



Minehead Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

FOR

THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

ON

TUESDAY 7TH MAY 2024

Introduction



“Welcome to the 2023-2024 Annual Report for Minehead Town Council. It has been an eventful year, marked by significant changes following the transition from having separate District and County Councils to the new unitary authority of Somerset Council.

This restructuring has presented challenges and opportunities for Minehead Town Council. We have embraced the prospect of added responsibilities at Town Council level with a commitment to serving our community effectively and efficiently.

We recognise the importance of open communication and collaboration with all stakeholders. We value the insights and perspectives of our residents, as they help shape our priorities and decision-making processes. Likewise, we appreciate the vital role played by local businesses and community organisations in contributing to the vibrancy and well-being of our town.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to continuous improvement and responsiveness to the evolving needs of our community. We look forward to continued interaction and partnerships, working together to address challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and ensure that Minehead thrives as a vibrant and inclusive place to live, work, and visit.”

Councillor C Palmer

Mayor of Minehead





What we invested in during 2023/24

Supported community groups and initiatives through £11,500 in community grants

Invested £37,810 in public spaces and recreation areas, including playground maintenance, tree works, and weed removal

Upgraded and maintained public toilet facilities across the town at a cost of £148,172

Organised town decorations including festive lighting totalling £15,361 bringing joy and vibrancy to the town

Sponsored the popular Summer band concerts in Blenheim totaling £7,002,

Contributed £7,757 to floral displays and participated in Britain in Bloom, beautifying the Town Centre

Invested £27,137 in essential infrastructure, including vehicle and equipment maintenance and replacement

Pledged £6,200 to local bus services and £6,000 to youth services, promoting accessibility and opportunities for young people



Your Councillors

Below is a list of who represents each ward

- Alcombe North: Cllr B Hodson,
- Alcombe South: Cllr J Bonar, Cllr T Bartlett, VACANT
- Minehead Central: Cllr B Hall, Cllr C Beynon, Cllr C Palmer, Cllr B Jewell, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr M Kravis
- Minehead North: VACANT, VACANT, VACANT
- Periton & Woodcombe: Cllr A Lawton, VACANT, VACANT

We currently have six vacancies on the Town Council. While serving as a Town Councillor is an unpaid commitment, the experience can be truly rewarding. If you are interested in becoming a Town Councillor, or would like to find out more information, please email info@mineheadtowncouncil.co.uk, call 01643 707213, speak to a Town Councillor or come into the offices.



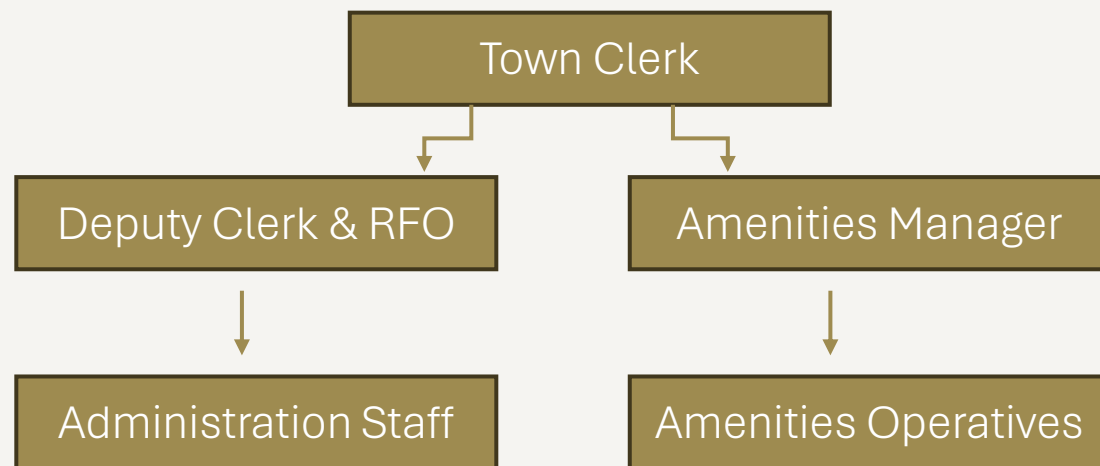
A Brief Overview of What Minehead Town Council Provides:

- 4 Play Parks
- 4 Public Toilets
- Roadside Verge Grass Cutting
- Maintenance of Green Spaces and sports fields including Irnham Rec and King George Playing Field
- Minehead Cemetery and St. Michael's closed churchyard
- Providing the Community centre and Community Notice Boards
- Festive lights and town entertainment/events
- 6 Allotment Sites
- Community Grants



Staff Structure

Minehead Town Council employs up to 12 members of staff. They either fall within the Administration Team or the Amenities Team. This is what the organisation structure looks like:





The Administration Team

The Administration Team is based at the Town council offices in Summerland Road. There are currently 3 members of staff who carry out the following roles:

- Town Clerk - The role of Clerk is to ensure that the Council as a whole conducts its business properly and to provide independent, objective and professional advice and support. As the proper officer, they are present at Council meetings and are responsible for the issuing of agendas and producing meeting minutes. They also oversee all day-to-day management of Council functions.
- Deputy Clerk & RFO – The Responsible Financial officer (RFO) provides day-to-day financial management of the Town Council under the direction of the Town Clerk. They manage the Town Council’s financial affairs within the legal framework for local authorities and comply with current legislation. They provide assistance and support for the Clerk and also line manage the administration Staff
- Administration Staff – This role provides the administrative functions ranging from customer services, allotment and cemetery admin and Community centre bookings.



The Amenities Team.

There are 8 members of the Amenities Team. 7 are line managed by The Amenities Manager. With the Amenities Manager line managed by the Clerk. The functions of the Amenities Team include, but aren't exclusive to, grounds maintenance services, Toilet Cleaning, Asset maintenance and decorating the town for special events such as the Christmas Lights.

As a very brief overview, the Amenities Team currently maintain:

- Annual floral displays throughout Minehead and Alcombe
- 4 Toilet Blocks (Quay West, Warren Road, Summerland Car Park, Blenheim Gardens)
- Minehead Cemetery and St. Michael's Churchyard
- The Community centre
- Roadside Verge grass cutting



What do we do? *Amenities Team.*

Minehead Town Council (MTC) maintains several large open spaces within the town. These include Marsh Common along with the Rose Gardens; Cross Farm Park; King George Playing Field; Irnham Recreation Ground; and Periton Playing Field. Additionally, MTC oversees six allotment sites: Marshfield; Harepark; Poundfield; Periton Way; Periton Lane; and Orchard Road. MTC is also responsible for the maintenance of Alcombe Common, a vast area of land situated on Wootton Ridge.

Beyond general maintenance tasks like grass cutting, these open spaces and allotments feature various amenities such as play equipment, benches, bins, trees, hedges, and fencing, all of which require regular upkeep by MTC's in-house team.

The Council's duties also encompass installing Christmas lights above the shops in the town centre and carrying out repairs and maintenance tasks related to public conveniences, among other facilities, through its in-house workforce.



Who is responsible for What?

One of the frustrations for residents is knowing which Council they need to contact for any particular problem.

The next page give a very brief (and not exhaustive) overview of who is responsible for what in Minehead.







Highlights for the town 2023 - 24





Celebrating local community groups and partnerships

To support community groups and sports associations, the Council also continues its small grants scheme, investing in local community groups and good causes active in the Town. Recent grants that have been approved include grants to The Minehead Eye Youth Service, The Minehead Museum and The Citizen Advice Bureau.

By supporting local volunteer groups, we have empowered them to make positive changes within the community. Our volunteer agreement document ensures local groups can have litter and vegetative waste removed from pre agreed volunteer events within our Town.

To mark the Coronation of King Charles III, We undertook a commemorative hedge planting project at the Rose Gardens with the help of local First Schools as well as The Minehead Rainbows & Brownies groups. The hedging planted consists of mainly of native UK species.

MTC continue to work in close partnership with Somerset Council who are experiencing a difficult financial situation and are ready to step in to retain local services as required.



Celebrating local community groups and partnerships

MINEHEAD BROWNIES AND RAINBOWS
PLANTING THE KING CHARLES III
CORONATION HEDGE.



MINEHEAD WOMBLES HAVING CLEARED
AND REPLANTED A SHRUB BED ALONG
TOWNSEND ROAD WITH HELP FROM MTC.





Celebrating local community groups and partnerships

A RECENT JOINT PROJECT BETWEEN THE WOMBLES AND MTC AT THE FOOTPATH NEAR MORRISONS.



WOMBLES AT REGENTS WAY





Owning and maintaining local community Assets

Throughout 2023, Minehead Town Council focused on enhancing the community's experience within its buildings and open spaces through several initiatives. We undertook a comprehensive refurbishment of the Quay West public toilets, which reopened in August. The project included a new roof, redesigned interior layout, updated colour scheme, energy-efficient LED sensor lighting, accessible toilets in both male and female facilities, sensor taps, and toilet flushes designed to reduce water waste.

In June we opened Minehead's and West Somerset's first-ever 'Changing Places Toilet' at the Summerland Road Car Park. These specialised toilets offer more space and the necessary equipment, enabling eligible users to use the facilities safely and comfortably.

We officially took over the ownership and management of Wellington Square from Somerset Council, carrying out much-needed maintenance, cleaning, and refurbishment of the benches in the area.

Continued to maintain our commitment to the management and maintenance of the Community Building, allowing local sports, health, wellbeing, and community support groups to hold their activities. Monthly Full Council meetings and one-off community drop-in events continued to be hosted at this venue.

Through these initiatives, MTC aimed to enhance the overall experience for the community while using the town's facilities and promoting accessibility.



Owning and maintaining local community Assets

THE REFURBISHED TOILETS AT QUAY WEST CAR PARK.



WELLINGTON SQUARE TRANSFERRED FROM SOMERSET COUNCIL TO MTC IN 2023.





Owning and maintaining local community Assets

THE COMMUNITY CENTRE OPENED IN 2020.



THE NEW CHANGING PLACES TOILET AT SUMMERLAND ROAD CAR PARK



A Greener and Cleaner Minehead and Alcombe



Minehead Town Council takes its statutory duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity seriously. We are committed to ensuring Minehead remains a clean and environmentally sustainable town. In 2023, we undertook several initiatives to further this commitment.

Our rewilding project across open spaces and highway verges was introduced, encouraging the growth of natural habitats and promoting biodiversity. By actively seeking feedback from residents, we were able to refine and amend the project for 2024, ensuring it aligns with the community's needs and preferences.

In an effort to reduce our dependence on annual bedding, we invested in more sustainable flowering perennial schemes, focusing on pollinator-friendly species. This approach not only reduces waste and resource consumption but also supports pollinating insects, crucial for maintaining a thriving ecosystem.

Responding to residents' concerns regarding street weed control methods, we further explored alternatives to the use of glyphosate-based herbicides.

To complement existing street cleansing contracts, we provided responsive works throughout the town, such as litter and glass removal when identified. This proactive approach ensures that Minehead maintains a clean and welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike.

We have been steadily transitioning our maintenance operations to utilise an ever-increasing fleet of electric equipment and vehicles. This reduction in fossil fuel consumption not only contributes to a cleaner environment but also sets an example for other organisations and individuals to follow.



A Greener and Cleaner Minehead and Alcombe

FOAMSTREAM TRIAL ONGOING
THROUGHOUT THE TOWN



REWILDING AT MINEHEAD CEMETERY





A Greener and Cleaner Minehead and Alcombe

WELLINGTON SQUARE FLOWER BED IS NOW 50% FLOWERING PERENNIALS



ELECTRIC 'ERIC' ONE OF OUR 3 ELECTRIC VEHICLES





Better community engagement

Minehead Town Council recognises that communities can sometimes become frustrated with Councils and Public Bodies. There may be instances when seeking public views or making unpopular decisions fall short of expectations. However, the Town Council is committed to becoming more visible, transparent, and accountable to the community.

To achieve this, the Council is utilising social media and online platforms to better promote its programs and events. Additionally, the Council regularly updates and refreshes its notice boards to promote community events. Furthermore, the introduction of a Virtual Online Notice Board on the MTC website has been implemented.

In an effort to foster community engagement, the Council organised Community Engagement Events in March and intends to hold these more regularly throughout the next year. The Council is also working towards establishing more transparent relationships with local press and media outlets.

Moreover, the Council provides a platform for local community groups and organisations to present at its meetings. All Council meetings are open to the press and public, and attendance is actively encouraged. We passionately want to foster a sense of inclusivity within the community.



Better community engagement

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS HELD IN MARCH.



THE MINEHEAD FIRST SCHOOL COUNCIL HOLDING THEIR SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING AT THE OFFICES.





Town Events

Minehead Town Council takes great pride in supporting a diverse range of events that bring the community together and celebrate the vibrant spirit of the town. In 2023:

The highly anticipated Christmas light switch-on and late-night shopping event was a shining example of successful collaboration between businesses, community organisations, and the Council. This event was well-attended and warmly received by all who attended; meticulous planning is already underway to ensure another spectacular experience this year.

During the summer months, the council sponsored and organised a delightful series of bandstand concerts in the picturesque Blenheim Gardens. Over 20 different bands, performers, and acts graced the stage, catering to diverse musical tastes and providing a festive atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.

The council-owned Marsh Common played host to the annual funfair visit, bringing excitement and joy to families throughout the town.

Additionally, our open spaces were used for various sporting events, including the ESF football tournament and Tigers rugby union tournaments.

During the historic coronation of King Charles III in May, the council supported Minehead Football Club in hosting a family fun day, creating a memorable celebration for all ages to enjoy.



Town Events

THE MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR WITH QUEEN VICTORIA AND FATHER CHRISTMAS AT THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON.



BLENHEIM GARDENS BANDSTAND CONCERTS SPONSORED BY MTC





Town Events

WELLINGTON SQUARE AT CHRISTMAS



KINGS CORONATION EVENT AT IRNHAM REC





The Year Ahead

Building on the successes of the previous year, Minehead Town Council remains steadfast in its commitment to community engagement and nurturing a deep sense of connection with the wider community in 2024.

The council has allocated dedicated funds to continue its environmentally conscious approach to street weed control, utilising alternative methods to the traditional use of glyphosate-based herbicides.

In anticipation of potential service cuts implemented by Somerset Council, the Town Council has proactively allocated resources to protect the town and ensure the continuity of essential services. Already, steps have been taken to secure floral displays for the summer season in Blenheim Gardens and the harbour area, as well as ensuring the nightly locking of Blenheim Gardens for public safety.

Recognising the importance of well-maintained public amenities, the council has earmarked funds for the continuation of its toilet refurbishment program, with plans to commence the development of a comprehensive strategy for the Blenheim Gardens toilet facilities.



The Year Ahead

In response to valuable feedback from residents, the council has tailored its rewilding program across open spaces, ensuring that the 2024 initiative harmonises seamlessly with the needs and preferences of the local community.

Furthermore, the council has pledged financial support to vital community initiatives, including the local youth service and the Minehead Bay Festival, while continuing to allocate small grants to various organisations and causes that contribute to the town's vibrancy and well-being.

Through these proactive measures and ongoing commitment to community engagement, Minehead Town Council is poised to cultivate stronger bonds with its residents, enhance the town's appeal, and create a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable environment for all.