



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING

held on Monday 13 January 2020

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 N Hercock, Cllr C Palmer\*, Cllr T Bloomfield  
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 Notetaker

**Councillor in Attendance:** Cllr M Palmer

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

#### 369 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [LGA 1972 s 85 \(1\)](#)

Apologies were submitted from Cllr D Prosser and Cllr B Mandley and approved by Councillors.

#### 370 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	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
	381	Personal Interest		
Cllr T Bloomfield	381	Personal Interest	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke
Cllr Kingston-James	379	Personal interest	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke, did not vote
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr S Slade	379	Personal interest	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke, did not vote
Cllr T Venner	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

(a) **Dispensations**

Dispensation for Cllr Slade as a cheque made payable to her.

371 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION

No members of the public were in attendance.

372 TO AUTHORISE CHEQUES

372.1 **To approve Direct Debit payments between 1 December 2019 and 31 December 2019**

Cllr Venner asked members to approve the Direct Debit payments.

Cllr J Malin queried charge from BT Group PLC. Mrs Thornton answered that this was being investigated and would be cancelled if necessary.

Cllr C Palmer said he had queried some items with Mrs Thornton prior to the Meeting and had received satisfactory answers. He asked again if we could find an alternative bank with lower fees. Councillors felt having a physical local bank was more important than having an internet bank with no fees. Cllr Venner requested Mrs Thornton investigate and report back.

*Action from the November Finance & Staffing Meeting regarding water charges at Quay West public toilets – the Acting Clerk explained that the toilets had been closed and water turned off to check for a water leak. The toilets had to be re-opened due to public objections. Confirmed water usage due to urinal constantly flushing. Officers are urgently looking at installing a PIR water management system to prevent overuse of water.*

***Cllr Venner proposed approval of the Direct Debits except the BT direct debit until we know what it is for and send it to Full Council to approve cancellation if needs be – this was seconded by Cllr C Palmer and unanimously agreed.***

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

There were no questions. Cllr Slade abstained on the approval of a personal cheque.

***Cllr Venner proposed approval of cheques under £1,000, Items 1 to 23 on the listing – this was seconded by Cllr C Palmer and unanimously agreed.***

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

Cllr Bolton asked if item 24 was for work done in The Parade previously approved – the Acting Clerk confirmed.

The RFO asked if we could pay item 25 to MG Cleaning Services urgently.

***Cllr Venner proposed we pay item 25 urgently and recommend to Full Council cheques 24, 26-28 over £1,000 – this was seconded by Cllr Malin and unanimously agreed.***

- 373 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM CLLR BOLTON REGARDING BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

Cllr Bolton explained he had not been in the office to sign reconciliations due to time off.

Cllr Bolton agreed to sign all outstanding reconciliations before the next Finance and Staffing Meeting in February 2020.

- 374 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING PROPOSED FLORAL DISPLAY FEES FOR SPRING 2020

The RFO and Acting Clerk explained that BID want to increase baskets by 49. Minehead Town Council (“MTC”) will charge for watering, putting up and taking down and storing baskets. MTC will order baskets and pass charges on to BID. Cllr Venner, who had attended a BID meeting, confirmed BID had increased their budget for floral displays and passed on their thanks to MTC for floral displays following public appreciation. The Acting Clerk advised more baskets each year may eventually have an impact on staffing.

The RFO explained that customers outside the BID area are charged directly by MTC, but all floral displays are for the general benefit of the town so charges should not be onerous.

MTC agreed a standardised look regarding equipment and charges needed, and to work in partnership with BID.

Officers will report back with proposed fees before the end of March 2020.

- 375 TO CONSIDER THE SUPPORTING OF A JUDICIAL REVIEW OF THE PORLOCK FIRE SERVICE

This matter has now been resolved so a Judicial Review is no longer required. MTC agreed to ring-fence money if something comes up in the future. Cllr Slade confirmed she had thanked Cllr Milne by letter on a successful campaign.

- 376 TO DISCUSS THE APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION OF ACTION POINTS/MONITORING DETAILS FOLLOWING COUNCIL MEETINGS

The RFO explained that a system is needed for managing what decisions are taken, when, by whom, with target date and status for actioning. He circulated a printout of the “Action Log” Excel file produced by Cllr C Palmer.

Cllr C Palmer explained how it should be used and what service it provides. Mrs Thornton explained that she was coding an emailing function to automatically email ‘actioner’ a reminder as the target date approached. Councillors agreed to be contacted in this way.

The RFO suggested we trial the software for the Finance & Staffing Committee Meetings/Councillors and go live for all Council Meetings/Councillors from April 2020 if the trial is successful.

Councillors agreed it was good to have a proper trail of actions taken by Council. Cllr Bloomfield suggested it could be used to provide a regular Newsletter to be published on the MTC website.

377 TO DISCUSS SUPPLYING TABLETS/iPADS TO TOWN COUNCILLORS

It was confirmed that there is money in the Budget and an allowance for printing for each Councillor had previously been agreed. Cllr Bolton raised the problem of papers for Planning now only being electronic, so Councillors need access to these at the Meeting. New building facilities with a 'big screen' may accommodate this.

Cllr C Palmer raised security issues and discussed the carbon footprint of iPad versus paper not being valid so need for iPads/tablets should offer other benefits. Cllr Slade suggested asking which Councillors would want one.

The issue of who will provide support/maintenance was raised. Cllr Bolton confirmed that SWAT's IT Department said they would help with support, maintenance and purchasing, with subsequent savings. Cllr C Palmer will contact them to discuss.

***Cllr Venner proposed it goes to Full Council to set-up a Working Group to report back in 3 months – this was seconded by Cllr C Palmer and unanimously agreed.***

378 TO DISCUSS AN EMAIL REQUESTING STORAGE AT THE MARSHFIELD ROAD COMPOUND

The Acting Clerk explained that a builder wants to rent MTC land to store equipment/vehicles which would take up a large area, over half of the site. Cllrs Slade and Bolton advised that the builder's and contractor vans are taking up parking spaces for the Marshfield allotments users. Groundsman Mr Baldwin has advised that vehicles are blocking access to the compound.

The Acting Clerk recommended refusal of the request and that the builder be asked to tidy-up his equipment, remove his containers and to restrict parking on our land.

Future problems regarding parking during and after the new houses are built were discussed. Provision of notices regarding parking to go to the Amenities & Environment Committee.

***Cllr Venner proposed refusal of the request for storage at the Marshfield Road compound – this was seconded by Cllr Bloomfield and unanimously agreed.***

379 TO CONSIDER A GRANT APPLICATION FROM MINEHEAD LITERARY FESTIVAL 2020

A Grant Application for £250 had been received. Councillors agreed that last year's Festival was good and the programme for this year sounded even better. Councillors discussed making a yearly payment for the life of MTC. Cllr Venner suggested the Minehead Literary Festival would have to approach MTC for that.

Councillors discussed the budget remaining for Grant applications. Cllr Slade suggested that MTC should announce March as the last date for Grant Applications this year (subject to conditions) and offered to write a letter to the Free Press.

***Cllr Venner proposed to approve this Grant Application – this was seconded by Cllr Malin and unanimously agreed.***

380 TO DISCUSS GRANT SCHEMES FOR 2020/2021

The Grant Scheme was discussed. The Acting Clerk felt a £500 limit may be too low and could be putting-off some applicants. The RFO confirmed a budget of £10,000 for larger projects. A total of £4,000 had been budgeted for small grants plus provision for SLAs (Service Level Agreements). Cllr Venner asked if Grant Schemes should be amalgamated.

The RFO suggested a need to re-write the Grants Policy before the new 2020/21 Budget commences, with Grants approved meeting the criteria required by MTC. The existing Grants' Budget to remain under the old policy. Councillors discussed competitions, presentations, a 'people's budget' to decide on a larger scheme for grant approval to generate public engagement - with MTC choosing up to three projects to support.

***Cllr Venner proposed to recommend to Full Council to seek Councillors' approval to review the Grant Scheme policy (on both funds) – this was seconded by Cllr Palmer and unanimously agreed.***

381 TO DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING THE PROPOSED FUNFAIR FOR 2020

Cllr Bloomfield explained that the Funfair provider wishes to return on either the first or second weekend of September 2020. Any Funfair in Spring 2020 was being arranged by SWAT. Councillors discussed charges and donations received last year, charging other possible users of the land, the need to link use of assets to MTC's priorities and to have a consistent approach that took account of community users. It was agreed that any use needed a proper agreement with rules and regulations regarding payment, deposit, health and safety, re-instatement of ground, insurance, etc.

Cllr Slade said a priority could be added 'to encourage community spirit'.

***Cllr Venner proposed to recommend to Full Council a fee of £100 per day to hire the land, with a deposit required – this was seconded by Cllr Kingston-James and agreed with two abstentions.***

382 RISK MANAGEMENT: TO REVIEW THE CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Acting Clerk explained that the Risk Register had to be assessed to satisfy the auditor, regarding the Annual Governance Report. The RFO confirmed that he was drafting a report to bring to Council regarding Governance.

The RFO explained that operational risks are such as the possible loss of office facilities in future, a need for a future Cemetery extension, how staff operate, the use of health and safety equipment, training etc.

The RFO proceeded to explain that MTC is using the Peninsula online system but not providing evidence of what is being done. MTC needs a Health & Safety Committee and a paper trail of actions taken. He advised that Councillors cannot sign the audit if they do not know what has been done. The Risk Register also needs to be kept up to date – for example the toilets should be added.

***Cllr Venner proposed to recommend to Full Council the setting-up of a Health & Safety Committee comprising two Councillors, the Acting Clerk, the RFO and two staff – this was seconded by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.***

383 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

No press or public were present.

384 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Meeting closed at 9.05 pm.