

**WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2025**

In attendance:

Cllr S Weaver, Mayor	Cllr D Baker	Cllr D Boylan
Cllr N Hinderwell	Cllr R Jenkins	Cllr Powling
Cllr T Webster	Kirsty Wadsworth (Town Clerk)	Cllr Martin Parsons (CCC)
Cllr John Jowers (ECC)	14 members of the public	

**25/039 RECORDING OF MEETING**

Chairman requested anyone present to identify their intention to record the meeting.

Cllr Webster, Cllr Hinderwell and the Town Clerk confirmed they would be recording the meeting. The office recording device was also used.

**25/040 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Williams. A vote of acceptance was taken with all in favour.

**25/041 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Powling declared he is a Colchester City Councillor

**25/042 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

MOP1- Enquired about the cost of maintenance of Dawes Lane – suggested scaling back to trees and grass.

MOP2- Asked why money taken by Colchester City Council is not put back into the seafront gardens – suggested low-cost dry gardens in the boats.

MOP3- Asked that the council opposes the extra 300 houses at Dawes Lane. In light of the Colchester Middlewick plan, the council should provide a united front against a flood of development.

MOP4- Asked the council to respond at Monday's Local Plan Committee meeting that the infrastructure on Mersea cannot support expansion of 300 houses. Wants to encourage the local community to support the council in objecting any plans for expansion.

MOP5- Raised the issue with an article in the Local Life magazine. Asked for a public meeting for an explanation of how lack of medical centres can support expansion.

MOP6- Referenced 3 plans for improvement of the beach front areas. The ongoing cost for the plans with option3- the dry beds being a preferred way forward.

To receive reports from County and City Councillors

**Cllr John Jowers –**

- Attended budget meeting – council tax in Essex is set to be the lowest of any county in England at 3.75.
- 12.3 million in highways.
- 910 million on adult social care.
- 290 million on children's care and SEND.
- County Council Elections in May have been postponed.
- There will be changes in the manner of Mayoral elections.

- Planning will come under the County Mayor.
- Objections to 300 houses need to be legitimate or we could be allocated a number that cannot be opposed.
- Council needs to look at opportunities to increase its power and funds in light of devolved Government.

**ClIr Martin Parsons –**

- Need to look at the bigger picture with the Local Plan as the government can intervene and allocate housing.
- Referenced New National Planning Framework, mandatory house building targets and change in calculation has increased Colchester allocation by 40%, an extra 1,300 houses per year.
- If Colchester City Council cannot demonstrate where it is building the extra 1,300 houses it can be increased by 20%.
- There is little opportunity for house building in Colchester, leading to the use of rural areas.
- New Local Plan needs to be in place by February 2026 or there is a risk developers could apply to the Government Planning Inspectorate for approval under the law of Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development.
- Need for better quality evidence to ensure the Local Plan is approved by planning inspector otherwise this could lead to delays, allowing the Government to impose targets.
- Colchester City Council is required to identify other localities for housing in light of Middlewick being removed from the plan. It is negotiation, not confrontation that will be more productive.
- Clarification was given over confusion arising from Colchester City Council website saying the forthcoming meeting on Monday has been rescheduled and might lead to no attendance. The meeting on the 17th February is still to go ahead.

**ClIr Carl Powling –**

- Mondays Local Plan Committee meeting is not to approve the plan but whether to put it out to public consultation.
- Utility companies have to supply the development by law, so not having the infrastructure in place is not an objection.
- A consultation would allow local councils to debate issues.
- Section 106 monies for Dawes Lane has been released, there is a period of 8 years now for the money to be spent.
- There is a need for better reports being submitted as Anglian Water is quoting a 28% surplus using incorrect data.

25/043 To confirm minutes of the Council Meeting of 16th January 2025 – Matters arising:

***It was resolved*** unanimously to accept the minutes of the 16th January 2025.

Matters arising: ClIr Hinderwell noted that he had been recording the meeting.

Proposed: ClIr Webster, Seconded: ClIr Jenkins. All in favour.

25/044 To confirm minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting of 24th January 2025 – Matters arising.

***It was resolved*** unanimously to accept the minutes of the 24th January 2025.

Matters arising: ClIr Hinderwell noted that the meeting on the 24th January should have been listed as an Extraordinary Council Meeting.

Proposed: ClIr Jenkins, Seconded: ClIr Powling. All in favour.

25/045 To provide an update about Dawes Lane Open Space and agree any further actions.

Colchester has now received the following S106 monies. The financial contributions for land at Dawes Lane is £223,892.12.

Four options were discussed:

Option 1: Acquire CL1 and CL2 but not the public open space.

Option 2: Acquire CL1 and CL2 and the public open space.

Option 3: To acquire only the public space.

Option 4: Decline it all.

Following discussion, **it was agreed unanimously** for the councillors to draft a factual document outlining steps that West Mersea Town Council have taken with respect to Section 106, to publish it on the WMTC website and to vote on the proposed options in the next Council Meeting of 10th April. Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Webster. All in favour.

25/046 To review and agree the evidence statement submission for the Local Plan, from a member of the public.

Council reviewed evidence provided by West Mersea Town Council submitted by two residents for the current review of the Local Plan.

Following discussion, it was **agreed unanimously** that Cllr Jenkins and a local resident would finalise the wording of the accompanying document for the approved environmental statement.

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

After discussion it was **agreed unanimously** for David Cooper to speak on behalf of WMTC and present his statement at the Local plan Committee meeting on Monday 17th February at Charter Hall, Colchester. Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Jenkins. All in favour.

25/047 To agree membership for the Town Clerk to Society of Local Clerks and Councils (SLCC) at a cost of £380.

It was **resolved unanimously to agree** the membership for the Town Clerk to the Society of Local Clerks and Councils at a cost of £380. Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

25/048 To review the quotes for new benches.

Following discussion, it was **agreed unanimously** to defer this item to the next meeting as costing for recycled benches would need to be considered.

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

25/049 To review and agree the Memorial Bench Policy

Following discussion, it was **agreed unanimously** to adopt the Memorial Bench Policy.

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

25/050 To agree the Routine Playground Inspection Course and Exam for 2 groundsmen at a cost of £400 per person.

Following discussion, it was agreed unanimously to agree the Routine Playground Inspection Course for the two groundsmen at a cost of £400 per person, provided that the correct training forms have been signed. Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded: Cllr Jenkins. All in favour.

25/051 To agree the quote for a new router at a cost of £320.68.

Following discussion, it was **agreed unanimously** to agree the quote for the new router at a cost of £320.68. Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Boylan. All in favour.

25/052 To discuss and agree the proposals from CCC for the Putting Green on Victoria Esplanade

Following discussion, it was ***agreed unanimously*** to accept the proposed option 3 for the flower beds in Victoria Esplanade. To remove all existing plants material, install membranes and use plants that can survive in challenging conditions. Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell. Seconded: Cllr Boylan. All in favour.

25/053 To provide an update about the Deed of Variation for Glebe 2

- A letter has been sent to the clubs at the Glebe giving the 3 options- still awaiting response from all parties.
- The council needs to decide whether to wait for all three clubs to agree or to consult MISA.
- Need to gather all information together before deciding on the way forward.
- S106 agreement states where the money can be spent and a timetable to adhere to, so action is needed.

25/054 To receive an update from the VE Day 80 working group.

The committee are finalising an agenda, and a schedule of events is to be advertised shortly.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm.