



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020 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 A Kingston-James, Cllr C Palmer\*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr D Prosser (Deputy Chair), 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

*Due to technical issues, Cllr Prosser was only in attendance for part of the Meeting.*

846 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE **LGA 1972 s 85 (1)**

Apologies were received from Cllr B Mandley and Cllr H Rose.

847 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	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr Bolton	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Remained present, spoke and voted
Cllr Kingston-James	7	Personal	2020	Remained present
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Remained present, spoke and voted
Cllr Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Remained present, spoke and voted

## DISPENSATIONS

None.

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

No requests to speak at the Meeting had been received.

### 849 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

Cllr Bloomfield confirmed the following:

- The Tennis Courts and Multi-Use Games Area ("MUGA") are currently closed due to the Covid-19 Second Lockdown and Government restrictions. The play parks and Adult Gym are still open as these have not been affected by the Government restrictions - the Adult Gym is similarly categorised as the play parks.
- Numerous issues have been encountered regarding the proposed installation of the Halfpipe Skate Ramp, but a concrete skatepark is being investigated. She has spoken with a company already used by MTC to provide playground equipment - who in turn provided her with details of another company they use to install concrete skate parks. Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that she has spoken with said company, who will provide a Representative to visit the possible location. Costs will then be scrutinised and possible funding streams, of which there are several possible, will be considered.
- She suggested that a "Motorhome Aire" could be situated in Minehead in an area not affecting local residents, which would be a possible solution to the issue of motorhomes congregating at Quay West. Space would be available for four/five motorhomes and provide all necessary facilities for a maximum three-night stay. This would obviously require a joint approach with SWaT and SCC.

Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that she would report further to Councillors at the following month's Amenities & Environment Committee Meeting.

### 850 TO DISCUSS A REQUEST FROM WEST SOMERSET CAR SCHEME PARTNERSHIP FOR A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO PROVIDE ELECTRIC COMMUNITY CARS

Cllr Bloomfield referred Councillors to the previously circulated information about the Scheme and confirmed that during the previous week some Minehead Town Councillors and Officers had met with representatives to discuss details.

This eco-friendly initiative is to support community transport for all ages in West Somerset - crucial during the Covid-19 Pandemic due to the suspension of community transport - using a seven-seater, Covid-compliant electric vehicle and supported by Disclosure and Barring Service "DBS" checked volunteer drivers. The hope is to fund three further electric vehicles to make this a viable and sustainable project, with the financial support of local Parish and Town Councils - plus additional funding to support mileage already agreed by SCC.

After some discussion, Councillors agreed the need for more comprehensive information before any decision can be made whether to move this matter forward.

Cllr Bloomfield stated that she would contact the Scheme Representatives to convene a presentation meeting with Councillors as soon as possible.

851 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK AS TO THE TERMS OF THE LEASE OF QUAY WEST PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Deputy Clerk gave background information to this item.

A five-year Lease was signed by MTC and SWaT on 1 October 2018. A break clause in the Lease giving 6 months' notice to end it had been confirmed by SWaT at that time.

The Deputy Clerk wrote to SWaT requesting clarification of this clause: this was following the Full Council Meeting in August 2020 when concern was raised about the demand on the facilities caused by Motorhome users parking in the vicinity overnight and it was deemed crucial that immediate action be taken to curb this. The communication also requested a site visit by representatives from both SWaT and SCC to discuss the various issues.

A reply had validated the break clause, but the other issues regarding over-use of the public conveniences and parking were not addressed at that time.

After Cllr Venner had raised the issue again at the previous Full Council Meeting, the matter had passed to SWaT's Chief Executive.

Cllr Venner continued by confirming that following recent further contact with SWaT Officers, there had been a joint decision with SCC that a meeting between MTC, SWaT and SCC will be convened to reach agreement on the outstanding issues. Once this meeting has taken place, details will be reported to Councillors.

The Deputy Clerk agreed to arrange this meeting, to include Ward Councillors and the Mayor. Cllr Bloomfield expressed her wish to be involved.

852 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK REGARDING THE CEMETERY AND TO DISCUSS THE REVIEW OF CEMETERY REGULATIONS

The Deputy Clerk confirmed the necessity for the Cemetery Advisory Group to meet and swiftly review the current regulations for the Cemetery.

There is a need to review and recommend regulations - including double fees, the charging rates for 2021/22, and any changes to choices of head stones - plus consideration of an alternative stone to be used for cremation plots. Any alterations/improvements will be included in the 2021/22 Budget.

Cllr Bloomfield requested that Cllr Prosser as Advisory Group Lead Councillor expedite the arrangement of a meeting.

853 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK REGARDING THE COMMUNITY BUILDING CAR PARK

The newly completed Community Centre, recently opened to the public, had been closed due to the Covid-19 Second Lockdown.

The adjacent car park is owned by SWaT. In the past year MTC secured two agreements: one to fence off part of the car park to build the Community Centre and secondly to fence off an area to enable safe demolition of the old building. During this time negotiations to allow MTC the lease of a section of the car park for free parking by users of the new Hall, Changing Rooms, Tennis Courts, Multi-Use Games Area, Children's Play Area and Adult Gym were ongoing.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed receipt of a "Heads of Terms" document from SWaT detailing the Lease and circulated to Councillors prior to the Meeting.

If MTC should wish to proceed with this arrangement it will provide three disabled parking spaces, two free electric charging spaces, and 15 free user spaces - plus a space for the Minehead Association Football Club minibus. The cost of the project will amount to rent for the spaces payable to SWaT per year, the marking-out of parking spaces and any legal costs. The rent will be financed from income from the Centre.

The Deputy Clerk requested that Councillors review the Heads of Terms Lease prior to further discussion at the next Full Council Meeting.

Cllr Venner expressed his reluctance to enter into a Lease at this time of the Covid-19 Pandemic and also with the uncertainty surrounding the proposed Unitary Authority: it could be cost wastage if MTC does eventually assume full responsibility anyway. He was also concerned that the free parking plan was open to abuse at this time and should therefore be stopped.

854 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK REGARDING GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR THE MULTI-USE GAMES AREA ("MUGA")

MTC has invested in resurfacing and refencing the MUGA. Originally funding was sought from Sport England to help with the project but due to various reasons this did not materialise. Sport England recently contacted MTC again with the news that funds are available to provide a grant for floodlighting of the area if required.

This would be low-cost LED lighting installed on top of the fencing in a way which will not be intrusive to local residents, but planning permission is necessary. This would enable the MUGA to be used throughout the winter months for, for example, evening Football matches. The Community Centre Promotion Officer is in favour of MTC adopting this offer.

The Deputy Clerk understood that the project would be fully funded by Sport England with no cost to MTC and was therefore requesting that Councillors consider the recommendation to Full Council that in principle the project should proceed.

Cllr Bloomfield wondered whether the lighting scheme could be extended to cover the tennis courts. The Deputy Clerk thought there would probably be insufficient evening demand for this facility but would investigate.

Cllr Venner believed this to be an excellent idea and benefit to the town but emphasised the need to be mindful that local residents are not affected by light pollution. He felt that the Community Centre Promotion Officer should be asked to investigate further.

***After some further discussion it was proposed that recommendation be made to Full Council that it approves the Community Centre Promotion Officer seeking the available funding for the project. The Community Centre Promotion Officer will be invited to attend the next Full Council Meeting.***

**Proposed by:** Cllr Bloomfield                      **Seconded by:** Cllr Venner  
**With 5 votes in favour and 2 abstentions.**

855 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK ON REFURBISHMENT PLANS FOR THE SUMMERLAND CAR PARK PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND OPENING HOURS OF BLENHEIM GARDENS PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

#### **Summerland Road Public Conveniences**

The Deputy Clerk referred Councillors to the two plans of the Summerland Road Public Conveniences already made available to them: one showing the existing Block and the other the proposed upgraded Public Conveniences - the latter plan drawn-up by a local architect after being appointed by MTC to carry out a survey. As Councillors are aware, MTC owns these Public Conveniences and has budgeted £50,000 for the necessary upgrade.

The proposed plan includes:

- Solar panels on the roof to provide electricity, made possible by removing the old sky lights and replacing with a solid roof.
- The possibility of rain harvesting.
- Incorporating disabled toilets/baby changing facilities in both the male and female areas and to change the use of the current disabled/baby changing facilities to a plant room/store. The access to the male public conveniences will be widened to allow for disabled access.
- Larger cubicles in all toilets.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that this is at an early stage and planning permission will be required - the Advisory Group will keep all Councillors up to date. If approved, this will go out to tender.

Cllr M Palmer expressed her hope that water costs would reduce with the installation of the proposed new eco facilities.

It was suggested that the old and proposed new plans be made available for Facebook viewers to see, and Cllr Bloomfield facilitated this during the live stream.

Cllr Bolton was concerned that the proposed two sets of disabled facilities, rather than the existing one, would put pressure on a limited budget and could not see the logic in this. He suggested that a unisex facility would perhaps be the better option. Cllr M Palmer explained that the additional proposed facility was not specifically for disabled access, but more over a 'less able' facility where a handrail would be provided and sufficient space for users of mobility aids.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that an alarm system would be installed in the disabled facilities.

The Advisory Group will review and report back to Councillors at the next Amenities & Environment Meeting.

***At this point Cllr Venner left the Meeting for personal reasons.***

#### **Blenheim Gardens Public Conveniences**

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that it is normal practice to close these Public Conveniences during the winter months, however it has been requested that these facilities stay open during the Covid-19 Second Lockdown period. He informed the Meeting that following some recent blockage issues due to users attempting to flush away non-flushable products, Hi-Tech Drains had made improvements to the drains which should hopefully at least reduce further issues of this kind.

***After some discussion and debate as to whether the Public Conveniences should be opened during the Second Lockdown period it was proposed that recommendation be made to Full Council that they should be opened on a reduced hours basis.***

**Proposed by:** Cllr M Palmer

**Seconded by:** Cllr C Palmer

**There were 3 votes in favour and 3 votes against: therefore, Cllr Bloomfield as Committee Chair had the casting vote and proposed that the motion should be carried.**

856 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE CLERK AND THE DEPUTY CLERK ON PLANNED MTC SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

The Clerk confirmed the following:

- The Summerland Road Office is officially closed but staffed each day with a different staff member working alone.
- The Amenities Team continue with their work, respecting social distancing as far as possible. Only one team member is permitted in the depot at any one time.
- Public Conveniences normally operating at this time of year remain open.

- Grass-cutting and litter-picking are continuing.
- Christmas decorations in The Parade: the Christmas trees will be erected at the end of November.

The Deputy Clerk explained to Councillors that a decision would have to be reached as to whether it was feasible to erect the usual small Christmas trees over the local shops if the current Lockdown is extended beyond 2 December and the non-essential shops inevitably have to remain closed. He has spoken with the Amenities Manager who confirmed that this would be a substantial amount of work - so Councillors would need to consider the practicality of the existing arrangement if the Government announces an extension.

Cllr Bolton expressed a view that there would be no merit in committing the Amenities Team to this task if the Lockdown continues as there will be no public access to the shops.

***It was proposed that Full Council be asked to grant delegated power to the Amenities & Environment Committee to decide this matter once the Government has reviewed the current Lockdown, scheduled to end on 2 December.***

**Proposed by:** Cllr Bloomfield                      **Seconded by:** Cllr Bolton  
**Unanimously agreed by the Councillors who remained in attendance.**

*Although not on the Agenda, the Deputy Clerk then used the opportunity to confirm the procedure for payment of allotment fees, as detailed in the letter and accompanying documentation recently despatched, for the benefit of any Allotment Holders viewing via the Facebook live stream.*

857 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

***It was then proposed to exclude members of the Press and Public.***

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

***The Public Meeting ended at 8.50 pm.***

858 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

None.