

## Malmesbury Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Malmesbury Town Council held in Malmesbury Town Hall on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 7.00pm.

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**PRESENT:** His Worship the Mayor, Councillor A J Gundry  
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor W R Jones  
R Budgen, S Cox, C C Doody, J E Exton, L G Grant, M Jennings,  
L V Penfold, S J Poole, K Power, R F Sanderson F Vandelli, H Webb,  
ACR Woodcock and K Wright.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Four members of the public.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None.

**48. TO RECEIVE AND ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Town Council meetings held on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015, as circulated, be received and adopted.

**Min 45** – Councillor Power read a prepared statement setting out the reasons why the MNSG should not have been disestablished (*copy attached*). The Town Clerk advised that the issue could only be reconsidered by the Council on receipt of a written notice of special resolution signed by three councillors or upon the recommendation or report from a committee.

**49. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND TOWN PROMOTION COMMITTEE HELD ON 30<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Community and Town Promotion Committee meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015, as circulated, be received.

**50. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning and Environment Committee held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015, as circulated, be received.

**51. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 13<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015, as circulated, be received.

**52. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE OF THE RIVERSIDE CAMPUS**

Councillor Doody reported that plans would be submitted in the next couple of weeks and that a full presentation would be made at the next meeting of the Area Board. During debate concerns were expressed about the level of spending of public money on a building leased and not owned by Wiltshire Council. Councillors were reminded that there had been no youth club in Malmesbury for several months. The point was made that these concerns should be expressed direct to Wiltshire Council.

The Mayor pointed out that no minutes from the Project could be found on the Wiltshire website since June 2014. Councillor Power reminded Council that she was the Chair of the Campus Project and would investigate the issue.

### 53. TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO PEDESTRIANISE THE MARKET CROSS AREA

Councillor Budgen explained that this had now been raised as a community issue 4290. Wiltshire Council are now seeking funding for any CATG projects at an earlier stage and could amount to the Council making a commitment without knowing the full scale of any potential expenditure. Councillor Jones suggested that there would be nothing to prevent the member of the public who raised the issue undertaking a feasibility study before the Council gave measured consideration but at the moment the scheme could not be supported by the Town Council.

**The meeting closed at 20.08 hrs**

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#### **. Statement to the Town Council re Minutes of Sept 2015 Meeting, Minute Point 45 - to dissolve the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Steering Group (MNSG)**

Unfortunately, I was not at our last meeting because of a close family bereavement, but I would have strongly opposed this proposal and voted against it. As you will have seen from my email correspondence to Councillors, I am very concerned about our Council's decision to 'disestablish' the MNSG, although I respect that our Council has the mandate to do this.

Wiltshire Council Planning experts, the two Wiltshire Councillors of the area (both members of the MNSG), the Chair and members of the group – reps of all important community organisations such as our schools, Civic Trust, Older People/ Burnham House rep etc. were **NOT REFERRED TO** before our Council took this action.

Many of these and also residents have now contacted the MNSG Chair, myself and Wiltshire Council have also emailed our Council to express their disappointment with this decision, as there is a clear, vital ongoing role for the MNSG.

Here are a few comments:

**Wiltshire Council Planning Expert said:** *“It is disappointing to hear that the group is in the process of being disestablished. As with any development plan, whether prepared by a local planning authority or parish council(s), the implementation and review of a plan is an important part of the process and that process is ongoing”.*

**And went on to explain** *“For instance, as planning applications come forward that will be considered against the Plan, the MNSG can play an important role in providing comment to Wiltshire Council that would support the Plan's implementation. Ongoing monitoring of the Plan will also help determine whether the plan is up to date and whether a review is necessary”.*

**John Thomson, the Deputy Leader of Wiltshire Council, which makes decisions on Planning said:** *“As you can see I believe there is a need for the MNSG to continue....”*

**A previous school MNSG rep wrote publicly:** *“If they feel there's no need anymore for an MNSG then they are wrong, too, but then the group can keep things ticking over and monitor long term planning building up to the next NP. Presumably the individual parish councils will think they can develop the next draft of the MNP but will have come together at some point.*

*What this decision does, however, is give something of a slap in the face to the community groups who were hopefully as much a part of the process as the local councils.”* **Other MNSG rep comments include much of the same.**

**Residents public comments include:** *“Such a success and now they abandon it? stupid, Stupid, STUPID!”*

*“The MNPG were critical in setting up the Malmesbury Neighborhood Plan. The group is 'Neighbourhood' NOT 'Council' or 'Government' led. It is now under threat...”*

*" I attended several of the meetings as a member of the public & was impressed with the diversity of the group & their common goal to make a difference to the community... I was not aware the council was planning to dissolve the group else I would have tried to attend the council meeting to voice my public objection”.*

*“The fact that this has caused so much surprise & discussion means their (MTC’s) ability to communicate with the community to allow timely objection is not working. Hence, the reason the plan needs independent oversight to help 'Maintain' it”.*

**Even Judy Rose, of the Devizes group of the only other successful Neighbourhood Plan in Wiltshire commented publicly:** *"Unbelievable. What an incredibly stupid thing to do! Neighbourhood Plans can't remain static. They have to adapt and take on board changes in the community. How do these Councils think that is going to happen without the Steering Group? I am appalled at such an absurd decision. Shame on them"*

**The MNSG is a real community voice, directly from the heart of important local organisations and residents have trust in this collective representation working together on behalf of their town. I believe it is not only wrong, but disrespectful to ignore the wishes of our residents on this matter.**

Therefore, I request and propose that we rescind or overturn this ill-advised decision and advise all the parties concerned accordingly.

**Cllr. Kim Power 27-10-2015**