



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 26th March 2024 at 7.30 pm in
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

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

Apologies: Councillor Beynon

Not present: Councillors Kravis and Bonar

In Attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk), J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO), Somerset Councillor Hadley, PCSO Melanie Cherrington-Firkins and 2 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. No matters were raised. However, PCSO Melanie Cherrington-Firkins gave the following update:

- The March neighbourhood policing Newsletter has been sent out to Councillors.
- There's currently a focus on raising local awareness on both sexual and criminal child exploitation. Information has been sent out to local hoteliers, taxi companies and holiday complexes offering advice on the signs to identify potential exploitation and the preventative steps to take. Additional training has also been offered to anyone working in the local hotel industry.
- In addition, the Neighbourhood Team have been visiting local secondary schools to give talks to children relating to exploitation.

A question was asked about a recent road accident that resulted in the main road to Minehead being closed for a considerable period despite there seemingly being no major injuries. PCSO Cherrington-Firkins acknowledged the delay in reopening the road but ensured Councillors that public safety always needed to be considered in such incidents. However, they always endeavour to get the roads cleared and reopened as quickly as possible.

The Chair thanked PCSO Cherrington-Firkins for taking the time to attend the meeting and providing an update.

PCSO Cherrington-Firkins left the meeting to continue her patrol at 7.40 pm.

The meeting convened.

2024/40. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillor Beynon's apologies were received.

2024/41. To receive disclosures of unregistered or other interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the Meeting.

There were no disclosures of unregistered or other interests.

2024/42. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors.

Somerset Councillors Lawrence and Chilcott sent their apologies.

Councillor Hadley gave the following report:

- The new Gigafactory at Bridgwater has been approved. Both the construction period and the site itself once completed, will create large employment opportunities in the area.
- A new public health website has been launched to help people lead a healthier lifestyle.
- Somerset Council are launching a 'Taking the pressure off' campaign designed to encourage people over 40 to get tested for high blood pressure.
- The deadline for Town and Parish Councils to apply for a free portrait of the king is approaching.
- The Knife Angel Statue aimed to raise knife crime awareness will be sited for 30 days outside The Market Centre in Taunton from 3rd April. It has been made from over 100,000 knives collected through amnesty boxes around the U.K and is 27 ft tall weighing 3.5 tonnes.

A question was asked whether Somerset Council had any update on the PSPO Dog control order for West Somerset. Councillor Hadley said at this time he had received no update. Although, he had been chasing for an update and was hoping to have an answer soon.

2024/43. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory Groups and Outside Bodies.

Councillor C Palmer and the Town Clerk attended a meeting of the Minehead First School Council who came to the Council offices for their school Council Meeting. The Clerk took minutes and Cllr C Palmer commented on how impressed he was with the matters discussed. He felt that the meeting was enjoyed by all and the report back from the Teacher was that all the children really enjoyed the experience.

2024/44. To approve the [Minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 27th February 2024](#).

Resolved to approve The Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of 27th February 2024.

2024/45. To receive the [Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting on 5th March 2024](#) AND the [Minutes of the Extraordinary Planning Committee Meeting on 12th March 2024](#) and to discuss any matters arising.

The minutes of the Planning Committee of 5th March 2024 and the Extraordinary Planning Committee Meeting of 12th March 2024 were **received**. The following matters arose:

An Extraordinary Planning Committee Meeting was held on 12th March 2024 to discuss a planning application relating to the site of the CO-OP building at 22 The Avenue. 14 members of the public attended and were given the opportunity to voice their concern. The Committee resolved to Object the planning application.

2024/46. To receive the Minutes of the [Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting on 12th March 2024](#).

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Meeting of 12th March 2024 were **received**.

2024/47. To consider an application for co-option to Minehead Town Council.

An application for co-option to Minehead Town Council were considered from a member of the public. The candidate spoke to Councillors, explaining why they wanted to join MTC.

Councillors voted to suspend standing orders and the applicant and attendees of the meeting were then invited to leave the room to allow the vote to take place. Mr Anthony (Tony) Bartlett was elected by a majority to be co-opted to Minehead Town Council representing Alcombe South Ward. He then joined the meeting as a councillor.

2024/48. Accounts

- To Approve the following payments over £1,500 for March (Recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee):
 - Payment of £12,480 for 2024/25 offices rental.

Resolved to Approve payment of £12,480.

- ii) To approve the following urgent payments:
 - Payment of £3,435 to Simon Scotting Tree Consultancy for Tree Survey. (Survey approved at February’s Full Council Meeting)
 - Payment of £13,725 to Weedingtech for Foam stream unit rental. (Rental approved at February’s Full Council Meeting)

The Clerk notified Councillors that pending payment to Weedingtech, a provisional delivery date of 8th April had been agreed and the Amenities Team would be trained up on the use of Foam Stream upon delivery. It is expected to be in operation very soon after.

Resolved to approve payments of £3,435 and £13,725.

- iii) To note payments made for February.

The Payments made for February were **Noted**.

- iv) To note budget income & expenditure reports for February.

The Budget Income & Expenditure reports for February were **Noted**.

- v) To note Income received for February.

The Incomes received for February were **Noted**.

- vi) To note bank reconciliations for February.

The bank reconciliations for February were **Noted**.

2024/49. To approve quote of £2,802.43 (exc. VAT) for repairs to existing play equipment at Irnham Recreation Ground and Cross Farm Park play areas.

The Chair observed that the use of the word repair was probably misleading because the work required was relating more to the restoration of play equipment. The Clerk confirmed that the quotations were for planned works on well used and now worn parts and the work was required in order to maintain compliance. The required work included the replacement of the rope bridge on the multi play at Irnham Rec and the tightrope walk on the adventure trail at Cross Farm Park. Replacement parts were also required for the rocker bike at Cross Farm Park. The 2024/25 budget had already been set with these planned repairs in mind and because of this, there is sufficient budget allocation in the 2024/25 financial year.

Resolved To approve the quote of £2,802.43 (exc.VAT) for repairs to existing play equipment at Irnham Recreation Ground and Cross Farm Park play areas with payment to be carried on no sooner than 1st April 2024.

2024/50. To Agree for Minehead Town Council to undertake the locking of Blenheim Gardens from April 1st 2024. (Recommendation from Finance and General Purposes Committee)

The Clerk prepared a report prior to the meeting. The report was received. The chair gave a brief overview of the report and highlighted that the Garden’s gates will continue to be opened Monday – Friday by Somerset Council but on weekends they will be opened by MTC. MTC will also need to carry out the locking of the gates 7 days a week. It was acknowledged that the Town Council would need to invest in signage for the gates to notify the public of the Opening and closing times in the Gardens. The opening and closing times from 1st of April 2024 will be:
April – September; Open by 8 am, Closed from 7 p.m.
October – March; Open by 8 am, Closed from 4 p.m.

Resolved To approve for Minehead Town Council to undertake the locking (and unlocking on weekends) of Blenheim Gardens by the inhouse Amenities Team from April 1st 2024 on an initial 1 year trial.

2024/51. To approve the draft terms of reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Resolved to approve the Terms of Reference for the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

2024/52. To approve the following policies (Recommendation from Finance and General Purposes Committee)

- i) Standing Orders
- ii) Financial regulations
- iii) Code of Conduct
- iv) Publication Scheme
- v) Financial, Operational and Governance Risk Management

Resolved to approve the recommended policy documents.

2024/53. To approve the 2024/25 Insurance Policy quotation of £14,963.62.

The 2024/25 Insurance policy quotation was received. The Clerk advised Councillors that an increase was expected and was budgeted for. This increase is within the budget set for 2024/25 Insurance costs.

Resolved to approve the Insurance Policy renewal quotation of £14,963.62.

2024/54. To receive an update on the recently held Community Engagement Events.

The Clerk said that [three](#) Community Engagement Events were held in March. These events gave residents [an](#) informal opportunity to meet with Town Councillors to discuss views or concerns and to encourage more people to join the Town Council. Although each event was attended, it had been hoped the attendance would be higher. The feedback by those that had attended was positive and this made the events a worthwhile exercise.

It was asked whether The Community Engagement Events would continue [in](#) April. The chair confirmed that he hoped for these events to continue and for them to be expanded to incorporate Somerset Councillors and representatives from other public bodies.

2024/55. To note Councillor Hall has applied to be a MTC representative at the Somerset Council Harbour Advisory Board.

The update was **Noted**.

Councillor Hadley said that there had been a number of applications, and the criteria was not just for local boat owners. They are also looking for business minded people to join. The remit was for a strategic overhaul of the management of the Harbours. Councillor Hall confirmed that he had an upcoming interview with the Advisory Board and would report back with an update.

2024/56. To note that Somerset Council no longer provides sandbags or equivalents to householders and businesses as from 13th March 2024.

The update was **Noted**.

The Clerk said that as flooding is an issue in the Town, MTC have created a 'Flood Support Resources' Section on their website that contains useful information on how to prepare for and what to do in the event of flooding.

The meeting closed at 20:25

Councillor C Palmer
Mayor