



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Meeting  
of Minehead Town which were held on  
Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7.30 pm at  
the Town Council Offices, 3 Summerland Road, Minehead, TA24 5BP

**Present:** Councillors Hodson (Chair), C Palmer, Lawton, M Palmer, Kravis, Jewell,

**Apologies:** Councillor Hall

**Not Present:** Councillors Beynon and Bonar

**In Attendance:** Ben Parker (Town Clerk), Jo Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO)

**2024/5.** To receive apologies for absence.

The apologies from Councillor Hall were received.

**2024/6.** 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.

**2024/7.** To Approve Minutes of the Finance and General purposes Committee meeting on [Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023](#) AND [Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024](#) and to discuss any matters arising.

**Resolved** to approve the Minutes held on Tuesday 14th November 2023 AND Tuesday 9th January 2024.

### **2024/8.** Accounts

- i) To recommend the following payments over £1,500:  
- *2024/25 Rent due for Council Offices: £12,450.*

**Resolved** to recommend the payment to Full Council for approval.

- ii) To note payments made for February.

The payments were **noted**.

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

The reports were **noted**.

- iv) To note Income received for February.

The Income received reports were **noted**.

v) To note bank reconciliations for February.

The Bank reconciliations were **noted**.

**2024/9.** To receive the mid-term health report prepared by the internal auditor and to discuss findings.

The report was **received**.

The Clerk explained that a mid term health check had been completed by the internal auditor. A table had been created for Councillors to review any required actions and to see the updates of each action. Councillors were informed that The Clerk and Deputy Clerk still had some outstanding actions to complete and a further update would be provided at the next Finance meeting but officers were confident the findings of the midterm health check would be actioned before the fiscal year end. One of the findings from the report was that although Councillors had been undertaking bank reconciliations and random account checks, they needed to be formally appointed, and would report back quarterly to the Committee.

**Resolved** to appointment Cllrs M Palmer & Lawton to undertake bank reconciliations and random account checks.

**2024/10.** To review and adopt the following policies:

- I. Standing Orders
- II. Financial regulations
- III. Code of Conduct
- IV. Publication Scheme
- V. Financial, Operational and Governance Risk Management

All policies were received and reviewed. Councillors agreed that the delegated authority of payments in the Draft Financial regulations needs to be lowered from £1,800 to £1,500.

**Resolved** to recommend Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of conduct, publication Scheme, Financial, Operational and Governance Risk Management for adoption at the next Full Council with suggested amendments above included.

**2024/11.** To review and recommend approval of all regular payments including Salaries.

The Deputy Clerk explained that because Council had already committed to make certain regular payments either through direct debits or existing staff salaries best practice would be to review these payments annually or whenever a change to the payment list was made. If, in the event, the regular payments were to result in a budget line overspend, The Clerk advised that it would be necessary for it to be reviewed by Council at the earliest opportunity.

**Resolved** to recommend the list of all 2024/25 regular payments including salaries providing the payments fall within the existing budget lines.

**2024/12.** To review and recommend 2024/25 Insurance Policy renewal quote.

The Clerk had reviewed the Draft Insurance Policy Schedule and had made appropriate amendments. He also explained that changes to the legal cover aspect of the Policy which would result in a rise in cost, and recommended the Policy is retained. Unfortunately, the renewal quote

had not been received in time for the meeting so the quote would need to be discussed further at Full Council.

**2024/13.** To receive the updated MTC Asset register.

The updated asset register was received and noted.

**2024/14.** To discuss the arrangements for the locking of Blenheim Gardens from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024.

The Clerk explained that due to financial pressures at Somerset Council, they had made a decision to no longer lock the parks across Somerset overnight. Initially, it was suggested that Blenheim Gardens may not be affected by this due to contractual obligations, however this turned out to not be the case. Somerset Council said they could continue providing the locking of the Gardens for c. £11,000 per year. Councillors were informed that following discussions with the Town Council Amenities Team they were prepared to undertake the duties as part of the current Toilet locking rota. Councillors were advised that if the Town Council did undertake the locking of the Gardens it would need to align with the toilet closure times (5 p.m. Oct – March, 7 p.m. April – September) Somerset Council had already been notified of this possible outcome and deemed it an acceptable proposition. The cost to the Town Council for bringing this service in house would cost c.£4,500 including on costs. Councillors were told that this additional cost could be funded from The Devolution costs budget line and the appropriate funds virement to the staffing budget line. The Clerk also advised that signs would be put up at the entrances advising users that MTC would be undertaking the locking and the times that the gardens will close. Councillors observed that there are currently concerns among residents of nearby properties at the possibility of the Gardens not being locked and the potential of increased overnight anti-social behaviour.

**Resolved** to recommend that the locking of Blenheim Gardens to be undertaken by the Town Council via the in house Amenities Team from Monday April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 for 12 months and to continue to review the longer term arrangements throughout the year.

**2024/15.** To discuss the purchase of a works mobile phone for use by The Clerk.

The Clerk explained that a works mobile phone would allow him to make calls and access emails outside of the office. The Clerk suggested that a purchase of a mobile phone up to the value of £200 and a monthly sim only contract up to the value of £10 per month would be sufficient.

**Resolved** to approve funds for a mobile phone up to the value of £200 and a sim only contract of up to £10 per month and delegate the authority to the Clerk to undertake the transaction.

**2024/16.** To recommend the purchase of new handheld machinery items for the Amenities Team.

Recent work on the asset register had identified the need for some new machinery due to the disposal of some equipment that was beyond repair. Councillors were informed that there was existing budget in the 2023/24 budget to finance these purchases.

**Resolved** to approve the purchase of multiple handheld machinery totalling £955.75 for The Amenities team.

**2024/17.** Grant applications for approval

- I. To receive a request from Minehead Coast Watch for a small grant.

Recommend to approve a grant for £500.

- II. To receive a request from Minehead & Exmoor Music Festival for a small grant.

Recommend to approve a grant for £500.

- III. To receive a request from St. Michaels School PTA for a small grant.

Recommend to approve a grant for £500 in principle if they are able to arrange the outstanding funds, at which point the grant would be released.

Councillors discussed all of the above applications. They were advised that under section 137 of the Local Governments Act 1972, The council can spend a limited amount of money on allocating small community grants.

**Resolved** to approve the recommendations and allocate the above grants.

**2024/18.** To consider a Letter of support for the reconnection of Taunton and Bishops Lydeard train line.

Cllr Jewell attended an informal stakeholder engagement event for the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) Project Team whose partners include West Somerset Railway PLC, Heart of Southwest Local Enterprise Partnership and Somerset Council. At this early stage, they are hoping to gain support for the proposition and also to identify any additional issues not yet considered. A request was received from the SOBC Project Team Chair submitted a request for a letter of support from the Town Council for the proposals set out in their presentation.

**Resolved** to send a letter of support to the Strategic Outline Business Case Project Team from members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Councillor B Hodson  
Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee  
March 2024.