

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2025

In attendance:

Cllr S Weaver, Mayor	Cllr D Baker	Cllr M Greenleaf
Cllr N Hinderwell	Cllr R Jenkins	Cllr Powling
Cllr T Webster	Cllr M Williams	Petra Palfreyman, Locum Clerk
Cllr John Jowers (ECC)	Cllr Dr Martin Parsons (CCC)	7 members of the public

25/001 RECORDING OF MEETING

Chairman requested anyone present to identify their intention to record the meeting.

Cllr Webster and the Clerk confirmed they would be recording the meeting. The office recording device was also used.

25/002 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

25/003 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Powling declared he is a Colchester City Councillor and Cllr Hinderwell declared he is a member of the Tennis Club.

25/004 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MOP 1 – gave thanks to the office for arranging to get the rubbish cleared at The Glebe.

The plans for the Seaview Avenue access to Sanderling Reach should be refused, even if they do go to appeal. There is a health and safety issue there.

The Local Plan Review states on the CCC website that WMTC approved the comments and questioned if this had actually happened.

The plans to redevelop the Co-op in Barfield Rd may have access issues

MOP 2 – has been contacted by approx. 20 residents about the health and safety dangers regarding the entrance to the development on Seaview Avenue and there was an accident about 10 days ago. A meeting of the Local Plan committee will take place on 17th February and will list the sites for development in this Colchester. Requested that WMTC publish the evidence put forward as part of that review and make the position of the Council very clear.

If Middlewick is excluded from the Local Plan development sites what are the contingency plan in terms of the impact on the island. There is a target of 1300 houses for Colchester and West Mersea might get more development.

Thanked the Council for adding item 25/014 to the agenda. The petition was organised by a group of people and has 870 signatories. There is a need to get the stakeholders of the surgery together to have a meeting.

MOP 3 – stated that the Council has not published the finance reports since April 2024.

Comments were made about the article in Mersea Life from Cllr Powling, asking if they were written as a CCC councillor or WMTC councillor and whether there is a conflict of interest

S106 provision has been misinterpreted. The resident's consultation over the Dawes Lane Open Space showed that 75% of the residents rejected the proposal.

MOP 4 – advised there have been 5 attempts to get a new surgery. The main reason is that the doctors are not prepared to sign a 25 year lease on a building that may cost up to £3M from their own financial position.

A meeting of stakeholders would be a good idea and Sir Bernard Jenkin has agreed to chair it. ECC used to own the Legion field and the School field and wanted to build on it and a campaign was started to get Village Green status, which was agreed and then ECC sold the land to WMTC for £1, which is secure in perpetuity. If the Dawes Lane Open Space is taken the Council will own it forever and it can never be built on and with a wildflower meadow it would need minimum maintenance.

MOP 5 – representing beach hut watch regarding the former putting green on Victoria Esplanade and the previous commitment from CCC to restoring flower beds on the site, which has not happened. Beach Hut Watch has considered funding outdoor furniture and dinghies as planters but has seen a recent local publication suggesting that CCC intend to remove the flower beds and use the site for other purposes.

WMTC are asked to confirm the position.

To receive reports from County and City Councillors

Cllr John Jowers - confirmed that ECC will be dissolved and there will be 3 or 4 unitary councils, with Colchester combining with Tendring, Braintree, Uttlesford or Maldon. May 2025 elections will be cancelled. This may also apply to CCC elections. ECC was set up 136 years ago. Three chief executives will be lost and 2/3rds of councillors. More powers and devolution will come to parishes. There might also be a consolidation of local councils. The Police and Crime Commission will go to the new Mayor of Essex.

The Seaview application should be opposed.

Cllr Jowers has spoken to the Health & Overview Board and County and the NHS are looking at the Barfield Road site or potentially building a 1st floor at Kingsland Road. Doctors are only permitted to have 2500 people on their list per doctor.

Cllr Martin Parsons - National Policy Planning Framework was issued before the end of the year and states that the Coastal Protection Zone is still included and there is a huge emphasis on house building.

The Local Plan contained 1340 pages with the evidence base. Raised with the chairman about the sewages and doctors etc but WMTC must state corrections needed for the evidence base.

The Devolution White Paper creates 2 new tiers of local government so the Unitary Council which will combine County Powers and Local Councils and an elected Mayor and Mayoral Council. One of the exclusive powers for the elected Mayor is that they will be or can appoint the chair of the Integrated Care Board who can call all the relevant stakeholders together.

NHS is controlled by government, but opticians, doctors and pharmacies are contracted to the NHS to provide a service and are responsible for their own premises.

The Local Plan meeting arranged for 17th February 2025 might be delayed.

25/005 To confirm minutes of the Council Meeting of 9 September 2024 – Matters arising

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of 9 September 2024.

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

25/006 To confirm minutes of the Council Meeting of 10 October 2024 – Matters arising

These minutes have been previously confirmed.

25/007 To confirm minutes of the Council meeting of 7 November 2024

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of 7 November 2024.

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

25/008 To confirm minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting of 2 December 2024

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of 2 December 2024.

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

25/009 To confirm minutes of the Council meeting of 12 December 2024

It was resolved unanimously to accept the minutes of 12 December 2024.

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

25/010 To consider Planning Applications received and to receive notifications of Planning Decisions

Planning applications

(a) 231527

Application to vary conditions 15 and 35 to allow the continued use of Seaview Avenue access point until the 31st December 2025 following a grant of planning permission 222124. Description amendment. Land at, Brierley Paddocks, West Mersea

This Council objects to the proposal on Health & Safety grounds and in breach of original planning conditions.

(b) 242455

Replacement one and half storey 2-bedroom dwelling (self-build). 9 Kingsland Beach, West Mersea

It was resolved that consent be granted in respect of this application. Please refer to West Mersea Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan.

(c) 242479

Single storey detached hobby/garden room. 69 Colchester Road, West Mersea

This Council has no comment to make.

(d) 242478

Application for removal or variation of a condition 2 following grant of planning permission 232405. 124 Coast Road, West Mersea

This Council has no comment to make.

(e) 242510

Proposed boat shed and storage to rear of garden. 34 Coast Road, West Mersea

This Council has no comment to make.

(f) 242555

Full application for the provision of 3no. residential apartments (C3) on first floor of 43 Barfield Road, including elevational changes, and the change of use of 44 Kingsland Road to a residential dwelling (C3). 43 Barfield Road & 44 Kingsland Road, West Mersea

This Council has no comment to make.

(g) 242535

Construction of 1½ storey extension to provide living room for master suite and office above for clients own use. Construction of new dormer to provide additional headroom in bedroom 1 of this chalet typed dwelling. 8 Beach Road, West Mersea

This Council has no comment to make.

(h) 242566 & 242567 (listed building)

Demolition of existing conservatory and garage and erection of a single storey rear and side extension. West Mersea Hall, 4 High Street, West Mersea

It was resolved that consent be granted in respect of this application. Please refer to West Mersea Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan.

Planning decisions

Applications passed

(a) 242147

Proposed 2 storey rear extension and single storey rear extension. 25 Windsor Road, West Mersea

(b) 242110

Application for variation of condition 2 (drawings) following grant of planning permission 232161. Russets, 62B Firs Chase, West Mersea

(c) 242146

Infill extension to existing property, 2 storey side extension with extended balcony and single storey rear extension replacing existing conservatory. 21 Shears Crescent, West Mersea

(d) 242180

Application for variation of condition 2 following grant of planning application 230876. Creek Houses, 39 The Lane, West Mersea

(e) 242322

Second storey extension to rear of existing balcony. 19 Shears Crescent, West Mersea

(f) 241973

Side extension to living room (retrospective). The Beeches, 75 Kingsland Road, West Mersea

Application refused

(a) 242245

Extension and alterations to existing dwelling. 13 Firs Chase, West Mersea

Appeals

(a) 231103

Retention of an existing building for use as a residential annex and adjustment to residential curtilage.

Appeal lodged 28/06/24, appeal plan approved 06/01/25

25/011 To receive an update about the Tennis Club lease and consider any further actions needed

The lease has been provided by the solicitor and a number of changes proposed by Cllr Hinderwell have been agreed by the Council. Following discussion, **it was agreed** unanimously to arrange for the lease to be altered and then sent to the Tennis Club to review and agree.

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

25/012 To note the rubbish on Glebe One, particularly in and around Horticultural shed, and consider next actions

The clerk confirmed the rubbish has been removed. Cllr Powling and the office team have been pursuing this.

25/013 Deed of Variation Glebe Two – to discuss the options available to the Rugby and Cricket Clubs and agree the next actions

Following discussion, **it was agreed** unanimously to resend the email from May 2024 with the 3 options available to MISA on Glebe 2, in respect of obtaining a Deed of Variation allowing all sports to play on Glebe 2, with a deadline to respond of 1 May 2025. The Rugby Club can continue with their existing lease on one pitch until it expires.

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

25/014 To note the petition about Mersea Island Medical Practice and consider the Council's inclusion in the summit that has been called for

Following discussion, **it was agreed** unanimously that West Mersea Town Council take part in summit talks with the stakeholders regarding the doctors surgery.

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

25/015 To review the quotes of £490 and £70ph for internal audits for 2024/25 and agree which auditor to engage.

Following discussion **it was agreed** by a majority vote that WMTC would engage the auditor costing £250 each, for an interim and final audit.

Proposed: Cllr Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr Powling. Abstained: Cllr Webster and Cllr Hinderwell.

25/016 To review membership of the committees and working groups

Following discussion **it was agreed** unanimously that Cllr Williams would join the Planning Committee and the Glebe Working Group.

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

25/017 To discuss the new lease terms and revised rent for the allotments and agree a way forward

Cllr Greenleaf advised that the delays in updating the allotment lease were because the landowner passed away last year and probate was being obtained, which has now been finalised. The landowner has agreed to extend the existing lease as it is for one year, until the new lease is negotiated. The new rent is suggested as £5,000. £1,155 has been paid from a recent invoice. Cllr Greenleaf and Cllr Powling will discuss the new terms of the lease with the landowner and bring the information back to the Council by March 2025.

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

25/018 To receive an update about the Boardwalk works

The Locum Town clerk advised that works to the Boardwalk have been delayed slightly due to the salesman from the supplier leaving the business. Works are now due to start in February 2025 and councillors will be advised of the date.

25/019 To consider reinstating the bathing rafts and works needed to ensure compliance and Health and Safety

The bathing rafts were discussed by councillors, and it was noted that MMO and Crown licence and permissions are needed and repairs to the rafts, insurance, new anchors and Health and Safety compliance would be required. Following discussion, **it was agreed** unanimously to set up a Working Group, including members of the public, to discuss actions and costs required to get the rafts back in the water. Cllr Webster offered to chair the working party and Cllr Williams agreed to join the group. Proposed: Cllr Powling, Seconded: Cllr Williams. All in favour.

The Council **agreed unanimously** to continue the meeting until 9.30pm. All in favour.

25/020 To provide an update about the Dawes Lane Open Space and agree any further actions

The main WMTC open space contractors were asked for detailed costs to maintain the land and at the next meeting Cllr Jenkins will be able to provide further information and a business case. 81 residents commented in the consultation with 75 % against and 25% in favour.

25/021 To discuss applying for the Love Your Bus grant fund for projects aimed at increasing bus patronage and enhancing local services and consider any projects suitable for the fund

The Council discussed the Love Your Bus grant fund that offers up to £50,000 to increase bus patronage and enhance local services. The deadline for this was moved forward to 21 February 2025 from 14 February 2025. Various plans were considered including working with Abberton and Langenhoe to improve the bus service. Following discussion, **it was agreed** unanimously not apply for this grant in view of the short deadline, the information requested and the ongoing requirements. The clerk agreed to feedback that the deadline was too short. Proposed: Cllr Webster, Seconded: Cllr Greenleaf. All in favour.

25/022 To note an apology to a member of the public

Cllr Weaver outlined the reason for the agenda item, stating that a member of the public had sent a complaint to the Monitoring Officer (MO) regarding behaviours at Council meetings, and in particular comments from Cllr Weaver. Cllr Weaver advised that all councillors received training (Code of Conduct) in October 2024 and then quoted from the MO's email which recommended that the complaint and outcome was acknowledged at the next available meeting. The Locum Town Clerk made the decision not to name the member of public on either the agenda or during the meeting. It is accepted that this may have led to some other members of the public not fully understanding the reason for the agenda item, but the Locum Town Clerk did not feel it was permitted to share the contents of private communications with other members of the public, as prescribed by the GCDP Compliance Regulations.

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

Press and public excluded: Proposed: Cllr, Seconded: Cllr. All in favour.

25/023 To confirm Town Clerk's salary

The Town Clerks salary was confirmed.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

DRAFT