

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall



Inaugural meeting

2nd September 2021, 19:00
Via Zoom and in person

<http://www.fomah.org.uk/2021902slides.pdf>
info@fomah.org.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/fomah>



Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Agenda

- * Welcome
- * **Objectives overview**
- * Who's who
- * Where each person can help
- * Initial Committee
- * **Overview of some of the options**
- * Next steps

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Melksham Assembly Hall - to provide live and recorded entertainment for public audiences of up to 400, and hire for events and groups commensurate with that space, for a customer base primarily in the West Wilts area.

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

This is our new (Summer 2021) friends group to look forward to how we can help take The Hall forward in coming months and years [work in progress description]

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Melksham Assembly Hall

- * Owned and run by Melksham Town Council
- * Subsidised by Melksham Town council tax payers
- * Used by people from a much wider area
- * Well used and much loved
- * Brings people and business into Melksham
- * Unique hall for the area
- * Super dedicated staff team
- * Building in need of TLC and upkeep
- * Very limited funding for none-staff items
- * Councillors elected on manifesto to reduce subsidy & risk
- * Running at a loss. Severely hit by Covid

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

- **1907** - Drill Hall moves to behind Town Hall, enclosing the old cheese market

- **1914** - Urban District Council purchases Town Hall, Drill Hall and Police Station at auction

- **1939-1945** - World War II

- **1939** - Military authorities requisition building, needing premises to store ARP equipment

- **1942** - caretakers hired for "Assembly Hall"

- **1946** - Drill Hall becomes Assembly Hall with major interior redecoration, addition of entrance lobby, stage, and bathroom facilities, exterior painting

- **1947** - first public performances following war

- **1950** - Entrance archway to Assembly hall demolished; entrance pillars to Melksham House moved back and walls behind the pillars demolished

- **1954** - Major renovations to Assembly Hall include new flooring and amplification system

- **1955** - Further renovations include bar and kitchen alterations, new stage curtains and extension at the front

3/10/1960	3 October, 1960	Vince Eager & The Moontrekkers
16/1/1961	16 January, 1961	Terry Dene
30/1/1961	30 January, 1961	Johnny Kidd & The Pirates
27/2/1961	27 February, 1961	Marty Wilde & The Wildcats
3/7/1961	3 July, 1961	Cliff Bennett & The Rebeltrousers
28/8/1961	28 August, 1961	Billy Fury & The Blue Flames
9/7/1962	9 July, 1962	Brian Poole & The Tremeloes
27/8/1962	27 August, 1962	Joe Brown & the Bruvvers
15/10/1962	15 October, 1962	Shane Fentone & the Fentones
22/10/1962	22 October, 1962	The Barron Knights
23/3/1963	23 March, 1963	Chris Farlowe & The Thunderbirds
22/4/1963	22 April, 1963	Billie Davis
19/8/1963	19 August, 1963	Jet Harris & The Jet Blacks
26/8/1963	26 August, 1963	Sounds Incorporated
9/9/1963	9 September, 1963	Billy J Kramer & The Dakotas
21/10/1963	21 October, 1963	Peter Jay & The Jaywalkers
28/10/1963	28 October, 1963	The Searchers
25/11/1963	25 November, 1963	The Spotniks
2/12/1963	2 December, 1963	The Merseybeats
31/8/1964	31 August, 1964	The Applejacks
27/10/1970	27 October, 1970	From the Dustpipe (Status Quo)
3/11/1970	3 November, 1970	From the Common People (Nicky Thomas)
25/3/1972	25 March, 1972	Thin Lizzy, Arrival, Barabbas
16/6/1972	16 June, 1972	Mungo Jerry plus Mad Mick
1/6/1974	1 June, 1974	The Fortunes
12/7/1986	12 July, 1986	Wee Willie Harris, The Jets, Colin's Rockline Bop Hop
28/1/2017	28 January, 2017	Melksham Movies: Fantastic Beats and Where to Find T
17/2/2017	17 February, 2017	Melksham Movies: Birth of a Nation
25/2/2017	25 February, 2017	Melksham Movies: Finding Dory
10/6/2017	10 June, 2017	Dolly Parton Tribute
22/6/2017	22 June, 2017	Brian Poole & The Tremeloes
9/2/2018	9 February, 2018	The Kast Off Kinks
27/2/2018	27 February, 2018	Cilla and the Shades of the 60s
7/4/2018	7 April, 2018	Black Magic: The Little Mix Show
5/5/2018	5 May, 2018	Wannabe, the Spice Girls Show
4/1/2019	4 January, 2019	Bohemian Rhapsody
5/1/2019	5 January, 2019	Roller Disco
18/1/2019	18 January, 2019	Forbidden Nights
28/3/2019	28 March, 2019	Coldplace
10/5/2019	10 May, 2019	Mark Steel

3/9/2021	3 September, 2021	The Unravelling Wilburys
4/9/2021	4 September, 2021	Floyd in the Flesh
5/9/2021	5 September, 2021	Melksham Community Meals
6/9/2021	6 September, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
10/9/2021	10 September, 2021	Melksham and District Historical Association
13/9/2021	13 September, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
18/9/2021	18 September, 2021	The Lynne & McCartney Story
20/9/2021	20 September, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
20/9/2021	20 September, 2021	Melksham Seniors Film Club
25/9/2021	25 September, 2021	Melksham Rock 'n' Roll
27/9/2021	27 September, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
3/10/2021	3 October, 2021	Melksham Community Meals
4/10/2021	4 October, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
6/10/2021	6 October, 2021	The Arts Society
11/10/2021	11 October, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
16/10/2021	16 October, 2021	Female of the Species
18/10/2021	18 October, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
18/10/2021	18 October, 2021	Melksham Seniors Film Club
21/10/2021	21 October, 2021	Melksham and District Historical Association
22/10/2021	22 October, 2021	Everything Changes (Take That tribute)
23/10/2021	23 October, 2021	Melksham Rock 'n' Roll
25/10/2021	25 October, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
29/10/2021	29 October, 2021	Through the Decades with Roy and Buddy
30/10/2021	30 October, 2021	Sausage & Ale Fest
1/11/2021	1 November, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
3/11/2021	3 November, 2021	The Arts Society
7/11/2021	7 November, 2021	Melksham Community Meals
8/11/2021	8 November, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
15/11/2021	15 November, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
15/11/2021	15 November, 2021	Melksham Seniors Film Club
18/11/2021	18 November, 2021	Melksham and District Historical Association
19/11/2021	19 November, 2021	The Beatones
20/11/2021	20 November, 2021	Melksham Rock 'n' Roll
22/11/2021	22 November, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
23/11/2021	23 November, 2021	Christmas Memories
26/11/2021	26 November, 2021	Majesty (Queen tribute)
27/11/2021	27 November, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
27/11/2021	27 November, 2021	Hometown Glory (Adele tribute)
29/11/2021	29 November, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
1/12/2021	1 December, 2021	The Arts Society
2/12/2021	2 December, 2021	Through the Rain (Barry Manilow tribute)
3/12/2021	3 December, 2021	Rock for Heroes
4/12/2021	4 December, 2021	Christmas Fayre
5/12/2021	5 December, 2021	Melksham Community Meals
6/12/2021	6 December, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
11/12/2021	11 December, 2021	Troy Ellis and Train to Skaville
13/12/2021	13 December, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
15/12/2021	15 December, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
18/12/2021	18 December, 2021	Melksham Rock 'n' Roll
20/12/2021	20 December, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club
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27/12/2021	27 December, 2021	West Wilts Model Car Club

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Options Offered to Councillors on 9th August 2021

1. Close or Mothball the hall
 2. Reduce to hiring out as a "Village Hall"
 3. Make hall available as a venue others can hire to run events
- A further option (4) to add film/cinema events in was offered as an add-on

No option to carry on as at present was offered, stated as being too risky of significant loss / costs to council tax payers. And also staff at Melksham Town Council, including key expertise, have already been made redundant so "carry on without change" is impossible.

At the meeting, a decision was deferred until the next full council meeting in late September, due to technical difficulties with Zoom which reduced public inputs to those there in person only. **However, a vote was taken and passed to rule out option 1 as an option to be offered in September.**

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Are there other options?

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Doors ...

- * Open
- * Closed
- * Closed and locked (and who has keys?)
- * Closed and nailed / glued shut

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There is a base of enthusiasm and potential help and expertise

There is a potential to outsource services such as booking (for example to the TIC)

There is a good prospect to share amenities and hall staffing for the more effective use of both

Melksham has a strong volunteer base which could be tapped

There is political support from our Michelle Donelan MP

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER

By Michelle Donelan MP

Afghanistan and the Assembly hall

I HOPE you have had an enjoyable and relaxing summer and that you have plenty of opportunity to spend quality time with your friends and family, in a way that has not been easy for such a long time.

I have really enjoyed the bumper summer of sports, which has been very successful for the country, but it is now time to get back to work (and school or university). My best wishes to you or any of your family members who are starting school or university this month.

It has been awful to see the images and scenes as the Taliban have advanced through Afghanistan and it would be amiss of me not to mention the dreadful situation in Kabul, in particular. I cannot even begin to imagine how those who served in Afghanistan must feel seeing the situation unfold and I stand in solidarity with those people facing immense danger in the region.

Of course, we have a duty to the Afghan nationals who provided brave and committed support to the allied forces who have been helping to build the country for the last 20 years. The stories of the translators, in particular, have been well highlighted and it is essential that these people and their families are not abandoned to their fate under the Taliban. Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected in the coming weeks and months.

I am delighted that we finally have confirmation that

Melksham Assembly Hall will not be closed by the Town Council and I want to give credit to Cllr Phil Alford and the Council's Conservative Group for fighting for its future. The Assembly Hall has been part of Melksham's social fabric for generations and its loss would be felt by many that remember its colourful past and look forward to its bright future. I have always believed that community assets like this are so valuable to our towns and villages, which is the reason I led the bid to the Levelling Up Fund, to draw substantial investment into the town centre and revitalise community space.

I look forward to the Town Council now conducting meaningful consultation on the future of the Assembly Hall and how it can be sustainably managed to meet the needs and expectations of the Melksham community. If you would like to be more involved in the future of the Assembly Hall, you could look on the website of Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall at <http://fomah.org.uk/> or their Facebook page.

If you would like to speak to me about a personal issue or a specific topic, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me at michelle.donelan.mp@parliament.uk or by calling 01249 704465. I am also holding regular surgeries remotely for constituents so you can write or call to arrange an online appointment.



About Us - Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Thank you for visiting us.

On 9th August 2021, a well attended Melksham Town Council meeting considered the future of the Melksham Assembly Hall. With so much public interest in a topic that had only been added on to the agenda a few days before, and participation limited by technical issues, only a decision (on a unanimous vote of all councillors) to rule out closure or mothballing at this time or at the next meeting was made. This was stated to be to reassure users that although mothballing was in the report being considered, we (Councillor Graham Ellis writing) would not bring this option forward as a possibility at our next meeting.

Our council vote on 9th August has left the big question - though - what now?

Melksham Assembly Hall has been used by so many people over so many years, and is much loved. As I write, even coming out of pandemic lockdowns, it's booked every Saturday night until next March (except one) and there are dozens upon dozens of private, club/group and public bookings too. However, it's used by people from many miles away, and runs at the moment (and pre-covid was doing so) at a significant loss, which has been made up by the council tax payers of Melksham TOWN alone - Melksham Town being the inner 'parish' stretching a mile (if that) from the Market Place.

The Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall comprises - initially - of community members who are just that - friends of the hall. We want to see it vital, lively, friendly, affordable, good for the town's economy, happy, ... and many more words to add. We do NOT, as a friends group, want to take it over and run it, but many of us would love to assist and be involved with that. And amongst our number, we have a great deal of enthusiasm, experience and expertise.

So - if we're not wanting to run it ourselves, what might we suggest? It could stay with the Town Council, but the issues listed above would need to be addressed. It could be run by a Community Interest Company or a Charity - and those have the advantage of opening extra funding routes. It could be run by a commercial outfit - either sold off by the Town Council or leased by them (there are other examples in town). It could be something else, or a combination. Each has its pros and cons and on the day of writing (in mid August 2021) we don't know - or at least I don't as I "seed" this page. I have put together a few very early ideas - outlines to see what might work ...

Plans are for a handful of us - those with the time and enthusiasm to form an ongoing central group ("Committee", "Officers", "Board" - call it what you will) to meet on the evening of 2nd September to take this forward. If you have those qualities and want to be deeply involved, please get in touch with Geoff or me - info@fomah.org.uk reaches us both, or contact us via the Facebook group. Experience welcome, but not a pre-requisite - we want and need, at this early stage where the outcome is unclear, all sorts including newcomers to this sort of thing too. We need to reach not only the experienced old-timers, but the younger people. We will have Zoom running that evening, using the setup I have been using to run such meetings for a long time.



Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

- Friends Page -

Group looking ahead to what we (the wider community) can do to help take The Hall forward to a vibrant future

- The Assembly Point

An independent place to share Assembly Hall comments, stories & photos old & new, and to meet people with the same interests.

- Official page -

Melksham Assembly Hall hosts a wide range of live events and activities and is also available for private hire.

At this early point on this page, we are showing just Facebook and web page links. Various resources are available elsewhere on Social Media, but we are concentrating on just one or two - at least until September.

Email - info@fomah.org.uk

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Private group · 196 members



- About
- Discussion
- Rooms
- Topics
- Members

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Could another structure or additional body be helpful in working alongside, in place of, or under contract to the Town Council?

- * Fundraising opportunities via a Community Interest Company, Charity or some other mechanism?

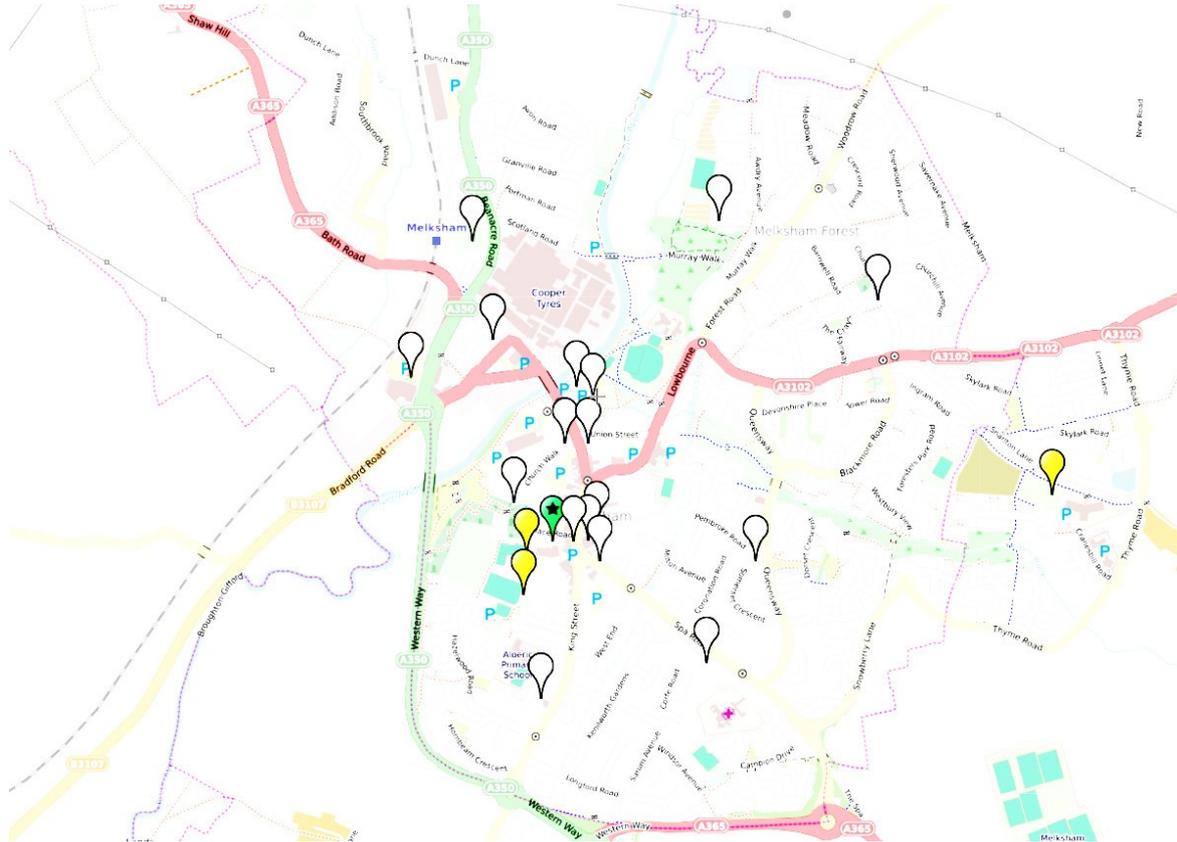
- * Ownership via membership and effective use of volunteers (remembering that Town Councillors are themselves volunteers, even if they then pass staff to fill day to day roles)

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Open (or openable) doors are significant – what do the majority of councillors want / what would fit their objectives?

What do the users want? Is the Facebook page and this group enough to know? Is a survey and consultation needed? How is this going to fit in with the Campus, Melksham House, Rachel Fowler, Riverside Club, Canberra, proposed new halls at East Melksham and Berryfield, Cricket Club, Queensway Hall, etc?
How do we set up for a future ten year vision?

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall



Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

* Who's who

* Where each person can help

* Initial Committee

Friends of Melksham Assembly Hall

Chair

Secretary

Partner liaison

Event Planner and diarist

Project analysis lead

Webmaster

Press and publicity

Committee / user [type] reps

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Strands ...

1. Immediate organisation
2. Help promoting current events
3. Council liaison – next checkpoint 28th September
4. Investigation of how we go forward

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