



MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON TUESDAY 30 JUNE 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 A Kingston-James (Deputy Mayor), Cllr A Lawton, Cllr B Mandley, Cllr C Palmer*, Cllr M Palmer, Cllr D Prosser, Cllr H Rose, Cllr T Venner*

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

*(*denotes Somerset West and Taunton "SWaT" Councillor*

***denotes Somerset County Councillor "SCC")*

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

Members of the Press and Public: 10 members of the Public
1 members 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. He welcomed all attendees and also those watching the first live-streaming on its Facebook page of an Minehead Town Council ("MTC") Meeting.

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

Apologies had been received from Cllr N Hercocock and Cllr J Malin.

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

Member	Item	Interest	Time Period	Speak/Vote
Cllr T Bloomfield	590.2 599 600	Personal Personal Personal	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke but did not vote
Cllr P Bolton	All 590.2 599 600	SWaT Councillor Personal Personal Personal	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted Stayed in the room, spoke but did not vote
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	2020	Stayed in the room, spoke and voted

DISPENSATIONS (Localism Act 2011)

No-one had requested any dispensations.

3 TO FORMALLY RECEIVE AND ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF CLLR STEVEN HEARD AS A MINEHEAD TOWN COUNCILLOR

The Acting Clerk read out a letter of resignation from Cllr Steven Heard who resigned as a Councillor on 11 June 2020.

Proposed: Cllr Venner Seconded: Cllr Mandley
Agreed with all in favour that Council accept Cllr Heard's resignation as a Councillor.

The Acting Clerk said he would notify SWaT of Cllr Heard's resignation and Council would be notified whether it could co-opt to fill the vacant position. Council now needed three new Councillors.

4 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM:

Somerset County Council ("SCC")

Cllr Mandy Chilcott reported on the costs SCC had faced in coping with the COVID-19 crisis. She estimated that so far it had cost £47m and that currently about £26m had been received from the Government and about £6m from the NHS. SCC had paid an increase of 10% to all care home providers to keep them viable, had funded 78% of all the PPE provided cross-County (this excluded NHS services) and had opened a new care home in Yeovil for people recovering from COVID-19. There had been a great deal of support to nurseries and child care settings to help them survive. Social care services had been run as a 7 day a week service and there had been support for homelessness. Birth registrations had now started but there was a large backlog. At the moment although libraries were set to open users would not be able to browse books. She would let Council know when Minehead Library would open. Cllr Christine Chilcott reiterated her thanks to all the volunteers who had worked so hard throughout the COVID crisis. She said people should still make efforts to keep safe. David Fothergill had been and spoken to many parishes about the One Somerset proposals and she was sorry he had not yet spoken to Minehead Town Council. Both Councillors took questions from MTC Councillors.

Somerset West and Taunton District Council (“SWaT”)

Cllr Benet Allen, Deputy Leader had no formal report, but mentioned the planting of the wildflower meadows at Culvercliffe and Seaward Way, the takeover of the planting on Minehead sea front and clearing of the sand on the Promenade and accommodation of homeless people in the Beach Hotel. SWaT hoped to continue with this after lockdown.

Police

The Police had apologised for being unable to attend in person but had sent in a written report for the month which Councillors had been able to read.

Councillors attending Meetings on behalf of MTC

Cllr Lawton said she and Cllr Venner had attended a Minehead BID meeting on 9 June about opening-up of the town ahead of non-essential shops being able to open. This involved limiting some parking and having enough signs around the town. There were also to be monitors who would help people negotiate the new layout of The Parade. It had been a very productive meeting and BID were now meeting every two weeks to deal with updates during the COVID crisis.

Cllr Bloomfield had attended a few meetings including one about Butlins reopening and also West Somerset Railway both of which would be dealt with in Mayor’s Announcements. She had also attended a meeting of the Minehead Marketing Group, a good meeting chaired by Andrew Hopkins.

Advisory and Working Groups

There were no reports from Advisory and Working Groups.

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

Beverley Milner Simonds, accompanied by Sarah Milner Simonds, said they were pleased to have been asked by Minehead BID to return to Minehead on 22 August with an eat:Minehead Festival involving 50 local producers. She gave details of plans and took questions from Councillors.

6 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor, Cllr Bolton, had had a very positive meeting with Butlins to discuss the COVID measures they were putting in place and what precautions they were planning. From a personal point of view he now felt more comfortable about any re-opening of Butlins at a later date. He was satisfied Butlins was doing everything it could to keep themselves and the rest of the town safe.

Cllr Bolton had also had a meeting with West Somerset Railway who found themselves in a very difficult position as any re-opening would see overheads rise sharply. There did not look to be any re-opening in the near future.

The Mayor told the Meeting that all Minehead public toilets were re-opening, having had hand sanitisers and dispensers fitted. The playgrounds would all be re-opening the following weekend.

Provision of bands in Blenheim Gardens, eat:Minehead Festival and Christmas Events

The Mayor said that, although gatherings of no more than 30 people were now permitted, at this point in time MTC could not be seen to be supporting events in the town considering all the current Government guidance. Council needed to follow Government guidance and be seen to leading the way and not promoting events or trying to stage them. If Government guidance were to change Council would revisit this stance. Where Bands in Blenheim Gardens were concerned Council had no control of the number of people entering the Gardens; the same applied to any event or festival in the town

Cllr Harvey reported that the Bandstand was not yet in a safe condition – the wood had been repaired but the paving had not. The meeting agreed to take the subject of Bands to the next Amenities and Environment Committee meeting for discussion.

- 7 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE STATUTORY ANNUAL FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2020 – *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

Cllr C Palmer's initials had been incorrectly recorded in Minute 561.2.

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

- 8 TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING ON TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2020 - *MINUTES TO BE AGREED BY COUNCILLORS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE*

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

The Acting Clerk told the Meeting that, although the Planning Committee meeting of 2 June had been inquorate, the single minute of that meeting would need to be approved. It was not on the Agenda but would be approved at the next Full Council Meeting

- 9 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STATUTORY ANNUAL FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2020 – *TO RATIFY THAT ALL HAS BEEN AGREED*

9.1 The appointment of Lead Councillors to Advisory Groups

The Lead Councillor of the Community Hall Advisory Group was Cllr Bloomfield and the Lead Councillor of the Public Conveniences Advisory Group would be Cllr M Palmer. The Acting Clerk called for a leader for the Cemetery Advisory Group as an urgent meeting was needed of this group. Cllr Prosser volunteered as Lead Councillor. Work would soon need to be carried out at Hopcott Common so Cllr Bolton volunteered as Lead Councillor for the Hopcott Common Advisory Group. Cllr C Palmer volunteered to be Lead Councillor of the Risk Management Advisory Group. The Acting Clerk asked the remaining Advisory Groups to contact him with Lead Councillors – the Allotments, Community Orchard, Flooding, and Partnership Advisory Groups.

9.2 The appointment of a Representative to the Plastic-Free Community Group

Cllr Kingston-James and Cllr Harvey both wished to represent Council on this Group and Cllr Bolton was happy to have two representatives.

11 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM THE ACTING CLERK REGARDING THE COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Acting Clerk reported that work had now resumed on the Building with workmen conforming to strict distancing rules. The original contract end date of 7 May 2020 was now estimated to be the end of July 2020 subject to obtaining necessary supplies. Electricity meters were still awaited.

- *Alexandra Car Park*: Talks had started with SWaT, the owner of the car park, about the possibility of leasing all or part of the car park. There would be a Zoom meeting with the Acting Clerk, Cllr Bloomfield, the RFO and a representative from SWaT on 3 July 2020.
- *Demolition of old building*: Gilpin Demolition would start removing asbestos on 20 July 2020 and demolition should be completed by the end of July 2020.
- *Adult Gym/Tennis Courts/MUGA*: Work had started on upgrading the tennis courts and MUGA and orders had been placed to install the adult gym. Upgrading of all areas and completion of the adult gym were planned to be finished by the opening of the new building, estimated in September 2020.
- *Additional outside area works*: Paths, storage, entrance pillars all need upgrading and quotes had been obtained for the work and the costs included in revised budgets for 2020/2021. These were repairs and maintenance to pillars and repairs to path in front of Community Building £1,235 plus cost of steel doors estimated at £500. The total was £1,735.
- *Increased storage*: Storage away from the Community Building would be needed for safe keeping of sports equipment and ground maintenance tools. The Acting Clerk recommended that MTC purchase a shipping container for this purpose at a cost of £2,500.
- *Paths*: It was proposed to upgrade current paths and create new ones for the public to access all facilities on the Recreation Ground. The cost would be £12,747. All costs listed were included in revised budgets. The total required was estimated at £18,000.
- *Inside areas*: Estimates included were £6,500 for benches and storage, £500 for telephone and wifi, £2,000 for sound/conference system, £500 for cleaning equipment, £4,000 for furniture, £1,000 for kitchen and miscellaneous expenditure of £500. This totalled £15,000.

The Acting Clerk wished to create two budgets to fund the above expenditure totalling £33,000. He also suggested that he and the Lead Councillor for the Community Centre, Cllr Bloomfield, be given delegated authority to spend these budgets but conforming to Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

After discussion Cllr Venner said he would be prepared to agree delegated powers if this proposal came through Finance & Staffing Committee. It was not on the Agenda for approval at the Meeting and needed to be debated in Committee. Cllr Lawton agreed and said she would like to see an itemised list of what was still required for the Community Centre. She wondered whether it would be cheaper to hire a container or storage space. Cllr Harvey said he would like to see a running total and a list of the cumulative costs of what had been spent to date. The subject was referred back to Finance & Staffing Committee for discussion.

12 TO RATIFY THE LETTER SENT TO SCC REGARDING A UNITARY AUTHORITY FOR SOMERSET

Proposed: Cllr P Bolton
Agreed with all in favour

Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

13 TO DISCUSS AND CONSIDER A REPORT ON THE PURCHASE OF AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE

Councillors had seen a report on the proposed purchase of an electric vehicle for the Amenities Team. The vehicle had been trialled for nearly three weeks. It was a reconditioned demonstration vehicle, with new batteries, which would come with a six-month warranty. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations would have to be suspended because there was no other supplier with a similar vehicle to compare. The Acting Clerk said the Amenities Team were very happy with the vehicle because it was easy to use and gave ready access to areas such as the Cemetery and the harbour, it was quiet, efficient and cheap to run. Cllr Bolton said he had done some research and if MTC were to purchase the electric vehicle it would be the first Council in West Somerset to acquire one and possibly the first in the whole of Somerset and would be leading the way.

Cllr Harvey proposed that Council go ahead and purchase the vehicle and Cllr Venner proposed an amendment that Council vote to suspend Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and go ahead with the purchase. Cllr Mandley asked if the six month warranty could be extended. The Acting Clerk said he would look into that.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr Bolton

Agreed with all in favour that Council suspend its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and proceed with the purchase of the electric vehicle which they had on trial.

Cllr Bloomfield suggested running a competition on MTC's Facebook page for Minehead children to choose a name for the vehicle. She would publicise a draw which would take place live on Facebook and Cllr Bolton had offered to provide prizes from his Mayor's Allowance. She thought it was a good idea to involve local children in such a project and to publicise what Council were doing in this respect.

The RFO confirmed that, following the proposal, payment no 52 for the Electric Vehicle was now agreed.

14 TO DISCUSS COVENANTS ON WELLINGTON SQUARE

Cllr Venner said a covenant imposed on Wellington Square in which commercial use was proscribed had been lifted by SWaT in granting permission for the Farmers' Market to be held there during the COVID crisis. Wellington Square was amenity land for the people of Minehead and MTC had not been consulted in this decision. He had been asked for his opinion about this as an individual and had said he was content for the six month period of suspension to go ahead in these unusual times but was worried this may be extended for further commercial use. He thought MTC should write to SWaT to make it clear that the covenant should be put back in place from 1 January 2021 and that MTC should have been consulted as a body about its removal. Cllr Bolton said the Farmers' Market would have to revert to its usual site in November because the large Christmas tree would be put up in Wellington Square.

was suggested that a letter should be written to SWaT expressing Council's concern about not being consulted about removal of the covenant, asking assurance it would be put back in place after the six month period and reminding SWaT that MTC would be asking permission to erect the town Christmas tree in Wellington Square in November and use the Square for Christmas festivities.

Proposed: Cllr Venner Seconded: Cllr Bolton
Agreed with all in favour that a letter should be written to Somerset West and Taunton Council in the above terms.

15 FINANCE 2019/2020

15.1 To approve Annual Governance Statement (AGAR)

The RFO explained that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return had to be submitted to the External Auditor who would review the work of the Internal Auditor. £65,000 would need to come from reserves to balance spending. He had previously run through the Statement with Councillors at a seminar and had answered questions arising then.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton Seconded: Cllr C Palmer
Agreed with all in favour to approve the Annual Governance Statement.

15.2 To approve Accounting Statements

Proposed: Cllr Venner Seconded: Cllr Kingston-James
Agreed with all in favour to approve the Accounting Statements.

15.3 To approve reserves as at 31 March 2020

Proposed: Cllr C Palmer Seconded: Cllr Venner
Agreed with all in favour to approve the Reserves as at 31 March 2020.

16 TO CONSIDER THE PROVISION OF AN ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO WELLINGTON SQUARE

The Acting Clerk said he and the RFO had been looking at this as there were issues with using electricity in Wellington Square for the Christmas tree and other purposes. For years MTC had taken electricity from the Church into the Square for the tree. This was dangerous. A new power supply would be needed for the tree. Taking a supply from the lighting supply would not be permitted by the lighting company and the only other option was to put a supply in to the flower bed area which would be MTC's own supply with its own meter. Council had received a quote for just over £3,000 from Western Power who is the only supplier able to do this. In reply to a question from Cllr C Palmer the Acting Clerk said permission had been obtained from SWaT who owned Wellington Square. OH said original supply came from a small substation behind Costa Coffee. Cllr M Palmer asked if SWaT had been asked to contribute. The Acting Clerk said they had not been approached. Cllr Bolton thought the relationship with SWaT was one-sided because MTC put up a tree for the town on land owned by SWaT and were now considering putting in an electricity supply on their land for the benefit of the town's Christmas tree. He thought SWaT should be making some contribution. The Acting Clerk said he was no longer prepared to have MTC staff taking electricity supplies from shops and the Church for Christmas lights when this was dangerous practice. Cllr Bolton said SWaT contributed towards such costs for other towns and ought to do the same for Minehead. Cllr Venner considered it was up to himself and the other District Councillors to put pressure on SWaT and MTC should work in partnership with BID, as had happened with The Parade electricity supply, to get the supply sorted as soon as possible. He said it was time that SWaT treated Minehead the same as other towns in the district. Cllr Bolton said the District Councillors had tried to put pressure on SWaT but never got very far. It was time for MTC as a body to do this too.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with 1 abstention and the rest in favour that Council install an electricity supply in Wellington Square.

- 17 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE ACTING CLERK REGARDING THE TOWNSEND ROAD PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

The Acting Clerk confirming that MTC's comments about the proposed safety measures in Townsend Road had been sent to SCC. County's formal proposals had arrived that day and he would circulate these if anyone wished to see them.

- 18 TO ADOPT THE REVISED SMALL GRANTS POLICY

Council needed to formally adopt the revised Small Grants Policy which had previously been slightly amended but needed formal approval.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Venner

Agreed with all in favour.

- 19 TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE SUPPORT OF THE MINEHEAD CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT GROUP

The Acting Clerk said this item was to minute the fact that MTC was acting as banker for the Minehead Coronavirus Support Group. The RFO had obtained a grant of £500 for the Group. The Group had been set up as a matter of urgency but without a bank account would have been unable to secure any grant funding. Council's bank account had received the £500 and the Group's transactions would show up as rechargeable items in Council's accounts.

Proposed: Cllr Venner

Seconded: Cllr M Palmer

Agreed with 2 abstentions and the rest in favour.

Cllr Bloomfield, who was heavily involved with the group, said she already had Councillors helping the Group but if any of the public watching the live streaming would like to volunteer please would they message her on Facebook as the Group was crying out for helpers for picking up shopping, prescriptions, etc.

- 20 TO DISCUSS THE REQUEST FOR A FUN FAIR ON THE ROSE GARDEN SITE

Cllr Bolton said the Fun Fair owners were now allowed to operate but were still awaiting Government guidance about how to do so. It was agreed to defer discussion about the Funfair or any other entertainments to a future meeting once Government guidance was clear.

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr C Palmer

Agreed with all in favour to defer discussion to future meetings.

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

Proposed: Cllr Bolton

Seconded: Cllr Bloomfield

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

The Public Meeting closed at 9.53 pm.