



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

held on Tuesday 11 August 2020 at 7.30 pm

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

The Meeting was digitally recorded

Present: Chair: Cllr T Bloomfield
Councillors: Cllr P Bolton* (Mayor), Cllr O Harvey, Cllr A Kingston-James (Deputy Mayor), Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr H Rose, Cllr T Venner*

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

Absent: Cllr B Mandley

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Howe – Acting Clerk
Mrs M Swallow - Note-taker

Members of the Public and Press: 1 member of the Public
0 members of the Press

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

Apologies were received from Cllr D Prosser (Deputy Chair) and approved by Councillors.

688 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 C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Remained present, spoke and voted
Cllr Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Remained present, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS

None.

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

There had been no requests to speak at the Meeting.

690 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

Cllr Bloomfield had no specific developments to report but invited Cllr Bolton to update Councillors on a matter pertaining to the Quay West public conveniences.

Cllr Bolton reported further to discussion at the previous Full Council Meeting, where it had been suggested that perhaps Minehead Town Council ("MTC") should consider closing these public conveniences to prevent the overuse of the Quay West Public Conveniences' water supply by numerous campervan owners parking in the area - if Somerset County Council ("SCC") are not prepared to take action from a highways perspective. A solution has now been suggested that MTC adjusts the public convenience opening times, to open later in the day and subsequently close later - which may curb this ongoing and contentious issue.

It was agreed that this matter would be referred to Full Council for discussion.

691 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM THE ACTING CLERK REGARDING PLANTERS AT THE RAILWAY STATION

The Acting Clerk referred Councillors to the approximately 20 planters on both sides of the entrance to the Railway Station. MTC supplies and maintains the plants within.

SCC originally installed these planters circa 20 years ago, as a barrier to prevent cars parking in those areas - but have failed to maintain them. Consequently, MTC has since replaced six/seven of the old planters which had disintegrated with recycled plastic versions for their superior longevity and water-saving quality.

The Acting Clerk has observed that the remaining 13 are also disintegrating and require urgent replacement - possibly with the same replacement containers installed by MTC. To undertake this would cost about £180 each, around £2,300 in total. Councillors must decide if this course of action is acceptable, and, if so, whether to replace all immediately or perhaps in stages.

SCC could be asked to contribute to the cost, as could Minehead Business Improvement District ("BID").

Cllr Venner confirmed that when the area was redeveloped around 20 years ago SCC financed the cost of this, with the agreement that they would assume responsibility for the first three years. MTC's assumed initial responsibility was for planting the containers, not maintenance or replacement thereof, but approximately 10 years ago MTC took on full responsibility under a licence - and this licence provided to MTC by SCC allowed the maintenance of all planters and payment of all flowers within each year. This should have been reviewed every 12 months.

Cllr Venner raised environmental concern about the installation of plastic containers as replacement for the wooden versions, but was accepting of recycled plastic planters when

Cllr M Palmer assured him of this fact and the benefits they have - as already demonstrated in the installed replacements.

The Acting Clerk added that he felt it important the replacement planters should match those already replaced.

Graham Sizer of Minehead BID soon joined the Meeting and confirmed that he was happy to propose to his BID colleagues that BID contributes to the cost of purchasing these replacement planters.

In conclusion it was suggested that firstly the licence agreement with SCC must be checked to establish its validity and then perhaps SWaT be asked to consider a financial contribution to the replacements, in addition to Minehead BID.

It was proposed that in principle MTC supports this replacement suggestion once the situation with the licence agreement has been established.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton

Seconded by: Cllr Bloomfield

Unanimously agreed.

692 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE HOPCOTT COMMON ADVISORY GROUP

Cllr Bolton confirmed that the Advisory Group were going to meet with the appointed Contractor to discuss the extent of the work to be undertaken - including the cutting-back of heather and the marking-out of the land boundary. It has been suggested that the definition of MTC's land would be best served by installing posts.

The Advisory Group plan meeting with a representative of Natural England and a naturalist with knowledge of the rare species of butterfly frequenting the area, and to discuss the extent of the necessary management of the land. Cllr Bolton reminded Councillors that MTC receives funding for this project, so it is vital to demonstrate that the funding criteria is being met. A meeting between all parties involved in the project is the best way to manage moving this matter forward.

Cllr Rose requested that she be part of this planned meeting.

693 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM THE ACTING CLERK REGARDING NEW POWER SUPPLIES FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTS REGULATIONS

Lights are provided in the central aisles of The Parade, which have been upgraded in recent years to provide power there - with assistance from Minehead BID.

Every year MTC provides a Christmas tree for Wellington Square, the lights of which have previously been powered by the St Andrew's Church power supply - which is not ideal and has health and safety implications. Councillors have recently agreed that a dedicated metered power supply needs to be installed in Wellington Square, which could serve as a multi-use facility - to be completed before December 2020.

Park Street, Friday Street, Blenheim Road and Alcombe are presently powered from shop supplies via their windows, again a potential health and safety issue which should not continue.

In attempting to resolve this matter, the Acting Clerk reported that he has recently had town site meetings with Western Power to formulate a solution. Western Power has emphatically refused the allowance of 'tapping into' existing supplies for the bollards, street lighting etc, so as an alternative to this Western Power was asked to quote for providing a new power supply to the necessary six areas; around £3,000 per supply, approximately £18,000 in total, which the Acting Clerk feels is too costly.

Western Power suggested as an alternative to this - that MTC liaises with the relevant shop proprietors in the vicinities to request a Christmas Lights power supply be sourced via their main existing shop supplies. This could be routed to the front of the building with a weather-proof plug and will of course be metered. The Acting Clerk confirmed that if this was feasible, MTC would pay for its installation and provide a gesture amount to the shops for any inconvenience caused. MTC will then be responsible for funding this supply on an annual basis. Some shops have already been approached with this idea, with a positive verbal response.

MTC's appointed Electrical Contractor has agreed to carry out a site visit and discuss with the proprietors the nature of the necessary work, and then provide MTC with a price to complete. At present there is no idea of the total cost of this option, as it depends on the amount of work necessary - for example there would be added cost bringing the power through to the front external of a shop if the consumer unit is situated at the rear.

The Acting Clerk confirmed that prior to Lockdown the aim was to carry out this work in the main town, Parade and Avenue area, but that plan is now on hold. However, it is something that Minehead BID could progress next year.

Cllr Harvey confirmed that it would be necessary to install a separate consumer unit for each supply, to avoid any possibility of tripping the shop's main supply.

Cllr Venner felt that MTC should seriously consider funding the new supply to the six areas as quoted by Western Power, perhaps on a staggered basis, as this would give MTC full control and therefore possibly be the most sensible option in the long-term. There are sufficient funds to action this.

The Acting Clerk stipulated that the situation needs to be carefully considered; the new supply already agreed for Wellington Square is crucial for the tree lighting and may prove a multi-use system, but a new supply for the necessary six areas would probably only function for Christmas lighting so it is important to weigh-up whether this overall cost justifies a possible single annual use.

It was proposed that the 'shop option' power supply should initially be explored to ascertain the cost in comparison to the dedicated power supply option. These findings should then be presented to the Finance & Staffing Committee and the Amenities & Environment Committee respectively - and then to Full Council.

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

Cllr Venner requested permission to seek financial support from Minehead Bid for this project, by way of a partnership. This was agreed.

Cllr Harvey also requested permission to liaise with MTC's Electrical Contractor regarding some continuing electrical issues in The Parade area. The Acting Clerk confirmed that this was acceptable.

It was further proposed that Cllr Venner approach the Directorship of Minehead BID regarding the possibility of working in partnership with MTC on this project.

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

Cllr Venner concluded by mentioning a contact he had received from a Paganel Rise resident who wishes to remove a roughly 24 feet high Norwegian Spruce Christmas Tree on her property. He would like a member of the MTC Amenities Team to attend the property with him to ascertain whether it would be suitable for use in Wellington Square for this Christmas season - approximate cost £150. It was agreed that this was worth pursuing.

694 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE ACTING CLERK REGARDING THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Acting Clerk provided an update on general developments:

- At the last Full Council Meeting it was agreed to delegate power to the Community Centre Advisory Group to spend a maximum of £30,000 purchasing items to complete the Centre.
- Outstanding issues are:
 - the paths around the Centre;
 - the patio area;
 - the area outside the garage and some others to be concreted;
 - benches in the Changing Room to be ordered and fitted; and
 - fencing and gates around the area need to be installed and hedges be tidied.
- The budget covers other areas to include chairs, tables, kitchen equipment and final fitting ready for opening.
- The Acting Clerk reported that the Advisory Group has authorised the path and patio work, which will be undertaken by C J Lynch Builders - who are already on site carrying out ground work for the lighting and Adult Gym with a view to hopefully commencing work week beginning 17 August.
- A specialist floor cleaning machine has been ordered.

- Prices for removal of the hedges at the front of the building are being explored, with a view to fencing and gating the perimeter.
- Changing room benches to be sought.
- A meeting with the Project Manager was held on Monday 10 August in order to carry out the 'snagging list'. There are presently several items on this list, the most serious being a substandard finish to the suspended floor. Instruction to rectify this has been given and the finished colour will also be darkened as requested. It is estimated that at least a week will be required to remedy the issues, which will necessitate revision of the planned date for MTC to take possession.
- The Acting Clerk has met with representatives of the Football Club - legal papers are in place and they will sign the lease and licence to use the building.
- The temporary fencing around the site will remain in situ until work is complete.
- The estimated opening date of the Centre is mid-September.
- The remedial work necessary to the Multi-Use Games Area ("MUGA") and Tennis Courts within the Irnham Road Recreation Ground has been completed, and these will re-open once the paths surrounding the area have been finished. It is hoped to open those in around two weeks.
- Work on the LED lighting has commenced - pylons to be installed on 17 August.
- Demolition of the old building is underway, with specialists removing the asbestos within - anticipated completion date end of September.
- The Acting Clerk has also corresponded with SWaT regarding the possibility of leasing 20-25 spaces in the Alexandra Road car park - those spaces facing the new Centre and where the old building stood. This request has received a positive response. Negotiations regarding rent will be necessary.

Cllr M Palmer enquired whether the roots of the hedging will also be removed, her concern being that if left these could cause damage. The Acting Clerk confirmed that he would check this.

Cllr Bloomfield expressed her admiration for the new Centre following her recent site visit.

The Acting Clerk suggested that some thought should be given to organising a ceremonial Open Day, and this should probably be considered at the Full Council Meeting on Tuesday 25 August. Cllr Bloomfield suggested that the Advisory Group should be tasked in formulating this, accounting for Covid-19 safety guidelines. A social media 'virtual tour' is another possibility.

695 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Cllr Bloomfield firstly thanked Graham Sizer for his attendance.

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

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

Cllr Bloomfield concluded the Public Meeting by thanking the public viewing via the Facebook streaming service, which was then ended at 8.14 pm.

696 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

It was proposed to end the Meeting at 8.40 pm.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Kingston-James
Unanimously agreed.