: removal of pole cones.

John Jennings had received lots of positive feedback following the recent funfair at Marlborough Common. It had been very well attended and it was great to see it back. The Mayor was really looking forward to attending Marlborough Mop Fairs in October.

Schools would break up later in the week and the Mayor paid tribute to everyone involved across all schools and every member of staff who had made monumental efforts to get through lots of tests and deal with difficult circumstances. Students must be congratulated too for adapting so quickly in a difficult year.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held 28 June 2021 were approved as a true record with one amendment and signed by the Town Mayor

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MARLBOROUGH TOWN TWINNING

Councillors considered the opportunities for Marlborough town twinning, and the Council's role.

Councillor Fogg reminded Members that a Working Party had been set up to bring together ideas about creating twinning opportunities but it had met only once (*Min. No. 104/19, Full Town Council 24 June 2019. "RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Working Party meeting of 14 May were noted and the Terms of Reference were adopted with no changes"*). He set out several opportunities and benefits, and hoped that the work begun by the working party could be continued to identify potential opportunities.

RESOLVED: to create a small Twinning Working Party to propose, and examine existing, twinning links

Councillors Fogg, Ross, Loosmore and **Farrell** expressed interest in joining; the **Mayor** asked any other interested Councillors to make themselves known.

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MARLBOROUGH AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (MANP)

Councillors considered submission of the Plan to Wiltshire Council under Regulation 15.

The **Mayor** thanked all members of the Steering Group who had worked so hard over the past five years to create the plan.

To introduce the topic, **Councillor Hall** (Chairman, MANP Steering Group) explained that the purpose of the Plan was as a legal document to be used by Planners when considering planning applications. The needs of the community had been included within it. Some topics could not be included, such as a High Street scheme – these were primarily Highways issues

and would need a separate Town Centre plan which could be something for the Town Council to consider creating in future. **Councillor Davies** had previously circulated a useful table that mapped community needs to policies within the Plan, and he was happy to include this. Councillors were asked to decide whether they believed the plan was now ready to be submitted to Wiltshire Council under Regulation 15 – the final stage for Wiltshire Council scrutiny and possible suggested changes prior to a final public consultation leading to a referendum.

Questions and comments included:

- Clarifying the definition of affordable homes and the mix of social and shared equity homes
- That nursery provision had not been included as it had not been identified as a need during public consultation
- Clarifying that the Kennet and Avon Medical Partnership currently needed to double its floor space and that a piece of land had been made available for a wellbeing hub. It would be for Wiltshire Council, the practice partners, and the Clinical Commissioning Group/ Primary care Trust to take this forward. This would be in addition to the existing George Lane site, not replacing it
- Clarifying that the proposed free car parking at The Common was primarily intended for workers/day visitors to use rather than shoppers
- Clarifying that for two sites the Steering Group had been able to negotiate with landowners to create 50% rather than the normal 40% to be affordable homes and this would be provided in partnership with social housing organisations, not as private sales
- Clarifying why the Elcot Lane site had been removed (feedback had shown this area to be already significantly developed and that any further development would have a detrimental impact on the immediate area)
- That without a neighbourhood plan in place there was little protection from speculative developments
- Debates on whether the stress on 2-3 bed affordable housing was still valid, and whether 1 bed accommodation should be included
- That Marlborough had limited areas left for development and great care should be taken in deciding how to use it
- Whether Policy 3 should be split between rental and purchase
- Whether multi-generational living should be considered
- Whether there was enough clarity about why developments for senior citizens were resisted in the plan
- Whether a preference for development for sheltered accommodation for the vulnerable such as that at York Place should be included or existing sites protected in some way
- Whether comments on traffic were out of date: whether more up to date data should be requested from Wiltshire Council, and whether to delay submission until it could be included
- Whether it was too late to include a policy to protect existing social housing sites, and whether this was legally possible
- Whether the housing policy should be reviewed; whether the current and future housing needs should be updated and then resubmitted for Town Council review
- Whether Barton Dene was an appropriate location for a medical centre
- Whether anyone would use the proposed free parking at The Common and whether the Common should be protected green space
- Whether the vision referring to the future of the High Street took account of most recent government thinking and policies, e.g. pedestrianisation, cycling, café culture
- Whether the best way forward would be to adopt the plan now and review every 2 years, and at the first opportunity to incorporate some of the feedback received

- Whether to include an overview summary sheet as suggested by Cllr Davies

Councillor Sheppard stressed how important it was to have a neighbourhood plan in place to provide a level of protection and signal local intentions to planning bodies. He commended the Steering Group on their work.

During a suspension of Standing Orders **Mr Cunnane** asked whether the plan should be strengthened by including a timescale for the creation of a regeneration plan for the town centre.

RESOLVED: to submit the plan to Wiltshire Council as required under Regulation 15

Councillor Thomas proposed an amendment to submit the plan subject to Councillors' feedback being considered by the Steering Group before submission. However this came too late as the vote had already been taken. **Councillor Cleasby** would have supported this amendment and not abstained with this clarification. The **Town Clerk** agreed to check Standing Orders to clarify the process for dealing with opposing proposals within a meeting.

The **Town Clerk** commented on the Neighbourhood Plan process and its relationship with the due processes of the Council, with Mildenhall and Savernake Parish Council having already provided comments and clarifications. These, together with the comments recorded at this meeting would all be considered at the Steering Group meeting to be held later in the week, and that the Steering Group could consider amendments to the plan that clarified or bolstered the existing policies of the submission plan, but fundamental changes to the plan at this point would undermine the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Six members of the public left the meeting

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COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED: that, in accordance with para. 3.1 of the Scheme of Delegation, the following approved minutes of committee meetings were noted: **Planning** held 14 June 2021; **Property** held 6 April 2021 and **Amenities and Open Spaces** held 26 April 2021

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MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

No questions had been submitted.

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COMMON SEAL

Proposed by **Councillor Fogg** and seconded by **Councillor Ross** 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 8.38 pm

Signed:

Town Mayor

Date: