



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes  
Committee Meeting held  
on Tuesday 11 July 2023 at 7.30 pm at  
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

The Meeting was streamed live on the MTC Facebook page and digitally recorded

*Members were 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 M Kingston- James

Councillors: Cllr Ch Beynon, Cllr B Hodson, Cllr M Kravis\*, Cllr A Lawton, Cllr C Palmer and Cllr M Palmer, (\*denotes Somerset Councillor)

**In Attendance:** Helen Nathanson, Town Clerk  
Ben Parker, Operations Manager  
1 member of the public

Cllr Kingston-James opened the meeting.

**51 To receive Apologies for Absence LGA 1972 s85 (1)**

There were no apologies.

**52 To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest and any Dispensations in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members**

Cllr Kravis declared his membership of Somerset Council.

**53 To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 9 May 2023**

It was resolved to approve the Minutes.

**Proposed: Cllr CP      Seconded: Cllr BH**

**54 Finance**

54.1 **To approve** urgent payments for July 2023.

It was resolved to approve the urgent payments.

**Proposed: Cllr BH      Seconded: Cllr CP**

**54.2 To approve** payments under £1,500 for July 2023

It was resolved to approve the payments under £1,500.

**Proposed: Cllr BH      Seconded: Cllr MP**

**54.3 To recommend** to Full Council payments over £1,500 for July 2023

It was resolved to recommend the payments over £1,500.

**Proposed: Cllr MP      Seconded: Cllr BH**

**54.4 To approve** payments by procurement card for July 2023

It was resolved to approve the payments by procurement card.

**Proposed: Cllr CP      Seconded: Cllr BH**

**54.5 To approve** regular payments for June 2023

It was resolved to approve the regular payments.

**Proposed: Cllr MK      Seconded: Cllr CP**

**54.6 To receive** the Income Report for June 2023

The Income Report was received.

**55 To recommend** the purchase of a new lawn mower cutting deck.

The Operations Manager outlined a proposal to purchase a new cutting deck for the existing Town Council-owned mower. The existing mower deck is only suitable for very short grass and is not powerful enough to cut areas of longer grass or areas with less frequent cutting. The cost of the conversion would be in the region of £7,500 (including VAT) which would include part exchange of the current deck. This new deck could be used for all grass cutting and would give greater flexibility at optimal times. The alternative would be to use a contractor for the longer areas which would cost approximately £1,000 each time.

Councillors asked questions about the following matters:

Budget provision - there is no provision made in this year's budget so the option would be to flex from underspend in other areas.

How often the deck would be used - the new deck would be a permanent feature on the lawnmower so would be used all the time.

The lead time – this is likely to be a few weeks.

Efficiency - both the existing and new cutting decks are the same width but the latter would cut longer, thicker grassed areas without stressing the motor which may save money on maintenance.

Councillors noted the request and asked for a written brief addressing these issues to be prepared for the July Full Council Meeting to allow them to make a decision.

**56 To recommend** the installation of new gates at the Summerland Road car park toilets

The small pocket of land behind the toilets, an asset transfer from Somerset Council, has historically been a magnet for anti-social behaviour, including drug use. Gates have been used successfully in other toilets areas to prevent this and have an added benefit of creating a storage area. No provision was made in the budget for this and councillors requested a written brief for the July Council meeting to discuss this further and allow them to make a recommendation.

**57 To propose** MTC representation at the Local Community Network (LCN)

The LCN is a new initiative from Somerset Council to create partnerships amongst towns and parishes within 'districts' of Somerset. Members will have voting rights and will determine the agenda for the Network.

Cllr Kravis is automatically on the Network as a member of Somerset Council.  
Cllr C Palmer volunteered and was elected to represent Minehead Town Council.

**Proposed: Cllr BH    Seconded: Cllr M-KJ**  
Cllr M Palmer abstained

It was noted that the meetings will also be hybrid online and other councillors may attend remotely, though they will not be eligible to vote.

**58      To discuss** transfer of equipment from Minehead BID

Councillors discussed the proposal and raised questions about the following matters:

- The equipment must be inspected for value for money and condition
- The arrangement for hanging baskets, which are still in use at the moment, needs consideration
- There is a group which is potentially positioning itself to replace the BID and councillors wished to know if they had been approached and what would happen to the equipment if MTC does not take it on.
- The MTC budget has not factored in either the cost of purchase or the staff time required for maintenance and operation, which may compete with other priorities.

It was therefore proposed that the equipment be inspected and a condition report brought back to the August Full Council Meeting. In addition, councillors requested an outline of the costs involved for MTC to support the new equipment and its functions for the next three years.

**Proposed: Cllr MK    Seconded: Cllr CP**

**59      To resolve** to exclude members of the press and public ([Public Bodies \[Admission to Meetings\] Act 1960](#))

It was resolved to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the items to be discussed.

See Confidential Minutes.

**61 To recommend** Draft letter to Somerset Council regarding Blenheim Gardens

Councillors noted the letter.

Cllr Palmer explained that many of the issues identified in the letter are being attended to or are issues of which SC officers are aware. It was recommended that the letter be sent to Somerset Council and that it should remain confidential until information is available.

**Proposed: Cllr MK    Seconded: Cllr MP**

The meeting closed at 8.43pm.