Minutes from the Full Council Meeting of Minehead Town Council held on Tuesday 27th October 2026 at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Building, Irnham Road, Minehead TA24 5DW

Present: Councillors C Palmer (Chair), Milton, Basketfield, Beynon, Bonar, Jeffery, Jewell, Kravis, Lawton, Maycock, M Palmer and Pattison.
Apologies: Councillors Bartlett, Hodson and Sharjeel.
Not present: Councillor Hall
In attendance: B Parker (Town Clerk) J Chapman (Deputy Clerk & RFO) Somerset Councillors Chilcott, Hadley and 24 members of the public.

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:

Representatives of Minehead Bowling Club raised concerns regarding ongoing anti-social behaviour within Irnham Recreation Ground, which they advised has increasingly impacted the bowling club. Issues highlighted included footballs and missiles entering the club grounds as well as incidents of verbal abuse. Representatives invited the Council Chair and relevant committee members to meet with the club to discuss potential measures to reduce the number of footballs entering the site and to consider solutions to the concerns raised. The Council Chair confirmed that arrangements could be made for a meeting to take place.

The Chairman of Minehead Cycling Club expressed the club's support for the proposed pump track project at Culvercliffe. A member of the public also confirmed support for the provision of a pump track within the town but questioned whether Culvercliffe was the most appropriate location. Concerns were raised regarding the potential impact on dog walkers and the possibility of increased anti-social cycling activity in the area, with reference made to previous incidents between cyclists and users of the site. An alternative location at the King George V Playing Field was suggested for consideration.

A further member of the public welcomed the principle of a pump track within Minehead but also questioned the suitability of the Culvercliffe site, questioning the implications of any land covenants affecting the site.

2026/162. To receive Apologies for Absence ***LGA 1972 s 85 (1)***

Councillors Bartlett, Hodson and Sharjeel's apologies for absence were **received.**

2026/163. To receive disclosures of unregistered or other interests from Councillors on matters to be considered at the meeting ***Localism Act 2011 S 26 - 34***

Councillor Kravis has a standing declaration as a Somerset Councillor.

Councillor Jewell declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 (Co-option onto the Council). Stayed in room, did not speak, did not vote.

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

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2026/164. To receive reports from Somerset Councillors and the Local Policing Team.

There were no representatives from the Local Policing Team present.

Somerset Councillor Chilcott gave the following updates:

- The resurfacing works on The Avenue have now been completed. Whilst some inconvenience was experienced during the works, it was reported that the project had generally gone well. Concerns were raised regarding puddling at the zebra crossing; however, it has been confirmed that tree roots have affected the drainage in the area and the situation will continue to be monitored.
- An update was provided on the street lighting issues in Millbridge Road. It was confirmed that the fault related to a National Grid issue. National Grid has a target response time of 21 days; however, discrepancies regarding reports that the lights had been repaired appear to have contributed to the ongoing problem.
- Concerns were raised regarding delays within the planning service. It was reported that significant challenges remain, with applications taking considerable time to validate.
- Thanks were expressed to those who attended the recent Local Community Network (LCN) meeting. The attendance and contribution of Minehead Town Council representatives was appreciated. Current discussions at LCN level include the proposed road closure at Williton, which is anticipated to have a significant impact on travel routes to Bridgwater.
- It was reported that approximately 42,000 working days were lost to staff sickness across Somerset Council during the last year. It was noted that, within an already reduced workforce, such absences place additional pressures on service delivery. Residents experiencing unresolved issues were encouraged to raise them with their local Somerset councillors.

Somerset Councillor Hadley gave the following updates:

- It was reported that Somerset Council continues to face a challenging financial position, with a projected budget gap of approximately £42 million. Without further action, the authority may need to seek additional support from central government.
- Planning enforcement services continue to experience delays across Somerset due to limited staffing resources. It was noted that additional resources are being progressed in an effort to improve response times and case management.
- The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will come into effect on 31st October. The changes include amendments to planning processes and an increase in delegated decision-making powers, reducing the number of applications requiring consideration by Planning Committee. The implications will continue to be monitored.
- More than 4,000 Somerset residents signed a petition relating to parking charge proposals. Following review, Somerset Council has resolved to implement a 10% increase in parking charges, with the proposed tiered charging system now delayed until autumn 2027.
- An update was provided on the Somerset Local Plan. The initial consultation stage has now concluded and work is progressing through the next phases of plan preparation. Further public consultation is expected in 2027, with publication anticipated in 2028 and adoption targeted for 2029.

Somerset Councillor Kravis gave the following updates:

- Funding has been secured for rough sleeping services, with approximately £6 million to be invested across Somerset over the next three years to support rough sleepers and help prevent homelessness.
- The SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Reform Plan has now been approved and will guide future improvements to SEND provision and support across Somerset.
- Concerns regarding the condition of road surfaces across the town have been raised with Highways officers. It was advised that discussions regarding future resurfacing requirements should take place now to ensure these schemes are considered as part of forthcoming highways maintenance programmes.

Concerns regarding the proposed road closure in Williton were raised and it was questioned whether consideration had been given to introducing parking restrictions on Tower Hill to help manage any increase in traffic and associated parking pressures. Somerset Councillors advised that discussions remain ongoing and encouraged residents to engage with the consultation and planning process. It was noted that feedback received at this stage will help inform the development of any proposals and mitigation measures.

2026/165. To receive reports from councillors, advisory groups and outside bodies.

There were no reports from councillors, advisory groups or outside bodies.

2026/166. To approve and sign the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd September 2026. ***LGA 1972 Sch 12 para 41***

> **RESOLVED** the Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd September 2026 were approved and signed by the chair as a true and accurate record.

2026/167. To receive the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13th October 2026.

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 13th October 2026 were **received.**

2026/168. To receive the Minutes of the Planning & Licencing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 6th October 2026.

The minutes of the Planning & Licencing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 6th October 2026 were **received.**

2026/169. To note the updated business case submitted by Minehead Pump Track CIC and to consider whether an area within Culvercliffe Open Space should be identified as the preferred site for further investigation, subject to all necessary permissions, approvals and legal requirements.

The Chair exercised their discretion under Standing Order 1(a) to vary the order of business and brought forward Agenda Item 14 for consideration.

Members received an updated business case from Minehead Pump Track CIC regarding the development of a pump track in Minehead. It was noted that the proposal had been further developed in response to previous discussions and feedback from councillors and provided additional detail on the project's objectives, delivery and site considerations. The business case identified Culvercliffe Open Space as the preferred location.

Councillors discussed the proposal in detail and considered whether alternative locations may be more suitable. Potential sites raised during the discussion included Cross Farm Park and the King George V Playing Field, Alcombe. Members explored factors including accessibility, demographic considerations, existing use of the sites, connectivity, environmental constraints and the suitability of each location for a facility of this nature.

A number of councillors expressed the view that, whilst there appeared to be community support for the provision of a pump track within Minehead, further consideration was required to determine the most appropriate location. Particular discussion took place regarding Culvercliffe Open Space, including the need to ensure the site remained inclusive and accessible for all users, the pedestrian and cycling links to the site via Quay Street and the practical implications of the site's ground conditions.

Other councillors noted that Culvercliffe could be a suitable location and emphasised the benefits of providing a pump track within the town. It was acknowledged that, irrespective of the eventual site

selected, there was merit in further exploring the project and the opportunities it could provide for local residents.

Following discussion, it was recognised that the Council was not in a position to reach a view on a preferred site at the meeting. Members agreed that further appraisal of the available options would assist future decision-making.

> **RESOLVED** that councillors meet informally prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to review the updated business case and undertake an initial appraisal of potential locations, including their respective advantages, disadvantages, constraints and opportunities. Following that review, a report setting out the findings of the informal appraisal shall be prepared and presented to Full Council to inform its future consideration of the proposal.

2026/170. Accounts ***Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015***

i. To note Payments made in September.

A question was raised regarding two invoices relating to flagpoles. The Clerk advised that, as part of the devolution agreement between Somerset Council and Minehead Town Council, responsibility for the seafront windsock flagpoles had transferred to the Town Council. One invoice related to the required LOLER inspections, whilst the second covered repairs identified as necessary following those inspections.

The payments made in September were **noted.**

ii. To note budget income & expenditure reports for September.

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

iii. To note income receipts for September.

The income receipts for September were **noted.**

iv. To note bank reconciliations for September.

Councillors M Palmer and Lawton confirmed they have continued to undertake councillor account spot checks, with inspections now completed up to April 2026. The update was **noted.**

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

2026/171. To receive and note the mid-year financial report on the 2026/27 financial year.

The Deputy Clerk & RFO presented the mid-Year Financial Report for the period 1st April to 30th September 2026. Members noted that the Council's overall financial position remained positive, with income and expenditure generally progressing in line with budget expectations for this stage of the financial year.

The report highlighted several income streams performing ahead of budget and identified a number of budget variances, including increased vehicle maintenance costs, vehicle replacement expenditure and higher refuse and recycling costs. It was noted that these pressures were expected to be offset through underspends in other budget areas and additional income generated from Council assets.

Councillors commented favourably on the Council's financial position and welcomed the positive mid-year outlook. The mid-Year Financial Report for the period 1st April to 30th September 2026 was **noted.**

2026/172. To consider an application for a Councillor co-option to the Minehead North Ward of Minehead Town Council ***LGA 1972 S 87 & Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 2006 r 5***

The Council considered an application for co-option from a member of the public. The candidate addressed Members, outlining their reasons for wishing to join Minehead Town Council.

Following the presentation, Members voted to suspend Standing Orders. The candidate and members of the public were then asked to leave the meeting to allow Councillors to discuss the application.

The candidate and members of the public were invited to return to the meeting. Councillors then voted to reinstate Standing Orders and determine the matter by vote.

> **RESOLVED** that Mr Jon Pattison be co-opted to Minehead Town Council to represent Minehead North Ward.

Following the completion of the Declarations of Acceptance of Office, which were duly signed and witnessed by the Clerk as Proper Officer of the Council, Councillor Jon Pattison took his seat and joined the meeting as a Councillor.

2026/173. To receive a report on the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation; to undertake the six-month review of these policies as resolved by the Council in April 2026 and to consider their re-adoption.

Members reviewed the findings of the six-month review of the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation. It was noted that the changes adopted in April 2026 have improved operational efficiency, strengthened governance arrangements and reduced delays in routine decision-making. Members considered a proposed amendment to Financial Regulation 6.8(iv) to permit officer transfers between Council-owned bank accounts for cashflow and treasury management purposes, subject to reporting to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

> **RESOLVED** that council approves the replacement of Financial Regulation 6.8(iv) with the wording set out in the report, confirms that the current Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation remain fit for purpose and undertakes future reviews through the Council's normal annual review process.

2026/174. To receive a report from the Deputy Clerk on play area provision within Minehead and to consider future priorities and next steps for the development of play facilities in the town.

Members received and considered a report prepared by the Deputy Clerk regarding play area provision across Minehead. The report reviewed all twelve play areas within the town, including those transferred from Somerset Council in 2025, and highlighted significant variations in usage levels between sites.

The report outlined a proposed long-term strategic approach focused on prioritising investment in the most frequently used and accessible play areas, reviewing sites with lower levels of use and exploring opportunities to enhance facilities and engagement for older children and young people.

During discussion, a question was raised regarding the independent observation figures contained within the report. The Deputy Clerk explained that the usage data had been compiled from observations undertaken by a range of local residents and volunteers, including regular users of open spaces such as walkers and dog walkers. It was noted that this information had been gathered over an extended period, originating from preparatory work undertaken when devolution proposals were first being considered. Whilst the figures provided a useful snapshot of play area usage, Members questioned the extent to which they reflected overall use across the year.

Councillors suggested that a town-wide user survey should be undertaken to gather feedback from residents on which play areas they use, how frequently they use them, and what improvements they would like to see. Members considered that such engagement would provide valuable evidence to inform future

investment decisions and help identify gaps in current provision. It was further noted that any future review should actively engage parents, schools and young people to ensure that facilities meet the needs of the community.

There was broad agreement amongst Members that the report was not about implementing a programme of closures, but rather as an opportunity to develop a long-term strategy for improving play provision across the town. Councillors recognised that play areas are costly assets to maintain and replace and therefore considered it important that future investment is directed towards creating high-quality, accessible and sustainable facilities that deliver the greatest benefit to children and families.

The Deputy Clerk was thanked for the work undertaken in preparing the report. Councillors commented that the report had provided a helpful and evidence-based overview of current provision, assisted in identifying strengths and gaps within the network of play areas and helped focus future discussions on strategic priorities.

Councillor Kravis left the meeting at 20:55.

It was proposed and seconded that a Play Area Working Group be established to consider the future provision of play facilities within Minehead, undertake further review and stakeholder engagement and develop recommendations for future investment and improvements.

> **RESOLVED** that a Play Area Working Group be established to consider the future provision of play facilities within Minehead and to report recommendations to Full Council.

The Chair then invited nominations for membership of the Working Group.

> **RESOLVED** that Councillors Jeffery, Basketfield, Jewell, Maycock, Beynon, Bonar, Pattison and M. Palmer be appointed to the Play Area Working Group.

Councillor Kravis rejoined the meeting at 20:59.

2026/175. Christmas Lights and Christmas Event

i. To receive an update on the Christmas Lights Contract and associated arrangements.

Members received an update on the Christmas Lighting Contract and noted that a discrepancy had been identified between the Council's expectation and the contractor's interpretation regarding the number of centre motifs to be installed along The Parade. Following negotiations, agreement had been reached to provide the full complement of 36 motifs (18 twin displays) for an additional annual cost of £1,250 plus VAT, significantly below the contractor's original quotation. Members noted that the revised annual contract value will increase from £16,210.53 to £17,710.44 inclusive of VAT and that future Christmas lighting budgets will need to reflect this ongoing commitment. The update was **noted.**

ii. To receive an update on arrangements for the Christmas Light Switch-On Event, review current expenditure against budget, and consider the approval of any additional expenditure required.

The Clerk prepared a report updating on preparations for the 2026 Christmas Event and it was noted that planning is progressing well, with arrangements largely in place. Particular attention has been given to event safety and pedestrian management, resulting in an extended road closure area covering Friday Street and Park Street in addition to existing closures. Members noted that competitive traffic management rates had been secured and that a two-year road closure order had been obtained, providing greater certainty for future event planning.

It was further noted that £3,421.83 of expenditure had already been committed to essential compliance, safety and traffic management requirements. In order to provide flexibility for entertainment, marketing and community activities, Members were asked to consider additional expenditure of up to £1,500, if required, to support the safe and successful delivery of the event.

> **RESOLVED** to authorise additional expenditure of up to £1,500, if required, to support the safe and successful delivery of the event.

2026/176. To receive an update on the Blenheim Gardens Toilet Project procurement process and consider the appointment of a Councillor tender evaluation panel.

Councillors received an update on the Blenheim Gardens Toilet Project and noted that planning permission had been secured, the procurement process was underway, and contractor interest had been encouraging. Members were advised that tender submissions were due in November, with a further report and contractor recommendation to be presented to Full Council following evaluation.

The Clerk advised that Standing Orders require tenders to be opened in the presence of at least one councillor. Given the anticipated number of submissions, it was considered beneficial to establish a small member panel to assist with the review process and help identify a shortlist for Full Council's consideration.

The Chair invited interested councillors to put themselves forward.

> **RESOLVED** that Councillors Jeffery, Basketfield, Maycock, Lawton, Palmer and Pattison be appointed to a Member Tender Review Panel to assist the Clerk with the opening and review of tenders received for the Blenheim Gardens Toilet Project and to identify a shortlist for consideration by Full Council.

2026/177. To note the completion of the Limited Assurance Review (Sections 1-3) of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

The limited assurance review of Sections 1-3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the 2025/26 financial year had been completed, and the accounts had been signed off by the external auditor. The update was **noted.**

2026/178. To note receipt of the second precept instalment from Somerset Council and to authorise the transfer of funds between Minehead Town Council accounts.

Councillors noted that the second precept instalment had now been received. Members considered the transfer of funds into existing and new interest-bearing accounts to maximise investment income whilst maintaining sufficient liquidity to meet the Council's operational and budgetary requirements.

During discussion, it was suggested that officers continue to monitor the market for alternative accounts offering more favourable interest rates and consider whether larger balances should be held in accounts generating higher returns, subject to the Council's investment and treasury management requirements.

It was proposed and seconded that the transfers outlined in the Deputy Clerk's report be noted and approved in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and that the Finance and General Purposes Committee review the Council's investment strategy to ensure it remains appropriate and aligned with the Council's objectives.

RESOLVED that the transfer of funds to the Council's deposit accounts, as set out in the Deputy Clerk's report, be approved and that the Finance and General Purposes Committee undertake a review of the Council's investment strategy and arrangements.

2026/179. To Co-opt Councillors Jeffery and Maycock onto the Planning and Licencing Committee.

In accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, appointments of new Members to committees must be approved by Full Council.

RESOLVED that councillors Jeffery and Maycock be co-opted onto the Planning and Licencing Committee.

2026/180. To receive an update on staffing recruitment and associated vacancies.

The Clerk provided an update on the Head of Amenities and Assets recruitment process. Members were advised that a number of applications had been received before the closing date of 16th October 2026. The Staffing Sub-Committee had subsequently met to shortlist candidates, with interviews scheduled to take place on 28th and 29th October 2026. A further meeting of the Staffing Sub-Committee was scheduled for 30th October 2026 to consider the outcomes of the interviews and any recommendations arising from the recruitment process. The update was **noted.**

The meeting closed at 21:26.

Councillor Craig Palmer
Chair of Minehead Town Council
October 2026

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