



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 27th January 2026 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. The following matters were raised:

Mr. Syed Shah, public liaison officer for the ongoing works at the A39 traffic lights project in Dunster, provided an update. He acknowledged that the first phase of the project had been challenging, with a high volume of complaints and enquiries at the outset. These difficulties were compounded by an unprecedented hardware failure affecting the traffic lights, which caused additional issues and delays. As the A39 is the main route into Minehead, the impact of these problems was heightened.

He noted that there had been important learning from this project, particularly in light of the negative experience with the previous Active Travel scheme. Although the two projects were unrelated, the comparison had highlighted the shortcomings of the earlier scheme and will help inform improvements going forward.

Mr. Shah explained that the team was considering adjustments to the work schedule to maintain two-way traffic during the forthcoming half-term period and for visitors to Dunster Castle. However, this would need to be balanced against the risk of delaying the project's overall completion. He also acknowledged the unique traffic patterns created by Butlins changeover days on Mondays and Fridays and confirmed that this would be factored more clearly into future contract planning. Two-way traffic is expected to remain in place on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays and Fridays. The aim is for the scheme to be completed ahead of the Easter weekend. The regular works newsletter will continue, with the next edition due shortly.

In response to questions, Mr Shah confirmed that he had engaged with local supermarkets, some of which had reported reduced takings during the works, although obtaining the correct contact information for larger chains had been challenging. He was also asked about the number of other street works happening concurrently in the town. He clarified that his role relates only to specific assigned projects, and he was not aware of wider works taking place. He recognised how busy the A39 becomes and noted that if there had been any doubt previously, the current situation had demonstrated it clearly.

The meeting convened.

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

Apologies: Councillors Jewell and Beynon

In Attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk), J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO), Somerset Councillors Chilcott, Hadley and 1 member of the public.

2026/01. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillors Jewell and Beynon’s apologies were received.

2026/02. 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.

2026/03. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

There were no representatives from the local policing team present.

Councillor Chilcott gave the following update:

- Delays on local roads were noted, partly due to several emergency street works. Some ageing infrastructure, such as street lighting, will require longer-term investment.
- The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published over Christmas, including a one-off allocation. Work continues toward securing a longer-term three-year settlement.
- Somerset Council’s budget gap has reduced but remains significant. The authority expects to address this through various measures, including an increase in council tax.
- Somerset Council has confirmed it has again requested exceptional financial support from the government.
- Full Council has called for additional measures to help address the backlog in the planning system.
- Several posts removed during last year’s staffing reductions have since been identified as key roles and are now proving challenging to recruit into.
- Somerset Council’s budget consultation has closed. Residents and local businesses were encouraged to share their views, and ongoing participation in all consultations was strongly encouraged.

Councillor Hadley gave the following update:

- A motion was agreed supporting Somerset’s town centres and high streets, highlighting the need for the Council to better recognise and reflect the importance of local high streets in future policy and decision-making.

It was noted that delays within the planning system, and the resulting slowdown in approved applications, appear to be having a direct impact on local trades. All Somerset Councillors acknowledged these concerns and confirmed that the issue is being raised within Somerset Council’s scrutiny process, with officers already aware and engaged in addressing the matter.

2026/04. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory groups and Outside Bodies.

Cllr Hodson reported that the swimming pool feasibility study is under way, with several local stakeholders being contacted as part of the process. The study is expected to be completed within the next month, after which a report will be available. He suggested that it would be beneficial for Council to receive a summary of the findings.

2026/05. To approve and sign the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 16th December 2025.](#)

RESOLVED the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 16th December 2025 were approved and signed by the council chair as a true and accurate record.

2026/06. To receive the Minutes of the [Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 12th January 2026.](#)

The minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 12th January 2026 were **received**.

2026/07. To receive the Minutes from the [Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13th January 2026.](#)

The minutes from the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 13th January 2026 were **received**.

2026/08. Accounts

- i. To approve the following payments:
 - Payment of **£2,000** to eat:Festivals for the delivery of two festivals in Minehead through 2026. *(Two annual festivals agreed in June 2025's Full Council Meeting, Minute Number 2025/109, Payment recommended for approval in January 2026's Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting)*
 - Payment of **£1,487.64 inc. VAT** to Riverside Plant Nurseries for the supply of shrubs for Parks Walk *(Entirely funded through underspend from the Section 106-funded "New Benches in The Parks" Project, Noted at December 2025's Full Council, Minute Number 2025/222.)*
 - Payment of **£726.00 inc. VAT** to Exmoor Skip Hire for 2 x skip exchanges at Marshfield Road Compound.

RESOLVED the payment of £2,000 was approved.

RESOLVED the payment of £1,487.64 inc. VAT was approved.

A question was raised regarding green-waste skips. The Clerk explained that while most green waste is processed through the chipper, some items, such as larger tree logs, cannot be chipped and therefore require alternative disposal methods.

RESOLVED the payment of £726.00 inc. VAT was approved.

- ii. To note payments made for December.

A question was raised regarding a payment for an advert in the local newspaper. It was confirmed that the advert related to the Christmas light switch-on event and had been authorised and paid under the Clerk's delegated authority.

It was also noted that details of payments made via the prepaid card had not been included in the papers available to councillors and a request was made for these to be included in future payment lists.

The payments made for December were **noted**.

- iii. To note budget income & expenditure reports for December.

The budget income & expenditure reports for December were **noted**.

- iv. To note income received for December.

The income received for December was **noted**.

- v. To note bank reconciliations for December.

The bank reconciliations for December were **noted**.

2026/09. Budget

- i. To receive and note the Minehead Town Council financial budget reports for the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year.

A quarterly budget monitoring report for the third quarter of the current financial year was prepared by the Deputy Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and circulated with the agenda. The report indicated that the Town Council's finances were broadly in line with the 2025/26 budget.

It was noted that some income and expenditure variances reflected items that are invoiced or paid in lump sums at the start of the financial year, such as insurance. Other minor underspends were expected to be offset by minor overspends in other areas as the financial year progresses.

The Minehead Town Council financial budget reports for the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year were **noted**.

- ii. To receive and review the draft budget report for the 2026/27 financial year, to consider the recommendations therein and to approve and set the final budget for 2026/27.

The draft budget had been developed over a number of months, incorporating known costs for services and utilities while also making provision for projects and investments identified by Councillors. The draft budget was reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee in January and recommended to Full Council for approval.

A supporting report was provided alongside the draft budget, setting out the budget-setting process and highlighting key areas of expenditure, income and earmarked reserves. The report also included a number of recommendations for Council's consideration.

RESOLVED the 2026/27 Earmarked Reserves totalling £575,876.72 were approved.

RESOLVED the Deputy Clerk and RFO was authorised to transfer any 2025/26 year-end underspends from the identified budget lines into the designated Earmarked Reserves rather than the General Reserve.

RESOLVED the General Reserve level of £451,626.17 for 2026/27, representing approximately four months of net revenue expenditure was approved.

RESOLVED the 2026/27 revenue budget with total expenditure of £1,254,249 and total income of £161,738 was approved.

- iii. To approve the Precept requirement for the 2026/27 financial year, and to resolve that the Clerk submits the approved Precept request to Somerset Council by the statutory deadline of 30th January 2026.

Having approved the revenue budget for 2026/27, Councillors proceeded to set the Town Council's precept requirement for the forthcoming financial year. With total expenditure approved at £1,254,249 and anticipated income of £161,738, the required precept was calculated accordingly.

RESOLVED that the 2026/27 precept be set at £1,092,511, equating to a Band D charge of £238.19 per annum, representing an annual increase of £9.72 on the previous year. The Clerk was instructed to submit the approved precept to Somerset Council by 30th January 2026.

2026/10. To consider issuing a letter of support to store and maintain the Hobby Horse and related equipment in a purpose built space at the rear of Quay Street.

A request was received seeking the Town Council's support for the storage and ongoing maintenance of the traditional Sailor's Horse within a purpose-built structure proposed to be located at the rear of a property on Quay Street. It was noted that a formal letter of support from the Town Council would assist the applicant in securing external funding for the project. A draft letter of support had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting for consideration.

RESOLVED that the draft letter of support, as presented, be approved for issue.

2026/11. To consider the purchase of two replacement recycled plastic tree seats in the Parade using funds from the Open Spaces General Maintenance budget at a total cost of **£2,378** (*inc. delivery but exc. VAT.*)

It was reported that the two wooden benches positioned around the trees on The Parade are now over 20 years old and, due to their age, have deteriorated to a point where replacement is necessary. Composite recycled-plastic alternatives were presented for consideration. Councillors acknowledged that the existing benches are heavily used and form a well-loved feature of the town.

A proposal was put forward, and seconded, that plaques be added to the replacement benches to indicate they have been provided by Minehead Town Council.

RESOLVED that the purchase of two replacement recycled-plastic tree seats for The Parade, at a total cost of £2,378, be approved; and that delegated authority of up to £2,600 in total be granted to include the addition of Minehead Town Council-branded plaques.

2026/12. To consider the purchase of replacement seats and chains for play equipment at Irnham Road Play Area and Cross Farm Play Area due to damage and general wear.

Councillors noted that the chains on several swings at Cross Farm Play Area and Irnham Road Play Area have reached the end of their serviceable life and require replacement. It was further noted that one swing seat at Irnham Road Play Area also requires replacement due to damage. A quotation in the sum of £874.20 (excluding VAT) for the necessary replacement seats and chains was presented for consideration.

RESOLVED that the purchase of replacement swing seats and chains for play equipment at Irnham Road Play Area and Cross Farm Play Area, at a cost of £874.20 excluding VAT, be approved.

2026/13. To consider the appointment of Per Pro Services as the Council's internal auditor for the 2025/26 AGAR and to delegate authority to the Clerk to retain their services throughout the year, including a mid-term health check during 2026/27.

RESOLVED Per Pro Services as the Council’s internal auditor for the 2025/26 AGAR and to delegate authority to the Clerk to retain their services throughout the year, including a mid-term health check during 2026/27.

2026/14. To appoint two councillors to witness the sealing of the Car Park Management Agreement, as required under Standing Orders. The agreement has been updated following councillor review.

Following the devolution of open spaces from Somerset Council to Minehead Town Council in May 2025, which included North Road and Alexandra Road car parks, the issue of enforcement became a matter for consideration. Due to the complexities involved and the desire to ensure a consistent approach to enforcement across the town, it was agreed that Somerset Council managing enforcement and the collection of fees on behalf of Minehead Town Council was the most practical option.

A previously presented draft maintenance agreement was reviewed by councillors and subsequently updated to more accurately reflect the required arrangements. A report detailing the additions and amendments to the revised agreement had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chair then invited two councillors to nominate themselves to witness the signing of the agreement in accordance with Standing Orders.

RESOLVED that the Management Agreement for North Road and Alexandra Road Car Parks be approved, and that Councillors Lawton and C Palmer be appointed to witness the sealing of the Agreement in accordance with Standing Orders.

2026/15. To note the dates of the 2026 Minehead Eat:Festivals of Sunday 12th April and Sunday 9th August and to further note the 2027 dates of Sunday 4th April and Sunday 8th August.

The dates for the 2026 and 2027 eat:Festivals were **noted**.

2026/16. To note the update and revised pricing for the replacement tree works on The Avenue, and to consider increasing the Clerk’s delegated authority for the project from £8,000 to £11,000 to meet updated reinstatement and planting costs.

It was reported that the tree-replacement project along The Avenue has been ongoing for some time and had been delayed due to restructuring within Somerset Council. The Clerk advised that Somerset Council has now confirmed the works can proceed, with a contractor appointed to deliver the project alongside its wider tree-replacement programme.

The project includes the removal of one existing tree on The Avenue due to its condition. Somerset Council will remove the tree to stump height, with Minehead Town Council funding the full stump removal, reinstatement of the tree pit, and the planting of a replacement *Tilia cordata* ‘Streetwise’, a species suitable for roadside environments. The same process will be carried out for the three existing tree stumps along The Avenue, resulting in a total of four new trees being planted, fully funded by Minehead Town Council.

The Clerk explained that, due to the time elapsed since the original quotations were obtained (approximately 18 months), costs have increased and higher delegated authority was therefore requested to enable the project to move forward. Councillors also asked whether Somerset Councillors could approach Somerset Council regarding a potential contribution toward the increased costs, given that the works would enhance Somerset Council-owned assets.

Since publication of the agenda, all updated quotations had been received, totalling approximately £11,300. It was proposed and seconded that the Clerk’s delegated authority be increased to £11,500 to allow the project to proceed without further delay.

RESOLVED that the updated pricing be noted, and that the Clerk’s delegated authority for the project be increased from £8,000 to £11,500 to meet the revised reinstatement and planting costs.

2026/17. To note the Quarter 3 data report from Citizens Advice West Somerset.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial for a representative from Citizens Advice to attend a future meeting to give a presentation. The Clerk confirmed he would arrange this.

The Quarter 3 data report from Citizens Advice West Somerset was **noted**.

The meeting closed at 20:44.

Councillor Craig Palmer
Chair of Minehead Town Council
January 2026.