

Minutes from the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF MINEHEAD**

Held on
Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 7:30 p.m. at The Community
Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

1. Welcome by the Mayor of Minehead.

Cllr C Palmer opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees and expressing gratitude for their presence. He clarified that the event was not a Town Council meeting, but a public meeting aimed at bringing together residents, community groups and local volunteers to share ideas and contribute to making Minehead the best it can be.

2. To receive and approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 7th May 2024.

The minutes from the Annual Town Council Meeting held on 7th May 2024 were received. Paper copies were available for attendees and they are also accessible online. The Chair signed the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. To receive the Minehead Town Council Annual Report.

The Minehead Town Council Annual Report was presented. Cllr C Palmer introduced the report, noting a year of meaningful progress. Attendees were informed that a limited number of printed copies were available for viewing at the meeting, with a digital version accessible on the Minehead Town Council website.

4. Short reports from local organisations/groups.

Several local organisations and community groups attended the meeting, each offering a brief verbal presentation and distributing handouts or informational materials about their work. These included:

- Local Policing Team
- Minehead Coast and Development Trust
- Citizens Advice West Somerset
- Minehead Museum
- Minehead Women's Institute
- Minehead Repair Café
- Minehead Rotary Club
- St. Michael's Swimming Pool
- Minehead Pool Group

5. To present the RHS In Your Neighbourhood Awards to local groups.

Cllr C Palmer reported that following Minehead's achievement of a Gold award in the 2024 South West in Bloom competition, several local organisations and individuals were recognised for their contributions to the town's upkeep. "In Your Neighbourhood" awards were presented to:

- Brian Milligan – for monitoring and protecting the Reed Warbler population at Lower Marsh Common
- Blenheim Gardens Volunteers
- Community Payback – for their work within Blenheim Gardens
- Steven Heard of Minehead Metal Heads

An award was also given to Minehead Wombles in recognition of their ongoing efforts; however, no representative was present at the meeting. The Clerk will arrange for their certificate to be presented at a later date.

6. Public Question Time – To receive questions relating to the town of Minehead which may be asked by any Minehead resident.

A number of questions had been submitted in advance of the meeting. Written responses to these questions have been provided and are appended to these minutes (*See Appendix A*).

The Chair invited further questions from those in attendance. Several additional verbal questions were received, covering topics such as fencing and shelters at Culvercliffe, anti-social behaviour, Dog Control Orders, seafront bin provision and local government devolution matters.

7. Mayor's closing comments.

The Mayor closed the meeting by expressing his appreciation to all attendees, as well as to the local organisations and groups for their continued dedication and service to the town. Attendees were reminded that light refreshments were available and encouraged to stay and take advantage of the opportunity to network.

Meeting closed at 20:51

Councillor Craig Palmer
Mayor of Minehead
May 2025

Pre-Submitted Questions for the Annual Town Meeting – 20th May 2025

From Sandra Gough

1. can I please have a response to the items/issues raised at the public consultation meeting in April

Due to staff leave and competing urgent matters, there has been an unavoidable delay in publishing the questions. We are aiming to have them uploaded to the website as soon as possible.

2. the mayor said he would arrange to meet me re the access issues for disabled dog walkers he has not done so is there a plan to undertake this site meeting

Cllr Palmer regrets that he has not yet been able to arrange the meeting but fully intends to do so. He will be in touch in due course to propose a date, and the Town Clerk will also seek to attend if available.

3. Has the council addressed the Equality Act impact assessment with the council re access to the beach and the lack of response re complaints appeals and freedom of information request.

At present, we have not received a formal Freedom of Information request on this matter. We are awaiting further details in order to clarify the concerns raised and to respond appropriately.

From Robbie Hamblin

What are the council, who now run all parks in Minehead, going to do about the lack of play equipment for Children?

We are currently being laughed at by other local communities usually with a lot less funding somehow managing to have far far better safe places for children to play.

What is the time schedule for this, as it is clearly a must do... The hairy dog (a pub, not the best place for children) currently had the best outside experience in the town, how embarrassing is that.

Minehead Town Council has invested in improving several play areas in recent years. We recognise that some newly devolved areas (as of May 1st, 2025) require further attention. There are a number of potential funding routes for such improvements, including the possibility of allocating council tax funds or securing external community improvement grants. An advisory group has recently been formed to identify suitable projects, which may include enhancements to play facilities. We would welcome Mr. Hamblin's input, as community involvement is key to ensuring any future investments reflect the needs and priorities of local residents.

From Ann Spry

You have asked for questions to be raised at the above meeting. I have a question, but it's more of a request, as I won't be able to attend the meeting, so if it is not raised/discussed on the night at the meeting, please would you kindly respond to me by email.

For many months now, I have become increasingly concerned about the 'work' the Community Payback people are doing in Blenheim Gardens each Saturday. I walk through the gardens every day, and sit to enjoy the peace and quiet on sunny days, and look at the beautiful flowers and trees etc., and I have witnessed them slicing the edges of the grass verges with their hoes, and that is all they seem to do apart from standing around talking while the supervisor sits in the van. They are slicing more and more off each week, to the extent that there will eventually be no grass verges left in places, as it cannot possibly grow back when all that is left is the concrete/ tarmac underneath. You just have to walk through and see how far they have been chopped back. It breaks my heart. And it's not as if they are even straight edges. They seem to hack away at them without any thought. At the bottom end of the park there is a little wooded area, and the grass edge has been almost completely desecrated, and all that is left is a muddy mess. I have even witnessed them throwing some of the off cuts in a pile behind one of the trees there.

This task is certainly not improving the look of the pathways, quite the opposite, as when there is heavy rain, the edges fill with muddy water. Is there nothing else they can do which would produce a more positive result. Like sweeping the pathways to clear them of the seeds, leaves and branches etc. which normally fall from the beautiful trees at this time of year. They are particularly messy at the moment.

I sincerely hope you can intervene and put a stop to it, for the sake of the future look of our beautiful gardens.

Sorry my question turned out so long, but I had to explain the circumstances. It is without any malice, merely to save the gardens from further destruction. Thank you for your time.

Blenheim Gardens has recently come under our management through the asset and service devolution from Somerset Council, completed on May 1st 2025. We believe the Community Payback team can play a meaningful role in the upkeep of the town and they were acknowledged for their contribution through a recent 'In Your Neighbourhood' award in our Gold award in South West in Bloom. That said, with the transition to local oversight, we are reviewing how tasks are allocated. Discussions are already underway to implement a more structured and balanced maintenance approach across the town.

From Jo Eadon

Good afternoon

As per your fb posting I am submitting questions in advance of the meeting. They are as follows:

- 1. What strategy does MTC have in place to tackle the problem of littering on the beach?**

In light of Somerset Council ceasing their beach cleaning service — a service to which MTC contributed significantly — we have had to reconsider how the beach is maintained.

Although MTC does not own the beach, we are initiating collaborative discussions with key stakeholders, to develop a cohesive and sustainable approach to its ongoing management.

- 2. There is a sign that states the beach is an alcohol free zone, what systems are in place to enforce this?**

Alcohol restrictions are enforced under Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs), which can only be enacted by Somerset Council. While MTC does not have the legal authority to introduce these measures independently, we have been engaging with Somerset Council to broaden the scope of existing PSPOs, including those concerning alcohol restrictions.

Although progress has been slow, we've been assured that MTC will be involved at an early stage during any future PSPO review process.

3. Having undertaken numerous litter picks on my own and as part of organised activity there is loads of smashed glass both on and buried in the sand. Can something not be done to prevent someone seriously cutting their feet etc. years ago there used to be a tractor that trawled the beach and collected litter in a net could this not take place again?

Please see our earlier response regarding beach maintenance. How the reintroduction of mechanical cleaning solutions can be funded is one of several options to be explored as part of a coordinated beach management strategy.

4. The worst of the litter is down the Butlins end, has anyone tried holding them to account? I note from their website they undertake 4 litter picks a year. This is not good enough it should be at least daily in the holiday season. I understand that Hinckley Point provide the local community with beach buggies and litter tools as part of the project could Butlins not be persuaded to do the same for Minehead?

As mentioned earlier, we are working to establish a collaborative approach to beach management. As part of this, we aim to engage with all parties we consider key stakeholders — including local organisations and businesses — to explore how each can play a role in maintaining and improving the beach environment. These conversations will be an important part of shaping a shared long-term strategy.

I have written to our local MP re holding Butlins to account but to date have had no reply.

Look forward to coming to the meeting.

From Rachel Hill

Good Morning,

Sorry I didn't notice that there had to be 5 days notice for questions to the Council at tomorrow's Town meeting. So no response expected from the following comments but would be grateful if you could pass them on.

- 1) Firstly a big Thankyou to all who maintain our public spaces. The park areas are very well maintained. Also appreciate the 1 hour free parking in the Town centre I supported 4 businesses in one morning recently all within the hour.

MTC remains committed to supporting local businesses and believes that free on-street parking plays a vital role in encouraging footfall within the town. We are therefore concerned about Somerset Council's proposed changes, including the removal of existing free parking options. We have recently written to the Executive Committee at Somerset Council to express our concerns and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

- 2) No tourist information what a disaster! We have the Saltpath film on national release 30/5 and could really showcase our beautiful area.

We are saddened by the closure of the Tourist Information Centre, though we acknowledge that the previous business model was ultimately unsustainable for Minehead Coastal and Development Trust (MCDT). We continue to work closely with MCDT to develop a more sustainable approach that aligns with modern trends and visitor needs. Our goal is to create a cohesive, long-term solution that benefits the town and its visitors alike.

- 3) Litter and Shopping trollies continue to blight our town we need some action.

While a street cleansing contract is currently in place between a contractor and Somerset Council, we recognise that certain areas of the town still require additional attention. The existing reporting mechanisms can sometimes feel cumbersome, and we understand the

frustration this may cause. MTC remains committed to supporting ongoing operations by complementing—not duplicating—the existing contractual arrangements. Our in-house Amenities Team takes a proactive role in addressing issues such as litter and abandoned trolleys as they are reported or identified during routine patrols.

- 4) Dogs on beaches (don't groan! 😊) I'm aware current restrictions in place until 2027 but I will continue to put the case for time restricted access early morning and evenings. The current dog beach is inaccessible to my husband with mobility problems and we paddle early morning tides permitting for pain relief and physio. Would be lovely to have our dog with us. Ps. We and many dog walkers litter pick the beach as we walk.**

As a previous answer mentions, we have held discussions with Somerset Council regarding the Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) across the town. While we understand that limited action can be taken before the formal review period, we have been assured that MTC will be included in discussions as soon as the review process begins.

- 5) A dog bin at the start of the lovely walk from Seaward Way to the children's play area alongside the railway line would be a big help.**

As referenced previously, devolution presents MTC with the opportunity to review both the areas we maintain and the services we provide within them. While we are not in a position to make any commitments at this stage, the suggestion has been noted and will be considered as part of future planning.

I think that's enough for now, have a good day.
