

# MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

Court Garden, Pound Lane, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 2AG

## MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY AND LIVE STREAMED ON THE TOWN COUNCIL'S FACEBOOK PAGE ON TUESDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020 AT 7.00pm

### Present

**Town Mayor  
Leader  
Councillors**

**Cllr R Scott  
Cllr J Towns  
S Brown  
R Cadman  
C Funnell  
N Marshall  
K Thomson  
E West  
R Wilson  
Mrs H Martin  
Mrs K Joy**

**Town Clerk  
Deputy Clerk**

### M.16.20

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Johnson and Cllr C Keighley.

### M.17.20

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### M.18.20

#### **COMMUNICATIONS FROM TOWN MAYOR**

20 May – 29 June 2020

Clearly the number of events the Deputy Mayor or myself have been able to attend has been restricted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The prospect of attending events and other face-to-face meetings over the next few months may still be limited even when some of the social distancing rules have been relaxed.

Since March 16, the Leader, the Town Clerk and myself have participated in a number of virtual meetings of the Meals from Marlow project, established by Brand Events and Tom Kerridge. We are all Trustees of this very successful project, which has now provided over 75,000 meals with the 75,000<sup>th</sup> meal presented to a Marlow resident on Saturday 27 June.

18<sup>th</sup> June, Together with the Town Clerk, visited Lush Catering, Cressex, High Wycombe, the kitchen responsible for the provision of food for Meals from Marlow.

27<sup>th</sup> June Along with other members of the Meals from Marlow team, presented the 75,000<sup>th</sup> meal to a Marlow resident.

Please note that other than stated above, there has not been a single request for Mayoral attendance during this period.

#### **Civic events**

Civic service (postponed from 9 June) and Celebrate Marlow (postponed from 27 September) will be combined as a thank you to our residents for the excellent volunteering that has taken place during the Covid pandemic. The date for this event is Sunday 21 February 2021.

Remembrance Day (8 November) – awaiting further guidance from the Government and the Royal British Legion.

Switch on and Shop (19 November) – currently planned to go ahead in usual format; final decision to be taken by 25 September. If not, alternative arrangements for the switching on the lights will be agreed.

Carols on the Causeway (17 December) – currently planned to go ahead, final decision to be taken by 30 October.

### **Town twinning**

In October 2019, local elections were held in Hungary and the incumbent Mayor of the Budavar Council, Gabor Nagy lost his seat; following this, I tried unsuccessfully to contact the new mayor. I am pleased to report that I have now made contact and will see whether our previous twinning arrangements can be maintained.

The Budavar Council has recently contacted us and other twin cities to support a project, which involves refurbishment of a derelict concrete wall on Castle Hill. They have invited the Town council to submit a symbol, picture or silhouette, which contemporary artists will then add to the wall. We are sourcing an appropriate picture, possibly of the bridge and Church to send to them.

For information, Budavar has ten European ‘sister’ cities including Marlow.

### **Lord Lieutenant**

Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher will be retiring at the end of November and the name of the new Lord Lieutenant will be announced on 26 June.

Joe Bradshaw, the Civic and Lieutenancy Officer and assistant to Sir Henry will be retiring on 30 June. A successor has yet to be announce

### **Cllr Richard Scott**

Town Mayor

30 June 2020

## **M.19.20 TO AGREE AS A TRUE RECORD THE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES DATED 19.05.20**

### **RESOLVED:**

THAT THE MINUTES DATED 19.05.20 WERE AGREED AND WILL BE SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD

## **M.20.20 REPORT FROM LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Cllr J Towns, Leader of the Council, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

It has been an incredibly busy time since our last TC meeting. Covid may have kept us in, but not inactive!

**Meals from Marlow** the Tom Kerridge initiative has been really successful, and is now about to deliver its 75,000<sup>th</sup> meal. The community have really pulled together here to support our local hospital NHS workers, and the vulnerable in and around Marlow An amazing contribution from all those involved.

### **Covid aware**

- **Pedestrian Flow.** We installed an advisory, voluntary pedestrian flow around the town to help with social distancing. It has met with mixed reactions but generally people are respecting it. As further changes are announced we will also make changes. We are working closely with Jacqueline Ford and Dave Roberts at Buckinghamshire Council on our next steps.
- **High Street Pop up Cycle Racks** having been such a demand for these across the country we have had to source a company to make these pop up bike racks for us, and how found a local company. We are just awaiting the go ahead from BC for them. These will help with the increased number of cyclists in the town.

- **Marlovian Magazine** was produced as usual but due to Covid couldn't be printed and delivered in the usual way so it was provided as a link on our website.
- **Covid Fund** will be discussed later in this meeting.
- **Management Meetings** throughout this period we have also held weekly management meetings rather than monthly.

**Gossmore Park** we are working closely with the EA to have the Park signed back over to us, but this won't be until they have completed the first two mows of the football pitch and undertaken a full grounds clearance to bring Gossmore Park up to standard.

**The Higginson Park** back water (from the wooden bridge) is to be cleared so it can be more of a natural habitat especially for fish, giving them a better breeding area, is moving forward. Meetings are taking place with the land owner from the other side of the stream for their buy into to the scheme. More news as we have it.

**Expression of Interest**, before Covid we submitted our 'expression of interest' to the new Buckinghamshire Council to volunteer ourselves to become a 'pilot' council for devolved services. Covid has obviously delayed this happening. But I heard this week that BC hope to re-start this programme in the very near future.

#### **Sustainablemarlow**

- **Eco-Schools initiatives**, sadly we had to cancel the Eco-Schools conference due to Covid, but we are still engaging with the schools and early next month will be working with the schools running an eco-week, with many ideas on how they can become involved
- **Community discussion** will be run on zoom to highlight what the sustainablemarlow team are focusing on
- **Releaf** continue to establish areas to plant more trees, and getting ready for the October planting dates. **Releaf** have also been offered an established Walnut Tree which will be planted in Seymour Park in October.
- **Refill** as promised a water refill station has been put in place on the Causeway, it will be connected by Thames Water at the end of July, and will be open for use once our Covid rules allow. Other locations are also being assessed.

The day to day business of the Town Council has continued throughout lockdown, and all our commitments have been met, the office will open again just as soon as the right permissions are in place. A risk assessment has been completed and all necessary Covid protections are in and ready for when we open the doors.

## **M.21.20**

### **INFORMATION REPORTS**

#### **A) Committee Minutes**

All members of the Council are encouraged to read Committee minutes, whether or not they are sitting on that Committee. Town Council and Committee minutes are posted to the Town Council website within four weeks of the meeting taking place.

#### **MEMBERS NOTED THE REPORT**

## **M.22.20**

### **FINAL ACCOUNTS 2019-20**

Circulated to all members of the Council were the final accounts for the year ending 31 March 2020.

The Town Mayor, in the absence of the Resources Committee Chairman, took the meeting through the year end schedules.

- Income and expenditure account
- Balance Sheet
- Earmarked Reserves Schedule
- Expenditure Schedules by Cost Centre
- Grants and Donations Schedule
- Bank Reconciliation

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS APPROVED THE YEAR END ACCOUNTS DATED 31.03.20

**M.23.20 COVID RESERVE**

It was recommended that the Council establishes an earmarked reserve of £10,000 for emergency Covid expenditure from the surplus funds from the 2019/20 general fund. These funds would have delegated authority for The Mayor, The Leader, and The Clerk to agree on expenditure. As an example, this fund could be used for the suggested pop up bike racks, increased signage/new signage, banner graphics etc. It should be noted that any amounts remaining past Covid will be returned to reserves.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS RESOLVED TO ESTABLISH AN EARMARKED RESERVE OF £10,000 FOR EMERGENCY COVID EXPENDITURE AND AGREE ON DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO THE MAYOR, THE LEADER AND THE CLERK FOR SPENDING FROM THIS RESERVE

**M.24.20 GRANTS EXPENDITURE**

It was recommended that the Council establishes an earmarked reserve of £5,000 from the surplus funds from the 2019/20 general fund to enable the Grants fund to be able to support local charities and charitable organisations that have lost income as a result of Covid-19.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS RESOLVED TO ESTABLISH AN EARMARKED RESERVE OF £5,000 FOR GRANTS AND DONATIONS

**M.25.20 EARMARKED RESERVES**

**Consolidation of existing and proposed new earmarked reserves**

A full review of the balances on the earmarked reserves, which totalled £567,059.98 as at the 31 March 2020 has been carried out. The tables below highlight the reserves recommended to remain and proposed new earmarked reserves. A detailed explanation of the purposes of all these reserves was circulated to all members in a separate schedule.

<b>No change to the existing carried forward reserve balances -</b>	
Grants & donations 2019/20 revenue account, approved 30 June 2020)	5,000.00 (transferred from
Office move	17,400.00
Elections	16,604.68
Shopmobility	1,479.00
Infrastructure	30,605.00
Old WDC Ward budgets	2,888.06
Covid fund 2019/20 revenue account, approved 30 June 2020)	10,000.00 (transferred from
Hanging Hill triangle	1,308.27
Allotments – water levy	(1,029.00)
Bus shelters	1,027.00
CIL reserve 2018/19	50,806.81
CIL reserve 2019/20	33,232.08
Cemetery	31,306.00
Gossmore Trust	8,530.13
Recreation grounds	63,799.49

**MEMBERS TO NOTE THESE EXISTING RESERVE BALANCES**

<b>Consolidations of following existing and proposed new earmarked reserves are proposed</b>	
New website	3,000.00
Events, including Christmas lights	100,000.00
Environmental	25,000.00
Security	13,994.00
Town improvements, including bridge lighting	69,687.97
Defibrillators	1,000.00
Causeway development	20,000.00
MVAS speed devices	10,430.70
Creation of 20 mph zone	25,000.00
Water bottle refill station	8,515.00
CIL reserve 2017/18	7,474.79
Dedmere Rise	10,000.00

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS RESOLVED TO AGREE TO THE CONSOLIDATED AND NEW EARMARKED RESERVES AS SHOWN ON THE SCHEDULE ABOVE

**M.26.20 YEAR END INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019-20**

The Town Council's Internal Auditor completed the year end audit on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20 (circulated to all members) confirms that all internal control objectives have been met to a standard adequate to meet the needs of Marlow Town Council.

The Year End Internal Audit Observations report was also circulated to all members. Officers have noted the observations and appropriate action is being taken, financial clarification from NALC is being sought on the treatment of the CCLA investment.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS APPROVED THE ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019/20

**M.27.20 ASSET REGISTER 2019-20**

Circulated to all members was the Town Council's Asset Register. It was noted that it is an audit requirement to have an Asset Register set out in this format and that this document is not to be confused with any insurance valuation documents.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS REVIEWED AND ADOPTED THE ASSET REGISTER DATED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020

**M.28.20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019-20**

Circulated to all members was the Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

Members were asked to review the document and give approval for the Town Mayor to sign the document.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGED THE RESPONSIBILITIES OUTLINED IN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND THAT IT BE APPROVED AND THAT THE TOWN MAYOR SIGN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

**M.29.20 MOBILE VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS**

The Council currently has one Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign(MVAS) that is placed around the town to alert speeding drivers and to gather data on speeding which is shared with the Police. The purchase of two additional machines is proposed to ensure that more roads can be covered. The most suitable battery-powered portable machine recommend by the Police can be purchased at the cost of £3,000.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS RESOLVED TO AGREE ON THE PURCHASE OF TWO MVAS AT A COST OF £6,000 TO BE TAKEN FROM THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED MVAS EARMARKED RESERVE

**M.30.20 MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE**

Members were asked by the management working group at September 2019's meeting for suggestions on a new look for the Council website. The current site uses dated technology is difficult to amend and is not mobile friendly. Furthermore, the website does not comply with new DDA accessibility law that requires any government website to be completely accessible by September 23rd, 2020. The quote from the current supplier to make the current website comply with the new legislation is £1900. The working group have looked at several website providers with quotes for a new website ranging from £2,500 to £7,000.

The proposal is to proceed with a local contactor who will design a brand-new website at a cost of £2,500. If members agree to proceed the website launch would be scheduled for August. Monthly

hosting at a cost of £50 per month. Initial support during the launch of the website is available at £150 per month, officers anticipate that this will only be required for three months.

**RESOLVED:**

THAT MEMBERS RESOLVED TO AGREE TO PROCEED WITH A NEW WEBSITE WITH THE COSTINGS OUTLINED ABOVE TO BE FUNDED FROM EARMARKED RESERVES

**M.31.20 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDES BODIES**

Cllr C Funnell

Reported the Town Regatta and Festival Committee had hosted a virtual celebration to keep the event spirit alive.

Cllr R Cadman

Confirmed the Budavar exchange visit had been postponed until 2021.

Cllr R Scott

Stated that the Marlow Community Association would reopen Liston Hall on 13.07.20 with revised terms and conditions. The Marlow Carnival had been cancelled for 2020.

**M.32.20 REPORTS FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL**

Cllr S Brown

Confirmed that fresh fruit and vegetables were being distributed to schools on a two weekly basis to support families impacted by Covid restrictions.

Cllr R Scott

Reported a press release in relation to the re-modelling of Marlow library and confirmed it would be closed during the works. There would be a Community Board meeting next week.

**M.33.20 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 08.09.2020 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 7.45pm

**Town Mayor**.....

**Date** .....

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Members of the public were invited to submit questions by 12 midday on the day of the meeting via email:

Marlow Resident:

Q1. What is the council's opinion on the success of the one-way system in the town centre in supporting local businesses and how is its success being measured? A petition to widen the pavements in the High St and West St attracted 885 signatories. How does the council plan to respond to this petition, given that the pavement widening across the 2 bays at the bridge-end of the High St does not add much value on its own.

Town Council response:

Thank you for your questions. We believe that the Town Council has acted quickly and responsibly to some of the issues arising from the Covid pandemic.

The one-way system in the town centre was introduced early into the lockdown phase of the pandemic and supported by Buckinghamshire Council, the relevant highway authority. Its main purpose was to try to maintain the social distancing recommended by Government. The Town Council believes that its usage and success has grown during the lockdown period, appreciating that it is voluntary and that some people will always go against the guidance. Clearly, other than food shops, chemists and takeaways most businesses have been closed during this period, but anecdotal evidence from a number of businesses indicates that they are generally supportive. We understand that a petition has been raised regarding proposed temporary widening of pavements in the High Street and West Street, but we are unaware of the details. The Town Council has supported the use of two parking bays in the centre of the High Street for the provision of additional cycle parking. These are agreed in principle with the highways authority and we await their final decision on the design of the temporary cycle stands. It is hoped that these stands can be relocated elsewhere in the Town following this temporary period. The Council also sought agreement to improve the width of the footpath towards the bottom of the High Street on the West side, but this has proved to be challenging. An improved temporary widening scheme was installed yesterday by Buckinghamshire Council to improve social distancing at the corner of the junction of the High Street and Pound Lane.

Q2. In light of the council's climate-related declaration and commitment, what will the council do to continue supporting people who have switched to non-car modes of transport and to avoid traffic and air pollution going back to pre-lockdown levels? This is beyond the 2 temporary cycle racks and additional, temporary pedestrian crossings. When will a local cycling & walking improvement/action plan be published?

TC response

The Council has always tried to encourage the use alternative forms of transport. Indeed, we were very supportive of the shared cycle path between Marlow and Little Marlow and currently have a programme to clear vegetation in alleyways around the Town to help both cyclists and pedestrians. In the past, we have also supported the highways authority in their installation of cycle stands in the High Street and continue to look for additional sites for these. It is however, not easy to find appropriate open spaces for this provision given the land ownership within the Town and other matters that have to be considered.

The Town Council has strongly supported the Air Quality Management Area established by Wycombe District Council and has provided advisory banners at the entrances to the Town.

We also provide a Town bus, which circulates the Town on weekdays days offering alternative transport to cars. As a principle, the Town Council does support a modal switch to reduce traffic and pollution, but can only lobby Buckinghamshire Council, the highways authority, for further change.

To support the variety of environmental issues, the Town Council last year established an environmental sub group, including external professionals, to work through the challenges facing the Town and some excellent work has taken place since then. During the earlier part of the meeting, you may have heard the Council's agreement to the establishment of a £25,000 reserve to be used for environmental issues.

All this confirms that the Town Council does take environmental matters seriously, but has to balance the interests of residents, businesses and visitors to ensure that Marlow remains a vibrant and attractive Town.

As a final point, we are facing an unprecedented level of demand for actions from individuals and groups within the Town, all of which deserve a level of attention on their individual merits. Many of these relate to better and smarter ways of working and collective aspirations for change. However, we have to be mindful to work with all stakeholders. That process is underway with quick wins, for example, the temporary cycle stands and we are in conversation with other Town organisations, such as the Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

Marlow Resident:

Q1.The accounts show £3000 expenses for elections that haven't taken place this year. What was this used for?

Town Council response:

Thank you for your question. It was received after the deadline, but on this occasion I will take it. I am pleased you have read our accounts in detail.

The Town Council has to bear a its proportion of Town Council election costs incurred by Buckinghamshire Council for the regular elections and any by-elections that may occur. Thus, we build up a reserve, normally over four year, but currently over five years following the postponement of local elections in May of this year. At this stage we do not have an estimate of those costs and the full reserve for them is shown on the earmarked reserve schedule. The £3,000 to which you refer is the 2019/20 provision towards those 2021 costs.