



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM AT
THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, IRNHAM ROAD, MINEHEAD TA24 5DW

The Meeting was digitally recorded

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 Present:** Cllr A Berry, 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 B Allen* (*denotes Somerset West and Taunton "SWaT" Councillor
**denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")
- Councillor Absent:** Cllr N Hercock
- Officers in Attendance:** Ms S Rawle (Clerk)
Mr B Howe (Deputy Clerk)
Mrs J Notley (Note-taker)
- Members of the Public:** 0
- Members of the Press:** 0

The Mayor welcomed Councillors, officers and those watching on Facebook.

1360 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies had been received from Cllr O Harvey.

1361 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RESPECT OF ANY AGENDA ITEMS [\(Localism Act 2011\)](#)

| Member | Item | Interest | Time Period | Speak/Vote |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|--|
| Cllr P Bolton | All | SWaT Councillor | 2021 | Stayed in the room, spoke and voted |
| Cllr A Kingston-James | 1366.2 | Personal | 23.11.2021 | Stayed in the room; didn't speak or vote |
| Cllr J Malin | 1369 | Personal | 23.11.2021 | Stayed in the room; spoke but did not vote |
| Cllr C Palmer | All | SWaT Councillor | 2021 | Stayed in the room, spoke and voted |
| Cllr T Venner | All | SWaT Councillor | 2021 | Stayed in the room, spoke and voted |

DISPENSATIONS (Localism Act 2011)

No-one had requested any dispensations.

1362 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

- **Somerset County Council (“SCC”)**

Cllr Christine Lawrence sent her apologies for being unable to attend.

Cllr Mandy Chilcott reported on the latest COVID statistics which were published online on the Somerset Covid Dashboard and said that Somerset had one of highest vaccination rates in the country. She reminded listeners to book their booster vaccinations and advised the use of lateral flow tests.

Cllr Chilcott confirmed the roadworks at Carhampton were now finished but there were more requests for works on the highway than ever before. Local Government reorganisation was progressing by forming a joint Committee to oversee the transition which was approved by all 5 Councils. She reminded parents that applications for school places should be submitted by 15 January. SCC’s carbon zero target had moved forward with a successful bid for £4million for carbon-reduction work on buildings, mainly schools but also libraries and at County Hall.

Cllr Chilcott took questions from Cllr Malin about the closure of Minehead Library.

- **Somerset West and Taunton District Council (“SWaT”)**

Cllr Benet Allen told the meeting that SWaT had appointed its new Chief Executive, Andy Pritchard, at a special meeting the previous week. He said SWaT had installed drinking fountains on the sea front to enable refilling of water bottles to reduce single plastic use. Cllr Allen reported that SWaT had also opened the consultation on its website about the shape of the new Somerset Council and had also launched a scheme to help people with backlogs of Council Tax and business rates. A link in the Somerset West & Taunton Newsletter contained further information about this. There would be free car parking in SWaT owned car parks in the Saturdays leading up to Christmas on 4, 11 and 18 of December in Minehead and Dunster amongst other locations. The Small Grants Fund for small associations was still open for applications with details again in the SWaT Newsletter. Somerset Waste Partnership requested that residents be careful how they pack their recycling over the Christmas period.

- **Police**

The Mayor read out the crime figures from the Police monthly newsletter for the benefit of those watching on Facebook, said he found the figures worrying and it would be interesting to see what the clear-up rates were in the future.

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

Cllrs Lawton and Venner had come straight from the Minehead BID board meeting. They had had an update on the progress of CCTV review in the town linking up with townwatch and also the toilets situation. It had been decided that there needed to be linked discussions with SWaT, Minehead BID and MTC through the Minehead Development Trust. Cllr Venner had given a comprehensive update on the Christmas lights. Winter displays of flowers were ongoing and also the Christmas Tree festival around the town which would welcome any traders interested in taking part. Cllr Venner had put a grant application in to Minehead BID and MTC had been given a grant of £300 towards the cost of the clock. He suggested a photographic article with Chair of Minehead BID and the Mayor since it was the first time the clock had worked in 25 years. A steam festival was being planned for spring 2022.

Cllr Lawton said she had had a very productive meeting with SWaT and fellow North Ward members to try and push forwards improvements to the zig-zag path. Cllr Venner wished to thank Jonathan Stevens and Ben Parker for attending.

Councillors also discussed CCTV which they heard was live and working in the town but was not continuously monitored. The Clerk detailed a current review of camera sites and a plan to link up with Watchet and Bridgwater. The cost was a going to be a major factor. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that footage from the CCTV was available in the case of accidents, etc.

- **Advisory and Working Groups**

There had been no Advisory or Working Group meetings.

1363 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor and other Councillors had represented Council at the Remembrance Day Services in Alcombe and Minehead.

The Mayor wished Council to observe a minute's silence following the tragic deaths of Steve Chappell and his wife. Thoughts went out to their family and friends and Mr Chappell's colleagues at West Somerset College.

1364 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2021 – *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with 2 abstentions (Councillors absent) and 12 in favour.

1365 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2021, THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2021 AND THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2021

The draft Minutes were noted.

1366 FINANCE MATTERS

1366.1 *To approve Urgent Payments for November 2021*

Payments 1-6, totalling £28,203.28, including £19,044.70 for staff salaries.

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

1366.2 *To approve Payments under £1,000 for November 2021*

Payments 7-37, totalling £7,344.32 (items 7-19 having already been approved for payment by the Finance and Staffing Committee).

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Malin**
Approved for payment with 13 in favour and 1 abstention.

1366.3 *To approve Payments over £1,000 for November 2021*

Payments 38-42, totalling £5,900.98 of which only item 38 had been recommended by Finance and Staffing Committee, the others being new payments.

Cllr Venner queried item 40, a wages payment, and the Deputy Clerk confirmed that this was for the new cleaner whose pay date had missed the payment run prior to the Finance and Staffing Committee meeting. He would now be on the normal payroll.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield**
Approved with all in favour.

1366.4 *To approve Regular Payments for October 2021*

Payments 1-34, totalling £10,673.12.

Cllr Malin was surprised at a bill of nearly £1,000 for water and sewage charges for Quay West toilets for one month. The Deputy Clerk said he would investigate this and also the similar charge for Warren Road toilets but he did think it was probably a quarterly charge rather than a monthly one.

Cllr Malin thought the company contracted to provide equipment in the public toilets were costing a lot. The Deputy Clerk said the company supplied all 5 sets of public toilets with hand-dryers, etc and that when the contract came up for renewal this could be looked at.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Burke**
Approved with all in favour.

1366.5 *To approve Payments by Procurement Card for October 2021*

Payments 43-51, totalling £388.22.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Berry

Approved with all in favour.

1366.6 *To approve Income Report for October 2021*

Income totalling £71,992.20.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Approved with all in favour.

1367 TO CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

To accept Quote No 1 for remedial work at the Cross Farm Park play area

Both Committees had seen and discussed the Cross Farm Park Remedial Work Report and 3 quotes for carrying out the work. Both had agreed to recommend Quote No 1 to Full Council.

Proposed: Cllr Lawton

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Approved with all in favour that Council accept Quote No 1 for remedial work at Cross Farm Park play area.

1368 TO CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To forego the installation of grinding rails at Irnham Road Recreation Ground and instead investigate the possibility of hiring/purchasing a mobile skate ramp

The Deputy Clerk told the meeting that the cost of putting in the rails had been investigated and the majority of the cost was the actual tarmac or concrete base for the rails which had to be a minimum of 3 metres on all sides of the rails. This would cost around £8,000 to install which was a great deal of money merely for 2 grinding rails: the budget agreed for this project had been £3,000. It had been suggested that Council instead investigate the possibility of hiring or purchasing a mobile skate park. This was a trailer-mounted system which folded out to provide a skate park. The Deputy Clerk said that Council had spoken to Minehead Eye who were very keen on this idea and would like to go into partnership with the Council in such a project and would provide instructor training sessions for running it. They also had a vehicle which could tow it. It would be ideal for running sessions in school holidays, in local car parks, etc. Where Minehead Eye itself was aimed at older children this system would encourage younger children to try skateboarding. Cllr Bloomfield added that keeping a record of the numbers of children using this system would give information to any feasibility study about a skate park. The portable skate parks cost around £15-20,000 including the trailer but could be hired out to other organisations.

Cllr Venner said Councillors would need to know any projected costs before the Budget meeting as it was a Capital and Revenue cost so investigations would need to be carried out quickly if it was to be put in the budget.

Cllr Palmer reminded the meeting that the initial reason for installing grinding rails was to distract skateboarders from grinding on the Community Centre steps. Cllr Bloomfield suggested putting planters along the steps; the Deputy Clerk said studs could be used as a deterrent but lately there had been very little trouble.

Cllr Bloomfield wished to change the last word of the proposal to “park” rather than “ramp”.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr Lillis

Agreed with all in favour to forego the installation of grinding rails at Irnham Road Recreation Ground and instead investigate the possibility of hiring/purchasing a mobile skate park.

- 1369 TO CONSIDER WRITING TO SOMERSET NHS FOUNDATION TRUST URGING THEM TO RECONSIDER THE FURTHER SIX MONTHS’ CLOSURE OF THE MINOR INJURY UNIT

Cllr Bolton was most concerned about the further closure of the MIU and said in his view it was unacceptable. It was also causing issues with ambulances. He said Minehead used to have a hospital but what it had was being lost. He thought this was just the start of a process and could see Minehead losing the MIU completely before long. Cllrs Venner and Lawton agreed and Cllr Malin asked to suspend Standing Orders and ask Cllr Mandy Chilcott about what progress she and Cllr Frances Nicholson had made in discussions with the Trust.

Proposed: Cllr Malin

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with all in favour to suspend Standing Orders to put questions to Cllr Mandy Chilcott.

Cllr Chilcott told Councillors that she and Cllr Nicholson had had one meeting with the Trust. She said the concern was not just the MIU as in Minehead even doctors’ appointments were a problem. The solution will have to be a whole system solution. No-one was coming forward to fill overnight shifts. Not every area of Somerset was as challenged as this one. She and Cllr Nicholson were due to have another meeting because Trust was going to do some more work on the matter, announced two weeks previously. Cllr Chilcott had suggested that the ambulance service and out-of-hours GPs could work together. She was pushing hard but at the moment there was no news on the plans. She urged that when Adult Health issues were coming up at Scrutiny Meetings of SCC, which the NHS attended, Councillors could attend these hybrid meetings online and add their voices to hers.

Cllr Chilcott added that the future of all Community Hospitals in Somerset was being looked at.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour to reinstate Standing Orders.

The Deputy Clerk suggested Councillors may wish to volunteer to attend these meetings. Cllrs Bloomfield and Lawton said they would do so.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with 1 abstention and 13 in favour to write to Somerset NHS Foundation Trust urging it to reconsider the further six months' closure of the Minor Injury Unit.

1370 TO DISCUSS THE INSTALLATION OF A MEMORIAL FOR PO PHILIP NEVIL FLOYD

Cllr Malin said PO Floyd's bravery when flying a bad aeroplane had saved the lives of four of his crew at the expense of his own. Suggestions included erecting a plinth in Wellington Square, putting a plaque on Floyds Corner or adding his story to the War Memorial.

Proposed: Cllr Malin

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Agreed with all in favour to refer the matter for discussion by the Amenities and Environment Committee who would make recommendations back to Full Council.

Cllr Bloomfield, Chair of the Amenities and Environment Committee, said all Councillors would be welcome to attend that meeting. She asked for ideas for a memorial to be emailed to herself or Cllr Malin before the Committee meeting.

1371 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CLERK ON PROGRESS WITH SETTING THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2022-23

The Clerk told the meeting that an informal seminar had been held in October to discuss ideas for capital projects for the next year. She and the Deputy Clerk had gone through the Revenue Budget and had pulled together a balanced budget within the current precept. She suggested that Councillors met on the following Tuesday to discuss the Budget in more detail and decide what precept they wished to set. Cllrs Venner and Lawton asked to attend on Zoom. The Deputy Clerk was agreeable to any Councillors doing so.

The Deputy Clerk said Council would have a small surplus at the end of the financial year, which would go into Reserves.

1372 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE STATE OF THE WALLED SHRUB BED ON ST MICHAEL'S ROAD

The Clerk had been in discussion with the Asset Manager of SWaT which owns this area, and it was due a visit by the Structural Officer who had been off sick but who would make a structural survey. The matter was moving and in the pipeline. Residents around Church Steps had expressed their concerns. Cllr Venner had met two officers from SWaT who were looking to clear the area and plant new shrubs. He had warned them he would be reminding them each week. Cllr Malin said the wall was part of the highway and was the responsibility of the County Council. The Clerk had also been in touch with County Councillors about this.

1373 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE SINKHOLE IN THE PARK STREET SERVICE ROAD

The Clerk understood that the Environment Agency were due to carry out a survey and CCTV scan of the area on the previous Friday. The report was yet to be received. MTC would have a meeting with them when the report was published. Cllr Venner confirmed that the EA had put an operative down a hole to inspect the culvert which ran down Park Street and the report would be emailed to the Clerk from the specialist firm involved.

1374 TO AGREE THE DATE OF THE DECEMBER FULL COUNCIL MEETING

The Clerk told Councillors that the Chair of the Amenities and Environment Committee had decided not to hold a December meeting and asked whether Councillors would wish to bring forward the December Full Council meeting from 21 December to 14 December 2021 to move it further from Christmas. Cllr C Palmer suggested that, as the Finance & Staffing Committee meeting was scheduled for 13 December, it would make sending that Committee's recommendations to Full Council easier if its own meeting was then brought forward to 6 December.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour to hold the December meeting of Finance & Staffing Committee on 6 December 2021 and that of Full Council on 14 December 2021.

1375 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

(Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960)

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Jones

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

The Public Meeting ended at 9.02 pm.