

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2025

In attendance:

Cllr S Weaver, Mayor	Cllr J Akker	Cllr D Baker
Cllr N Hinderwell	Cllr R Jenkins	Cllr C Powling
Cllr T Webster	Cllr M Williams	
Kirsty Wadsworth (Town Clerk)	Cllr John Jowers (ECC)	Cllr Martin Parsons (CCC)
12 members of the public		

25/055 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.

25/056 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

25/057 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

25/058 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MOP1 - Stated that there was a small error in the Village Green sign 241 and asked the Council to protect the shoreline from unlawful works.

MOP2 - Welcomed Cllr Akker. Stated that the biggest threat to the island is a massive scale development and that politicians need to be honest and trustworthy. Mentioned previous drawings which were commissioned for the Glebe Pavillion and a FOI request. Reflected that there is a need for transparency and a clear conscience.

MOP3 - Requested that planners should consider the various options for a doctor's surgery as the Local Plan does not mention the problem with the doctors. This needs to be followed up with the local planners. Discussed the changing rooms, reducing car parking and any additional costs at the Pavillion.

MOP4 - Spoke on behalf of MISA. Stated that no plans have been approved, and various options are still being considered. The Glebe building has severe health and safety issues which have been highlighted in the commissioned report of 2023. No plans have been agreed – only proposals have been considered, and no suppliers have been appointed.

MOP5 - Asked for reassurance that the boardwalk fixings are sea waterproof. The mayor reiterated that the correct materials have been selected, and the Clerk stated that a meeting with the project manager has been scheduled for an inspection before the project is signed off.

MOP6 - Questioned how the public could access an 11-page Dawes Lane document on the West Mersea website. The council responded stating that no more consultation is required, and a decision will be decided on the 10th April Council meeting.

25/059 To receive County and City Councillors reports

Cllr John Jowers-

- Discussed Middlewick and the Local Government Review.
- Questioned how many Unitaries there will be in Essex.
- Mentioned the possibility of losing the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Reflected that the role of the Parishes has not yet been determined.

Cllr Martin Parsons-

- The precept has been approved by Colchester City Council and is now legal.
- Regarding the Local Plan the recommendation was to read Mersea Life for details.
- Some unrealistic assumptions were mentioned in the Local Plan.
- Stated that there was a 4-month period that was set aside in the original timetable for the infrastructure plan to be completed after the consultation- it needs to be completed before the consultation, or it could potentially delay the Local Plan.
- There is a possibility that the planning inspector could turn down the plan, which happened at Great Tey.
- The planning committee by majority vote said the infrastructure plan needs completing first.
- Raised concerns about the GP surgeries. Asked for a discussion between the planners and the integrated care board for a time board for when they expect to see GP's taking new registrations.
- Sewage issues and the effect of climate change were raised.

25/060 To confirm minutes of the Council Meeting of 13th February 2025 – Matters arising.

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of the 13th of February 2025.

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

25/061 To agree a revised wording to the Memorial Bench Policy and to agree which bench options to offer

It was resolved unanimously to agree the revised wording to the Memorial Bench Policy

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

It was ***resolved unanimously*** to offer the Balmoral Bench as the standard option, with the recycled bench as an alternative choice.

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

25/062 To receive a Finance update

- Working on end of year books.
- End of year auditor has been booked for May.
- Monthly bank income and expenditure sheets are now available on the website.
- A list of invoices has been submitted for approval.

It was ***resolved unanimously*** to approve the list of payments.

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

25/063 To receive the Town Clerk's report

- The internal audit was completed in February 2025. Recommendations made by the auditor are being actioned.
- Regular staff meetings are being held with all staff, which have been productive.
- The Boardwalk is near completion and the grant money has been requested.
- Fairhaven toilets are undergoing repairs so that they can be opened on time.
- Action points have been listed after a meeting with the Health and Safety advisor.
- Bus shelter refresh and paint is due to begin. This is now a priority.

- The allotment and tennis leases are being reviewed and amended to agree new terms.
- Town Clerk has attended courses with the EALC to facilitate her training.

25/064 To agree for three Groundsmen to complete online Health and Safety courses - Working at Heights/ Hot Works/HAVS at a cost of £250 plus VAT

It was **resolved unanimously** to agree for the three Groundsmen to complete online Health and Safety courses - Working at Heights/Hot Works/HAVS at a cost of £250 plus VAT.

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

Cllr Powling arrived at 7.45pm and joined the meeting.

25/065 To receive an update from the Community Assets/Facilities Committee

- The final draft of the tennis lease has been sent for amendments and approval.
- A meeting has been scheduled to discuss and amend the allotment lease.
- A meeting was held with MISA to discuss the possibility of a 20/25-year lease.
- The Pavillion has been visited to assess minor repairs and maintenance of the building.

25/066 To agree the wording and a timeframe for a further Glebe Pavillion Consultation

It was **resolved unanimously** for the Community Assets/Facilities Committee to agree the wording and a timeframe for a further Glebe Pavilion consultation and to report this back to full council.

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

25/067 To agree the wording of Village Green 241 South sign

It was **resolved by majority** to agree the wording of the Village Green 241 South sign.

Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. Cllr Powling abstained. Cllr Jenkins opposed.

25/068 To agree the quote for public toilet cleaning cover for 2025/26

It was **resolved unanimously** to agree the quote for public toilet cleaning cover for 2025/26.

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

25/069 To review and agree the Waste Disposal contract

It was **resolved unanimously** to agree the waste disposal contract once the correct number of bins have been verified.

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

25/070 To agree to close the Barclays Bank account – and use the Unity account as the main Bank account

It was **resolved unanimously** to close the current Barclays account and transfer funds to the Unity account, which will become the main account, subject to advising all payees of the new banking arrangements.

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

25/071 To adopt and agree the Investment Policy

It was **resolved unanimously** to adopt and agree the Investment Policy.

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

25/072 To review and agree an Internal Controls Policy

It was **resolved unanimously** to defer the decision to agree the Internal Controls Policy until the document had been revised and updated correctly.

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

25/073 To review and update the Financial Regulations

It was **resolved unanimously** to update the financial regulations with the noted amendments.

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

25/074 To review and agree the WMTC CCTV Policy

It was **resolved unanimously** to defer reviewing and agreeing the WMTC CCTV policy until clarification has been sought on the document wording.

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

25/075 To agree to book the Accountant in April/May 2025 to work with the Responsible Finance Officer

It was **resolved unanimously** to book the accountant for one day in April/May 2025 to assist the Responsible Finance Officer in completing the VAT returns.

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

25/076 To agree to pay the Professional Locum Clerk Services Invoice dated 21st January 2025 £883.33 – for 21.5 hours

It was **resolved unanimously** to pay the Professional Locum Clerk Services Invoice dated 21st January 2025 £883.33 – for 21.5 hours.

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

25/077 To receive an update from the VE Day 80 Committee

- Musical acts have been booked.
- Army, food and drink stalls have been arranged.
- Lighting of the beacon by Garrison Commander is scheduled.
- Security and first aid officers have been booked.
- Fire brigade booked.
- Radio coverage booked.
- Next meeting will be to finalise the details, including Health and Safety checks.

25/078 To receive an update on the Waterside Committee

- Another Waterside Forum meeting will be scheduled.

25/079 To agree the next steps for Coast Road path

It was **resolved unanimously** to defer to agree the next steps for Coast Road path. The Community Assets/Facilities committee will discuss the next steps and put forward a recommendation to the full council.

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

25/080 To agree a budget up to £500 spend for the Annual Town Meeting and ask for ideas/suggestions for the event from the Council

It was agreed that this would not need a vote and as an allowance of £500 has been allocated in the budget. Ideas and suggestions were discussed for the Annual Town Meeting.

25/081 To discuss and agree instigating an Annual Mayors Young People's Award

Following discussion, it was **resolved unanimously** that the mayor would present her proposals on paper and bring her plans to the full council where it would then be considered.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC To resolve that due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be excluded pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

It was **resolved unanimously** to exclude the press.

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

25/082 To agree for a staff member to carry over 3 days holiday to the holiday year starting 01/04/25 – to be used by 30th September 2025

It was **resolved unanimously** to agree for a staff member to carry over 3 days holiday to the holiday year starting 01/04/25 - to be used by 30th September 2025.

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

25/083 To agree to instruct the accountant to change staff passwords on all staff wage slips

Following discussion, it was **resolved unanimously** to change the passwords to a password which is specified by the employees and where each employee will have to contact Tax Assist for a unique password.

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

Meeting closed at 9.35pm.