

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT MELKSHAM TOWN HALL  
ON MONDAY, 13 JULY 2009**

**Present:**

Ms Sarah Cardy	Mrs Terri Welch
Mr Rod Eaton	Mrs Adrienne Westbrook
Mr Jon Hubbard	Mr Simon White
Mr Vic Oakman	Mrs Sheila Wilkinson
Mr Chris Petty	Mrs Pamela Wiltshire
Mrs Louise Smith	Mr Richard Wiltshire (Chairman)

**2009**

**103. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Simon Bridgford-Whittick and Mark Griffiths.

**104. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**105. Public Participation**

**(a) General and Planning Matters**

Chris Neale (member of the local scouting group), of Addison Road attended the meeting to ask if the Town Council would support local charitable organisations who will be affected by the increase in Rainfall Tax being imposed by the government. This will restrict the activities of local groups by lowering the amount they have available to spend on their members by being forced to payout additional money.

A delegation of Scouts will be going to Downing Street to hand in a petition regarding the unfairness of this Rainfall Tax.

**(b) Matters arising**

It was agreed to enlist the support of Michael Ancram and ask him to:

- Sign the Early Day Motion 985 which is a public declaration of support for a social tariff for voluntary and community groups.
- Write to the Defra Minister responsible and ask him to support changes to legislation through the Floods and Water Bill to make sure Ofwat have to consider the social impact of their decision to impose a rain tax.

- Write to the Chief Executive of Ofwat to urge her to take into consideration the impact on local scout groups and young people and issue guidance to water companies that they can offer social tariffs to community and voluntary groups for these charges.
- Pledge to propose or support amendments to the Floods and Water Bill to introduce a social tariff for water services for community and voluntary groups and to reform the role of Ofwat to ensure it acts in the public interest.

**106. Questions. To receive any questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with Standing Order 21**

No questions were received from Councillors.

**107. Minutes (to approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meetings listed below)**

**(a) Development Control – 11 May 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Vic Oakman and seconded by Councillor Louise Smith.

**(b) Full Council – 18 May 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Richard Wiltshire and seconded by Councillor Adrienne Westbrook.

**(c) Town Development – 1 June 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Pam Wiltshire and seconded by Councillor Vic Oakman.

**(d) Development Control – 8 June 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Vic Oakman and seconded by Councillor Louise Smith.

**(e) Amenities – 15 June 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Simon White and seconded by Councillor Pam Wiltshire.

**(f) Development Control- 22 June 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Vic Oakman and seconded by Councillor Rod Eaton.

**(g) Policy and Resources – 29 June 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Rod Eaton and seconded by Councillor Richard Wiltshire.

**(h) Full Council (Final Accounts) -29 June 2009**

**RESOLVED:** These were approved by Councillor Richard Wiltshire and seconded by Councillor Terri Welch.

**108. Matters arising**

**Town Development – 1 June 2009**

**Min 38i) Empty Shops:** Councillor Richard Wiltshire asked if there had been any progress regarding the use of empty shops to promote events and organisations in Melksham.

The Clerk informed the meeting he has obtained access to one shop, the Citizens Advice Bureau are ready to go once they have confirmed their needs with Tony Baldwin, Town Caretaker. The Clerk had also hoped to speak to Councillor Simon Bridgford-Whittick this evening on how to progress this matter further but will now do so as soon as possible.

The meeting was informed artwork undertaken by pupils at George Ward School is now ready.

**Policy & Resources – 29 June 2009**

**MIn 72: Staffing:** The Town Clerk suggested holding a Staffing Working Group meeting before interviews take place for the posts of two Duty Managers and asked if Councillors were happy to nominate someone from this group to be on the interview panel.

**RESOLVED:** To agree to the request and that the Working Group choose a member to sit on the interview panel.

**109. Mayor's Announcements**

These were on the table for perusal. However, the Mayor drew the Council's attention to the following:

Doug and Doreen Hodder are retiring from the Rachel Fowler Centre after 30 years.

Terry Gregory has retired as manager from Melksham House after 26 years. Mr Eddie Schofield is the new manager.

The Reverend Derek Smith is leaving after 11 years as Rector of St Michael & All Angels Church to take up a post in Cyprus.

Geoffrey Carr has resigned from the Town Council.

The Mayor reminded councillors volunteers are needed to help with the Carnival/Party in the Park. Once the event has taken place a meeting should take place to suggest how this event can move forward next year, given the lack of volunteers this year.

If any councillors wished to be on the working group they were asked to contact the Clerk

**110. Matters arising**

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed that the Mayor should write to the above with the Town Council's thanks for their hard work and dedication.

**111. Urgent Business**

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the Police wished to reintroduce a previously agreed arrangement whereby they use an office in the Town Hall to hold 'Drop-in Surgeries'.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed to continue this arrangement subject to availability.

**112. Town Centre Improvement Scheme.**

This item had been deferred at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 29 June to allow more time for negotiations with taxi drivers to take place.

The Town Clerk had produced a report at the Policy & Resources Meeting with his recommendations, however it was agreed to discuss this report this evening along with any new information received following Mouchel's (contractor for the project) meeting with local taxi drivers to resolve the problem of provision of taxis in the Market Place.

New plans were available which showed a new layout for taxi provision which the taxi drivers were happy with, and if Councillors approved this information this can be passed back to the project board to be "worked up".

Jo Quarterly, Licensing Officer, Wiltshire Council informed the meeting that taxi drivers felt this was the best solution and all 14 drivers were happy.

Paul Carter Junior thanked the Town Council for the extra time for negotiations and Jo Quarterly for her help and felt this was the best solution in the circumstances, but felt there could be issues with taxis at weekends.

Councillor Rod Eaton asked if there would be any compensation from Wiltshire Council for the loss of 2 hours free parking in the Market Place.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed to accept the proposal in principle and allow the Project Board to move forward with the scheme.

Councillors Rod Eaton and Chris Petty asked for their vote against this proposal to be recorded in the minutes.

Councillor Vic Oakman asked for his abstention from voting be recorded in the minutes.

Councillor Sarah Cardy arrived at 7.35pm.

**113. Use of Town Hall for Councillors Surgeries.**

This item has been referred to Full Council for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Clerk sought the views of councillors as he was unclear on the Town Council's policy on the use of Town Hall rooms for Councillor Surgeries, especially if they are attributed to one particular political party.

Considerable discussion ensued and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That if councillors wished to hold surgeries on an occasional basis and as long as no political party was used in publicity material then this be agreed subject to availability and agreement with the Clerk.

**114. Budget Working Group.**

To consider a suggestion from the Clerk and Finance Officer that this group be re-named the Finance Working Group to cover additional items e.g. Final Account preparation.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed to support the suggestion.

**115. Historic Conservation Areas in South West.**

A news release had been received from English Heritage regarding historic conservation areas being at risk in the South West.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed this needs to be looked at in future when looking at the Town Plan and an item to be placed on a future Town Development agenda.

**116. Food Festival.**

Councillor Pam Wiltshire informed the meeting she had been asked by FAB who helped organise this year's Food Festival if the Town Council wished to use their services again next year.

After giving the matter due consideration Councillor Pam Wiltshire proposed the Town Council move forward and undertake the work 'in house' with a temporary member of staff (from October) helping a few hours a week.

Concerns were raised at the costs involved and workload balance.

Jean Harris, Finance Officer informed the meeting that there has been more expenditure on this year's Food Festival account and will inform Councillors of the final balance in due course.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed to support the idea of using a temporary "in house" member of staff subject to budget constraints and that this matter is discussed at a future Staffing Meeting when the Assistant Town Clerk/Project Officers has had time to evaluate needs.

**117. Reports from Councillors:**

**(a) To receive any reports submitted since the issue of this agenda.**

No reports had been received.

**118. Police Report. To receive a progress report.**

Kevin Harmsworth, Community Beat Officer attended the meeting in the absence of Inspector Cullop who was on leave. Kevin explained that Inspector Cullop's report will be distributed on his return from leave. However he was happy to take any questions.

**119. Finance**

**(a) Payments for approval**

**RESOLVED:** Payments were approved.

**(b) List of Payments since last Town Council Meeting**

**RESOLVED:** To note the list of payments since the last meeting.

## 120. Correspondence

### (a) Wiltshire Council re Parish Improvement Grant Schemes 2009-2010

Information had been received from Wiltshire Council regarding their parish improvement grant scheme with information for potential bidders.

**RESOLVED:** It was suggested that further consideration be given to working up bids in respect of:

- Improving the footpath between Tower Road and Devonshire Place which links into Snarlton Lane and the proposed new school.
- Riverside Walk.

### (b) Melksham Without Parish Council re The Spa

A letter had been received from Melksham Without Parish Council asking if the Town Council would support The Spa being included in the Conservation Area.

**RESOLVED:** It was agreed to support Melksham Without Parish Council's request.

### (c) Melksham and District French Twinning re 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing Twinning Charter with Avon

A letter had been received from the Melksham and District French Twinning Association asking what involvement Melksham Town Council wished to have in the arrangements to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Twinning Charter with Avon.

**RESOLVED:** That a working group consisting of Councillors Wilkinson, Pam Wiltshire and Richard Wiltshire be elected to work with the Twinning Group.