



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 24th October 2023 at 7.30 pm at
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

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

Apologies: Councillors Hall, Kingston – James and Hodson.

Not Present: Councillor Bonar

In Attendance: B Parker (Operations Manager), H Nathanson (Town Clerk via Teams), Somerset Councillors Chilcott and Hadley and 1 member 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 spoke about the consultation on the PSPO Dog Control consultation and how they struggled with the online format. They asked for future consultation to consider people that are less computer literate by providing paper alternatives. As it was a Somerset Council consultation Cllr C Palmer noted that if MTC undertake any consultation work in the future they will bear the need for paper copies in mind. Cllr Chilcott said this issue was raised whilst the consultation was ongoing and she was told there would be paper copies available. Once the consultation ended, feedback was passed on to SC officers that included the concerns for the lack of paper copies.

Removal of the cannons on Minehead Harbour – a questions was asked about the lack of correspondence from Somerset Council relating to their removal; why it happened, who authorised the removal and why it wasn't better communicated. They also asked where they are now and what the future plans for them were. Cllr C Palmer said that he understood the cannons were in storage at the moment and the viability of refurbishment was currently being considered. Cllrs Hadley and Chilcott shared their frustration at the lack of correspondence around this. Cllr Chilcott was unaware at this time where the budget for any refurbishment would come from.

1. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillors Hall, Hodson and Kingston-James gave their apologies for personal circumstances and these were accepted. Councillor Hodson listened in to the meeting via Teams but did not vote.

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

Councillor Kravis declared his membership of Somerset Council.

3. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors.

Councillor Chilcott gave the following report:

- Annual voting registration is due. The first batch of letters have been sent out and all are urged to register if they have not already done so.
- School admissions application for secondary and upper schools is now open and closes on 31st October.
- The Go Green and Somerset Green Business Grant Schemes, aimed at helping businesses reduce their energy consumption and carbon emissions, are now open with an application deadline of 31st October.
- Every piece of plastic recycled in Somerset both kerbside and at recycling sites last year has been recycled within the UK.

- There is an upcoming Financial audit committee meeting at Somerset Council. The SC finance director wrote to the government outlining the complex financial situation that they were facing, and pressures are continuing.
- Cllr Chilcott thanked MTC for the recent level of communication between all parties.

Councillor Hadley gave the following report:

- Youth parliament are looking for candidates for those who are interested, registration is now open.
- There is still a need for home support for Ukrainian visitors and urged anyone with extra space to come forward.
- The Minehead to Taunton bus is under threat for the service being reduced but not removed all together. Overall message is the more the bus is used the less likely the service will be reduced.

Councillor Kravis gave the following report:

- Regarding the Minehead to Taunton bus service he had received reports that it was not the quantity of service but the quality of service that is causing the lack of use and would like the matter to be addressed across all political parties to explore ways of preserving the service.
- Councillor Kravis recently attended a Somerset Energy Test and Finish Group and there is lots of work being done to achieve net zero energy consumption within the area.

Cllr C Palmer asked if the recycling of soft plastics is still on schedule. Cllr Chilcott said the scheme is currently being piloted in Frome and the outcome of the pilot will influence the rate of its roll out across Somerset.

Cllr Lawton has had a couple of resident queries relating to the noise from Butlins seemingly being louder than normal and wanted to make the Somerset Councillors aware. She also asked if they were aware of a party planned in Blenheim gardens, organised by the café, on 31st October as some local residents were concerned about the prospect of the gardens hosting out of hours parties. Councillors Chilcott and Hadley were unaware of the exact details of the party and Cllr Beynon said that the event had since been cancelled.

4. To approve the [Minutes of the Full Council Meeting](#) held on 26th September 2023 and to discuss any matters arising.

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

The following matters arose.

Item 4

Blenheim Gardens Centenary Working Group

SC had been notified that Town Councillors have been nominated for the Working Group and the initial meeting date was still pending.

Item 6

Allotment land transfers from Somerset Council to Minehead Town Council

Councillor Chilcott was thanked for her help with negotiating some financial assistance for MTC for the legal work required to make the transfers. SC offered to answer any questions that may arise during the process and to register the transfers, which may be all that is required. Previous legal advice recommended that MTC should carry out local searches as a minimum which are estimated at £180.00 plus VAT per property and this will be discussed in more detail at the next Finance and General Purposes Meeting.

Christmas lights switch-on

The Christmas light switch on time of 18:30 on Friday 24th November had been confirmed and in keeping with the Victorian theme, Queen Victoria would be switching on the lights. Many businesses in the town would be taking the opportunity to stay open for late night shopping. Councillor Jewell gave the following updates: a steam bus/ lorry had been confirmed; the finishing stages of finalising what shops would be open and mapping out events across the town was in hand; Minehead Lions had offered the use of their sleigh; The Regal Theatre would be assisting with

entertainment and a small procession would be going up through the town on the pavement with no road closures required.

5. To receive the [Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting](#) on 3rd October 2023.

The Minutes were received.

6. To receive the [Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting](#) on 10th October 2023 and to approve the recommendations.

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

Item 4

It was **resolved** to approve the payments to the value of £10,286.94.

Item 3

It was **resolved** to raise the annual allotments charges with effect from October 2024 as follows:

Full plot large – raise from £44 to £60

Full plot standard – raise from £33 to £45

Half plot – raise £20 to £30

Cllr C Palmer advised that MTC would be writing to plot holders advising them of the increase in advance.

Item 8

The accounts training session for councillors on Tuesday 21st November at 7pm in the office was noted.

7. To discuss plans to look at the feasibility of installing a swimming pool in Minehead.

Councillor Hodson, Lead Councillor of the Pool Advisory Group, had given his apologies to the meeting and the update about this item was therefore deferred until the November meeting.

8. To receive an update from the Town Clerk about asset transfers and the West Somerset asset rationalisation project.

The Operations Manager informed councillors that he recently attended a devolution workshop at Glastonbury Town Hall that involved a number of other City, Town and Parish Clerks from across the county as well as a number of directors from Somerset Council. It was a first stage meeting to discuss the role City, Town and Parish councils can play to ensure services, assets and liabilities could be maintained due to the current financial challenges faced by Somerset Council. Councillors were also informed that SC have notified MTC that their asset portfolio across the district is being looked at as a part of the unitary council formation in an attempt to find efficiencies in regard to office and desk space. However, this is not linked to any green space and services.

Councillors questioned whether any office or desk space owned by Somerset Council was available in Minehead and the Operations Manager advised that this was a district wide exercise but wanted to highlight that MTC would be made aware of any developments at the earliest opportunity.

9. To discuss a consultation that is being held about a proposed reduction to local bus services.

Councillor Lawton read out a statement from the Somerset Bus Partnership asking for MTC to assist in promoting the 28 Minehead to Taunton bus service. Councillors discussed this matter and Cllr Kravis suggested that if MTC printed the bus timetable for users that may help. He also questioned whether MTC could explore subsidising the service in a similar way to the town bus service. Cllr M Palmer suggested that the town bus is run as a not for profit service as where the 28 service is a private company so subsidy may be problematic. She also said that the bus service was also one of the most raised issues at the recent LCN meeting. A discussion relating to reliability concerns and whether a more 'express' service would see higher user levels was held. Councillor Hadley emphasised that they were not looking at removing the service all together but reducing the service that is currently provided. It was discussed that

if MTC took on the printing and distribution of a timetable that they would have to consider the ongoing cost implications of changing timetables.

The Operations Manager highlighted that paper bus timetables are already available in the MTC council offices, and a digital version can be found on the MTC website. He was asked to look at the potential costs of the printing of the timetable on a larger scale for distribution.

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

Cllr C Palmer visited Minehead First School to meet the newly elected school council members and was also present for the awarding of the summer reading challenge certificates. He also attended the recent Minehead People and Place Partnership meeting remotely.

Cllr M Palmer and Cllr C Palmer both attended the Twinning association anniversary event last weekend at the community centre and commented on how well organised the event was. MTC gave the gift of a model hobby horse to St Berthevin and Minehead received a model bronze dog made by a local artist which is now on display at the MTC offices.

Cllr Kravis had attended the Minehead security meeting and the main point of concern in the meeting was shop lifting. He noted that Butlins security staff are now helping provide security throughout the town and it was good to see collaborative work between the businesses in town and Butlins.

11. To note the date of the December meeting which will be held on Tuesday 12th December instead of Tuesday 19th December.

This was noted.

12. To receive the **Confidential** Minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee Meeting on 17th October 2023 and to discuss any matters arising.

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

The Operations Manager had been formally interviewed for the role of Town Clerk and it was **resolved** to accept the recommendation from the Staffing Sub-Committee to offer him the role with effect from 1st January 2024. The Locum Clerk would step down at this point but would still be available to advise on the budget setting process in January.

See Confidential Minutes

The Meeting ended at 21:30

Councillor C Palmer
Chair