



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 28th January 2025 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. No matters were raised.

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

Not present: Councillor Bonar

In Attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk), J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO), Somerset Councillor Chilcott and 1 member of the public.

2025/01. To receive apologies for absence.

There were no apologies for absence.

2025/02. 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.

Councillor Kravis has a standing declaration as a Somerset Councillor.

There were no further disclosures.

2025/03. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

There were no representatives of the local policing team present.

Councillors Hadley and Lawrence sent their apologies.

Councillor Chilcott gave the following updates:

- A Somerset Council Business Survey has concluded.
- The Local Plan 'Call for Sites' is open for 6 weeks - landowners and developers are invited to submit land for future development consideration.
- Fostering campaign conducted over the Christmas & New Year period highlighting a critical shortage of foster carers in Somerset.
- Three motions supporting local farmers and food producers were approved at a recent Somerset Council meeting.
- Boundary Commission consultation extended to 4th March. Alternative Somerset plans submitted with the intention of a Somerset Council submission before deadline.
- Ongoing seafront sand removal works in progress, Cllr Chilcott is now focusing on organising the clearing of the golf club roundabout area.

- New police centre signage installed with facility to include Town Deal funded care profession training centre.

Concerns were raised about the 5-year pollarding schedule for street trees, with some trees potentially requiring more frequent maintenance. The Arboricultural Team's capacity to deliver this schedule was discussed, noting their current focus on storm damage response. Cllr Chilcott confirmed she had requested the pollarding schedule to monitor timing of works.

Councillor Kravis gave the following updates:

- Local Plan call for sites is underway, with Somerset facing significant housing targets which will be crucial for Local Plan development.
- Somerset Council Executive Committee has approved key devolution decisions for Minehead.
- The staffing restructure at Somerset Council continues to progress.
- Councillors are working cross-party to resolve the ongoing Minehead harbour fees dispute.
- Strong emphasis placed on supporting Somerset Council's fostering campaign, with encouragement for potential foster carers to come forward.

2025/04. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory groups and Outside Bodies.

Cllr Hodson reported that Minehead Swimming and Leisure (MSL) are making good progress with current membership of 56 and four directors.

2025/05. To approve and sign the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 19th December 2024.](#)

RESOLVED the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 19th December 2024 were approved and signed by the chair.

2025/06. To receive the Minutes of the [Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 7th January 2025.](#)

Councillors wished to formally record their appreciation for the quality and detail of the minutes.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 7th January 2025 were **received**.

2025/07. To receive the Minutes from the [Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 14th January 2025.](#)

The minutes from the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 14th January 2025 were **received**.

2025/08. To consider an application for co-option to Minehead Town Council.

An application for co-option to Minehead Town Council were considered from a member of the public.

The candidate spoke to Councillors, explaining why they wanted to join MTC. Councillors voted to suspend standing orders, and the applicant and attendees of the meeting were then invited to leave the room to allow a paper ballot to take place.

RESOLVED for Mr Mohamed Sharjeel to be elected and co-opted to Minehead Town Council representing Minehead North Ward.

After signing the declaration of acceptance of office, which was witnessed by the Clerk as proper officer, he took his place in the meeting as a councillor.

2025/09. Accounts

- i. To approve the following urgent payments over £1,500 for January:
 - Payment of £1,680 inc. VAT to GB Sport & Leisure for 4 x play inspection training (*Training approved in August Full Council minute number 2024/137*)

RESOLVED the payment of £1,680 inc. VAT to GB Sport & Leisure was approved.

- ii. To note payments made for December

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

- iii. To note budget income & expenditure reports for December

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

- iv. To note income received for December

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

- v. To note bank reconciliations for December

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

2025/10. Budget

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

The Minehead Town Council financial budget reports for the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year were **noted**.

- ii. To receive the budget report for 2025/26 financial year, to consider the recommendations and to set the precept.

The budget report for 2025/26 financial year was **received**.

Councillors reviewed the report and queried certain earmarked reserves, questioning whether a review was necessary. It was agreed that a comprehensive review would be required in the future once officers had a full understanding of the history and sources of these reserves.

Concerns were raised regarding legal fees associated with devolution. The Clerk acknowledged that the allocated amount was relatively low but expressed confidence that, as the transfer of public

space does not require the same level of scrutiny, a combination of officer review and limited legal oversight should be sufficient.

The significant increase in the general maintenance budget was also queried. Officers confirmed that while they had made every effort to estimate accurate costs related to devolution, unforeseen expenses were likely, and the additional budget would help mitigate any unexpected costs.

RESOLVED To approve the budget and set a precept totalling £1,011,635.00. Making the Town Council Band D rate in Minehead £228.47. This represents an annual Band D increase of £13.95, which equates to 6.5%.

RESOLVED That the General Reserves be set and approved at £287,098.01, representing 3.5 months of operational costs for the 2025/26 financial year.

RESOLVED That the Earmarked Reserves are set and approved at £567,845.70, allocated across their designated categories.

2025/11. To approve the Minehead Town Council Absence Management Policy.

The Clerk reported that during the ongoing policy review process, the current absence management policy was found to be outdated and required a complete overhaul. The proposed new policy would ensure a more consistent approach to managing absences while aligning with the HR support provided by Southwest Councils.

RESOLVED to approve and adopt the Minehead Town Council Absence Management Policy.

2025/12. To receive an update on the insurance settlement relating to the October 2024 incident at Summerland Car Park Public Conveniences and to consider the recommendation.

A report provided an update on the insurance settlement status. The report was **received**.

Prior to the meeting, concerns were raised regarding the limited information provided by the preferred contractor on the scope of works. In response, the contractor submitted a detailed Risk Assessment Method Statement outlining the planned works.

The Clerk explained that, if approved, the works could commence as early as 3rd February. He confirmed that, in the interests of equality and health and safety, the entire toilet block may need to be closed for the duration of the works, which were expected to take approximately three weeks. While acknowledging the high usage of the facilities, he noted that February would be one of the less busy months, making it a more suitable time for temporary closure.

RESOLVED by majority to approve the repair works as outlined in the report and to direct the Clerk to proceed with the insurance-appointed contractor for the block and coloured render rebuild option.

2025/13. To receive a report on repainting works at the Community Centre and to consider the recommendation.

The report was **received**.

The Clerk informed councillors that while the original report had proposed delegating authority for quote review and contractor appointment, three quotations had since been received and were presented for consideration. It was noted that the works were budgeted for in the current financial year.

Concerns were raised regarding the volume of ongoing projects and whether this work was essential at this time. Members also discussed the usage of the facility the need to ensure its long-term upkeep through collaboration with other users. The importance of the community centre as a valued asset was acknowledged, with recognition on the Town Council's responsibility to maintain it.

A proposal was made to defer the works for several months and earmark the allocated funds for completion in the next financial year.

RESOLVED to defer the Community Centre repainting works for several months and earmark the allocated funds for completion in the next financial year.

2025/14. To receive a report on tree maintenance works at King George Playing Field and to consider the recommendation.

The Report was **received**.

The Clerk reported on required pollarding works to six willow trees located near the Sure Start building at King Georges Playing Field, which fall within Town Council boundaries. While the remaining willow trees in the line were within private ownership, the Clerk confirmed they had sent a letter to the private landowner, offering to work with them if needed, to achieve the required maintenance works in the interests of open space users. It was noted that sufficient funds were available within the tree works budget due to underspend on other maintenance projects.

RESOLVED to authorise the Clerk to obtain quotes and appoint a contractor for pollarding works on approximately 6 trees along King George Playing Fields' eastern boundary, with a maximum budget of £2,500 and completion within the timeframes specified in this report was approved.

2025/15. To reconsider West Somerset Green Forum's request for a letter of support, following their submission of additional information, regarding their proposal to install a temporary 'beach fish' plastic recycling structure on the Esplanade in May & June 2025.

Further to the Council's request for additional information on the initial proposal considered in November 2024, further details had been received. Councillors had previously raised concerns regarding volunteer management, potential misuse, and waste disposal.

Upon reviewing the new information, members felt that while some concerns had been addressed, uncertainties remained about how the structure would be used and whether it would serve its intended purpose. There were also concerns about the potential impact on MTC's waste disposal costs through misuse. However, Councillors acknowledged the project's potential to raise awareness of plastic usage.

A proposal was made for MTC to provide a letter of support for the Green Forum's "Fish" structure for a two-month trial period. The motion was seconded but did not carry.

RESOLVED as the motion did not carry, no further action will be taken at this time.

2025/16. To receive a request from Bridgwater and Taunton College who are seeking members of the local community to join the Governing Body at West Somerset College.

The Town Clerk has received a request from Bridgwater and Taunton College regarding vacancies on the West Somerset College Governing Body. The college is looking to recruit members of the local community for these positions. Interested councillors or community members are invited to contact the Clerk for more information and relevant contact details.

The request was **received**.

2025/17. To consider nominating a Town Councillor representative at the bus users & stakeholders group meetings.

The agenda item was **received**.

The Clerk reported receipt of an invitation from Somerset Council for a Town Council representative to attend quarterly Bus Users & Stakeholders Group meetings, held via Teams. The chair asked council if they would like to accept the invitation and if so to contact the Clerk.

2025/18. To note Minehead Town Councils response to The Boundary Commission Review of Somerset Council Ward Boundaries and to approve additional Minehead Town Council response.

Minehead Town Council's response to The Boundary Commission Review of Somerset Council Ward Boundaries as agreed at December's Full Council meeting was sent on 23rd December 2024 was **noted**.

The Town Council discussed the additional response submitted to the Boundary Commission's consultation on the Somerset Council ward boundary review. Following the December meeting where Council had agreed to submit a response, the Clerk noted that Kingston Parish Council had put forward the only Somerset-wide proposal, which suggested splitting Minehead into two wards. This conflicted with Minehead Town Council's preference for a single ward that would extend slightly beyond the current parish boundary. The Clerk prepared and submitted a supplementary response defending the single ward approach, which would ensure more effective governance and clearer accountability for residents. This additional submission, made on 16th January 2025 after receiving a digital quorate approval from councillors, now required formal Council approval.

RESOLVED Minehead Town Council's additional response to The Boundary Commission's review of Somerset Council Ward Boundaries sent 16th January 2025 was approved.

It was **noted** that the Somerset initial consultation stage has been extended to a new submission deadline of 4 March 2025.

The meeting closed at 21:12

Councillor Craig Palmer
Chair of Minehead Town Council
January 2025