



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

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

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 raised concerns about tree and land erosion along Periton Lane, highlighting a great oak falling over the weekend and ongoing erosion within a metre of the footpath. They discussed potential safety and wildlife implications if erosion is not addressed. They suggested the creation of a charity to address bank stabilisation and conservation. They sought council assistance in establishing an initiative that could attract funding through national lottery and carbon capture credits to protect the historic lane's environmental and structural integrity. The chair noted this item is not on the current agenda but acknowledged that pending further information could be included in a future meeting for further discussion.

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

Apologies: Councillor Kravis

In Attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk), J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO), Somerset Councillor Chilcott and 3 members of the public.

2024/179. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillor Kravis' apologies were received.

2024/180. To receive disclosures of unregistered or other interests and to consider any prior requests for dispensations from councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.

There were no declarations or disclosures.

2024/181. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

There were no representatives from the Local Policing Team present.

Somerset Councillors Lawrence and Hadley's apologies were received.

Councillor Chilcott gave the following updates:

- Lighting in Alexandra Road car park is experiencing supply-related delays, extending beyond the typical 72-hour highway repair timeframe.

- SC's online payment system is currently transitioning, temporarily preventing online transactions and potentially causing resident inconvenience.
- Severe recent weather led to extensive flooding across the county, with over 200 trees down and the council managing more than 600 support calls, resolving over 300 incidents by Monday.
- A Somerset Council by-election took place in Taunton's Rowbarton and Staplegrove division and Blackmoor Vale division this week.
- The council's public consultation on proposed council tax reduction scheme changes has concluded, with work ongoing to review and potentially implement the proposals.
- A local Exmoor based Young Voices charity has been recognised for significant work supporting young people, particularly through housing initiatives at a recent awards ceremony.
- Spark Somerset continues its work in supporting the voluntary sector, with a specific focus on increasing its profile in West Somerset.
- The Boundary Commission is currently reviewing Somerset's council representation, proposing a reduction from 110 to 96 councillors with a first stage consultation about boundary divisions ongoing.
- The government is preparing a December paper emphasising devolution, with focus towards unitary authorities and promoting collaborative regional governance approaches.

2024/182. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory groups and Outside Bodies.

Councillor Lawton recently attended the Plastic Free Minehead group meeting, highlighting their ongoing efforts to engage local businesses and organisations in their environmental initiatives. The group continues to seek new members and welcomes interested individuals to join their cause.

Councillor Hodson attended a briefing with the local Member of Parliament regarding the pool project, where he noted significant enthusiasm for the proposed development.

As Mayor, Councillor C Palmer awarded medals to newly elected members of the school council at Minehead First School. He also represented the town by attending three remembrance services on November 10th and 11th, accompanied by several other Minehead Town Councillors.

2024/183. To approve and sign the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October 2024.](#)

RESOLVED the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd October 2024 were approved and signed by the chair.

2024/184. To receive the Minutes of the [Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 5th November 2024.](#)

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 5th November 2024 were **received.**

2024/185. To receive the Minutes from the [Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 12th November 2024.](#)

The Minutes from the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 12th November 2024 were **received**.

2024/186. Accounts

- i. To approve the following payments of £1,500 or over for November (*Recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee*):
- Payment of **£2,120.40 inc. VAT** to Bristol City Council for the supply of annual floral bedding plants for Blenheim Gardens.
 - Payment of **£1,500 inc. VAT** to Bristol City Council for the supply of annual floral bedding plants for Minehead & Alcombe.

Councillors were reminded that the payments were split into two separate invoices to ensure that each invoice was financed through the appropriate budget, with Blenheim Gardens floral displays financed through the Devolution budget.

RESOLVED that the payments of £2,120.40 inc. VAT and £1,500 inc. VAT to Bristol City Council were approved.

- ii. To approve the following urgent payments for November:
- Payment of **£1,605.41 inc. VAT** to Core Highways for the supply of Traffic management provision for Minehead Victorian Christmas on 29th November 2024. (*Spend recommended by The November Finance and General Purposes Committee minute number 2024/95*)
 - Payment of **£3,360.00 inc. VAT** to PD & GM Storey for maintenance works of Alcombe Common including Mulching areas and establishing fire breaks. (*Power to authorise works delegated to the Clerk in June's Full Council Meeting, Minute number 2024/108*)

It was noted that funding for work at Alcombe Common is secured through a higher-tier stewardship agreement with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

RESOLVED that the payments of £1,605.41 inc. VAT and £3,360.00 inc. VAT were approved.

- iii. To note payments made for October

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

- iv. To note budget income & expenditure reports for October

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

- v. To note income received for October

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

- vi. To note bank reconciliations for October

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

2024/187. Budget

- i. To note the Minehead Town Council financial budget reports for the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

The Minehead Town Council financial budget report for the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year was **noted**.

- ii. To note the latest draft budget for 2025/26.

The latest draft budget for 2025/26 was **noted**.

2024/188. To consider a request from West Somerset Green Forum seeking a letter of support from the Town Council regarding their proposal to install a temporary 'beach fish' plastic recycling structure on the Esplanade during May & June 2025.

Councillors discussed the request and raised several concerns about the proposed fish-shaped recycling structure. They questioned the feasibility of volunteer management, waste sorting processes, and potential safety hazards. Councillors indicated they cannot provide support until more comprehensive information is presented.

Councillors expressed specific reservations about the structure's design. They worried about potential vermin access, the impact of sand accumulation from the seafront, and the risk of plastic dispersal during stormy conditions. The open nature of the structure was a particular point of concern.

Additionally, discussions revealed insights from previous hosts of similar installations. Their feedback suggested that such structures often become repositories for unintended materials, undermining the project's potential effectiveness. Councillors agreed that more detailed planning and risk mitigation strategies were needed before endorsing the proposal.

RESOLVED to defer the decision on whether to support the project until more clarity on the project is provided.

2024/189. To receive a report on refurbishment work on the Lychgate at Minehead Cemetery and to consider the recommendation.

A report detailed the preservation requirements for the Lychgate at Minehead cemetery, noting the wooden frame's deterioration and potential structural risks. The report was **received**.

The clerk explained the significant difficulties in obtaining quotations due to the specialised conservation joinery required on the project. Unlike standard carpentry, this work demanded a certain level of technical expertise. While one local contractor submitted a quote in advance of the meeting, another was provided to councillors at the meeting. Others were invited to tender but most could not provide proposals due to the work's complexity and existing workload. National contractors who were also approached and similarly declined, citing similar constraints as well as distance considerations.

The chair confirmed that The National Trust at Dunster were approached, and they confirmed they use national specialists for their preservation projects and were unaware of any further local joiners capable of undertaking this project.

Acknowledging the usual requirement for three quotations, the clerk recommended proceeding with reviewing the available quotes. This approach was justified by the project's unique conservation needs, the time it had taken to obtain two quotes and the urgent intervention requirements which he advised complied with section 11 .1 (ii) of the council's financial regulations. Sufficient funding was available through existing budgets and earmarked cemetery improvement reserves.

Councillors discussed the structure's current unsafe condition, exploring potential demolition. However, removal was deemed financially impractical. Regarding the proposed Iroko wood for the gates, while its sustainable sourcing was uncertain, the clerk noted it as a more cost-effective alternative to oak for this project.

RESOLVED by majority to accept the first quote and to instruct the clerk to engage the preferred contractor to start work carried out as per the quotation at a cost of £11,785.

2024/190. To consider replacement of amenities team's ageing power tools and to receive quotations.

A report produced by the clerk highlighted the need to renew power tool equipment for the amenities team. Following an asset registration process, equipment was found to be old, in poor condition, and unsuitable for current works. The clerk proposed standardising equipment, ensuring uniform batteries and chargers from recognised brands to facilitate long-term parts availability. Three quotes were obtained, with quote B recommended as the preferred supplier.

RESOLVED that the Council approve the purchase of the Makita 9 tool brushless set for the Amenities Team, with Quote B being accepted as the preferred supplier at a cost of £2406.00 inc. VAT.

2024/191. To note Somerset Council's response regarding community request to Compulsory Purchase land at Beacon Road.

Following a prolonged period, Somerset Council has addressed a community request through Minehead Town Council for conducting a compulsory purchase of land at Beacon Road. The response indicated the request fell outside their compulsory purchase criteria and would not be progressed further. The Clerk informed councillors that the town council had exhausted available options, and he had communicated the outcome to the community group.

The update was **noted**.

2024/192. To note the mid-year Citizens Advice West Somerset reporting data.

The mid-year Citizens Advice West Somerset reporting data was **noted**.

2024/193. To note that Minehead Victorian Christmas Event will be held on Friday 29th November between 16:30 – 21:00.

The Minehead Victorian Christmas Event will take place on Friday, 29th November. The event will feature late night shopping, community celebration, and Christmas light switch on from 16:30 to 21:00, with lights switching on at 19:00. A road closure will be in place, hosting stalls including hot

food vendors, local crafts, goods, and community group engagement. Work has been done to minimise any disruption and public information is available on the town council website.

The event information was **noted**.

The meeting closed at 20:37.

Councillor Craig Palmer

Chair Minehead Town Council

November 2024