



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 8 MARCH 2022 AT 7.30 PM

AT THE COMMUNITY BUILDING, IRNHAM ROAD, MINEHEAD TA24 5DW

The Meeting was recorded and broadcast live on the MTC Facebook page

Members are reminded that Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and Biodiversity

Present: Chair: Cllr T Bloomfield
Councillors: Cllr P Bolton*, Cllr E Jones, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr H Rose
(* denotes Somerset West and Taunton District "SWaT" Councillor)

Officers in Attendance: Ms S Rawle - Clerk
Mr B Howe – Deputy Clerk
Mr C Johnson - Community Centre Manager (for item 1479)
Mrs M Swallow - Notetaker

Members of the Press and Public: 0 members of the Press
0 members of the Public

Councillors Absent: Cllr A Berry and Cllr O Harvey

Cllr Bloomfield welcomed all to the Meeting, including public viewing via the Facebook streaming service.

1473 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies had been received from Cllr A Kingston-James, Cllr M Kingston-James and Cllr T Venner*.

1474 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY DISPENSATIONS

[In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members](#)

To receive and record any Declarations of Interest in respect of any matters included on the Agenda for consideration at this Meeting.

Member	Minute	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr Bloomfield	1486	Personal	08.03.2022	Spoke but did not vote
Cllr Bolton	All	SWaT Councillor	2022	Remained present, spoke and voted
	1486	Personal	08.03.2022	Spoke but did not vote
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2022	Remained present, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS

None.

- 1475 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the Meeting by Councillors who had been present.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr M Palmer
Unanimously agreed by the appropriate Councillors.

- 1476 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION [Standing Order No 3e](#)

As there had been no requests to speak at the Meeting, adjournment was not necessary.

- 1477 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

Although Cllr Bloomfield did not have anything specific to report, she used the opportunity to reinforce her social media news that the old Minehead Hospital would be a donations drop-off point for the Ukraine crisis - and required items were listed online. She encouraged the public to do what they could to support this initiative.

- 1478 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK ON REFURBISHMENT OF THE IRNHAM ROAD RECREATION GROUND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Deputy Clerk firstly reported the recent arson and vandalism in both the Gents' and Ladies' toilets where some items had been destroyed: an insurance claim would be submitted against this damage. Thankfully CCTV had recorded those responsible and the police were involved. The inevitable closing of the facilities had not resulted in receipt of complaints, so it could be conceived that their permanent closure during the winter months once refurbished was a possibility.

A quotation for the proposed work discussed at the February Amenities and Environment Committee Meeting would be sought if Councillors wished to proceed, and the Deputy Clerk's suggested contractor had already provided a quotation of £1790 to fence-off the back of the building - to include a steel gate on the right-hand side and a solid back gate. The Bowling Club had been consulted and approved the work. The Deputy Clerk emphasised that if Councillors consented it would be an ideal time of the year for the work to be undertaken.

It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should seek a quotation for the refurbishment work and relocation of the Gents' toilets to the front of the building - and to report this to Full Council.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Jones
Unanimously agreed.

It was further proposed that Full Council should authorise the closure of these facilities during the winter months.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton

Seconded by: Cllr M Palmer

Agreed with 5 votes in favour and one abstention.

1479 TO DISCUSS OPTIONS FOR THE USE OF LAND AT THE IRNHAM ROAD RECREATION GROUND

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the vacant land resulted from the demolition of the old Football Club. Mr Johnson, the Community Centre Manager, then addressed the Meeting using a Powerpoint presentation:

- It was possible to site a 25 x 10 metre outdoor five-lane pool on the land, with accompanying changing rooms and toilets, viewing area, gymnasium, small cafe, office and plant room - which would sit comfortably within the 85 metres of space available and would not be too near to the properties in Queens Road.
- The proposed project would encompass modular buildings and aluminium windows, with a ground level pool. Ground and air heat source pumps and solar panels would be installed - which would heat the pool to a temperature between 26 - 29 degrees year-round.
- Draft costings had established the capital building costs to be around £1 million - which was around £4 million cheaper than for an indoor pool - and the costs for associated modular buildings to be in the region of £800,000 to £1 million.
- Building a pool on that site could work well with the Community Centre, which has around 450 weekly users, and the car park's 79 spaces could be increased to 100.
- To make the project viable the target membership would be 130 mainly in the 50 to 80 plus age group - and 100 possible adult 'direct debit members' at £25 per month had already been identified.
- The Beach Hotel had been consulted and confirmed that they would be happy to franchise and operate the gym.
- A Sport England study had concluded that outdoor swimming facilities were in high demand nationally: Mr Johnson added that with a large elderly demographic in the district the project could prove very successful. A similar facility at Teignmouth was popular, with residents and visitors alike, and the town benefited from visitor income too. Being close to schools would also be an advantage, and Mr Johnson had already approached Minehead Middle School for feedback.
- A meeting with a representative from SWaT earlier that day had proved positive - with SWaT's support for the proposed project. It had been confirmed that the suggested alternative site at Seaward Way was more problematic and would probably not be a viable option. There was a strong possibility that external grants could be achieved to assist the funding of the project.

- Pre-planning for the concept had been approved, but Mr Johnson hoped that a commitment could be achieved: more community consultation could be undertaken if Councillors required such.

Mr Johnson emphasised that since the closure years before of Minehead Lido and subsequently Aquasplash, a pool facility was much needed by the town and surrounding area. He thanked Councillors for the opportunity to speak and provided a written summary of the proposed project for their perusal.

Cllr Bolton extended his appreciation to Mr Johnson for the work undertaken.

Mr Johnson then left the Meeting.

1480 TO DISCUSS MAINTENANCE OF THE WARREN ROAD ROUNDABOUT

The Clerk informed Councillors that their ideas were sought.

When responsibility for maintenance of verges in the town was delegated to MTC, the Warren Road roundabout adjacent to Minehead and West Somerset Golf Club became part of that responsibility.

The past installation of sea defences had contributed to sand settling in that area, and the shrubs planted in the roundabout had suffered badly as a result. There was consequently a problem in maintaining the roundabout, requiring the MTC Amenities Team to dig out the area twice yearly - including dealing with a problematic bramble thicket. The roundabout surface was consequently not suitable for planting.

The Clerk explained that after some consideration it was felt the most practical solution would be to hard surface the roundabout, and then perhaps add some seasonal planted pots. Enquiries had shown that this option would however be costly: firstly, the central light column would have to be removed by its owner Somerset Highways at a cost around £2000, and a contractor's quote for the other work had come in at £5000 - therefore a budget of £7000 would have to be committed. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk believed that this amount from MTC funds was excessive for a small roundabout.

The Golf Club had approached MTC in 2021 about the maintenance issue and had been in touch since about the condition of the roundabout. There was a possibility that they might consider sponsorship of some floral displays once remedial work was completed.

Cllr Bolton suggested that Somerset Highways should be asked to remove the roundabout, then tarmac the area and have a roundabout painted on. The Clerk confirmed that the central light would require removal in that case. The Deputy Clerk added that it was vital to maintain a form of safety lighting there - bollards were installed following a fatal collision some years ago.

Cllr C Palmer put forward the idea of local artwork being displayed on a hard-surfaced roundabout - with perhaps the hobby horse as the inspiration.

Cllr Bolton felt that area of the seafront was constantly a mess as the sand was not satisfactorily maintained by SWaT or SCC.

Councillors were asked to email their ideas for this project to the Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk.

1481 TO RECOMMEND THE PURCHASE OF A VAN FOR THE CLEANING TEAM

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the item had been discussed the previous evening at the Finance and Staffing Committee Meeting.

The grey vehicle, which had been unroadworthy for some time due to an electrical fault, had recently been sold via eBay for £640. MTC's policy, to comply with its green credentials, was to replace with an electric van.

One of the current electric vans "Eric" would be used for watering during the summer period, from June to October.

The Cleaning Team required a box van to transport supplies and chemicals. Brand new electric vans were expensive, but the Deputy Clerk reported that he had sourced a second-hand Goupil G5 electric van, perfect for this task, available to purchase on eBay - to be supplied with new batteries, having been serviced and equipped with a three-month warranty - at a cost of £12,500. The Finance and Staffing Committee had recommended that MTC proceed with the purchase of the van and the Amenities and Environment Committee were now being asked for their permission to proceed with the purchase.

It was proposed that Full Council be recommend to approve the purchase of the second-hand Goupil G5 electric vehicle from eBay for £12,500.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton **Seconded by:** Cllr Jones
Agreed with 5 votes in favour and one abstention.

1482 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK ON THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that after approaching shop owners in The Parade about the proposed new Christmas lighting structure there, seven owners had responded positively. Although one quotation for the necessary work had been received from the existing installer, other quotations were still awaited: the Deputy Clerk would report further in due course.

Minehead Business Improvement District (BID) had agreed to pay for the power supply and sockets along The Avenue (16 columns) - and an order had been received by MTC to arrange the work with the installer. Minehead BID also asked MTC to source a quotation for festive lights. The Deputy Clerk had contacted Festive Lighting, the company who had provided the 2021 Christmas lighting, for this purpose - the received quotation had subsequently been forwarded to Minehead BID who had confirmed their agreement to fund the lighting over a two-year agreement (to tie-in with the current MTC lighting agreement). This meant that Minehead BID would pay for the first year, but as their future existence was not secure, they could not guarantee payment of the second year. It could be considered to ask Minehead BID to pay for the lighting outright.

Minehead BID were also in agreement to having a form of permanent lighting installed in The Avenue.

1483 TO DISCUSS PLATINUM JUBILEE ARRANGEMENTS

The Working Group had been unable to liaise prior to the Meeting, therefore Cllr Bloomfield agreed to contact those Councillors to convene a Meeting prior to the next Full Council Meeting. It was recognised that action would need to be undertaken as soon as possible to ensure any necessary bookings. The Deputy Clerk reminded the Working Group members that Blenheim Gardens would be available for use during the Platinum Jubilee weekend.

1484 TO RECOMMEND THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREETLIGHTING ON THE MARSH COMMON FOOTPATH

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that there had been an issue with the lighting on the pathway to the Rose Garden at the end of Marshfield Road, which was repaired by the Company who installed the Christmas lighting in Wellington Square. It was mentioned that the area around the entrance to the MTC compound near the hospital entrance was particularly dark and there had been public requests for lighting in that area - therefore a quotation was requested. It was suggested that installing a solar panel streetlamp could be a much cheaper option than a traditional electricity-fed lamp (around £10,000 to £15,000). The quotation received for a 30watt solar panel streetlamp was for £1808 plus VAT. The Amenities Team had been consulted and felt that to be very reasonable.

This would light-up the walkway to the hospital, and if successful could be repeated in the Rose Garden as there was insufficient lighting in that area - plus replacement of the unmetered streetlight in the Harepark area.

Councillors agreed this to be a good option.

It was proposed that Full Council should be recommended to agree the purchase of the solar streetlight as per the quotation received.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton

Seconded by: Cllr Bloomfield

Unanimously agreed.

1485 TO AGREE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING GROUP CONCERNING THE MINEHEAD EMERGENCY PLAN

Cllr Bloomfield explained that during the recent severe storms some members of the community suffered a breakdown in their electricity supply and phone lines for a few days, and there had been no contingency plan in place to support the community. The local PCSOs had stepped-in to support as far as they could.

Cllr Bloomfield felt that a cohesive Emergency Plan should be organised to prevent this chaos from happening in the future. The Minehead and District PCSOs were in favour.

SCC Councillor Mandy Chilcott had previously confirmed that an emergency telephone number would be allocated for future use.

It was agreed that a MTC Working Group to progress this plan was necessary.

It was proposed that Full Council should ratify the establishment of the Working Group, comprising of Councillors Bloomfield, Bolton, Jones, M Palmer and C Palmer, and any other Councillors who wished to be included.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton

Seconded by: Cllr C Palmer

Unanimously agreed.

1486 TO RECOMMEND THE RETURN OF LEIGH DANTER'S FUNFAIR ON MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL OWNED LAND

Cllr Bloomfield quoted a previous Full Council minute where it had been agreed to invite the funfair back to Minehead in September 2022. Leigh Danter had proposed the 2022 dates as Wednesday 7 to Sunday 11 September inclusive.

Cllr M Palmer stated that she had received complaints from adjacent residents about the noise volume during the 2021 visit - that the music was far too loud. Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that she would monitor the noise levels and request that the volume is reduced for the 2022 visit: she offered publication of her telephone number for use by complainants by way of courtesy.

Cllr Bloomfield explained that as both she and Cllr Bolton were personal friends of Leigh Danter, the conflict of interest meant it would be unethical for them to personally recommend the return and asked whether other Councillors present would do so instead.

It was proposed that Full Council be asked to extend an invitation to Leigh Danter to return the funfair to Minehead on the inclusive dates Wednesday 7 to Sunday 11 September 2022.

Proposed by: Cllr Jones

Seconded by: Cllr Rose

Agreed with 4 in favour and 2 abstentions.

Cllr Bloomfield concluded the Meeting by thanking those viewing via the live streaming process.

The Meeting ended at 8.48 pm.