

Melksham Town Council
Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
on Monday 31st March 2025

PRESENT Councillor T Price (Town Mayor)
Councillor S Rabey (Deputy Town Mayor)
Councillor P Alford
Councillor P Aves
Councillor G Cooke
Councillor S Crundell
Councillor G Ellis
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor C Stokes
Councillor A Westbrook
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE Councillor Glover, Councillor Pafford, Councillor Harris and Teresa Strange (Clerk) of Melksham Without Parish Council were in attendance to talk on several agenda items.

OFFICERS Tracy Predeth Locum Clerk
Andrew Meacham Committee Clerk

PUBLIC Three members of the public and one member of the press were present and three members of the public were present virtually. Representatives of Melksham Rugby Club Juniors were present for item 12.1

191/24 Apologies

There were no apologies.

192/24 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

193/24 Public Participation

Member of the Press

Thanked the Council for the last 4 years and wished good luck to all standing in the upcoming elections.

Local Resident

“Would Melksham Town Council please provide an update on progress towards building East Melksham Community Hall? At the 27th November 2023 Full Melksham Town Council Meeting, it was stated that the Town Clerk had given instructions to the architect to submit a planning application. It is now 16 months later and, despite the funds being essentially in place along with assurances at the beginning of 2025 that the planning application was imminent following final queries from the architect and that the application would not be delayed as a result of it being a possibility that funds may be combined with those from the Blackmore Farm development for a larger single hub some several years in the future.”

The Town Mayor Councillor Price thanked the resident and noted that there was an agenda item for East Melksham Community Hall.

Representative of Melksham Without

East Melksham Community Hall - If Melksham Town Council is not going to proceed with their plans then a bigger facility in the Blackmore Farm development would be able to benefit all the residents of East Melksham. Melksham Without Parish Council would welcome an update on Melksham Town Council's plans.

Age UK – MTC and MWPC entered into a joint contract with Age UK for a 3 year programme. MWPC have a SLA with Age UK starting 1st April 2025. Not aware of MTC plans. Understand there are funds in the MTC budget but not the amount Age UK expected to maintain the service at the same level.

Emergency Plan – Officers have been talking for some time about a joint plan. Note that the matter has been pushed back to the new council.

194/24 Police Report

Sgt Rutter reported that Inspector Lemon has temporary been reposted and a new inspector would be in post shortly.

Comparative stats for January – March 2024 and January – March 2025 were given.

Violence	102 down to 84
Theft	41 down to 30
Criminal Damage	31 down to 19
Drug Offences	6, up to 10 (due to increased police activity)
Burglary	21, down to 6

Priorities going forward – safer spaces (such as nighttime economy, cycling on pavement), retail crime and violence against women & girls.

Sgt Rutter answered councillors' questions.

195/24 Motion on Rugby Club

This item was advanced up the agenda.

Councillor Hubbard introduced the motion.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders.

The Youth Chairman of Melksham Rugby Club spoke about the benefits of rugby for young people.

Members of the youth teams spoke.

It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

Members debated the motion. There was broad support for the work of the club and thanks to the team members who spoke. Questions were asked about the intended ownership of the floodlights. Some members were of the view that a grant application should be made. It was pointed out that the amount exceeded the maximum grant level.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

RESOLVED to allocate £12,000 from the Solar Farm Fund to allow Melksham Rugby Club to purchase two mobile floodlight units for Melksham Rugby Club Juniors to support increased participation in youth rugby training and development programmes.

Councillor S Crundell left the chamber for a short period.

196/24 Resolution of Asset Management & Amenities – Shurnhold Fields

This item was advanced up the agenda.

Councillor Hubbard left the chamber for a short period.

The Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey introduced the item.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

The representatives of Melksham Without Parish Council spoke on the plans and answered questions.

It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

Members debated.

It was proposed by Councillor Aves, seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to proceed with the Shurnhold Fields Improvement Scheme.

The Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey left the chamber for a short period.

197/24 Neighbourhood Plan Funding

This item was advanced up the agenda.

Councillor Hubbard addressed the concerns coming from the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor S Cundell and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

Representatives of Melksham Without Parish Council spoke to clarify the situation and answer councillors questions. Councillors debated. Councillor Aves left the chamber for a short period during this time.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by the Town Mayor Councillor Price and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to pay outstanding sums due and to allocate £6000 from CIL for future costs. If any funding beyond that is required it is to come to full council before any expenditure is authorised for payment.

198/24 East Melksham Community Centre

This item was advanced up the agenda.

Councillors were concerned that the project had stalled. There was discussion on a joint project with Melksham Without Parish Council, or providing funds to Melksham Without Parish Council, to build a larger facility at Blackmore Farm and whether the section 106 money could be allocated to such a project.

It was proposed by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor S Crundell and

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders.

East Melksham resident was concerned about how long the Blackmore Farm development would take and the amount of land allocated for a Community Hall.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

Councillor Stokes confirmed that Blackmore Farm had gone through strategic planning and additional land had been allocated for a Community Centre.

It was agreed that the matter would come back to the first meeting on the new council. Officers would speak to Wiltshire Council to confirm what restraints there were on the 107 agreement, what renegotiation was possible and what would happen to the land that would have been the Community Centre if MTC decided not to proceed. Councillor Hubbard urged proper consultation with residents.

199/24 Questions from Councillors

There were no questions.

200/24 Minutes

The minutes of Monday 20th January 2025, Monday 27th January 2025 and Monday 3rd February 2025, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair Town Mayor Councillor Price.

201/24 Town Mayors Announcements

Thanked councillors for their support and commitment over the last four years and particularly during his year as Mayor. Also thanks to everyone who made the Mayors Reception a success.

202/24 Reports from Unitary Councillors.

There was nothing to report.

203/24 Bank Mandate

It was proposed by Councillor S Crundell, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to update the bank mandate to remove Kalpesh Patel, add Hayley Bell and add the new RFO.

204/24 Recommendation of Community Development Committee

It was proposed by Councillor A Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Stokes and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to move the £10000 for tree planting into a Tree Planting Earmarked Reserve to carry forward into the next financial year.

205/24 Recommendation of Asset Management & Amenities.

It was noted that the resolution mistakenly referred to Councillor Rabey as Mayor rather than Deputy Mayor.

It was agreed that this should be a matter for the new council with a detailed report on why it is a good idea and how it would work.

206/24 Motion of Financial Reporting

Councillor Griffin introduced the item.

The Town Mayor Councillor Price left the chamber for a couple of minutes The Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey sat as chair in his absence.

The Locum Clerk gave advice.

There was discussion on what it was appropriate to publish.

Councillor Hubbard proposed a friendly amendment, which was accepted by Councillor Griffin.

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor A Westbrook and

RESOLVED that when the new RFO is appointed it is anticipated that they will get Melksham Town Council to the point where they would:-

- a) Comply in full with the public disclosure requirements contained in Local Government Transparency Code 2015
- b) Publish enhanced financial reports including at least a summary Income & Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet with appropriate notes, together with a narrative report of the financial performance for the year, and including comparative numbers for the previous year.

Within 12 months

207/24 Financial Risk Assessment/Risk Register

It was noted that this was a “living document” and could be revisited after adoption if required. On that basis,

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the Financial Risk Assessment/Risk Register.

208/24 Financial Regulations

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by Councillor Alford and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to adopt the amendment to the Financial Regulations as follows:-

FR 5.15 Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:

1. **The Clerk**, under delegated authority, for any items below **£10,000** (excluding VAT).
2. **The Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council of Chair of the appropriate committee**, for any items between **£10,000 and £15,000** (excluding VAT).
3. **A duly delegated committee of the council** for all items of expenditure between **£15,000 and £20,000** (excluding VAT), within their delegated budgets.
4. **The full council** for all items over **£20,000** (excluding VAT).
5. **For grants**, a duly authorised committee may approve expenditure within **any limits set by the council** and in accordance with an agreed policy statement.

209/24 Payroll Provider

It was proposed by Councillor Alford, seconded by the Town Mayor Councillor Price and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to defer until the new Town Clerk was in post.

210/24 Execution and Sealing of Legal Deeds – Acquisition of the Blue Pool

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and

RESOLVED to approve the signing of the TR1 for the acquisition of the Blue Pool and for the Clerk to apply for rate relief.

211/24 Interview Panel

There was discussion on the make up of the panel.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to extend the meeting beyond 10pm.

It was proposed by Councillor S Crundell, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint the Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey, Councillor Hubbard and Councillor J Westbrook to join the Town Mayor and Chair of Personnel Councillor Price on the panel to interview applicants for the post of Town Clerk.

212/24 Accounts – Unity

The statement was noted

213/24 Accounts – Lloyds

The statement was noted

214/24 Accounts – Petty Cash

The statement was noted

215/24 Income and Expenditure

The report was noted.

It was proposed by the Deputy Town Mayor Councillor Rabey, seconded by Councillor Griffin and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to fund the purchase of replacement goalposts for Riverside Play Area from the Play Equipment budget

216/24 Variance Report

The report was noted.

217/24 Confidential Session

It was proposed by the Town Mayor Councillor Price, seconded by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Rabey and to go into confidential session.

218/24 Bowerhill Depot Lease

It was proposed by Councillor Alford, seconded by Councillor Hubbard and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve a one year lease running 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 with an increase in rent of £1650.

Meeting closed at: 10.10pm

Signed

Dated