



## TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**Meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 7pm in the Council Chambers,  
10 Melrose Road, West Mersea, Colchester CO5 8JD**

£ = Expenditure decision    🗑️ Resolution made

In attendance:

Cllr. S. Weaver (Mayor)	Cllr. R. Jenkins
Cllr. C. Powling	Cllr. M. Parsons
Cllr. T. Gibbons	Cllr. B. Holmes
Karen Kuderovitch, Town Clerk & RFO	Cllr. T. Webster
	8 members of the public

24/48.	<p><b>WELCOME CLLR. WEBSTER</b> Mayor welcomed Cllr. Webster.</p>
24/49.	<p><b>RECORDING OF MEETING</b> Chairman requested anyone present to identify their intention to record the meeting. The Town Clerk indicated she was recording.</p>
24/50	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> All Members were to be reminded that they must disclose any interests (pecuniary/nonpecuniary) they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda either at this point or during the agenda item. They are reminded that they will need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if the interest is a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time. If not already done so, they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the meeting. Cllr. Powling declared he is a Colchester City Councillor. Item 24/56 - Cllr. Powling would abstain from voting due to a pecuniary interest.</p>
24/51.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> 🗑️ Clerk to report and Councillors to vote on the absence and the reasons given. Cllr. Hart, Cllr. Boylan, - personal commitments. Councillors voted to accept the apologies and the reasons given. All in favour. Cllr. Jowers &amp; Cllr. Davidson had also sent apologies.</p>
24/52.	<p><b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b> A period of up to 15 minutes (maximum of 3 minutes per person) for members of the public to ask questions or submit comments about items on the agenda. <b>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.</b> <b>MOP 1</b> - raised concerns about maintenance to the bus stop outside the MICA and requested Town Council to act. Also made reference to the Christmas Tree at library forecourt needs attention. Coastal coffee – weed maintenance. Glebe corner – parking on green – suggested posts to stop cars going on. <b>MOP 2</b> - Residents raised concerns relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the composition of the Council</li> <li>• alleged the recent two elections were not advertised properly</li> <li>• alleged the Mayor &amp; Town Clerk do not follow protocol at meetings</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Called on the Mayor and Cllr. Holmes to resign</li> <li>• Documents not being made available before meetings</li> <li>• Working Group for the new facilities at the Glebe – no information on the web site</li> <li>• Action Plan delivered with no mandate</li> <li>• Planning applications heard with no proper training</li> <li>• GDPR &amp; safeguarding- challenged the Mayor in relation to championing disability rights</li> <li>• Welcomed Councillor Webster.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mayors response:</b> The Mayor thanks the MOP for his valued comments which we take on board and the Mayor stated she would not lower this into a public debate over our abilities or inabilities as seen at this present time and would move on.</p> <p><b>MOP 3</b> – raised concerns over muddy area in the play area near Oyster Close which is causing local issues with slipping over and dogs excrement issues. Lack of safety lights. Anti-social behaviour continues. A brief discussion took place over French drains at the location and clearing of ditch in Bardfield Road. A suggestion was made for the Mayor to visit Dawes Lane estate to review footways and disabled access.</p> <p><b>MOP 4</b> – raised concerns over a suggested breach of data protection.</p>
24/53.	<p><b>The Mayor requested members of the public to remain silent whilst Council was in session.</b></p> <p><b>COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS REPORTS</b></p> <p>Cllr. Powling approved its budget with drastic cuts. Boundaries Commission agreed keeping 51 Councillors. Call for sites – CCC planning team reviews them and choosing which sites maybe allocated covering all wards. Current local plan runs to 2033 and 920 dwellings built per year. Review is every 5 years which will extend the plan to 2041. Once the local plan approved the figure could increase. Karen Sira will visit in mid-April to discuss call for sites with WMTC and possible allocations. Some villages are desperate for housing. Cllr. Powling was thanked.</p>
24/54.	<p><b>APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR 🙌</b></p> <p>Members considered the appointment of a Councillor to the role. The Town Clerk confirmed a co-opted member can be appointed. Cllr. B. Jenkins was proposed by Cllr. Powling and seconded by Cllr. Holmes. All in favour. The Town Clerk congratulated Cllr. Jenkins on his appointment.</p>
24/55.	<p><b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES 🙌</b></p> <p>To minutes of the Town Council meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved and signed. Cllr. Webster asked a question about the minutes which was clarified by the Town Clerk. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins seconded Cllr. Holmes. All in favour.</p>
24/56.	<p><b>SANDERLING REACH – PLANNING APPLICATION 240313 🙌</b></p> <p>Full planning application for the erection of 18 dwellings with associated parking, detailed landscaping, sustainable urban drainage system (SUDs) and use of existing vehicular access from East Road via Brierley Paddocks.</p> <p>The Town Clerk provided feedback from the public open session held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks for facilitating the meeting</li> <li>• Felt it was a useful meeting</li> <li>• Estimate 50-60 people attended</li> <li>• Feedback was more positive compared to the initial consultation in August 2023</li> <li>• The concept of the gifted affordable units was well received</li> <li>• The majority of concerns raised related to some ongoing site/construction issues and queries rather than to the proposal themselves. They are on City &amp; Country radar and those concerns have been fed back to the Directors.</li> <li>• Not a formal consultation event and as the planning application already running, residents were encouraged to submit their comments to CCC on-line.</li> </ul>



	<p>The Mayor congratulated Cllr. Jenkins on his appointment as Deputy Mayor. Councillors shared their views and debated. The Mayor clarified the houses would be for any age residents and section 106 monies would be available from the development.</p> <p><b>Council came out of session for a MOP to speak, then returned.</b></p> <p>It was resolved, by a majority vote, to support the application, with the following comments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCC need to talk to Anglian Water about the sewerage treatment capacity on Mersea</li> <li>2. Section 106 needs to be signed with the main holding company, not the local company</li> <li>3. A restriction needs to added to open the access road onto East Road before the building commences</li> <li>4. A pedestrian crossing in installed.</li> </ol> <p>Proposed Cllr.Parsons, seconded Cllr. Jenkins. Cllr.Powling abstained from voting as per item 24/50.</p>
24/57.	<p><b>MAYOR'S REPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be 5 new benches, each being sponsored. The information boards for Coast Road are being ordered. Work should soon be completed.</li> <li>• Productive meeting with MISA.</li> <li>• Action Plan – now published and on our website. Includes figures allocated to works. This also enables people to see what is in our current workload, and plans for this next year.</li> <li>• Plans for the D-Day 80 Commemorations are moving forward on the Beacon Lighting event from 7-9.30pm on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June on the Esplanade Car Park. There will be a mix of ceremonial elements as well as some appropriate entertainments.</li> <li>• Latest newsletter is also now available to view on the website, for those who prefer things digitally.</li> <li>• Councillor surgeries – first Saturday of every month from April to be held at the council chamber</li> <li>• Thanks were given to all for all the hard work being done.</li> </ul>
24/58.	<p><b>CLERK'S REPORT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web site is now a gov.uk domain and new Councillor .gov.uk e-mails set.</li> <li>• Office roof nearly completed – can now move on to getting the office finalised. Insurance claim funds received. The Town Clerk reported the staff have been amazing with the additional workload.</li> <li>• Newsletter on the web site and distribution around 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024.</li> <li>• Action Plan – work being done on a bio-diversity plan. Cemetery Clerk working on a plan for cemetery improvements for future consideration.</li> <li>• All Committees are now meeting.</li> <li>• Advice received on dealing with the press from Breakthrough Communications. Articles should be published with a right of reply.</li> <li>• CCC waived the administration fee for the uncontested election.</li> </ul> <p><b>Town Clerk response to comments made in the public session:</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk would like to put on record that she strongly objects to the claims made, a lot of them being non-factual and the Town Clerk will be taking her own personal advice on some of the comments that were made.</p> <p>Cllr. Webster enquired as to a response in connection with Nuclear. The Mayor confirmed this would be forthcoming ahead of the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024.</p>
24/59.	<p><b>COMMITTEES</b></p>

	<p>Members reviewed and approved draft Terms of Reference for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Assets &amp; Facilities Committee – Proposed Cllr. Powling, seconded Cllr. Weaver. All in favour.</li> <li>Environment &amp; Community Services Committee - Proposed Cllr. Weaver, seconded Cllr. Parsons. All in favour.</li> </ul>
24/60	<p><b>POLICIES &amp; PROCEDURES/TRAINING</b> 🖱️</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance Regs – members to review and approve – 1 additional was approved: Section 2.2 – to undertake and minute a review of the risk assessment in the year of audit. Proposed Cllr. Powling, seconded Cllr. Jenkins. All in favour.</li> <li>Town Clerk suggested all Councillors attend on 19<sup>th</sup> March for in house training and agree modules. Powers &amp; duties, roles &amp; responsibilities and finance were agreed. Proposed: Cllr. Powling, seconded Cllr. Jenkins. All in favour.</li> </ul>
24/61.	<p><b>COMMUNITY PROJECTS/ACTION PLAN</b> 🖱️</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town Clerk reported progress on community projects and shared the revised Action Plan.</li> <li>Members reviewed the Action Plan. The Town Clerk asked Councillors to consider if they would like to join the Glebe Working Group. Cllr. Powling relayed a survey had been done building structurally sound but in need of major refurbishment. The users have been consulted with recommendations for their requirements. Cllr. Powling suggested a MOP be permitted to address Council.</li> </ol> <p>MOP relayed funding could be applied for from the Football Foundation. A productive meeting had been held with the users. Section 106 funds could be available. Further meetings to be held.</p> <p>Council resumed.</p> <p><b>Council came out of session, then returned.</b></p> <p>The Mayor added that the project was for a community use building, in relation to S106 and the MICA was not included in the project. Cllr. Powling thanked MISA and the users for their involvement.</p> <p>Cllr. Powling reported on the water bailiff, a meeting has been held which includes suggestions for new signage. Progress had been made on the enhanced zone warden, to have an officer April – October. CCC are unable any funds to the position (WMTC have £25,000 in the 24/25 budget). Further discussions to take place. Discussions had taken place with the Tennis Club in relation to the lease. Cllr. Webster asked who decides the projects and whether community are consulted. Response was that, where possible, the community would be consulted. Councillor surgeries would further improve community engagement. Community pay back scheme could be explored.</p>
24/64.	<p><b>FINANCE</b> 🖱️£</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To approve payments to be made (to be presented at the meeting). <b>It was resolved</b> to defer and approve these at the next Finance &amp; Strategy meeting. The Town Clerk reported the Edge system and the Finance details on the web were up to date as at end of January 2024.</li> <li>Heelis &amp; Lodge were appointed to complete the audit for 24/25. Proposed: Cllr. Powling, seconded Cllr. Jenkins. All in favour. Clerk reported on end of year audit – to be arranged after 31.3.24.</li> <li>Emergency expenditure – none.</li> <li>The Town Clerk asked Cllr. Powling &amp; Cllr. Powling to reset login details. Unity would be used for main transaction from 1.4.24.</li> <li>Clerk reported further finance information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VAT – Town Clerk submitted a complaint to HMRC in connection with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter VAT refund. Total owing is £37,263.</li> <li>The Town Clerk relayed she had approved new more competitive rates on gas and electricity.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
24/65.	<p><b>ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024</b> 🖱️</p> <p>Town Clerk reported on guest speakers and stands.</p>



24/66.	<p><b>CONTACT FROM RESIDENTS/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS</b></p> <p>Town Clerk reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact in relation to maintenance of the bus shelter</li> <li>• Thanks from Refresh Mersea for the £600 donation</li> <li>• Information received at the office today in relation to Village Green 241 South</li> <li>• Contact from Proud of Mersea in relation to litter bins</li> <li>• FOI requests responded to, one recording to be sent of the February meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Cllr. Parsons referred to an untrue claim made in the public session that Councillors have not completed planning training and asked if an FOI request had been received in relation to Councillors planning training and therefore there was no basis for the comment to be made.</p>
24/67.	<p><b>COUNCILLORS UPDATES</b></p> <p>Councillors were offered the opportunity to share information. The Town Clerk clarified that this agenda item's purpose was for Councillors to share any information relating to the agenda. Cllr. Powling reported the further two compactor bins had been installed and that these bins had been installed in the Colchester Town Centre.</p>
<p><b>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</b> 🙅</p> <p><i>It was RESOLVED 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.</i></p>	
24/68.	<p><b>PERSONNEL</b> 🙅</p> <p>Chair of Personnel reported and a recommendations considered. <i>It was resolved</i> to defer to October 2024. Proposed: Cllr. Powling, seconded Cllr. Parsons. All in favour.</p>
24/69.	<p><b>VEXATIOUS POLICY</b> 🙅</p> <p>Clerk to report – deferred.</p>