



# MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 PM AT  
THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, IRNHAM ROAD, MINEHEAD TA24 5DW

*The Meeting was digitally recorded and streamed 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**

Mayor: Cllr A Kingston-James  
Councillors: Cllr J Bonar, Cllr C Gilberto, Cllr B Hodson, Cllr M Kingston-James,  
Cllr M Kravis\*\*\*, Cllr A Lawton, Cllr J Malin, Cllr C Palmer\*, Cllr M Palmer,  
Cllr T Venner\*

*(\* denotes Somerset West and Taunton Councillor "SWaT")  
(\*\* denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")*

**Officers in Attendance:** Mr B Howe (Deputy Clerk)  
Mr Ben Parker (Operations Manager)  
Ms M Boobyer (Assistant Clerk)  
Mrs J Notley (Notetaker)

**Councillors in Attendance:** Cllr B Allen \* \*\*  
Cllr A Hadley \*

**Councillors Absent:** Cllr M Burke, Cllr J Rogers

**Members of the Public:** 20

**Members of the Press:** 0

The Mayor welcomed Councillors, members of the public and those watching on Facebook.

**223 To receive** Apologies for Absence [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)  
Apologies had been received from Cllr T Bloomfield.

**224 To receive:**  
Declarations of Interests in respect of any Agenda items [Localism Act 2011](#)

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr M Kravis	All	SWaT Councillor SCC Councillor	2022	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2022	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr T Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2022	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

#### Dispensations [Localism Act 2011](#)

None.

The Mayor said item 11 on the Agenda concerning Blenheim Gardens would be brought forward. At Cllr Kravis' suggestion, once Cllr Venner had read out the proposed motion, item 5 on the Agenda, to adjourn the meeting for public inclusion, was also brought forward to allow members of the public who had asked to speak to address the meeting prior to discussion of item 11.

#### **225 To adjourn** the Meeting for Public Inclusion [Standing Order No 3e](#)

Two members of the public had asked to speak about Blenheim Gardens. The Mayor thanked them for their contribution to the meeting.

**226 To discuss** the future of Blenheim Gardens Café and agree the motion "That Minehead Town Council expresses its desire that Blenheim Gardens and Blenheim Gardens Café are promoted as a community asset for the benefit of the people of Minehead and request that Somerset West and Taunton Council actively engage with Minehead Town Council to achieve this aspiration to protect the Gardens for future generations"

Cllr Lawton told the meeting that she and Councillors C Palmer and M Palmer had been in contact and had had several conversations with officers at SWaT during regular live issue meetings. They were very disappointed in SWaT's responses. The officers seemed to regard the situation as a *fait accompli* and did not seem minded to make any changes to their courses of action. She thanked the members of the public who had been campaigning on this issue and said MTC needed the community behind it and also needed the public to come forward with suggestions.

Cllr Venner said it was hard but Minehead had to realise that the Gardens did not belong to Minehead Town Council and neither did the café. However both were part of the town. He, Cllr C Palmer and Cllr Hadley had told SWaT that were not in agreement with what was taking place regarding Blenheim Gardens Café and officers told them everything was done correctly. Cllr Venner disagreed. He said now was the time to tell the District Council that it had treated Minehead appallingly and as SWaT could not do the job of properly looking after Blenheim Gardens and the Café it should hand them back to Minehead.

Cllr M Palmer said there were 5 District Councillors present and they should force SWaT to deal with this issue before a new Council was in place.

Cllr Kravis told the meeting that there was an agreement to lease affecting Blenheim Gardens Café but this had not been signed yet. An agreement had been signed, but not a lease.

Cllr C Palmer pointed out that Blenheim Gardens was already registered as an asset of community value which meant that if SWaT wished to dispose of any part of it, including leasing the Café, it had to consult with MTC first and give the Town Council an opportunity of putting in a counter-offer. He did not know how this affected the Agreement to Lease.

After much discussion Council moved to a vote.

**Proposed: Cllr Venner**

**Seconded: Cllr Lawton**

**Agreed** with all in favour that Minehead Town Council expresses its desire that Blenheim Gardens and Blenheim Gardens Café are promoted as a community asset for the benefit of the people of Minehead and request that Somerset West and Taunton Council actively engage with Minehead Town Council to achieve this aspiration to protect the Gardens for future generations and that Minehead Town Council use the community to help achieve their aims and objectives.

**227 227.1 To co-opt** Councillor to represent the ward of Alcombe South

Mrs Sandra Slade made a short speech setting out why she would like to re-join MTC as Ward Councillor for Alcombe South Ward. Councillors held a secret ballot and, by a majority of votes, agreed to co-opt Mrs Slade to Minehead Town Council to represent Alcombe South Ward. The Mayor welcomed Cllr Slade to the Council.

**227.2 To co-opt** Councillor to represent the ward of Periton and Woodcombe

Mrs Stephanie Stephens had indicated she wished to stand as Ward Councillor for Periton and Woodcombe Ward. She was not present at the meeting so it was proposed to defer the co-option until the December Full Council meeting.

**Proposed: Cllr M Kingston-James**

**Seconded: Cllr Gilberto**

**Agreed** with all in favour to defer co-option of a Councillor to represent Periton and Woodcombe Ward until the December Full Council meeting.

**228 To receive** reports from:

- Somerset County Council (SCC)  
Cllr Christine Lawrence and Cllr Mandy Chilcott had sent their apologies for not being able to attend the meeting.  
Cllr Benet Allen gave a report from SCC after commenting on the subject of Blenheim Gardens and the Café. His report covered a SCC survey of Council tenants, the extension of the e-scooters scheme until May 2024, City, Town and Parish Council Working Group meetings about Unitary Council and Local Community Networks.
- Somerset West and Taunton District Council (SWaT)  
Cllr Andy Hadley said he was completely in support of Cllr Venner's motion and was happy to get involved. He said Cllr Lawrence, following the sudden death of her husband, would be cutting back on her Council duties for a while. Cllr Hadley and Cllr Chilcott would take over her work. He paid tribute to the late Cllr A Trollope-Bellew who would be sadly missed. Cllr Hadley also gave details of carbon-cutting grants for

small businesses. Car Parks owned by SWaT would be free to use for the 3 Saturdays leading up to Christmas. He also publicised the new one-stop shop for travel information in Somerset which would be accessed via Somerset.thinktravel.info.

- Police. The Police had sent in a Newsletter for November which would be put on the MTC Facebook page and website.
- Councillors attending Meetings on behalf of Minehead Town Council (MTC)
  - Minehead BID (Cllrs Bloomfield and Venner)  
Cllr Venner thanked Minehead BID for providing the extra Christmas lights in The Avenue this year.

Cllr C Palmer said he had attended a MPPP meeting on 15 November. The Minehead Coastal Development Team were currently looking at hosting a similar festival to the one held 2022, in 2023. They had recently refurbished the open air gallery near the Jubilee Café and new shelters were being planned on 2 empty bases near Warren Road.

Cllr Gilberto had attended a meeting at Minehead Eye and praised the work it was doing.

## **229 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor told the meeting he had attended, on 13 November, Remembrance Day events at Alcombe War Memorial and in Minehead where he had laid wreaths on behalf of MTC.

## **230 To agree** the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25 October 2022 – *Minutes to be agreed by Councillors who were in attendance*

Cllr M Palmer said that minute 199 needed amending to show that Cllr Lawton had also been involved in the Quay West toilets refurbishment project.

Cllr C Palmer requested that minutes of meetings be published sooner.

**Proposed: Cllr M Kingston-James**

**Seconded: Cllr Bonar**

**Agreed** with 8 in favour and 4 abstentions (Councillors absent) that, subject to the amendment, the Minutes were approved.

## **231 To note** the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 1 November 2022, Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee held on 7 November 2022 and Minutes of the Amenities & Environment Committee held on 8 November 2022

The Mayor said the Minutes were noted.

## **232 Finance Matters**

### **232.1 To approve** Urgent Payments for November 2022

Payments 1-5, totalling £57,969.68. of which £34,852.73 was staff salaries

Cllr Gilberto queried the purchase of 3 Christmas trees, including 1 for the Old Hospital. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the large Christmas tree was for Wellington Square, another was for Alcombe and the third was purchased for the Old Hospital but MTC would bill Minehead Connect and re-charge them for the tree.

He added that the larger salary amount included a nationally agreed staff pay rise back-dated to April 2022.

**Proposed: Cllr Malin**  
**Agreed with all in favour**

**Seconded: Cllr Lawton**

**232.2 To approve** Payments under £1,500 for November 2022

Payments 6-40, totalling £7,616.92

Cllr M Palmer asked if MTC were paying insurance for the office on the whole property. The Deputy Clerk replied that the landlord paid insurance for the building but charged MTC for the part it occupied. She also wished to know what was the payment for legal fees in connection with land at the rear of Quay West toilets. The Deputy Clerk said these were legal fees in connection with a lease to access land behind Quay West toilets, not the toilets themselves. Cllr M Palmer said she would skip the rest of her queries for the moment. Cllr Gilberto queried a charge for hire of room space for interviews back in 2020 and wished to suspend payment because of the length of time in sending an invoice. The Deputy Clerk replied that this invoice had only just reached MTC but Council did owe the money and should pay it.

**Proposed: Cllr A Kingston-James**  
**Agreed with 1 abstention and 11 in favour**

**Seconded: Cllr Bonar**

**232.3 To approve** Payment over £1,500 for November 2022

Payment no 41, totalling £10,527.62

The Deputy Clerk told the meeting that this was for installing power to 17 pylons in The Avenue, with access to timers and plugs. VAT would be reclaimed making a total of around £8,000. Minehead BID had financed the lights themselves.

**Proposed: Cllr Bonar**  
**Agreed with all in favour**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**232.4 To approve** Payments by Procurement Card for October 2022

Payments 42-54, totalling £708.56

Cllr Gilberto wanted to know why coffee and milk for the office had been bought from one particular retailer when another would have been cheaper. The Deputy Clerk told him that staff used both retailers. Cllr Gilberto suggested staff should look for somewhere cheaper. The Deputy Clerk noted his comments. Cllr M Palmer queried vehicle petrol purchases which she said came up regularly. The Deputy Clerk told her this was a transit panel van used when cleaning the toilets, which was driven 7 days a week. The electric vehicles could not be used because they were open vehicles. The electric vehicle bought to do the same work had had to be sent back because it was faulty. Cllr Palmer said efficiency had to be addressed because the van covered many hundreds of miles.

Cllr Venner said this had been talked about in the past, but if Councillors had questions about payments they should send them in before the meeting. If Councillors had a problem they should ask questions of the Clerk or Deputy Clerk beforehand. Cllr Kravis suggested payments ought to be approved by Finance & Staffing Committee to save time and questions at Full Council and perhaps the delegated power of that Committee ought to be considered in future. Cllr C Palmer

pointed out that the November meeting of Finance & Staffing Committee had not been able to approve payments because it had been inquorate.

**Proposed: Cllr M Palmer**  
**Agreed** with all in favour

**Seconded: Cllr Lawton**

**232.5 To approve** Regular Payments for October 2022  
Payments 1-32, totalling £7,092.52  
Cllr M Palmer said she would put her questions in an email.

**Proposed: Cllr Bonar**  
**Agreed** with all in favour

**Seconded: Cllr Slade**

**232.6 To note** Income Report for October 2022  
Income totalling £9,737.25  
Cllr M Kingston-James said the Income Report was noted.

**233 To clarify** position of a Councillor for Minehead Central Ward  
Cllr Gilberto had sent an email resigning from MTC but had subsequently changed his mind. The Deputy Clerk said this item was purely to ratify Cllr Gilberto's position as a Councillor.

**Proposed: Cllr A Kingston-James**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**Agreed** with 1 abstention and 11 in favour that Cllr Gilberto had not resigned from Council.

Cllr Venner reminded Councillors that when sending a resignation in an email or letter it constituted a legal document. In the past Council had adjusted the rules where a change of mind had happened but he considered that in future Council should stick to the rules and when a resignation was tendered that should be final.

**234 To agree** date for budget-setting seminar (suggested date 28/29 November 2022)

**Proposed: Cllr A Kingston-James**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**Agreed** with 10 in favour, 1 abstention and 1 against to hold budget-setting seminar on 28 November 2022

**235 To confirm** date of next Full Council meeting (13 December 2022)

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that in December the only Committee meetings would be Finance & Staffing and Planning with Full Council brought forward to 13 December 2022 to avoid Christmas.

**236 To agree** to create a Policy Review Group

The Deputy Clerk called for volunteers for a small Policy Review Group. The meeting would be in office time so that the Operations Manager and Assistant Clerk could bring forward suggested updated policies. Cllrs Gilberto, Lawton, Malin, C Palmer, M Palmer and M Kingston-James all wished to be involved but Cllr M Kingston-James said he may not be able to attend day-time meetings but would try to be available.

**237 To consider** adopting NALC model Councillor-Officer Protocol

**Proposed: Cllr M Kravis**

**Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James**

**Agreed** with all in favour to formally adopt the NALC model Councillor-Officer Protocol

**238 To resolve** to exclude Members of the Press and Public ([Public Bodies \[Admission to Meetings\] Act 1960](#))

**Proposed: Cllr Gilberto**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour to continue the meeting *in camera* to discuss a staffing issue.

**239 Confidential Item**

The public meeting closed at 8.50 pm