



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 25 AUGUST 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 O Harvey, Cllr N Hercock, 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 A Hadley*
Cllr Benet Allen* (*denotes Somerset West and Taunton "SWaT" Councillor
**denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Howe (Acting Clerk)
Mr A Giles (Acting Responsible Finance Officer "RFO")
Mrs J Notley (Note-taker)

Members of the Press and Public: 3 members of the Public
1 member of the Press

The Acting Clerk opened the Meeting as host on Zoom and told the Meeting that all participants would be kept muted until they wished to speak.

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

Apologies had been received from Cllrs B Mandley and D Prosser.

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

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr T Bloomfield	15	Personal	2020	Stayed in the room and spoke
Cllr P Bolton	15 All	Personal SWaT Councillor	2020	Stayed in the room and spoke Stayed in the room, spoke and voted
Cllr A Kingston-James	12	Personal	25.08.20	Stayed in the room
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
Cllr 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.

699 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

- **Somerset County Council (“SCC”)**

Cllr Mandy Chilcott had sent her apologies. Cllr Christine Lawrence spoke about the Food Festival, siting of the half-pipe skate ramp, the SCC parking review and problems with leaking water pipes along the sea front. She reported that the tree stump outside Minehead Middle School would be removed before the start of term.

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

Cllr Benet Allen reported that he had attended the V J Ceremonies and the Eat Festival and reminded the meeting that SWaT parking charges would be reimposed from 31 August.

- **Police**

The Police were unable to send a representative but had sent in their report which the Mayor summarised for the Meeting. Cllr Bolton said he had had a conversation with the Police that day who had said that crime figures were distorted because of a large number of calls from one individual and each call had to be included in the figures.

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

There were no reports.

- **Advisory and Working Groups**

Cllr Lawton said members of the Community Building Advisory Group had had a couple of meetings to decide on various outstanding items which needed completing, mainly to do with the area surrounding the building, paving and paths.

Cllr M Palmer reported that the Allotments Advisory Group had met with plot-holders at the Marshfield Road site and had discussed several issues and future plans. New sign boards were soon to be erected at the allotment sites.

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

No-one had asked to speak.

701 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Bolton said he, Deputy Mayor Cllr Kingston-James and several other Councillors had attended the V J Day Commemoration Service in Blenheim Gardens. This would be the last such commemoration as the Burma Star Association was being wound up after 75 years.

702 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 JULY 2020 – *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Proposed: Cllr Bolton **Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield**
Agreed with all in favour.

703 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

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

704 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10 AUGUST 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

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

705 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Cllr Bolton said Item 6 should read “the Advisory Group was going to meet the appointed Contractor ...” but had not yet done so.

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

706 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10 AUGUST 2020 - *TO RATIFY THAT ALL HAS BEEN AGREED*

There had been 3 recommendations from the Meeting. One would be dealt with in Item 12 on the Agenda (payments numbered 28-35) and the others were:

- Acceptance of the Movement of Reserves Report, and
- Acceptance of the Allotment Fees Report

Councillors had seen both Reports. The Allotments Fees Report recommended that fees were unaltered and a deposit scheme be introduced. Cllr C Palmer recommended accepting both Reports in one vote.

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer **Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James**
Agreed with 1 abstention and the rest in favour.

- 707 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE AMENITIES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2020 - *TO RATIFY THAT ALL HAS BEEN AGREED*

Cllr Bloomfield, Chair, said the only recommendation from the Meeting would be discussed under Item 18.

- 708 FINANCE MATTERS

708.1 To discuss and approve payments for August 2020 under £1,000

The only payments requiring explanation were two payments to Somerset West and Taunton Council for Election Expenses. The RFO said they related to contested and uncontested election fees charged in 2019 which the District Council had only recently charged.

708.2 To discuss and approve payments for August 2020 over £1,000

The only query was item 53 which the RFO said related to invoicing software added on to software already used by MTC and which could potentially be used for debtors, allotments, etc.

Cllr C Palmer proposed approving all payments at once.

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

- 709 TO DISCUSS CURRENT ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH QUAY WEST PUBLIC CONVENIENCES, INCLUDING THE OUTCOME OF RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH SWAT AND SCC

The Acting Clerk gave the background to the situation with Quay West Toilets.

The toilets were leased from SWaT on a 5-year lease commencing on 1 October 2018. There had been many problems with water supplies, vandalism, etc. MTC had been given the impression that SWaT intended to remove the toilets at some time and would build others nearby. This was the reason MTC had spent little money on the toilets and they had fallen into disrepair. Cllr Bolton called upon the ward Councillors for their comments.

Cllr Venner asked if there was a break clause in the lease. He said he would be loath to see these toilets closed as they were used a lot by local people but he thought that Council ought to give notice to SWaT that if there were no improvements with regard to parking then MTC would hand the toilets back to the District Council. Cllr Venner thought that MTC, SWaT and SCC should all work in partnership to solve the matter. He said he would talk to Cllr Christine Lawrence about parking charges and echoed her suggestion that Council invite Steve Deakin, who was conducting the parking survey for SCC, to come to Minehead, talk to Council and review parking arrangements before any steps were made to close Quay West toilets.

The Acting Clerk confirmed that MTC had had a response, dated 7 August 2020, from SCC to their original complaint and Cllr Malin had drafted a reply to that response which was available to read in the Members' Area on the website. Cllr Malin felt disappointed with the County Council's response and considered that SCC had failed Minehead and its residents in not making an effort to protect them from COVID-19 in an area which had turned into a camp site.

Cllr Malin recommended Council send his letter as drafted to Cllr Fothergill and quoted the case of a similar situation in a small coastal town in a neighbouring county which had eliminated the problem in a matter of days by co-operation between a County Councillor, the County Council and the Town Council.

Cllr M Palmer said she was struggling to understand how it was so difficult to put up a few signs about parking. The problem had been going on for a very long time. Soon it would be winter when the problem wouldn't be there, but Minehead had the problem now. There were complaints about the toilets, even though MTC did its best to keep them clean, which reflected badly on the Council. She could not support the County Council's vision for a unitary authority given their response to this problem.

Cllr Christine Lawrence asked for Cllr Fothergill's response to MTC to be read out so all Councillors and public could hear the contents. Cllr Bloomfield read it out to the Meeting.

Cllr Bolton wondered whether, given the changing situation around unitary authorities, the parking review would ever be completed and implemented.

Cllr Malin said the action necessary, which had been implemented in other areas, was a preventative measure against COVID-19. Council needed to respond to Cllr Fothergill in a positive way. Most of the parking spaces in the relevant area were not consistently legal and cannot be enforced and, according to his information, this situation had gone on for eight or nine years. There were a number of issues involved but the most important one was the prevention of the spread of COVID-19.

Cllr Lawton said SCC had legal powers to stop people sleeping in vehicles on the street.

Cllr Harvey said the SCC response was an avoidance. Before going any further MTC had to establish that the area was safe and not wait until circumstances worsened. Similarly, with the toilets, Council had to ensure they were in a safe condition to be used. If they weren't, however inconvenient it may be, then the toilets could not be used.

Cllr Bloomfield wanted it minuted that she was disappointed with SCC's response and lack of any offer of wanting to work in partnership with MTC to solve the issue.

Cllr Venner said he supported Cllr Malin's drafted letter but said he thought Council should invite Steve Deakin (SCC Parking Services Manager) to come and discuss the problems with MTC, along with a representative from the County Council. The issues should be discussed around a table. He reiterated his reluctance to close Quay West toilets.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Agreed with 8 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention.

Cllr Bolton said he wished to arrange a meeting with the appropriate officers from both SWaT and SCC, to include the ward Councillors – Cllrs Lawton, Malin and Venner and himself as Mayor. This would be to discuss all issues, including public toilets and parking. Cllr M Palmer said she wanted to be included because she was lead of the Toilets Advisory Group.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with all in favour.

Cllr Malin suggested this invitation should be issued at the end of the letter he had drafted to make it a conciliatory offer.

- 710 TO CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADVISORY GROUP TO ASSESS THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MTC IF SWAT AND SCC WERE TO BE REPLACED BY A 'UNITARY AUTHORITY'

The Acting Clerk thought that this was a subject which could usefully be dealt with by the proposed Policy and Development Committee, due to be discussed as Item 16. Cllr Bolton suggested an Advisory Group be formed consisting of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of Committees which would feed back in to the Full Council once a month and also take advice from outside sources in a wider context. The Acting Clerk said the group would need to be a small group to work with the RFO and himself to look at budgets, services, what each Council did and look at the potential of what MTC wanted and didn't want to happen for the town. The Mayor said this would take some commitment because it was a big piece of work and needed moving forward as soon as possible. Cllr Kingston-James said there was a lot to look at – he had already identified over 200 pieces of land to consider.

Council voted on Cllr Bolton's proposal to form a Working/Advisory Group consisting of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the 3 Chairs of Committees which could co-opt others to work with them.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James

Agreed with 2 abstentions and the rest in favour.

The Acting Clerk reminded Councillors that there was already a Zoom meeting set up with the Leader of the County Council (Cllr David Fothergill) at 6.00 pm on Tuesday, 15 September 2020. The Acting Clerk said he would invite all to the meeting including Cllr Mandy Chilcott.

- 711 TO REVIEW THE DECISION TO ALLOW LEIGH DANTER'S FUNFAIR TO RETURN TO MINEHEAD IN SEPTEMBER 2020

Cllr Bolton said the Danter family had confirmed a date they could come to Minehead of 23–27 September 2020, arriving to set up about two days beforehand. This would be, as before, in the Rose Garden area. The funfair had already visited four locations since lockdown and had developed their COVID-19 precautions. The funfair would come on the clear understanding that should Government guidelines for such amusements change the event would be cancelled and there would be no liability to MTC for loss of earnings. The Danter family would send in their Risk Assessment which could then be submitted to the

Environmental Health Department at SWaT for approval. The proposal was to invite the funfair to come to Minehead in September as long as the organisers conform strictly to Government COVID-19 rules.

Proposed: Cllr Kingston-James

Seconded: Cllr Hercock

Agreed with 5 in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

712 TO DISCUSS THE CREATION OF A POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - *DEFERRED FROM THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON TUESDAY 28 JULY 2020*

The creation of a Policy and Development Committee was a suggestion coming from the Annual Full Council Meeting. Cllr Venner said such a Committee had been in operation twenty years ago. It met quarterly, all Councillors were invited and although it had no powers as such all members could participate and it could make recommendations on policy and development matters with the format being similar to a seminar rather than a public meeting.

The proposal was to hold a quarterly seminar to discuss development and policy issues with the first meeting to be in September.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Harvey

Agreed with all in favour.

The Acting Clerk said the meeting would be on 15 September immediately after the meeting with Cllr Fothergill at 6.00 pm. It would start at 7.30 pm and take no more than 1-1.5 hours.

713 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 continue the meeting *in camera*.

The Meeting closed at 10.00 pm.