



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Minehead Town Council
held on Tuesday 25 July 2023 at 7.30 pm at
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

The Meeting was digitally recorded for the Town Council website.

Present: Councillors C Palmer (Chair), Lawton, Hodson, M Palmer, Beynon, Kravis, Hall and Jewell

Apologies: Councillor Kingston-James

Not Present: Councillor Bonar

In Attendance: H Nathanson (Town Clerk), B Parker (Operations Manager), Somerset Councillors Lawrence and Chilcott, and 7 members of the public

There was a 15-minute open forum at the beginning of the Meeting for residents of Minehead and Alcombe to speak on any matter related to the town. No matters were raised.

1. To receive apologies for absence.

It was **resolved** to accept the apologies from Councillor Kingston-James.

2. To receive disclosures of unregistered or other interests from councillors on matters to be considered at the Meeting.

No interests were declared. Councillor Kravis declared his membership of Somerset Council and Exmoor National Park.

3. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors.

Councillor Hadley gave his apologies.

Councillor Lawrence reported that the Minehead Library refurbishment was now complete and that it would be a focal point for help and support to the community, offering advice on a range of matters.

There would also be reading skills events for children. All were encouraged to visit.

Complaints about weeds had increased recently in Minehead and Alcombe and presented a trip hazard. Responsibility for dealing with this needed to be resolved and Councillor Lawrence was trying to get information from Somerset Council.

Councillor Chilcott reported that the Minehead Library was also running an annual summer reading challenge.

Somerset Council was running a national award scheme to help young people who find it difficult to get placements, and to provide homes for them, from where they can access the right services whilst remaining close to their families in Somerset.

The Somerset Council budget end of year accounts process was more complicated this year because of the requirement to close five different council accounts however, it was likely that there would be overspend and the future predictions show shortfalls starting at £41.6m just in the first year.

Waste services industrial action had been suspended for the time being.

Councillor Kravis reported that the Somerset Council newsletter was a useful and informative way to stay informed about what was going on around the County and he recommended subscribing.

Town Councillors then raised the following issues with the Somerset Councillors:

Councillor Lawton asked why it was necessary to have so many ZIP scooters in Minehead and whether the new ones were operating at faster speeds. Councillor Chilcott explained that the units were speed restricted and that extra numbers of them were brought in for the summer. Discussion was had about whether or not speeds had changed and Councillor Chilcott agreed to find out. She also suggested that Minehead Town Council could invite the ZIP company to one of its meetings and speak to them directly.

Councillor Lawton asked about the progress of the new homes on Seaward Way because it seemed slow. The Somerset Councillors had not received any updates.

Councillor Lawton asked about beach cleaning routines. Somerset West and Taunton District Council used to carry out the cleaning but it seems to have stopped. Councillor Kravis agreed to investigate.

Councillor Lawton asked whether the new library advisory services would be in person or remote and was told that it would be a mixture in order to broaden the range of help available.

Councillor C Palmer had contacted various towns and parishes around Somerset and been told that Somerset Council was still responsible for street weed clearance in many areas. Councillor Chilcott confirmed that this had previously been the responsibility of Somerset County Council and she had requested more information and advice about what needs legally to be done to keep the paths and roadways clear of obstruction.

Councillor M Palmer asked about the frequency of street sweeping which she said had not been done recently and seemed to be happening less frequently. Councillor Chilcott recalled that Minehead Town Council had been consulted some years ago about the frequency of cutting and agreed to a 12-weekly cycle, though this did vary in some areas and she would find out more.

Councillor Chilcott suggested that the Somerset Councillors would always be happy to receive questions in advance of the meetings to allow them to find out as much as possible beforehand. They were thanked for their attendance and help.

4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on Tuesday 27th June 2023 (Attachment 1) and to discuss any matters arising.

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes.

The following matters arose:

Item 39 A decision was deferred to this month to find volunteers to represent MTC on the League of Friends of Minehead Hospital, Minehead & Porlock Bus Group and Minehead Youth Club.

This item was moved to the August meeting to allow councillors, and in particular those newly co-opted, time to consider where they might like to be involved.

5. To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting on 4th July 2023.

The Minutes were **received**.

6. To receive the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting on 11th July 2023 and to resolve to approve the recommendations made by the Committee. (Attachment 3)

It was noted that the reports for items 55, 56 and 58 would be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in August.

The Minutes were **received**.

It was **resolved** to approve the payments over £1,500 for July 2023 for a total of £6,912.50.

It was **resolved** to send the draft letter to Somerset Council regarding Blenheim Gardens.

7. To consider three applications for co-option to Minehead Town Council.

Applications for co-option to Minehead Town Council were considered from two members of the public. The candidates spoke to councillors, explaining why they wanted to join MTC, and councillors asked questions of them.

Councillors voted to suspend standing orders and applicants and attendees of the meeting were then invited to leave the room to allow the vote to take place. Mr Ben Hall and Mr Ben Jewell were both elected by a majority to be co-opted to Minehead Town Council and they joined the meeting as councillors.

8. To receive an update about the meeting of the Local Community Network (LCN) held in Crowcombe on Thursday 13th July 2023.

Councillor C Palmer reported that Somerset Councillor Sully was elected as Chair with Councillor Maitland-Walker (Carhampton Parish Council) as Deputy. Membership of the LCN consists of town and parish councils, Somerset Council and key local organisations and members of the public are invited to attend meetings. Discussion was held about the main issues facing members, which ranged from very localised to more general shared problems. Meetings will be held bi-monthly with the next one in the autumn.

Councillor Kravis, who had also attended the meeting, added that it had been well-attended and that he hoped the LCN would be proactive and focused on wider community issues.

9. To nominate Councillors Hodson and C Palmer to act as trustees to Quirke's Almshouse Charity.

It was **resolved** to nominate Councillors Hodson and C Palmer as trustees to Quirke's Almshouse Charity.

10. To receive an update about Quay West toilets.

The Operations Manager reported that the refurbishment work at Quay West Toilets was nearing completion and due to be finished within the next two weeks. The external toilet refurbishment work had meant the roofing felt was entirely replaced and the old sky light windows, that were sources of water ingress, removed. Internally the refurbishment had incorporated the renewal of all wall, floor and ceiling coverings within the public toilets as well as replacement of the cubicles, vanity units, taps, baby change units and washroom accessories. A change in colour scheme with updated LED sensed lighting had been incorporated to help lift the light levels within the toilet rooms. The works undertaken had also provided an accessible toilet to comply with The Equalities Act in both the male and female sides. Vandal resistant details including sensor taps and toilet flushes had been designed to limit the opportunity for users to grab and break any handles and a sensor timed flow restricted water use, reducing waste. The Operations Manager reported that the opening date was subject to final snags and issues and would be shared via the Town Council website and social media.

Councillor Lawton proposed a vote of thanks to the Operations Manager for his project management and all were in agreement.

11. To discuss the offer from Somerset Council to look at Community Funded 20mph speed limits.

Councillors considered the costs of the scheme to be confusing and wanted more information before committing to anything, though the idea of more areas of 20mph speed limits was supported in

principle. Queries were also raised about whether or not there was capacity within the police to monitor and enforce the speed limits.

Councillor Kravis reported that he had recently attended a useful police presentation at a nearby parish and undertook to find a contact with a view to inviting the speaker to a Minehead Town Council meeting. It was also suggested that councillors look at the Kendal Town Council policy as a good example of how the reduced speed limit could be applied town-wide rather than just in one-off areas.

12. To discuss the letter regarding tree planting from Exmoor National Park Authority.

The Town Clerk was asked to confirm whether this funding applied to Minehead or only within the boundary of the National Park. Councillor Kravis queried whether the Town Council would have the capacity to take on tree planting at the moment and it was agreed that the Operations Advisory Group would consider it in more detail at its next meeting and make recommendations if appropriate.

13. To receive a brief update about work to create a new management plan for Alcombe Common which has been instigated by the Butterfly Conservation Trust.

The Town Clerk explained that new funding had been granted to the Butterfly Conservation Trust to continue with the work to restore and protect threatened species across land on Exmoor which includes Alcombe Common, an area of approximately 57 hectares which is owned and managed by MTC. A public consultation needs to be carried out because this is common land and a firm of ecologists has been engaged to do this. The Town Clerk and Operations Manager met with them last week for an initial discussion about their intentions and more information will be forthcoming. The Town Council is not being committed to anything and will be involved in any decisions about future management. The Town Clerk also explained that Natural England is peat sampling around the UK to create a Peat Map and that samples will be taken from Alcombe Common at some point in the year.

14. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory Groups and Outside Bodies.

The following reports were **received**:

Councillor C Palmer attended the Minehead People and Place Partnership meeting last month. The Partnership is keen to revamp the Minehead Plan and revisit targets. The bandstand concerts in Blenheim Gardens continued to be successful and well supported.

15. To nominate a councillor to attend the Town Centre Security Meetings arranged by the Minehead PCSOs.

It was **resolved** to nominate Councillors Kravis and Hall to attend the monthly meetings which are held virtually.

16. To note the following correspondence:

- a. Letter from Citizens Advice Bureau
- b. Notification of the South West Coast 50 Charity Challenge.

The items of correspondence were **noted**.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Councillor C Palmer
Chairman
Minehead Town Council