



# MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 13 DECEMBER 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**

Chair: Cllr T Bloomfield (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillors: Cllr J Bonar, Cllr B Hodson, Cllr M Kingston-James, Cllr A Lawton, Cllr J Malin, Cllr C Palmer\*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr S Slade, Cllr T Venner\*  
(\* denotes Somerset West and Taunton Councillor "SWaT")  
(\*\* denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")

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

**Councillors in Attendance:** Cllr M Chilcott \*\*

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

**Members of the Public:** 1

**Members of the Press:** 0

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

**254 To receive** Apologies for Absence [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)  
Apologies had been received from Cllr A Kingston-James, Cllr C Gilberto and Cllr M Kravis.

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

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
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](#)

No dispensations were requested.

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

The Deputy Mayor told the meeting that, due to unforeseen circumstances, the co-option would no longer proceed and the casual vacancy would be re-advertised.

**257 To receive** reports from:

- Somerset County Council (SCC)

Cllr Mandy Chilcott told the meeting that Cllr Christine Lawrence thanked Council for its kind regards following her bereavement. She hoped to be back to work in the New Year.

Cllr Chilcott said that SCC was currently facing a deficit in its finances of £22.5 million due to the present huge rises in costs especially for travel and care. She said the vesting day for the new Unitary Council was 1 April 2023 and much work was going on around the county towards this. There would be more help this year than there had ever been with Council Tax, with 100% Council Tax reduction for some residents.

Cllr Chilcott was pleased to tell the meeting about Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust merging to create a new, single organisation which would be responsible for running Yeovil District Hospital and Musgrove Park Hospital, the community hospitals in Somerset, all community, mental health and learning disability services in the county and a quarter of GP practices in Somerset.

- Somerset West and Taunton District Council (SWaT)

There was no report from SWaT. Both Cllr Hadley and Cllr Allen had sent their apologies for being unable to attend. If any Councillors had questions for Cllr Hadley they could be sent to him via Cllr Chilcott.

- Police

No Police report had yet been received as the meeting was two weeks earlier in the month than usual.

- Councillors attending Meetings on behalf of Minehead Town Council (MTC)

- Minehead BID (Cllrs Bloomfield and Venner)
- Advisory and Working Groups

Cllr C Palmer said he and Cllr Bonar had attended a meeting of the West Somerset Flood Group on 7 December 2022. The flood line number was 0800 087 060. In the case of an incident the number to ring was 0345 988 1188. The number to use to receive text messages was 0345 602 6340.

Cllr Malin said he and Cllr Lawton had attended a meeting of Trustees of Quirke's Almshouses which was experiencing great difficulties following the sudden sad death of David Lethaby, leaving the Trust without a Clerk. He asked if anyone had any ideas. There were 6 Almshouses and 2 other properties alongside which were managed by the Trust.

There had been meetings of several Advisory Groups but there was nothing to report as yet.

- 258 To adjourn** the Meeting for Public Inclusion [Standing Order No 3e](#)  
Speaker – Mr Ian Atkinson (Chief Officer of Citizens Advice -West Somerset)

Mr Atkinson gave a presentation detailing Citizens Advice West Somerset's work in the area and giving an idea of the scope of the problems dealt with and the organisation's pool of expertise and aims for the future. He assured the meeting that any Service Level Agreement, if agreed, would ring-fence the money for use in Minehead. Mr Atkinson then left the meeting.

**259 Mayor's Announcements**

Cllr M Kingston-James said he and the Mayor had attended West Somerset School on Saturday, 10 December 2022 to open its Christmas fete.

The Deputy Mayor wished all residents of Minehead a very happy Christmas.

- 260 To agree** the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22 November 2022 – *Minutes to be agreed by Councillors who were in attendance*

Cllr Lawton pointed out that Cllr Hadley was indicated as a County Councillor as well as a District Councillor. Subject to his designation being altered to District Councillor, Councillors approved the Minutes.

**Proposed: Cllr M Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr Lawton**

**Agreed** with 9 in favour the 1 abstention (Councillor absent) to approve the draft Minutes subject to a minor amendment.

- 261 To note** the Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee held on 5 December 2022 and Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday 6 December 2022

The Deputy Mayor said the Minutes were noted.

**262 Finance Matters**

- 262.1 To approve** Urgent Payments for December 2022

Payments 1-6, totalling £36,098.27, of which £22,285.90 was staff salaries

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr Malin**

**Agreed** with all in favour

- 262.2 To approve** Payments under £1,500 for December 2022

Payments 7-18, totalling £1,914.65

**Proposed: Cllr Hodson**

**Seconded: Cllr M Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour

**262.3 To approve** Payments over £1,500 for December 2022  
Payments 19-21, totalling £40,964.40

In response to questions from Cllr Lawton the Deputy Clerk explained that MTC had received a £20,000 grant from SWaT for the Culvercliffe refurbishment. SWaT would still own the benches but it was paying for the refurbishment. Cllr Bonar asked about payment 19 and the Operations Manager told him this was for bedding plants to provide the display of flowers throughout the town in the spring. The Deputy Clerk told Councillors that payment 21 was the required 50% advance payment towards the Changing Places toilets. Work was set to start on 6 February 2023.

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

**Seconded: Cllr Lawton**

**262.4 To approve** Payments by Procurement Card for November 2022  
Payments 22-32, totalling £855.77

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

**Seconded: Cllr Bonar**

**262.5 To approve** Regular Payments for November 2022  
Payments 1-34, totalling £8,254.14

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

**Seconded: Cllr Slade**

**262.6 To note** Income Report for November 2022  
Income totalling £39,510.86, and with interest, £40,074.61  
The Chair of Finance & Staffing said the Income Report was noted.

**263 To agree** Budget and Precept for 2023/2024 referring to Council Tax Base  
The Deputy Clerk told the meeting that Councillors had attended a seminar about the budget and precept. Since drafting a proposed budget some additions had had to be made and the current proposed budget came in at £30,000 over the current precept. The Council Tax base had now been received and Councillors would be able to work from this. The current precept would be raised by about £6,000 with the new tax base.

Cllr Venner proposed that the precept should be raised by 5%, seconded by Cllr Malin and agreed by Cllr Slade. This would equate to a rise of 74p per month for a Band D property. Cllr C Palmer wished to keep the precept the same as the previous year which would raise an extra £6,000. Cllr Bloomfield agreed.

Cllr Bloomfield proposed an amendment to the motion: that the precept be kept the same as for 2022/2034.

**Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**Agreed** with 6 in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention that Minehead Town Council's precept for 2023/2024 would represent a 0% increase.

**Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield**

**Seconded: Cllr M Palmer**

**Agreed** with 7 in favour and 3 against that Minehead Town Council's precept for 2023/2024 be £759,293, an increase of £6,032.

**264 To consider** the creation of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) from April 2023 for Citizens Advice West Somerset

The Deputy Clerk said as yet there was no provision in the budget for this Agreement and no draft Agreement to read through yet. There was a definite link between CAWS and the office with residents calling in for help. Councillors wished to hear how much finance CAWS was asking for. Cllr Malin pointed out that any finance would now have to come from a different budget because no provision had been made when setting the precept. Councillors were impressed with the presentation by Mr Atkinson and were in favour of offering help to the organisation. The Deputy Clerk offered to discuss with Mr Atkinson a possible SLA Agreement and to find out how much support was hoped for.

**Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour to defer further discussion to the next Full Council meeting when more details were available.

**265 To confirm** Councillors on Committees

The Deputy Clerk told the meeting that originally it had been intended to have half of Councillors on Finance & Staffing Committee and half on Amenities & Environment Committee. The system seemed to have gone haywire and he felt a review was called for. Cllr Malin said Quirke's Almshouses were desperately seeking more members for their Committee. He said Cllr Bonar was willing to stand as MTC representative. Cllr Malin said the Mayor had indicated he was content to stand down in favour of Cllr Bonar but Cllr Slade thought the rules were that representatives should be the Mayor and two others.

**Proposed: Cllr Malin**

**Seconded: Cllr Venner**

**Agreed** with all in favour that Cllr Bonar would stand as MTC's representative on the Quirke's Almshouses Committee in place of the Mayor.

Cllr Hodson enquired about the Risk Management Advisory Group and said he would like to join it. The Operations Manager promised to send him an invitation to the next meeting and email him the necessary information.

**Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour that Cllr Hodson be included on the Risk Management Advisory Group

Cllr Lawton asked to join the Allotments Advisory Group in place of Cllr Bloomfield lwho wished to step down.

**Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield**

**Seconded: Cllr C Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour that Cllr Lawton join the Allotments Advisory Group in place of Cllr Bloomfield.

Cllr Venner suggested that the two main Committees be amalgamated to avoid the same Councillors discussing some subjects on successive evenings when Finance & Staffing Committee often overrode proposals from Amenities & Environment Committee. Discussions could then be over in one night.

Cllr M Palmer suggested trialling a new system starting in May. The Deputy Clerk also wished to review the advisory groups.

**266 To approve** draft protocol covering interaction between officers and Councillors  
The Assistant Clerk introduced the draft protocol. The Deputy Clerk said some points in it would form part of other policies, which the Policy Advisory Group would confirm. Cllr Lawton thought the protocol needed work but Council needed to have a balance between staff responding to queries and having space and time to work. She said Council needed to be mindful of the culture and conditions in which officers had to work. She wished to look at it alongside the new NALC Protocol. Cllr M Palmer pointed out that this was a working document that did need work.

Cllr Venner proposed approval of the protocol as a working document, seconded by Cllr Bloomfield.

Cllr Lawton proposed approval of the draft protocol with a review of it in six months' time. Cllr M Palmer proposed a second amendment to discuss the draft protocol at the next meeting of the Policy Review Advisory Group in one month's time.

**Proposed: Cllr M Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr M Kingston-James**

**Agreed** with 8 in favour and 2 against that the draft Protocol be sent to the January meeting of the Policy Review Advisory Group for discussion, amendments and approval.

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

**Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield**

**Seconded: Cllr M Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour to continue the meeting *in camera*.

The public meeting ended at 8.55 pm

**268 Confidential Items**