



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes from the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting of Minehead Town Council
held on
Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 7.30 pm at
The Town Council Offices, 3 Summerland Road, Minehead, TA24 5BP

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

Apologies: Councillors Milton, Jewell, Beynon, Bartlett and Bonar.

In Attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk), J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO)

There was a 15-minute open forum at the beginning of the Meeting for residents of Minehead to speak on any matter related to the agenda. No matters were raised.

2026/06. To receive apologies for absence.

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

2026/07. To receive disclosures of unregistered or other interests from councillors on matters to be considered at the Meeting.

Councillor Kravis has a standing declaration as a Somerset Councillor.

Councillor Lawton declared a personal interest in Item 2026/16 (i). Stayed in room, Spoke, did not Vote.

There were no further disclosures of unregistered or other interests from councillors on matters to be considered at the Meeting.

2026/08. To Approve and Sign Minutes of the [Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on Tuesday 13th January 2026](#).

RESOLVED the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on Tuesday 13th January 2026 were approved and signed by the committee chair as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2026/09. Accounts

- i. To approve the following payments over £500:
 - Payment of **£688.80** to Exmoor Skip Hire for 2 x skip exchanges at the Marshfield Road Compound.

RESOLVED the payment of £688.80 inc. VAT was approved.

- ii. To recommend for approval the following payments over £1,500.

- Payment of **£2,340 inc. VAT** to MTF Training for excavator training for 4 x amenities staff members (*Staff training needs discussed in February 2025's Finance and General Purposes Committee Minute Number 2025/15*)
- Payment of **£3,645** to MS Tree Services for various tree works across Minehead Town Council sites (*Delegated authority for expenditure up to £7,000 granted to the Clerk at the December 2025 Full Council meeting, Minute 2025/218*)

RESOLVED the payments of £2,340 inc. VAT and £3,645 were recommended for approval.

iii. To receive payments made for January.

The payments made for January were **received**.

iv. To receive budget, income & expenditure reports for January.

The budget, income & expenditure reports for January were **received**.

v. To receive Income receipts for January.

The Income receipts for January were **received**.

vi. To receive bank reconciliations for January.

It was questioned whether councillors were able to view all the account reconciliations, as some appeared to be missing. The RFO confirmed that they would be available at Full Council. However, the bank statements had not been received in time for this committee meeting.

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

2026/10. To receive information on Somerset Council's proposed county-wide Public Space Protection (Dog Control) Order and to consider a Minehead Town Council response.

Somerset Council has confirmed that its review of the Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) relating to dog control is not due to Minehead's renewal, as the current orders were introduced recently and remain in force. Instead, the council is seeking to create a single, consistent county-wide PSPO to replace the varying legacy orders from the former district councils and has opened a pre-consultation with Town and Parish Councils. The Clerk provided a brief report highlighting observations on the existing Minehead PSPO, including potential feedback such as extending the dog-permitted area of Jubilee Beach to the groyne for improved accessibility, ensuring all enclosed play areas are designated as dog-free, and considering whether sites such as Woodcombe and Bratton Walk still require dogs to be kept on leads.

RESOLVED to delegate to the clerk the authority to respond to the pre consultation on behalf of Minehead Town Council in line with the report provided.

2026/11. To review Minehead's Christmas light provision following the end of the previous contract and to consider developing a new tender for future Christmas lighting.

The clerk prepared a report on the Christmas light provision in town. The report was **received**.

The report confirmed that 2025 marked the final year of a five-year contract for the town's Christmas lights. It highlighted ongoing concerns regarding the condition of the trees above

shopfronts and noted that, without significant investment in infrastructure and improved health and safety measures, in-house installation is no longer viable. Trained specialist contractors remain the preferred option for Christmas lighting due to the safety requirements and specialist skills involved.

A draft tender for a new three-year contract was presented for councillors to review. The Clerk advised that the tender process must commence in the coming weeks to ensure a contractor is appointed by June, enabling timely supply and delivery for the forthcoming season.

The draft tender also invited contractors to propose ideas for a potential Christmas light trail in Blenheim Gardens, though it was acknowledged that such a project would require additional infrastructure and would fall outside the scope of the core contract.

Councillors discussed whether the draft document was too restrictive and whether an indicative contract value should be included. The Clerk explained that the draft aimed to provide a clear framework while still allowing creative proposals and that omitting a contract value risked receiving submissions that were either unaffordable or insufficient.

It was proposed and seconded that councillors submit comments on the draft by the end of February. The Clerk will prepare a report summarising and qualifying any amendments made, noting that not all suggested changes may be incorporated.

RESOLVED that councillors will provide feedback on the draft tender document by the end of February. The Clerk will incorporate any necessary amendments and present a report outlining these changes at the next suitable meeting for consideration.

2026/12. To discuss and consider the proposed fees and charges for 2026-27 financial year.

The RFO presented the draft fees and charges for the 2026/27 financial year, noting that comparisons had been made with neighbouring and similar sized councils to ensure the proposed charges remained competitive and aligned with similar authorities.

It was noted that allotment fees were last reviewed in 2023/24 and that the intended fees and charges review during 2025/26 had not taken place. Councillors commented that the Community Centre fees would need to be revisited to ensure the facility better covers its operating costs. Cemetery charges were also discussed in the context of the limited availability of full burial space.

Concerns were raised about whether there was sufficient time, with the new financial year approaching, to undertake a detailed and informed review of all fees and charges.

It was proposed and seconded that the Community Land Use Advisory Group should meet within the next couple of weeks to examine the fees and charges for 2026/27 and bring forward a recommendation to the next suitable meeting to allow approval before the start of the financial year.

RESOLVED That the Community Land Use Advisory Group meet to prepare a qualified fees and charges proposal for the 2026/27 financial year and present their recommendations at the next suitable meeting for approval before year end.

2026/13. To authorise the inspection of 2 x Roof Mounted 'Roof safe' Horizontal Lifelines at Minehead Community Centre.

The roof mounted lifelines at the community centre were due their annual inspection. These lifelines need to be maintained and compliant in order to enable access to the roof for any maintenance or repairs.

RESOLVED the quotation for the inspection of 2 x Roof Mounted 'Roof safe' Horizontal Lifelines at Minehead Community Centre at a cost of £649.00 exc. VAT was approved.

2026/14. To receive an update on the devolution and land registry processes and to consider operational arrangements for council-managed assets.

The Clerk provided an update on the ongoing land registration process following devolution. To minimise legal costs, the Clerk is registering the Council with HM Land Registry's online portal. Although this involves some initial setup work, including creation of a Variable Direct Debit, it will reduce future registration fees.

The update was **Noted**.

An update was also provided regarding operational responsibilities along the Esplanade. As is typical with lease arrangements, the lease between Somerset Council and Minehead Town Council does not set out day-to-day management duties. The layout of the leased area has also led to practical complications, with some flagpoles, lifebuoys and lighting columns falling within MTC's boundary and others remaining under SC's control.

To ensure clarity, an agreement has been reached whereby MTC will carry out inspections of all lifebuoys and undertake LOLER testing of all flagpoles, while SC will continue to empty bins and maintain the lighting columns along the seafront. The Clerk has drafted a short Memorandum of Understanding to formalise these arrangements and asked councillors to confirm the position.

The Committee also considered the wider approach to lease arrangements across devolved assets. It was noted that a mixture of historic and more recent agreements has resulted in an inconsistent framework. Initial advice from the Council's solicitor indicates that the preferred first step is to work collaboratively with existing tenants to regularise arrangements wherever appropriate. Members agreed that further clarification and guidance from the solicitor will be required before any formal decisions are made.

RESOLVED that the Clerk is delegated authority to finalise and complete a Memorandum of Understanding with Somerset Council to formally record operational responsibilities along the Esplanade and that the Clerk is authorised to seek further guidance from the Council's solicitor as required in order to progress the regularisation of lease arrangements, bringing any recommendations back to councillors for decision at a future meeting.

2026/15. To consider granting delegated authority to the Clerk to authorise and settle invoices for skip exchanges associated with amenities operations, up to a value of £1,500 per invoice, charged to the appropriate budget.

RESOLVED the delegation of the authority to the Clerk to authorise and settle invoices for skip exchanges associated with amenities operations, up to a value of £1,500 per invoice, charged to the appropriate budget.

2026/16. Grants

- i. To consider an application from Minehead Male Voice Choir for a grant of £500.

Councillor Lawton declared a personal interest in this item at the start of the meeting. Remaining in the room, and spoke only to provide factual information. Did not vote on the matter.

The Committee considered an application from Minehead Male Voice Choir for financial assistance towards the costs of participating in the International Male Voice Festival in Cornwall in May. Members expressed concern that funding an activity taking place outside the town might not provide sufficient direct benefit to the wider community. However, it was also noted that representation of the town at an international festival could be viewed positively. The Clerk advised that the grant could be awarded under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 145.

A vote was taken, but no majority was reached. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Paragraph 18(3), the Chair exercised their casting vote.

RESOLVED that the Committee, following the Chair's casting vote (as permitted under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Paragraph 18(3)), refuse the grant application from Minehead Male Voice Choir.

- ii. To consider an application from Minehead and Exmoor Music Festival for a grant of £500.

The Committee considered an application from the Minehead and Exmoor Music Festival seeking support towards the 2026 Exmoor and Minehead Music Festival, scheduled to take place from 25th July to 1st August 2026. The Clerk advised that the grant may be lawfully awarded under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972, which permits expenditure on the provision of entertainment and support for the arts.

RESOLVED that the grant to the Minehead and Exmoor Music Festival be awarded.

The meeting closed at 20:53

Councillor Bill Hodson
Chair Finance and General Purposes Committee
February 2026