



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 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)

Councillors Present: Cllr T Bloomfield, Cllr N Hercock, Cllr A Kingston-James (Deputy Mayor), Cllr A Lawton, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr H Rose, Cllr T Venner*

Councillors in Attendance: Cllr C Lawrence**
Cllr M Chilcott**
Cllr B Allen*

*(*denotes Somerset West and Taunton "SWaT" Councillor
**denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")*

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

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

The Deputy Clerk opened the Meeting as host on Zoom, passed the hosting to the Mayor and told the Meeting that all participants would be kept muted until they wished to speak. The Mayor welcomed members of the public watching on Facebook.

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

Apologies had been received from Cllr J Malin, Cllr B Mandley, and Cllr D Prosser.

913 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	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
		SWaT Planning Cttee	2020	
Cllr T Venner	All	SWaT Councillor Director of Minehead BID	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS (Localism Act 2011)

No-one had requested any dispensations.

914 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

- **Somerset County Council (“SCC”)**

Cllr Mandy Chilcott reported that SCC had carried out a huge amount of work in connection with the COVID vaccine roll-out and the Test and Trace system. Seven hundred staff were ready to be deployed of whom 150 were already supporting the work of the NHS. This would inevitably have some impact on SCC services generally and she asked that people bear with the Council because some things would take longer. Cllr Chilcott urged people to read the Your Somerset paper which outlines the breadth of SCC services, including the centre spread giving the winter road-salting routes. She said schools were delighted that they will be funded to supply those who received free school meals. Cllr Chilcott summarised SCC services in Minehead, including the Highways Depot, the renewed cattle grid on North Hill, major work due at the Library in 2021 and the business units next to the railway. She reminded the Meeting that SCC was responsible for residential care and packages of care at home and also the recycling centres.

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

Cllr Allen apologised for the fact that he was trying to attend two Meetings at the same time. He said the work was near to beginning on the new Council house development in Rainbow Way. He would send a newsletter to the Deputy Clerk for circulation. SWaT had submitted its business case to the Government for Stronger Somerset. He was pleased to report that the Government had ditched its algorithm for calculating the need for new housing and Minehead would not be turned into a new city. He asked anyone with questions to email him after the meeting and urged everyone to read the newsletter.

Cllr Allen left to attend another Meeting.

- **Police**

The Mayor said the Meeting was a week earlier in the month than usual, so no Police report was yet available. It would be covered at the January Full Council Meeting.

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

Cllr Lawton had attended three Meetings of the Minehead BID board and sub-groups. She reported that the Emergency Town Recovery Fund group was discussing how to best spend the grant of £100,000 and to start moving on this as quickly as possible. Support had been agreed for a retail consultant to come and help businesses on a one-to-one basis on new working practices and also a Minehead gift card system. Plans were being monitored by SWaT and Meetings would be held every two months to approve how funds were being spent. Other suggestions were improvements to the BID website to improve communications with it, a blue flag status for Minehead beach and promoting tourism in Minehead as well as Exmoor. The BID Manager had conducted an audit of the town centre including items such as the circular benches in The Parade and painting and/or renewing planters. MTC would need to be involved in this as some items were its responsibility. The BID board had drawn reports together from the sub-groups and was discussing bookings for events planned for 2021. It was doing its very best to bring a lot of events to Minehead and trying to mitigate the damage done by COVID.

- **Advisory and Working Groups**

There were no reports for December.

A member of the public joined the Meeting.

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

No-one had asked to speak.

916 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor thanked everyone who had supported Santa’s sleigh as it toured Minehead and praised all those who had attended and maintained social distancing. The support had been marvellous.

917 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2020 – *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr Bolton **Seconded:** Cllr Kingston-James
Agreed with one abstention and the rest in favour.

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

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded:** Cllr Lawton
Agreed with all in favour.

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

Cllr M Palmer said the last line of the second proposal on page 9 should read “the amount was made up from the COVID budget”.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded:** Cllr M Palmer
Agreed, subject to the amendment, with all in favour.

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

Cllr M Palmer said the Meeting had closed at 8.46 pm.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield **Seconded:** Cllr M Palmer
Agreed, subject to the amendment, with all in favour.

921 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7 DECEMBER 2020

921.1 *To agree nominations of charities to receive donations from the COVID Crisis Fund*

At the Finance and Staffing Committee Meeting five charities had been nominated to receive donations of £500 each and this had been recommended to Full Council. The charities were the Hope Centre, Spark, the YMCA side of the Beach Hotel, Home Start and the Somerset Community Council, Village Agent Crisis Fund. Cllr Venner queried which budget this would come from – Cllr C Palmer said it would be allocated from the COVID Recovery Fund. He said the money needed to be spent solely in Minehead and this would be specified with the donation.

Cllr M Palmer said she would propose removing Spark from the list as they didn’t necessarily work in Minehead and already had a huge budget.

Proposed: Cllr M Palmer **Seconded:** Cllr Venner
Agreed with one abstention and the rest in favour that Spark be removed from the list.

The Deputy Clerk pointed out that recipients would need to be registered charities. Cllr T Bloomfield told the meeting The Village Agents were a Somerset Community Council scheme. Any donation to them would need to be ring-fenced for use in Minehead. Cllr Venner was unsure if these donations were the correct way of carrying out the idea – MTC had a small grant scheme which had been undersubscribed in 2020 and this had a very tight remit. Cllr Palmer thought that this scheme was different. It would be funded from the COVID Emergency Fund and awarded to groups working hard to help people in the pandemic. The Deputy Clerk said that other suitable groups could approach MTC for similar help.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Agreed with all in favour that a £500 donation would be made to each of the Hope Centre, the YMCA side of the Beach Hotel, Home Start and the Somerset Community Council, Village Agent Crisis Fund, with the proviso that the money be spent in Minehead.

922 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020 - *TO RATIFY THAT ALL HAS BEEN AGREED*

922.1 *To agree that a letter be sent to SWaT, copying in Cllr Benet Allen, requesting that, following complaints, the Parks Walk Public Conveniences either be made use of or demolished.*

Cllr Venner had had discussions with Cllr Marcus Kravis* because these Public Conveniences were in Cllr Venner's ward. The options being considered by SWaT were removing the building completely or renting it out. A consultation would follow. Cllr Venner personally favoured removing the building completely. Cllr Bloomfield suggested that Cllr Kravis also be copied in to the letter. Cllr C Palmer added that there were Environment Agency items on the side of the building and these would need to be removed if demolition was to be carried out.

Cllr Lawrence had been waiting for some time to enter the Meeting and was admitted at 8.08 pm. The Mayor apologised for not seeing her in the waiting room.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with all in favour that a letter be sent to SWaT, copying in Cllrs Allen and Kravis, requesting that, following complaints, the Parks Walk Public Conveniences either be made use of or demolished.

922.2 *To agree that MTC does not follow through with the Heads of Terms in the Lease of Alexandra Car Park and look at other alternatives.*

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

Agreed with 1 abstention and 8 in favour that MTC do not follow through with the Heads of Terms in the Lease of Alexandra Car Park and will look at other alternatives.

923 FINANCE MATTERS

Cllr C Palmer asked Councillors to accept the urgent payments, numbered 1-4, of which 3 had already been paid. These totalled £15,422.48.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Agreed with all in favour to approve payments 1-4 on the Payments list.

923.1 *To discuss and approve payments for December 2020 under £1,000*

Cllr C Palmer said payments under £1,000 numbered 5-17 on the list, totalling £2,782.69, had been approved by Finance and Staffing Committee. Payments numbered 18-25, totalling £5,604.03 needed approval from Full Council.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded:** Cllr Bloomfield

Approved for payment with all in favour the payments numbered 18-25, under £1,000, on the payments list.

923.2 *To discuss and approve payments for December 2020 over £1,000*

Cllr C Palmer said payments numbered 26-31, over £1,000 and totalling £38,436.14, were recommended by the Finance and Staffing Committee for approval by Full Council.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded:** Cllr Kingston-James

Approved for payment with all in favour payments over £1,000 numbered 26-31 on the payments list.

924 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2021/2022

The Deputy Clerk said the proposed Budget and Precept had been taken to both Committees and both had recommended increasing the amount of the Precept by 5%. He said he was disappointed that SWaT had altered the tax base for a second time, reducing it in the last few days immediately before MTC had to agree setting its Precept. The increase to MTC would be 2.5% and the total Precept would now be 713,990.07. Cllr Palmer said he was surprised to hear about the alteration as MTC had been assured it would not be changed again this year. The Deputy Clerk said the Precept would have to be rounded up or down and recommended rounding it down to £713,500.

The Deputy Clerk said he had had a message from Cllr Mandley who opposed any increase in the Precept. Cllr Rose also opposed a rise.

Proposed: Cllr Venner **Seconded:** Cllr Lawton

Agreed with 1 against and the rest in favour that Council approve a Budget of £713,500.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton **Seconded:** Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with 1 against and the rest in favour that Council approve a Precept of £713,500.

925 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE HEADS OF TERMS REGARDING THE INSTALLATION OF AN ELECTRICITY CABLE ON THE EDGE OF KING GEORGE PLAYING FIELD, ALCOMBE

The Deputy Clerk informed Councillors about an application made by Conrad (Minehead) Limited for Western Power to lay an underground cable across land at King George Playing Field. The route of the cable would run alongside the Children's Centre, towards the bridge and through a hedge. It would provide power to generators being built to supply electricity for a substation. Cllr C Palmer queried if the cable would be at the correct depth and the Deputy Clerk said he would check this. Cllr M Palmer said she wanted more information.

The Deputy Clerk told Councillors that there would be a substantial amount paid to MTC in compensation.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James

Agreed with one abstention and the rest in favour that Council agree in principle to give its consent to the cable-laying, subject to the Deputy Clerk circulating the figures and seeking further details about the work.

926 TO DISCUSS CHARGES FOR THE WATERING AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE FOR HANGING BASKETS FOR SUMMER 2021

The Deputy Clerk had had discussions with Andrew Hopkins, BID Manager, who had delegated powers to agree charges for the watering and maintenance service on behalf of BID. The Deputy Clerk said that no baskets had been put up in 2020 and that in 2019 the charge had been around £41 per basket. MTC had made an offer to BID to carry out watering and feeding of baskets three times a week over a period of 17 weeks at a reduced rate of £40 per basket. This fixed price would be agreed for two years. Cllr Venner wanted to see an agreement for a fixed three-year period. The Deputy Clerk told him that BID itself would only exist for another two years. Next year the charges would be reviewed. Cllr Venner said he would like to see a longer-term agreement, say over five years. The Deputy Clerk told him that future charges would be agreed for a period of five years and the costs inflation-proofed.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Agreed with 2 against, 1 abstention and 6 in favour that MTC maintain and water hanging baskets for Minehead BID at a rate of £40 per basket.

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

The Deputy Clerk reported that the Community Centre had partially re-opened since the last lockdown in November and the MUGA/Tennis Courts and adult gym were now open to the public. The first user of the Community Centre had used it on 14 September and usage had grown steadily since then. The hall was available for community groups to hire from Monday to Friday apart from Tuesday evenings (reserved for MTC meetings), and Wednesday evenings (Minehead AFC). Minehead Football Club had first claim on the Centre at weekends but it would be available in the summer for other hirers when Minehead AFC did not use it. The Year 1 target for community use was originally 50% (from 9am to 9pm) but this had already reached 75%. The income target for that period was £9,373 but on current usage (when fully open) the income would be £19,200 plus income from Minehead AFC. Presently Friday mornings and evenings are left free for now so new community sessions can be organised once COVID restrictions are over. He read out the list of booked sessions and said the total weekly income was £400.

Demolition of the old Football Club building continued, with all asbestos gone. All parts of the old building would be dismantled and re-cycled. The main structure would be demolished by the end of the year but removal of foundations and lighting pylons may have to wait until January 2021.

The Project Manager had reported some small defects to Qube Construction for remedy. There was a current 5% retention, half of which would be released. The remaining 2.5% would be held until September 2021 – a year after hand-over of the building.

Cllr Venner was extremely pleased that the income was going so well and said that any surplus over expenditure should be ring-fenced for upkeep of the building which ought to be maintained to a very high standard. The Deputy Clerk told the meeting that £5,000 per annum had been planned to be set aside every year for maintenance of the Community Centre.

928 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

(Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960)

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

Agreed with all in favour to hold the rest of the meeting *in camera*.

Cllr Bolton thanked the members of the public who had attended via Zoom and Facebook. He wished everyone a merry, safe Christmas and a happy New Year.

The Public Meeting closed at 8.49 pm.