

MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

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

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY ON TUESDAY 27th APRIL 2021 AT 6.30pm

Present	Town Mayor	-	Cllr R Scott
	Leader	-	Cllr J Towns
	Councillors	-	T Avery S Brown R Cadman C Funnell N Marshall R Wilson
	Town Clerk	-	Mrs H Martin
	Deputy Clerk	-	Mrs K Joy

M.101.20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B Johnson, Cllr C Keighley, Cllr K Thomson and Cllr E West.

M.102.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

M.103.20 COMMUNICATIONS FROM TOWN MAYOR

HRH The Prince Philip

It is with great sadness and reflection that Council today remembers the passing of his Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, just weeks short of his 100th birthday. On behalf of your Council and the residents of Marlow, I immediately sent our sympathies to Her Majesty the Queen and the royal family after hearing the sad news. There are simply no words to adequately describe the Duke of Edinburgh's dedication and service to the Queen, the country and public life.

As has already been quoted, he was the 'father of the nation' in so many ways and, as members, we recognise that immense contribution to public duty, together with everything he did for the county of Buckinghamshire, including a visit to Marlow, and for the nation as a whole. The Council has followed all the protocols required of it following the death of a member of the Royal family.

At this point in the meeting a one minute's silence was held.

Mayoral engagements

Now in April 2021 and we are still under some Covid lockdown restrictions, although the Government has announced relaxations so that many of our businesses can re-open. We look forward to all restrictions being lifted, hopefully by June, and we have already seen organisations announcing that their events will take place from late summer onward. As a Council, we look forward to supporting their activities.

On behalf of the Council, may I again place on record my thanks to all residents and organisations who have helped and continue to help our vulnerable residents.

Lockdown has severely restricted the number of events to which the deputy mayor and myself would normally have been invited. However, I did represent the Council on a Zoom call to celebrate of the 101st birthday of Mrs Barbara Wood, a resident of Aubrey Ward House on 13 February.

Later this evening, I shall be attending a virtual induction service for a new minister, Rev Sarah Jones, to the All Saints Church Team and saying a few words of welcome on behalf of the Town. And next week, I shall be meeting with a number of students from Great Marlow school who have expressed an interest in setting up a Youth Council.

You will recall Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher retired as Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire last November and during his fourteen years' service in that role, Sir Henry and his wife Bobby, have been regular visitors to civic and other events in the Town. In recognition of that, I was pleased to present him with a framed signed drawing of Marlow Bridge last Wednesday, 21 April.

Civic events

As reported previously, the continuing Covid pandemic meant that all publicly facing civic events have been cancelled and this included the Mayor's charity golf day, scheduled for 20th April. The Civic service will be arranged for later in the year.

Looking further forward into the year, the Council has agreed the dates for Remembrance Day and the pre-Christmas civic events of Switch on and Shop and Carols on the Causeway and these are shown on the Town Council's website.

The annual general meeting of the Town Council will take place on Tuesday 18 May 2021. It is currently uncertain if this will be held physically, rather than virtually. Again, full details will be published on our website.

Local elections and retiring councillors

I'm sure that it won't have escaped anyone's attention that we have local elections on Thursday 6 May and the first meeting of the new Council will be held on 18 May.

Attached to this report is a list of those members who are not seeking re-election. I would like to pay tribute to those five councillors, Suzanne Brown, Bob Johnson, Camilla Keighley, Kathy Thomson and Emily West for the service they've provided to local residents and the Council over many years - in fact, their total service amounts to 46 years. I know that one or two of you had expected to withdraw from Council life a year ago, but then we saw the local elections postponed due to the covid pandemic. Thank you for providing an additional year of service.

Cllr S Brown: serving Councillor since election in 2007. Town Mayor 2013-14 and 2014-15. Deputy Mayor 2011-12 and 2012-13. PET committee member.

Cllr B Johnson: serving Councillor since election in 2011. Town Mayor 2015-16 and 2016-17. Deputy Mayor 2013-14, 2014-15, 2019 to present day. Chairman of Resources several years. Staffing Committee member.

Cllr C Keighley: serving Councillor since election in 2015. Resources Committee member.

Cllr K Thomson: serving Councillor since election in 2011. Resources Committee and Events working group member. Recruited Christmas lights sponsors. Worked on "Vision" for Marlow.

Cllr E West: serving Councillor since election in 2015. PET committee member. Recruited Christmas lights sponsors.

The Town Mayor stated what questions were permissible during the current period of purdah. The statement is attached to these minutes for reference.

Cllr Richard Scott
Town Mayor
27 April 2021

REPORT FROM LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

I would just like to start by saying a big thank you to all our volunteer groups during this pandemic, whether it be helping with the vaccine delivery, litter picking, delivering food parcels/hot meals, helping neighbours etc. We have a great town that has really stepped up.

The Business Park B BID (Business Improvement District) Board – has been meeting regularly through lockdown. Though many of the businesses have not been on site the business park has been really busy with walkers and joggers, which is good to see. The downside has been the increased litter in the area. There are currently no public litter bins, and a request has been put to Buckinghamshire Council (BC) to see if a couple could be included on the business park. I will provide more news when I have it. To help the area in the meantime the BID Board Manager, the Chief Womble and I have been litter picking the area every Friday afternoon since January.

Environment Consultant – Nick Rowcliffe joined us in a consultative role to help with our Environmental Strategy. Having set our Environment Policy last year along with our Clean Air Plan, and earlier this year published our own Town Council Carbon Audit and our Environmental Performance Index, we felt we needed expert help in developing these initiatives further. An initial very successful community call was held recently, some great questions asked and we received some helpful feedback. The Town Council (TC) is committed to increasing community engagement on sustainability and informing residents of what they can do to make a difference. Nick will be proposing some work streams for consideration to take forward once the newly elected council is in place in early May

Wild Flower areas – are really important for our Bee and insect populations. We are working closely with Wild Marlow to develop further areas to support them around the town. We are looking at three further locations where opportunities will be developed by the incoming council.

Lighting problems in Liston Court – we continue to work with BC on this and hope to have a solution in the very near future.

Eco-Schools Conference – more on this in the information reports, but just to say we are really pleased this is back on the sustainable marlow agenda.

Great British Spring Clean – we continue to support the Wombles who are doing a fantastic job of litter picking in and around the town. The Great British Spring Clean litter pick that we support each year will be managed differently this year. It will need to be organised in groups of no more than six, to adhere to Covid rules. Litter pickers and bags will be available from the TC office, so please email or ring to arrange a pick up. As before full bags can be left by the Council office for disposal.

AQMA Banner – This was sadly torn in the recent high winds and had to be taken down and disposed of. We have a replacement banner going up on Sunday. It is important to keep reminding drivers that they are in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) area and not to drive erratically.

Marlow is Open for Business banner - As well as installing our new bunting early this year to support the shops re-opening, we were also able to put up our Marlow is Open for Business banner, which will be in place for another couple of weeks.

Poster Competition – The recent Marlovian Magazine ran a poster competition put together by the Marlow Wombles, for school children. These have now been judged and winners will be notified very soon. We had a great response to this competition. Thank you to all who took part.

Cllr Jocelyn Towns
Leader

27.04.21

M.105.20 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES DATED 16.03.21

RESOLVED:

THAT THE MINUTES DATED 16.03.21 WERE UNANIMOUSLY AGREED AS A TRUE RECORD AND WILL BE SIGNED AS SUCH

M.106.20 WILTSHIRE ROAD FOOTPATH

Cllr Avery joined the meeting

Marlow Town Council (MTC) has had resident requests regarding the installation of a proper tarmac footpath across two grass verges in the area of the Wiltshire Road roundabout. Historical background information regarding this area was submitted to members.

An MTC officer has visited the site and agreed that a footpath would be very beneficial to Marlow residents and the general public.

Contractors had visited the site and quoted for the work. It was recommended that the footpath should be moved 5 meters to the west as it is currently quite close to the roundabout, over two water covers and the opposite side would be very close to the lamp post. The cost would be £2,724 plus VAT, including dropped kerbs. The recommended contractor is approved by Buckinghamshire Council to work on the footpaths.

The cost for dropped kerbs on both sides and a footpath on the opposite verge would be £2,521.

A map accompanied the agenda showing the positions marked in orange.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY TO A SPEND FROM CIL (COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY) OF £5,300 TO COMPLETE THE FOOTPATHS

M.107.20 STAFFING REVIEW

The Staffing Committee had proposed that members agree to instruct a specialist company to carry out a detailed staffing review. A review of the workings of the Council has never been carried out and the staffing committee recommend that this be carried out as good practice. The review will encompass all the workings of the Council, acknowledging that the provision and delivery of services has changed over many years. There is also an expectation of more devolved services from Buckinghamshire Council.

Several providers had been approached and the company recommended has significant Town Council experience of conducting these reviews and will provide a detailed report and presentation to the staffing committee. The cost including advisory reports is between £4,000 and £5,000 and this cost can be met from the predicted surplus in the 2020/21 budget.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS AGREED UNANIMOUSLY TO PROCEED WITH THE STAFFING COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION AND SPEND UP TO £5,000 ON THE STAFFING REVIEW WITH THE RECOMMENDED CONTRACTOR

M.108.20 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Circulated to all members were the management account schedules dated 28.02.21 as detailed below:-

- Income and Expenditure
- Balance Sheet
- Earmarked Reserves
- Grants
- Bank Reconciliation
- Bank Statements
- Payments
- Expenditure breakdown by cost centres

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS DATED 28.02.21

M.109.20 RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND COVID RISK ASSESSMENT

Circulated to all members was the Risk Management Plan 2021 and the Covid-19 Risk Assessment Policy.

In accordance with NALC guidelines, and with the approval of Bucks Association of Local Councils and advice from the Health and Safety Executive, the plan had been prepared by officers and was submitted to members for review and approval.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2021 AND THE COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

M.110.20 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Circulated to all members was the completed Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit 2020-21 report.

Cllr N Marshall undertook the review on 21.01.21 and recorded no areas for development.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY ACCEPTED CLLR MARSHALLS REPORT

M.111.20 GRANTS

Cllr N Marshall joined the meeting

Completed grant applications had been received from the following organisations and the funding determined as detailed below:-

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Lighthouse Marlow | Agreed Grant £500 |
| • Christ Church United Reformed Church, Marlow | Agreed Grant £500 |

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THE GRANT FUNDING AS DETAILED ABOVE

M.112.20 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) Schools Eco Conference

This was scheduled for March 2020 and sadly it had to be cancelled due to the first Covid lockdown. The schools are keen to reinvigorate this conference either virtually or in person when rules permit but are looking to do so before the end of the school year. The format is currently being worked on and more details will follow.

c) Wildflower Planting

Three areas of highway land around the Town have been allocated for Wildflower planting. This is to support the local Bee population and wildlife. The areas have now been planted and we hope to see a bumper crop of wildflowers later this year. The very dry weather has had an impact, but they are being watered regularly. Wild Marlow are supportive of these initiatives, and we look forward to developing more Bee corridors with them in the future.

In addition, an area in Rookery Park has been left to re-wild and there is now an area designated for wildflowers in Higginson Park. Work has also been undertaken to improve the land around the Higginson Park backwater (recently upgraded) by the first bridge to the towpath, Wild Marlow have been working on the area and have done a great job in tidying the land and planting trees.

There was a presentation by Wild Marlow to the Council prior to the meeting.

MEMBERS NOTED THE REPORTS

M.113.20 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDES BODIES

Cllr J Towns

Reported attending a meeting of BidCo with another meeting forthcoming

Cllr R Wilson

Reported he would be attending a Marlow Forum meeting on 28.04.21

Cllr C Funnell

Reported the Town Regatta and Festival would run as a virtual event this year

Cllr S Brown

Reported attending two meetings of Brinkhurst

On behalf of Cllr Keighley, Cllr Brown reported that the Marly-le-Roi twinning association had been sharing videos and images as twinning visits could not take place

Cllr Marshall

Reported attending a meeting of the Marlow Society

M.114.20 REPORTS FROM BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr R Scott

Reported that the 6 month trial of the “quiet road scheme” in Trinity Road had started

M.115.20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18th May 2021

Meeting closed at 7.00pm

Town Mayor **Date**

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Q: Where could information on grant awards and applications be found?

A: The Town Council website posted a list of grants issued. Advice and application forms were also available online.

PURDAH STATEMENT

As you know, we have the challenge of conducting this full council meeting during the pre-election period. I have liaised with the town clerk on the business for this meeting and am acutely conscious of the importance of ensuring proper and informed political debate, set against having a full council meeting in such close proximity to the elections.

All councillors will appreciate that this is a period of heightened sensitivity and while we are able to carry on the normal business of the council, which will include providing factual information, and asking questions on council business, the meeting cannot be used to enable councillors (or any candidates standing for election) to communicate in a way which seeks to influence voters.

The Town Clerk or I will intervene if we consider that any member is using the council platform to make statements designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

CLlr Richard Scott | Town Mayor