**WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2026**

In attendance:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cllr R Jenkins (Mayor) | Cllr J Akker | Cllr D Baker |
| Cllr N Hinderwell | Cllr C Powling | Cllr S Weaver |
| Cllr T Webster | Cllr M Williams | Kirsty Wadsworth (Town Clerk) |

26/237 To receive apologies for absence and a vote of acceptance to be taken

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Boylan and Cllr Davidson.

26/238 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.

26/239 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- Asked the Council to confirm the BMX humps contain no buried material and to protect the land drains during removal, and to consider simpler self-closing gates at the Co-op play area. Also highlighted that Essex County Council holds no emergency evacuation plan for Mersea and requested urgent action from City and County councillors.

MOP2- Criticised councillor conduct, noting Councillor Powling's refusal to apologise undermined the Civility and Respect Protocol. Also condemned Essex County Council's Project Vanguard as politically driven, poorly procured, and worryingly authoritarian.

Councillor Teresa Webster stated that she had not been present at the meetings held on 23 July or 13 August. She explained that allegations made by Councillor Powling suggesting she had withdrawn the Council from the Waterside Forum were untrue. She added that two councillors had asked Councillor Powling to apologise for the allegations, but he had refused.

MOP3- Asked for an update on the beach risk assessments and expressed concern that plans for pictorial safety signs appear to have been dropped despite earlier assurances. Also requested to be included in the Waterside Forum so they can present their ideas.

MOP4- A business owner reported they will have to close for four months after 14 years of year-round trading because an ice-cream van operated outside their premises all summer without paying business rates or contributing locally. They have submitted multiple complaints with no response and asked the council to prevent this happening again next year.

MOP5- Noted that seasonal parking rules on the Esplanade are not working, with drivers choosing free on-street spaces while car parks remain empty, and ice-cream vans using parking tickets as a cheap "pitch fee" to trade outside local businesses. It was suggested that the City Council use its powers under the 1982 Act to prohibit such street trading and apply higher penalties to protect year-round traders.

26/240 To receive County and City Councillors report.

Report received from County Cllr Christopher Perera: -

- Has left Reform, opposes Project Vanguard, and says the funding should train police instead.
- Rejects claims of racism, citing his own immigrant background.
- Raises concerns about long school bus journeys, cuts to hospice care, and long waits for talking therapies.
- Wants better bus services and joint work with City councillors to address severe GP shortages.

Report received from Cllr Martin Parsons: -

- GP improvement plan agreed with the ICB has stalled and not been progressed.
- Government has removed councillor call-in powers, shifting most planning decisions to officers.
- New recycling system starts mid-October with single bins plus separate glass and food waste.
- Evacuation planning for Mersea remains unclear, with slow progress and no confirmed plan from emergency services.

Report received from Cllr Carl Powling: -

- Bin rollout begins in villages on 12th October, but only selected streets are done at a time.
- Mersea rollout follows the week after, also with partial street delivery.
- Full rollout for the wider area expected by March and new bins can be used immediately once delivered.

26/241 To confirm minutes of the Council meeting of 3rd September 2026

***It was resolved*** unanimously to approve the minutes of the Council meeting of 3rd September 2026. Proposed: Cllr Akker, Seconded: Cllr Powling. Cllr Webster to abstain. All in favour.

26/242 To agree and approve a list of payments

A list of payments was approved.

26/243 To provide an update from: -

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

An update was received.

26/244 To receive the Town Clerk's report

- Installation of the new play equipment is nearing completion.
- Historical documents are being securely disposed of in line with GDPR requirements.
- The tennis club lease is close to final agreement.
- A new bench has been installed in the School Gardens.
- The Groundsman's truck has been updated with the new Council crest.
- The metal benches in School Gardens have been repainted.
- Beacon posts have now been installed.
- Highways have cleared the blocked drain on Kingsland Road.
- The Kingsland Road bus shelter has been repaired.

26/245 To review and agree the Civility & Respect/Model Councillor-Officer Protocol

***It was resolved*** unanimously to agree the Civility & Respect/Model Councillor-Officer Protocol. Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded: Cllr Baker. All in favour.

26/246 To consider and approve a proposal to move from the Council's current health and safety adviser, Chestnut Associates, to a retained contract with WorkNest, including the appointment of WorkNest as the Council's Competent Person

***It was resolved*** unanimously to approve the 5-year plan to move from the Council's current health and safety adviser, Chestnut Associates, to a retained contract with WorkNest, at a cost of £1,725.00.
Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Akker. All in favour.

26/247 To consider and approve the impulse/sonic tomography testing of the Lime tree on the Parish Church Green to assess internal decay, at a cost of £435.00 + VAT. The testing will provide detailed information on the extent of any deterioration before committing to any significant reduction works, as outlined in the Tree Survey Report

***It was resolved*** unanimously to approve the impulse/sonic tomography testing of the Lime tree on the Parish Church Green to assess internal decay, at a cost of £435.00 + VAT.
Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Webster. All in favour.

26/248 To consider and approve commissioning updated legionella risk assessments for Rushmere and the Council Office in order to ensure statutory compliance at a cost of £600.00 + VAT

***It was resolved*** unanimously to approve commissioning updated legionella risk assessments for Rushmere and the Council Office at a cost of £600.00 + VAT subject to confirmation from the new provider that updated assessments are required.
Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Weaver. All in favour.

26/249 To approve the estimate for replacement seat pads for the Chambers chairs at a cost of £615.00

***It was resolved*** unanimously to approve the estimate for replacement seat pads for the Chambers chairs at a cost of £615.00.
Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Weaver. All in favour.

26/250 To consider and approve West Mersea Town Council's submission of a planning application on behalf of Mersea Community Repair and Make (MCRM), now that the required architectural drawings and reports have been completed and formal agreement has been received from MIALGA and the allotment landowners

***It was resolved*** unanimously to approve West Mersea Town Council's submission of a planning application on behalf of Mersea Community Repair and Make (MCRM), now that the required architectural drawings and reports have been completed and formal agreement has been received from MIALGA and the allotment landowners.
Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Hinderwell. All in favour.

26/251 Local Plan – Regulation 19: To consider: -
(a) the draft Council submission prepared by the Local Plan Working Group; and
(b) to note the actions taken to inform residents and to agree any further measures required
Document to follow on (a) and (b)

The draft Council submission was reviewed and actions taken to inform residents were noted. A revised updated document will go to the Council on Tuesday 6th October for approval.

26/252 (a) To review and approve the quotation for fencing and a gate along the oyster bed path, Coast Road, at a cost of £2,775.00 + VAT
(b) To approve a quotation for stump removal
(c) To receive an update on Openreach work to the existing path

An update on Openreach work was received.
***It was resolved*** unanimously to approve the quotation for fencing and a gate along the oyster bed path, Coast Road, at a cost of £2,775.00 + VAT and the quotation for removal of 9 stumps at a cost of £675.00.
Proposed: Cllr Hinderwelll, Seconded: Cllr Webster. All in favour.

26/253 To discuss concerns raised regarding the double gates at the School Gardens adjacent to the Co-op, including reports that the gates are being left open and the associated safety risk to young children, and to agree any necessary actions

Concerns were discussed, and it was resolved unanimously to contact the provider to obtain a quotation for installing a self-closing mechanism on the double gates and the rear gate, with all information to be brought back to the next Council meeting.
Proposed: Cllr Hinderwell, Seconded: Cllr Webster. All in favour.

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.

26/254 To receive an update on an employee's probation

An update was received and ***it was resolved*** unanimously that the employee had passed his 3-month probation.
Proposed: Cllr, Webster Seconded: Cllr Akker. All in favour.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm.