



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 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 A Kingston-James (Deputy Mayor), Cllr A Lawton, Cllr J Malin, 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")*

Councillors Absent: Cllr O Harvey, Cllr B Mandley, Cllr D Prosser

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

Members of the Press and Public: 3 members of the Public
0 members 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

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

Apologies had been received from Cllr N Hercock.

860 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RESPECT OF ANY AGENDA ITEMS (Localism Act 2011)

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr T Bloomfield	17	Personal	24.11.20	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr P Bolton	17 All	Personal SWaT Councillor	24.11.20 2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr A Kingston-James	17	Personal	24.11.20	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
Cllr T Venner	All All 17	SWaT Councillor Director of Minehead BID Personal	2020 24.11.20	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS (Localism Act 2011)

No-one had requested any dispensations.

861 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

- **Somerset County Council (“SCC”)**

Cllr Mandy Chilcott reported that rates of COVID 19 cases across the county varied, with higher numbers in larger towns. During the period 7-20 November there had been 16 cases identified in Minehead. All the figures county-wide were available to see on-line.

She said the winter gritting programme would start shortly and that SCC had 23 gritters which would maintain the extended gritting programme covering approximately 900 miles of road.

The Climate Emergency Strategy was working its way through meetings at SWaT and SCC. Support had been agreed by SCC on 18 November 2020. It was of overriding importance that all had a part to play in the Strategy over the coming months.

She told the Meeting about the work of the Corporate Parenting Board and the need for more host families.

Cllr Christine Lawrence was very pleased to tell the Meeting that the SCC Contact Centre had been given an award for the best in the area for the third year running. She was very proud of all the work they had done in directing users to the right help. She said it was still important to note that the 0300 790 6275 number was still available and had received 10,041 calls up until the previous day. COVID Champions training, which she had undertaken, was still available to help people be a signpost to help in their local area and be more confident in talking to people about help. This was through Spark Somerset.

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

Cllr Benet Allen reported that seagull control using plastic eggs had not taken place during 2020 but would resume around the industrial estate in spring 2021.

Blenheim Gardens Café had been let and would re-open with full service as soon as COVID rules permitted.

SWaT hoped to continue the rough sleeper programme although there was one new rough sleeper and three who were refusing accommodation. SWaT would try to move them somewhere safer.

He reminded Councillors that precept forms had to be returned as soon as possible.

Cllr Allen said the Grant Scheme was back again, for which local businesses could apply. There was a mandatory Government grant scheme based on the value of businesses and smaller discretionary grants which would be opened by SWaT later the same week.

COVID wardens had been appointed by all four District Councils and were available on request for presentations or for appearing in the town.

He gave details of the Exmoor National Park night photography competition and its appeal for a Rescue Team vehicle.

Cllr Allen queried why SCC had recently agreed to cancel or postpone the next Council elections due in May 2021 and said Minehead Town Council may want to ask about this.

Cllr Allen said SWaT were looking at Christmas parking arrangements for the weekends leading up to Christmas, with a decision coming later in the week.

- **Police**

The Police were unable to send a representative but had sent in their report which the Mayor summarised for the Meeting.

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

Cllr Lawton said she and Cllr Venner had attended a couple of BID meetings. BID have appointed several sub-groups and Cllrs Lawton and Venner were now on the Public Realm sub-group.

- **Advisory and Working Groups**

There were no reports for November.

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

No-one had asked to speak.

863 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Bolton said he had no announcements for November but would instead bring forward Item 14 to hear a presentation from David Croxton and Izzy Silvester to discuss a request from West Somerset Car Scheme Partnership ("WSCSP") for a letter of support to provide electric community cars.

The WSCSP hoped that MTC would be party to a multi-Council bid for a grant from the Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund. In particular it hoped that MTC would submit a letter of support for the scheme. The Deputy Clerk said each bid was limited to £75,000 and that the Clerk had already applied for grants towards solar panels and an electric vehicle. Mr Croxton and Ms Silvester took questions from Councillors. Some Councillors felt uncomfortable making a pledge to support the scheme with little prior information. After much discussion it was felt appropriate to make a proposal to support the scheme in principle.

Proposed: Cllr Rose

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with 6 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions that Minehead Town Council write a letter of support in principle to the West Somerset Car Scheme Partnership bid.

864 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE INFORMAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2020 – *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James

Agreed with all in favour.

865 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2020 – *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

Agreed with all in favour.

866 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Agreed with all in favour.

867 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer

Seconded: Cllr Malin

Agreed with all in favour.

868 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield
Agreed with all in favour.

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

869 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2020

Cllr C Palmer reported there were no recommendations from the Meeting apart from payments for November, to be covered in Item 13.

870 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*

870.1 *To discuss and review the Heads of Terms of the Lease in respect of the Community Centre Car Park*

The Deputy Clerk reported that an update had been received that day from SWaT in which the District Council had increased the proposed rent quite considerably. This would now have to be discussed further at the next Finance and Staffing and Amenities and Environment Committee Meetings.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

Agreed with all in favour to refer the matter back to both Committees.

870.2 *To approve the recommendation that the Community Centre Promotions Officer pursues the available Sport England funding to install new lighting on the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)*

Colin Johnson, the Promotions Officer, told the Meeting that after the MUGA and Tennis Courts had been re-vamped they had had a lot of use in the light evenings.

Sport England had earlier in the year turned down MTC's application for funding for the improvements but, out of the blue, they had contacted him to say that they approved the scheme and recommended installation of floodlights which Sport England would fund. This would enable greater use of the MUGA including use by Minehead Eye who wished to run activities there. Planning permission would need to be sought for the floodlighting.

Mr Johnson took questions from Councillors about security, safety, limiting the hours of use of the floodlights and consideration of local residents.

Cllr Venner thought that Council should grasp the offer as it had invested a lot of money in the scheme and needed to maximise the benefit.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Agreed with all in favour that Sport England funding for floodlighting should be pursued.

870.3 *To approve the recommendation that the Blenheim Gardens Public Conveniences should be opened during the second lockdown period, on a reduced hours basis*

Cllr Bloomfield thought MTC should follow its usual procedure but wondered if the toilets were still blocked. The Deputy Clerk said the drains had been cleared but the toilets were presently closed. Normally the toilets were closed over the winter.

Cllr Bolton said the local PCSO had updated him about the quite serious problems with anti-social behaviour in Blenheim Gardens and that the hand sanitiser on Blenheim Gardens toilets had already been vandalised. He said Summerland Place toilets were a two-minute walk away and the Deputy Clerk confirmed that a sign was normally put on Blenheim Gardens toilets to indicate the nearest public conveniences. Cllr Bolton proposed keeping Blenheim Gardens toilets closed.

Cllr Bloomfield proposed an amendment that a notice should be put on the toilets to say that Summerland Place toilets were available.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Agreed with 6 in favour and 3 abstentions that a notice indicating the nearest open public conveniences in Summerland Place be posted on Blenheim Gardens public conveniences.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with 6 in favour and 3 against that Blenheim Gardens public conveniences remain closed now and throughout the winter as usual

870.4 *To grant designated powers to the Amenities & Environment Committee to decide whether to install Christmas trees above shop premises in the town- as would be done in normal circumstances when all shops are open - once the Government review of the ending of the second lockdown, scheduled for 2 December, is known*

The Deputy Clerk told the Meeting that this item had been tabled for discussion because at the time of posting the Agenda no-one knew what the Government guidelines would be for the opening of non-essential shops. Now the position was clear Council could make the decision at this Meeting whether to put up the Christmas trees in Park Street and Friday Street. Cllr Venner thought the grounds staff should be asked whether this would be feasible and if it was then MTC should do what it could to make the town feel festive. The Deputy Clerk told Councillors that the Amenities Team were under pressure at present but he was sure they would do what they could.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Agreed with all in favour that the Amenities Team be asked to do what they could to put up Christmas trees over the shops.

The Deputy Clerk told Councillors that Minehead BID had suggested having a “virtual switch-on” of the Christmas lights streamed on Facebook. This would record the Mayor switching on the lights.

871 FINANCE MATTERS

871.1 *To discuss and approve payments for November 2020 under £1,000*

Items 7-28 had already been approved by the Finance & Staffing Committee on 9 November and totalled £6,112.66; Items 36-44, totalling £2,954.84 needed to be approved by Full Council.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer
Approved with all in favour.

Seconded: Cllr Venner

871.2 *To discuss and approve payments for November 2020 over £1,000*

Items 29-35 were recommended to Full Council for approval by the Finance & Staffing Committee on 9 November and totalled £41,737.48; items 45-49 totalling £10,897.59 were new items for approval.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer
Approved with all in favour.

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

Cllr Palmer said items 1-6 were the urgent payments already made under Financial Regulation 5.5.1, and totalled £59,950.56.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer
Approved with all in favour.

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

Cllr Palmer told the Meeting that in the Regular Payments Report items 3 and 4 were over £1,000 in a total expenditure of £11,879.67.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer
Approved with all in favour.

Seconded: Cllr Lawton

Cllr Palmer wished to add to the Report from the District Council. The tree that had blown down near the Jubilee Café was being replaced. It had arrived with SWaT and was due to be planted within the following fortnight. It was expected to be 3-3.5 metres tall.

872 TO DISCUSS A REQUEST FROM WEST SOMERSET CAR SCHEME PARTNERSHIP FOR A LETTER OF SUPPORT TO PROVIDE ELECTRIC COMMUNITY CARS – PRESENTATION FROM DAVID CROXTON AND IZZY SILVESTER

Discussed as Minute 863.

873 TO DISCUSS QUAY WEST PARKING AND PUBLIC CONVENIENCES AND TO RECEIVE A PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE CLERK FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

The Clerk reported that a Meeting had been held with Steve Deakin from SCC and Stuart Noyes, the Director of Treasury Services for SWaT and Councillors and Officers from MTC. Councillors had put forward their concerns about this matter very robustly and the Meeting had, in the end, been quite positive.

The Clerk reported that the Officers acknowledged the problem with residents purchasing parking permits but having no designated spaces. One matter which both authorities were going to clarify was the ownership of land at Quay West. The SCC parking review was imminent and Minehead was first to be considered. They have promised to come back to MTC in January or February with a progress report.

It had been established that there were four bays in the car park clearly marked out for motor homes and instituted by the old District Council.

Cllr Venner thanked all who had attended the Meeting and said there were two issues; parking and the public toilets were separate issues. He found it quite extraordinary that no-one knew who owned "the Triangle". It seemed that the District Council were unaware they were taking parking revenue on behalf of SCC. Cllr Lawton thought that if 4 motorhomes parked there it would be difficult to dissuade others; she felt that motor homes should use the proper camp sites and the Council should aim to get rid of the 4 designated parking bays.

The Deputy Clerk reported that there was new parking signage at Quay West. Cllr Malin reported that this was the first time in eight years that the signage was legal. Parking rules were now being enforced. Much revenue had been lost in the past few years. He was more concerned about people living on the highway. He wanted to suggest that County Councillors should come back to MTC at the December Full Council Meeting and assure Councillors that the parking review was ongoing and the matter would be moved forward.

The Deputy Clerk had been in contact with both Officers since the Meeting and said MTC would need to keep pushing the matter on.

874 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE DEPUTY CLERK REGARDING THE AGAR REPORT 2019/20 - NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT

The Deputy Clerk said that the Audit had been completed and that this was a formality, although a transcription error had been picked up – figures for assets had appeared in the wrong column. This had been corrected and the Report would be put on the MTC website and displayed in the office window. This marked the end of last year's audit.

875 TO CONSIDER A GRANT APPLICATION FROM MINEHEAD CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

An application for a grant of £250 had been received from the Minehead Christmas Tree Festival organiser. Councillors heard that the usual Festival in the Methodist Church could not be held because of COVID precautions so organisers were planning a "forest" in the

Church garden and a trail of MDF trees around the town in shop windows as an I-spy event for families to be decorated as each charity/organisation wished.

Proposed: Cllr Bloomfield

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with all in favour that a grant of £250 should be awarded to the Minehead Christmas Tree Festival.

876 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CLERK ON PROGRESS WITH SETTING THE BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2021-22

The Clerk said Officers had already had 2 Meetings to go through a proposed Budget and precept for 2021/2022. Council needed to have two informal Meetings to move the matter forward. She proposed having an informal Finance & Staffing Committee Meeting to consider the staffing structure from 1 April 2021, then an informal Meeting of all Councillors to discuss a full budget and possible levels of precept. This would then be recommended to the Full Council Meeting in December.

The Clerk suggested a Meeting on Monday 30 November to recommend staffing structures and an informal budget seminar to go through budget assumptions and possible precept at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 2 December. The Deputy Clerk confirmed he had received the precept forms and these had to be returned by 8 January 2021. Cllr Venner asked the Deputy Clerk when sending out invitations to the budget seminar to stress that all Councillors should attend as it was very important they all understood the budget.

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

877.1 *To receive a Verbal Report from the Community Centre Management Group regarding an update on management and budgetary issues*

The Deputy Clerk said this subject had been covered by Colin Johnson's report about the funding for floodlighting for the MUGA. The Community Building had been closed for the previous three weeks because of the COVID lockdown but would open again the following week when this was lifted. He confirmed that all asbestos was now out of the building, it was completely empty and merely had to be signed-off by the Health and Safety Executive. The actual crane for demolition would be delivered on Monday 30 November and would be in non-stop use from then onwards. Hopefully the building would be completely down by Christmas. Some members of the public are very interested in watching the demolition and photographing it including one with a drone.

877.2 *To receive a written report from the Deputy Clerk concerning developing community use of Minehead Recreation Ground*

Councillors had been able to read the written report covering the Community Hall, Tennis Courts, MUGA and Outdoor Gym. It included the usage which was already at 70% where the target for the first year had been 50%. There were plans for reaching a broader section of the community and making the hall a community focus. The £10,000 grant offered by Sport England was detailed and confirmation that

floodlights would be used only between 5.00 pm and 9.00 pm with all sessions being supervised by approved adult coaches/youth leaders. The outdoor Gym had had some regular use but had not been promoted to the local community as planned due to the lockdown.

878 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.

The Public Meeting closed at 9.37 pm.