



## MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10 AUGUST 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Remote Virtual Meeting via Zoom, 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 P Bolton\*(Mayor), Cllr A Lawton, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr J Malin, Cllr T Bloomfield, Cllr A Kingston-James, Cllr T Venner\* (*arrived after start of the Meeting*),  
(\* denotes Somerset West and Taunton District "SWaT" Councillor)

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

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

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

Apologies were submitted for Cllr N Hercock and Cllr B Mandley and approved by Councillors.

It was confirmed that Cllr Venner would be joining the Meeting after 8pm.

#### 673 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 C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr P Bolton	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr A Kingston-James	4.2	Personal payment	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

## DISPENSATIONS [Localism Act 2011](#)

No dispensations were requested.

### 674 TO ADJOURN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC INCLUSION

No members of the public were in attendance.

### 675 TO AUTHORISE PAYMENTS

#### 675.1 **To approve Direct Debit payments between 1 July 2020 and 31 July 2020**

Cllr J Malin asked what the item 17. 'Equipment hire for Quay West WCS' paid to Initial was for. The Finance Administrator confirmed it was for the equipment supplied by Initial such as soap dispensers, hand driers, etc.

***Approval of the Direct Debits, items 1 to 32 on the listing, was Proposed by Cllr M Palmer – this was Seconded by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.***

#### 675.2 **To approve payments under £1,000**

Cllr M Palmer said she would ask about the plumbing charges by email to the Finance Administrator. There were no other questions.

***Approval of payments under £1,000, items 2 to 28 on the listing, was Proposed by Cllr Malin – this was Seconded by Cllr Bloomfield and unanimously agreed.***

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

This included an urgent payment, item 1 over £1,000.

The Administrator asked if item 31. to MG Cleaning Services to clean all the public toilets in July could be paid urgently as the invoice had been received after the Full Council meeting but we would have usually paid the contractor on the 1<sup>st</sup> of this month, so payment was now overdue. Cllr C Palmer therefore asked for item 31 to be moved to 1A on the 'Urgent Payments' list, to be paid under the provision of Financial regulation 5.1.1.

***Recommendation to Full Council of payments 28-35, with 31 having been moved to 1a, over £1,000 was Proposed by Cllr Bloomfield – this was Seconded by Cllr Bolton and unanimously agreed.***

#### 675.4 **To receive the Income Report for July 2020**

There were no questions.

***Cllr C Palmer proposed receipt – this was seconded by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.***

675.5 **To approve the wages for August 2020**

There were no questions.

***Approval of wages for August 2020 was Proposed by Cllr C Palmer – this was Seconded by Cllr Bolton and unanimously agreed.***

676 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 JULY 2020

Cllr M Palmer confirmed she had not received the reconciliations this month. The Finance Administrator confirmed that the data input had not been completed so the reconciliation reports could not yet be generated. She confirmed that our Financial Regulations require the reconciliations to be signed every three months so there was no problem in leaving them until next month.

677 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE ACTIONS LOG

The Finance Administrator explained that the Actions Log had now been rolled out to include all Committees, but due to staff being on holiday and the delay in getting Full Council minutes produced, only F&S was currently up to date. The Finance Administrator further explained that 'Action' emails had been sent out using the automated email facility and replies were coming back. There had been some requests for the wording of emails to include more information and this would be actioned, but overall the system was working well and people were getting used to receiving these emails and understood that the purpose was to improve communication and to record Actions.

678 TO RECEIVE THE CHAIRMAN'S MONTHLY REPORT

Cllr C Palmer thanked all the finance staff, the office and outside staff for all their hard work, especially during this difficult period working with Covid-19

679 TO REVIEW THE LEVELS OF EARMARKED AND GENERAL RESERVES

The RFO explained adjustments were needed to the reserves to reflect where we are now and to meet our obligations going forward. He then displayed the Report on screen so Councillors and the Public could view the Report and went through the various items. He noted that the date 1/4/19 should be 1/4/20 in the orange Balance column.

The RFO explained that the General Reserve covered any unforeseen expenditure. Demolition of the Irnham Road buildings would cost more than envisaged as would costs incurred to open the Community Building and to upgrade the MUGA and tennis courts. Funds would be transferred from the General Reserve to meet these costs but advised that the final cost may not be as much once the final bills came in.

The RFO explained that once the Community Building project was finished, there would be a 'snagging' period after which the 2.5% retention would be released, with the final 2.5% retention released after a year.

An amount had been set aside to extend the Cemetery and to improve the Public Conveniences.

The RFO explained that the green column better reflects a required adjustment to the Reserves.

Cllr Bolton asked about the play area and whether there would be money left to be used once the Review of Play Parks had been undertaken. The RFO explained that the figures could be re-adjusted at a later date and that there would be some money left for the Play Parks.

Cllr Lawton asked about the money put aside for the new Council offices and whether the creation of a Unitary Authority might affect the Council's requirements. The RFO explained that the Report was not a policy document to spend the money but rather to ensure funds were available should the Council decide to fund such a project. He added that the Council had made it a priority to find a permanent home for the Council offices so it must set aside funds. If the funds are not spent then they would go back to the General Reserves.

***Cllr C Palmer proposed to recommend the Movement of Reserves Report to Full Council – this was Seconded by Cllr Malin and unanimously agreed.***

680 TO RECEIVE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR APRIL – JUNE 2020

There were no questions. Cllr C Palmer asked that it was minuted that the Budget Monitoring Report for April – June 2020 had been received and noted.

681 TO REVIEW ALLOTMENT CHARGES WITH EFFECT FROM 1/11/20

Cllr C Palmer discussed the Allotment Fees Report highlighting the idea of a deposit. The Finance Office asked if it could be agreed that charges would remain the same for the forthcoming year.

***Cllr Bolton proposed to recommend the Allotment Fees Report to Full Council – this was Seconded by Cllr Lawton and unanimously agreed.***

682 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING OUR INVESTMENT RETURNS WITH A VIEW TO MAXIMISE OUR INVESTMENT RETURNS

The RFO explained that he had looked at other options and had not yet found any better available returns. He added that reviewing fees and charges was part of the Budget process and the investments should be reviewed at that time. He said that the Auditor should be able to see that we are reviewing investment and asked that it be noted that investments are included in the Budget Review.

683 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING PERSONNEL SUPPORT

The RFO explained that the proposal from Peninsula had been presented last month and other offers should be considered but there had not been time to do this yet. He said this should be done as part of the Budget setting process.

Cllr Kingston-James explained we already have a subscription with South West Councils which provided Personnel Support. This was confirmed by the RFO who explained he had

contacted SW Councils to get details so their level of service can be compared with any others.

684 TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS:

684.1 **The Regal Theatre – The Film Society**

There were no questions or comments

***Cllr Lawton proposed to approve the Grant – this was Seconded by Cllr Bloomfield, with 5 in favour and 2 abstentions.***

685 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

No press or public were present.

***Cllr Kingston-James proposed to exclude the press and public and end the live Facebook feed – this was Seconded by Cllr M Palmer and unanimously agreed.***

*(The live feed to Facebook ended)*

Cllr Venner joined the Meeting.

686 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Meeting ended at 9.00 pm.