

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 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)	

26/218 To receive apologies for absence and a vote of acceptance to be taken

Apologies received and accepted from Cllr Webster, Cllr Williams and Cllr Robert Davidson.

26/219 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 and would be leaving his phone switched on as he was on duty.

26/220 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- Expressed concern about the conduct of recent Council meetings, stating that Cllr Powling repeatedly refused to apologise for making unfounded allegations despite clear evidence they were incorrect. He further criticised the Chair, Cllr Jenkins, for failing to uphold the Code of Conduct or intervene, arguing that their inaction has brought the council into disrepute.

MOP2- Raised concerns about the pavilion project, noting a lack of clarity on plans affecting the Horticultural Society, questioning the need for an additional community hall, and expressing unease about the financial implications and reliance on future development for funding. He also advised strongly against reinstating bathing rafts due to safety risks and emphasised the need for clear, effective water-safety signage.

MOP3- Highlighted inconsistencies in season ticket pricing that disadvantages residents, particularly compared with beach hut owners. Recommended restricting windsurfer season tickets to Seaview Car Park for safety and limiting hut-owner tickets to those renting sites from Colchester City Council. Also noted that West Mersea's parking charges exceed comparable coastal locations and warned against fee increases without addressing nearby road congestion.

MOP4- Thanked the Council for including allotment voting on the agenda. Explained that earlier invoicing helps identify plot turnover sooner, preventing delays and loss of income for the Council.

26/221 To receive County and City Councillors report.

Report received from City Cllr Martin Parsons: -

- The draft Local Plan must be submitted by 31 December to avoid restarting a new three-year process.
- Without submission, developers and the government would gain greater control over large housing proposals.
Three constraints now limit Mersea development: GP registration requirements, the island planning policy, and new isolated-village designations.

- Isolated-village status recognises single-access settlements and adds an extra barrier to major development.
- These measures are not absolute protections but provide additional safeguards against large-scale estates.

Report received from Cllr Powling: -

- Highlighted the long, unacceptable journeys families face on public transport.
- Stressed that affected pupils were unable to secure places at their preferred school and should receive free transport.
- Provided brief updates on waterfront ownership discussions and upcoming meetings with Anglian Water regarding capacity improvements.

26/222 To confirm minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting of 13th August 2026

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of the Council meeting of 13th August 2026 with the minor amendments.

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

26/223 To agree and approve a list of payments

A list of payments was approved.

26/224 To provide an update from:

- Committees
- Working Groups
- Representatives

An update was received.

26/225 To receive the Town Clerk's report

- The installation of the new play equipment has been delayed due to recent adverse weather conditions. The contractor has confirmed that works will now begin on Monday 7th September.
- Tree maintenance will continue across Council-managed sites. Priority 2 and 3 works are scheduled to commence in the autumn.
- A new water tank has been installed at the allotments to improve on-site facilities.
- Progressing health and safety compliance, including updating risk assessments and associated documentation, and arranging the purchase of COSHH storage cupboards.
- Successfully achieved CiLCA qualification.

26/226 To review and agree the following documents and policies: -

- Press and Media Policy
- Public Relations Policy
- Recording at Meetings Policy
- Reserves Policy
- Memorial Bench Policy

It was resolved unanimously to approve the documents and policies incorporating the agreed amendments to the Public Relations Policy.

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

26/227 To approve the retrospective payment for three memorial benches and associated plaques at a total cost of £1,145.82

It was resolved unanimously to approve the retrospective payment for three memorial benches and associated plaques at a total cost of £1,145.82.

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

26/228 To consider and approve an amendment to the Delegated Powers Policy to permit the Town Clerk, upon receipt of a completed memorial bench request form and the associated donation, to authorise the purchase of a memorial bench, plaque plus installation up to a maximum value of £1,000.00

It was resolved unanimously to approve an amendment to the Delegated Powers Policy to permit the Town Clerk, upon receipt of a completed memorial bench request form and the associated donation, to authorise the purchase of a memorial bench, plaque plus installation up to a maximum value of £1,000.00.

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

26/229 To agree for West Mersea Town Council to move from its current Barclaycard arrangement to a Unity Corporate Purchasing Card

It was resolved unanimously to agree for West Mersea Town Council to move from its current Barclaycard arrangement to a Unity Corporate Purchasing Card.

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

26/230 To confirm allotment plot prices to enable invoices to be issued to members in October, noting that recent management changes make early clarity essential

It was resolved unanimously to agree allotment plot prices with an increase of 4%.

For residents: Full plot - £145, Half plot - £81.50 and Quarter plot £44.50.

For non-residents: Full plot - £167.00, Half plot - £94.00 and Quarter plot £51.00.

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

26/231 To agree to commence a procurement process for the appointment of a Project Manager for the Glebe Multi-Purpose Community Building redevelopment, including approval to publish the tender on Find a Tender

It was resolved unanimously to agree to commence a procurement process for the appointment of a Project Manager for the Glebe Multi-Purpose Community Building redevelopment, including approval to publish the tender on Find a Tender.

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

26/232 To consider and approve the appointment of Jan Stobbart as the Internal Auditor for the 2026/27 financial year, noting the Council's satisfaction with the auditor's competence, independence and performance during 2025/26 and to approve the letter of engagement

It was resolved unanimously to approve the appointment of Jan Stobbart as the Internal Auditor for the 2026/27 financial year and to approve the letter of engagement.

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

26/233 To approve the proposed list of attendees for the forthcoming Civic event

It was resolved unanimously to approve the proposed list of attendees for the forthcoming Civic event.

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

26/234 To discuss and agree the Council's position in respect of the following matters: -

- a. To consider recommendations to Colchester City Council regarding the setting of 2027 parking fees
- b. To consider re-establishing The Parking Working Group to examine parking and traffic movements, with specific reference to: -
 - i. Potential yellow line restrictions/timings along the Esplanade and adjacent avenues
 - ii. Options for increasing parking provision in the Barfield Road area
 - iii. Possible parking restrictions or alternative arrangements in the Garden Farm area on match and event days

It was resolved unanimously to recommend to Colchester City Council that Option D be adopted for the setting of 2027 parking fees, subject to the amendment that residents using Willoughby Car Park shall pay £50.00.

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

It was agreed to re-establish the Parking Working Group. Cllr Boylan was appointed Chair, with membership comprising Cllr Akker, Cllr Baker, Cllr Boylan, Cllr Hinderwell, Cllr Jenkins and Cllr Powling. All in favour.

26/235 To receive an update on matters arising from the Local Plan; to note the correspondence issued to the City Council; to note the Regulation 19 response currently being prepared by the Working Group; and to consider any further actions required

An update was received on matters arising from the Local Plan. Two briefing sessions are to be held at the Council Offices to assist in the consultation process.

26/236 To receive a report on the recent Skate Jam event and to discuss and agree next steps for Youth engagement and provision

A report was received on the Skate Jam.

It was resolved unanimously to engage with the Essex Youth Team to explore future youth provision in West Mersea and to discuss any support they may be able to offer.

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

It was agreed in principle that the Town Clerk should contact Swatch to confirm West Mersea Town Council's interest in the project, with a feasibility study to follow.

Meeting closed at 9pm.