



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 26 OCTOBER 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 T Bloomfield, Cllr M Burke, Cllr E Jones, Cllr A Kingston-James, Cllr M Kingston-James, Cllr J Malin, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr T Venner*

Councillors in Attendance: Cllr C Lawrence**

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

Councillor Absent: Cllr N Hercock, Cllr H Rose

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.

1319 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies had been received from Cllr A Berry, Cllr O Harvey, Cllr A Lawton and Cllr R Lillis.

1320 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 | 1326.2 | Personal | 26.10.2021 | Stayed in the room; didn't speak or 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.

1321 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

- **Somerset County Council (“SCC”)**

Cllr Mandy Chilcott sent her apologies for being unable to attend.

Cllr Christine Lawrence reported that the massive piece of work on the A39 at Carhampton was ahead of schedule and should ensure that people in Carhampton would be much safer from flooding. She apologised for the disruption. Cllr Lawrence passed to the Clerk a press release about the closure of Minehead Library, a very difficult decision which Cllr Chilcott had had to make. The new Library would be ready in spring 2022 and some ideas were being put forward to house the Library until then. She urged any Councillors with questions about the Library to ring or email Cllr Chilcott.

Cllr Venner hoped that there would be more consultation about public transport before any future roadworks were carried out. He asked Cllr Lawrence about the licence granted for a motor rally over the Brendon Hills even though SCC had declared a climate emergency.

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

There was no report from SWaT.

- **Police**

The Mayor read out the crime figures from the Police monthly newsletter for the benefit of those watching on Facebook.

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

Cllr Venner had attended the Minehead BID AGM. He said it was well-attended and that BID had done a lot over the previous 12 months in partnership with the Town and District Councils.

Cllrs Bolton and Malin had attended the AGM of Quirke’s Almshouses which Cllr Bolton reported were in safe hands and in a very good position.

- **Advisory and Working Groups**

There had been no Advisory or Working Group meetings.

1322 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION *Standing Order No 3e*

No-one had asked to speak.

1323 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had no announcements but the Deputy Mayor said he and Cllr M Kingston-James had very much enjoyed representing MTC at Chard Carnival and the Chard Deputy Mayor had expressed an interest in coming to the next Hobby Horse season in Minehead.

1324 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2021 –
MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE

Proposed: Cllr Bolton **Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield**
Agreed with 8 in favour and 2 abstentions (Councillors absent).

1325 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2021, THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 OCTOBER 2021 AND THE AMENITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2021

The Minutes were noted.

1326 FINANCE MATTERS

1326.1 *To approve Urgent Payments for October 2021*

Payments 1-4, totalling £32,302.18, of which £18,975.87 was for staff salaries.

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

1326.2 *To approve Payments under £1,000 for October 2021*

Payments 5-32, totalling £5,647.30; payments 5-20 had already been approved for payment by Finance & Staffing Committee.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr M Palmer**
Approved with 9 in favour and 1 abstention.

1326.3 *To approve Payments over £1,000 for October 2021*

Payments 33-41, totalling £68,484.20.

Cllr Venner queried payment 41 and was reassured to hear it was the last payment in the contract with the company carrying out weed control.

Cllr M Palmer asked for confirmation that payment 39 would be the last payment to the project manager for the Community Centre. The Deputy Clerk was hopeful that the next payment would be the last one and told Councillors that payments were for resolution of the few snagging issues such as a problem with the showers and rust on the path.

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

1326.4 *To approve Regular Payments for September 2021*

Payments 1-22, totalling £5,465.10

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Approved with all in favour.

1326.5 *To approve Payments by Procurement Card for September 2021*

Payments 42-52, totalling £460.49

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Approved with all in favour.

1326.6 *To approve Income Report for September 2021*

Income totalling £363,138.99

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Jones

Approved with all in favour.

1327 TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE

1327.1 **To confirm the completion of the AGAR**

Cllr Palmer advised Councillors that it needed to be minuted that Full Council had received a satisfactory report and noted that the AGAR had been completed.

1327.2 **To agree commission payment for grant funding for Irnham Road Recreation Ground**

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with all in favour that the commission payment for Grant Funding for Irnham Road Recreation Ground was approved for payment.

1327.3 **To review current grant funding contract**

Cllr Palmer said the contract for grant funding had been specific to the Irnham Road Recreation Ground project and, once the commission payment had been made, was now completed.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour to end the grant funding contract with immediate effect.

1327.4 **To agree to accept Quote No 1 for the provision of Christmas illuminations**

Councillors had seen 3 quotes for the provision of Christmas illuminations, all of which were three-year agreements, priced per year, with the first year's cost being met by the grant from the Welcome Back fund. Subsequent years would need to be met from Council's budget.

The Deputy Clerk told Councillors he had asked the contractor submitting Quote No 1 what penalty would be imposed if Councillors did not approve the first year's illuminations and wished to terminate the contract. The contractor assured him that their service with the lights would be very good but should Councillors be dissatisfied with it the contract could be terminated after the first year. There would be a penalty of approximately £3-4,000.

Cllr M Kingston-James asked if Council's existing lights would be used in addition to the contractor's illuminations. The Deputy Clerk said they would be surplus to requirements but could be given to other organisations who could make use of them in the town. Cllr Venner wondered if BID could make use of the lights, particularly at the bottom of the town. The Deputy Clerk replied that there was no public power source in the rest of the town and it would be a risk to use them there.

Proposed: Cllr Burke

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Agreed with 8 in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention that Council proceed with Quote No 1 for the provision of Christmas illuminations.

1327.5 To agree to take forward the provision of Changing Places toilets

The Deputy Clerk said both Committees had discussed the provision of Changing Places toilets. SWaT had put in an application for funding for these. The nearest such toilets were at Weston-Super-Mare and Ilfracombe and provision of these toilets would attract more visitors to Minehead. Council had room for them in the old disabled toilet in Summerland Place toilets. The Deputy Clerk told Councillors that Council would need to invest a minimum of £5,000 in the project.

Proposed: Cllr Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with all in favour that Council take forward the provision of Changing Places toilets at Summerland Place public toilets.

1328 TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMENITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1328.1 To consider two quotations for remedial work at the Cemetery

The Deputy Clerk advised the meeting that, since it had only been possible to obtain 2 quotes for the Cemetery remedial work, Councillors would need to suspend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations if they wished to accept a quote. This was a civil engineering project where work was needed to both entrances to the Cemetery and also one main path in it. Both quotes were similar in price.

Cllr Bloomfield favoured Quote no 2 because it was from a local contractor and they were nearby should there be any issues with the work done. Cllr C Palmer was concerned that this quote was for repairing rather than replacing the kerb edges. Cllr Malin favoured Quote no 1 because it had been very well prepared.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour that Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be suspended.

Proposed: Cllr Malin

Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

That Council accept Quote no 1 for remedial work at the Cemetery
With 4 in favour and 6 against the motion fell.

Proposed: Cllr Burke

Seconded: Cllr Jones

Agreed with 7 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention that Council accept Quote no 2
for remedial work at the Cemetery.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour that Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be
reinstated.

1328.2 **To agree to the Clerk applying for S106 funding for allotments improvements**

The Clerk gave the background to this item which had been discussed at the Amenities & Environment Committee meeting on 12 October. The Allotments Advisory Group had carried out inspections during the summer and made a condition report on the allotments and had met on 5 October to discuss its findings. It had decided that the allotments could be improved and SWaT had advised that S106 funding could be available for this. This could include improving pathways, widening paths for wheelchair users, the provision of raised beds and new fencing for example.

The Advisory Group had decided these propositions needed more detailed discussion and it would need to put together a report and costings. It recommended that the Clerk submit to SWaT an expression of interest for Section 106 monies.

Proposed: Cllr M Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Jones

Agreed with all in favour that the Clerk apply for S106 funding for improvements to
the allotments.

1329 **TO CONSIDER A REQUEST BY CLLR HARVEY FOR AN EXTENSION TO THE PERIOD OF NON-ATTENDANCE**

Councillors had seen a report by the Clerk and a communication from Cllr Harvey setting out his reasons for non-attendance, which were COVID-related. He said he would hope to return to meetings but this would depend on circumstances.

Cllr Palmer said he did not think there would be any decrease in risk during the following few months. He was not sure that any extension granted would make any difference to attendance. He thought the rest of the six-month period of non-attendance should be left to run out and the proper procedure followed after that. Cllr Bloomfield felt Council should not discriminate against Cllr Harvey because of health concerns. Cllr Harvey did work for Council behind the scenes. Her opinion was that MTC should approve an extension of his period of non-attendance by six months then see what conditions were after the winter period. Cllr M Kingston-James agreed, saying people's personal circumstances had to be taken into account and the pandemic was still very much with us.

Cllr Malin observed that there were one or two faces who had not been seen at Full Council since lockdown ended and he was concerned certain areas of the town would be without proper representation. Cllr Bolton said two Councillors had not attended meetings and had offered no apology but this was a slightly different case. Cllr Venner remembered that he had had to apply for two periods of absence in the past. Cllr Harvey was doing this in the right way.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr Jones

Agreed with 6 in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention that Cllr Harvey be granted a six month extension to the period of allowed non-attendance.

1330 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE FINANCE SEMINAR

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Seminar had been held on 19 October 2021, basically to go through the MPAPP plan document and a couple of issues MTC was involved with in the plan, budgets for 2022-23 and reviewing priorities for 2022. This meeting had been very useful to discuss what MTC had in mind. No decisions had been made because it was an informal meeting. The Deputy Clerk said he could let Cllr Venner, who had not been able to attend the Seminar, have the slide show with bullet points which had been used; discussion had centred on General Reserves and Earmarked Reserves and a further Seminar would be held in November to decide details of the Budget. Two items in the Minehead Plan that involved MTC were the skatepark and swimming pool projects. One essential which had emerged was to elect a representative for Council to MPAPP.

1331 TO AGREE MTC'S REPRESENTATIVES ON MINEHEAD PEOPLE AND PLACE PARTNERSHIP (MPAPP)

The Clerk asked the meeting for nominations from the floor for a representative for MTC on MPAPP. She also asked for nominations for a deputy, should the representative be unavailable to attend a meeting.

Cllr A Kingston-James nominated Cllr C Palmer as Council's representative, seconded by Cllr Burke.

Cllr Bloomfield nominated Cllr A Kingston-James as deputy, seconded by Cllr Jones.

Agreed with all in favour that Cllr C Palmer represent MTC on the Minehead People and Place Partnership and Cllr A Kingston-James serve as deputy.

1332 TO AGREE LEGAL FEES FOR THE PURCHASE OF WARREN ROAD AND QUAY WEST PUBLIC TOILETS

The Deputy Clerk reminded the meeting that it had been agreed to look into the purchase of Quay West and Warren Road public toilets from SWaT. He had approached SWaT and spoken several times with the Asset Manager who had suggested MTC register an interest in purchasing these assets. The lease on Warren Road toilets had been extended by a year to allow time for the purchase. The conditions stipulated by SWaT were that MTC would pay legal costs and any valuation costs. The Deputy Clerk had been shocked to find they were quoted £750 per property for legal costs and £1,000 for each toilet for valuation costs which seemed excessive. He needed permission from the meeting to proceed with negotiations and for the costs involved. He proposed that he and the Chair of Finance & Staffing

Committee speak directly to SWaT's Assets Team by Zoom to find out why the valuation costs were so high. Cllr Malin said MTC should insist on using its own valuer and lawyer, with valuation costs capped at £1,000 for both toilets. Cllr Venner thought the District Council should have a valuation in place already for both toilet blocks. Cllr Bloomfield felt that, as a Community Asset, Quay West toilets should be sold for £1.

Proposed: Cllr A Kingston-James

Seconded: Cllr Malin

Agreed with all in favour to authorise the Deputy Clerk and Chair of Finance & Staffing Committee to move the negotiations forward with a budget of up to £2,500 to cover legal and valuation fees, Minehead Town Council to have its choice of legal representative and valuer.

1333 TO AGREE THE PURCHASE OF ELECTRIC TOOLS TO REPLACE THE AMENITIES TEAM'S PETROL TOOLS

The Deputy Clerk told the meeting that the Amenities Team had trialled electric tools from a local supplier for the previous 2-3 months. Councillors had seen the list of tools which could now be electric rather than petrol and prices from a local supplier. Two other suppliers had also been approached for quotes. All had similar prices. There was a budget of £5,000 for replacing tools at the Depot and also a Cemetery equipment budget of £1,000 which could be used along with another equipment budget of £5,000. The cost of replacing all petrol tools, apart from larger ones such as tractors, would be £8,000. The Deputy Clerk proposed that the Cemetery equipment budget of £1,000, the new electric tools budget of £5,000 be used along with £2,000 from the other equipment budget.

Cllr Malin hoped that tools would only be replaced as they economically wore out. He thought electric tools were the way to go. The Deputy Clerk said the Amenities Team had been impressed by how quiet, how efficient and how powerful the electric tools were. The Clerk added that petrol, hand-held tools caused a lot of vibration on the user which meant that not only would MTC be green but also looking after the health and wellbeing of their employees. Cllr M Palmer asked if all the tools would be replaced at once. The Deputy Clerk told her that most of the petrol tools were old and would be phased out quite quickly.

Cllr C Palmer thanked all MTC members of staff who attended to help the Wombles in their recent clean-up and provided tools for their use and tidied up afterwards. He wished to acknowledge Council's co-operation with local groups.

Proposed: Cllr Malin

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

That the Amenities Team's petrol tools be replaced with electric tools as they economically wore out.

The motion was amended.

Proposed: Cllr Malin

Seconded: Cllr Jones

That the Amenities Team's petrol tools be replaced with electric tools as they economically wore out and purchased from the local supplier, Quote No 1 in the Report.

Cllr Venner suggested selling any petrol tools which would no longer be used. Cllr M Kingston-James asked about a discount for bulk buying. The Deputy Clerk said a discount had been applied but MTC could ask for more.

Another amendment was proposed.

Proposed: Cllr Malin Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour that the Amenities Team's petrol tools be replaced with electric tools: Council to purchase all the required electric tools from the local supplier, Quote No 1 in the Report, and petrol tools, where feasible, to be sold.

1334 TO CONSIDER INCLUDING A PUBLIC FORUM ON FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Clerk had received a suggestion from Councillors that Full Council meetings should include a short public forum where members of the public could have any questions answered. Councillors discussed at length what form this should take but agreed that topics of questions should cover any of the functions of local Councils, not necessarily items on the Full Council agenda.

Cllr Malin felt this was important because the new Unitary Authority would be a remote body and that the form of the forum should follow NALC's recommendations. Cllr M Palmer hoped this would include lobbying of the MP. Cllr Malin disagreed, with Cllr Venner adding that Councillors could ask for topics to be put on the agenda themselves. Cllr Bolton said questions should be confined to business which local Councils deal with. Cllr Venner said this was a subject which should really be dealt with at Council's Annual Meeting in May.

Cllr Bolton put forward a proposition to have a public forum before business at Full Council meetings. Cllr Venner proposed an amendment that this should be for a trial period of six months so that the likely new Council in 2022 could decide whether this should be a permanent arrangement.

Proposed: Cllr Venner Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with 8 in favour and 2 against that any public forum agreed should be for a trial period of six months only.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with 9 in favour and 1 abstention that for a trial period starting at the next Full Council meeting in November a public forum for residents of Minehead and Alcombe would be added before Full Council business. Questions about any of the functions of local Councils should be submitted to the Clerk three working days before the meeting and would be answered at the discretion of the Clerk. Answers would be verbal or in writing. The time for the forum would be limited to 15 minutes and any speakers would be restricted to a maximum of 3 minutes each for their question.

1335 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 that the meeting should continue *in camera* to discussing staffing issues.

The public meeting closed at 9.25 pm.