

**MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
OF MELKSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT MELKSHAM TOWN HALL
ON MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2009**

Present: Ms Sarah Cardy	Mr Simon White
Mr Rod Eaton (Chairman)	Mrs Sheila Wilkinson
Mr Vic Oakman	Mrs Pam Wiltshire
Mr Jon Hubbard	Mr Richard Wiltshire

2009

14. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Geoffrey Carr and Adrienne Westbrook. Councillor Vic Oakman substituted for Councillor Adrienne Westbrook.

15. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Vic Oakman and Sheila Wilkinson declared an interest in agenda item 12 re Forest Community Centre.

16. Announcements from the Chair

Councillor Rod Eaton expressed his sadness that Cooper Avon Tires have decided to close their fire station which was such a valuable service to the town.

The Clerk reported that Councillor Geoffrey Carr had asked that an item be placed on the next Town Council agenda for discussion, as there may be implications for the town.

RESOLVED: To write a letter of thanks to Cooper Avon Tires for the service their Fire section had given to the Town.

17. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

18. Public Participation

(a) General Matters

Mr Ian Cardy, Watsons Court explained he had attended a meeting before Christmas to ask the Town Council to support a lottery bid by the Waterways

Group of Melksham 1st to help improve the riverside walk next to Sainsburys. Unfortunately, due to the changes at Melksham 1st and the timescale for the completion of the bid this application will not be going ahead.

Under Sainsburys' original Section 106 Agreement it was a condition of planning permission that the footpath be provided. However, in the last 10 years it appears Sainsburys, has not maintained this path.

Mr Cardy explained that this particular footpath is impassable at times due to the surface water since most of the footpath is on a floodplain. He also raised concerns that the seats along the path are rotting, vegetation is not cut back on a regular basis and litter is an issue at times. The problem with flooding could increase as Sainsburys plan to extend their car park into the neighbouring wilderness area, he believes West Wiltshire District Council also plan to extend the car parking for the cemetery nearby.

Mr Cardy asked if the Town Council would write to Sainsburys Head Office with photographic evidence, to ask that they maintain this path and include the maintenance of this footpath in their plans for the proposed extension.

Shaun Bailey, Gamingalore, Bank Street attended the meeting to express his disappointment that the planned works in Bank Street will now take 7 weeks to complete instead of 3 as originally proposed. He understood that the County's Council explanation for this was because one lane will be open this time at the request of Bank Street traders therefore there will be no room for 2 gangs to work. He felt this was not a satisfactory explanation and there was plenty of room for 2 gangs to work.

He stated most traders in Bank Street would prefer the whole road to be closed for 3 weeks, therefore reducing the inconvenience to them and their customers.

(b) Matters arising therefrom

With regard to the riverside walk near Sainsburys in was:

RESOLVED:

1. To write to Planning and Leisure Departments at West Wiltshire District Council with a copy to Sainsburys asking if planning conditions have been ignored and whether they can take any action against Sainsburys to maintain the footpath.
2. To inform the Riverside Walk of the Town Council's actions.
3. That the Clerk seeks clarification from West Wiltshire District Council regarding any plans they may have for the cemetery car park to be extended.

With regard to Bank Street it was:

RESOLVED : To write to Wiltshire County Council to ask for a formal explanation of why these works will take longer than previously anticipated and to seek their co-operation in taking any action that may reduce the length of time needed for the partial road closure.

POLICY/OPERATIONAL

19. Grant Applications

A report had been received from the Grants Working Party (**see attached appendices**) making recommendations regarding applications from the Party in the Park group, Melksham and District Twinning Group and the Melksham Choral Society:

RESOLVED : It was agreed to support the recommendations made by the Working Group.

20. Local Authority Pension Scheme.

The Clerk reminded councillors that at a recent meeting he had produced a report suggesting an Employer Discretions Policy as required by the Pension Department at Wiltshire County Council. At that meeting Councillors had asked the Clerk to seek the views of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils before adopting the policy.

The Clerk confirmed that WALC were happy with the report that he had produced and he now sought the approval of the Committee to adopt the report as policy.

RESOLVED : It was agreed to adopt the report and that the decision be forwarded to Wiltshire County Council.

21. Melksham 1st.

The Clerk had produced a report (**see attached appendices**) which included a letter from Niki Lewis Service Director at Wiltshire County Council setting out the latest position regarding the new arrangements of the new Area Boards to be implemented in April 2009.

The Clerk also reported on the outcome of a recent Melksham 1st Funders meeting in which it had been suggested that work on drawing up a Job Description for the Community Area Partnership support worker should be undertaken with a view to making an appointment from 1 April, 2009.

Discussion ensued during which it became apparent that the committee felt that there was no need to push ahead with this appointment immediately and that no further action be taken until Wiltshire Council have appointed their Community Area Board Manager.

Discussion then ensued regarding what support might be given to the various theme groups in the meantime.

The Clerk reported that he had contacted the Chairperson of each group and they were happy to continue and only a small amount of administrative support is likely to be needed. He stressed though that he would need to contact them again now that the Committee wanted to delay the above appointment beyond April 2009.

It was felt other parish councils in the area need to be involved in the new community area board structure.

RESOLVED:

1. To inform the Melksham 1st Funders Group that this committee feels that the recruitment of the Community Agent should be delayed until Wiltshire County had appointed their officer.
2. That the Clerk transmits this decision to the Chairpersons of the theme group seeking their continued co-operation for a while longer
3. That the Clerk writes to Niki Lewis at County Hall to seek some additional admin costs from the transition fund until such time as appointments are made.

22. Former Youth Cafe (Adventure Centre).

The Town Clerk had produced a report on actions he had taken regarding an unpaid BT bill for the now defunct youth cafe based at the Adventure Centre (**see appendices**) and asked that the Town Council support his actions.

RESOLVED: To support the actions of the Town Clerk and that the amount be paid from the youth budget.

23. Public Participation at Council/Committee Meetings.

The Town Clerk had produced a report and drafted a set of notes for consideration by councillors in respect of guidance to members of the public wishing to speak under this item on all agendas.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk tries to simplify the document for consideration at the next Town Council meeting incorporating the following points.

To allow questions/presentations to exceed no more than 20 minutes (each speaker having 3 minutes each) any further time needed to be at the discretion of the Chairperson and Committee if necessary to allow flexibility.

At the end of the report to include '... meeting shall disallow any question that is, in his/**her** opinion scurrilous ...'

That once agreed by councillors notices be placed at strategic points in the main hall outlining guidance notes for members of the public wishing to speak under public participation.

24. Signage - School of Gymnastics.

The Clerk had produced a report (**see appendices**) regarding a request for extra signage on behalf of the Gymnastics Club in Bowerhill for the 2012 olympics.

The report explained 8 or 9 signs would cost in the region of £2000 to install and there was a suggestion that the costs be shared between the County Council, Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council. County are prepared to put in £1000 and would waive their associated design and administration costs. Melksham Without Parish Council have already agreed to put in £500. The cost to the Town Council would be £500.

A motion that the Gymnastics Club be asked to contribute to reduce the cost to this council and Melksham Without Parish Council was defeated (Voting 4 against 4 for). The Chairman Councillor Rod Eaton used his casting vote to against the motion.

RESOLVED: To contribute £500 towards the signage costs.

25. Forest Community Centre.

Councillor Vic Oakman had produced a report regarding the latest position with regard to the new Forest Community Centre (**see attached appendices**).

Councillor Oakman explained that unfortunately the group had been let down with a funding application to the Football Foundation after many months of working with the Wiltshire Football Association which has been very disappointing for the group. This has had a consequential effect on the plans of the group, one being the lease of Awdry Avenue Recreation field to the group, which has now been put on hold.

RESOLVED: The Town Council noted the report and asked if a letter could be sent to the Planning Department at West Wilts District Council asking if consideration could be given to this project under the Section 106 for Planning Application 05/00225: Residential development, land south of Sandridge Common, Melksham which is now under further consideration due to the elapse of the original resolution.

26. Additional Hanging Baskets.

The Clerk had produced a report (**see attached appendices**) on the proposal for additional hanging baskets in the Town with a Project Initiation Document as agreed

at the Policy Committee Meeting on 8 October 2008. In the report Tony Baldwin, Town Caretaker had also produced details on the costing of staff time in both hours and money and some health and safety issues involved in watering these extra baskets.

The recommendation of the Clerk was that the committee considers the information available and decides on a way forward bearing in mind the comments made.

Councillor Pam Wiltshire explained that in the report it should have said she along with Councillor Simon Bridgford-Whittick would contact local traders (around 50 businesses) to see if they would be interested in having a hanging basket at a cost of £7.50 for the basket and £2 per week for 15 weeks for upkeep/watering costs.

A concern was raised that if businesses do not take up this offer the Town Council may struggle to re-coup the costs involved.

RESOLVED: It was agreed this was an excellent project and should be supported. The Clerk was also asked to obtain information from Devizes Town Council re maintaining flowers so that costs could be compared.

27. Chairing of Meetings.

Councillor Jon Hubbard asked that clarification be sought of the role of Chairpersons at meetings and their privileges and responsibilities to avoid confusion at future meetings.

The Clerk reported that he had received some advice on this matter and would circulate this to all councillors for information.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk makes this information available to councillors and that the item is placed on a future agenda.

28. Town Maintenance.

Councillor Richard Wiltshire requested that consideration be given to the caretaking staff having a schedule of inspection of the town area to combat problems like fly-posting, fly-tipping, water course problems, litter, graffiti etc before they become an issue with members of the public, as currently there is not a regular system of checking for these problems.

It was also asked if cameras could be provided to help photograph evidence.

RESOLVED: To support the idea in principle and to ask the Town Clerk to produce a report for further consideration by councillors.

29. Christmas Late Night Opening.

The Assistant Town Clerk/ Project Officer had produced a report on the Christmas Light Night Opening event on 27 November with examples of feedback from traders in the town (**see appendices**).

Recommendations were that if the late night opening event is to be supported by the Town Council again, a sub-committee of traders and the Chambers of Commerce should be formed in the summer. Traders also need to be made aware of the independence of the Christmas Lights/Fayre Committee and that changing the day and time of this is not an option. Options for this year are:

Option 1 - A stand alone event with entertainment

Option 2 - An event coinciding with the Christmas Fayre

Option 3 - A stand alone event the week after the lights have been switched on.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to support Option 3 and investigate costings involved and the availability of other funding and that further consideration be given to this later in the year.

30. Town Hall Photocopier.

The Assistant Town Clerk/Project Officer had produced a report on the need for a new photocopier in the Town Hall and the costs involved (**see appendices**).

The report explained that the current photocopier and printer can be replaced with a photocopier that can be networked to all computers including the Assembly Hall.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to accept the quotation of with Office Evolution at a cost of £683.15 per quarter (excluding VAT).

31. Finance

(a) Payments for Approval

RESOLVED: To approve payments.

(b) Treasury Deposit.

The Finance Officer reported that the Deposit of £50,000 matures on 9 March 2009 and sought the views of the committee on whether this amount should be reinvested for a further 6 months.

RESOLVED: Due to the current economic climate it was agreed to keep the money in the above account and to review the situation again in 6 months time.

CORRESPONDENCE

32. (a) West Wiltshire District Council re Gambling Act 2005. Consultation on Statement of Principles for Wiltshire Council.

West Wiltshire District Council had written to the Town Council regarding the new Wiltshire Council as a Licensing Authority and how consideration will need to be given to a New Statement of Principles for Gambling.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to note this information and for councillors to make their views known individually if they wish.

(b) West Wiltshire District Council re The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. Consultation on Draft Policy and Regulations - Licensing of Sex Establishments for Wiltshire Council.

A letter had been received from West Wiltshire District Council regarding the new Wiltshire Council as a Licensing Authority and how consideration will need to be given to agree a new policy and regulations for the licensing of sex establishments.

RESOLVED: It was agreed to note the above.

(c) West Wiltshire District Council re Transition to area Boards – Information Evening.

A letter had been received from West Wiltshire District Council inviting councillors to an information evening on 11 March.

RESOLVED: It was agreed any councillors interesting in attending should contact the Town Clerk.

(d) Wiltshire County Council re Melksham Town Centre Improvements - 5 Towns Initiative Funding.

A letter had been received from Ms Fleur de Rhe-Philipe, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Economic Development, Wiltshire County Council in response to the Town Council's letter asking if money put aside for town centre improvements under the 5 Towns Initiative Funding will still be available under the new unitary council.

Ms de Rhe-Philipe informed the Town Council that the Implementation Executive is currently considering the budget and associated service standards and programmes for the new council. The recommendations of this group will be reported to their full council on 10 February 2009. Until this meeting no assurances could be given on whether the scheme would be funded next year.

RESOLVED: To note this letter and to email County Hall next week to ascertain the outcome of the above Full Council meeting on 10 February.

(e) Wiltshire County Council re Melksham Town Centre Improvements - Project Board.

A letter had been received from Wiltshire County Council asking if the Town Clerk would sit on a proposed project board for the town centre improvements planned for Melksham.

RESOLVED: To write to County stating the Town Council would prefer if the Town Clerk together with the councillors from the original Steering Group were on the group.

(f) Wiltshire County Council re Pedestrian Enhancements - Bank Street

A letter had been received from Gareth Rogers, Senior Engineer, Wiltshire County Council informing the Town Council of the start date for the planned works in Bank Street. It is proposed the works will start the week commencing 23 February and continue for 7 weeks, with a partial street closure.

RESOLVED: As this matter had been discussed above it was agreed to note this letter.

(g) Wiltshire County Council re Melksham Library Infozone

A letter had been received from Ros Meyer, Community Librarian, Wiltshire County Council thanking the Town Council for their grant of £3000 towards the funding of Infozone, the homework club at Melksham Library.

RESOLVED: To note the above.

(h) NHS South West re Restoration of a Minor Injuries Service for Melksham.

A letter had been received from the South West Strategic Health Authority in response to the Town Council's letter regarding the re-opening of the minor injuries unit at Melksham hospital.

The letter stated the matter remains an issue for Wiltshire Primary Care Trust to consider.

RESOLVED: To note the above with regret.

(i) Royal United Hospital Bath re X-ray facilities at Melksham Hospital

The Clerk reminded the committee that at the request of councillors he had contacted the Royal United Hospital about the above facilities. In response a

letter had been received informing the Town Council that x-ray services will be provided at Melksham Hospital for the foreseeable future.

RESOLVED: To note the above information.

(j) German Twinning Association.

A letter had been received from the Mayor of the Brookmerland Municipal Principality in Germany stating their Twinning Association wished to revive the Twinning arrangements between themselves and Melksham which has become dormant recently.

RESOLVED: To place an article in Melksham News asking for the views of residents regarding reviving the Germany Twinning arrangements.

(k) WWDC Re Planning Application 05/00225OUT: Residential development of 90 houses, Land South of Sandridge Common, Melksham – Section 106 Agreement

The Planning Department of West Wiltshire District Council had written to the Town Council asking that consideration be given to the Section 106 Agreement for the above which has now lapsed and is up for further consultation.

This item had been deferred from the Planning Meeting on 2 February 2009 to allow time for Councillors to make recommendations.

Consideration had already been given to this item under item 25 regarding the Forest Community Centre.

RESOLVED: To write to the Planning Authority with the above comments regarding Forest community centre and to reiterate the Town Council's comments regarding this application ie:

The Town Council objected to this application on the following grounds:

- No road access shown (no access from Snarlton Lane)
- No flood analysis
- 90 homes would exceed District Plan.
- Utilities impact
- No mention of access for pedestrians/cyclists
- No mention of Safe and Secure by Design
- No house types shown
- No design brief (in keeping with area)
- No landscaping/protection of hedgerow shown
- No information on social housing
- No mention of contributions via 106 agreement – recreational amenities and education
- No highways study (impact on new distributor road and Sandridge Road junction).

STAFFING

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

In view of the confidential nature of the business set out below it is suggested that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

The Clerk will report on the current staffing situation.

The Town Clerk gave an update on the progress of the current temporary staffing structure in the Town Hall and the impending changes in the Assembly Hall.

Resolved: To note the report.