

**MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD AT MELKSHAM TOWN HALL  
ON MONDAY 6 APRIL 2009**

**Present:** Ms Sarah Cardy  
Mr Simon Bridgford-Whittick  
Mr Rod Eaton (Chairman)  
Mr Jon Hubbard  
Mrs Adrienne Westbrook  
Mr Simon White  
Mrs Sheila Wilkinson  
Mrs Pam Wiltshire  
Mr Richard Wiltshire

Also in attendance Louise Smith, Vic Oakman, Chris Petty and Terri Welch for item 39.

**2009**

**34. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Geoffrey Carr.

**35. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**36. Announcements from the Chair**

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

**37. Urgent Business**

Councillor Pam Wiltshire referred to the previous Policy and Resources meeting when it was agreed Leekes would provide extra hanging baskets for the town. Unfortunately, due to the current economic climate they will be unable to provide these, however, they will be supporting the Food Festival instead.

**38. Public Participation**

**(a) General Matters**

Mrs Howard, 15 Spa Court; Mrs Austin, 16 Spa Court along with various other residents from Spa Court attended the meeting to voice their concerns regarding the lorry park in King Street. Residents concerns were:

- Lorries parking close to residents rear garden boundary walls in Spa Court.
- Engines starting early in the morning sometimes before 4.00am
- Smell from fumes (in the summer you cannot leave windows open)
- Litter being left behind
- Lack of toilet facilities

- The number and size of lorries parking in King Street seems to have increased in the last couple of years.
- If drivers drive into bays they overlook people's gardens affecting residents privacy.

Ian Cardy, Tree Warden explained if the lorries were moved there is an area behind the lorry park which would be ideal for tree planting, which would enhance the area and provide residents with a certain amount of privacy.

Ian Cardy explained he wished to voice his concerns at the state of the Riverside Walk running adjacent to Sainsburys Store. His concerns were the amount of litter along this route and the state of the footpath in some areas.

Sainsburys have been contacted several times regarding these problems, but there has been no response from them so far. Sainsburys have a legal obligation to maintain the footpath and Wiltshire Council can take enforcement action if necessary.

Along with Councillor Pam Wiltshire he had made a recent site visit and was surprised to see there has been a litter pick and new bins have been provided. He hoped this would continue, but going on previous experience he felt this would not be the case.

It was also noted on the recent site visit that the lifebuoys seem to be missing. He was unclear whose responsibility this was, but asked if the Town Council would chase this up.

Regarding the state of the footpath, this is in need of restoration, as it has seriously deteriorated. In places it is impassable for people with pushchairs and wheelchairs. Ian Cardy explained under new legislation there is a legal obligation to make footpaths accessible for everyone. Part of the problem is part of the footpath is on a lower slope which floods repeatedly. This either needs resurfacing or redirecting.

Ian asked if a site visit could be made with representatives from Sainsburys to get an agreement from them to maintain the footpath.

The meeting was then opened up to Councillors.

Councillor Richard Wiltshire explained there is an opportunity to achieve some agreement under the Section 106 Agreement for the new extension.

Councillor Terri Welch explained she is on the Riverside Walk committee and she felt Sainsburys already have a legal obligation under the original Section 106 Agreement to maintain the footpath and asked that any Section 106 monies could go towards helping with the restoration of the Gasometer site.

It was noted there seems to be Japanese Knotweed overgrowing certain areas of the footpath.

**(b) Matters arising therefrom**

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed to discuss the above under the appropriate agenda items and to investigate who is responsible for cutting back the knotweed.

**POLICY/OPERATIONAL**

**39. Town Centre Improvement Scheme.**

Spencer Drinkwater of Wiltshire Council and Marc Cashmore of Mouchel attended the meeting to update the Committee on negotiations that had been held recently with Taxi Operators.

It was clear from that meeting that the taxi operators would like more spaces than those currently available but were anxious to retain a presence in the Market Place.

Paul Carter Jnr attended the meeting to express the views of local taxi drivers who would prefer to stay in the Market Place as this is where most trade is derived from. He explained currently there are 6 spaces in the Market Place for use by approximately 27 licensed hackney carriages. Taxi drivers would prefer to retain a rank in the Market Place as this provides easy access for wheelchair users etc.

Marc Cashmore put forward a number of options for consideration by councillors and following considerable discussion it was agreed to recommend to Full Council on 20 April a situation which allowed 6 of the planned car parking spaces to be set aside for taxi use and that a further two spaces (possibly three) be provided in Lowbourne and that the situation be reviewed one year after implementation.

**RESOLVED:** That the above recommendation be reported to Full Council on 20 April 2009.

**40. Melksham 1st**

The Clerk had submitted a report (**copy enclosed**) in which he had suggested a number of options for the committee's consideration.

He informed the meeting that just today he had been notified that a Community Area Board Manager had been appointed and will take up her post on 1 July 2009.

Councillors considered the Clerk's report and it was felt that an option whereby an experienced practitioner was employed to undertake a short term development project to re-establish a strong Community Area Partnership was preferred.

The likely cost of this would be £5000 which would be shared on a proportionate basis by the funders.

This option meant that a small amount of clerical assistance would be required and the cost of this would also be met proportionately.

**RESOLVED:** That the Clerk takes the necessary action to move this forward.

#### **41. German Twinning**

The Clerk reminded councillors that at a previous meeting correspondence had been received from Germany expressing a wish to re launch the twinning arrangements with Melksham. As a result an article had been placed in the Melksham News to ascertain whether there was any interest in this idea from the local community.

Graham Hedges had written to the Clerk and was attending the meeting to discuss German Twinning and the fact he had been involved with the original Marienhafé Twinning Association. He felt the original Association failed for many reasons, one being the lack of youngsters involved and this time round he stressed the need to involve youngsters in George Ward School in possibly coming up with a website which can be used to allow them to liaise with youngsters in Marienhafé. He would wish to also contact other youth organisation in the town to come on board.

Discussion ensued on the best course of action to take and the possibility of holding a public meeting was considered. However as a starting point it was agreed that a meeting between Graham and an appropriate representative from George Ward School was desirable.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council would contact George Ward School in order to see if there was interest at their end and if so to arrange a get together between the two parties.

#### **42. Positive Promotion of Melksham in empty shop windows.**

Councillor Jon Hubbard had asked if his Project Initiation Document regarding the above could be presented to this meeting.

The Town Clerk reported that at a recent meeting of the Town Development Committee he had been asked to contact local agents/owners to seek permission for the use of empty shops and that if so this committee be asked:

That the Council

- (i) Approaches other organisations within the town to ask if they wish to advertise their group/events etc.
- (ii) Approaches schools regarding artwork for display.

The Clerk further reported that just today he had been informed that some shop owners were prepared to help.

Councillor Simon Bridgford-Whittick explained he had sourced material free of charge to help with displays.

The item was also raised at the recent Seminar and it was felt by Councillor Jon Hubbard this suggestion along with those raised at the seminar should run alongside each other. It was felt any displays need to be high quality to give a positive image.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed the working group which was set-up to move items forward from the recent Seminar needs to meet as soon as possible and that the group considers the best way to proceed with the shop fronts issue. It was also agreed the Clerk would contact Councillors with a suggested date.

#### **43. Freedom of Information Act**

The Clerk explained that this item was on the agenda as a new model scheme regarding requests for information by members of the public under the Freedom of Information Act for all public authorities had been implemented by the Information Commissioners Office. He sought the Town Council's approval in adopting this scheme and whether to charge for hard copies of information requested by members of the public (**please see attached report**).

**RESOLVED:** To agree to adopt the scheme as outlined in the report and that a charge of 10 pence per sheet is made for any hard copies supplied.

#### **44. Supporting Employment**

A request had been received by Councillor Richard Wiltshire to consider setting up a 6 monthly meeting with those involved in fostering the Town Council's employment/commercial base i.e. West Wilts Economic Partnership/Wiltshire Council Regeneration/Economic Development; Local Chamber of Commerce; plus the Parish Council Clerk/Chairman. This would cover the emerging Melksham Area Board area and be a useful platform to consider and help promote economic issues.

**RESOLVED:** To support the suggestion.

#### **45. Melksham Cemetery**

This item had been placed on the agenda by Councillor Vic Oakman following recent press report that the current cemetery will be full within the next couple of years.

The Clerk had contacted West Wiltshire District Council and as a result David Carpenter, Estates Surveyor, West Wiltshire District Council had written stating due to recent coverage on the local news a local landowner has offered part of his land.

**RESOLVED:** To note the report and to invite David Carpenter to the meeting of Full Council on 20 April 2009 to discuss this matter further.

**46. King Street Lorry Park.**

This item had been placed on the agenda at the request of Councillor Jon Hubbard who had been contacted by local residents living adjacent to the lorry park who are concerned at the nuisance being caused through noise, litter, fumes and the lack of toilet facilities.

Councillor Jon Hubbard explained that he agreed with the residents and felt action was needed to alleviate the concern/distress being caused to residents. He had spoken to West Wiltshire District Council who were responsible for the car park at that time and was informed there is no statutory obligation by the local authority to provide lorry parks, however, no action could be taken until the formation of the new unitary authority. He asked if the Town Council would write to the new Wiltshire Council as soon as possible to ask for the lorry park to be closed.

Considerable discussion ensued and it was:

**RESOLVED:** To write to the new Wiltshire Council as soon as possible asking because there is no statutory obligation for a local authority to provide a lorry park could King Street lorry park be closed as soon as possible and that an alternative site with facilities be sought elsewhere in the town following the closure (6 for 1 against).

**Note:** An amendment to the above proposal asking that an alternative site is sought before the closure, thus causing less disruption to lorry drivers was defeated (4 for 5 against).

**47. The Friday Night Project**

A letter had been received from Mike Mills, Chairman of Melksham Without Parish Council asking if Melksham Town Council would be prepared to part fund the above project which has proved very successful to date. An amount of £350 was suggested.

The letter stated '... the original intention was for this project to be opened up to just those children in the Melksham Without Parish Council area, but to guarantee success it was opened up to everyone, as a result nearly two thirds of those who attended the last event were from the town area'.

**RESOLVED:** To agree to the request and that the £350 be taken from the Youth Budget.

#### **48. Area Board Arrangements**

Correspondence had been received from Councillor Rod Eaton asking if the Town Council wished to comment on the recent decision of the Implementation Executive to include Summerham and Seend Electoral Division in the Melksham Community Area.

**RESOLVED:** To note the information.

#### **49. Assembly Hall Working Group**

The minutes of the Assembly Hall Working Group of 20 January and 3 March were presented to the meeting for information/discussion (**please see attached minutes**).

The Town Clerk reported that as a result of a request from the Working Group he had written to 12 organisations seeking support for a jobs fair but only 4 had shown any interest. He was also waiting for the views of Len Turner from the Economic Partnership.

**RESOLVED:** That no further action is taken at this time but that thought be given to allow those who can offer advice to anyone looking for work to use an empty shop window, under the 'Empty Shop window project' for advertising.

#### **50. Riverside Walk/Sainsburys**

A letter had been received from the Planning Compliance Officer, West Wiltshire District Council following the Town Council's letter regarding the state/maintenance of the Riverside Walk footpath adjacent to Sainsburys, which had been raised by Ian Cardy and Mary Jarvis, Co-ordinator, Riverside Project at a recent meeting.

Discussion ensued during which the comments made by Ian Cardy earlier in the meeting were considered. Councillors:

**RESOLVED:**

1. To arrange a site meeting with representatives of Sainsbury's and that following this they be invited to a meeting at the Town Hall to discuss councillors concerns.
2. To write to Dave Hubbard, head of planning to push for compliance with the conditions of the original planning application and to state that the Town Council is dissatisfied with action taken by former District Council employees on this matter.

**51. Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal**

A letter had been received from the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Appeal regarding their new initiative to have recycling clothing and shoe banks in various parts of Wiltshire to help achieve their fund raising goals and asked if the Town Council would be prepared to have one of these located in the town.

**RESOLVED:** The Town Council agreed to support this proposal.

**52. Finance**

**(a) Payments for Approval**

**RESOLVED:** Payments were approved.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

**53. (a) Wiltshire County Council re Parish Steward Programme - Spring 2009**

A Letter had been received from Wiltshire County Council regarding their Parish Steward Programme for Spring 2009.

**RESOLVED:** To note this letter.

**(b) Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service re Cooper Tires Fire Section**

A letter had been received from Peter Baxter, Assistant Chief Fire Officer in response to our letter regarding the closure of the Cooper Tires fire station and our concerns that this could leave Melksham vulnerable.

Mr Baxter wrote to reassure the Town Council this would not be the case.

**RESOLVED:** To note this letter.

**(c) Great Western Ambulance Service re Air Support Clinical Review**

A letter had been received from the Great Western Ambulance Service following the recent clinical review of the three air ambulance operations in their area.

The letter stated that the Trust had signed up to a further five year contract, ensuring the Air Ambulance continues to operate as it did previously.

**RESOLVED:** To note this letter.

**(d) Wiltshire Association of Local Council - March 2009 circular**

The above circular had been received.

**RESOLVED:** To note the information.

**(e) Melksham and District French Twinning Association re Room Hire Grant**

A letter had been received from the Melksham and District French Twinning Association regarding the Town Council's recent room hire grant.

**RESOLVED:** To note the letter.