



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6 DECEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 PM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, IRNHAM ROAD, MINEHEAD TA24 5DW

The Meeting was streamed live on 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 C Palmer\*

Councillors: Cllr M Burke, Cllr A Kingston-James, Cllr A Lawton (Deputy Chair),  
Cllr R Lillis, Cllr J Malin, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr H Rose, Cllr T Venner\*  
*(\* denotes Somerset West and Taunton District Councillor "SWaT")*

**Officers in Attendance:** Ms S Rawle – Clerk  
Mr B Howe – Deputy Clerk  
Mrs J Notley - Notetaker

**Members of the Press and Public:** 1 member of the public  
0 members of the press

**Councillors Absent:** Cllr O Harvey

Cllr C Palmer welcomed Councillors and Officers to the Meeting and the public watching on Facebook.

1377 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies had been received from Cllr T Bloomfield and Cllr P Bolton.

1378 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND ANY DISPENSATIONS  
[In accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 in respect of members](#)

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr A Kingston-James	1381.2	Personal	06.12.2021	Stayed in the room. Did not speak or vote
Cllr A Lawton	1386	Personal	06.12.2021	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2021	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr H Rose	1386	Personal	06.12.2021	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr T Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2021	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS [Localism Act 2011](#)

There were no dispensations requested.

- 1379 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2021 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**                      **Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James**  
**Agreed** with 7 in favour and 2 abstentions (Councillors absent).

- 1380 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION [Standing Order No 3e](#)

Mr Graham Sizer, Chair of Minehead BID, thanked Cllrs Lawton and Venner for being brilliant conduits between Minehead BID and MTC. He wanted to let Councillors know that Minehead BID was now in its fourth year and would start its final year in July 2022 before a re-ballot when the 240 levy-payers would have to decide whether BID had done enough to warrant support for another five years. It was bringing in roughly £100,000 per annum. He thought that the very successful partnership working, particularly with MTC would play a part in levy-payers' decisions. Mr Sizer took questions from Cllr Lillis and Cllr Venner. Cllr Venner also suggested that someone from Minehead BID should come to Council every six months to give a report.

- 1381 FINANCE

- 1381.1 *To approve urgent payments for December 2021*

Payments 1-6, totalling £31,389.70, including £19,806.95 for staff salaries.

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**                      **Seconded: Cllr Malin**  
**Agreed** with all in favour to approve the urgent payments for December 2021.

- 1381.2 *To approve payments under £1,000 for December 2021*

Payments 7-18, totalling £2,554.17

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**                      **Seconded: Cllr Lawton**  
**Agreed** with 8 in favour and 1 abstention to approve payments under £1,000 for December 2021.

- 1381.3 *To recommend to Full Council payments over £1,000 for December 2021*

Payment no 19, for £1,740

Cllr Venner said this payment was to do with an inspection and report on Wellington Square. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that Council had chosen to carry this out before applying to acquire Wellington Square. The report had flagged up one or two issues needing attention which SWaT would put right. He would send the report around to interested Councillors.

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr M Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour to approve payments over £1,000 for December 2021.

1381.4 *To approve payments by Procurement Card for November 2021*

Items 20-23, totalling £226.37

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr Burke**

**Agreed** with all in favour

1381.5 *To approve Regular Payments for November 2021*

Items 1-32, totalling £9,018.86

Cllr M Palmer queried item 10 relating to new watering points. The Clerk said this concerned the watering points in the centre aisles in The Parade and also at the Rugby Club corner which MTC solely had been using for a number of years, but SWaT had discovered that these bills had been paid by the old West Somerset Council. An agreement had been reached that these would be transferred to MTC as the payer as from April 2020. One of the points in The Parade had been found to be leaking for which the water company would give MTC a discount. The figure on the payment list did not include discount for the leak. MTC would be credited in mid-December with the sum of £1,309 and also an adjustment to the net figure of £250. Council would however need to approve payment of the full amount.

Cllr Lawton had noticed that whilst three sets of public conveniences water/sewage charges were monthly payments, two sets appeared to be six monthly. The Deputy Clerk told her that frequency of billing depended upon the actual amount of individual bills and they could be monthly, quarterly or six monthly. Cllr Lawton also said she thought that the Ladies' and Gents' toilets in Blenheim Gardens had been combined. The Deputy Clerk said that during the summer both toilets had been opened but the Gents' used a lot of water.

Cllr Lawton also queried item 19 which was a monthly charge for electricity at various sites. She asked if this could be itemised by site for Councillors in the future even if only on an occasional basis. The Deputy Clerk said he would get a breakdown of the charge.

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr M Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour.

1381.6 *To receive the Income Report for November 2021*

Councillors had seen the Income Report, for a total of £6,241.65. The Chair said the Income Report was noted.

1382 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2021

Cllr M Palmer confirmed that Bank Reconciliations had been satisfactorily carried out up to the end of November 2021.

1383 TO NOTE THE ACTIONS LOG

The Chair confirmed that the Actions Log was noted.

1384 TO RECOMMEND DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2022/23

Councillors had seen the draft Budget and Precept documents which had been gone through line by line at the Finance Seminar the previous Tuesday. Those present at the Seminar wanted to recommend to the Committee and Full Council that MTC possibly increase its precept by just over 4%. However, the Clerk had heard that SWaT had announced on the day of the meeting a change in the tax base which would affect calculations. It had been recommended to set the precept at £753,261, a 4.25% increase on the previous year. Cllr C Palmer said Council needed to maintain the level of service achieved in the past year in spite of the current inflation. He suggested that Full Council should consider proposed draft Budget and Precept but without a specified figure until the exact change in tax base was known.

Cllr Venner said it was most unfortunate that SWaT had changed the tax base already. It was difficult to set a Budget if Council did not know the correct tax base. He said clarification should be obtained from SWaT as soon as possible. Cllr Venner wanted the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to go back to SWaT and tell them how difficult it was to set a balanced budget if it wasn't made clear what the tax base was going to be. Cllr C Palmer reminded the meeting the late change of tax base had also happened in the past few years.

The Deputy Clerk said the proposed increase on a Band D property would probably be about £7 per year and Cllr Malin added that rather than quoting percentage increases it would be more helpful to say that the increase would amount to about 13p per week.

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr Lawton**

**Agreed** with all in favour to recommend to Full Council the draft Budget and Precept for 2022/2023.

1385 TO RECOMMEND MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL'S VISION AND PRIORITIES

Councillors had seen a draft Vision and Priorities document. Cllr M Palmer suggested amending the Recreational Facilities priority to include "and all abilities", to amend the Community priority to read "to promote inclusiveness and wellbeing" and to refer to the Unitary authority rather than Unitary local authority in the Community Assets priority.

Cllr Venner said he was very happy with the Partnership Working item but wondered if protecting heritage sites should be included with improving transport links, new attractions and facilities for residents and visitors. He thought it was possibly too many aims in one block. He said he was very keen on enhancing and protecting heritage sites and maybe this should be a separate item.

Cllr C Palmer said the list was not intended to be a list of separate items as had been produced previously but an attempt to amalgamate them as a series of aims which could be viewed together.

**Proposed: Cllr Lillis**

**Seconded: Cllr Rose**

**Agreed** with all in favour to recommend to Full Council, subject to the suggested amendments, the draft Vision and Priorities document.

1386 TO CONSIDER SMALL GRANT APPLICATIONS

1386.1 **Chamber Orchestra of the West**

This item had been deferred from the previous Finance & Staffing Committee meeting as Councillors were unsure of how it would benefit Minehead as the application was rather general. Cllrs Lawson and Rose had attended concerts put on by the Chamber Orchestra of the West. Cllr Rose said the quality of the music was superb and the Orchestra were playing in areas where previously residents would not have been able to attend their concerts, such as old people's homes and schools. This had benefitted Minehead.

**Proposed: Cllr Malin**

**Seconded: Cllr M Palmer**

**Agreed** with all in favour to award the full £500 grant to Chamber Orchestra of the West.

1387 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

**Proposed: Cllr C Palmer**

**Seconded: Cllr A Kingston-James**

**Agreed** with all in favour to continue the meeting *in camera* to discuss staffing issues.

The Public Meeting closed at 8.19 pm.

1388 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.