



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Remote Virtual Meeting via Zoom

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

Chair: Cllr P Bolton* (Mayor)

Present: Cllr T Bloomfield, Cllr O Harvey, Cllr A Kingston-James (Deputy Mayor), Cllr A Lawton, Cllr B Mandley, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr H Rose,
(*denotes Somerset West and Taunton Councillor
**denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")

Councillors Present: Cllr M Chilcott**, Cllr C Lawrence**, Cllr B Allen*

Councillors Absent: Cllr N Hercock, Cllr D Prosser

Officers in Attendance: Ms Sam Rawle (Clerk)
Mr B Howe (Deputy Clerk)
Mrs J Notley (Note-taker)

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

The Deputy Clerk opened the Meeting as host on Zoom and told the Meeting that all participants would be kept muted until they wished to speak. The Mayor said the meeting, because of a clerical error, had had to be postponed from the previous week.

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

Apologies had been received from Cllr J Malin and Cllr T Venner.

753 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RESPECT OF ANY AGENDA ITEMS [\(Localism Act 2011\)](#)

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr P Bolton	All	SWaT Councillor	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr C Palmer	All	SWaT Councillor SWaT Planning Cttee	2020 2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS (Localism Act 2011)

No-one had requested any dispensations.

754 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

- **Somerset County Council (“SCC”)**

Cllr Mandy Chilcott reported on current COVID-19 statistics for Somerset, children’s school attendance figures, the auditor’s report on the turnaround of SCC finances and reminded Councillors they could remotely attend the 4 vital meetings discussing the ‘One Somerset’ proposals.

Cllr Christine Lawrence reminded Councillors about the Climate Emergency Fund which can make grants of between £5,000 and £75,000 for innovative projects and the Somerset Fund which offered grants to smaller groups who may be suffering because of the COVID situation. She also said that libraries could lend laptops or tablets to those seeking employment.

- **Somerset West and Taunton District Council (“SWaT”)**

Cllr Benet Allen reported the closure for a day of West Somerset College owing to COVID-19 cases. He pointed Councillors towards the ‘Stronger Somerset’ proposal put forward by the 4 District Councils, congratulated Minehead on the success of the funfair and reported on the SWaT staff drafted in to clear up the fallen tree on the sea front. In reply to a question from Cllr C Palmer Cllr Allen thought SWaT would be supportive of MTC trying to replace the lost tree.

- **Police**

Councillors had been able to read the Police report for September. Cllr Bolton read out the crime statistics for the benefit of the public watching the Facebook stream.

- **Councillors attending Meetings on behalf of Minehead Town Council (“MTC”)**

No one had any reports.

Cllr Mandley asked that the County Councillors be removed from the Zoom meeting. The Deputy Clerk said they could turn their videos off and mute themselves. Cllr Mandley wished the County Councillors to leave the meeting and watch on Facebook but the Deputy Clerk said thought they would not be able to do this. Cllr Lawrence confirmed that she couldn’t. Cllr Allen was also asked to watch the meeting on Facebook.

- **Advisory and Working Groups**

Cllr M Palmer had technical issues with her equipment so the Deputy Clerk delivered the report from the Public Conveniences Advisory Group on progress with updating Summerland Place public toilets. A meeting had been held with a local architect and the first stage would be conducting a measured survey and the second would be

submitting a floor plan. A planning application would probably be needed because there would be changes to the disabled toilet which may also involve building regulations approval. The architect was concerned about the time schedule as work would not be carried out in the busy summer period. If agreement to go ahead could be reached quickly the architect could be carrying out the planning application and building control processes whilst Council could prepare the proposal to go out to tender. It had already been agreed to spend up to £2,000 on a survey and the architect had given a quote of just over £1,000. Proposals included renewing the floor, re-wiring, re-plumbing and making the disabled toilet into one large room, accessible from the front of the building.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

Agreed with all in favour to instruct the Architectural Studio to carry out the survey, submit the floor plan and prepare planning applications.

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

Mr Gareth Latham had asked to speak about Marshfield Road Allotment Site and he and Councillors were content for him to speak when item 14 was being discussed.

756 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Bolton introduced Sam Rawle as MTC's new Clerk and said she would be working on various projects with Council at least until 31 March 2021.

757 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 AUGUST 2020 – *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour

758 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with all in favour

759 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour

760 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

Agreed with all in favour

761 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2020 - *TO RATIFY THAT ALL HAS BEEN AGREED*

761.1 *The need for Councillors' IT and to discuss a budget*

Cllr C Palmer had surveyed Councillors and said he had had replies from all but two Councillors about their IT requirements. To put some form of IT equipment in place for all Councillors would cost £8,000-£10,000. The Council was now part of the way through its four-year tenure. Cllr Palmer suggested deferring discussion until the budget-setting meeting was held to discuss potential costs and what savings could be made.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Agreed with all in favour that this topic be deferred until after a budget-setting meeting.

762 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2020 - *TO RATIFY THAT ALL HAS BEEN AGREED*

762.1 *That, with sadness, Christmas events should be cancelled this year in the light of Covid-19 safety concerns and the season should just be marked by the switching-on of the Christmas lights*

The Deputy Clerk said Council was planning to purchase large Christmas trees as usual for Wellington Square, Alcombe, the Old Hospital and possibly for outside the Beach Hotel. There would be Christmas lights as usual but no formal switch-on. Council would not be supporting any events in the town.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour that Christmas trees should be purchased as usual and Christmas lights put up but no events or formal switch-on be planned.

762.2 *To authorise the Deputy Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to investigate the feasibility of acquiring another Electric Vehicle*

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Amenities Team were all pleased with the new electric vehicle. It was proposed to investigate the acquisition of another electric vehicle which could be used for the watering of hanging baskets next year. The old flatbed truck had been used for watering but an electric one would be quiet for early morning use around the town and fitted specifically for watering. There were going

to be almost double the number of hanging baskets in 2021. It would be used for other purposes outside the watering season.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton **Seconded: Cllr Mandley**

Agreed with all in favour to investigate the acquisition of another electric vehicle.

- 762.3 *To authorise purchase of the necessary 13 replacement planters, displaying logos of MTC and Minehead BID, and that it be communicated to SCC that MTC in replacing the property from its funds becomes owner of the equipment - in conjunction with the licence MTC has with SCC. Also, that any local contributions offered towards this process will be gratefully received*

The Deputy Clerk said it was proposed to purchase 14 replacement planters made from recycled plastic. There were currently about 20 tub planters near the Railway Station installed by SCC to stop cars from parking on the footpath. SCC did not maintain them and over the years MTC has replaced the old, rotting, wooden planters with 6 or 7 larger, plastic tubs. MTC have always carried out the planting.

The Deputy Clerk had spoken to West Somerset Railway who had offered to fund 2 planters, up to a total cost of £400. Minehead BID had offered to pay 20% of the cost of replacements. The total replacement cost was £2,707.50 including delivery and the contributions offered totalled £940. This would leave MTC with a cost of £1,767.50. Council would own all the planters and the Amenities Team would fill and plant them.

Proposed: Cllr Mandley **Seconded Cllr Bloomfield**

Agreed with all in favour that Council purchase the replacement planters and accept contributions offered by BID and West Somerset Railway.

- 762.4 *To contact SCC Highways regarding the suggested changes in signage on the junction of the Porlock Road and A39 - following a request to MTC for assistance with this matter from a member of the public*

Cllr Kingston-James had received a request from a resident of Wootton Courtenay for help in requesting SCC Highways to move the 40 mph speed limit signs near the junction of Porlock Road and the A39 so that the speed limit covered the junction itself thus making it safer. Cllr Kingston-James suggested consulting with Minehead Without Parish Council and writing a joint letter to SCC Highways asking for this to be done.

Proposed: Cllr Kingston-James **Seconded: Cllr Bolton**

Agreed with all in favour that MTC approach Minehead Without Parish Council with a view to making a joint representation to SCC Highways asking that the 40mph limit area be moved to include the Porlock Road/A39 junction.

- 762.5 *The establishment of the "Friends of Irnham Recreation Ground" Group*

Cllr Bloomfield suggested that because there was so much new going on, and planned for the future, at Irnham Road Recreation Ground it could be a good idea to found a Group including Councillors, residents, representatives from outside bodies and users

and their parents. She cited the Cuckoo Meadow group which had worked so well. The Deputy Clerk suggested that the first thing to do was to put the word out and see how much interest there was in the area, have a meeting at the Community Centre and report back to Council regularly. Cllr Bloomfield, Cllr Bolton and Cllr Kingston-James said they wished to be part of the Group.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour that Cllrs Bloomfield, Bolton and Kingston-James arrange a meeting with parties interested in forming a "Friends of Irnham Recreation Ground" Group and report back to Council at a future meeting.

763 FINANCE MATTERS

763.1 *To discuss and approve payments for September 2020 under £1,000*

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr P Bolton

Agreed with all in favour that payments numbered 22-44 (minus 3 urgent payments which had already been made) be approved for payment.

763.2 *To discuss and approve payments for September 2020 over £1,000*

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

Agreed with all in favour that payments numbered 45-58 (minus 3 urgent payments which had already been made) be approved for payment.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with all in favour that urgent payments numbered 1-8 and also the 6 items paid as urgent payments under Financial Regulation 5.5.1 be approved for payment.

764 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY CENTRE AND IRNHAM ROAD RECREATION GROUND FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK

The Deputy Clerk reported that the handover of the Community Centre had taken place on 14 September. All snagging issues had now been resolved apart from fitting of the bar, discolouring of the paths and new handrails at the front of the building. The bar would be fitted in the week beginning 12 October and any other issues would be finished within the following four weeks. Other work in progress included removing hedges, installing fences and gates, fitting benches in the changing rooms, new paths and a patio area at the front of the function room. Minehead AFC had signed the licence to occupy the changing rooms on 14 September and had been using them regularly. The Club had been sent the lease for the bar area and garage and these would be signed on 12 October. The function room had had some use but use was restricted due to COVID-19 precautions.

The new floodlights, 6 pylons replacing the 8 old ones, had already been used for football matches.

There was much interest in bookings and Colin Johnson had already secured regular bookings, estimated to a value of in excess of £20,000 per annum, including the rent from MAFC.

Demolition of the old Clubhouse had ceased five weeks previously because of additional, hidden asbestos located in the roof of the Clubhouse. Discussion about this had taken place at the previous week's Informal Meeting.

The Deputy Clerk suggested that the official opening date should be set once the whole project was complete. He invited Councillors to perhaps attend an open day in ones and twos and said that all should have a look round the building which had turned out very well.

764.1 To receive a Verbal Update on the Lease of the Quay West Public Conveniences and to discuss further the issue of the six-month break clause as discussed at the Full Council Meeting on 25 August 2020

The Deputy Clerk said he had written to SWaT over a month before but as yet had had no reply. Opening hours of the toilets had been changed which had made a difference and there were no longer many motor homes parked at Quay West. There had been a few problems with local businesses not being able to access the toilets and these had been given a key. He said the matter should go back to the Amenities and Environment Committee to discuss opening hours.

765 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT REGARDING MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL'S ALLOTMENT SITES FROM CLLR M PALMER AND TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES RAISED

Mr Latham spoke to the Meeting about thefts of produce from allotments at Marshfield Road site and his views on the question of opening and closing the main gate to the site.

Cllr Bolton reminded Cllr Rose she had a personal interest in this matter and she apologised for forgetting to declare it.

After much discussion about the merits of keeping the site gate open or locked, alternative locking arrangements and whether an open gate encouraged theft of produce Cllr M Palmer said she thought the various proposals needed looking at in depth and asked if the Amenities and Environment Committee could have delegated powers to decide exactly what needed doing at Marshfield Road allotment site and implement suggestions. Cllr Bolton asked that the Amenities and Environment Committee discuss all proposals and come back with a solution to the problems.

Proposed: Cllr M Palmer

Seconded: Cllr T Bloomfield

Agreed with one abstention and the rest in favour that Amenities and Environment Committee make a decision about the problems at Marshfield Road allotment site and implement solutions – Full Council and all ploholders to be advised of any new arrangements.

766 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REMINDER FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK REGARDING THE THREE VACANT COUNCILLOR POSTS IN THREE WARDS

The Deputy Clerk reminded the Meeting that there were vacancies for Councillors in three wards – Alcombe South ward, Minehead Central ward and Periton and Woodcombe ward. The Electoral Officer at SWaT had said Council may re-advertise the vacancies separately for 14 Council working days. If there were not expressions of interest from a sufficient number of residents the District Council would give MTC authority to co-opt to fill the vacancies. The

Deputy Clerk reminded members of the public that if they were interested in standing for election they should contact the District Council. If they wished to stand for co-option residents should contact Minehead Town Council.

767 TO CONSIDER A REPORT REGARDING THE VACANT GENERAL LABOURER (SEASONAL) POST

Councillors had seen the Report which explained that the seasonal post for a General Labourer had not been filled in 2020 because the summer workload involving the floral displays had been less because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget for the post was £17,500 and it was hoped to re-allocate this budget elsewhere to ease the backlog of other work which had built up during the lockdown. Staffing resources for the Amenities Team were under review and the outcome would be known early in 2021. Specific use of the funds would be controlled by the Deputy Clerk in consultation with the Acting RFO and reported to Councillors through the normal budget monitoring process.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with 3 abstentions and 7 in favour that the budget of £17,500 be reallocated from funding a seasonal worker to easing the pressure of work on the Amenities Team – budget to be controlled by the Deputy Clerk in consultation with the Acting RFO.

768 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960)

Proposed: Cllr Kingston-James

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

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

The Public Meeting closed at 9.10 pm.