

MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

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

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2023 AT 7.00pm IN THE SEYMOUR ROOM, COURT GARDEN, MARLOW

Present

Town Mayor	Cllr D Brown
Deputy Mayor	Cllr C Stapley
Leader	Cllr C Funnell
Deputy Leader	Cllr C Hoyle
Councillors	R Cadman
	C Heap
	N Marshall
	N Mityaeva
	J Towns
	R Wilson
Town Clerk	Mrs H Martin
Deputy Clerk	Mrs K Joy

Also present

3 members of the public

M.42.23 Apologies for absence

Cllr R Scott.

M.43.23 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

M.44.23 Communications from the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor presented the list of engagements that he and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken since the last meeting.

M.45.23 Report from Leader of the Council

The Leader gave a verbal report on activities since the last meeting.

M.46.23 Town Council Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT THE MINUTES DATED 01.08.23 WERE AGREED AND SIGNED AS A TRUE RECORD

M.47.23 Management Accounts

RESOLVED:

THAT THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS DATED 30.06.23 WERE APPROVED

M.48.23 Frohman Statue Winter Cover

Filming/Recording/Photographing at Meetings – please note that this may take place during the public part of the meeting. Notices are displayed in the meeting room.

Members had a presentation from Chiltern Conservation in 2022 where several options to preserve the statue were discussed.

Whilst more options including possible re siting are explored it is recommended that a winter cover is purchased at a cost of £1840 to protect the statue during the winter.

The statue will be cleaned when the cover is removed in the Spring.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS APPROVED EXPENDITURE OF £1840 FROM TOWN IMPROVEMENTS RESERVES FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE WINTER COVER FOR THE FROHMAN STATUE

M.49.23 Office Christmas Closure

Members are asked to approve the closure of the office from Friday 22nd December 2023 to Tuesday 2nd January 2024 inclusive.

As in previous years, it is recommended that the officers be granted the two statutory days during the closure period and the remaining one working day will be met by annual leave.

Arrangements will be in place to cover funerals should the need arise and for emergency contact. Information regarding the closure will be posted on Town council website, office noticeboard, social media and office answerphone.

RESOLVED:

THAT COUNCIL APPROVED THE CLOSURE OF THE OFFICE AS DETAILED ABOVE

M.50.23 Appointment of Internal Auditor 2024-25

The Internal Auditor appointed by the Town Council for the past financial year has indicated that he would be willing to carry out the audits again this year. The service received by the Town Council has been thorough and professional.

To undertake the interim audit and year-end audit at a fee of £790.00 plus VAT.

Members are asked to approve the Internal Auditors Terms of Reference circulated to all members.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS APPOINTED THE SAME INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE YEAR 2024-25 AND

APPROVED THE CURRENT SCALE OF FEES AND

APPROVED THE INTERNAL AUDITORS TERMS OF REFERENCE

M.51.23 Civic Visit Approval

An invitation will be forthcoming for the Town Mayor to attend this year's Remembrance commemorations in Marly-le-Roi, France. In order for expenses to be claimed the visit must be approved by Council.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS APPROVED THIS AS AN OFFICIAL CIVIC VISIT

M.52.23 Ace Marlow Playing Cards

Members are asked to consider sponsoring a playing card for the Ace Marlow Playing Card pack. The pack is expected to be launched in time for Christmas.

The aim of the pack is to promote Marlow, its shops, restaurants, businesses, events, things to see and also hidden gems, Marlow's best kept secrets etc. Packs will be available to purchase in various locations.

Feedback from Members so far is that the Council could sponsor one card at a cost of £200 per year. It has been suggested that the playing card feature the Christmas Lights Switch On event. Expenditure could be funded from Town Improvement reserves.

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS AGREED TO SPONSOR ONE CARD AT A COST OF £200 FEATURING MARLOW'S CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON

M.53.23 Bleed Kit Installations

Purchase of Bleed Kits to install in defibrillator boxes in Seymour Park Road, jct of Station Rise and Quoiting Square

Officers recommended the purchase of bleed kits to go into the Council's three existing defibrillator cabinets and the one about to be installed in Quoiting Square. The packs can be included in the existing cabinets that house the defibs and additional signage can be placed indicating the presence of a bleed kit.

The kits can be accessed by dialling 999 and the call handler will give the access code to the box. The kits cost £85 each and can ensure a life is saved.

RESOLVED

THAT MEMBERS APPROVED THE SPEND OF £255 FROM TOWN IMPROVEMENT RESERVES FOR THE PURCHASE OF THREE BLEED KITS AND ESTABLISH A NOMINAL BUDGET LINE OF £100 FOR THE 2024/25 BUDGET OF £100 FOR REPLACEMENT ITEMS

M.54.23 Free Parking Days

Buckinghamshire Council offer three free parking days in their Marlow car parks each year. In previous years these have been agreed as the first three Saturdays in December.

RESOLVED:

THAT COUNCIL AGREE THAT BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL OWNED MARLOW CAR PARKS WILL BE FREE ON THE FOLLOWING DATES: SATURDAY 2ND DECEMBER, SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER AND SATURDAY 16TH DECEMBER 2023

M.55.23 MAAFC Fees

Council has had a request from the Marlow Amateur Association of Football Clubs (MAAFC) as follows:-

“The Association held a meeting this week to discuss amongst other things the state of the pitch at Gossmore.

Marlow Youth who presently have two sides using the main pitch are currently in discussions with the FA over grass pitches in the town and would like to include Gossmore in their talks with a view to receiving a grant to improve the main pitch which we agreed was the way forward.

This year Marlow United men's team are actively looking to find an alternative to playing at Gossmore because of its poor condition.

This would leave the youth section of the club, under 7 to under 10 sections, along with the two teams from Marlow Youth FC as the sole users of the pitches.

With this in mind we are asking if the Town Council would waive the fee for the new season.

If that were agreed that money could then be spent on improving the main pitch through the coming season.”

The meeting noted that the pitch was not fit for purpose and the Environment Agency (EA) should reimburse the Council for the lost income in waiving the MAAFC fee. The Town Council would continue to chase the EA to meet the terms of the contract and effect the pitch repairs.

RESOLVED:

THAT COUNCIL AGREED TO WAIVE THE £700 MAAFC FEE FOR THE 2022/23 SEASON

M.56.23 External Audit Report 2022-23

The External Auditor has returned the report and certificate (circulated to all members) confirming that Marlow Town Council has completed the audit of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The one noted matter is administrative and a disagreement between the internal and external auditor on a tick box.

RESOLVED:

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

M.57.23 Proposal for a Full Council Review from the Staffing Committee

Background

MTC has not undergone a systematic review of its organisation and legacy structure for over 20 years. A quotation has been sought from the consulting company “Council HR and Governance support” (HRGS) from a short list of candidates. The overall objective is to complete an organisational review which builds on previous work completed by LGRC and develops the detail required against the councils’ current requirements, objectives, and future aspirations and looks in detail at completing an overall review as follows.

- A training session with members
- A visioning exercise that develops a new strategic plan
- An organisational review and job evaluation exercise that defines current best practices and staffing levels
- Benchmarking other councils for comparable data
- A review and design of the pay and reward system for officers and staff

RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS APPROVED AND DELEGATED FULL RESPONSIBILITY BUDGET AND AUTHORITY TO PLACE A CONTRACT WITH HRGS TO THE STAFFING COMMITTEE FOR EXTERNAL CONSULTING EXPENDITURE OF £10,000 FROM THE REVENUE BUDGET IN ADDITION TO THE RESIDUAL EARMARKED RESERVE FROM 2020 FOR ORGANISATIONAL AND STAFFING REVIEW TO AIM TO COMPLETE THIS EXERCISE BY MARCH 31ST 2024

M.58.23 IT Review Proposal from Cllr Funnell

Background

Security of information and documentation within Marlow Town Council is important to our operation in all areas from our sensitive data and information /networks and systems.

It is critical that our systems are audited and compliant to protect the above and that we are not subject to Cyber-attacks, compromise of sensitive information and compromise of e mail accounts.

The council is supported by the company Cracking IT under contract for this.

The council must ensure that we have the correct policies and systems /procedures in place.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT MEMBERS APPROVED THE APPOINTMENT OF AN IT SECURITY EXPERT INDEPENDENT OF OUR CURRENT PROVIDER TO REVIEW AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO THE SUITABILITY OF OPERATION OF OUR IT SYSTEMS, AND TO CONDUCT AN AUDIT AND TO PROVIDE A REPORT TO THE COUNCIL. THAT THIS WORK BE DELEGATED TO THE CLERK, CLLR FUNNELL AND CLLR HOYLE AND A REPORT BE SUBMITTED TO FULL COUNCIL. BUDGET APPROVAL SOUGHT OF £3,000 TO BE TAKEN FROM RESERVES

M.59.23 Information Reports

a) Committee Minutes

Members are reminded that all minutes are posted to the Town Council website and all members are invited to review all Council and Committee minutes regularly.

b) Defibrillator in Quoiting Square Phone Box

The project to adopt the BT Phone Box and apply for LBC consent to install a defibrillator is complete. The defibrillator is live with the ambulance service.

c) Community Emergency Plan

Following the Flood Fayre Officers will be starting work on a draft Community Emergency plan with the support of the Buckinghamshire Council Community Resilience team. The plan will be presented to Council for approval in due course.

MEMBERS NOTED THE REPORTS

M.60.23 Reports from Outside Bodies

Cllr J Towns
Attended a BidCo meeting.

M.61.23 Reports from Buckinghamshire Council

Cllr J Towns Reported liaising with Highways regarding the Thames Water roadworks and the Plane Tree road closure / proposed felling. It was noted that shops and businesses had recorded being adversely affected by the road closures.

M.62.23 Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5th December 2023 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Chairman Date

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Cllr R Cadman asked why he had not been consulted about the renovation and siting of the clock in the cinema building.

The Town Clerk responded that three emails had been sent to Cllr Cadman without any response received.