

Strategy for The Common

Summary – The report asks Members to consider recommendations from the newly formed Working Party set up to consider a strategy for The Common

1. Background

At the FTC meeting of 14 December, the following resolutions were made:

RESOLVED: that Marlborough Town Council sets up a working party of Town Councillors to examine a fair resolution to the use of a restricted area of land available in full public consultation with all parties and conscious of the legalities of the case with the intention of devising an overall strategy that will ensure fair solutions to all users and the preservation of the character of Marlborough Common for future generations

RESOLVED: (ii) that Councillors Fogg, Loosmore, Farrell, Hall, Heath, Wilson, Hillier and the Town Mayor were nominated to the Working Party

2. Terms of Reference

At the first Working Party meeting Cllr Fogg was elected as Chairman and Cllr Loosmore as Vice- Chair. A Terms of Reference was agreed for recommendation to Full Council. This is at **Appendix 1**.

3. Background Report and Information

Prior to the meeting, information provided by the Model Flying Club, Marlborough Rugby Club and comments from members of the public were circulated to Working Party members. Also circulated, was a background report provided by Cllr Fogg. This is at **Appendix 2**.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- i) A survey of the fauna and flora of The Common should be commissioned from an independent professional organisation
- ii) Three quotes should be obtained for necessary works for the levelling of the ground for training areas at both the possible centrally located site and the one suggested by the Grounds Manager and adjacent to Frees Avenue
- iii) That the Town Council should generally look to increasing sporting facilities, where possible (*as set out in the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan*)
- iv) All identified users of The Common (formal users as well as regular hirers – Mop Fairs, circuses, Civil War Re-enactors, car boot sales, etc) should be approached about their forward plans in terms of use of The Common
- v) That there needs to be proper agreements in place for all users of The Common
- vi) A public consultation should take place asking the following question:
Do you support the provision of an additional training facility on Marlborough Common for use by Marlborough Rugby Football Club and Marlborough Youth Football Club for use on a Saturday and Sunday

5. Points to Note

- All the above recommendations will, where possible, take place in tandem
- Other plans for The Common will also feature in the overall *strategy (e.g. extension of the cemetery and an informal car park as set out in the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan)*

6. Financial Implications

No costings have yet been sought for any of the above proposals.

Town Clerk's Recommendations

The Town Clerk recommends that Members:

- a) agree the draft Terms of Reference
and
- b) consider the Working Party's recommendations at i) – vi) listed at para. 4 above.

Town Clerk

14 January 2020



Marlborough Town Council

Strategy for The Common Working Party

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Membership

Membership will comprise of Councillors Fogg, Loosmore, Farrell, Hall, Heath, Wilson, Hillier and the Town Mayor. Membership will be appointed by Full Council.

2. Chairman

A Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be appointed at the first meeting of the Working Party.

3. Powers

As set out in para 6.1 of the Town Council's Scheme of Delegation, working groups cannot make decisions on behalf of the Town Council and any recommendations made will be subject to approval by Full Council. Working group meetings are not open to the press and public.

Verbal updates, minutes and recommendations from Working Party meetings will be made to Full Town Council.

4. Responsibilities

To work to the following resolution made at the meeting of the meeting of the Full Council of 14 December 2020:

RESOLVED: that Marlborough Town Council sets up a working party of Town Councillors to examine a fair resolution to the use of a restricted area of land available in full public consultation with all parties and conscious of the legalities of the case with the intention of devising an overall strategy that will ensure fair solutions to all users and the preservation of the character of Marlborough Common for future generations

January 2021

TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR MARLBOROUGH COMMON

Background: at the meeting of Marlborough Town Council (MTC) held on December 14th, 2020, it was decided to establish a working party of Town Councillors ‘to examine a fair resolution to the use of a restricted area of land available in full public consultation with all parties and conscious of the legalities of the case with the intention of devising an overall strategy that will ensure fair solutions to all users and the preservation of the character of Marlborough Common for future generations’.

One councillor expressed the view that ‘another’ working party was not a good idea. In fact, there never has been such a working party concerning The Common. Any discussion has come from requests from outside bodies. At no point has a proper working party been convened to undertake the brief that the Town Council had delegated to this group, as defined above.

MTC and The Common: one of the problems for much of the business of MTC is that councillors feel that they are being called upon to give their opinions on issues. This is true, but the facility should be limited by four factors.

On occasions, a difference of opinion is resolvable by obtaining an objective and impartial assessment that can negate personal opinion. Wherever possible, judgements should be made on this basis. It should also be the case that opinions should not be formed on basis of what may be partial information presented by third parties.

As well as being potentially misleading, such information can present a third potential pitfall, in that it may not reveal the provider’s full intentions.

There are, of course, the legalities and statutory requirements of any issue and these cannot be over-ridden by personal opinion.

Let me start with objectivity: just to take one example. One issue that emerged during the discussion of Marlborough Rugby Club’s application to develop a training area on the Common was the environmental value of the land it was proposed to develop. To some, it is an area of great ecological value – the only area of open heath land in the district, containing a valuable reserve of flora and fauna. On the other hand, it was opined that The Common was an area of ‘scrubby wasteland’.

There is one simple way for MTC to resolve this issue in accordance with the criteria established above: A survey of the fauna and flora of The Common should be commissioned from a neutral organisation that carries weight, expertise and authority. Such a survey should cover the entire Common, including the area occupied by the Golf Club. If undertaken, it would provide a useful source of knowledge of the nature of The Common and a guide to its future management.

It is to be noted that the Planning Consultant, considered that it may be necessary to undertake ‘environmental analysis of the removal of existing grassland and resurfacing’ before any work is done in the context of the application by the Rugby Club (MRFC). See Appendix One.

The analysis, although only presented in relation to the proposed training area, underlines the desirability of an ecological survey of the entire common.

Partial third parties have a right to put their case, but the information provided should be regarded as precisely that – the presentation of a partial case in a way intended to influence councillors towards granting it. In such instances, it should be obligatory to undertake a full and objective examination of the case that is being presented. Such an example might be the application by the Rugby Club for a third pitch. It was resolved to consult other interested parties, but only organisations rather than individuals. Nevertheless, the application raises a number of questions, including:

- 1) A lack of analysis of potential costs: the figures given by MRFC are at considerable variance with those provided by the Town Clerk for work that appears to be of a similar nature. However, it is not the function of MTC to accept projects on the basis of the cost to those proposing them, It has to decide any such scheme purely on its own merits.
- 2) MRFC seeks to take on one hectare of common land and convert it into a ‘training area’. This is a considerable area, the size of a full-scale international Rugby pitch. Why such an area is needed is not explained. According to the minutes of the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee, the MRFC, had stated that ‘the area was more likely to be used as a training area for youth rather than senior players’. A literal interpretation of this means that, potentially, it would not necessarily be for the exclusive use of younger players.
- 3) Some doubt has been cast on the numbers of young people who might use the requested facility – the figure of 700 was cited by MRFC. Based on national demographics, the numbers quoted would appear to equate to some 80% of all the children of both sexes aged between eight and sixteen years old in the town. information provided by

Legalities: in any consideration of matters to do with Marlborough Common, it is important to get right the legalities involved.

At this point, a little history would be helpful.

A great deal of the English landscape once consisted of what were known as ‘common fields’, farmed by people who had few, if any rights of tenure. The enclosure movement of beginning in the C15th drove these people off the land their forebears had often tended for centuries. This could only occur by an Act promoted in Parliament.

There were certain areas, however, where people, known as Commoners possessed traditional rights known as ‘Rights of Common’, which allowed them such privileges as the right to graze their animals, to collect wood, or to cut turf for fuel. Many people will remember Harry Horsley, who was grazing his horses on Marlborough Common in recent years.

This is the origin of the some 7,000 sites in England and Wales that are registered as commons. The original ownership of Marlborough Common is lost in time, but since MTC registered it under Section 8 of the Commons Registration Act of 1965, it

possesses the Guardianship of the land on behalf of the Commoners, who, in this instance, it may be presumed are all the citizens of Marlborough.

Rights of Common were often vague, but over the years, legislation has been enacted that defines them more clearly. Hugely important in this was the Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2000 which confirmed and extended the right of the public the right to roam freely over all registered common land in England and Wales. On Marlborough Common this would include the entire registered area, including the various sports facilities.

It is probable that these recreational associations enjoy what are known in law as 'prescribed rights', which means they have a right to continue to practice their established functions in the place where this has long happened. This may give the Model Aircraft Club the right to continue its activities where it has done so for 40 years. If MTC, as Guardians of the Common, wished to supersede this right, it would be necessary to enact special measures.

Further to this is the Commons Act 2008, formal consent is needed to carry out works that impede or prevent public access to common land. Such legislation was enacted to preserve the heritage of common land for future generations. HM Planning Inspectorate is responsible for determining applications under the 2006 Act regarding common land in England. All applications are determined on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Under the terms of the Act, commoners are prohibited from selling, leasing or letting their rights away from the property to which rights are attached, although temporary severance of such rights is permitted for renewable terms of up to two years. It would be advisable to determine the extent to which such terms apply to parish councils acting as guardians of common land. Certain it is that any arrangement between MTC and any other body concerning usage of the Common should be the subject of a properly-constructed fixed-term lease which takes account of the absolute legal rights of other users.

The necessity for MTC to follow the correct procedures was underlined in a letter contained in Appendix One from the Planning Consultant to the Town Clerk – see Appendix Two.

The question arises as to the extent to which the Town Council's current arrangements with the various organisations that utilise facilities on The Common are in accordance with the protocols of common usage and the respective Acts of Parliament that deal with access and other rights. It would appear that at least three of these bodies are unaware of public rights in relation to land they occupy in order to pursue their interests. In its response to the committee, MRFC announced that 'the car park adjacent to the clubhouse was available to the whole community.'

'We see many dog walkers and runners park in our car park on a regular basis', the Marlborough Golf Club stated in its response. Both the MRFC and the MGC have declared that they permit the public to use their car-parking facilities. Although this attitude is to their credit, in fact they have no choice. Since the car parks are on common land, the general public has the right of access to the facilities. It might be a

good idea for MTC to make lessees and other users of the Common aware of this fact and to examine leases in terms of the existing law of the land. y not reali

It would also be worthwhile to ask lessees and other users of the Common to set out their future plans. At present plans are presented on an ad hoc basis. It would be well within the prerogatives of MTC to ask them how they see their organisations developing. It is clear that MRFC has ambitions to develop the club to a higher level of status. Having possessed just a single pitch on The Common within recent years, it has gone on to acquire a second pitch, a clubhouse and a car-park, as well as permanent fencing and advertising hoardings around the first pitch. It is clear that the MRFC Committee is skilful at presenting its requests for further developments on an ad hoc basis, gaining one objective before moving on to the next. If the permission for the third pitch is granted, I wonder how long it will be before the posts becomes permanent – officially, or otherwise. It is also being suggested that, in order to achieve its ambition to move up a further tier in the Rugby Football playing hierarchy, it will be necessary for the club to install seating.

Appendix One

Letter from Planning Consultant to Town Clerk on December 16th, 2019

It seems to me that planning permission is likely to be required and permission from the Secretary of State as well. Both procedures require extensive public consultation as well as with AONB officers and other stakeholders. The TC Amenities committee is not the appropriate body to consider this initially. Unless pp is granted by Wiltshire and SoS consent given there isn't a proposal for the Amenities Committee to consider. There may be a need for environmental analysis of the removal of existing grassland and resurfacing .

Appendix Two

Letter from Planning Consultant to the Town Clerk on December 17th, 2020.

The land in question is part of a designated Common in the North Wessex Downs AONB. The land at present is Common land available for informal use by the public. The proposals by the rugby club may constitute a material change of use of land to a formal sports pitch available only to members of the club. If this is a material change of use under the Town and Country Planning Act then it requires planning permission for a change of use.

Furthermore the information provided by the rugby club makes it clear that this change of use also requires extensive cut and fill works to level the land for sports use, and may include drainage works. The information provided implies that the land would also require resurfacing . These works may constitute Engineering Works under the Town and Country Planning Act and as such is development requiring planning permission.

Thirdly under the provisions of Section 38 of the Commons Act 2006 these works may also require the express consent of the Secretary of State as the works appear to fall within the relevant definition.

It may therefore be the case that approving the use of this land for a rugby pitch falls outside the legal competence of the Town Council regardless of the ownership of the land concerned.

As the full Town Council requires further information regarding this proposal it seems necessary and prudent for the Town Council to consult the Planning Authority and the Secretary of State to establish whether any planning permission and SoS approval is necessary . If consent is required then the necessary applications could be lodged and the Town Council would be a consultee in the usual way.

The matter of the terms of a lease is a quite separate matter of course.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Summary – This report asks Councillors to consider the allocation of CIL funding.

1. Background

The current balance of CIL is held as an Ear Marked Reserve (EMR) and stands at £27,132. This has not been broken down in the budget line but there are already agreed ring fenced funds within that:

Skatepark Lighting	£10,000
Additional funding for Jubilee Field	£ 1,000

This leaves a balance of £16,132

However, an additional CIL allocation of £12,445 was received on 8 January 2021 connected to the Premier Inn at the Salisbury Road development

This brings the new unallocated CIL balance to **£28,577**

A spreadsheet of future possible CIL payments attached to development is at **Appendix 1**.

Other money may be paid to the Town Council later, but it is difficult to put a timescale on it. A rough calculation of what is likely to be coming our way at 15% could be as much as £57,066 (largely made up on the contribution from the Rabley Wood development). It could be 25% if our Neighbourhood Plan is in place later this year. However, none of these figures are guaranteed and are dependent on development going ahead.

2. What can we spend it on?

Wiltshire Council must use its own proportion of CIL funds on infrastructure to support the development of its area. However, the rules give parish and town councils wider powers and considerable freedom to spend their proportion of CIL: Examples include:

- Improvements to a village hall
- New / improved play areas
- Provision of affordable housing
- Preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (providing it addresses the demands that development places on the area)
- Planning Application Fees – monies can be used towards a planning application fee that relates to community proposals.

Where a Neighbourhood Plan is in place, a town or parish council will receive 25% of the overall CIL contribution and where no such plan is in place then only 15%.

Through CIL, Marlborough Town Council has already contributed towards the refurbishment of the Community & Youth Centre, Coopers Meadow Play Area, Marlborough Tennis Club, Jubilee Field Play Area and the Village Hall at Manton.

3. New Allocations

To help reduce precept costs for 2021/22, it has been suggested that the Town Council legitimately funds the following projects from unallocated CIL funds:

- a contribution towards the building of a bridge at Stonebridge Meadow (**£7,500**)
- a contribution towards the final stages of the Neighbourhood Plan (**£2,000**)
- a contribution towards new fencing at land at Tin Pit (**£5,000**).

This totals £14,500 leaving a balance of **£14,077** of unallocated CIL monies remaining.

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that **£14,500** of unallocated CIL funds is allocated as follows:

- a contribution towards the building of a bridge at Stonebridge Meadow (**£7,500**)
- a contribution towards the final stages of the Neighbourhood Plan (**£2,000**)
- a contribution towards new fencing at land at Tin Pit (**£5,000**).

Town Clerk

14 January 2020

Budgets/Precept 2021/22

Summary - In accordance with para. 3 of the Council's Financial Regulations, the Finance and Policy (F&P), Property, Amenities and Open Spaces (A&OS) and Planning Committees have agreed draft budgets for 2021/22. Members of the F&P Committee have reviewed all budgets and are now recommending final budget and precept figures to Full Town Council.

1. Background

The Chairs of all budget holding committees and the Town Clerk met to review first budget estimates on 27 October 2020 and 3 December 2020. Subsequently, suggested savings were incorporated into each committee budget before submission to committees for approval. The budgets presented here represent significant savings (original estimates would have equated to an increase of 11.62% and a Band D budget of £230.35).

On 11 January, the F&P Committee met to review budgets recommended by the A&OS, Property and Planning Committees and to agree its own committee budget. These figures are presented here so that Members can agree final budget figures and a precept figure to submit to Wiltshire Council.

Other relevant background is set out in paras. 5 – 11.

2. F&P, A&OS, Property and Planning Committees Budgets

Following review by the F&P Committee, budget sheets for the F&P, A&OS, Property and Planning Committees for 2021/22 are at **Appendix 1**. These are colour coded to indicate increases, decreases and new budget lines.

Staffing Sub-Committee – This is not a budget holding committee but, under the Scheme of Delegation, it can make recommendations to the F&P Committee. It met on 8 December and made recommendations which were passed on to the F&P Committee and have been agreed and incorporated into the budget sheets.

3. Review of Property, A&OS and Planning Committees Draft Budgets

The recommended Property, A&OS and Planning Committee budgets for 2021/22 are also at **Appendix 1**. Members of the F&P Committee now need to review these.

4. Budget/Precept Figures - 2021/22

The budget sheets give the following calculations:

Overall Predicted Committee Expenditure 2021/22

The following shows estimated expenditure for each budget holding committee (compared to the previous financial year)

Committee	Predicted Expenditure 2020/21	Predicted Expenditure 2021/22	Increase or Decrease	% Increase or Decrease
F&P	376,547	374,726	- 1,821	- 0.48%
A&OS	265,111	276,068	+10,957	+ 4.13%
Property	254,589	246,469	- 8,120	- 3.19%
Planning	11,500	12,500	+ 1,000	+ 8.69%
Total predicted expenditure	£907,747	£909,763	+ £2,016	+ 0.22%

Overall Predicted Committee Income 2021/22

The following shows estimated income for each budget holding committee (compared to the previous financial year)

Committee	Predicted Income 2020/21	Predicted Income 2021/22	Predicted Increase or Decrease	% Increase or Decrease
F&P	2,900	2,600	-300	-13.10%
A&OS	41,950	41,450	- 500	- 1.19%
Property	139,640	121,340	- 18300	- 13.10%
Planning				
Total predicted income	£184,490	£165,390	- £19,100	-10.35%

This gives a precept calculation as follows:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total Planned Expenditure	809,831	848,565	907,747	909,763
Less Planned Income	183,500	178,690	184,490	165,390
Net Expenditure to be funded	626,331	669,875	723,257	744,373
Precept	626,331	669,875	723,257	744,373
Tax Base *	3332.16	3432.93	3504.70	3476.60
Tax per Band D Property	£187.96	£195.13	£206.37	£214.11

*The Tax Base is the average number of Band D properties within a town/parish. It is used to calculate the Band D charge for each town/parish. This is done by dividing the total precept requirement by the tax base.

So, there is a precept requirement of **£744,373** which equates to a precept rise of **3.75%** and an annual Band D figure of **£214.11p**.

For a Band D property, this also equates to £17.84 per month or £4.11 per week. It also represents an annual increase of only £7.74.

5. Tax Base

Members will want to be aware that there has been a reduction in our Tax Base for 2021/22 due to the impact of COVID so more people qualify for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR). This means that to just to stand still so the Town Council can raise the same amount in precept as the current year, the Band D rate will need to rise by £1.67 an increase of 0.81%.

2020/21 - Tax Base - 3,504.70 - Precept Requirement - £723,527 – Band D - £206.37
2021/22 - Tax Base - 3,476.60 - Precept Requirement - £723,527 – Band D - £208.04

6. Community Asset Transfers and Devolution of Services

For the last 18 months to 2 years, MTC has been working towards devolution of services and asset transfers from Wiltshire Council. Responding to a question from the Mayor at the Area Board meeting in September, Wiltshire Councillor Clewer indicated that towns would be contacted within weeks. No contact has been made. The Town Clerk has written to WC asking for an update. We do know that a number of town councils are in the same position. There is currently £46,000 in EMR towards devolution.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

There is an unallocated CIL balance of £16,132. Proposals have submitted to Full Council about how this balance could be used to legitimately fund projects rather than them be funded via the precept (see agenda item 8). A contribution towards the building of a bridge at Stonebridge Meadow (£7,500), a contribution to the final stages of the Neighbourhood Plan (£2,000) and fencing at Tin Pit (£5,000) have been proposed.

8. Other Wiltshire Town Council Precepts for 2020/21 (current FY)

These include:

TOWN COUNCIL	2020/21	% OVER 2019/20
Chippenham	£262.05	9.37%
Bradford on Avon	£216.90	17%
Calne	£215.57	2.5%
Malmesbury	£210.63	2.5%
Royal Wootton Bassett	£209.81	2.44%
Salisbury	£208.00	0%
Marlborough	£206.57	5.76%
Cricklade	£203.79	3.5%
Corsham	£199.09	17.99%
Devizes	£176.11	11.52%
Trowbridge	£164.98	7.14%
Melksham	£160.45	4.78%

9. Marlborough's Precept Rises

Precept rises in last 5 years:

Year	% Rise over previous year	Band D figure
2020/21	5.76%	£206.37
2019/20	3.81%	£195.13
2018/19	2.91%	£187.97
2017/18	16.55%	£182.67
2016/17	4.96%	£156.73

In terms of precept sizes in England for 2019/20, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) placed Marlborough in the 60 highest town and parishes Band D precepts in England. (Comparisons have not yet been released for 2020/21).

10. Project Plan 2017 - 2021

This is at: https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/images/your-council/Action_Plan_Review_Sept_2019.pdf A lot has been achieved – taking on and refurbishing of the Youth and Community Centre, completion of the CCTV project, new play areas at Coopers Meadow and Jubilee Field, new public toilets, re-jig of the basement of the Town Hall for storage, a Puppet Festival, a Civil War Re-enactment, a weekend's worth of WW1 commemorations. Due for completion before the end of the Council term are the Skatepark lighting and the Neighbourhood Plan. Some things didn't come off and were out of our control – for example residents car park at Kelham Gardens (WC sold to another buyer), WW2 commemorations, scuppered by COVID. (lots of other things outside of this plan too– e.g., 3 Christmas Lights Switch-ons, success at In Bloom, all the day to day services we provide).

ITEM 9

Big projects with a foot in both existing and new council terms are likely to be – the external works to the Town Hall, the Workshop at The Common, repurposing of the workshop at the Recreation Ground and the taking on of land and play facilities at Rabley Wood.

11. Ear Marked Reserves

Towards the end of the FY, it is possible to better predict the budget surplus we are able to vire into ear mark reserves (to help towards ongoing projects) and general reserves.

Town Clerk's Recommendations

The Town Clerk recommends that Members consider the recommendation as set out in the resolution from the F&P Committee of 11 January 2020

RESOLVED: (iii) to recommend 2021/22 budgets to Full Town Council with a precept figure of £744,373, representing an increase equivalent to 3.75% for a Band D Property to £214.11 per annum

Town Clerk

14 January 2021

Update on Tourism

Summary – This report asks Members to note actions taken thus far to deliver the Marlborough Tourism Strategy, as set out in January 2020, and to offer consider a proposed plan for the way ahead

1. Background

At the Full Council Meeting in January 2020, Councillors noted and approved a revised and finite version of the Marlborough Tourism Strategy. Resulting objectives have been progressed where possible to mitigate the impact of lockdown and the challenges of the Covid-19 virus. It is generally assumed that, by the end of 2021, the virus will be endemic and controlled rather than pandemic. Until such time, it is necessary to continue to act with agility and responsibility to ensure things remain as safe as possible for both residents of Marlborough and visitors to the town.

Figures from Visit Britain suggest inbound tourism to the UK fell last year by 76 % and that confidence in international travel is not expected to return until vaccinations start to proceed globally. The tourism focus, therefore, remains, for now, firmly on the domestic market. With demand hit by unemployment and fiscal tightening, new behavioral habits affecting leisure and business travel are expected. Visits to friends and relatives are forecast to recover quickest, business trips slowest and holiday movement somewhere in between.

2. Current situation

Five priorities were outlined in the action plan concluding the Marlborough Tourism Strategy. Work already done to address these, current plans and future goals are as follows:

a) Developing the product and visitor offer

- Created new tours, including a Guided History Town Tour and A Savernake Forest Oak Trail.
- Set up a package between Crofton Beams, Wilton Windmill and the Merchant's House, to link visitor attractions. Now working with Ramsbury Brewery on a new link tour.
- Begun equipping the Tourism Information Outlet (Coopers Corner) for a spring launch.
- Positioned the town is to be awarded Coach Friendly Status on 15 March (delayed from last year by the virus)
- Set up an Instagram account, now with 959 followers, and counting
- Working on Marlborough Food and Drink video to launch in spring
- Invited by Summer School to take part in a course and write a blog on it

b) Improving coordination

- Re-established Tourism Working Party (met twice so far, but thwarted by lockdowns, virtual one planned for spring)
- Strengthened relationships with Visit Wiltshire and Great West Way
- Fostered connections with Space for Nature and North Wessex Downs
- Established a credible, working database of the town's stakeholders

c) Marketing and information

- 50 Things to Do in Marlborough leaflet is ready to launch in Spring.
- GWW workshops planned for local stakeholders.
- Food and drink and accommodation lists revised and updated.

- Illustrated map leaflet is ready to print.
- Signage review complete – but work still to be done on town's general signage and map board.
- New moveable "A" board in operation outside Council offices.
- Listed building permission granted for new bracket sign outside No 5 High Street

d) Branding and Identity

- Work to be done on developing a consistent Marlborough brand – whether that be a sticker to promote the fact we are Covid Safe and "Good to Go", or one asking visitors to "Support Local" or, long term, one promoting our GWW ambitions – it needs to be accessible to all stakeholders, unite us as a town and, ultimately, help us attain a stronger, bolder, stand out, digital presence.

e) Knowledge and Understanding

- Work has begun to promote big events of 2021 (eg. Cinema launch, Lit Fest, Dark Skies, Marlborough White Horse clean up). The aim is next to link data, where possible, from these events and combine it with visitor information from the likes of the Premier Inn and the Summer School to enable us to conduct seasonal visitor surveys and improve understanding of visitor types, needs and behaviour going forward.

3. Financial Implications

Expenditure to date this year has been minimal though some funds are still needed to help equip the TIP. The balance in the budget is £4,129. One suggestion would be to earmark funds at year end for much needed improved town signage or use a contribution from CIL unallocated funds.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Members note this update and provide any useful feedback.

Tourism Officer

12 January 2021

The Vicar's Library – Bodleian Library

Summary – This report asks Members to consider a request for support for a film to raise awareness of rare books (known as the Marlborough Vicar's Library) on permanent loan to the Bodleian Library in Oxford

1. Background

The Town Council has received a request from Mrs Ilse Nikolsky (a volunteer and guide at The Merchant's House) for permission and support in the making of a short film to raise awareness about rare books on permanent loan to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, collectively known as Marlborough Vicar's Library. Mrs Nikolsky has written an interesting piece about the history of this collection which is at **Appendix 1**.

The Bodleian Library website refers to the collection as follows:

***“Marlborough Vicar's Library** The Vicar's Library, St Mary's, Marlborough, Wiltshire. The bulk of the collection was put together by William White (1604-1678), Master of Magdalen College School 1632-1648 and later Rector of Pusey and of Appleton, who bequeathed it to the Mayor and Corporation of Marlborough in trust for the use of the Vicar of St. Mary's. Deposited on permanent loan in the Bodleian in 1985. Over 600 volumes, containing c. 760 items, including 237 items printed in Britain before 1641, of which 8 are the only known copies and another 45 are rare. The majority of the volumes are theology, works of scholarship and school books (there are 13 specimens of the grammatical treatises of Robert Whittington and a volume of 5 tracts by John Stanbridge of which 4 are unique), while classics, literature, political tracts, history, law and medicine are also represented. Includes many books interesting for their associations and many annotated with date of purchase and price. The majority of the bindings are by Oxford binders of the 17th century, with some earlier blind-tooled examples.”*

Mrs Nikolsky has had an outline discussion with the Head of Rare Books at the Bodleian Library about filming and there are, in principle, no objections once the necessary approval has been obtained.

As the Mayor and Town Council are trustees or guardians of the books and as a courtesy, Mrs Nikolsky would like to ask for the permission and support of the Town Council to go ahead with the project. She is already liaising with members of the Merchant's House Trust and feels that the Town Museum would, eventually, be an ideal conduit where the film could be accessed.

Councillor Fogg played a role in arranging for the permanent loan of the books to the Bodleian where conditions for their safekeeping are ideal.

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that Members fully support this exciting project which will raise awareness of this important bequest and that the Town Council representatives to the Merchant's House Trust help in terms of how the film can be accessed via the Town Museum.

Town Clerk

14 January 2021