

MELTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 08 FEBRUARY 2021

Present via video conference or phone:	Councillor Buchanan (Chair), Councillor Bampton, Councillor Sonia King, Councillor Spencer King, Councillor Haigh, Councillor Lyons, Councillor Noon, Councillor Millward, Councillor Storey, Councillor White and Councillor Wrathall
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PUBLIC SESSION: 3 Kirklees officers had attended in connection with Agenda Item 5 Engagement Family Hubs and one member of the public had attended in connection with Agenda Item 15 Meltham Greenway project.

21/19 NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Taken as read.

21/20 ADMISSION TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended by the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (as amended)

RESOLVED: That because of the confidential/ personal/ commercially sensitive or legally prejudicial nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press leave the meeting during consideration of the following: -

- Item 3 Councillors' reasons for absence – to consider this item in private as it would divulge personal confidential information.
- Item 11 Purchase of Land – to consider this item in private as it would divulge commercially sensitive / personal information.
- Item 12 Pride of Meltham Nominations - to consider this item in private as it would divulge personal confidential information.

RESOLVED: That agenda items 3, 11 and 12 be moved to the last items on the agenda otherwise the order of the original agenda be followed.

21/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Buchanan and Bampton declared an interest under Appendix B of the code of conduct in respect of Item 8 Grant Application (1)

21/22 ENGAGEMENT FAMILY HUBS

Councillors received a presentation from Kirklees Officers regarding Family Hubs and there were several questions from Councillors.

RESOLVED: That Agenda item 15 Meltham Greenway project be dealt with next thereafter the original order of the agenda resume subject to any other resolutions.

Kirklees Officers left the meeting.

21/23 MELTHAM GREEN WAY PROJECT

Councillors received an update on the project and noted that headway was being made with a wide variety of organisations both local and nationally supporting it. It was further noted that Kirklees Council had now appointed a designated officer for this project but that significant amounts of funding would be required. The overarching objective was to extend the Greenway through to Huddersfield. The member of the public who was in attendance was invited to ask questions. Councillors then considered whether the Council formally supported the Meltham Greenway Project which they did unanimously.

RESOLVED: That the Council record its formal support for the Meltham Greenway Project.

The member of public left the meeting.

21/24 MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Bampton and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on the 4 January 2021 be approved

21/25 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

It was proposed by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Bampton and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Planning Environmental and General Purposes Committee held on the 4 January 2021 be approved.

It was proposed by Councillor White and seconded by Councillor Bampton and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Planning Environmental and General Purposes Committee held on the 25 January 2021 be approved.

As both the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor had declared an interest it was suggested that Councillor White be appointed Chair for the next agenda item.

RESOLVED: That Councillor White be appointed Chair for the next agenda item.

21/26 GRANT APPLICATION (1)

Councillors considered a smaller grants application from the Friends of Robert Ashton Memorial Park in the sum of £500.00 to establish a bank account, purchase equipment and put on events in the park in the future deferred from Council on 4 January 2021.

RESOLVED: That the smaller grants application from the Friends of Robert Ashton Memorial Park in the sum of £500.00 to establish a bank account, purchase equipment and put on events in the park in the future be approved together with the necessary expenditure.

Councillor Buchanan resumed as Chair of the meeting.

21/27 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2021/22

Councillors considered the final approval of the budget and precept for 21/22 as set out in the report prepared by the Clerk (which included some minor revisions from the version considered by Council on the 4 January 2021) circulated with the agenda.

Councillors noted that following the January Council meeting the Town Council had received notification of the provisional 21-22 tax base figures from Kirklees Council namely 2834.30 which meant Meltham Town Council will receive a grant from Kirklees Council in the sum of £419.77 for 21-22 and allowed a calculation of how much a band D property will pay based on the proposed precept.

In relation to the 21/22 budget Councillors agreed that in addition to the recommendations of the Properties Administration and Finance Committee considered at the previous Council meeting the following recommendations of the Clerk were also approved:

- The budget for rent and room bookings be reduced by £500
- The budget for Ask Meltham should be reduced from £10k to £8868.00 for 21/22 (a new budget for park events has also been established in the sum of £1000.00)

Councillors agreed to formally approve the budget as set out in the report from the Clerk.

Based on the approved budget Councillors agreed the precept as set out in the report circulated with the agenda and formally authorised the Clerk to make the formal precept demand to Kirklees Council in the sum of £137,981.51

Councillors approved a delegation to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair) to draft a press release regarding the budget and precept and authorised the Clerk to post this on the Council's website and provide to the media if requested.

RESOLVED: -That the budget for rent and room bookings be reduced by £500 and that the budget for Ask Meltham be reduced from £10k to £8868.00 for 21/22

-That the budget for 21/22 as set out in the report from the Clerk circulated with agenda be approved.

-That the precept demand in the sum of £137,981.51 be approved and the Clerk be authorised to make the formal precept demand to Kirklees Council in the sum of £137,981.51

-That a delegation to the Clerk (in consultation with the Chair) be approved to draft a press release regarding the budget and precept and to post this on the Council's website and provide to the media if requested.

21/28 INTERNAL CONTROLS

Councillors considered the Schedule of receipts and payments for December 2020 and January 2021 circulated with the agenda and

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Payments for December 2020 in the sum of £8383.06 (net) be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Payments for January 2021 in the sum of £10417.30 (net) be approved.

Councillors noted that in the absence of face-to-face meetings the schedules of payments, monthly bank reconciliations and the corresponding current account bank statements are being scanned and sent to the Town Mayor and Chair of Finance for checking and everything had been found to be in order.

21/29 ROBERT ASHTON MEMORIAL PARK MASTER PLAN

Councillors received an update on the results of the public consultation exercise which concluded on the 4 January 2021.

Councillors considered the recommendations from the Park Master Plan Working Group on the quick wins and priority areas for development in the light of the consultation exercise and

RESOLVED: That the following areas be progressed as quick wins

- Removal of holly /rhododendron / trees to let light in and open up historic views.
- Signage and interpretation
- Create outdoor classroom / storey telling area.
- Planting of more blubs / wildflowers.

That the following areas be progressed as priority

- The improvement of the whole area around the existing children's play area and tennis courts
- The improvement of the pond area, including looking at water quality.
- A footpath improvement programme

Councillors further agreed that the Council go ahead and obtain quotes for more detailed plans / sketch level designs for those areas identified above together with indicative costings for the works.

RESOLVED: That the Council go ahead and obtain quotes for more detailed plans / sketch level designs for those areas identified above together with indicative costings for the works.

Councillors confirmed their commitment to supporting this project financially but due to the significant amounts required the need to obtain external funding was reiterated. The Clerk also confirmed that the commissioning of more detailed plans for the areas approved (above) would entail significant additional expenditure on top of the cost of commissioning the master plan. It was agreed to pay the second invoice relating to the outstanding fees for the Master Plan work.

Councillors noted that the Working Group will now work with Kirklees Officers to scope out the more detailed plans required and obtain quotes for those plans, those quotes to be brought back to a later Council meeting for consideration.

Councillor Sonia King left the meeting.

21/30 ASK MELTHAM ACTIONS

Councillors noted that Council had previously approved 7 priority areas arising from the Ask Meltham exercise.

Councillors considered the recommendations from the Ask Meltham Working Group and

RESOLVED: That the Town Council approve all the recommended specific actions sitting under the 7 priority areas previously agreed by Council set out in the attached report circulated with the agenda

- That the improvements / redevelopment of Robert Ashton Memorial Park should be dealt with separately (see above)
- That the Council approve on going actions such as:
 - annual campaigns on road safety (which could include speeding/ parking) and Keep Meltham Tidy (which could include litter /dog fouling). It was noted the intention is to run three campaigns each year to coincide with the publication of Meltham Mercury.
 - That a delegation to the Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor and Chair of Communications Committee be approved to spend up to £1500.00 in respect of the three campaigns annually.
- That the Town Council agree to start with the following specific actions identified by the working group following a scoring exercise namely:
 - Explore with Kirklees Council the provision of additional SID/VAS devices in Meltham to combat speeding.
 - To work in partnership with WAW to create better signage in the Town and to publicise Meltham as a walking destination.
 - To create a Meltham map of paths and tracks and produce leaflets.
 - Continue to promote grot spot response service.
 - To hold at least 3 events in the park annually (a park events budget of £1000.00 has been created for 2021/22).
 - That a delegation to the Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor and Chair of Communications Committee be approved to spend up to £1000.00 in respect of the park events.
 - To meet with Kirklees Officers to explore ways of more joined up working and better reporting mechanisms (WAW to attend)

Councillors noted that for the initial specific actions approved above, where applicable a more detailed action plan with deadlines, costings/suggested budget and analysis of resources will be brought back to Council for approval before implementation.

Councillors noted that once these initial specific actions have been completed the process will be repeated until all the actions in the attached report have been completed and agreed that the Ask Meltham Project should be undertaken again at that point.

21/31 YLCA SEEKING VIEWS OF MEMBER COUNCILS ON THE POWER TO HOLD REMOTE MEETINGS

Councillors noted that the government is not currently planning to extend the remote meeting regulations beyond 7 May 2021 and that along with other local government bodies, NALC is continuing to press for this power to be made permanent.

Councillors thought that failing to extend the power to hold remote meetings placed both an unacceptable and unnecessary risk to health on both Councillors and staff and undermined the democratic process.

Councillors strongly supported the power for remote meetings to continue and expressed a view that the Council would like to see this power extended so future meetings could be held remotely or as a hybrid with some attendees in person and others participating remotely as they felt it increased democratic participation for both Councillors and the press and public. The Clerk was asked to respond to the YLCA survey accordingly on behalf on the Council.

In addition, considering the recent advice from NALC it was agreed to move the previously scheduled Annual Meeting from the 10 May 2021 to Tuesday 4 May 2021 when the power to hold remote meetings would still be in place.

It was also agreed to reaffirm the wide-ranging delegation given to the Clerk on the 23 March 2020 namely:

RESOLVED: That the Council empowers the Clerk / Responsible Finance Officer to do anything expedient and necessary to ensure the continuous business of the Council and to deal with mandatory undertakings in order to prevent the authority from incurring liability during the period that this delegation is in force.

RESOLVED: That the Council empowers the Clerk to pay all invoices by electronic means until further notice subject to all payments being reported to the Chair of the Council and the Chair of PAF regularly and that the Councils standing orders and financial regulations are to be amended / interpreted accordingly.

21/32 STANDING AGENDA ITEM - INFLUENCING TOWN DEVELOPMENT

Councillors deferred this item to the next Council meeting.

21/33 STANDING AGENDA ITEM - WILSHAW VILLAGE HALL

Councillors considered an update on progress and any issues circulated with the agenda. The Clerk was asked to contact the trustees and thank them for their update.

As previously resolved because of the confidential/ personal/ commercially sensitive or legally prejudicial nature of the business to be transacted, the public and the press were required to leave the meeting during consideration of the remainder of the agenda items.

21/34 APOLOGIES / REASONS FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keighley.

Councillors Keighley had also requested that his reason for absence be considered by Council. Councillors considered the reason for absence provided by Councillor Keighley and

RESOLVED: That the reason for Councillor Keighley's absence was accepted and the absence was therefore approved.

21/35 PURCHASE OF LAND

Councillors received an update from the Clerk following further enquires. The Clerk reported on the indicative survey fees, advertising, and legal costs and that the prospective purchaser had agreed to meet these indicative costs up to a maximum amount. It was agreed that the prospective purchaser should be asked to agree to pay these fees even if the eventual sale of the land did not prove possible. Councillor White agreed to provide some wording regarding the restrictive covenant to be imposed. Councillors decided to proceed with the disposal of the land subject to the above.

21/36 PRIDE OF MELTHAM NOMINATIONS

Councillors considered several Pride of Meltham nominations and whether the criteria to approve the award were met in each case and agreed in each case to make the award. The Clerk was asked to write to the successful nominees to notify them of the award. In relation to the group award, it was agreed that two persons should be nominated by the group to attend any face to face event on behalf of the group. A further nomination was suggested at the meeting which the Clerk was asked to progress.