



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 7.30 PM AT
THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, IRNHAM ROAD, MINEHEAD TA24 5DW

The Meeting was digitally recorded and live streamed on the MTC Facebook page

Members are reminded that Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and Biodiversity

Chair: Cllr P Bolton* (Mayor)

Councillors: Cllr T Bloomfield, Cllr M Burke, Cllr E Jones, Cllr A Kingston-James (Deputy Mayor), Cllr M Kingston-James, Cllr A Lawton, Cllr R Lillis, Cllr J Malin, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr H Rose, Cllr T Venner*

Councillors in Attendance: Cllr M Chilcott**

Cllr C Lawrence** (*denotes Somerset West and Taunton "SWaT" Councillor
**denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")

Councillors Absent: Cllr A Berry, Cllr O Harvey

Officers in Attendance: Ms S Rawle (Clerk)
Mr B Howe (Deputy Clerk)
Mrs J Notley (Notetaker)

Members of the Public: 2

Members of the Press: 0

The Mayor welcomed Councillors and those watching on Facebook.

1446 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies had been received from Cllr N Hercock.

1447 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RESPECT OF ANY AGENDA ITEMS ([Localism Act 2011](#))

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr A Kingston-James	1452.2 1457.2 1453	Personal	22.02.2022	Stayed in the room; did not speak or vote Left the room Stayed in the room; did not speak or vote
Cllr M Kingston-James	1453	Personal	22.02.2022	Stayed in the room; did not speak or vote
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2022	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr H Rose	1453	Pecuniary	22.02.2022	Stayed in the room, spoke; did not vote
Cllr T Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2022	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS [\(Localism Act 2011\)](#)

No-one had requested any dispensations.

The Mayor said he wished to move first to item 1449.

1449 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION [Standing Order No 3e](#)

The Mayor welcomed Thomas Sheppard, High Sheriff for Somerset, who described his office and function in Somerset. He presented the High Sheriff's Award for Work in the Community to Colin Johnson for all his work in bringing together all the different agencies and partners in the Community Centre project and its outside facilities and the end result which was, said Mr Sheppard, way ahead of anything of this type. The High Sheriff thanked MTC for what they had achieved collectively by persevering for a very long time.

Colin Johnson took the opportunity to tell the meeting that the Community Centre building had been listed by Jewsons as one of the 25 best designed community buildings in the country. It had also been a finalist in the Somerset Playing Field of the Year award where it had been highly commended. He said all credit was due to MTC for backing his efforts and seeing the project through.

Mr Sheppard and Colin Johnson left the Meeting.

1448 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

- **Somerset County Council**

Cllr Mandy Chilcott reported on one of the busiest weeks ever for SCC Highways with 281 trees down in the storms with 258 cleared, with West Somerset being one of the worst hit areas. Six chain-saw gangs had been working, along with many members of the public, to clear roads. Cllr Chilcott said there was a "Gold Command" which stood up immediately in the case of such emergencies where several processes kicked in and many agencies came in and worked together. It would be helpful if some time in the future MTC could learn more about this.

Cllr Chilcott said the Local Government Reorganisation was due to go through Parliament the following day; this would confirm the Town Council election date and also the County Council election with 110 instead of 55 candidates. She said she was due the following day to present her budget to SCC. No services or jobs would be affected. There would be an extra over £30 million per year to be spent mainly in adults and children's services. There would be a proposed capped 2% rise in Council Tax.

Cllr Chilcott told the Meeting that SCC had come out as a top council for its work on climate change and the District Council was a top district. SCC was now looking at all schools in the coming year to see what could be done to reduce their buildings' carbon footprint. Hopefully some Government funding would be forthcoming.

With regard to the Parking Review Cllr Chilcott told Councillors that questions were being compiled to send out to the public to find what parking challenges they found and SCC would then look for solutions. She said Councillors would have sight of these questions and asked them to come back to her with any additional questions they would like to include. She hoped that Council as a body, as well as individual Councillors, would respond to the consultation.

Cllr Christine Lawrence reported that COVID cases were going down. There had been 18,000 calls to the designated helpline and 12,000 calls had been followed up. The weekend of the storm had seen a spike in calls because residents did not know what to do and had found help that way. The COVID number would remain for COVID help until the end of March and would then be re-named and designated as a helpline for residents to call when they needed help. This would not be instead of the 999 number but would be a helpline for all other emergencies.

Cllr Lawrence told the Meeting that there would be no further walk-in centres for COVID vaccinations in the area but anyone who needed a further vaccination could attend a walk-in clinic at Wheddon Cross on 9-13 April at the Village Hall.

In reply to a question from Cllr Venner, Cllr Lawrence said the trees cut back along the A39 between Ellicombe and Dunster had been cut to make the path safer for cyclists and pedestrians and would hopefully grow back well during the summer.

- **Somerset West and Taunton District Council**

In the absence of Cllr Benet Allen, Cllr C Palmer said he wanted to thank the many staff working very hard since the storm hit at the District Council, County Council and Town Council. He reminded people that staff are all working on high priority incidents and asked for their patience if matters took longer to deal with.

- **Police**

Cllr Bolton had seen the Police Report and read out the Crime Statistics for the benefit of those watching on Facebook. He found the total of 30 offences committed against the person particularly worrying. He wished the Police could attend Meetings. The Deputy Clerk said MTC had been told that their Meetings did not fit with the Police shift patterns. The Clerk said MTC would push to ask a representative from the Police to attend a Full Council Meeting.

- **Councillors attending Meetings on behalf of Minehead Town Council**

Cllr Lawton had attended a BID Meeting earlier the same evening. Karen Morlidge had been appointed as new Manager in place of Andrew Hopkins who was leaving. The new Secretary was Sally Turner and there was a consultant, Mel, who had been taken on to manage preparation for the election. Andrew had given a run-down of planned spending which included the joint projects with MTC of lighting infrastructure, hanging baskets and signage.

A meeting had been arranged with the new Director at Butlins the following Thursday which Cllr Lawton hoped to attend. Preparations for the Steam Punk weekend were going very well and there had been talk about sand removal on the sea front.

1450 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2022 –
MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE

Cllr Malin said Minute number 1413 referred to a plaque. This should read “mug” and the inscription of Henry Wood was on the base not the reverse.

Proposed: Cllr Burke

Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Agreed, subject to the amendments, with 7 in favour and 6 abstentions (Councillors absent).

1451 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING ON 1 FEBRUARY 2022,
FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING ON 7 FEBRUARY 2022 AND AMENITIES &
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON 8 FEBRUARY 2022

Councillors had seen the three sets of draft Minutes and the Mayor said they were noted.

1452 FINANCE MATTERS

1452.1 *To approve Urgent Payments for February 2022*

Payments 1-11, totalling £30,374.18 of which £19,836.69 was staff salaries.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Malin

Agreed with all in favour.

1452.2 *To approve Payments under £1,000 for February 2022*

Payments 12-34, totalling £6,547.33.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with one abstention and 12 in favour.

1452.3 *To approve Payments over £1,000 for February 2022*

Payments 35-38, totalling £8,998.32.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with all in favour.

1452.4 *To approve Payments by Procurement Card for January 2022*

Payments 39-54, totalling £745.

Cllr Venner queried the payment for parking tickets. The Deputy Clerk explained that four members of a dance group using the Community Centre on Wednesdays

had received parking tickets for parking outside the fence in the Alexandra Car Park. They had parked in this area for the past few months but had only recently been ticketed. Colin Johnson did not work on a Wednesday and had not been able to inform them about parking in the designated Community Centre area inside the fence. Rather than lose Community Centre users over a misunderstanding, Officers had decided to pay the fines.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Malin**
Agreed with all in favour.

1452.5 *To approve Regular Payments for January 2022*

Payments 1-29, totalling £7,122.08.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Lillis**
Agreed with all in favour.

1452.6 *To note Income Report for January 2022*

Income for January totalling £18,245.

Cllr C Palmer said the Income Report was noted.

1453 TO APPROVE MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022/2023

The Deputy Clerk told the Meeting that the proposed fees and charges had been discussed at the Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting and its recommendations were included in this list of fees. Cemetery charges would remain the same as would charges for the tennis courts. Most other fees were slightly raised. A deposit scheme for new allotment holders would be introduced with a deposit of £75 for large plots and £50 for standard ones. The Deputy Clerk reminded Councillors that Cllr Malin had proposed, and the Committee had agreed, having a £400 pot out of which larger bands could receive a higher fee. The Bands budget had been set at £5,500 so the additional £400 would have to come from a different budget.

Proposed: Cllr Venner **Seconded: Cllr Malin**
Agreed with all in favour that an additional £400 would be set aside for bands out of an alternative budget.

Cllr M Palmer wished to raise allotment rents from November 2022, but the Deputy Clerk said ploholders legally needed to have a year's notice and the rise in rent would have to be from November 2023.

Proposed: Cllr M Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield**
Agreed with 7 in favour, 4 abstentions and 2 against to raise allotment plot rents to £33 (standard) and £44 (large) subject to the rules under the Allotments Act 1950.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Malin**
Agreed with 8 in favour, 3 abstentions and 2 against to accept the new list of fees and charges for 2022/2023.

1454 TO AGREE COSTINGS FOR THE ELECTRICAL WORK NECESSARY FOR UPGRADING CHRISTMAS LIGHTING IN THE TOWN

The Deputy Clerk said he, the Clerk, a representative from SCC and an electrician had walked around the town looking at where Council plugged its Christmas lights into electricity supplies. Over the years lights had been plugged into various supplies with no fusing or meters. The electrician advised MTC could go back to Western Power and ask for a power supply which would cost about £2,000 for each site and there were 10 separate sites. This would cost a great deal. Alternatively, MTC could install a fuse box and meter inside each shop with the owner's permission to use their power and would be safe for both shop owners and those installing the lights. This would cost up to £1,000 per box. The Deputy Clerk said he estimated it would actually cost between £500-£700 per box. In Friday Street two new supplies were needed and there was one existing supply. In Park Street there were three existing suppliers who were happy with the idea. In Blenheim Road two new suppliers were needed and possibly two at Alcombe. This would all cost £6,000 - £7,000 for six existing supply points and four new ones. He said it was a Health and Safety issue and would also avoid Christmas lights inadvertently being switched off as had happened last Christmas.

In response to a question from Cllr Bolton the Deputy Clerk said two more quotes would be obtained if Councillors agreed to this scheme.

Proposed: Cllr Malin

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with all in favour that the Deputy Clerk should proceed to obtain competitive quotes for the work described and bring back to Finance & Staffing Committee.

The Deputy Clerk told the Meeting that The Avenue was a completely different matter. He and the Clerk had walked round with an SCC officer for advice about street columns in The Avenue. This officer had laid out the procedure for using these columns. Their use would need to be registered with Western Power as an unmetered supply with an agreement about how much use these power sources would have. The electrician gave a quote which had been passed on to Minehead BID because MTC would not finance this scheme. BID had agreed to pay £4,700 plus VAT to go ahead, with MTC doing the work on behalf of BID. There would be a socket on each pair of lampposts down The Avenue. SCC would then give authority to use their lampposts. Who would provide the lights themselves was another matter.

In response to a question from Cllr Bolton the Deputy Clerk confirmed that MTC would be responsible for the upkeep of the supply.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Lillis

Agreed with all in favour that the Deputy Clerk should proceed as advised by Somerset County Council with arranging power supplies for Christmas lights in The Avenue.

1455 TO DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Councillors discussed several ideas about how to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, either on the Jubilee weekend or as a permanent legacy. A Working Group had been established of Cllrs T Bloomfield, P Bolton, A Kingston-James and M Palmer to decide how MTC would mark the occasion.

The Deputy Clerk recommended that the group meet as soon as possible and come back to Council with its recommendations.

1456 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Lillis

Agreed with all in favour to continue the Meeting *in camera* to discuss staffing issues.

The Public Meeting closed at 8.50 pm.