



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

held on Monday 11 November 2019

at the Council Offices: 3 Summerland Road, Minehead at 7.30pm

The Meeting was digitally recorded

Present: Chair: Cllr T Venner*
Councillors: Cllr P Bolton* (Deputy Mayor), Cllr A Kingston-James, Cllr A Lawton, Cllr J Malin, Cllr B Mandley, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr D Prosser, Cllr S Slade (Mayor)
(denotes Somerset West and Taunton District "SWaT" Councillor)*

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Howe – Acting Town Clerk
Mr A Giles – Acting Responsible Finance Officer ("RFO")
Mrs L Thornton – Finance Administrator and Note-taker

Councillor in Attendance: Cllr M Palmer

Members of the press and public: 0 members of the public
0 members of the press

286 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN
[LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies were submitted from Cllr T Bloomfield and Cllr N Hercock and accepted by Councillors.

287 TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
[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 P Bolton	All	SWaT Councillor	2019	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr Kingston-James	Agenda Item 294	Fees and charges concerning the Cemetery	2019	Stayed in the room, did not speak and no vote taken
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2019	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr T Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2019	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

(a) **Dispensations**

Dispensation for Cllr Slade as a cheque to her required authorisation.

288 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION

No members of the public were in attendance.

289 TO AUTHORISE CHEQUES

289.1 **To approve Direct Debit payments between 1 October 2019 and 31 October 2019**

Cllr Venner asked members to approve the Direct Debit payments.

Cllr C Palmer queried Initial rental costs for Minehead Town Council (“MTC”) and why there were two charges for the King George V Playing Field. Mrs Thornton answered this.

Cllr Malin queried high water bills for Quay West, possibly camper van use. Cllr Venner requested Mrs Thornton compare charges over the last couple of years and report back.

The camper van parking issue at Quay West will be addressed at the SWaT Parking Meeting.

Cllr Venner put forward the following proposals, which were seconded by Cllr Kingston-James and unanimously agreed:

- ***Direct Debit payments under £1,000 be approved***
- ***Direct Debit payments over £1,000 be recommended to Full Council for approval.***

Cllr Venner informed the Meeting that the Woodchipper payment had already been authorised in accordance with the provisions of Financial Regulation 5.5.1 – the Acting Clerk explained that the included VAT will be reclaimed.

289.2 **To approve payments under £1,000**

Cllr C Palmer asked for a review of the AR Computing Contract before renewal in April 2020. Some Councillors are still experiencing problems using email.

Cllr Venner proposed approval of cheques under £1,000, Items 2 to 12 on the listing – this was seconded by Cllr C Palmer and unanimously agreed

289.3 **To recommend to Full Council payments over £1,000**

Cllr C Palmer asked which areas are covered by weed control. The Acting Clerk requested this be deferred to the Amenities and Environment Committee Meeting on Tuesday 12 November 2019.

Cllr Venner proposed recommendation to Full Council cheques over £1,000 – this was seconded by Cllr Prosser and unanimously agreed.

290 TO APPROVE BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 OCTOBER 2019

The Acting RFO explained that although “To approve Bank Reconciliations” was included on this Meeting’s Agenda, the Committee had previously agreed that Cllr Bolton would attend MTC’s office once a month to do this.

Cllr Bolton agreed to report back to the Committee each month.

291 TO NOTE THE CIL ACCOUNT HAS BEEN CHECKED

The Acting RFO indicated that the CIL Account should read “CCLA Account”. To be reconciled by Cllr Bolton monthly.

The Acting RFO confirmed the balance as £507,074.30, interest varies as invested as shares.

292 TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT (2019/20 FIRST UPDATE)

- Cllr Venner asked the Acting RFO to explain the Audit Report. The Acting RFO asked that the Committee resolve to keep Auditing Solutions Ltd for this year and look at alternative options next year.

Cllr Venner proposed recommendation to Full Council that the contract with Auditing Solutions Ltd be continued for the 2019/20 financial year and alternatives investigated for the 2020/21 financial year. This was seconded by Cllr Slade and unanimously agreed.

- The Acting RFO explained the Annual Governance Report and auditing procedures, why the Risk and Asset Register requires updating and that insurance may need to be increased to cover over £1 million.
- The Acting RFO agreed to update the Register in January/February 2020: this must be done by the end of March 2020.
- The Eurobeck Report was discussed and Cllr Slade agreed to email a copy to the Acting RFO and Acting Clerk. The financial risk assessment and need to spread the risk over more investments was also discussed.
- The Acting RFO confirmed that the reference to no RFO in the Report has been rectified and that “Fees and Charges” should be set by Councillors, not Officers.

Cllr Venner proposed the sending of the Internal Audit Report 2019/20 First Update to Full Council – seconded by Cllr C Palmer and unanimously agreed.

293 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE OPTION FOR NEW DEPOT ARRANGEMENTS

- Cllr Venner explained the need for improving Depot facilities.

- The Acting Clerk discussed the Report and visit to the suggested new Depot, and costs were also discussed. Although not in this year's budget, the Acting RFO confirmed it could be added if Councillors agreed.
- The Acting Clerk stated that a new Depot would be multi-beneficial: storage, providing adequate welfare services for workers and in addition litter collection, which is currently outsourced at a yearly cost of £12,000, could be brought in-house.
- It was explained that the owner of the land may sell the freehold after an initial leasing period.
- The new Depot would be additional to the existing Depot.

Cllr Venner proposed that recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of the Report, plus a break clause of six months for a one-year agreement with a right to extend and the option to buy, be recommended to Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr C Palmer and unanimously agreed.

294 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2020/21

- Floral Display fees should be looked at now, ready for Spring 2020. Mrs Thornton was asked to supply detail to enable this information to be reported to Councillors at the next Finance and Staffing Meeting.
- Allotment fees to be reviewed next year as renewal begun on 1 November 2019. It was asked whether charging should be annually Spring to Spring. Cllr Mandley will pass his feedback about charges elsewhere to the Amenities and Environment Committee.
- Cemetery fees were reviewed and increased earlier this year. The Cemetery Advisory Group is to be asked to look at fees and recommend any future changes.
- The Summerland Room fees were discussed.

Cllr Venner proposed fees for the Summerland Room as £10 per morning, afternoon or evening session (including charities) – shorter periods to be charged at the Clerk's discretion. This was seconded by Cllr Mandley and unanimously agreed.

- The 20p WC charge for the Warren Road facilities to be reviewed.
- The Acting Clerk stated that the proposed charges for the Community Building will be addressed early in the New Year.

295 TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO THE BUDGET 2020/21

- The Acting RFO distributed his Budget Working Paper 2020/21 and explained that the timetable for setting the Budget had slipped. There is a Budget Seminar on Monday 18 November 2019.

- The Working Paper should be a starting point for discussion with 3% on the current year plus assumptions on overspends, per department, to arrive at possible precept charge. The Council must set its budget and precept for 2020/21 in December 2019.
- Cllr Malin thought there would be little public objection to raising the precept if the rise can be justified and the Council is perceived as spending wisely.
- Cllr Venner felt an increase of 40% was acceptable.
- Cllr Slade suggested reporting the actual rise per household rather than in percentage terms would be preferable.
- Councillors discussed the need to be firmer with both SWaT and SCC regarding their need to contribute to local services such as the Cemetery.
- Cllr Venner questioned whether the MTC offices should be budget neutral?
- Cllr Mandley to provide his feedback on green vehicles to the Amenities and Environment Committee.
- Cllr Venner asked members to discuss the Budget in more detail at the Seminar on 18 November.

296 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

No press or public were present.

297 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Meeting closed at 9:45 pm.