

Report No.2

Report to the Malmesbury Town Council

Collaborative working

Purpose:

The purpose of this brief paper is to invite Council to acknowledge and support the delivery of the ten objectives listed below.

Background:

It is evident from the results of the recent Town Council elections that the community has an appetite for a positive change both in the openness and transparency in the way the Council does business and in the priorities and importance that we attach to managing the resources available to the town.

You will all be aware that a significant number of the new Councillors have publicly pre-notified ambitions to deliver the ten items listed below.

The ten objectives:

1. We will not sanction unnecessary Council Tax rises

We will use the funds generated by the recent unnecessary Town Council tax rise to create a new Grant Awards Scheme to allow local community voluntary groups to bid for much needed funds. A Town Council tax rise will only be considered when it is needed and can be fully justified.

2. We will improve the openness and transparency of the Council

We will become a "Quality Council": a programme that gives accreditation for changes that make a Council more open, transparent and accountable to the public. We will commission a new interactive website to make it easy for everyone to access the information associated with decision-making in the Council. We will use new electronic social media to help bring the processes of Council closer to the community.

3. We will bring a more diverse range of people into our Council

We will work with our local schools and Youth Service to encourage young people to participate in the Town Council.

4. We will build a strong Neighbourhood Plan

We will actively support the Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group. We will deliver a strong plan that will defend our town from speculative developers, protect our existing services, strengthen our local economy and provide the right housing for local people.

5. We will support better Emergency Planning

We will ensure that a locally co-ordinated, resilient plan is delivered to better protect our town in times of emergency, particularly extreme weather.

6. We will support local businesses to protect and improve the economy of the town

We will work with retailers and the Chamber of Commerce to set up a Town Business Team. This team of local business experts will agree new initiatives to get the empty shops back into retail use, encourage more tourists to visit and address parking issues.

7. We will improve access to our public toilets

We will work to improve the provision of our toilet facilities for residents and visitors to our town. We will ensure that our toilet facilities are adequately signposted so that residents and tourists

know where they are.

8. We will make our Town Hall more affordable for our community to hire

We will make these fantastic facilities available to local community groups at more affordable rates and at times that suit them.

9. We will create a Community Advice Hub

We will embrace the Wiltshire Council Campus initiative to bring community facilities together and deliver a Community Hub. We will explore the opportunity to accommodate the Hub in the Town Hall. This Hub will allow the Police, Local Housing Associations, Citizens Advice Bureau, Wiltshire Council officer advisers, voluntary local support groups, etc., to have a central place to connect with local people wishing to use their services.

10. We will build a positive working relationship with our local partners

We will build a strong open relationship with Wiltshire Council and Malmesbury Area Board to ensure that the town benefits from this partnership. Road repairs, pedestrian safety enhancements and reduced parking charges will be top of our shopping list. We will build positive relationships with our Community Groups, Neighbouring Parishes, Local Schools, Health Centre, Local Emergency Services and our local Community Police.

Successfully delivering these ten objectives will bring significant benefit to the community whilst at the same time demonstrating a new consultative and interactive relationship with residents. I suggest that none of these objectives are contentious. Indeed it could be argued that many should already be in place in Malmesbury and are already in place in many of our peer towns.

Recommendation:

Our new Council is a mixture of experience and bright-eyed enthusiasm which if marshalled effectively has the potential to produce very positive benefits for the residents of our town. The delivery of improvements to the town will be best achieved if this Council works as a collective in which members feel comfortable to discuss items in a mature and respectful environment.

Thus in the spirit of unity and a genuine desire for us to adopt a team approach to tackling issues, I should like to invite each and every Councillor to embrace these objectives and to work within a collaborative framework to deliver them as expeditiously as possible.

Proposal:

To seek the Council's acceptance of the listed ten objectives and agreement to work collaboratively to achieve their delivery as quickly as practicable.

Cllr Roger Budgen
20th May 2013