



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on  
Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 at 7.30 pm in  
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

There was a 15-minute presentation at the beginning of the meeting from members of Citizens Advice West Somerset who covered the following points:

Ian Atkinson and Cheryl Brooks presented on Citizens Advice West Somerset (CAWS) whose work covers Local Community network areas 1,13 and 14. They addressed a number of issues including debt, welfare, and housing, aiming to prevent escalation through early engagement. CAWS encourages client independence and maintains face-to-face services for accessibility. Open four days a week, they offer various contact methods. Support work covers simpler queries all the way to time-intensive case work. Last year, they helped over 2,000 people in the local area. Minehead Town Council's £5,000 contribution in 2023/24 represented a good return per issue resolved. Support is always well received as paid staffing levels directly impact service capacity and quality.

Councillors enquired about CAWS relationship with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). CAWS reported a good rapport with the local job centre while monitoring DWP's decision-making on claims and occasionally challenging decisions. Council Tax issues are common, often due to client confusion over debt prioritisation. CAWS educates clients on this and praised Somerset Council's Tax team for cooperation. They've also established positive relationships with bailiffs to further help clients. It was noted that Council Tax issues often arise from lack of communication with Somerset Council, people with concerns are encouraged to engage in conversations with SC. CAWS provides online resources and a local pod for preventative support and education, also linking with support cafés in the town. Their collaborations with various agencies aims to better assist those facing difficulties.

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There was a 15-minute open forum prior to the start 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 expressed their support for Citizens Advice West Somerset, stating they felt it is worth investment. They also raised concerns about the lack of affordable housing rental options in Minehead.

Another comment related to the reinstated Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) dog control regulations on the beach. They noted that signage prohibiting dogs on the beach has not yet been updated, and they have not received a response from Somerset Council after contesting the reinstatement of the PSPO dog control regulations on the beach.

*The meeting convened*

Initial .....

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

**Apologies:** Cllr Beynon

**In Attendance:** B Parker (Town Clerk), J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO), Somerset Councillors Chilcott, Hadley, Lawrence and 2 Members of the public.

**2024/111.** To receive apologies for absence.

Councillor Beynon's apologies were received.

**2024/112.** To receive disclosures of unregistered or other interests from councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Kravis has a standing declaration as a Somerset Councillor.

There were no further disclosures.

**2024/113.** To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

Councillor Chilcott raised the following matters:

- Efforts to update beach signage and website information regarding dogs have involved multiple officers and councillors. The issue was raised at a recent Somerset Council meeting. Inconsistent signage across town is causing confusion.
- Recent contractor financial pressures have led to renegotiation of the waste removal contract with the waste removal contractor further impacting Council finances.
- At the recent Minehead and Watchet Local Community Network (LCN) meeting a request has been made for a 30-minute drop-in session with police before each LCN meetings to discuss neighbourhood concerns.
- Surface dressing work on Periton Road has caused road closures. While some issues remain, the level of information sharing has been satisfactory, resulting in fewer complaints than anticipated whilst work was ongoing.

Councillor Hadley raised the following matters:

- PSPO dog control information should now available on website; maps to be added soon. However, signage installation is still pending.
- Cllr Chilcott has been elected as LCN chair at the recent Minehead and Watchet LCN meeting.
- He had posed a question to Somerset Councils Full Council meeting regarding harbour and slipway. He felt the verbal response received was unsatisfactory. His request is the reconsideration of slipway fees, emphasising the consideration of socio-economic factors.
- E-scooter trial that at the last meeting was announced being extended for two years, has now been temporarily suspended.
- SC staffing restructure continues; new Section 151 (Chief Financial) officer appointment approved at recent Full Council.

- Minehead library is hosting its Summer Reading Challenge for children aged 4-11 during school holidays.
- Homes and Horizons initiative at Somerset Council is where they are purchasing homes to provide specialised 1-to-1 care for 2-3 children per property. Project has recently won innovation award in collaboration with NHS.

Councillor Lawrence raised the following matters:

- Disappointed to see the lack of activity down the harbour over the weekend, she is hopeful for a workable agreement with Somerset Council next year to improve facility usage.
- Noted success of Minehead music events such as the recent male voice choir performance being very well-attended. She highlighted importance of supporting and celebrating these cultural successes

Councillor Kravis raised the following matters:

- Deane House office space in Taunton has been vacated by Somerset Council. The main chamber and meeting rooms will continue to be used for council meetings, along with aspects of the downstairs space.

**2024/114.** To receive updates from councillors on Advisory groups and Outside Bodies.

The Chair reported on several recent engagements. He attended the 150th anniversary celebration of the Minehead to Watchet line at West Somerset Railway, accompanied by Councillors M. Palmer, Lawton, and Hall. The event featured a 151-year-old steam engine. Additionally, the Chair participated in the official opening ceremony of the Minehead Shed, joined by Councillors Hodson, M. Palmer, and Lawton.

The Chair also took part in the Coast to Coast Classic Motorbike Rally award presentation, where he presented a number of prizes in his capacity as Mayor. He attended a painting unveiling at the Minehead Museum and participated in the recent Local Community Network (LCN) meeting.

In other activities, Councillor Lawton and Councillor Bartlett attended an open coffee morning at Wyndham House

**2024/115.** To approve and sign the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024.](#)

**RESOLVED** the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25th June 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

**2024/116.** To receive the Minutes of the [Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024.](#)

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd July 2024 were **received**.

**2024/117.** To receive the Minutes of the [Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024.](#)

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 9th July 2024 were **received**.

**2024/118.** Accounts

- i. To Approve the following payments over £1,500 for June (*Recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee*)
  - **£2,000** to Minehead and Coast Development Trust for sponsorship of musical acts at Minehead Bay Festival to be held on Saturday 31st August 2024. (*Sponsorship package approved at April's Full Council Meeting Minute Number 2024/60*)
  - **£7,200 inc. VAT** to Minehead Eye youth Services for delivery of Minehead Youth Club by 2 qualified youth workers on a weekly basis between April 2024 – March 2025. (*3-year SLA approved at February's Full Council Meeting Minute Number 2024/22*)

**RESOLVED** the payments of £2,000 to Minehead and Coast Development Trust and £7,200 inc. VAT to Minehead Eye youth Services were approved.

The Deputy Clerk notified Councillors that an additional urgent payment of **£1,680 inc. VAT** needed to be considered for the exchanging of three waste skips from Exmoor skips. The invoices had been sent to Councillors via email earlier in the day.

**RESOLVED** the urgent payment of £1,680 inc. VAT to Exmoor Skip Hire was approved.

- ii. To Note payments made for June.

The payments made for June were **noted**.

- iii. To Note budget income & expenditure reports for June.

The budget income & expenditure reports for June were **noted**.

- iv. To Note income received for June.

The income received for June was **noted**.

- v. To Note bank reconciliations for June.

The bank reconciliations for June were **noted**.

**2024/119.** To approve to write of an historic bad debt for the cost of a destroyed planter at Alcombe in 2023 totalling **£583.33 + VAT**. (*Recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee*)

This matter involved a vehicle crashing into a MTC flower planter in Alcombe in early 2023. The Deputy Clerk has pursued this since, initially as a police matter, and then contacting the Chief

Constable and Police Crime Commissioner for resolution. MTC has since been advised that further action would require civil court proceedings, with costs likely to exceed potential recovery.

**RESOLVED** the recommendation to write of an historic bad debt totalling £583.33 + VAT for the cost of a destroyed planter at Alcombe in 2023 was approved.

**2024/120.** To approve for Minehead Town Council to finance the EAT Festivals in Minehead for a three-year period, comprising three annual events, commencing with the first festival in April 2025. *(Recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee)*

Councillors discussed the proposal for MTC to fund three annual EAT Festivals in the town over the next three years. Concerns were raised about potential opposition from local businesses, as experienced during previous events. The Clerk clarified that past discontent might have stemmed from the previous funding model, where Minehead BID financed the events through a business levy. While acknowledging that not all businesses would support the festival, the Clerk emphasised that MTC's primary consideration was the residents' disappointment when the event was not funded last year. He expressed confidence that funding the EAT Festivals would be well-received by the community.

**RESOLVED** the recommendation for Minehead Town Council to finance the EAT Festivals in Minehead for a three-year period, comprising three annual events, commencing with the first festival in April 2025 was approved.

**2024/121.** To approve for Minehead Town Council to support a Christmas Light switch on Event in the Town on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024. *(Recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee)*

**RESOLVED** the recommendation for Minehead Town Council to support a Christmas Light switch on Event in the Town on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024 was approved.

**2024/122.** To note that Minehead Town Council have received a cash gift of **£500** under Section 139 of Local Government Act 1972.

A local resident had recently completed a sponsored walk and wished to donate half of the proceeds to Minehead Town Council with the hope that it would assist with the replacement of trees along the Avenue in the Town. Councillors were advised that the Council could accept the gift donation of £500 under section 139 of The Local Government Act 1972. The Chair thanked the donor for their effort and donation and asked the Clerk to write to the local resident from Minehead Town Council, inviting all Councillors to sign the letter, thanking them for their gift.

The receiving of a cash gift of £500 under Section 139 of Local Government Act 1972 was **noted**.

**2024/123.** To note upcoming tree maintenance work at Marsh Common.

Following an independently conducted tree condition survey across all Minehead Town Council owned sites. The survey identified a group of willows and poplars on the south side of Marsh Common that require intervention works to ensure their long-term health and safety. The primary intervention will be retrenchment pruning that will focus on removing the top of the tree canopy.

Wildlife factors had been considered and the Clerk was intending on receiving independent ecological endorsement for the works prior to them starting. Works were due to start by the end of July.

The report was **noted**.

The upcoming tree maintenance work at Marsh Common was **noted**.

**2024/124.** To note Citizens Advice West Somerset Quarter 1 Service Data.

The Citizens Advice West Somerset Quarter 1 Service Data was **noted**.

**2024/125.** To note The Local Community network Minehead and Watchet (LCN 13) 2023/24 annual report.

The Local Community network Minehead and Watchet (LCN 13) 2023/24 annual report was **noted**.

**2024/126.** To note recent judging of Minehead in Bloom and Blenheim Gardens Green Flag Award for 2024-25.

The Chair reported that on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July Minehead received its Southwest in Bloom Judges visit. The feedback on the day was positive and it is hoped that Minehead will be duly recognised when results are announced in the autumn. He also reported that on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July Blenheim Gardens had been awarded its fourth consecutive annual Green Flag Award. This year marked a particular milestone as MTC had funded both the Britain in Bloom entry and The Green Flag award entry as well as the annual floral displays in Blenheim Gardens.

The Chair thanked all the many volunteers as well as staff from both MTC and SC for all their hard work.

The report was **noted**.

The meeting closed at 20:45

Councillor Craig Palmer

Chair of Minehead Town Council

July 2024.

Initial .....