



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 27 JULY 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 (Deputy Mayor), Cllr M Kingston-James, Cllr A Lawton, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr T Venner*

Councillors in Attendance: Cllr C Lawrence**
Cllr M Chilcott** (*denotes Somerset West and Taunton "SWaT" Councillor
**denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")

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

Members of the Public: 2

Members of the Press: 0

Councillors Absent: Cllr N Hercock, Cllr R Lillis

The Mayor welcomed Councillors to the Meeting, members of the public and those watching on Facebook.

1194 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies had been received from Cllr A Berry, Cllr O Harvey, Cllr J Malin and Cllr H Rose.

1195 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RESPECT OF ANY AGENDA ITEMS (Localism Act 2011)

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr T Bloomfield	1204(iv) 1206	Pecuniary Personal	27.07.2021	Left the room Stayed in the room, spoke, did not vote
Cllr P Bolton	All 1204(iv) 1206	SWaT Councillor Pecuniary Personal	2021 27.07.2021	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted Left the room Stayed in the room and spoke, did not vote
Cllr E Jones	1204(iv)	Pecuniary	27.07.2021	Left the room
Cllr A Kingston-James	1201.2 1204(iv)	Personal Pecuniary	27.07.2021	Stayed in the room; did not speak or vote Left the room
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.

1196 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM

- Somerset County Council (“SCC”)**

Cllr Chilcott reported that the new road crossing by the College was completed with the electrical supply on and the lines finished. The lining near the Middle School may not be completed until some time in September. She referred to the decision by the Secretary of State to approve the One Somerset plan put forward by SCC and said that all 5 existing Councils in Somerset will be replaced by a new unitary authority by 2023. There will be a number of consultative groups which she encouraged listeners to consider joining and details were available by emailing onesomerset.gov.uk or looking at the One Somerset website. She would send details to the Clerk for circulation.

Cllr Lawrence advised that the new Bring Back Better Government bus strategy was beginning to unfold and that MTC may wish to have a discussion about what was needed for the community in the future. Chris Parkinson was the SCC officer most involved with this work. She said the future move to the new unitary authority was a wonderful opportunity for Minehead Town Council to decide what it could do, doesn't want to do and would like to plan for and also what could be done in a better way, planning for the next 5-10 years. Cllr Lawrence reported that the plans had been published for the cycle path from Dunster Marsh Lane to the West Somerset College crossing. She said that Sarah Ellwood, who worked for the Steam Coast Trail and was the Project Manager for Active Travel at SWaT would like to come and put up a display up showing the new path which will be bigger, better and safer. Cllr Lawrence said she would pass Ms Ellwood's contact details to the Clerk.

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

There was no report for July.

- **Police**

There had been no July report received but instead Councillors had seen an email from PCSO Katherine Williams with details of how the Police were responding to recent outbreaks of antisocial behaviour and vandalism. Increased patrols had paid dividends and there had been a noticeable decrease in this of late.

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

Cllrs Lawton and Venner had attended the Minehead BID board meeting on 14 July 2021. The 40s Weekend would be going ahead on 11 and 12 September 2021 which would be run as near to normal as possible. There would be a vintage bus from Dunster to Minehead, music and entertainment in Minehead, including Blenheim Gardens and events at Watchet and Bishops Lydeard. There was an update on the project to get Blue Flag status for Minehead beach where a feasibility study had been carried out. Minehead Visitors Guide had been published and an information leaflet given to Butlins visitors. The Gift Card scheme still needed more independent traders to sign up. The Thundercats weekend would be on 31 July and 1 August, coinciding with RNLI day. There was discussion about the Boosting Somerset Economy grants and arrangements for clearing the sand on Warren Road.

- **Advisory and Working Groups**

There had been no Advisory or Working Group Meetings.

1197 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION [Standing Order No 3e](#)

The Mayor welcomed Ellie Bishop and Mark Shields, Village Agents, who gave a presentation about the work carried out throughout the pandemic by the Village Agents group. They thanked MTC for all the support they had received and in turn Cllrs Bolton and Bloomfield expressed their personal thanks to the Village Agents for their help in running the COVID helpline and meals on wheels service.

1198 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor said he and the Deputy Mayor had attended a function at the Cricket Club on Saturday 24 July to present badges to all the NHS volunteers who had worked at Minehead Hospital, working outside in all weathers, to get the vaccine roll-out done. It had been a very enjoyable afternoon and the Mayor said he would like to publicly thank the volunteers again for all the work they had done.

1199 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2021 –
MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with all in favour.

1200 TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 JULY 2021, THE
FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2021 AND THE AMENITIES &
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 JULY 2021

Councillors had seen the Minutes of the Meetings, and these were noted.

1201 FINANCE MATTERS

1201.1 *To approve urgent payments for July 2021*

Payments 1-8, totalling £25,871.06, of which £18,783.79 was staff wages.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Approved with all in favour.

1201.2 *To approve payments under £1,000 for July 2021*

Payments 9-21 (already approved by Finance & Staffing Committee) and 22-27,
totalling £4,263.48.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Approved with 1 abstention and the rest in favour.

1201.3 *To approve payments over £1,000 for July 2021*

Payments 28-35, totalling £57,232.00.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Approved with all in favour.

1201.4 *To approve regular payments for June 2021*

Payments 1-28, totalling £6,513.31.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Approved with all in favour.

1201.5 *To approve payments by Procurement Card for June 2021*

Payments for June were £1,114.77 and items 36-49 for July were £646.16, totalling
£1,760.93.

Cllr Venner queried why payments for as little as 80p were made with the card. The Deputy Clerk said that there was no longer any petty cash in the office. The card had a monthly charge but no transaction costs.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Approved with all in favour.

1201.6 *To approve Income Report for June 2021*

Income for June 2021 totalled £15,412.47.

Cllr Venner thanked officers for presenting the income in this format which he found easy to understand.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Approved with all in favour.

1202 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JULY 2021

Cllr M Palmer said bank reconciliations were up to date to the end of June and were carried out on a 3-month cycle.

1203 TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE

1203.1 **Summerland Place Toilets**

(i) *Restoration of clock on exterior of toilet block*

Cllr Palmer asked the Deputy Clerk to summarise what had been discussed so far. The Deputy Clerk told Councillors that it had been decided at the Finance and Staffing Committee meeting to try and restore the clock to its original appearance but, owing to the cost which would be £1,500-£2,000, Council should try to secure outside funding to help with this. Cllr Venner had mentioned this to Minehead BID but the request would need to be put in writing. The Deputy Clerk said a decision would need to be made regardless of the source of funding as the refurbishment of the toilets was due to be completed at the end of the following week. Cllr Palmer felt that any decision should be deferred whilst outside funding was sought and to take it forward as a potential project.

Cllr Venner proposed that Council give delegated powers to the Chair of Finance & Staffing and the Deputy Clerk to spend up to £2,000, hopefully in conjunction with BID, to move the project forward. He, Cllr Lawton and Cllr Chilcott would try to work in partnership with BID to secure some public realm funding.

Cllr Burke and Cllr Lawton felt that £2,000 could be better spent elsewhere in Minehead and were not in favour of the restoration of the clock.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with 7 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention that Council give delegated powers to the Chair of Finance & Staffing and the Deputy Clerk to spend up to £2,000 to restore or refurbish the clock on the exterior of Summerland Place toilets.

(ii) *Installation of CCTV on exterior of toilet block*

Councillors discussed installation of CCTV on the toilet block. The Deputy Clerk had quotes ranging from £977 to £1,500 to install CCTV on the exterior of the toilet block. This would include 3 cameras; one on the front showing the entrance to the ladies' toilets, one on the side covering the entrance to the gents' toilets and one on the back of the block. This would link to the CCTV in the offices and could at a later date link with a town CCTV.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

That Council should accept the cheapest quote and have the CCTV installed as soon as possible.

Cllr Venner said Council should work in partnership with the new group formed with the District Councils and SCC which was planning CCTV covering the whole of Minehead: MTC should purchase a system which is compatible with their system. Buying the cheapest was not necessarily the best. He wanted to give delegated powers to the Deputy Clerk and Chair of Finance & Staffing to purchase a compatible CCTV system because MTC needed to protect their investment.

Cllr M Kingston-James said it was not just the initial cost of the system to be considered, but the annual cost and the quality of the back-up provided.

Cllr Lawton said it would be unwise to wait for the District Council's system to be in operation as this could take a considerable time and the toilets needed to be protected as soon as possible.

The Deputy Clerk said the systems at the Community Centre and in the office were compatible and he, the Clerk and Cllr Venner were intending to have a discussion with an officer at SWaT about the system being considered for Minehead as a whole.

Cllr Bloomfield withdrew her proposal.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with 1 abstention and the rest in favour that Council give delegated powers to the Chair of Finance & Staffing Committee and the Deputy Clerk to spend up to £2,000 to get the best compatible CCTV system for Summerland Place toilets.

(iii) *Discuss proposed purchase of new Electric Vehicle and ride-on lawn-mower*

Cllr Palmer said Finance & Staffing Committee had not discussed the purchase of a ride-on lawnmower and it was not a recommendation from that Committee. He asked the Deputy Clerk to summarise a report on the purchase of a new electric vehicle only. He said the lawn-mower could be considered at a different time.

Councillors had seen the Deputy Clerk's report about the need for a replacement vehicle because the small diesel van had broken down and was uneconomic to repair. The Deputy Clerk had put forward a suggestion to purchase a new Ligier Tipper, which was considerably cheaper than a new Electric Eric. However, on the day of the meeting the company which had supplied Electric Eric had found a refurbished, second-hand vehicle which was exactly the same as the one MTC already owned. It was originally registered in 2017 and would cost £2,000 less than the Ligier vehicle.

Cllrs Bloomfield and Lawton felt it was a good idea to buy another electric vehicle similar to the present one as the Amenities Team all liked using it and equipment on it would be interchangeable with the new vehicle.

The Deputy Clerk said this particular vehicle would be available at the end of August 2021.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with all in favour that Council does not proceed with the second leased van as agreed previously.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

Agreed with all in favour that Council purchase the refurbished electric vehicle similar to the present one with the proviso that the battery is also refurbished.

Cllr Palmer said the purchase of the ride-on mower should not be discussed as it was not a recommendation from Finance & Staffing Committee.

Cllr Venner asked for this to be on the next Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting Agenda on 9 August.

Cllr C Palmer said a recommendation concerning the lease of Warren Road public conveniences was to be considered in the confidential part of the Meeting as item 1208.2(ii). He said this should be discussed in the Public Meeting and several Councillors had asked for further information. He would propose deferring discussion until more information had been given to Councillors.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

Agreed with 3 in favour and 7 abstentions that item 1208.2(ii) be deferred until more information was available to Councillors.

1204 TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMENITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1204.1 **To write to Somerset NHS Foundation Trust objecting to the night-time closure of Minehead MIU**

Cllr Bloomfield said she had the email address of the CEO of the Somerset NHS Foundation trust if the Clerk needed it. Cllr Venner thanked Cllrs Chilcott and Lawrence who had been working hard to try and have this closure reversed. The population of the town doubled or trebled over the summer season and older people were frightened of the consequences. He said MTC should work in partnership with their SCC colleagues in making the NHS Foundation aware that this decision was completely unacceptable.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield Seconded: Cllr Jones

Agreed with all in favour that the Clerk write to Somerset NHS Foundation Trust objecting to the decision to close Minehead MIU at nights.

1204.2 **To consider a ban on chemical spraying of weeds and consider alternative arrangements**

Cllr Venner totally supported a ban on chemical spraying of weeds but was conscious that a second spraying by contractors was imminent and he had concerns that if this was not carried out Minehead would look very untidy, unkempt and unloved. He said it was easy to say MTC wanted to ban chemical sprays but Council needed to sit down and discuss how their objectives were going to be achieved and set a proper programme in place. If extra staff were going to be needed this would need to be budgeted for. He suggested September's weed-spraying should be carried out as scheduled, making it clear that would be the last such spraying whilst Council worked out over the following 3 months a plan to achieve the desired results without chemical sprays.

Cllr Burke said Councillors needed advice as to whether sprays in gutters and pavements has an undesirable impact.

The Deputy Clerk said he had discussed this with the Amenities Team Manager who told him that manual eradication of weeds would take a large chunk out of the workforce for this year alone. This could be budgeted for for future years but would need to be borne in mind.

Cllr M Palmer said this had been under discussion for two years. She read out a statement about the undesirable effects of glyphosate. She said using this chemical was one of the least green things Council could do. She wanted use of glyphosate banned and then a plan formulated for dealing with weeds. Cllr Lawton recommended the use of a weed burner. Cllr M Palmer said if everyone weeded outside their own houses Council would save a great deal of money.

After a discussion Councillors agreed the existing contract should be completed and a ban implemented subsequently. Cllr M Palmer said there were occasions

when glyphosate would need to be used, for instance in eradicating Japanese Knotweed, so that door needed to be left open.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with 1 abstention and 9 in favour that after the contracted September weed-spraying Council would no longer employ a company to treat weeds with glyphosate. This would, in exceptional circumstances, be used in-house where there was no alternative available. Council would discuss, and budget for, alternative weed treatment during the autumn.

- 1204.3 **To consider appointment of an independent contractor to carry out a tree survey, with any major works to be undertaken by an alternative tree surgery operative, avoiding the nesting season**

The Clerk had had a discussion with SWaT's Open Spaces Team. There was a possibility that Council could use their contractor for the tree survey. She told the meeting that some of MTC's Amenities Team had the necessary skills to carry out some of the tree surgery. There would also be the opportunity to work with SWaT's Tree Officer.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour that the Clerk liaise with SWaT about carrying out tree surveys and subsequent necessary work.

- 1204.4 **To consider granting permission to extend Bands in Blenheim Gardens to the end of September 2021**

The Deputy Clerk said that Band performances had been planned to take place each weekend up until 5 September. Due to COVID restrictions any potential June and July performances had been lost. He wished to ask Council's permission to book performances up to 26 September 2021.

Proposed: Cllr Burke

Seconded: Cllr M Kingston-James

Agreed with 4 abstentions and 6 in favour that Bands in Blenheim Gardens be booked up to 26 September 2021.

- 1205 **TO CONSIDER SENDING INVITATIONS FOR AN OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE ON FRIDAY 20 AUGUST 2021**

The Deputy Clerk told the Meeting that the official opening of the Community Centre had been planned for Friday 20 August 2021 at 2.00 pm. He had a provisional invitation list including funders, District and County Councillors and the Football Association. He would circulate the list to Councillors and hoped they would add in their suggestions. A Fun Day at Irnham Road Recreation Ground being organised for 22 August would be an opportunity for the public to visit the Community Centre.

Proposed: Cllr M Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with all in favour that invitations would be sent out to the official opening of the Community Centre.

1206 TO CONSIDER THE RETURN OF LEIGH DANTER’S FUNFAIR ON COUNCIL OWNED LAND

The Clerk told the Meeting that Council had had correspondence from Leigh Danter’s Funfair, which wanted to return to land next to the Rose Garden, setting up on Monday 6 September 2021 with the funfair running from Thursday 9 September to Sunday 12 September 2021. The Deputy Clerk reminded Councillors that last year the Funfair had given a donation to MTC for the use of Marsh Common, but Council had intended to charge a set fee in 2021.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Burke

Agreed with all in favour to invite Leigh Danter’s Funfair to land at Marsh Common from 6-12 September.

1207 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

(Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960)

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour.

The Public Meeting ended at 9.15 pm.