



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at 7.30 pm at
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

Presentation from McCarthy Stone to discuss plans to develop land at The Co-op, 22 The Avenue, Minehead. There was a 15-minute presentation at the beginning of the meeting from at McCarthy Stone who covered the following points:

The proposal is to provide up to 35 one and two bedroom apartments with the development including shared facilities such as a homeowners lounge and guest suite. The current CO-OP will be replaced by a 3,000 sq ft store. The plan includes utilising the existing service access from Summerland Avenue for retirement living access (21 spaces) and a new car park for CO-OP access will be newly created via the access lane that links The Avenue to the Summerland Car Park (19 spaces). The public consultation has been extended until 2nd February 2024 to allow for postal feedback. Once feedback from the consultation has been collated the aim is for a Planning application to be submitted by late February.

Councillors asked a number of questions relating to the proposed development as did both Somerset Councillors and members of the public. In this discussion, the CO-OP confirmed that notice had been served on the existing Post Office and the development plans do not include a provision for The Post Office. There would also be a 12 – 18 month period during the development when the CO-OP would be closed. Once reopened, at 3,000 sq ft, it would be the largest possible store size to have unrestricted Sunday trading. The developers confirmed the recent public exhibition raised concerns with the development needing additional protection from noise which was now being addressed.

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.

A member of the public asked if the council is helping the Post Office to relocate somewhere in the town. Councillors agreed that a Post office in Minehead is important and they intend to speak to the Post Office and discuss what their future intentions are. They also asked whether Somerset Council had many responses to their budget consultation. Somerset Councillor Chilcott confirmed that although they hadn't heard formally, they believed it was a large increase from last year's consultation.

A member of the public spoke about a report in the local paper regarding MTC's proposed precept increase. They felt it was important that MTC where in a financial position to step in to retain any services under threat and it was equally important the town was kept up to standard. They therefore expressed their support for a proposed Council Tax increase. They also observed that Butlins may be one of the biggest business rate payers in Somerset and wondered whether Minehead should have better access to the funding generated from these taxes when they are redistributed.

A member of the public spoke about their desire for a new Bus shelter by railway station in Minehead. They asked if MTC could use S106 money to provide this. Councillors responded that this had been looked into previously but due to the junction and crossing in close proximity to the bus stop, it was difficult to identify a suitable location for a bus shelter. They also told councillors that a lot of people don't want to see an increase in their Council Tax and made councillors aware of the lack of street lighting along the walkway between Hayfield Road and Stephenson Road. Councillor Chilcott confirmed that she has requested the need for lighting in that walkway.

The meeting convened

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

Apologies: Cllr C Beynon

In attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk), J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO), Somerset Councillors Chilcott, Hadley and 5 Members of the public.

The Chair introduced and welcomed Ben Parker as the new Town Clerk and Jo Chapman as Deputy Clerk & RFO. He also confirmed that Helen Nathanson, who had been the Locum Town Clerk since July 2023, had now stood down and would be leaving the Council at the end of the month, and thanked her for all her hard work during the last six months.

2024/1. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillor Beynon's apologies were received.

2024/2. 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 and his position as vice chair of the licencing committee at Somerset Council when discussed at Item 12.

2024/3. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors.

Councillor Chilcott raised the following matters:

- She extended her thanks to the outgoing Clerk and wished the new Clerk good luck in their new role.
- The Doctor surgery was closed in the morning unexpectedly due to a suspension notice issued. However, the latest update is that from 8 am Wednesday the surgery will be back open with a new service provider. Patients are advised not to ring the surgery and if there are any concerns with pre booked appointments, patients will be contacted.

Councillor Hadley raised the following matters:

- Somerset Council officers and Councillors will be working on setting next year's budget which is to be set on February 20th 2024.
- DIY waste charges at Recycling Centres in Somerset were removed from 1st January. However, pre booking is required.
- Minehead Recycling Centre isn't under threat of closure but other sites in West Somerset are.
- Roadside waste collection days are changing and residents should look out for a letter advising them of the change.
- Somerset Council have received a £9.6 m grant from government for phosphate mitigation works.
- They are currently looking for volunteers for the independent panel for school appeals

The Somerset Councillors were asked if the new service provider at the doctor's surgery was a permanent or temporary measure. It was unknown other than they were due to take over the next day. They were also asked if they knew whether existing staff would be retained. From what they understood they would be.

2024/4. To approve the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting](#) on 12th December 2023 and to discuss any matters arising.

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting on 12th December 2023.

2024/5. To receive the Minutes of the [Planning Committee Meeting](#) on 10th January 2024 and to discuss any matters arising.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting on 10th January 2024 were received.

2024/6. To receive the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting on 9th January 2024 and to discuss any matters arising, The following matters arose:

Item 3

- i) To note the Receipts and Payments.
- ii) To note the Bank Reconciliations.
- iii) To note the Income and Expenditure Report.
- iv) To note the Earmarked Reserves.

Cllr Hodson commented that he couldn't access items from 1 – 3. This was noted to be looked in to.

Item 4

Budget 2024/25

The Minutes of the Finance and General purposes Committee Meeting on 9th January 2024 were received.

2024/7. To finalise and agree The Town Council Budget 2024/25 and to set the precept.

The chair asked councillors if they had any further comments regarding next years budget.

Cllr M Palmer asked Councillors to consider including an earmarked fund for the replacement of the trees in The Avenue. Previously MTC had met with Somerset Council and Minehead BID to discuss partnership working to replace trees that had already been removed and many of the trees along the avenue as they have reached a stage of maturity are now identified as 'at risk' of removal. She said that because of this, MTC should do everything it can to retain the feature of the town.

It was resolved to add £6,000 to the proposed budget, creating an Earmarked Reserve as a replacement fund for The Avenue trees.

This resulted in the precept required now totalling £931,642. Making the Town Council Band D rate in Minehead £214.52. This equates to an annual Band D increase of £36.78 (20.69%).

It was resolved with all in favour to approve The Town Council Budget 2024/25 and to set the precept at £931,642.

The Chair asked the Clerk to submit the precept request to Somerset Council before the end of the week.

2024/8. To discuss whether Minehead Town Council would be prepared to fund the future annual bedding schemes in Blenheim Gardens and The Quay area.

The Clerk explained that Somerset Council have put forward a new saving proposal of 'Closure of Taunton Nursery and reducing planting across SC parks.' Having had a conversation with officers at SC, this meant that Blenheim Gardens and the planters along the Harbour and Quay were at risk of not being planted up possibly as soon as the summer of 2024. The Clerk had produced the concept costs for Councillors to consider whether MTC would be prepared to fund the cost of providing bedding. As MTC have been working on reducing their dependence of annual bedding plants, this could be incorporated into future SC bedding displays but if bedding was required for Summer 2024 the current proposal would need to be adopted due to time constraints. Councillors agreed that MTC have a responsibility to make town look nice.

It was resolved to agree that Minehead Town Council are prepared to fund the annual bedding schemes in Blenheim Gardens and The Quay area for 2024 if required. The Clerk was delegated the authority to put an order in for Summer 2024 if required without having to report back to council.

2024/9. To agree to fund Blenheim Gardens Green Flag (£393.80) and Minehead in Bloom (£90.00) entries for 2024.

The Clerk explained that SC had confirmed that this was another area in which they were no longer going to fund. Blenheim Gardens have been entered and subsequently obtained the Green Flag award since 2020 and had entered the Britain in Bloom awards since the same year after a long hiatus. SC had asked MTC if they would want to fund the 2024 entries.

It was resolved to agree to fund Blenheim Gardens Green Flag and Minehead in Bloom entries for 2024.

2024/10. To note the resignation of Councillor M Kingston James and to agree actions on how to fill 7 casual vacancies at Minehead Town Council.

Councillor M Kingston James resignation was noted, and the following actions were agreed to fill 7 casual vacancies:

Cllr Kravis thanked Cllr M Kingston James for his time and commitment to MTC

Councillors discussed ways to recruit new Councillors. Councillors agreed that it was important MTC remained quorate. They also acknowledged the need to appreciate people's needs of balancing work, families etc. with holding public office.

It was resolved to agree for council to; Publicise the existing vacancies more within the town and to organise councillor drop in sessions for people interested in becoming a Councillor.

The Clerk was also asked to investigate the cost of improving the infrastructure to allow Council meetings to be hosted online again.

2024/11. To receive an update about the visit from Somerset Councillors Federica Smith-Roberts and Theo Butt Philip to Minehead Town Council Offices on 10th January 2024.

The Town Clerk, Mayor, Deputy Mayor and County Councillor Chilcott met with Councillors Federica Smith-Roberts and Theo Butt Philip on 10th January 2024. The Chair reported that he found this meeting to be useful to all and they were hopeful these meetings will happen quarterly.

2024/12. To note that Minehead Town Council will be sponsoring the 2024 Summer bandstand concerts in Blenheim Gardens between Saturday 25th May and Sunday 15th September and to agree the recommended performance dates.

The Summer bandstand concerts sponsored by MTC were noted.

It was resolved to agree the recommended performance dates and the Clerk was asked to fill these dates and report back on progress.

2024/13. To receive the notes of the Town Council offices task and finish group and to approve the recommendation.

The notes were received.

It was resolved to approve for the Clerk to write to the landlord stating that MTC may be interested in buying the current office leasehold subject to a satisfactory survey and to ask if they would consider this possibility.

2024/14. To note the dates for 2024's ESF (Football, 20th – 21st April) and Tigers Challenge (Rugby Union, 4th – 5th May) tournaments that will include the use of King George Playing field and Irnham Road Recreation Ground.

The dates were noted.

2024/15. To receive an update regarding the coastal erosion protection project and routine beach reprofile works received from the EA.

The Clerk read out an update from the Environment Agency regarding the coastal protection project that had now been completed. The routine beach reprofile works were started on Monday 22nd January which would see the sand cleared away from the beach side of the sea wall which was a vital part of ensuring the sea defence worked appropriately.

2024/16. To note West Somerset Citizens Advice reports for April to December 2023.

The reports were noted.

2024/17. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory Groups and Outside Bodies.

CLlr Kravis informed councillors that he would be happy for another councillor to attend the Town Security meetings if there was any interest to do so.

CLlr C Palmer attended the Minehead People and Place Partnership (MPAPP) meeting which gave an update on progress for the new shelters on the seafront and a plastic recycling concept they were looking to introduce on the seafront.

2024/18. To resolve to exclude members of the press and public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act) 1960 in order to receive an update about matters relating to the 2022/23 accounts.

See confidential discussion notes

The meeting ended at 22:15.

Councillor C Palmer
Chair