



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 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 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 O Harvey

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

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

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

Apologies were received from Cllr A Kingston-James and Cllr B Mandley and approved by Councillors.

793 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 H Rose	7	Personal	2020	Remained present but did not speak nor vote
Cllr Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Remained present, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS

None.

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

Cllr Bloomfield welcomed Mr James Mason to the Meeting, who had requested to speak in connection with item 7 on the Agenda.

795 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIR'S VERBAL REPORT

Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that there was just the one item to be reported at the Meeting: that MTC is now awaiting receipt of official Health & Safety advice before the Half-Pipe Skateboard Ramp can be installed.

796 TO DISCUSS THE FREE TREES OFFER TO THE DISTRICT'S PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS BY SWAT, AS PART OF THEIR CARBON NEUTRAL INITIATIVE

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that Councillors had been circulated with the information about this initiative prior to the Meeting.

Cllr M Palmer added that she had investigated further this offer of free trees up to the value of £50. Councils can choose from Oak, Beech, Lime and Hawthorn saplings at a height between 170-190 cm, and the offer also includes stakes, ties and guards. They could be purchased and then grown further at the MTC Depot until they are at a suitable height to be planted where needed in the Town. Councillors discussed this further and suggested various places where the Town could benefit from the planting.

Cllr Venner expressed his hope that SWaT would prioritise replacing the tree which was blown down at the seafront during the recent storm: Cllr C Palmer confirmed that was indeed the case - SWaT will replace this tree with a suitable similar type at a height of between 3-3.5 metres during November.

It was proposed that it be recommended to Full Council that Cllr M Palmer liaise with the Amenities Team Manager to formulate a list of trees required.

Proposed by: Cllr M Palmer **Seconded by:** Cllr P Bolton
Unanimously agreed.

797 TO DISCUSS THE SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL "SOMERSET CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMUNITY FUND 2020-2021"

Again, Councillors had been provided with a background paper prior to the Meeting.

There are two rounds of applications for Councils to benefit from this scheme: the deadline for the first is the end of October and there will be another closing mid-January 2021, and the stipulation is one application per desired project - all up to the value of £75,000 - with SCC deciding which projects to fund.

Councillors and the Deputy Clerk discussed various possible projects:

- Cllr Bloomfield suggested 'rainwater catchers' for installation at the Allotment sites (SWaT Cllr Peter Pilkington would be able to advise).
- Working in conjunction with SCC, purchase of larger trees to replace those felled by SCC during 2019.
- The Deputy Clerk emphasised the importance of 'going green' on all MTC Amenities equipment and replacing as far as possible with electric options. He felt it imperative that a second electric amenities vehicle be purchased, and this scheme could fund that necessity.
- Solar panels fitted to the rooves of the Town's Public Conveniences to provide them with hot water was emphasised by the Deputy Clerk as another important option.

Cllr Venner added that he had spoken with SCC Cllr Mandy Chilcott, who had confirmed that registration of interest must be submitted by 31 October in the first instance. He suggested that MTC could work in partnership with Cllr Chilcott, in her Finance Councillor capacity, on achieving the best outcome from this scheme.

It was proposed that a recommendation be made to Full Council that in this first round application MTC should apply for funding to purchase a new Electric Vehicle, trees and solar panels - with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk working with the SCC Councillor to formulate the application.

Proposed by: Cllr Venner
Unanimously agreed.

Seconded by: Cllr Bloomfield

798 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE BY DELEGATED POWERS ISSUES REGARDING MTC ALLOTMENT SITES

Cllr Bloomfield invited Mr Mason to speak.

Mr Mason firstly thanked Cllr Venner and Cllr Rose for their replies to his recent correspondence. He had provided the Amenities & Environment Committee with details of the concerns raised on behalf of some of the Marshfield Road Allotment holders, who hold opposing views as to the proposed closure of the access gate, and invited the Committee to provide their response.

Cllr Bloomfield confirmed that the Allotments Advisory Group had visited all six Allotment sites on Friday 9 October and Marshfield Road the previous day, to assess the sites and access areas. She continued with a slide show presentation to the Meeting.

Cllr M Palmer, as leader of the Allotments Advisory Group, was invited to provide an overview to the Meeting.

MTC was contacted in August by some Marshfield Road Allotment holders who were concerned that the access gate could be a possible source of Covid-19 transmission. Cllrs M Palmer, C Palmer, Kingston-James, Harvey, Bloomfield and Bolton met with the Allotment holders, resulting in a decision being made to keep the gate open and a sign displayed to indicate the reason for this. Allotment holders were asked to report any unauthorised access or thefts, and thefts were reported thereafter. Following a further

meeting with Allotment holders regarding the theft issue disagreement between Allotment holders as to whether the gate should remain open or be closed was aired. It was agreed that as a result of the thefts the decision whether to keep the gate open would have to be reviewed at a Full Council Meeting.

Mr Mason then spoke about the issue of the recent thefts and reported that it had become evident that they were carried out during night time hours by children under the age of 15 whilst in the National Lockdown period earlier this year.

Cllr Bloomfield reported that during the Advisory Group's visit to the Marshfield Road site, it was discovered that a make-shift toilet had been illegally erected. As this is close to a water course it could present a substantial environmental issue so must be urgently disabled. It was noted that there appeared to be fly-tipping of rubbish too.

Cllr Bolton emphasised that the removal of the toilet must happen without delay as this could become an issue with Environmental Health, that rubbish (currently covered with green waste) must be removed and those allotments noted as neglected need to be addressed. He emphasised concern that drivers are currently using the open entrance to site to manoeuvre their vehicles and that allotment site gates should be kept closed as per the MTC policy, notices of which are clearly displayed on the gates.

Mr Mason was permitted to address the Meeting one final time where he stated that he felt there was a considerable risk of Covid-19 transmission from the gate, as researched from scientific evidence reported in a publication of the medical journal "Lancet". Cllr C Palmer replied that he had viewed this publication but discovered that an additional report in a more recent Lancet publication disputed that evidence.

After further discussion it was agreed to vote on the improvement Proposals for the Allotment sites, as demonstrated in the slideshow. At the Full Council Meeting on 5 October 2020 it was agreed to give dispensation to the Amenities & Environment Committee to vote and, if agreed, pass the resolutions.

Proposal 1

That the makeshift toilet at the Marshfield Road Allotment site be immediately condemned, use of it prohibited and it be removed by the MTC Amenities Team - to prevent any environmental damage.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton

Seconded by: Cllr C Palmer

Agreed and passed with 6 votes in favour and one abstention.

Proposal 2

- ***That the main gate at Marshfield Allotment site is kept shut, and the gate's locking mechanism is replaced with one easier to open and close. A hand sanitising station will be placed on the Allotment side of the gate for the use of all allotment holders. Hand sanitising stations to also be installed at the five other Allotment sites.***
- ***On the Marshfield Allotment site where there is vehicle access to the Allotments a Bollard Barrier with a key lock be installed in front of the main gate - this to be***

locked when the weather/ground is wet (MTC Amenities Team and Office to hold key).

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded by:** Cllr Bolton
Agreed and passed with 5 votes in favour one abstention and one against (*bollard only*).
Proposal 3

That the new Agreement formulated by Cllr M Palmer is despatched to all Councillors for consideration, with a view to adopting the Agreement at the October 2020 Full Council Meeting.

Proposed by: Cllr M Palmer **Seconded by:** Cllr Prosser
Agreed and passed with 6 votes in favour and one abstention.

Proposal 4

That initial allotment inspections are carried out as soon as possible by the Allotment Advisory Group. If it is deemed there is need for improvement, those allotments are revisited 28 days thereafter for further assessment. Allotment inspections will be undertaken by the Allotment Advisory Group every three months.

Proposed by: Cllr Bolton **Seconded by:** Cllr M Palmer
Agreed and passed with 6 votes in favour and one abstention.

All proposals were agreed and passed as MTC policy.

799 TO DISCUSS THE OPENING HOURS OF THE QUAY WEST PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Deputy Clerk believed that the implemented change to opening hours during the past two/three months had generally proved successful. It had discouraged over-usage by campervan owners parking nearby overnight and the issues this had presented - which had prompted the agreed temporary change in opening hours.

It was recommended that Full Council should consider at their October Meeting the return to normal opening hours.

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

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

800 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK REGARDING THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, ADULT GYM, TENNIS COURTS, MULTI-USE GAMES AREA ("MUGA") AND IRNHAM RECREATION GROUND

The Deputy Clerk gave his verbal report as follows:

Building

- It was reported at the Full Council Meeting on the 5 October 2020 that there was a 'snagging issue' with the Function Room floor. The floor was completed on time and the handover of the building to MTC took place on 14 September 2020.
- All other snagging issues have been resolved, apart from the fitting of the Bar and the discolouring of the paths - which are due to be finished on Friday 16 October.
- Minehead Association Football Club ("MAFC") signed the licence to occupy the Changing Rooms on 14 September and has regularly used this part of the building for weekend matches and mid-week cup finals in the evenings under the new floodlights.
- The lease to use the Bar area and garage has been sent to the Football Club, and it is hoped that this will be signed on 19 October 2020.
- The Function Room is already in use, but this is restricted due to Government Covid-19 guidelines.

Bookings

There has been much interest. Colin Johnson has secured regular bookings, and it estimated that secured annual bookings exceed £20,000 per annum: these include the rent from MAFC.

Demolition

Gilpin Demolition had previously ceased work after finding additional asbestos under the spectator stand in the roof of the Club House. Work is scheduled to recommence on 19 October 2020 - this will include the dismantling of the remaining old floodlight pylons.

Car parking

MTC is currently corresponding with SWaT regarding an arrangement where dedicated car parking spaces can be made available to users of the Community Centre. These spaces will encourage more people to use the facilities and they will also include dedicated spaces for members of the public to charge electric vehicles. The new electric dual charging station is fully installed and live.

Advisory Group construction phase

Gratitude was expressed to all MTC Councillors on the Community Building Advisory Group during the construction phase. Councillors are subsequently asked to consider dissolving the Advisory Group as its goal of steering the Community Building successfully through the construction phase has been achieved and instead to replace it with a "Community Centre Management Group" to oversee budgets and the running of the Centre.

801 TO DISCUSS A LETTER FROM FINE MEMORIALS

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the letter from Fine Memorials had been circulated to Councillors prior to the Meeting.

The letter was to inform MTC of a substantial cost saving if memorials are considered manufactured from Celtic Granite rather than the traditional Cornish Granite.

After some discussion Cllr Prosser, as leader of the Cemetery Advisory Group, agreed to set-up a meeting between the Group and the MTC Cemetery Manager to consider this change - and to report back to the Amenities & Environment Committee at their Meeting on 10 November 2020. In addition, Cllr Bloomfield agreed to visit Fine Memorials to view stone samples on behalf of MTC and the Cemetery Advisory Group.

802 TO DISCUSS AN EMAIL FROM SWAT REGARDING THE SEAFRONT PROJECT

The Deputy Clerk referred Councillors to the email received by MTC and despatched to them for their perusal.

The email confirmed the planned substantial improvements to the esplanade from the kiosk area opposite the Warren Road roundabout to the Golf Course area, planned for commencement during the Autumn/Winter of 2020-21.

Cllrs Bloomfield and Venner stated concern that following recent bad weather there appears to be a drainage issue along the seafront area which requires rectifying by SWaT as soon as possible. The Deputy Clerk agreed to write to SWaT to voice MTC's concern about the matter.

It was proposed that a recommendation be made to Full Council that SWaT be contacted in respect of rectifying the drainage issue at the seafront, and to emphasise the need for this remedial work to be done on a regular basis - plus MTC be consulted in respect of the proposed new shelters.

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield
Unanimously agreed.

Seconded by: Cllr Prosser

803 TO DISCUSS AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN BLENHEIM GARDENS CAFE

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that MTC had formally submitted an expression of interest to SWaT in respect of keeping the Cafe as a community base, but at the time of the Meeting a reply was awaited. This will be discussed further as an Agenda item at the next Amenities & Environment Committee Meeting in November.

Cllr Bloomfield suggested that SWaT be contacted again in the week prior to the October Full Council Meeting; the Deputy Clerk will action this.

804 TO DISCUSS THE SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL "£1 MILLION PREVENTION FUND TO IMPROVE LIVES"

Councillors expressed confusion about the dates stated in the paper detailing this Fund; the Deputy Clerk agreed that this required clarification by SCC and will contact Cllr Mandy Chilcott in that respect.

He agreed to report further information to Councillors at the October Full Council Meeting.

805 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Cllr Bloomfield concluded the Public Meeting by thanking the public viewing via the Facebook streaming service and Mr James Mason for his attendance regarding the Allotment agenda item.

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

Proposed by: Cllr Bloomfield
Unanimously agreed.

Seconded by: Cllr Prosser

The Meeting ended at 8.57 pm.

806 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There was no business to discuss.