

**WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 4 APRIL 2019**

PRESENT: Councillors: Carl Powling (Mayor)  
Peter Banks  
David Bragg  
Peter Clements  
Bernard Hart  
Robert Jenkins  
Paula Moore  
Sylvia Wargent  
Sophie Weaver

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: Petra Palfreyman  
Borough Councillor: Robert Davidson  
John Jowers

**19/071 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence received from Borough Councillor Patricia Moore.

**19/072 TO RECORD DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**19/073 PUBLIC SESSION**

10 members of the public in attendance.

The following comments were made:

A query over the Council appointing a minute taker in the Clerks absence and why tenders are discussed in closed Council meetings.

A suggestion to register the Library forecourt and Broomhills Rose Garden as Village Green.

Confirmation that Mersea Island Library Enthusiasts (MILE) had written to ECC challenge the data which put the library in Tier 3 and a request that the Council do not put in an expression of interest to run the library on a voluntary basis.

A request from Beach Hut Watch and Mersea Island Society for a consultation over the closure of toilets on Victoria Esplanade.

**19/074 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM OUR COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

**Borough Councillor Robert Davidson**

The elections are on 2 May and you still can register for the electoral role until next week.

There is a lot of hard work going on behind the scenes about the libraries. Essex County Council understand that we are an island and a unique case. Essex County Council would like communities to work with them to make libraries better. There have been 21000 responses to the survey but only 6% are actual users, possibly meaning that the rest are happy with the proposals. There have been 47 expressions of interest of community groups working with them and decisions will be made around July.

Thanks for those that attended the recent meeting about the caravans. It is felt the officers need to do more monitoring of the sites. East Mersea Parish Council have done a lot of monitoring but the statistics have not been followed up.

There will be a 30mph speed limit from The Stone all the way through.

The Community Initiative Fund has now been handed to the EALC who will run it for the next two years. The maximum grant will be £10000 with lots of £500 grants.

Colchester Borough Council are applying for a share of £675M to improve the High Street.

At the Northern Gateway there is an application for a Health Centre and Green Energy Centre and green space.

Colchester Borough Council are successfully prosecuting bad landlords.

#### Borough Councillor John Jowers

The Council and staff were congratulated and thanked for their good work over the last 4 years.

The library is attended and supported by the Councillor who confirmed that Essex County Council are spending more money than ever on libraries which will have a new function. Borough Councillor Jowers was optimistic about the future of the library and suggested no action is taken until the results of the consultation are public.

In the next 18 months all major roads will be repaired and resurfaced.

Cameras have been installed around Mersea by the developers counting traffic.

The difficulty with the Neighbourhood Plan is appreciated and there is no date for a start on Part b.

The flood defence scheme in The Lane is ongoing and at one stage was going to cost £1.8M. Borough Councillor Jowers suggested the original plan to put pop up barriers should be considered. The scheme will need the support of West Mersea Town Council as a recognised authority.

There is a public enquiry in to the house boats. Borough Councillor Jowers hoped that Colchester Borough Council would adopt the Essex Act 1954 which specifies the number and type of houseboats. If the plan fails, there could be a whole row of houseboats.

Borough Councillor Jowers is looking in to the Dabchicks Village Green.

The Devolution of Powers should be looked in to as the Council will have the authority to get the work done.

#### 19/075 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 21 FEBRUARY 2019 – MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Jenkins, SECONDED by Councillor Banks that the MINUTES of the Meeting held on 21 February 2019, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising: No matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Councillor Bragg requested an update re alarm call outs.

#### 19/076 TO CONFIRM MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 14 MARCH 2019 – MATTERS ARISING

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Hart, SECONDED by Councillor Bragg that the MINUTES of the Meeting held on 14 March 2019, be CONFIRMED. ALL IN FAVOUR.

Matters arising: No matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

#### 19/077 PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

##### a) 19 0637

Proposed 2 bed bungalow.

Land adjacent to 10 Beverley Avenue, West Mersea – Mr Boyd

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend refusal on the following grounds:

The proposed bungalow is out of keeping with the street scene, due to its placement it breaks the building line of properties in Empress Avenue.

This Council is concerned with the lack of parking spaces as highlighted by Essex County Council Highways correspondence.

b) 19 0140

4 new 2 bed houses with associated highway access and parking area, landscaping, bin stores and cycle sheds. Revised layout with 3 units.

2-4 High Street North, West Mersea – Mr P Whiting

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application but recommend the building is centralised to balance the street scene.

c) 19 0659

Proposed new three bedroom bungalow.

77 Fairhaven Avenue, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Wilson-Hinds

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend refusal as the proposal is an overdevelopment of the site.

d) 19 0740

Proposed balcony, balustrades and increased size of existing openings.

West Lodge, 1 Willoughby Avenue, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Davonport

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

e) 19 0795

Erection of new carport with annex above within front garden. External covered walkway to link new carport to existing dwelling. Amendment to granted application 18 2672.

Backwater Lodge, 20b Firs Chase, West Mersea – Mr D Cope

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

#### 19/078 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING DECISIONS RECEIVED

##### Applications passed

a) 19 0152

Proposed single storey rear extension, garage conversion, driveway extended with permeable paving, weather boarding to 1<sup>st</sup> floor level of property beneath painted brickwork and erection of bike store.

17 City Road, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Shipton

b) 19 0130

Proposed single storey rear extension and porch to front elevation with proposed detached annex.

27 Prince Albert Road, West Mersea – Mr M Wilson

c) 19 0241

Side garden room extension.

67 Churchfields, West Mersea – J Woodhead

d) 19 0078

Proposed garden room and store, outdoor fireplace, chimney and timber pergola (revised description).

7 Empress Avenue, West Mersea – Mr D Murrell

WMTC Recommendation: Following discussion it was agreed to recommend refusal on grounds of proximity to neighbouring property and height of chimney and building.

e) 19 0107

Erection of a new shed. Revised description.

56 Kingsland Road, West Mersea – Mr P Smith

## Application refused

### a) 19 0146

Proposed two storey rear extension.

74 Empress Avenue, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Watkins

WMTC Recommendation: Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application.

### 19/079 TO REVIEW MEETING DATES AND COMMITTEES

Deferred to next Council meeting as the implications in Planning Applications need to be considered.

### 19/080 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE LANE FLOOD BARRIER SCHEME

The scheme covers The Nothe Cottage, part of Smugglers Way and up to The Lane. Three parties need to be involved – Essex County Council, West Mersea Town Council and a community group which would do the physical work of erecting the barriers. A meeting will be arranged with principal stakeholders to move the scheme forward. West Mersea Town Council would need to consider their responsibility for maintenance after 10 years.

### 19/081 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE WEST MERSEA LIBRARY

The Library is still in Tier 3 and the outcome of the consultation in July. This means that unless a community group takes over the library could close, and Essex County Council are asking for an expression of interest. West Mersea Town Council did not agree to provide an expression of interest as the library should not close. Following discussion it was agreed to redraft a letter to Essex County Council asking further questions and restate that it is not appropriate to be in Tier 3.

### 19/082 TO ADOPT THE NALC DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Following discussion it was agreed to adopt the Document Retention Policy.

### 19/083 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE A PUBLICATION SCHEME FOR WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

Following discussion it was agreed to adopt the Publication Scheme.

### 19/084 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON CARAVAN SITES

The caravans are reviewed by two committees in Colchester Borough Council - Planning & Licencing.

The Licencing committee were unaware of the situation, although the officers are aware. West Mersea are a big area for caravans and Colchester Borough Council is aware that some caravans are used as residential properties but it is very difficult to prove. If Colchester Borough Council are aware of it, they do check and make unannounced visits. If it is proved the caravan site are told to ask them to leave or face prosecution. Colchester Borough Council are looking at a higher level to see if any changes can be made to make it easier for them to enforce. East Mersea Parish Council are carrying out surveys, Colchester Borough Council will not accept council information as they have to be seen by an Enforcement Officer.

Councillors spoke at meeting and they confirmed there are 2400 static caravans (almost half the number of houses on Mersea). If people are resident in the caravans it will not be represented in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Colchester Borough Council officer would not say how many visits they had made to sites.

### 19/085 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE A WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL TRAVEL AND EXPENSES POLICY

Deferred until next meeting.

## 19/086 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS:

### Assets, Facilities & Environment – Report by Councillor Jenkins (Chairman)

1. West Mersea Park crescent path to be resurfaced end April - to include around the safety gates and the west entrance gate to made level with path for wheelchair, buggy access.
2. West Mersea Park new basket swing has been installed.
3. Glebe 2 play area - still waiting on replacement chains from supplier for the basket swing - hopefully will be complete by end April.
4. Glebe 1 - basketball stands have been erected - just waiting on a new back board, rings and nets.
5. Safety surfaces to Glebe 2 play area have been repaired.
6. Refit and refurbishment of Willoughby toilets should be completed w/c 8<sup>th</sup> April 2019.
7. Wallgate units in Fairhaven and Coast Road toilets have been repaired.
8. Update on Police Specials - an extensive advertising campaign in the Gazette and other local papers over a 4 week period in March does not appear to have yielded any more candidates. So far we have 1 officer attested last February with a second officer due to attest in July.
9. A meeting was held in March at the Council offices headed by the Neighbourhood Watch and West Mersea Town Council to attempt to bring together as many “agencies” as possible who could provide intelligence gathering to support our new police specials. For example Neighbourhood Watch, Facebook platforms such as Crimewatch Mersea, Mersea Locals, Real Mersea Locals, Beach Hut Watch and the shopkeepers/retail outlets intelligence group. A WhatsApp instant messaging system is being set up too amongst all interested parties.
10. Litter pick arranged for 6/7<sup>th</sup> April at which the following groups will be involved -
  - a. West Mersea Town Council
  - b. Proud of Mersea
  - c. Mersea Island Lions supported by SMILES
  - d. Rotary Club of Mersea Island
  - e. Mersea Island Museum
  - f. 1<sup>st</sup> Mersea Brownies
  - g. West Mersea Yacht Club
  - h. Dabchicks Sailing Club
  - i. Neighbourhood Watch
  - j. Carnival committee
  - k. Mersea Island School - each class has already been out
  - l. Spar
  - m. Colchester Borough Council Litter Warriors
  - n. Stiches + Steel
  - o. 1<sup>st</sup> Mersea Island Beaver Scouts
  - p. North Essex Labour Party (Mersea Branch)
  - q. Colchester 12 Sea Scouts (water borne)
  - r. Church and Community Together

### Bradwell – Report by Councillor Banks (Vice Chairman)

The Committee met on 26th March 2019.

Whilst the meeting was not quorate a discussion was held with the attendees which was minuted for future reference. Various points were considered and requests tabled for the council to consider acting on. The recent visit by BANNG to meet the new director of the Bradwell B site was discussed.

Cemetery Committee – Nothing to report.

### Communications – Report by Councillor Weaver (Chairman)

It was agreed to propose that the Communications Committee becomes a working group after 2 May 2019. The matter will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

Personnel – Nothing to report.

Sports & Recreation – The leases are still to be signed. The Rugby Club are holding back from signing the pitch lease as they want a longer lease than 7 years for funding purposes but the Council have to comply with the LGA 1972 which states it should be 7 years. An application can be made to the Secretary of State who can grant extensions for funding purposes. A letter has been drafted which confirms we would apply for the extension if required. This letter will be given to all clubs once the lease has been signed. West Mersea Town Council have been in touch with the RFU to ensure this would work for the Rugby Club.

Transport – Nothing to report. Next meeting to be held on 3 June 2019.

Waterside – Nothing to report. Next meeting to be arranged for May 2019.

#### 19/087 MAYOR'S NOTES

Councillor Powling confirmed this was the last Council meeting before the elections. Thanks were given to staff and councillors for all their hard work over the period of office. Councillor Peter Clements MBE will not be standing for election in May and was thanked for his hard work over the last 16 years, (including 4 terms as Mayor to West Mersea Town Council) especially his work in West Mersea Park and more recently with the beacon for the 100 anniversary of World War 2. Councillor Powling also thanked the County and Borough Councillors for all their support.

There being no other business, the public meeting closed at 8.55pm.