



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 9 MARCH 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 H Rose, Cllr T Venner*
(denotes Somerset West and Taunton District "SWaT" Councillor)*

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

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

Cllr Bloomfield welcomed all to the Meeting.

1044 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies had been received from Cllr Kingston-James.

1045 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 C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2021	Remained present, spoke and voted
Cllr H Rose	1052	Pecuniary	2021	Placed in 'Waiting Room' - did not participate in discussion nor vote
Cllr Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2021	Remained present, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS

None.

1046 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2021

The Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record of the Meeting.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr M Palmer
Unanimously agreed.

1047 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION [Standing Order No 3e](#)

There were no requests to speak at the Meeting.

1048 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

Cllr Bloomfield reported to the Meeting:

- Minehead Town Council's ("MTC") Amenities Team continued to work laboriously during a difficult time.
- She had recently received her Covid vaccine and recommended uptake.
- Gratitude was extended to Cllr Danielle Prosser for her work and support whilst a Minehead Town Councillor and as Deputy Chair of the Amenities and Environment Committee. Sadness was expressed at her recent resignation from the Council, and she was wished well for the future.
- It was necessary to elect an interim Deputy Chair of Committee until MTC's Annual Meeting - when new Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs would be elected. Cllr Venner offered to assume this role temporarily.

It was recommended that Cllr Venner be elected as interim Deputy Chair of the Amenities and Environment Committee.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Bolton
Carried with 6 votes in favour.

1049 TO CONSIDER AN ACTION FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To receive from the Clerk verbal clarification regarding Minute 995: MTC's legal ownership status of Periton Playing Field as a 'field in trust' - in connection with the request to install an access gate from the boundary of a private property

The Clerk had consulted Fields in Trust regarding this matter: confirmation was received that the field is indeed in trust, however it was MTC's prerogative to decide whether to permit the access gate.

It was proposed that recommendation should be made to Full Council for authorisation of the access gate.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Harvey
Agreed with 4 votes in favour and 3 abstentions.

1050 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CEMETERY ADVISORY GROUP

Cllr Bloomfield referred Councillors to the Report from the Cemetery Advisory Group circulated prior to the Meeting and asked that they vote on the proposals contained therein.

Recommendation 1: To replace the existing MTC Noticeboard and to provide three watering cans displaying the MTC logo as replacements for the old plastics containers currently available.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr M Palmer
Unanimously agreed.

Recommendation 2: To improve to a much higher standard, and over a period of time, the pathways within the Cemetery.

Proposed by: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded by:** Cllr Venner
Unanimously agreed.

These proposals to be recommended for Full Council's approval.

1051 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM CLLR BLOOMFIELD REGARDING MATTERS CONCERNING THE POTENTIAL INSTALLATION OF A CONCRETE SKATE PARK AND TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE PROGRESS OF THIS INITIATIVE

Cllr Bloomfield reported that a Meeting to discuss possible funding streams had recently occurred - involving herself, Cllr Bolton, Cllr Kingston-James, the Deputy Clerk and Community Officer Mr Johnson.

When established, the Steering Group for the envisaged project should firstly undertake a feasibility study, to encompass such matters as necessary equipment and a suitable location - the results of which to be presented at a future Full Council Meeting. This group should comprise three MTC Councillors and seven to ten members from outside agencies - possibly to include the Minehead Eye, Young Somerset, Live West, the Police, two parents, a potential skate park user and a West Somerset College teaching member of staff.

Cllr Venner asked to be considered as a Councillor member of the Steering Group.

It was proposed that the Steering Group should be established, and the feasibility study commissioned.

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

At this point, Cllr Rose temporarily left the Meeting.

1052 TO CONSIDER THE EXTENSION OF THE HAREPARK ALLOTMENT SITE INTO THE ADJOINING TOWN COUNCIL OWNED FIELD - TO ACCOMMODATE THE HIGH DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENT PLOTS

The Clerk specified that following a recent Meeting of the Allotment Advisory Group it had become apparent that action was needed to address the waiting list for allotment plots: there were 43 names on the waiting list, some of whom have specified allotment sites and of those nine had specified the Harepark Terrace site.

MTC owns a field adjacent to the Harepark Terrace site which could be worked by the Amenities Team later in 2021 to accommodate further allotment plots - historically, it had been used for at least one plot. These in theory would then be ready for the November 2021-2022 allotment year.

Cllr Bolton felt it wise to utilise the vacant land as earning potential when it is currently costing MTC with no return.

Cllr Venner urged caution as he recalled it not being the most fertile land for this purpose and would require considerable work to bring it up to standard. He stated that firstly existing plots should be revisited and checked to be suitable as a few of these may become vacant once notice is given to non-compliant allotment holders. The waiting list should firstly be addressed in this manner.

Cllr Harvey was concerned that a delay would be unwise considering such a long waiting list and action should be taken to utilise the empty field as soon as practicable. Cllr C Palmer echoed Cllr Harvey's view.

It was proposed that recommendation be made to Full Council that the Harepark Allotment site be extended into the adjoining MTC owned field.

Proposed by: Cllr Harvey **Seconded by:** Cllr C Palmer
Agreed with 5 votes in favour and 1 against.

Cllr Rose was then re-admitted to the Meeting.

1053 TO CONSIDER THE CURRENT POLICY ON BANDS PERFORMING IN BLENHEIM GARDENS

The Deputy Clerk advised Councillors that with the proposed Government Lockdown restrictions due to be lifted in June, it was perhaps a good time to consider once again booking music acts to perform on a Saturday and Sunday afternoon - ideally from Sunday 4 July. This should not be delayed as there had already been numerous enquiries from bands and sufficient notice is required to book these in diaries and for the necessary rehearsals. The Deputy Clerk clarified that as in previous years it would probably be rock genre music on Saturday, with 'lighter' band music on Sunday.

Cllr Bolton could see no reason why this would not be possible when national music festivals were planned for Summer 2021. Cllr Venner agreed and said it was important to show support to bands after such a difficult period when they had been unable to perform. He

added that MTC should formulise a plan for an eight-week period of musical performances in Blenheim Gardens from the first week of July and consider planning for the Autumn/Winter period too.

Cllr Harvey, as a member of a London-based band, felt it important to consider a wider range of musical acts such as quartets. The Deputy Clerk agreed and asked for any recommendations.

Cllr Bloomfield suggested an 'Open Mic' type option for local performers on a Saturday afternoon using their own equipment, as this would be a good avenue to showcase local talent. The Clerk, although in agreement with this idea, did urge caution as assurance would be required of an artist's experience to perform. Cllr Bloomfield continued by suggesting that West Somerset College and local Dance and Performing Arts outfits could be contacted in that respect, and if it proved fruitful a charity donation could be made in lieu of the normal fee paid to acts. The Deputy Clerk agreed that the idea should be considered for pursuance.

Cllr Venner reminded the Deputy Clerk that contact would need to be made with SWaT to ensure that the bandstand would be available on the proposed dates and that it was important to ensure that if performances go ahead social distancing measures must be put in place and adhered to as far as possible, especially important for public who may remain wary of social mixing for the foreseeable future.

Cllr Bolton added that if bookings were made it should be borne in mind that there were at least two dates when other events co-ordinated by Gateway Events would prevent musical performances: the annual "Beacon to Beach" either in July or deferred until September and a Bank Holiday Weekend event. Dates would be confirmed to the Deputy Clerk as soon as possible.

It was proposed that Full Council should be recommended to approve the booking and performances of bands for an eight-week period from Saturday 3 July 2021.

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

1054 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE LOCATION OF NEW PICNIC BENCHES ON TOWN COUNCIL AMENITY LAND

The Deputy Clerk stated that the MTC Depot had been storing for a year six recycled plastic, wood-effect picnic tables and four benches, as the Covid-19 restrictions had prevented them from being installed. Following consultation with the Amenities Manager it was believed that allocation had been proposed as two tables to Irnham Road Recreation Ground, one to King George V Playing Field and the final one to Cross Farm Park Playing Field - and the benches - one at Cross Farm Park, one at Periton Playing Field, one or two at Marshfield Common and the destination of the remaining three to be decided. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that there would be additional cost incurred to provide concrete bases from which to bolt down the equipment for safety reasons. Councillors were asked for their opinions on exactly where the equipment should be sited.

Cllr Bloomfield requested that the Deputy Clerk provide her with this written information to assist her in her review of equipment in the Cross Farm Park and King George V Playing Fields, plus she would undertake a recce of the other areas for that purpose. The findings would subsequently be reported at the next Finance and Staffing and Amenities and Environment Committee Meetings.

Cllr C Palmer was concerned that concrete bases did not meet MTC's 'green credentials' but if it be necessary then a tender process should be followed before the work be commissioned. The Deputy Clerk agreed that this would be undertaken if it were decided to proceed this way, but alternative options for anchoring the equipment to the ground could be researched - which could be possible to do in-house by the Amenities Team. However, a contractor would have to be used if Councillors wished the equipment to be sited without further delay.

1055 TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE ENHANCEMENT OF PLAY EQUIPMENT AT CROSS FARM PARK AND KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD WITH S106 FUNDS

Cllr Bloomfield informed Councillors she had received information that funds totalling just over £41,000 were available for Community Sports and Recreation purposes, to be used by January 2022. The roundabout at Cross Farm Park Playing Field required replacement, and King George V Playing Field would benefit from further equipment - possibly of the sensory kind as the Nursery used this facility regularly.

Cllr Bloomfield stipulated that she was asking for Councillors' approval to liaise with the Amenities Team to progress this project, and for permission to apply for the funds on offer.

Cllr Bolton wished to emphasise that the money available had been specified for use in the Ellicombe area only - it was not permitted to purchase equipment for other areas in the town.

Cllr Harvey was concerned about safety checks on existing equipment: Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that Section 106 funds are not permitted for this purpose, however she would include safety checks on existing play equipment within MTC amenity land in her review.

The Deputy Clerk stated that the funds must be used to add to existing equipment and would be included on The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents ("ROSPA") regular safety checking list.

Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that she would report further to the next scheduled Finance and Staffing and Amenities and Environment Committee Meetings.

1056 TO REVIEW THE TOP TEN PRIORITIES

The Deputy Clerk reminded Councillors that the MTC Top Ten Priorities require consideration for the new financial year. A seminar at some point in the next few months to discuss the priorities, MTC's future, its vision for the next three to five years and a medium to long-term financial plan was necessary - preferably a physical meeting in the new Community Building if permitted.

Cllr Venner voiced his support for the Deputy Clerk's proposal and felt it imperative that it be scheduled as soon as possible after the Annual Meeting, during which elections would be held - then all sixteen Councillors could be involved in these important decisions. He added that a four to eight-year period of financial planning should be considered as a long-term 'package' was crucial.

Cllr Bolton reminded Councillors that unless the Government revised current legislation on Zoom meetings MTC will have no choice but to return to physical meetings. The Clerk added that in addition there would remain a restriction of no more than 30 persons meeting together at any one time and it appeared that Government was recommending Councils meet virtually to discuss any crucial and urgent business before regulations ceased on 7 May 2021 - therefore perhaps the Annual Meeting should be scheduled before that date.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that if the physical meeting could go ahead, as the technology was already available it would be live streamed from the venue via Facebook for the public's benefit. Future physical meetings would take this format, even when the public is permitted to attend meetings in physical form.

1057 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK ON THE SITUATION REGARDING REFURBISHMENT OF THE SUMMERLAND ROAD PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Deputy Clerk reminded Councillors that after agreement at the Full Council Meeting on Tuesday 22 February refurbishment would now proceed - with Ware Construction the appointed contractor. The work will commence in April 2021, with the anticipated completion in June 2021.

Both Male and Female toilets would incorporate disabled and baby changing facilities - with the existing disabled toilet and baby changing area to be converted into a store/plant room.

There would obviously be disruption whilst the work was completed, but it was anticipated that some form of temporary facility would be available for the public - plus the opening-up of the Blenheim Gardens Public Conveniences to counter-act this disruption as far as possible.

Internal plans and further information about the project would be displayed in the Summerland Room Office situated to the front of the Summerland Road Public Conveniences.

Cllr Bloomfield requested that the plans be uploaded to MTC's Facebook page and Cllr C Palmer asked that they be made available on MTC's website too.

1058 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 Bolton
Unanimously agreed.

The Public Meeting ended at 8.25 pm.