



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 7.30 PM

a Remote, Virtual Meeting via "Zoom", streamed live on the MTC Facebook page

The Meeting was digitally recorded

Members are reminded that Council has a general duty to consider the following matters in the exercise of any of its functions: Equal Opportunities (race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability), Crime & Disorder, Health & Safety, Human Rights and Biodiversity

Present: Chair: Cllr T Bloomfield
Councillors: Cllr P Bolton* (Mayor), Cllr O Harvey, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer,
Cllr D Prosser (Deputy Chair), Cllr H Rose, Cllr T Venner*

(denotes Somerset West and Taunton District "SWaT" Councillor)*

Absent: Cllr B Mandley

Officers in Attendance: Ms S Rawle - Clerk
Mr B Howe – Deputy Clerk
Mrs M Swallow - Notetaker

Members of the Public and Press: 2 members of the Public
0 members of the Press

Cllr Bloomfield welcomed all to the Meeting.

992 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

There were no apologies for absence.

993 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY DISPENSATIONS
[In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members](#)

To receive and record any Declarations of Interest in respect of any matters included on the Agenda for consideration at this Meeting.

Member	Minute	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr Bolton	All	SWaT Councillor	2021	Remained present, spoke and voted
Cllr Kingston-James	994 & 995	Personal	2021	Placed in 'Waiting Room' - did not participate in discussion and did not vote
	1002	Personal	2021	Remained present, spoke and voted
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2021	Remained present, spoke and voted
Cllr H Rose	998	Pecuniary	2021	Placed in 'Waiting Room' - did not participate in discussion and did not vote
Cllr Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2021	Remained present, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS

None.

994 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION [Standing Order No 3e](#)

Mr Paul Fraser had requested the opportunity to speak at the Meeting in support of his family's request to Minehead Town Council ("MTC") for permission to install a gate from their land boundary onto Periton Playing Field.

At this point, Cllr Kingston-James temporarily left the Meeting.

Cllr Bloomfield welcomed Mr Fraser to the Meeting and invited him to speak.

Mr Fraser thanked MTC for the opportunity to speak on behalf of his family.

He confirmed the wish to install a second access gate from their boundary fence onto Periton Playing Field, following the sale of a parcel of the property's land to his brother-in-law for the purpose of constructing a new personal dwelling (outlined planning permission granted) - with work to commence March/April 2021. As the gate is within the acquired land, in order to avoid any future legal right of way issues the hope is to install a new access gate on the back boundary fence appertaining to the existing property.

995 TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO INSTALL A NEW GATE ACCESSING PERITON PLAYING FIELD

Councillors were furnished with background paperwork to this item prior to the Meeting.

Cllr Bloomfield had viewed the area and confirmed that most adjacent properties had boundary gates accessing the Periton Playing Field. She had no personal objection to an additional gate, on the proviso that it would be of a similar construction to those in situ. Cllr C Palmer advised a technical point that full planning permission has yet to be given for the new property's construction, although he too has no personal objection to the gate.

Mr Fraser, in reply to Cllr C Palmer, confirmed that if full planning permission is granted the gate would become part of the overall schedule of works and therefore installed at some point within the project, not immediately.

As an MTC Councillor of twenty years standing, Cllr Venner added that he could not recall MTC previously receiving an application for private property access to public playing fields. He expressed reservation - fearing that by granting this request it could set a precedent and may 'open the floodgates' to other similar requests. In reply, Cllr Bolton added that he believed only two adjacent properties were without access gates on their boundary.

Cllr M Palmer requested clarification as to whether as "fields in trust" MTC does actually own Periton Playing Field and therefore has the legal right to make a decision on others accessing the land. She added that this must be clear before permission can be considered, although it could be possible to grant conditional permission in the interim. The Clerk advised Councillors that granting conditional permission during the Meeting was an option they could adopt if so wished but would thereafter check the relevant legal paperwork and report back as necessary.

Cllr Rose was mindful that property owners bordering The Parks Walk for example must pay the District Council for the privilege of access onto this public land and was concerned how they would view this matter - although she had no personal objection. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that there is no onus on property owners bordering Periton Playing Fields to pay a fee to MTC for their access. Cllr Venner supported Cllr Rose's point: SWaT requires property owners to apply for a 3-year licence and pay a £150 fee for this facility. He added that Councillors should consider the possibility that existing access gates to Periton Playing Fields may have been installed without legal authority.

In reply to Cllr Venner's concern, Mr Fraser confirmed that gate access by the surrounding properties already existed before the Periton Playing Field was put into trust.

Mr Fraser assured Councillors that if permission is granted the gate would be a similar construction to existing gates and MTC's approval of the proposed gate would be sought once the Council had had the opportunity to view the plan of such.

Cllr Bloomfield expressed her gratitude to Mr Fraser and his family for seeking permission from MTC as she was aware that historically it would appear other property owners had not sought permission before fitting an access gate.

It was proposed that Conditional Permission for the installation of this gate should be given whilst the legal position is established by the Clerk and on the proviso that the gate aesthetically resembles and is of a similar construction and size to all existing access gates.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Harvey
Agreed with 7 votes in favour and one abstention.

It was also proposed that in future no access gates bordering any MTC recreation area can be installed without the relevant permission being granted by MTC.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Prosser
Agreed with 6 votes in favour and 2 abstentions.

Cllr Bloomfield thanked Mr Fraser for attending the Meeting.

Cllr Kingston-James was then re-admitted to the Meeting.

996 TO CONSIDER AND RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO WORDING OF THE MTC PLASTIC-FREE MOTION

The Clerk referred Councillors to the paperwork made available to them in advance of the Meeting and continued with an overview.

The MTC "Plastic-Free" motion was carried at the Full Council Meeting in November 2019 and subsequently Cllr Harvey and Cllr Kingston-James were nominated MTC steering group representatives for this project. Representatives of "Plastic-Free Minehead" had recently contacted the Clerk to confirm that plastic-free status for Minehead is imminent. However, in order to meet one of the objectives, the "Plastic-Free" motion adopted by MTC requires slight amendment to the wording and the motion must be recorded in the Minutes.

The Clerk said it was important that the motion, with Councillors' names recorded therein, be recorded in the Minutes of that evening's Meeting - the motion was then read out:

- 1 MTC will lead by example and remove single-use plastics from its premises and operations.
- 2 That MTC will encourage plastic-free initiatives in the area by promoting the campaign and supporting events.
- 3 Cllr O Harvey and Cllr A Kingston-James are representatives of MTC to sit on the Plastic-Free Minehead Community Steering Group.

Cllr C Palmer felt it was imperative that MTC delivers on point 1 of the motion by removing the single-use plastic-lined cups available with the office's water dispenser. The Clerk agreed to investigate alternative environmentally-friendly options.

It was proposed that the motion as read by the Clerk be recommended to Full Council for adoption by MTC.

Proposed by: Cllr Venner **Seconded by:** Cllr Bolton
Unanimously agreed.

997 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

Cllr Bloomfield did not have anything to report for the preceding month.

998 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE CLERK ON MTC'S ALLOTMENTS

At this point, Cllr Rose temporarily left the Meeting.

The Clerk summarised the latest situation.

Updated Tenancy Agreements were despatched in November 2020. A total of 30 remained outstanding and seven allotment holders are yet to pay their fees for the 2020/21 tenancy year. The outstanding 30 tenancy agreements have been 'chased' since January 2021 - approximately 10 of which have been re-sent Tenancy Agreements on request - with assurances of completion and return. Of the remainder, it is known that some tenancy holders are abroad, but the remainder have ignored communications from MTC.

The Clerk informed Councillors that draft letters giving notice had been prepared in relation to these outstanding Tenancy Agreements, which she suggested should be despatched at the end of the week if replies were still awaited.

There are currently two vacant plots, with names on the waiting list who can be offered these.

The Clerk continued with information that some allotment holders had requested, following MTC's adoption of a no bonfires policy on allotment sites, that it provides a service to remove non-compostable waste. She asked for Councillors' comments on these matters.

Cllr M Palmer stated that the MTC Allotments Group should firstly consider the issue of waste and thereafter report to the Amenities and Environment Committee. Cllr Bloomfield agreed that a meeting should be set-up to discuss the matter and then report to the Amenities and Environment Committee as necessary.

Cllr Bolton asked the time limit given to non-payers, bearing in mind the waiting list of interested people wanting to become allotment holders. He also felt it was crucial the issue of burning waste was resolved at the Meeting as it may have a bearing on whether certain allotment holders renewed their Tenancy Agreements. The Clerk confirmed that non-payers had been given seven days' notice previously.

Cllr C Palmer emphasised that a no burning policy had already been passed. He felt that if some allotment holders required MTC to provide a non-compostable waste removal service the cost of this should be passed on to them.

Cllr Harvey was concerned that potentially non-organic, non-compostable 'rubbish' materials not permitted on site might be added to the waste by some.

Cllr Venner felt that non-payers were in breach of contract by non-payment within the permitted time limit and therefore had in effect terminated their own contracts. He asked for confirmation of the time limit quoted in the Tenancy Agreement. Cllr M Palmer confirmed that 30 days are allowed for payment and return of the signed Tenancy Agreement, but in view of the current pandemic and Lockdown restrictions this had been increased to 40 days.

The Deputy Clerk stated that a letter had been received from one allotment holder, asking that MTC considers the possibility of allowing the burning of waste on certain permitted days only. Cllr Bloomfield then read out the communication to the Meeting.

Councillors felt that as a policy of non-burning had been passed for all allotment sites this should not be deviated from at all and will remain a rule. This was established as part of

MTC becoming a greener Council; the Deputy Clerk confirmed that "green allotments" is specifically referred to as part of the MTC Green Priorities initiative.

Cllr Harvey stated that having worked an allotment in the past, he had never had the need to burn therefore felt that allotment holders use permitted alternative methods to dispose of waste.

Cllr Bolton added that for this season allotment holders could make use of the recycling centre in which to dispose of their non-compostable waste, with MTC to consider the providing of a removal service in future.

It was proposed that a non-burning rule remain in place for all Allotment Sites, in view of MTC's Greener Council priority, and for this season allotment holders must be responsible for removal of their own non-compostable waste.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton
Unanimously agreed.

Seconded by: Cllr M Palmer

Cllr Venner requested that 28 February be stipulated in the letter as the cut-off date. Cllr Bloomfield wanted a narrative added to the letter stating that if there is no reply by that date MTC will take back control of the allotment, clear the site and charge the cost thereof to that person - plus it will reserve the right to recoup the cost using the Small Claims Court if there is a failure to pay. The Clerk asked the Allotment Group to provide her with any desired amendments to the letter.

Cllr Bolton believed there was a clause in the Tenancy Agreement stating that an allotment holder cannot be evicted between March and November - therefore this action would need to happen before the end of the month. Cllr M Palmer confirmed that allotment holders have 30 days in which to pay and sign the agreement - upon failure to do so MTC can evict without notice. MTC is only required to give notice if there are plans for the site - that is relevant in respect of the planned clean-up for next winter, hence the letters with this detailed information to allotment holders last year.

It was further proposed that the draft letter to those allotment holders who have failed to return their signed Tenancy Agreements and payments should be finalised and despatched at the end of the week. Any amendments to the letter by the Allotments Advisory Group should be communicated to the Clerk by the end of the following day.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield
Unanimously agreed.

Seconded by: Cllr Kingston-James

Cllr Rose was then re-admitted to the Meeting.

999 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK ON QUAY WEST PARKING

The Deputy Clerk reminded Councillors that representatives from MTC had met with officers from SCC and SWaT during the latter part of 2020, where MTC vocalised its concerns regarding the Quay West area. Emailed responses from both the District and County Councils have recently been received, of which some MTC Councillors had had sight.

Within the responses it was reported that 20 signs will be placed along the Quay West area stating pay and display between the hours of 10.00 am and 6.00 pm, the Council's parking contract and advises the area is fully compliant with the Traffic Regulations Order. They continue to look at the issue of parking including motorhomes using the area.

Cllr Venner felt the report was unsatisfactory and did not address the issue of overnight motorhome parking as regulations will only be enforced between 10.00 am and 6.00 pm. It is six years since it was stated that Minehead would be the first area to be scrutinised in respect of the proposed Parking Review, and this is yet to be actioned.

Cllr Bolton informed Councillors he was in receipt of an email from Cllr Malin, who had suggested alternative action MTC could consider to progress this matter, and he would circulate that communication to Councillors if permitted by Cllr Malin.

He also believed that although some residents of Quay West have been granted permits and designated parking bays, this will not prevent motorhomes parking in such as there is no enforcement in place. The motorhome issue is the fundamental problem which must be addressed as a priority: the coach parking area could be made available for their use.

Councillors believed the Report did not address the important issues and could, in its current wording, create more issues by vehicles parking all along the seafront in breach of parking regulations as there would not be 24-hour enforcement. Councillors were also disappointed that the Parking Review, commissioned in 2015 and the subsequent request in 2018 for parking maps to be completed by MTC Councillors, had yet to be actioned - it was felt that this delay was unacceptable.

Cllr Venner asked that MTC's reply to SWaT and SCC should state that although grateful for the Report it is insufficient and requires more attention to the important issues.

It was proposed that this matter should be added to the Full Council Meeting Agenda for the Monday 22 February Meeting, where Councillors will have the opportunity to question both the SCC and SWaT Councillors present on how their respective Councils will progress this urgent matter.

Proposed by: Cllr Venner
Unanimously agreed.

Seconded by: Cllr Bolton

1000 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK ON DEMOLITION OF THE OLD FOOTBALL CLUB

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the contractor had completed all necessary work and left site that day. He added:

- Fencing to screen the car park from the ground should be completed within a couple of weeks.
- There is an area which requires filling-in soon, so a price for topsoil will be sought.
- Two double gates will be erected to replace the previous gates plus a pedestrian gate installed.

- The asbestos removal has been achieved, signed-off and the site is clear.

Cllr Bolton asked whether the ground had been left in a level condition; the Clerk replied that the Amenities Manager had harris-fenced the area, except the car park. There is an area available for spectators of football matches to use.

1001 TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE OF THE OLD SKATEBOARD RAMP

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the Half-Pipe Skateboard Ramp, acquired from Carhampton, has been in storage there for over a year due to the difficulties in MTC trying to find a suitable site for it. Watchet Town Council had expressed a desire to take possession and Councillors were asked to consider allowing this.

Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that she is still in consultation with the specialist concrete skate park company and she is currently awaiting their plans for this suggested new amenity. There are some possible areas being considered to accommodate this full concrete skate park. There is the possibility of grant funding for this project, plus Section 106 money specifically for recreational purposes. Cllr Bloomfield added that she had been approached to investigate the installation of 'grinding rails', so will research quotations for these.

Cllr Bloomfield then presented a visual display of grinding rail options to the Meeting.

When the quotations for these and the awaited plans from the company are received, they will be presented to Councillors at future Finance and Staffing and Amenities and Environment Committee Meetings.

Cllr Rose believed it would be advisable to ask possible users as to their equipment preference: Cllr Bloomfield replied that once the information was received this would be done via such means as Facebook or a 'survey monkey'.

Cllr Prosser expressed her disappointment that Minehead is not able to accommodate the Half-Pipe Skateboard Ramp and was hopeful that it would be sited in Watchet. She stated concern that the suggested new skate park should not be sited in the Irnham Road Recreation Ground due to the noise issue this would present from using grinding rails.

Cllr Bloomfield suggested that if the skatepark is permitted on a suitable site, a plaque could be displayed in memory of the boy whose tragic death prompted his family to donate the Half-Pipe Skateboard Ramp, as a respectful gesture.

Cllr Venner added that he was aware of a petition commissioned November 2020 and sent to SWaT for a skate park to be built within Galmington Playing Field: with SWaT appointing an officer to investigate the feasibility. As the budget for a skate park would be in the region of £100,000 to £300,000 Cllr Venner felt that Minehead, being within the same district, should be afforded the same consideration - adding that petitioning SWaT to support a feasibility study in regard to Minehead and West Somerset should be actioned. Cllr Venner stated that a skate park had recently been completed near to Galmington. Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that she had already approached a District Councillor to this effect.

Cllr Palmer clarified SWaT had stipulated that as part of the consultation funding would be sourced from other agencies.

It was agreed that a decision about the future of the Half-Pipe Skateboard Ramp had been in limbo for too long and agreement should be reached at the Meeting. The Deputy Clerk added that a decision was also necessary on whether to proceed with the concrete skate park: he confirmed that Community Officer Colin Johnson, who has experience of sourcing funding streams, could do so in this case too.

It was proposed that if the owners and donators of the Half-Pipe Skateboard Ramp agree, it should be donated to Watchet Town Council. Also, that MTC should proceed with the concrete skate ramp once locations and funding streams are established - and investigate the possibility of installing grinding rails within.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton **Seconded by:** Cllr Bloomfield
Agreed with 6 votes in favour, 2 against and one abstention.

1002 TO CONSIDER CEMETERY FEES AND REGULATIONS FROM APRIL 2021

The Deputy Clerk referred Councillors to the accompanying paperwork circulated prior to the Meeting.

It was confirmed that the Finance and Staffing Committee made a recommendation on fees at their Meeting the previous evening, but it was necessary for the Amenities and Environment Committee to agree regulations.

The Deputy Clerk explained that there were very few proposed amendments, but the most significant being the use of different stone within the Garden of Rest.

Cllr C Palmer queried the wording in the section concerning residence within the town and felt it was ambiguous; the Deputy Clerk agreed that it should be re-worded - there had been some difficulty writing this correctly in regard to the double-fee system (for a non-resident of the town, or when residence has been less than a year).

It was agreed that the Cemetery Working Group would meet later that week to discuss the issue and consider the regulations document as a whole prior to the next Full Council Meeting.

It was proposed that it be recommended to Full Council that agreed fees and regulations are established from April 2021.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Prosser
Unanimously agreed.

1003 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK ON THE SITUATION REGARDING REFURBISHMENT OF THE SUMMERLAND ROAD PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that adverts had been placed in media sources. There had been around nine interested parties, but only three of those had submitted tenders - which had been seen by some Councillors. A meeting was scheduled for the following day to review these.

1004 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

CLlr Bloomfield concluded the Public Meeting by thanking those viewing via Facebook.

It was resolved to exclude members of the press and public.

Proposed by: CLlr Bloomfield

Seconded by: CLlr Kingston-James

Unanimously agreed.

The Public Meeting ended at 9.00 pm.