



Understanding Devolution of Green Spaces in Minehead

What is Devolution?

Devolution is the transfer of assets and services from a larger authority (in this case, Somerset Council) to a more local one (Minehead Town Council). For Minehead, this specifically involves the transfer of ownership and management responsibility for various open spaces, parks, gardens, and play areas throughout the town beginning April 2025.

Why is This Happening?

Somerset Council is facing significant financial challenges that make it difficult to maintain these spaces properly. Devolution is part of Somerset Council's cost-saving strategy while ensuring these valuable community assets continue to be maintained and accessible to residents.

What Assets Are Being Transferred?

The transfer includes several key areas:

- Blenheim Gardens (including its café and North Road car park)
- The Parks (including Parks Walk, Woodcombe Walk, and Bratton Park)
- Jubilee Gardens and its café
- Alexandra Road car park
- Multiple play areas throughout town
- Various open spaces and green spaces
- Some planters and bus shelters

How Will This Benefit Minehead?

Local Control and Faster Response

With local ownership, Minehead Town Council will be able to respond more quickly to maintenance issues and community needs. Decisions about these spaces will be made closer to home by people who understand local priorities.

Improved Maintenance Standards

The Town Council plans to implement consistent maintenance standards across all green spaces. This will eliminate the current confusion caused by having two different authorities responsible for different areas of town.

Environmental Benefits

The Town Council already has experience with rewilding initiatives across open spaces, cemeteries, and grass verges. Devolution will allow for expanded biodiversity enhancement through adjusted maintenance regimes and habitat creation across more areas of Minehead.

Streamlined Service Delivery

Currently, both MTC and Somerset Council deliver grounds maintenance services, creating inefficiencies and confusion about who is responsible for what. With a single authority managing all open spaces, service delivery will be more efficient and consistent.

Income Generation Opportunities

Some of the transferred assets have potential to generate income (café facilities, car parks) which can help offset the additional maintenance costs and potentially fund improvements to these spaces in the future.

Community Focus

As a local authority, Minehead Town Council is better positioned to understand and respond to community needs and preferences for these spaces. The Town Council plans to establish methods for public feedback to ensure accountability and service quality.

While there will be challenges in managing this transition, including additional staffing and equipment needs, the devolution of these assets represents an opportunity for Minehead to take greater control of its green spaces and ensure they continue to be well-maintained, accessible, and developed according to local priorities.