



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 7.30 pm at
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

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

In Attendance: B Parker (Operations Manager), H Nathanson (Town clerk via Zoom), Somerset Councillor Chilcott and 7 members of the public

There was a 15-minute open forum at the beginning of the Meeting for residents of Minehead to raise with councillors any matters related to the town. The following matters were raised:

A member of the public asked for more information about the proposed lido and it was agreed that the subject would be placed on a subsequent agenda.

A member of the public mentioned the difficulty hearing councillors speak at council meetings and would like to see a report at next Full Council meeting as to what is happening to ensure that this is addressed.

Councillor Chilcott asked on behalf of a Minehead resident who couldn't attend, if the Town Council sent letters to private residents whose vegetation overgrowth encroached onto public roads and footways asking them to cut it back as they understood that historically, MTC carried out this duty. Cllr C Palmer said some councillors had been successful as individuals asking county council to enforce such matters. Cllr M Palmer said that ensuring vegetative growth stays within the property boundary is the owners' responsibility and it is down to the of higher tier authority to enforce. Cllr Kravis said he suspects that reports of some Parish and Town Councils undertaking such duties may have taken it upon themselves to do so.

Cllr Kravis said he had been asked about adult social care and where the funding actually goes.

Councillor Chilcott responded by saying that everybody who requests help is entitled to a needs assessment and depending on the outcome of the assessment, Somerset Council are duty bound to deliver. Last time she checked there were c100 people in beds in care homes in Minehead area that were being subsidised by Somerset Council. She also mentioned that SC fund some peoples help at home and rehab care after a hospital stay. It was discussed that even though, in a county with a population of c500,000 people, the percentage of people requiring both child and adult social care is low but the reality is that it incurs very high costs.

1. To receive apologies for absence.

There were no apologies.

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

Councillor Kravis said he had already declared himself a Somerset Councillor but wanted to make people aware that in relation to item 8 he was a member of The Wessex Regional Coastal Defence and Flood Board.

There were no other disclosures of unregistered or other interests.

3. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors.

Councillors Hadley and Lawrence sent their apologies to the meeting.

Councillor Chilcott gave the following report:

Council finances – SC were about to draw on reserves for the second year to balance the budget and there will be some difficult decisions to make moving forward.

Bus services - 28 Taunton to Minehead has been identified as a bus at risk and is running at a loss. Government is currently subsidising 28 but funding is due to stop in the spring. The number of users needs to increase. The bus usage is currently lower now than pre covid.

Autumn Covid and Flu booster vaccines are now underway having been brought forward. As availability varies, some people may have to go to Taunton.

The consultation period on the gambling policy has come to an end and will now need to wait for the policy to go through council.

With the ban on single use plastics due to come into force, Trading Standards are working with businesses to assist in the transition.

Floods in Minehead – They were devastating for the town and were at a level we haven't seen in many years. Somerset Council had officers on the ground for a few days talking to those affected. If anyone has been affected, please report to Somerset Council number and the first option is flooding support. Huge thanks to all involved especially the Fire Brigade and the level of community response.

Councillor Kravis gave the following report:

28 Bus Minehead to Taunton – Councillor Kravis was surprised that it makes a loss and commented on the shortage of drivers.

Floods in Minehead - Environment Agency visit regarding costal defence did mention the culvert in town and the need to find a long-term solution.

Surestart Centre, Alcombe - £425,000 is being spent in decarbonisation work and he asked whether the Town Council had been consulted about heat pumps being laid under King George Playing Fields.

4. To approve the [Minutes of the Meeting of Minehead Town Council](#) held on 22nd August 2023 and to discuss any matters arising.

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

The following matters arose:

Item 3 Wootton Ridge Management Plan Consultation

The Operations Manager explained that the public consultation is due to end on Saturday 30th September 2023 and encouraged any who have not yet completed the online consultation to do so. The drop in event at Minehead library on 11 September went according to the ecology company, really well, and there appeared to be general support for more joined-up management across the ridge. The 1st stage report will be available in time for the landowner workshop in early November.

Item 12 Blenheim Gardens

The Operations Manager confirmed that a site meeting was held between Officers at both MTC and SC as well as councillors for both MTC and SC. The meeting was held to discuss some Town Council concerns regarding the long-term maintenance and anti-social issues. Some potential shorter- and longer-term solutions were discussed, and it was agreed that both councils would work closely by forming a centenary group for the gardens to ensure the 100th anniversary of the gardens in 2025 would be marked appropriately.

Councillors thanked Somerset Councillors Chilcott and Handley for their help in arranging the meeting. The following councillors were nominated to be part of the centenary group: Councillors Jewell, Lawton and M Palmer.

5. To receive the [Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting](#) on 5th September 2023.

The Minutes were received.

6. To receive the [Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting](#) on 12th September 2023.
To discuss any matters arising and approve the recommendations:

The Minutes were received and it was **resolved** to approve the following recommendations:

Item 5

It was **resolved** to approve the payments over £1500 to the value of £10,554.14 be approved.

Item 9 - Operations Advisory Group Minutes 5th September matters arising:

Item 4 - Dog Control Orders on MTC-owned land

The Operations Manager reminded councillors that the proposals are relating strictly to MTC owned areas and broadly reflect the dog controls held within the previous PSPO. The following single Town Council response was approved for land owned by MTC:

Irnham Road Recreation Ground	Dog Exclusion- high use area
Millennium Rose Garden	Dog Exclusion – this is MTC's most 'formal' garden
King George V Playing Field	Dogs on Leads - used for both adult and youth football
Cross Farm Park, Alcombe	Dogs on Leads - play equipment and regular child users
Cross Farm Park Kindergarten	Dog Exclusion - play area specially for under 5's and fenced
Periton Play area	Dog Exclusion - fenced play area within a large field
King George Play Area	Dog Exclusion - fenced play area within a large field

Item 5 - transfer of ownership of the allotments land at Periton Lane, Periton Way, Orchard Road and Marshfield from Somerset Council to the Town Council.

Somerset Council had recently contacted MTC regarding the transfer of the allotment sites that have historically been managed and maintained by MTC regarding the transfer of assets. Councillors were concerned about the legal costs that have not been budgeted for. It was agreed that legal costs aside, the town council should own the allotment sites:

Cllr C Palmer asked Somerset Councillor Chilcott if this was something she could take away with her to investigate with SC officers if an agreement could be reached regarding costs. Councillor Chilcott asked if she could be included in an email in order to further investigate.

Item 8 - Christmas Lights switch-on

The Operations Manager confirmed that Christmas lights switch on has been confirmed as 24th November with a time TBC. Festive Lighting will be in Minehead preparing the lights and dressing the Christmas tree on 22nd, 23rd and 24th November. They will also be present to assist with the switch on. Local businesses have been invited to use this occasion to hold late night shopping in the town and Cllr Jewell has been working with them to finalise the plans. Cllr Jewell explained that there had been a couple of informal get togethers held with local businesses to discuss the event. The businesses have agreed a Victorian theme for the event. Cllr Jewell has also been in touch with the Regal to see if they want to be involved. There is an acknowledgment that there is not a lot of time to get this event finalised but the response from businesses has been good. Councillor Jewell stressed that this is not just open to businesses and he wants it to be a community event.

6. To discuss the payment of Planning Obligation (Section 106 Agreement) for Planning Application VSC/21/22/001 at Land south of Hopcott Rd. (Councillor C Palmer)

Councillor C Palmer gave the following update; On the land south of Hopcott road the developer has applied to SC to remove their obligation to pay S106 money in exchange for providing 100% affordable housing rather than the 30% previously agreed. The MTC planning Committee has objected to this. SC has said that MTC needs to provide an appropriate project for the S106 payment as this will give them more ability to turn the developer's application down.

Questions were asked about how many houses were in the development and the definition of affordable. The original application was for 71 houses and the developer is struggling to build houses at a profitable rate. The exact definition of affordable was not clear but it was thought to be t the social rate or 20% reduction of market value. It was agreed that this should be discussed in more detail and that MTC should take a strong stance on this. Councillor Chilcott suggested that the Town Council could identify projects relating to town priorities to assist with allocation of S106 money.

8. To note the information about the Minehead Coastal Erosion Protection work. (Attachment 1)

The information regarding the Minehead Coastal Erosion Protection works were received. The Operations manager highlighted that works had already begun and the first shipment of granite arrived in Minehead on the Searock barge on Monday 18th September. Work is likely to last for 10 weeks. The EA and MTC were working closely together to ensure information and updates would be shared via the MTC website and Facebook page. The Operations Manager explained that further works would be required in the future and that the EA is eager to draw all the different bodies together to work on a longer-term strategy for the town.

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

Cllr C Palmer attended a Minehead People and Place Partnership meeting and that work was ongoing to update the Minehead plan.

10. To note the correspondence from Education Support Services (ESS) and to discuss how Minehead Town Council could be involved (Councillor Beynon).

Further updates are awaited.

11. To receive an update on the twinning visit in October by the delegation from Saint Berthevin (Councillor Kingston – James)

Cllr Kingston James gave the following update. 24 guests are expected to come over from France to celebrate the delayed 30th anniversary of the Twinning agreement. Minehead Twinning association has been working hard to ensure MTC honour the oath they made in 1990. A ticketed event has been organised on Saturday night with male voice choir and barn dance.

Members of the public left the meeting at this point because of the confidential nature of the discussion.

12. To receive the **Confidential** Minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee Meeting on 11th September 2023 and to discuss any matters arising. (Attachment 2 & 3)

The Minutes were received.

The following matters arose:
See Confidential Minutes

Councillor C Palmer
Chair