



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on
Tuesday 17th March 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. No matters were raised.

This was followed by a presentation from Citizens Advice West Somerset, on their work within the local community.

Ian Atkinson provided an overview of Citizens Advice West Somerset (CAWS), based in Minehead. The organisation supports residents in understanding their circumstances, preventing escalation of problems and improving their situation. CAWS operates with a small team comprising of paid staff and volunteers.

West Somerset experiences high levels of deprivation and CAWS deals with a significant number of family and debt related enquiries. They offer drop in, non-appointment sessions, on most days, Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 13:30, alongside private appointments. Outreach services are delivered across the area, with locations adjusted according to demand.

Casework ranges from brief advice to long term support. Client numbers have increased compared with the previous year. Through successful benefit claims, debt negotiations and casework, CAWS generated over £1 million in financial gains for the community in the last year. Most enquiries relate to debt and benefits, followed by utilities and housing. Client demographics in Minehead span all age groups and genders. CAWS evidences a return of £2.86 for every £1 invested in Minehead and over £6 across West Somerset. The service is free, impartial, holistic and entirely independent of national Citizens Advice funding.

Councillors raised concerns about rising housing issues. Affordability and availability were highlighted and CAWS works with clients to maximise income and manage budgets. Homelessness cases can be challenging, particularly where individuals decline support. CAWS coordinates assistance where possible, especially in adverse weather. Relocation within Somerset can also disrupt clients' support networks.

Councillors asked about staff training. CAWS provides selected training from the Citizens Advice network and many new staff arrive with relevant experience, developing expertise in particular areas over time.

The meeting convened

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

Apologies: Councillors Hall, Kravis and Bartlett

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

2026/36. To receive apologies for absence.

Councillors Hall, Kravis and Bartlett's apologies were **received**.

2026/37. 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.

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

2026/38. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

There were no representatives from the local policing team present.

Somerset Councillors Chilcott, Hadley and Strom's apologies were received.

2026/39. To receive updates from councillors on Advisory groups and Outside Bodies.

Councillor Hodson said the feasibility consultants were now finalising their data gathering on consultation been carried out.

2026/40. To approve and sign the Minutes of the [Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 24th February 2026.](#)

RESOLVED the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 24th February 2026 were approved and signed by the chair as a true and accurate record.

2026/41. To receive the Minutes of the [Planning & Licencing Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd March 2026.](#)

The minutes of the Planning & Licencing Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd March 2026 were **received**.

2026/42. Accounts

- i. To approve the following payments:
 - Payment of **£3,888.00 inc. VAT** to Zurich Management Services Limited for 15 x Desktop Rebuild Cost Assessments (*Works discussed and approved at December 2025's Full Council Meeting, Minute Number 2025/219*)
 - Payment of **£2,808.98 Inc. VAT** to Glasdon for 2 x benches at seafront and Blenheim Gardens (*Benches fully funded through private donations*)
 - Payment of **£2,052.00 inc. VAT** to WestCountry Heating Ltd for repair and maintenance works to boilers at Minehead Community Centre. (*Works discussed and approved at December 2025's Full Council Meeting, Minute Number 2025/217*)
 - Payment of **£1,598.52 inc. VAT** to CJG Fire Protection Ltd for annual fire extinguisher and emergency lighting preventive maintenance across MTC buildings.
 - Payment of **£874.20 inc. VAT** to GB Sport & Leisure for the supply of a nest swing, chains and fittings. (*Works discussed and approved at January 2026's Full Council Meeting, Minute Number 2026/12*)
 - Payment of **£510.00 inc. VAT** to Riverside Plant Nurseries for 2 x new trees at Blenheim Gardens and Woodcombe Walk (*Trees fully funded through Private donations*)

The Clerk presented an additional invoice totalling **£4,776 inc. VAT** from CJ Lynch for the tree pit works carried out in The Avenue. It was noted that these works had previously been discussed and approved at the Full Council meeting held in January 2026, Minute Number 2026/16.

RESOLVED the payments of £4,776 inc. VAT, £3,888.00 inc. VAT, £2,808.98 Inc. VAT, £2,052.00 inc. VAT, £1,598.52 inc. VAT, £874.20 inc. VAT and £510.00 inc. VAT were approved.

- ii. To receive payments made for February.

A question was raised regarding a potentially high electricity charge for the office. The amount relates to an estimated reading from the previous month. The Deputy Clerk will verify the details and issue an email update to councillors to confirm the correct figure.

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

- iii. To receive budget income & expenditure reports for February.

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

- iv. To receive income receipts for February.

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

- v. To receive bank reconciliations for February.

A request was made for councillors to be provided with copies of the bank statements alongside the bank reconciliations.

The reconciliations for February were **received**.

2026/43. To receive a report on the current fleet vehicles for the Amenities Team and to consider delegating authority to the Clerk to undertake any required repairs or replacement purchases within the approved budget.

A report on several matters relating to the Amenities fleet vehicles was presented to councillors with the agenda. It was noted that one van had reached the point of uneconomical repair due to its age and the extent of work now required. Two of the electric vans were also experiencing charging issues, which were affecting service delivery due to reduced battery performance during the working day.

The report further highlighted that another vehicle had entered the final 12 months of its lease period and a decision regarding its replacement or extension would be required before the lease expires. This matter was **noted**.

The Clerk advised that quotations had been received for an engineer to attend site to diagnose the charging issues with each of the electric vehicles, at a cost of £750 including VAT per vehicle. This fee would cover diagnostics only, with any repairs or further works incurring additional costs depending on the findings.

Councillors discussed whether the electric vans should instead be returned to the supplier for assessment, as they would likely need to go there for repairs regardless. While this option could potentially reduce diagnostic costs, it was noted that it would impact vehicle availability across the fleet. The possible short term hire of a replacement van during any period of absence was considered.

A question was raised as to whether electric or hybrid alternatives had been explored. The Clerk confirmed that initial focus had been on fuelled vehicles due to the higher purchase costs of electric models and the reliability issues currently being experienced. It was confirmed that all fuel types would be assessed when considering a replacement, with value, quality and suitability all taken into account.

It was proposed and seconded to approve the immediate replacement of the Vauxhall van and to delegate authority to the Clerk to determine the most cost-effective approach to diagnosing the electric van issues, including whether the vehicles should be sent to the supplier and whether a hire vehicle is required to cover their absence. A total budget of up to £30,000 was proposed, to cover the purchase of the replacement vehicle and any necessary short-term hire.

RESOLVED by majority, to:

1. Approve the immediate replacement of the Vauxhall van.
2. Delegate authority to the Clerk to procure and purchase the replacement vehicle.
3. Delegate authority to the Clerk to determine the most appropriate and cost-effective method of diagnosing the electric vehicle charging issues (either on site diagnostics or returning the vehicles to the supplier).
4. Approve a total delegated budget of up to £30,000, drawn from the identified budgets within the report, to cover the purchase of the replacement vehicle and any associated short-term hire costs if required.

2026/44. To receive and consider a sponsorship proposal from Minehead Coast and Development Trust for the Minehead Bay Festival on 29th August 2026.

Following a presentation to Council regarding the Minehead Bay Festival in February, a sponsorship proposal was submitted by the festival organisers for consideration. The proposal outlined a range of sponsorship packages at differing costs, each offering varying levels of promotional presence and coverage across the event.

Councillors discussed the proposal and noted the importance of ensuring that, when the Town Council sponsors events, performance content remains neutral and non-controversial. Questions were also raised about the extent to which performers were local and whether the programme catered to a broad audience. It was acknowledged that the festival had proactively sought public feedback and that it was unlikely any sponsorship arrangement would provide the Town Council with a veto over performer selection.

Members agreed that a further meeting with the organisers would enable a fuller understanding of the proposals and support a more informed decision.

RESOLVED to defer a decision on the sponsorship proposal until a meeting has taken place between councillors and the festival organisers, with a view to bringing the matter back to Full Council for determination in April.

2026/45. To receive a report on the Christmas lighting tender document outlining amendments made following councillor feedback and to approve the final draft document.

Further to the discussions at the February meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, councillor feedback on the Clerk's draft tender document for the 2026, 2027 and 2028 Christmas Lighting contract had been incorporated. A report accompanying the agenda outlined the amendments and additions made to the original draft.

The Clerk sought approval to commence the tender process in line with the timetable set out in the report, with all quotations to be received and presented to the May Full Council meeting for the appointment of a contractor.

A question was raised regarding proposed changes in Wellington Square, specifically whether uplighting around the lime tree would provide as effective a display as the previous dangling lights. The Clerk advised that uplighting can produce a strong visual effect when installed correctly and would also reduce installation costs. However, he confirmed that it would be for tendering contractors to propose the most suitable and visually effective options using their technical expertise.

RESOLVED to approve the Christmas Lighting Tender document and authorise the Clerk to commence the tender process as set out in the report, with quotations to be brought to the May Full Council meeting for consideration and appointment of a contractor.

2026/46. To receive the proposed fees and charges for 2026/27 from the Community Land Use Advisory Group.

The Community Land Use Advisory Group had been asked by the Finance and General Purposes Committee to review the draft Fees and Charges schedule presented in February and to bring forward recommendations for approval ahead of the new financial year. The group had been unable to convene a formal meeting; however, two members submitted individual proposals to the Clerk, which were circulated with the agenda.

Members reviewed the proposed Fees and Charges for 2026–27. The staff baseline recommendation applied modest increases and introduced a number of new fees across council facilities and services.

Proposal 1 set out generally higher increases, particularly for hall hire, cemetery charges and bandstand use.

Proposal 2 proposed more moderate rises for hall and bandstand fees but suggested the largest increase in Fun Fair land hire.

Both proposals aligned in recommending allotment fee increases and incremental adjustments to memorial fees. Members discussed the approach and financial implications of each, noting the Clerk's advice to avoid increases that could be considered excessive or insufficiently evidenced. The Clerk advised that further work would be required during the coming financial year to establish consistent cost bases across all service areas.

It was noted that the Council would no longer be installing small shop Christmas trees and therefore no longer required a reimbursement fee within the schedule.

Following discussion, it was proposed that the staff recommended schedule be adopted, with a full strategic review of Fees and Charges undertaken during the next financial year.

RESOLVED by majority:

1. To approve the staff-proposed Fees and Charges schedule for 2026–27, including the removal of the small shop Christmas tree reimbursement fee.
2. To commit to a full review of Fees and Charges across all council services during 2026–27, with the revised schedule to be implemented for the 2027–28 financial year.

2026/47. To review and approve the regular payments including staff salaries for 2026/27 financial year.

In accordance with Financial Regulations 5.6 and 5.7, a schedule of regular payments for the forthcoming financial year, including direct debits, subscriptions and staff salaries, was presented for Council approval. The Clerk noted that, due to the confidential nature of certain payments such as salaries, detailed breakdowns could not be published in the public domain. To support transparency, a summary report outlining all categories of regular payments was provided with the agenda.

RESOLVED to approve the schedule of regular payments for the 2026/27 financial year, including staff salaries.

2026/48. To receive and approve the updated Minehead Town Council asset register.

The Clerk reported that work continued on transferring data from the current asset register into the Council’s new asset management system, Civic.ly. In the meantime, the existing asset register had been maintained and updated to reflect all additions and disposals.

The register circulated to councillors provided a comprehensive list of all Council assets, including buildings, land, benches, bins, play equipment, plant, and equipment across all sites. It was noted that, following recent devolutions of land, the volume of assets had increased significantly. These devolved parcels of land were recorded with a nominal purchase value of £1, as required, and shown in official documentation as “if demanded”.

The summary of asset values had been compiled using known purchase prices and included insurance valuations where applicable. The Clerk confirmed that the asset register would support the completion of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) due in May.

RESOLVED to approve the Asset Register as presented, showing a total known asset value of £1,786,886.33, representing an increase of £55,120.01 from the previous total of £1,731,766.32.

2026/49. To receive a report on Minehead Town Council’s insurance provision for 2026/27 and to consider the quotations for full Council cover.

A report detailing the Town Council’s insurance requirements and the quotations obtained was presented with the agenda. The report noted that the Council was approaching the end of the final year of its long-term agreement with the current insurance provider, during which premiums had been fixed subject only to index-linking and the addition of new assets.

Four organisations, comprising suitable insurers or brokers with experience in local government, had been approached, recognising that the market for local authority insurance remains limited. Two quotations were received, including one from the Council's existing provider. Both proposals, together with their respective terms of business, were made available to councillors for review.

During discussion, members expressed concerns about the adequacy of cover offered by one of the alternative providers, despite the lower cost of their quotation. Councillors emphasised the importance of ensuring comprehensive and robust insurance protection across all areas of identified risk.

RESOLVED to approve quotation A from the existing insurance provider, at a cost of £19,891.52 per annum, and to enter into a three-year long-term agreement with them, thereby guaranteeing this price for the duration of the term, subject to the conditions outlined in the provider's Terms of Business.

2026/50. To review the councillor arrangements for the quarterly internal financial checks in 2026/27 and to appoint two councillors to carry out these checks for the forthcoming financial year.

Councillors were reminded that internal financial account checks are an essential component of financial controls. Councillors M Palmer and Lawton performed these checks during 2025/26, and nominations were sought for the 2026/27 financial year.

RESOLVED Councillors M Palmer and Lawton will continue to perform financial account checks throughout the 2025/26 financial year.

2026/51. To receive and approve the reviewed Financial, Governance, Operational and Devolution Risk Assessments for 2026/27.

A report was presented containing the updated Governance, Financial, Operational and Devolution Risk Assessments for 2026/27. The Clerk confirmed that all documents had been reviewed and updated, with controls remaining robust and only minor amendments required. The separate Devolution Risk Assessment remains in place due to the ongoing higher-risk profile associated with recent asset transfers.

The review meets all statutory requirements and will support the completion of the AGAR in May.

RESOLVED to approve the updated Governance, Financial, Operational and Devolution Risk Assessments for 2026/27, and that the Finance and General Purposes Committee continue to monitor these on a quarterly basis, with a full annual review undertaken each March

2026/52. Grants

- i. To consider an application from Minehead Cricket Club for a grant of £500.

An application was received from Minehead Cricket Club for a £500 small grant towards the purchase of gang mowers to support ongoing pitch maintenance. The Clerk confirmed that the Council may award this grant under Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous

Provisions) Act 1976, as a contribution to a voluntary organisation providing recreational facilities.

Councillors raised several questions regarding elements of the Club's income and expenditure and sought clarification on the specific equipment required. It was noted that the Cricket Club provides significant social and recreational benefit to the community and that the grant represented a small proportion of the overall project cost.

RESOLVED by majority to award a £500 small grant to Minehead Cricket Club.

2026/53. To receive a progress update on the tree replanting works in The Avenue.

The Clerk reported that all four replacement trees on The Avenue had now been planted, completing this phase of the project. Although costs had exceeded initial estimates, the Clerk noted that the works were a worthwhile investment in preserving an important heritage feature of the town and public feedback had been very positive.

Thanks were extended to the contractors involved, the Town Council's Amenities Team for undertaking the replanting, and to Councillor M. Palmer and Somerset Councillors Hadley and Chilcott for supporting the coordination of the works with Somerset Council. Appreciation was also expressed to the Clerk for coordinating the project.

It was noted that Minehead Town Council will remain responsible for the trees for the next 8–10 years, including watering, formative pruning and any necessary replacements, after which they will be handed back to Somerset Council as established highway trees.

The meeting closed at 21:39

Councillor Craig Palmer
Chair of Minehead Town Council
March 2026.