



Midsomer Norton Town Council

Council Offices, The Town Hall, The Island, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2HQ
Phone: 01761 418701 Email: townclerk@msn-tc.gov.uk
Mayor: Councillor Martyn Plant Locum Town Clerk: Lee Jakeman

Minutes from the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 2nd December starting at 7pm

Present: Cllrs Shaun Hughes, Gordon MacKay, Martyn Plant (Chair),
Lynda Robertson, Cheryl Scott, Mandy Taylor, Tim Wells and
Simon Wright,

In attendance Lee Jakeman (Locum Town Clerk) and Kate Egan (Deputy Town Clerk)

1 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs W Gregory and C Lucas

2 Public Session

There were no members of the public in attendance.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

Following a slight amendment, the Council **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Town Council Meeting held on 4th November as a true record, these were signed and dated by the Chair.

5 Referral of Minutes

The Council noted the draft minutes from the Finance and Operations Committee Meeting and the Planning Committee Meeting, both held on Monday 18th November 2024.

6 Mayors Announcements

The mayor provided a brief verbal summary of his most recent and upcoming engagements, including having attended the following:

- Remembrance Sunday – representing Midsomer Norton Town Council
- Somer Valley House – Opening of a new care home on 18th November.
- Midsomer Norton Carnival
- Midsomer Norton Christmas Light Switch on and Market – 28th November
- Heart Talks CIC Opening – 30th November.
- Root Connections CIC Christmas Fair – 30th November

7 Budget

Cllr M Plant (Chair of the Finance and Operations Committee) informed members that the deadline for submitting the precept was the 11th of February.

The budget and associated figures are currently being reviewed and will be discussed at the Finance and Operations Meeting on the 16th of December, but the general consensus from the Finance and Operations Committee was to leave the budget the roughly the same as last year (continue to that which it currently does) and aim to keep the increase below 5%.

Review of Grant Request from the Carnival Club, Community Trust, and the Town Trust

Members noted the requests for Annual Grant Funding (as part of the budgeting process) from 3 regular beneficiaries: The Carnival Association, The Community Trust and The Midsomer Norton Town Trust. Members noted that the relationship with the Town Trust was slightly different to the others, in that the Town Council was the Sole Trustee.

The Carnival Association had requested 10K of grant funding for the year 25/26 (an increase of £2k on the current year figure).

The Community Trust had broken down its grant application into 2 separate bids: A core commissioning grant of £15K (no increase). An 'entertainments' grant of £36K to undertake a series of 4 events (Arts Programme £4K (no increase). Arts Festival £5K (£3K increase), Town Fayre £9K (£1K increase) and Christmas Fayre £9k (£3K increase), and the associated staff costs of 100 hours for each of the four events £11K.

The Town Trust had requested £25K of grant funding for the 25/26 (an increase of £10k on the current year figure).

The combined increase in grant funding requests for all 3 groups was £28k.

The recommendation for the Carnival Association was to be minded keeping the allocation much the same (but work with them to see how the costs could be reduced and whether the Town Council would see a benefit centred around the increased costs.)

A review is needed into the relationships between the trusts as indicated in the recent interim internal audit report.

The recommendation with regard to the two Community Trust Grants was to be minded to keep the allocation within the budget the same for the core commissioning budget but to reduce it over the next few years. There was comment that the Community Trust should demonstrate exploring revenue funding from outside the council, and so not to solely rely on the Town Council. The recommendation was to be minded to keep the allocation much the same as this year but to include each activity as a separate budget line so the impact of each could be considered before a decision was made.

(Clerk's Note: Councillors Scott, Mackay and Wells declared an interest in the following item (Town Trust) as they are members of the Management Committee appointed by the Council) and left the room until the matter had been concluded.

The recommendation for the Town Trust was to be minded to keep the allocation within the budget the same as last year to cover legal fees and possible tree maintenance in the Town Park. There was a general view that the underwriting of much of the required building works resulting from the recent survey was appropriate (subject to having sight of the report and appreciation of whether the works were required immediately / in the next financial year or whether they could be spread over a couple of financial years. It was mentioned that the Town Trust should be generating some income from the buildings they currently maintain.

Cllrs C Scott, G MacKay and T Wells returned to the meeting at 8.34pm

8 Co-option of a Town Councillor

The Council **NOTED** following correspondence from the Electoral Services at B&NES, no requests for an election to fill the current vacancy were received so the Town Council can follow the co-option process for a replacement Town Councillor.

9 Internal Audit Report

The Council **NOTED** the interim internal audit report and requested regular updates on the actions to be carried out.

10 Town Hall Update

The Council received an update on the Town Hall Refurbishment and were frustrated by the lack of progress. A request was asked whether the monthly report could be modified to include costs and breakdown of the remaining works to be carried out. Due to confidentiality (contractual matters) the Council **RESOLVED** to continue the discussion with the exclusion of the press and public.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The next Full Council Meeting will be held on Monday 6th January 2025 commencing at 7.00pm in the Council Chambers, The Hollies, Midsomer Norton.

12 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The Council **RESOLVED** under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

14 Continuation of the Contract with Stonebarn Landscaping

The Council **RESOLVED** to roll over the existing contract for an additional period of 12 months.

The Council **RESOLVED** to suspend standing orders to extend the meeting beyond the 2 hours prescribed in Standing Orders 3(x) in order that the matter could be concluded.

The Deputy Clerk left the meeting at 8.55pm

15 Town Hall Update

Members received a verbal update regarding the contract.

16 Update on the Town Clerk Recruitment

Members noted a confidential report and received an update from the Clerk and Panel Members.

Meeting closed 9.40pm

DRAFT