



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 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:

Emma Child and Cath Grant from Minehead Swimming and Leisure presented details about their Community Benefit Society formed in 2020 that aims to establish a public 25-metre indoor swimming pool in Minehead. The project aims to serve 27,000 potential users from Minehead and West Somerset and has the support from the local MP and local GP surgeries. They have launched a community shares offer at £1 per share and are preparing for their Annual General Meeting in January, currently having around 40 members. They are hoping to submit for pre-planning advice for two potential sites and have asked Somerset Council to waive planning advice fees, which currently range between £1,000 -£2,000 per site. Assistance was requested in encouraging Somerset Council to consider fee waiver.

Regarding town amenities, a member of the public highlighted two areas of public interest which were featured on the agenda, floral displays and weed control. They emphasised that floral displays receive considerable public praise and have a direct positive impact on mental health, encouraging community engagement and creating destination spaces, particularly in areas like Blenheim Gardens. On weed control, they acknowledged the contentious nature of glyphosate use but suggested there are good mitigation measures which ensure its safe use and the town council's rewilding approaches offset environmental concerns. They urged councillors to consider these when making their decision.

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

**Apologies:** Councillor Bartlett

**Not present:** Councillors Bonar and Kravis

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

**2024/194.** To receive apologies for absence.

Councillor Bartlett's apologies were received.

**2024/195.** 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.

**2024/196.** To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

There were no representatives from the Local Policing Team present.

Somerset Councillor Lawrence sent her apologies.

Initial.....

Councillor Chilcott gave the following updates:

- Somerset councillors have provided feedback on the review of political boundaries across Somerset.
- A government document has been released proposing a significant restructure of local government, potentially shifting many decisions to a publicly elected mayoral level, with a focus on combined and unitary authorities.
- Storm Darragh caused numerous tree downing's, particularly in Exmoor, with a support fund established.
- Sand was quickly cleared from Minehead seafront after the storm, with thanks to staff from both Somerset and Minehead Town Council for their assistance.
- The council leader has written to government requesting permission to increase council tax rates above 5% ahead of the full council meeting.

Councillor Hadley gave the following updates:

- New National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) released on Thursday, introducing substantial changes to Somerset's development land supply calculations. This also means The West Somerset plan is no longer reliable and a new Somerset plan is now in effect.
- January will feature a call for land and potential development sites across the county. Public consultations and meetings will be held, with strong emphasis on public involvement. This consultation stage is critical for objecting to proposed land development in the local plan.
- The Pharmaceutical needs assessment consultation remains open.

There was uncertainty as to whether the sand that was cleared was taken away or returned to the beach. While reports suggested the sand would be put back, there were conflicting accounts. The esplanade footpath area is typically not addressed until spring, and recent efforts primarily focused on clearing the road. A question was raised about Warren Road car park's continued closure, but a definitive answer was unknown.

Discussions were had on a revised Expression of Interest for a combined authority spanning Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire. The potential establishment of a mayoral system is expected to bring increased devolved funding and powers. Several Southwest areas are already participating in combined authorities. However, concerns were raised about potential funding disparities, with larger towns and urban areas likely to receive more significant funding allocations. The consensus was that local communities must advocate strongly to ensure fair consideration.

**2024/197.** To receive updates from councillors on Advisory groups and Outside Bodies.

Councillor C Palmer represented MTC at the 9 lessons and carols service at St. Michael's church on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December.

**2024/198.** To approve and sign the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024.](#)

Initial.....

**RESOLVED** the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2024 were approved, and signed by the chair.

**2024/199.** To receive the Minutes of the [Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024.](#)

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 were **received**.

**2024/200.** To receive the Notes from the Amenities Advisory Group Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and to consider the following recommendation:

- i. To purchase a new Stihl FS491 strimmer for Amenities Depot team at a cost of £799 exc. VAT.*

The notes from the Amenities Advisory Group Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024 were **received**.

**RESOLVED** the purchase of a new Stihl FS491 strimmer for Amenities Depot team at a cost of £799 exc. VAT was approved.

**2024/201.** To receive the Notes from the Devolution Advisory Group held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 and to consider the following recommendations:

- i. To proceed with the asset transfer negotiations as outlined in the Somerset Council document, maintaining ongoing dialogue about additional asset inclusions and any TUPE implications.*

The notes from the Devolution Advisory Group Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were **received**.

A proposal was made to amend the recommendation to include the need to seek expert legal advice on any potential TUPE transfers. The proposal was seconded.

**RESOLVED** to proceed with the asset transfer negotiations as outlined in the Somerset Council document, maintaining ongoing dialogue about additional asset inclusions and to seek expert legal advice on any potential TUPE transfers.

**2024/202.** Accounts

- i. To approve the following payments over £1,500 for December:*
  - Payment of **£5285.00** to DB Carpentry & Joinery for supply of Oak & Iroko for Cemetery Lychgate repairs. *(Work approved in November 2024 Full Council Minute number 2024/189)*
  - Payment of **£2,406.00 inc. VAT** to Eagle plant for supply of Makita power tool set. *(Purchase approved in November 2024 Full Council Minute Number 2024/190)*
  - Payment of **£7,200 inc. VAT** to Encore Electrical for installation and dismantling of Festive Lighting. *(Two-year festive lighting contract renewal approved in December 2023 Minute number 7, Item 5.)*

It was noted that the Christmas lighting payment was solely for the installation and dismantling expenses, with the light hire being subject to a separate contractual arrangement.

**RESOLVED** the payments of £5285.00 to DB Carpentry & Joinery, £2,406.00 inc. VAT to Eagle Plan and £7,200 inc. VAT to Encore Electrical were approved were approved by majority.

- ii. To approve payments made for November

**RESOLVED** the payments made for November were approved.

- iii. To receive budget income & expenditure reports for November

The budget income & expenditure reports for November were **received**.

- iv. To receive income received for November

The income for November was **received**.

- v. To receive bank reconciliations for November

The bank reconciliations for November were received.

#### **2024/203.** Budget

- i. To receive the latest draft budget report for 2025/26.

The latest draft budget report was **received**.

#### **2024/204.** To receive a report and to consider the recommendation on Minehead Town Council's Street weed response strategy.

The report on Minehead Town Council's Street weed response strategy was **received**.

Councillors comprehensively discussed the proposed street weed control strategy, exploring various aspects including contract management, treatment area mapping, and weed control methods. Discussions covered the use of both ride-on machinery and manual knapsack applications, particularly in challenging areas with parked cars and street trees. Councillors acknowledged the need for proactive weed management and potential community concerns about the reintroduction of glyphosate use. The clerk confirmed that detailed, accessible information explaining the controlled application and minimal risk would be made available on the council website. After reviewing previous alternative weed control attempts and comparing their effectiveness and costs, it appeared that controlled chemical weed control remained the most viable approach.

**RESOLVED** Minehead Town Council's Street weed response strategy as outlined in the report which includes the reintroduction of controlled glyphosate use was approved.

#### **2024/205.** To receive a report, review options, and approve the annual flower display strategy for Minehead Town Council

The Minehead Town Council flower display options were **received**.

Councillors discussed the planting options in the report. Concerns were raised regarding the costs and resource-intensive nature of annual bedding provision. The clerk clarified the differences between options 1 and 4 which were similar in nature. The transition away from annual bedding dependence was recognised as a potentially complex process requiring careful management over multiple years.

An amendment to option 2 was presented, suggesting a near full move away from annual bedding in 2025, with specific exceptions for Blenheim Gardens due to ownership constraints and its upcoming centenary year. The proposed approach also included maintaining some annual bedding trims around permanent beds and incorporating perennial plants in baskets and tubs, which would ensure a reduction on long-term maintenance requirements. However, this amendment was not seconded and therefore was not considered for voting.

Discussion then focused on option 1, acknowledging the ongoing transitional work by staff to reduce annual bedding quantities and recognising the positive social media engagement these displays typically generate. Option 1 was subsequently proposed and seconded.

**RESOLVED** option 1 as outlined in the report, which strategically reduces dependence on annual bedding displays over a period of years while retaining some displays in beds, tubs, and baskets was approved by a majority vote. A progress review will be conducted after two years and presented to the Council for further evaluation and discussion.

**2024/206.** To consider a Minehead Town Council response to The Local Government Boundary Commission for England Review of Somerset Council's division boundaries.

The Chair introduced the agenda item, highlighting the importance of Minehead Town Council providing a formal council response to the ongoing Somerset Council boundary review consultation, in addition to councillors submitting individual feedback.

It was noted that the current SC ward boundaries divide the Parish boundaries of Minehead, with areas such as Ellicombe and Alcombe being included in the Dunster ward. Councillors discussed the preference for SC ward boundaries to align with the MTC parish area, encompassing the entire town of Minehead.

While the Boundary Commission's preference is for single-member wards, councillors agreed that Minehead Town being represented as a single ward with two members would be more practical, reducing potential confusion among residents. It was felt that this approach aligns with the Boundary Commission's criteria.

**RESOLVED** it was agreed that the Clerk will draft a letter to the Boundary Commission outlining the town council position that the new Somerset Council ward should reflect the Minehead parish boundary and be represented by two ward members. Additionally, the Clerk will prepare a response to the consultation reflecting this position. Both the letter and the consultation response will be circulated to all councillors for approval before submission.

**2024/207.** To receive an update on the Lychgate preservation works at Minehead Cemetery.

The Clerk gave an update to council of the Lychgate preservation works. The Lychgate has now been made safe using acrow props but this does mean that access to the cemetery using this entrance is temporarily unavailable. Preservation works will continue throughout the winter months however, the lead time on the timber will be a contributing factor to the completion date. It is anticipated that structural works will be complete by the spring.

The update was **received**.

**2024/208.** To approve the sending of a letter from MTC to Morrisons and Somerset Council, urging immediate maintenance of all storm gullies and ditches under their responsibility

Councillors discussed the poor condition of the ditches and storm gullies around Morrisons, noting their urgent need for attention to ensure proper flood alleviation. Concerns were also raised regarding the broken elements of the fence along the footpath, which pose health and safety risks, as well as the non-functional streetlamps on the roadside, which remain under Morrisons' ownership as unadopted highways. Additionally, the overgrown shrubbery requires a general tidy-up.

**RESOLVED** it was agreed to instruct the Clerk to draft a letter to Morrisons highlighting concerns regarding the ditches, fences, streetlamps, and shrubbery. The draft will be circulated to all councillors for approval before submission.

**2024/209.** To receive update on Storm Darragh and to delegate the clerk with the authority to spend on any required repair works using the appropriate budget lines.

The Clerk reported that in preparation for the red weather alert, a response plan had been implemented, including the closure of Blenheim Gardens and public toilets for the duration of the red warning and the remainder of that day for public safety. The community building was also prepared for emergency use if required.

The storm had a moderate impact on the town council, including a fallen tree causing property damage, other trees requiring intervention, and issues with festive lighting. While efforts were made to address these in-house, some larger tasks may require external assistance. The Clerk requested delegated authority to carry out necessary works within the corresponding budget lines, provided funds are available.

The Chair expressed gratitude to MTC and SC staff for their efforts during the storm and throughout the year.

**RESOLVED** the authority was delegated to the clerk to authorise and arrange necessary repairs and maintenance resulting from Storm Darragh, using available funds within the appropriate budget lines.

**2024/210.** To note Minehead Town Council's January meeting schedule.

The following meeting dates for January 2025 were **noted**.

- Planning Committee; Tuesday January 7<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in The Council Offices

- Finance and General Purposes Committee; Tuesday January 14<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in The Council Offices
- Full Council Meeting; Tuesday January 28<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Centre.
- Reserve Full Council Meeting; Wednesday January 29<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 21:04.

Councillor Craig Palmer

Chair Minehead Town Council

December 2024