



# MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 7 DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Remote Virtual Meeting via Zoom, streamed live on MTC Facebook page

*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*

**Present:** Chair: Cllr C Palmer\*  
Councillors: Cllr T Bloomfield, Cllr P Bolton\*, Cllr A Kingston-James,  
Cllr A Lawton, Cllr J Malin, Cllr M Palmer  
(\* denotes Somerset West and Taunton District "SWaT" Councillor)

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

**Members of the Public and Press:** 1 member of the public  
0 members of the press

Cllr C Palmer welcomed Councillors, Officers and members of the public watching on Facebook.

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

Apologies had been received from Cllr N Herccock, Cllr B Mandley and Cllr T Venner.

886 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

[In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members](#)

To receive and record any Declarations of Interest in respect of any matters included on the Agenda for consideration at this Meeting.

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr T Bloomfield	Item 8	Personal	07.12.2020	Stayed in the room, spoke - did not vote
Cllr P Bolton	Item 8 All	Personal SWaT Councillor	07.12.2020 2020	Stayed in the room, spoke - did not vote Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

## DISPENSATIONS Localism Act 2011

There were no dispensations.

### 887 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION

Mr Graham Sizer, representing Minehead BID, was in attendance and was available to answer any questions arising from Minute 895 but discussed in Minute 891. No-one had asked to speak.

### 888 TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS

Cllr C Palmer reported that Urgent Payments had been made under Financial Regulation 5.5.1 to a total of £14,602.48.

#### 888.1 To approve Regular Payments made between 2 and 22 November 2020

Cllr C Palmer said these were payments 1-22 but excluding payment 15 which was a rogue payment which had now been dealt with. Payments now totalled £5,181.57.

**Proposed:** Cllr C Palmer

**Seconded:** Cllr Bloomfield

***Approved with all in favour.***

#### 888.2 To approve payments under £1,000

Cllr C Palmer said these were payments 4-16, totalling £2,782.69.

**Proposed:** Cllr C Palmer

**Seconded:** Cllr M Palmer

***Approved with all in favour.***

#### 888.3 To recommend to Full Council payments over £1,000

Cllr C Palmer said payments 19 and 20 on the list would be dealt with in the confidential part of the Meeting. Councillors were considering payments 17 and 18, a total of £6,883.14.

**Proposed:** Cllr C Palmer

**Seconded:** Cllr Lawton

***Agreed with all in favour that Committee recommend payments 17 and 18 to Full Council for payment.***

#### 888.4 To receive the Income Report for November 2020

**Received and accepted income recorded as £19,976.13 in the Income Report.**

#### 888.5 To approve the Wages for December 2020

**Proposed:** Cllr C Palmer

**Seconded:** Cllr Kingston-James

***Approved with all in favour payment of Wages totalling £20,585.62.***

889 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2020

Cllr C Palmer reported that the Bank Reconciliations for the period had been carried out but were not yet signed as Councillors were unable to enter the offices due to the lockdown rules.

890 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING THE "ACTIONS LOG"

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk had looked at the Actions Log and questioned why reminders were not being issued where actions were pending or outstanding. The report was very long with many actions on it which did not need to be and it needed refining and updating. Cllr Lawton wondered if it would be possible to have separate sheets in the report for each Committee. The Clerk said this would be helpful and Cllr C Palmer confirmed it was possible. He said the Committee needed to work out a way of keeping the log up to date and to see how it was run from now on.

891 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIRMAN'S MONTHLY VERBAL REPORT

Cllr C Palmer said he was bringing the item scheduled for Minute 895 forward to this point.

TO DISCUSS CHARGES FOR THE WATERING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE FOR HANGING BASKETS FOR SUMMER 2021

Mr Graham Sizer said he had not come to address the Committee but to answer any questions Councillors may have.

The Deputy Clerk said there were 144 hanging baskets altogether and Minehead Town Council hoped to be working in partnership with BID. Mr Sizer said BID had been told by the company supplying plants for MTC's baskets that it could not guarantee the supply of plants next season for Minehead BID. BID had sourced plants from SWaT which was also supplying other towns. The price, especially on the watering side, was quite different and BID wanted to see if there was a way to compromise on this. It had been decided at a recent BID meeting to source the plants from SWaT but to leave a decision on watering in abeyance to see if there could be any movement on watering prices.

Cllr Lawton felt that a bulk discount ought to be available where a lot of baskets were watered together. Cllr Bloomfield was concerned that having two different watering regimes would lead to baskets being missed. Cllr C Palmer said MTC should be able to come to a suitable compromise and the Deputy Clerk agreed saying MTC and BID should be working together and MTC should be watering all the baskets particularly as Council was trying to boost its green credentials using the electric vehicle to do the work. He pointed out that the Amenities Team watered more frequently than a different organisation would.

Cllr C Palmer said the subject could be discussed outside the Meeting, particularly bearing in mind use of the electric vehicle. The Deputy Clerk agreed and hoped to negotiate a longer-term agreement and wished to discuss a price for the remaining period of Minehead BID. Cllr C Palmer thanked Mr Sizer for attending the Meeting.

- 892 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE A DONATION FOR THE PROVISION OF MEALS AND/OR GIFTS FOR THE VULNERABLE AND/OR NEEDY PEOPLE OF MINEHEAD, FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S DAY

Cllr Bloomfield said she had achieved funding for the actual meals on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Cllr C Palmer said there were sufficient funds in the COVID crisis fund to make donations to appropriate charities such as the Hope Centre and Engage. Cllr M Palmer suggested adding Home Start. Cllr C Palmer said the Committee had delegated powers and could make donations not exceeding £500 to the various groups. He would propose that Minehead Town Council donate this to each of the three groups. Cllr Bloomfield reminded the meeting that the Talking Café and the Village Agents were also appropriate agencies, and Cllr C Palmer said he would amend his proposal accordingly.

**Proposed:** Cllr C Palmer

**Seconded:** Cllr Kingston-James

***Agreed with all in favour that Minehead Town Council make donations of £500 each to the Hope Centre, Engage, Home Start, the Talking Café and the Village Agents.***

Cllr Bloomfield said she would send the contact details to the Deputy Clerk the following day.

- 893 TO DISCUSS ON-GOING COSTS IN RELATION TO THE OLD TOWN HALL CLOCK

Cllr C Palmer said that Council contributed towards the maintenance of the Town Hall Clock and the Deputy Clerk confirmed this amounted to £150 annually. A planning application had been submitted for the old Town Hall to change it to a dwelling. Cllr Bolton said it had been very important to keep the clock going for the town. Cllr Malin thought there was no reason why Council should continue contributing towards the maintenance of the clock as the building was listed and the clock should be included in this listing. Responsibility for the running of the clock should rest with any new owner/lessee of the building. The Deputy Clerk suggested talking to the present owner of the building.

**Proposed:** Cllr Malin

**Seconded:** Cllr Bolton

***Agreed with all in favour that the Clerk and Deputy Clerk should discuss future maintenance and running of the clock with the present owner of the old Town Hall and the Conservation Officer at SWaT.***

- 894 TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATION FROM WEST SOMERSET ADVICE BUREAU

An application had been received from West Somerset Advice Bureau for a maximum grant of £500 or a Service Level Agreement. Cllr Bloomfield said she was the Council's representative for WSAB but had never been asked to attend any of its Meetings. Cllr Bolton commented that the organisation had been talking about a Service Level Agreement for a while, but Council had not received a proposal from it. He thought WSAB did a good job but was wary of awarding a grant to make up for a financial deficit. The Clerk read out a letter written from MTC to WSAB in November 2019 suggesting both work towards developing a Service Level Agreement to which there had been no reply.

Cllr C Palmer said the grant application could not be approved because it did not fit MTC's current policy for small grants. He suggested the Clerk and Deputy Clerk look into taking forward Council's suggestion to WSAB of November last year about developing an SLA.

- 895 TO DISCUSS CHARGES FOR THE WATERING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE FOR HANGING BASKETS SUMMER 2021

Discussed in Minute 891.

- 896 TO RECOMMEND DRAFT BUDGET & PRECEPT 2021/22

Councillors had received the budget working papers and the Council Tax base details. The Deputy Clerk said there had been several meetings about the draft budget and precept with Councillors, Officers and staff. There was still time for discussion as a decision on both would be taken at the Full Council Meeting on 16 December 2020. The Committee should send forward a recommendation to Full Council. The Deputy Clerk said the most important thing was to set the precept and a budget could be worked around that recommendation. The model budget had been worked using the green band precept figure of an additional 5%. The red band figure used a precept increase of 10% and the yellow band 20%.

Cllr Malin commented that, on a property in Band D, the increase in a year's Council Tax would be less than a packet of 20 cigarettes. He thought Councillors should concentrate on the actual amount of any rise not a percentage. The actual increase would be £8.13 per annum.

After discussion, Cllr C Palmer called for a proposal.

**Proposed:** Cllr Malin

**Seconded:** Cllr Bloomfield

***Agreed with all in favour that Committee would recommend to Full Council that the precept be increased by 5%.***

- 897 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

**Proposed:** Cllr C Palmer

**Seconded:** Cllr Kingston-James

***Agreed with all in favour that the meeting continue in camera.***

Cllr C Palmer thanked members of the public watching on Facebook and the public part of the Meeting closed at 8.34 pm.