

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13TH AUGUST 2026

In attendance:

Cllr R Jenkins (Mayor)	Cllr J Akker	Cllr D Baker
Cllr D Boylan	Cllr N Hinderwell	Cllr C Powling
Cllr S Weaver	Kirsty Wadsworth (Town Clerk)	

26/198 To receive apologies for absence and a vote of acceptance to be taken

Apologies received from Cllr Webster, Cllr Williams, City Cllr Davidson and County Cllr Perera.

26/199 To record declarations of interests

Members are invited to declare any relevant interests. Notwithstanding this item, Members may subsequently declare an interest at any point during the meeting

Cllr Powling declared he was a Colchester City Councillor.

26/200 Public session (15 minutes, 3 minutes per speaker)

Priority will be given to those members of the public wishing to share information relating to items on the agenda. Once the public session is closed, members of the public are not permitted to speak

MOP1- The allotments representative asked whether the Council could confirm plot prices by September so that invoices can be issued to members in October, noting that recent management changes make early clarity important.

MOP2- Raised concerns over a severe public safety crisis at West Mersea beach, due to a lack of warning signs and official inaction on safety equipment. Local authorities were accused of prioritising parking revenue over safety and removing community-funded lifebuoys and rafts, while failing to install proper signage.

MOP3- Warned that Monkey Beach poses serious safety risks due to strong tidal flows, deep water and past drownings, urging the Council to install warning signage unless a risk assessment shows it is unnecessary. Cited Weymouth's removal of similar rafts and noted potential HSE criminal liability for the Council if an incident occurred. Asked the Council to consider taking control of the launching area at Village Green 241 North to prevent misuse.

MOP4- Argued that the council is advancing the phase-one rebuild without a clear funding plan or firm commitments from sports clubs and challenged Councillor Powling for making an allegation about withdrawing from the Waterside Forum.

MOP5- Asked for pictorial, low-level beach safety signs, as they are clearer for children and non-English speakers. Explained that a planned meeting to discuss sketches never happened and has since been told existing signage is "sufficient," which the resident disagreed with. Asked for clarification on whether pictorial signs will still be considered.

26/201 To receive County and City Councillors report.

Report received from City Cllr Martin Parsons: -

- Committee decides on the Regulation 19 plan.
- Approval must happen by 31st December to avoid year-long delays.

- Without an adopted plan, Mersea and nearby rural areas are exposed to speculative large-scale development.
- Developments over 150 homes must now be referred to the minister, who can approve them regardless of local objections.
- GP issues might be ignored by state officials.
- Approval would give the council a five-year housing land supply, strengthening its ability to resist speculative applications.

Report received from Cllr Powling: -

- Officers have been progressing background work on water-related matters.
- Coastal ownership around Mersea is highly complex, involving Colchester City Council, West Mersea Town Council, private owners and The Crown Estate.
- Work on the definitive map is advancing, with final sections now being completed.
- Colchester City Council is exploring a joint full-beach risk assessment with West Mersea Town Council, holiday parks, RNLI, Postcard and the Crown Estate.
- Although lengthy, the work is moving forward, and further clarity is expected soon.

26/202 To confirm minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting of 23rd July 2026.

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of the Council meeting of 23rd July 2026 with the minor amendments.

Proposed: Cllr Boylan, Seconded: Cllr Akker. All in favour.

26/203 To agree and approve a list of payments

A list of payments was approved.

It was noted that the bank reconciliations were signed off by a non-bank signatory and that the bank statements were initialled. This arrangement will remain in place moving forward.

26/204 To provide an update from:

- (a) Committees
- (b) Working Groups
- (c) Representatives

An update was received.

26/205 To receive the Town Clerk's report

- Hand dryers and emergency red pull-cords have now been installed in the Willoughby disabled toilets.
- Installation of the new play equipment at West Mersea is scheduled for 24th August.
- The urinal installation at the Coast Road toilets is being completed 13th August.
- The gardener is continuing planting works across Council-owned areas.
- Priority 1 trees identified in the recent survey have been felled in West Mersea Park.
- A healthy tree (approximately 8 inches in diameter) has been deliberately cut down in Reymead Wood. This incident has been reported to the police as anti-social behaviour.
- Health and safety documentation and risk assessments for Rushmere and the Council offices are currently being reviewed and updated. Glebe has been formally notified of its requirement to complete a Fire Risk Assessment for the premises.
- The Groundsman has successfully completed his chainsaw qualification and basic tree-survey course.

26/206 To review and agree the following documents and policies: -

- (a) Drone Usage Policy
- (b) Email Policy

- (c) Equality and Diversity Policy
- (d) Freedom of Information Policy
- (e) Glebe advertising boards Policy
- (f) Grant/Donation Awarding Policy
- (g) Lone Working Policy
- (h) Meeting Protocol Policy
- (i) Publication Scheme
- (j) Training and Development Policy

It was resolved unanimously to accept the policies with the agreed amendments to the Grant/Donation Awarding Policy.

Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

- 26/207 To agree to add the RFO as a signatory on the Hinkley and Rugby Building Society Local Council Deposit Account

It was resolved unanimously to add the RFO as a signatory on the Hinkley and Rugby Building Society Local Council Deposit Account.

Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

- 26/208 To review and agree the approach for updating the West Mersea Town Council website, either by continuing with the existing contractor or commissioning a replacement website, to ensure full compliance with accessibility requirements as set out under Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) –

Option A - £2,400.00 + VAT

Option B - £899.00 + VAT

Option C - £400.00 + VAT

It was resolved unanimously to continue with the existing contractor and approve Option C at a cost of £400.00 + VAT.

Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Weaver. All in favour.

- 26/209 To agree payment of solicitor fees relating to the Tennis Court and Pavilion lease, covering professional charges incurred between 27th February 2026 and 8th August 2026, at a cost of £1,555.00 + VAT

It was resolved unanimously to agree payment of solicitor fees relating to the Tennis Court and Pavilion lease, covering professional charges incurred between 27th February 2026 and 8th August 2026, at a cost of £1,555.00 + VAT.

Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded: Cllr Boylan. All in favour.

- 26/210 To agree to purchase a new chainsaw at a cost of £755.00 + VAT

It was resolved unanimously to defer agreeing to purchase a new chainsaw at a cost of £755.00 + VAT and to investigate alternative options to be considered at the next Community Assets/Facilities Committee meeting.

Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded: Cllr Boylan. All in favour.

- 26/211 To consider and agree the quotation for repair works to the two existing sides at the Skatepark, comprising: installing of rubber mulch, rebuilding MOT Type 1 stone and cup and a compliant resin-bonded surfacing at a cost of £6,613.32 + VAT

It was resolved unanimously to agree the quotation for repair works to the two existing sides at the Skatepark, comprising: installing of rubber mulch, rebuilding MOT Type 1 stone and cup and a compliant resin-bonded surfacing at a cost of £6,613.32 + VAT.

Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded: Cllr Powling. All in favour.

26/212 To receive a summary of the completed public consultation feedback forms regarding the proposed multi-use community building at the Glebe, and to consider and agree whether, subject to the outcomes of the public consultation, the Council wishes to proceed with the Phase 1 rebuild project

It was resolved unanimously after consideration of the completed public consultation feedback forms for the Council to proceed with the Phase 1 rebuild project.

It was noted that the Council would address residents' concerns regarding car parking by meeting with:- (a) MISA

(b) Local residents

(c) NEPP

Proposed: Cllr Boylan, Seconded: Cllr Powling. All in favour.

26/213 To review and agree to undertake a comprehensive water-safety risk assessment for West Mersea Town Council owned beach, together with a corresponding risk assessment relating to the potential deployment of the council-owned bathing rafts

It was resolved unanimously that the Council would agree to participate and contribute towards the cost of a comprehensive water-safety risk assessment of all beaches, together with a corresponding risk assessment relating to the potential deployment of the council-owned bathing rafts. This risk assessment is to be commissioned by Colchester City Council.

Proposed: Cllr Akker, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

26/214 To consider and agree the requests from two families for composite benches to replace existing wooden benches on Coast Road

It was resolved to agree the request from the two families for composite benches to replace existing wooden benches on Coast Road.

Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour except Councillor Jenkins who voted against.

26/215 Local Plan: To consider a report from the meeting with Karen Syrett (Colchester City Council) on 28th July and agree sending a letter to Colchester City Council regarding environment issues

It was resolved unanimously to agree sending a letter to Colchester City Council regarding environment issues.

Proposed: Cllr Akker, Seconded: Cllr Baker. All in favour.

26/216 To receive an update and agree any final recommendations/actions from the Youth/Events Working Group regarding Mersea Skate Jam on 24th August 2026

An update was received from the Youth/Events Working Group regarding Mersea Skate Jam on 24th August 2026.

26/217 To receive and consider a statement from Councillor Webster regarding comments made at the Full Council meeting on 23rd July 2026 relating to West Mersea Town Council's involvement with the Waterside Forum

A statement was received and formally noted. Cllr Powling was invited to offer an apology for his comments but declined to do so.

Cllr Akker and Cllr Hinderwell both stated on the record that the former Mayor did not withdraw West Mersea Town Council from the Waterside Forum. Cllr Hinderwell further requested that it be formally noted that he asked Cllr Powling to apologise for making that assertion, a request which was refused.

Meeting ended at 9.00pm.