

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15 MAY 2025

In attendance:

Cllr T Webster (Mayor)	Cllr J Akker	Cllr D Baker
Cllr D Boylan	Cllr N Hinderwell	Cllr R Jenkins
Cllr C Powling	Cllr S Weaver	Cllr M Williams
Kirsty Wadsworth (Town Clerk)	11 members of public (MOP)	

25/143 Election of Mayor

Current Mayor to open the meeting. Members to vote and elect Town Mayor. Elected Mayor to sign the Declaration of Acceptance and take the Mayor's position.

Councillor Webster was proposed by Cllr Akker and seconded Cllr Hinderwell. Councillor Powling was proposed by Councillor Boylan and seconded by Councillor Jenkins. After a vote, the Council RESOLVED by majority to elect Councillor Webster as Mayor.

25/144 Election of Deputy Mayor

To elect a Deputy Mayor. Deputy Mayor to sign the Declaration of Acceptance.

Councillor Hinderwell was proposed by Cllr Akker and seconded by Cllr Webster. Councillor Jenkins was proposed by Cllr Powling and seconded by Cllr Boylan. After a vote, the Council RESOLVED to elect Councillor Jenkins as Deputy Mayor.

25/145 To receive apologies for absence and a vote of acceptance to be taken.

None received.

25/146 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Powling declared his interest as a Colchester City Councillor.

25/147 Public Participation:

MOP1- Requested that the Town Council register Broomhills Greensward as a Village Green and a Public

Right of Way. Raised the problem with purchasing a season ticket for the sea front car park.

MOP2- Stated that the alexander weed on Glebe 1 and 2 is spreading and needs cutting and that rubbish is piling up behind Glebe recreational shed. Mentioned his concerns about discharge of sewage.

MOP3- Expressed his thanks that the hedge and the grass had been cut at the bottom of Fairhaven.

MOP4 – Noted his concerns that some green areas were cut during no cut month of May.

MOP5- Expressed his thanks for the Town Council for providing a decent timetable for the new bus service from Mersea to Colchester.

25/148 To receive County and City Councillors reports.

Cllr John Jowers gave an update on the following:

- Talked about Government reform and County Elections.
- Colchester City Council may lose their city status and be parished.
- Recommended staying with the EALC.
- Questioned who will be responsible for the spends on adult social care and SEND.
- Mayor of Essex will be an important post, and other jobs may be lost in the process.
- Believes the future lies with parishes who should look at coordinating their time and working together.

Cllr John Davidson gave an update on the following:

- The biggest hurdle at the moment is financial stability – two thirds of the County Council budget is allocated to Social Care. Colchester and Tendring are the biggest applicants for the money, but will they get their fair share needed to deliver the services.
- Noted that there will be a labour mayor, council and government.
- Colchester is responsible for weekly tests on the sea water, and it is important that we monitor this.

Cllr Parsons gave an update on the following:

- Mersea has been allocated 300 houses.
- Water report was not in place before houses were put in place in Langham.
- Mentioned the fact that the GP problem was ignored in the Local Plan.
- Raised concerns about the local plan- if it's not completed in time, it could leave us open to speculative development. The other risk is the planning inspector turning down the local plan.

Cllr Powling gave an update on the following:

- Stated that the Mayor of Essex won't have the same full power as a Metropolitan Mayor.

25/149 To confirm minutes of the Council meeting of 10th April 2025

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of the 10th April 2025.

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

25/150 To receive the Town Clerk's report

- The Town Meeting was informative. Adam Pipe Heads of Roads Policing has expressed a wish to return and give an update at the next Town Meeting.
- Park Inspection course completed and passed by the two groundsmen.
- Town Clerk is completing an audit of all the parks.
- The Action Plan has been updated and is ready to be published on the website.
- VE Day was a huge success. Many thanks to the councillors for organising the event.
- Updating and renewing insurance policy

25/151 To receive a Finance update

- Year-end procedures are being completed in readiness for the audit on 19th May 2025 and the AGAR.
- Beaumont Seymour is now our payroll provider and we completed the first payroll run in April.

25/152 To approve and agree a list of payments

It was resolved unanimously to approve the list of payments.

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

25/153 To approve regular payments

It was resolved unanimously to approve the regular payments.

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

25/154 To approve the new updated Financial Regulations

Following discussion, ***it was resolved*** unanimously to approve the new updated Financial Regulations with the amended cover sheet and the pages numbered correctly.

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

25/155 To review and update the Standing Orders

Following discussion, ***it was resolved*** unanimously to amend and accept the Standing Orders with Paragraph 26 e and f on the current document to be added to the new proposed Standing Orders.

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

25/156 To review and agree the Fixed Asset Register

It was resolved unanimously to agree the Fixed Asset Register

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

25/157 Committees

(a) To consider and agree committee members and appoint chairs.

The following committee members were agreed.

- i. Community Assets/Facilities: Cllr Akker, Cllr Baker, Cllr Hinderwell, Cllr Jenkins, Cllr Webster, Cllr Williams.
Chair to be elected at the first committee meeting as per Terms of Reference.
- ii. Environment & Community Services: Cllr Akker, Cllr Baker, Cllr Hinderwell, Cllr Weaver, Cllr Webster, Cllr Williams.
Chair to be elected at the first committee meeting as per Terms of Reference.
- iii. Finance & Strategy: Committee members as per terms of reference are the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and elected Chairs to be decided at each Committee meeting.
Cllr Jenkins was elected as Chair. Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded Cllr Webster. All in favour.
- iv. Personnel: Cllr Akker, Cllr Baker, Cllr Hinderwell, Cllr Jenkins, Cllr Webster, Cllr Williams.
Chair to be elected at the first committee meeting as per Terms of Reference.
- v. Planning & Highways: Cllr Baker, Cllr Hinderwell, Cllr Webster.
Cllr Hinderwell was elected as Chair. Proposed: Cllr Akker, Seconded Cllr Webster. All in favour.

(b) To agree dates of committee meetings

It was resolved unanimously to agree for an email to be circulated for proposed dates for all of the committee meetings to be agreed for 2025 and early 2026.

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

25/158 Working Groups

To consider and agree working groups, their membership and chairs.

The following members were agreed.

(a) Bathing Rafts: Cllr Baker, Webster and Cllr Williams. Leader to be appointed at the first meeting.

- (b) Glebe: Following discussion, **it was agreed** by majority to dissolve the Glebe working group.
Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded: Cllr Webster. Cllr Boylan and Cllr Powling abstained. All in favour.
- (c) Local Plan: Following discussion, **it was resolved** unanimously to leave the Local Plan as it stands.
Proposed: Cllr Akker, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

25/159 Representatives

To consider and agree representatives:
The following representatives were agreed.

- (a) Allotments: Cllr Baker
- (b) CALC: Cllr Akker, Cllr Baker, Cllr Weaver
- (c) Car parks: Cllr Jenkins, Cllr Weaver
- (d) Essex Native Oyster Restoration Initiative (ENORI): Cllr Akker
- (e) Health & Safety: Town Clerk and Cllr Webster
- (f) MISA representatives on behalf of the Town Council: Cllr Weaver
- (g) Passenger Transport: Cllr Baker
- (h) Play parks: Cllr Webster and Cllr Baker
- (i) Police & Neighbourhood Watch: Cllr Baker, Cllr Webster

25/160 Policy reviews

To review and agree policies

- (a) Code of Conduct
- (b) Fixed Asset Policy
- (c) WMTC CCTV Policy

It was resolved unanimously to approve and agree the Code of Conduct Policy.
Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

It was resolved unanimously to approve agree the Fixed Asset Policy.
Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Powling. All in favour.

It was resolved unanimously to approve and agree WMTC CCTV Policy.
Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Powling. All in favour.

25/161 Subscriptions

Review and confirmation of the Councils subscriptions.

- (a) Essex Association of Local Councils (which includes NALC affiliation fee)
- (b) Colchester Association of Local Councils
- (c) Society of Local Council Clerks (Clerks membership)
- (d) Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Membership
- (e) Rural Community Council of Essex
- (f) Open Spaces Society
- (g) Essex Playing Fields Association
- (h) National Free Local Authorities – it was noted that this should be Nuclear Free Local Authorities

Following discussion, **it was resolved** unanimously to agree all the Council's subscriptions excluding Essex Playing Fields Association and defer to a further committee to see if we will potentially still use this subscription.

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

25/162 To approve the one-year service Wallgate plan at a cost of £7,667

Following discussion, it was resolved unanimously to defer the one-year service Wallgate plan at a cost of £7,667 with the proviso that an extraordinary meeting is called where more clarification can be given.

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

25/163 To agree to pay retrospectively the trimmer at a cost of £926

It was resolved unanimously to agree to pay retrospectively the trimmer at a cost of £926.

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

25/164 Local Plan – To consider the latest position and any action including follow-up to the Council's letter to Colchester City Council on the environment

Update received:

- The proposal is for the working Group to meet and consider what actions should be taken and report back to full Council.
- Town Clerk to write to Colchester City Council as a follow up to the letter which was sent on the environment issue, particularly in relation to sewage and water.
- Cllr Webster asked the Clerk to follow up on the first letter which was sent to CCC asking again where the evidence for West Mersea came from.

Council agreed to come out of closed session at 8.52pm.

Council went back into closed session at 9pm.

9pm All councillors agreed to carry on past the two hours.

25/165 To receive an update about Broomhills Greensward

Following discussion, it was proposed for the Clerk to contact the relevant bodies for advice on obtaining Village Green status and obtaining a Public Right of Way. Ellison's solicitors to be contacted for an opinion on obtaining ownership of the land with all information to be reported back to the council for the next steps to be agreed.

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

Meeting closed at 9.15pm.