

MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

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

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON TUESDAY 19TH JANUARY 2021 AT 7.00pm

Present

Town Mayor
Deputy Mayor
Leader
Councillors:

Cllr R Scott
Cllr B Johnson
Cllr J Towns
T Avery
S Brown
C Funnell at 7.20pm
C Keighley
N Marshall
K Thomson
R Wilson

Town Clerk
Deputy Clerk

Mrs H Martin
Mrs K Joy

Joined the meeting via Zoom link

2 members of the public

M.71.20

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr E West.

M.72.20

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

M.73.20

COMMUNICATIONS FROM TOWN MAYOR

Mayoral engagements

As we move from 2020 into 2021 and we are still under Lockdown restrictions, on behalf of the Town Council, may I again place on record my thanks to all residents and organisations that have helped and continue to help our vulnerable residents. We are in unprecedented and challenging times, but the community spirit that Marlow enjoys, continues to show through.

Mayoral Engagements

10th November 2020 – 12th January 2021

19th November Participated in the early morning filming of the Switch On of Marlow Christmas lights

25th November With the Leader of the Council, participated in the Mike Cannon Breakfast Show on Marlow FM

5th December Attended Marlow Christmas market on the Causeway

5th December Attended the opening of Grape Expectations in the High Street

5th December Attended the opening of Komao hair salon in Station Road

11th December Attended the opening of Crew Clothing in Marlow High Street

13th December Attended the launch of Marlow Round Table Christmas Float

18th December Participated in the Christmas lunch at the Marlow Christmas Drive-In

19th December Attended a ceremony in All Saints' Churchyard, organised by SV2G for the installation of a new grave stone and memorial in memory of George Alexander Gratton, known nationally at the Spotted Boy.

19th December Participated in the Alexander Devine Hospice event at the Marlow Christmas Drive In

Civic Events

The continuing Covid pandemic has meant that all publicly facing civic events have had to be cancelled or adapted.

The annual Remembrance Parade and Service was cancelled, but a specially recorded service was broadcast digitally on 8th November and was viewed by over 11,000 people world-wide. This service included most of the elements of the normal service.

Switch On and Shop was cancelled, but again, an excellent digital Switch On by Chris Evans was broadcast on 19th November – this attracted national press coverage!

Carols on the Causeway scheduled for 17th December was also sadly cancelled.

The next scheduled event was the Civic Service on 21st February, postponed from last year. Given the ongoing pandemic, the service for this mayoral year has been cancelled and we look forward to this taking place early in the new Council year.

Finally, the Town Mayor's Charity Golf Day is scheduled for Tuesday 20th April and we hope this can still take place.

M.74.20

REPORT FROM LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Leader Report for TC Meeting 19th January 2021 – Jocelyn Towns

Well what a strange year it has been. Let's hope that the vaccine is rolled out widely and quickly so we can start getting on with our lives!

The pandemic has heightened our awareness of the Environment, which is very important to us as a town. You may have seen that we are advertising for an Environmental specialist on a short term contract to help with developing our environment strategy. Also very excited that later in this meeting we will be sharing the great work we have completed on our Carbon Audit and our Environmental Performance Index.

Another impact on the Town, has been the huge increase in littering. We are so lucky to have the Wombles who do a really great job with litter picking, thank you. Somehow we need to encourage people to be more responsible for their own rubbish, rather than just discarding their take-away boxes, drinks cartons and masks. I did a litter pick last week and it was eye-opening!

It has been a busy time, listed below are some of our recent actions and achievements

- **Alleyway Clearance** – We have focused our efforts on our alleyway clearance, contacting land and home owners, and with general clearance from our Payback Team across this busy network has made a difference, really important especially with distancing.
- **Advisory Speed Limit** – We maintain an advisory limit of 20mph on the High Street this was established in the first lockdown and remains in place.
- **New Website** – We are delighted to announce the launch of the TC's new website, it went live just before Christmas. This brings us completely up to date with all current legislation and guidelines for Council websites. Do visit it and let us have your feedback. <https://www.marlow-tc.gov.uk/>
- **Lighting the War Memorial** – Permanent up-lighters were installed around the war memorial, which highlight a much respected piece of our local history.
- **Christmas Lights** – This year saw the introduction of the Town Council's new Christmas Lights display, and what a great time it was to deliver these, albeit coincidentally! Earlier in the year we had installed a brand new lighting infrastructure to give us greater flexibility. With the continued support of our fabulous sponsors and with our new lighting supplier, we were able to add more lights in and around the Town Centre. We introduced stars and baubles in the trees on the High Street, the Causeway and the corner of Dean Street which made a real difference. This year's lights really helped lift the flagging spirits of the town. Special thanks to Chris Evans and the Brand Events team who were able to film our exciting virtual 'Switch On' event (coveted by many other towns) which was shared on Facebook and U-Tube.
- **Christmas Drive-In** – So many events that normally happen around the Town just couldn't take place this year due to the virus. The Town Council were unable to host any of their events. Working together with the Town Council and MarlowFM, Brand Events provided a superb 'Drive-In' event venue for local community groups to hold their Christmas celebrations. Thanks also to the Marlow Rugby Club for the use of their grounds. Sadly before the programme was completed Tier 4 was announced bringing in even more restrictions. The group took the only decision they could and closed the Drive-In it was such a shame, but what had been achieved was so appreciated. It certainly showed how with a little thought and ingenuity much is possible.
- **Town Council Meetings** – We are happy to report that all TC, Resources, PET and Plans only meetings continue to take place 'virtually'. All meetings are streamed live on Facebook and the public can log onto the Zoom meetings. The public may ask a question at the appointed question time, providing it has been pre-submitted to the Town Clerk.
- **Finger Posts** – Two new Finger Posts have been installed one at the entrance to All Saint's Church signposting visitors to all parts of the town, replacing the very old board with missing words. The other on Pound Lane by the car park. These provide great guidance to those on foot.
- **Cycle Hoops** – With the recent increase in cycling during the pandemic, and renewed interest in the environment, there was a call for more cycle parking in the town. Working with the officers at Buckinghamshire council a number of locations for extra cycle hoops were agreed, the necessary ground undertaken and I am pleased to report that 16 extra hoops were installed just the week before Christmas. These were all placed with the cyclist in mind.
- **MVAS Speed Devices** – We had one portable sign in the town, for which there was much call so much so that we agreed the purchase of a further two devices. They are a great way of deterring traffic from speeding in and around the town. Please contact the office if you would like one on a road near you.

- **Wildflower Planting** – We have undertaken to increase our wild flower planting and have identified three areas in the town to achieve this.
- **Verge Protection in Lock Road and the Claremont's** – It has been agreed that we will protect the grass verges in these areas and work on this should take place very soon.
- **AQMA Banner** – We will re-install our AQMA banner across Spittal Street on the 24th January and currently it is planned to remain in situ until mid-April, this reminds motorists not to sit in traffic with their engines idling.
- **MTC's Carbon Audit** – Very excited that we have completed our Carbon Audit, a full report comes later in this agenda.
- **The Marlow Environmental Performance Index** – again very happy to report that this work is now ready to share later in the agenda.
- **Pound Lane Bollards** – We agreed the funding for the provision of these at our last meeting and they should be installed imminently.
- **We established a Covid fund** for any relevant Covid related costs, this has covered PPE for the office, plus screens etc.
- **Right of Way Access** – We continue to work with BC on registering the 'Right of Way' between Cromwell Gardens and Liston. Buckinghamshire Council grant these rights which is something of a long process. We are advised that our application has now reached the top of list and should be reviewed imminently. More information as we have it.

M.75.20 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES DATED 08.09.20 AND 08.12.20

RESOLVED:

THAT THE MINUTES DATED 08.09.20 AND 08.12.20 AS PRESENTED WERE AGREED UNANIMOUSLY AND WILL BE SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD

M.76.20 GRANTS

A completed grant application form was received from the following organisation

	Funding agreed
• Marlow Youth and Community Centre	£ 500

The full application was available on request.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY THE LEVEL OF GRANT FUNDING AS DETAILED ABOVE

M.77.20 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS REVIEW

Circulated to all members were the Town Council's current Financial Regulations.

As part of the Town Council's regular policy review process Officers have reviewed the new regulations against the current NALC documents and no changes were advised.

RESOLVED

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL UNAMENDED

M.78.20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY REVIEW

Circulated to all members was the Town Council's current Treasury Management Policy.

As part of the Town Council's regular policy review process Officers have reviewed the new regulations against the current NALC documents and no changes are advised.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AS PRESENTED FOR MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

M.79.20 DIRECT DEBIT AND STANDING ORDER REVIEW

RESOLVED:

THAT THE DIRECT DEBIT AND STANDING ORDER PAYMENTS SCHEDULE, AS PRESENTED, WERE REVIEWED AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY MEMBERS

M.80.20 CARBON AUDIT REPORT

The Carbon Audit Report, commissioned by the Town Council, was circulated in full to all members.

The report detailed the Council's carbon footprint for 2019/20 and

- Demonstrates that the Council takes climate change seriously
- Provides a baseline for actions that the Council will take to reduce its own emissions
- Will be used to encourage households to measure their own carbon emissions

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO ADOPT THE FINDINGS OF THE CARBON AUDIT REPORT AND THAT THE FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY WILL GO TOWARDS BUILDING THE COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

M.81.20 MARLOW ENVIRONMENT PERFORMANCE INDEX

A starting point for environmental action is to have a strong understanding of current environmental and sustainability factors and to be able to track progress over time. Based on the same approach as national environmental accounts, the Town Council is aiming for Marlow to become the first small town in the UK to create its own simplified environmental performance index.

The environmental performance index (EPI) will track trends in important indicators, including air quality, the CO2 emissions rating of cars registered in Marlow, the share of Marlow's municipal waste recycled. The full EPI was circulated to all members.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO ADOPT THE EPI AS A STARTING POINT TO TRACK PROGRESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE FACTORS OVER TIME AND AS A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

M.82.20 EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019-20*7.20pm – Cllr C Funnell joins the meeting*

The External Auditor has returned the certificate confirming that Marlow Town Council has completed the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2020. The report was circulated to all members of the Council as appendix F in the meeting agenda.

The report was signed in accordance with the instructions and this note has been challenged. One item refers to the treatment of the CCLA Property fund investment in the accounts. All figures have been approved as correct.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS NOTED THE REPORT AND UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THAT THE TOWN CLERK POSTS THE REQUIRED 'NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF THE AUDIT AND THE RIGHT TO INSPECT THE ANNUAL RETURN'

M.83.20 BUDGET 2021-2022

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FORECAST STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2020-2021 and 2021-22 PROPOSED BUDGET

The report below sets out the income and expenditure statements and forecast for the current year 2020-21 together with the budget proposals for the coming year 2021-22.

A detailed and thorough review has been conducted of all the various items of income and expenditure incurred by Marlow Town Council. The figures within the budget were compared to the forecast of expenditure for the current year. The surplus will be achieved by continuing prudent expenditure and the cancellation of key events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any surplus will be transferred to Reserves at the end of the financial year to improve the General Reserves position. The proposal is to set a break even budget this year.

Income and Expenditure Forecast Statement 2020-21 and 2021-22 Proposed Budget		Full Year Budget	Actual/ Forecast	Full Year Budget
		2020/21	2020/21	2021/22
	INCOME			
1	Precept Received	350,370	350,371	347,424
2	Bucks CC Devolved Services	16,870	16,870	16,870
3	WDC Devolved Services	46,718	46,718	46,718
4	Allotment Rents	13,500	12,500	12,500
5	Cemetery Fees	42,000	45,000	46,000
6	Gossmore Recreation Ground	700	700	700
7	Bus Shelter Advertising	752	910	910
8	Banner Administration	850	650	850
9	Markets	2,000	0	2,000
10	Shopmobility Marlow	260	260	250
11	Cash Holding Interest	4,631	4,631	5,068
	Totals	478,651	478,610	479,290

	EXPENDITURE	Full Year Budget	Actual/ Forecast	Full Year Budget
		2020/21	2020/21	2021/22
12	Salaries	211,401	209,401	210,776
13	Subcontractors	19,781	16,600	18,331
14	Administration	35,029	31,400	32,563
15	Waste Management	4,854	4,854	4,294
16	Health and Safety	4,506	4,506	3,747
17	Equipment, Operating and Maintenance	3,566	3,100	3,188
18	Community	110,211	95,409	102,461
19	Devolved	71,357	71,357	71,044
20	Utilities	7,665	7,665	7,359
21	Buildings	16,650	15,500	18,140
22	Insurance	3,800	3,374	3,787
23	Van	3,600	3,600	3,600
	Totals	492,420	466,766	479,290

INCOME

No	Item	Explanation
1	Precept	Decrease from £350,371 to £347,424 due to a reduction in the tax base.
6	Cemetery Fees	Increase in Cemetery income from £42,000 to £46,000 to reflect increased income in the first 9 months of this financial year and the average income over the past four years.

EXPENDITURE

No	Item	Explanation
14	Administration	Reduction from £35,029 to £32,563 due to continued prudent expenditure.
18	Community	Reduction due to removal of the £3,000 Unitary contingency and reduction in budget for Celebrate Marlow.
19	Buildings	Increase in costs of £1500 to reflect the cleaning costs of the water refill station.

RESOLVED:

1. THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FORECAST
2. THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE PROPOSED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BUDGET FOR 2021-22 AND
3. THAT IN PURSUANCE OF ITS POWERS CONFERRED BY SECTION 137 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
(AS AMENDED) THE TOWN COUNCIL: -

APPROVES PROPOSED EXPENDITURE FOR 2021-22 ON THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL ARE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE TOWN OR ITS INHABITANTS

MAYORAL FUNCTIONS AND CIVIC EVENTS; GROUNDS MAINTENANCE; GRANTS; TOWN TWINNING; CHRISTMAS TREE AND DECORATIONS; FLORAL DISPLAYS AND SUMMER BUNTING; ALLOTMENT PRIZES; COMMUNITY, LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT; YOUTH PROJECT

M.84.20 PRECEPT 2021-2022

Precept illustration 2021-2022 – Marlow Town Council

Precept	£0.00		
Or			
Band D Tax (Estimated)	£51.24		
Table – Summary of Results			
Year	2020-21	2021-22	Difference
Precept	£350,370.92	£347,424.62	-£2,946.30
CTSS Grant	£0.00	-	N/A
Income	£350,370.92	£347,424.62	-£2,946.30
Tax Base	6837.84	6780.34	-57.50
Band D (Estimated)	£51.24	£51.24	0.00%

The Town Council's precept contribution from Buckinghamshire Council is less than the previous year because the council tax base has reduced. Notwithstanding that, with the other savings and changes that have been made, the council tax charge for the average Band D property (as defined by Government) has remained at the same level as the previous year at £51.24 per annum.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THE MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL PRECEPT FOR THE YEAR 2021-2022 BE IN THE SUM OF £347,424

M.85.20 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Circulated to all members were the managements accounts schedules dated 31.10.20:-

- Income and Expenditure
- Balance Sheet
- Earmarked Reserves
- Grants
- Bank Reconciliation
- Payments
- Cost Centre Expenditure

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS DATED 31.10.20

M.86.20 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.

b) DPI Register and Gifts and Hospitality

A reminder to all members to notify officers if there are any changes to their Declarations of Pecuniary Interest Register and to notify officers if they receive gifts or hospitality that exceed £50.

MEMBERS NOTED THE REPORTS

M.87.20 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDES BODIES

Cllr J Towns

Will be attending a BidCo meeting later in January the December meeting having been cancelled

Cllr N Marshall

Reported for the Marlow Society

Cllr C Keighley

Reported the Marly-le-Roi town twinning plans had been cancelled

Cllr S Brown

Reported Brinkhurst had empty rooms and there was a vacancy for a Trustee

Cllr C Funnell

Reported that the Marlow Town Regatta and Festival would not take place in June and would either be postponed or be a virtual event

Cllr R Scott

Confirmed that the Marlow Community Association building remained closed

M.88.20 REPORTS FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr R Wilson – nothing to report

Cllr S Brown – two local organisations had received funding from the SW Chiltern Group

Cllr N Marshall – would be challenging some local planning applications

Cllr R Scott – Cabinet had approved the budget for 2021-22 and would be recommending this to Full Council on 24.02.21. Although not responsible for the Covid vaccination programme, Cllr Scott confirmed that Buckinghamshire Council were working closely with the NHS in support of them.

M.89.20 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING - Tuesday 16.03.2021 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 7.30pm

Town Mayor.....Date.....

Public questions:

1. Concerns were raised regarding polluting traffic behaviour to which the Town Mayor had previously responded
2. Concerns were raised regarding dog fouling issues. The Town Mayor responded that this issue would be raised with Buckinghamshire Council via the Town Council's PET Committee with an aim to improve signage.