



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 16th December 2025 at 7.30 pm in
the Community Centre, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

There was a 15-minute open forum prior to the start of the Meeting for residents of Minehead to raise with councillors any matters related to the town. No matters were raised.

Present: Councillors C Palmer (Chair), Lawton, Milton, Jewell, M Palmer, Hodson, Sharjeel and Kravis.

Not Present: Councillor Hall

Apologies: Councillors Bartlett, Beynon and Bonar

In Attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk) J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO) and Somerset Councillor Hadley.

2025/207. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillors Bartlett, Beynon and Bonar's apologies for absence were **received**.

2025/208. To receive disclosures of unregistered or other interests and to consider any prior requests for dispensations from councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Kravis has a standing declaration as a Somerset Councillor.

There were no further disclosures of unregistered or other interests and to consider any prior requests for dispensations from councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting.

2025/209. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

Somerset Councillors Chilcott and Strom sent their apologies.

Councillor Hadley gave the following updates:

- The issue of uneven pavements along The Avenue is under review by Somerset Highways and remains under investigation. He will continue to follow up.
- Leaf clearance has been carried out in several areas of the town following his persistent requests.
- The Boundary Commission's consultation on Somerset Council's councillor divisions has been reopened and will run until 14th January.
- Somerset Council has appointed a temporary Service Director for Planning for a 12-month period.
- Election Services have confirmed that, in the event of any Town or Parish by-election, all associated costs must be borne by the Town or Parish Council.
- Installation of a new gate and barrier at the harbour slipway is scheduled to take place imminently.

Councillor Kravis gave the following updates:

- Dunster straight traffic lights are scheduled for an upgrade in the New Year, which will result in some temporary disruption.
- The proposed cycle path between Dunster and Carhampton has been withdrawn.
- A proposal has been put forward to create a 40-mph speed limit on the approach to Carhampton from Minehead.
- A decision on Sunday parking charges have been temporarily suspended and MTC is encouraged to provide feedback.
- Two full Somerset Council meetings are taking place on Wednesday, during which former Dunster ward member Christine Lawrence is expected to be appointed as an alderman.

2025/210. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory groups and Outside Bodies.

Councillor Hodson reported that several companies are collaborating on a feasibility study for the pool project. Sport England has identified Minehead as one of 80 locations in need of investment.

2025/211. To approve and sign the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25th November 2025](#)

RESOLVED the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25th November 2025 were approved and signed by the chair as a true and accurate record.

2025/212. To receive the Minutes of the [Planning & Licencing Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025](#)

The Minutes of the Planning & Licencing Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd December 2025 were **received**.

2025/213. Accounts

- i. To approve the following payments:
 - Payment of **£9,310.00** to Simon Scotting Tree Consultancy and Training for the Provision of Tree Safety Management Policy and 25 x tree surveys (*Works agreed at the Full Council meeting in September 2025 Minute Number 2025/147*)
 - Payment of **£7,440.00 inc. VAT** to Encore Electrical for the installation of the festive lighting in Minehead (*Two-year extension of the Christmas lights supply and installation contract agreed at the Full Council meeting in December 2023 Minute Number 7, Item 5*)
 - Payment of **£3,024.00 inc. VAT** to Danfo UK Ltd for 50% of overall sales value for new accessible toilet door at Warren Road Public Conveniences. (*Work approved at the Full Council meeting in November 2025, Minute Number 2025/197*)
 - Payment of **£1,000** to Somerset Council for a contribution towards a new webcam at Minehead Harbour. (*Contribution approved at the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting in September 2025, Minute Number 2025/67*)
 - Payment of **£798.00 inc. VAT** to CJ Lynch & Sons for patching of potholes at Alcombe combe/common. (*Works agreed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting in October 2025, Minute Number 2025/75*)
 - Payment of **£570.71 inc. VAT** to Proludic for the supply and delivery of a replacement net for the pirate ship play area on the seafront (*Purchase approved at the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting in October 2025, Minute Number 2025/74*)

- Payment of **£2,521.21 inc. VAT** to Glasdon for two new benches, plaques and ancillaries at Bratton Walk and at Quay West between Lifeboat Station and Culvercliff Open Space (*One bench funded through S106 funding and another funded by a private donation*)
- Payment of **£600.00** to Southwest Stages for Temporary staging at Christmas Light Switch on Event. (*Delegated authority authorised to the clerk for Christmas event expenditure at the Full Council Meeting in June 2025, Minute number 2025/108*)
- Payment of **£524.05 inc. VAT** to Fix the bog for 2 x replacement electrical flushes and ancillaries for Summerland Car Park Public Conveniences.

It was noted that, due to the Christmas period and the absence of a Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting, all December payments required approval at this meeting. It was further noted that the Alcombe Common pothole works were funded using the previous year's underspend in the Alcombe Common maintenance budget, financed by an external grant.

The payment for the Warren Road toilet door was discussed. The supplier has yet to confirm whether an exact replacement can be provided. If an exact replacement can be sourced, this will result in an additional cost of £419.57, which will increase the 50% upfront payment accordingly. It was proposed and seconded to delegate authority to the Clerk to approve and pay the additional cost if necessary. The matter remains outstanding pending further information from the supplier.

RESOLVED that all payments for December be approved. It was further resolved to delegate authority to the Clerk to approve and pay any additional cost relating to the Warren Road toilet door replacement, should the alternative option be required.

ii. To receive the payments made in November

A comment was made regarding the high electrical costs at the Irnham Rec toilet blocks and the significant water charges for the allotments. The comment was **noted**.

The payments made in November were **received**.

iii. To receive budget income & expenditure reports for November.

The budget income & expenditure reports for November were **received**.

iv. To receive income receipts for November.

The income receipts for November were **received**.

v. To receive bank reconciliations for November.

The bank reconciliations for November were **received**.

2025/214. To receive a report on Minehead Town Council's accounting software and to consider the options.

The Clerk presented a report on accounting system options, prepared in response to councillor concerns about the transparency of the current system. While effective for experienced users, the system does not easily produce clear, accessible reports for councillors or the public.

Additional concerns included fees for extra users and an administration process that is not user-

friendly. To address these issues, staff reviewed alternative sector-specific accounting software, as commercial systems are unsuitable for council requirements. The options considered were: Rialtas (current provider), Scribe and Easy PC Accounts. Councillors were asked to consider the report, assess the financial implications of each option and instruct the Clerk on the preferred course of action.

Councillors discussed the potential early termination costs for Rialtas and whether an early exit fee would apply. It was considered that any fee would likely be proportionate to the remaining contract term. Officers advised that Scribe appears more user-friendly from an administrative perspective, enabling the RFO to adopt a more strategic role while routine data entry could be managed by administrative staff. However, concerns were raised about the combined cost of Scribe and any early termination fee for Rialtas.

Members noted that Scribe offers additional packages that could consolidate functions such as bookings and allotments. Options were discussed, including running both systems in parallel for the next financial year to ensure suitability. It was acknowledged that this could duplicate work in an already stretched office and that a full switch to Scribe may be more practical. Councillors also commented that Scribe's accessibility could allow members to answer their own queries on accounts and simplify councillor spot checks of accounts.

Following discussion, it was proposed and seconded that Scribe be adopted from 1st April 2026, replacing Rialtas from the start of the next financial year.

RESOLVED to adopt Scribe as the Council's financial management system for the 2026/27 financial year, commencing 1st April 2026.

At 20:23, Syed Shah, Public Liaison Officer, joined the meeting. Mr. Shah is working with Somerset Council and the appointed contractor, Centregreat, to oversee the A39 Dunster traffic signal replacement project.

RESOLVED that Standing Orders be suspended at 20:23 to allow Mr. Shah to present the work proposals for the A39 Dunster traffic signal replacement to councillors.

An update was provided on the Dunster traffic light replacement programme. The contractor has recently completed the Dunball roundabout project, junction 26 in Wellington and is now engaged to deliver this scheme. Work is scheduled to commence the week beginning 5th January 2026, with completion expected by April 2026. A temporary intelligent traffic light system will operate throughout the project, aimed at minimising disruption. The Public Liaison Officer will work closely with the appointed contractor to manage delivery and ensure community engagement and clear communication. A newsletter will be provided to the Clerk in PDF format for wider distribution. It was noted that contact will also be made with Butlins regarding the works. Mr. Shah then left the meeting.

RESOLVED that Standing Orders be reinstated at 20:42 and the meeting continue.

2025/215. To review progress on the Minehead Town Council Public Interest Report Action Plan and to carry out a six-monthly review of the Honorarium Bonus, Expenses, and Temporary Responsibility Allowance (TRA) Payments Policy.

The Clerk presented a review of the Action Plan approved following the Public Interest Report issued by the external auditor in June 2025 regarding the 2022/23 accounts. The updated plan

confirmed that all required policies have been implemented and other processes are in place and ongoing.

The review also highlighted the need to carry out a review of the Honorarium Bonus, Expenses, and Temporary Responsibility Allowance (TRA) Payments Policy. The policy was presented for review. It was noted it has not been required since adoption. Councillors were asked to review the policy and recommended it be added to the policy register with an annual review. It was further recommended that the Action Plan be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance, with the next review scheduled for April 2026.

RESOLVED that following review:

- The Honorarium Bonus, Expenses, and Temporary Responsibility Allowance (TRA) Payments Policy be added to the Council's Policy Register and reviewed annually.
- The Action Plan approved after the Public Interest Report be subject to periodic monitoring to ensure compliance, with the next review scheduled for April 2026.

2025/216. To receive a progress report on Minehead Town Council's Targeted Street weed control strategy and to consider the options for 2026.

The Clerk presented a report summarising the first year of reintroducing targeted street weed control using herbicide within the town. The report acknowledged public concerns regarding the use of glyphosate but highlighted that the decision to reintroduce herbicide was a direct response to residents' expectations for improved street weed management, following previous years when non-herbicide alternatives were trialled and proved largely ineffective.

The appointed contractor utilised modern application methods to minimise glyphosate usage and the Council's ongoing expansion of rewilding areas demonstrates its wider environmental commitment. The Council's transparent approach to these works resulted in no complaints being received during 2025 regarding herbicide use, in stark contrast to the significant number of complaints about excessive street weed growth in previous years when herbicide was not applied.

The Clerk asked Councillors to consider requesting the contractor to return in 2026, committing to three visits as in 2025: spring, mid-summer and late summer/early autumn. Councillors were also asked to consider expanding the programme to include back lanes and the newly devolved car parks at Alexandra Road and North Road.

The Clerk reported that accurate quotations had now been received: £80 + VAT per visit for car parks and £490 + VAT per visit for alleyways, with street weed control expected to remain broadly in line with 2025 pricing per visit. However, the alleyway quotation was based on a historic treatment map and will require review. It was noted that the Clerk's original estimate of £1,500 + VAT per visit for alleyways is likely to be more accurate following this review. It was further noted that, prior to any herbicide application in many alleyways, the Amenities Team would need to manually clear excessive weed growth during the winter months, similar to last year's street weed clearance.

It was discussed whether alleyway treatment should proceed, noting that while it could be beneficial, some residents maintain their own alleyways and concerns were raised about potential over reliance on herbicide. Conversely, some members felt this was an important service for residents and that extending street weed control to include alleyways would be valued.

It was proposed and seconded to approve three visits in 2026, as outlined in the report, to include North Road and Alexandra Road car parks and alleyways following a review.

RESOLVED by majority to accept the recommendation in the report and appoint the contractor to carry out three visits in 2026, applying treatment to North Road and Alexandra Road car parks and alleyways following a review.

2025/217. To consider a quotation of £1,330 exc. VAT for boiler repairs at the Community Centre.

The Clerk reported that during the recent routine boiler service at the Community Centre, it was identified that the pressurisation unit requires replacement and work is needed on the drainage pipe to ensure the boiler operates efficiently and reliably.

A query was raised regarding whether three quotations were required. It was confirmed that, as the cost is under £1,500, this is not necessary. It was further noted that a more thorough service, quoted at £380 + VAT and due next year, will be carried out under delegated authority.

RESOLVED to approve the quotation for the necessary works to the boiler system.

2025/218. To receive an update on the recently completed tree surveys, review the recommended works and confirm that councillors are satisfied for the Clerk to proceed with organising the higher priority works.

Following Council approval in August 2025, surveys of all significant trees on MTC land, including newly devolved areas, were completed by an independent qualified tree surveyor during October and November. The surveys identified a number of higher priority works required to maintain safety and tree health. The Clerk has prepared a summary table of these works, which, while not exhaustive, provides a sound starting point for action.

A previous Council resolution approved a virement of £5,000 from the Devolution Earmarked Reserve to fund associated works. After survey costs, approximately £7,000 remains available for carrying out the identified works. It was noted that while some tasks may be undertaken by in-house staff, most higher priority works will require specialist contractors due to their nature.

RESOLVED by majority:

- To delegate a budget of £7,000 to the Clerk to arrange for the tree works identified in the surveys to be carried out without delay, using a combination of contractors and in-house staff as appropriate.
- To note medium- and low-priority items for inclusion in future budget planning.
- That Section 211 notifications will be submitted by the Clerk where required.
- To create an earmarked reserve for future tree surveys.
- To investigate opportunities for upskilling in-house staff to undertake certain tree works as appropriate.

2025/219. To consider a quotation of £3,240 exc. VAT for a Reinstatement Cost Assessment for Minehead Town Council buildings.

The Clerk presented a report outlining the need for updated reinstatement cost assessments for the Town Council's buildings to ensure insurance values are accurate, providing adequate cover and avoiding under- or over-valuation. The current underspend in this year's insurance budget will cover most of the cost, with the Clerk recommending that the additional £648 required be funded

from the Devolution Earmarked Reserve, as several properties for assessment are recently devolved assets.

RESOLVED to approve the quotation for the reinstatement cost assessments and to fund the additional £648 from the Devolution Earmarked Reserve, as recommended in the report.

2025/220. To consider a request from Minehead Football Club for the temporary placement of two 10 ft x 8 ft containers adjacent to the existing container at Irnham Recreation Ground.

An informal meeting was recently held between councillors and the new board of Minehead FC to establish a positive working relationship and discuss future ambitions. Among several matters raised, one required urgent attention. To comply with their pitch lease, the club has purchased a ride on lawn mower to maintain the football pitch, a task previously carried out by the Town Council. Due to limited storage at their own premises, the club requested permission to place two 10ft x 8ft storage containers next to the existing unit at the recreation ground. This would provide secure storage for the mower and other equipment currently kept in the community building, freeing up shared space. The request was for this arrangement to be temporary, for a maximum of five years or until delivery of a swimming pool on the site, whichever is sooner. The Clerk advised that a Memorandum of Understanding could be prepared to set out expectations.

Councillors expressed concerns about the length of the proposed arrangement, noting that a longer-term agreement could lead to lapses in monitoring and informal management over time. It was also suggested that the request might be deferred until councillors had considered the overall strategy for the recreation ground. However, it was acknowledged that the current arrangement, where a volunteer groundsman stores a ride-on mower in their own garage, is not ideal and requires urgent resolution.

It was proposed and seconded to permit the siting of two 10ft x 8ft temporary storage containers for a maximum of three years, subject to planning approval, with a review after 18 months.

RESOLVED to approve the siting of two 10ft x 8ft temporary storage containers at the recreation ground for a maximum of three years, subject to planning approval, with a review after 18 months. A Memorandum of Understanding will be prepared to set out terms and responsibilities.

Councillor Jewell left the meeting at 21:21 and returned at 21:23.

2025/221. To receive an update on Twinning following the recent meeting between Minehead Town Council and the Twinning Society and to review Council representation on the Society, as well as confirm that the Town Council will formally invite representatives from Saint Berthevin to visit Minehead in 2026.

Councillors previously agreed in principle (August Full Council) to consider inviting representatives from Saint Berthevin, subject to a meeting with the Twinning Society. This meeting took place in early November, and notes were circulated to all councillors with the agenda.

The meeting focused on the Town Council's twinning agreement and the Society's role in supporting its delivery. Discussion included the potential for Minehead Town Council to invite representatives from Saint Berthevin to visit in autumn 2026 and what such a visit might involve. It was noted that public engagement with twinning arrangements may not be as strong as in previous years. However, the agreement, its benefits, and information on joining the Society are

not currently promoted as widely as they could be. An autumn 2026 visit, if approved, would allow sufficient time to publicise the visit, raise awareness of the twinning arrangement and encourage new membership of the Society.

It was noted that, in previous twinning arrangements, the Twinning Society typically raises funds and provides support for visits. Councillors expressed caution regarding the level of Town Council involvement. However, it was also acknowledged that the formal twinning agreement is between the towns and their councils, and therefore the Town Council should play its part. Councillors were reminded that, if an invitation is issued, it is customary for the host town to provide at least a civic function. Associated costs would need to be included in the 2026/27 budget.

RESOLVED by majority to invite representatives from Saint Berthevin to visit Minehead in autumn 2026, and for councillors to assist the Clerk in overseeing the preparation and delivery of the event, including arrangements for a civic function as required.

2025/222. To note there is an underspend of £1,240 from the Section 106-funded “New Benches in The Parks” project and the remaining funds will be used to purchase and plant new perennials throughout Parks Walk.

Following the recent Section 106 developer-funded project to install new composite benches in The Parks, there was an underspend of £1,240. As all required benches have now been installed, Somerset Council has agreed that the Town Council may retain the remaining funds, provided they are used to purchase new perennial plants for Parks Walk. These works must be invoiced by the end of January.

The update was **noted**.

2025/223. To receive and note the midterm internal auditors report.

The Internal Auditor has recently completed a mid-term health check of Council operations. These checks are designed to ensure that due process is being followed and to identify any areas for improvement ahead of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), due before the end of June.

This year’s audit placed particular emphasis on the new Assertion 10, introduced as part of the AGAR requirements, which focuses on digital and data compliance. In addition, the Clerk requested that the auditor not only confirm compliance but also highlight opportunities for the Council to go beyond minimum statutory requirements and adopt best practice standards, ensuring that the Council remains proactive and forward-thinking in its governance approach.

The midterm internal auditors report was **noted**.

The meeting closed at 21:36.

Councillor Craig Palmer
Chair of Minehead Town Council
December 2025

Initial