

WEST MERSEA TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

HELD ON MONDAY 21 JUNE 2021

PRESENT: Councillors: Carl Powling (Mayor)
John Akker
Julie Baker
Peter Banks
David Bragg
Robert Jenkins
Sophie Weaver

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: Vanessa Allen
Responsible Finance Officer: Valerie Henry

County and Borough Councillor: John Jowers

21/106 TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Sylvia Wargent, Councillor Chris Wood, Borough Councillor Robert Davidson and Borough Councillor Patricia Moore

21/107 TO RECORD DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Akker declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 21/110 as a member of Stop 350 and Mersea Island Society.

Councillor Baker declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 21/110 as a member of Stop 350.

Councillor Banks declared a pecuniary interest in item 21/121.

21/108 PUBLIC SESSION

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

A request was made for the dog bin at the Monkey Beach to be re-sited away from the garden wall. The issue was raised previously and in September 2011 the Council wrote to advise that arrangements would be made to move it further from the property. There was also a request for the path to the beach to be moved over by 10-15 feet as people are walking close to garden wall, looking over and there is a lack of privacy. A map and photo showing the original path route, along with copies of letters about dog and rubbish bins was presented to the Council.

The Council were asked whether the Red Lines Working Group had met and whether there was an update.

21/109 REPORTS FROM OUR COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

Borough Councillor John Jowers happy to report that he is now a back bencher and is a member of the Development and Regulations Committee at County, which deals with major schemes, new schools, hospitals, minerals and waste. At Borough, Councillor Jowers sits on the Policy Panel and Environment and Sustainability Panel.

The current issues/projects are:

- changes in planning as 95% of decisions are delegated to officers, which has stopped local officers having an input on decisions.
- tree planting in Colchester High Street and a southern relief road to be planned to minimise the impact on Mersea.
- to be prepared for Middlewick development. Number houses planned to be built has been reduced, unlikely to stop development, opportunity for Country Park and allow development behind Adelaide Estate.

National Planning Framework moving towards system of zones, where areas are zoned for development and do not need planning permission. To be pro-active the Town Council should get professional advice on obtaining Protected Planning Status, Mersea is a unique coastal village, with SSSI, in a conservation area to enable planning decisions to be devolved to Parishes.

Community Initiative Fund of grants up to £10,000, bids to be in by mid August.

Flood Defence project £250,000 of funding to protect Old City. Councillor Jowers removed himself from Floodgate working group once he became aware that a cousin twice removed was involved with the project.

Leader of Essex County Council is Councillor Kevin Bentley, who is also a Mersea resident.

Councillor John Jowers commended West Mersea Town Council for working and co-operating with Colchester Borough Council.

Rivenhall Integrated Waste Management facility planning permission has already been granted, only area can look at is alteration to existing permission to add further conditions.

21/110 PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

(a) 21 1332

Rear and side extension to existing two storey chalet. Reconfigured/extended roof layout to provide front/rear gable and small mez level above master bedroom. (Footprint reduction from consented scheme 20 0199).

18 City Road, West Mersea – Mr P and Mrs S Langley

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

(b) 21 1488

First floor side and rear extension.

15 Upland Road, West Mersea – Mr M Devonish

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

(c) 21 1512

Proposed two storey side extension and single storey rear extension.

36 The Lane, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Thurgood

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

(d) 21 1540

Single storey infill dining/living extension, two storey end extension.

2 Woodstock, West Mersea – Mr M O'Neill

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

(e) 21 1572

Demolition of existing garage and erection of a single storey granny annexe.
Garden Cottage, 116 East Road, West Mersea – Mrs S Lock

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application, with a proviso to keep within the regulations stated for a Grade II listed building.

(f) 21 1573

Listed building.
Demolition of existing garage and erection of a single storey granny annexe.
Garden Cottage, 116 East Road, West Mersea – Mrs S Lock

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend consent be granted in respect of this application, with a proviso to keep within the regulations stated for a Grade II listed building.

(g) 21 1684

Application to determine if prior approval is required for a proposed change of use from agricultural building to dwelling house (C3). Resubmission of 21 0013.
Barn to the south of Maydays Farm, Haycocks Lane, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Sunnucks

No comment.

(h) 21 1474

Proposed swimming pool building and alterations to parking layout.
9 East Road, West Mersea – Mr J Revell

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

21/111 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING DECISIONS RECEIVED

Applications passed

(a) 21 0670

Application for prior approval of a proposed enlargement of a dwelling house by construction of additional storey.
5 The Square, Coast Road, West Mersea – Mr H Cock

(b) 21 0876

Replacement of existing conservatory with single storey rear extension.
3 Brickhouse Close, West Mersea – Mrs R May

(c) 21 0569

Proposed demolition of existing single storey storage room at rear and ground floor bathroom wall to form proposed ground and first floor extension at rear. Internal alterations.
9 Colchester Road, West Mersea – Mr A Bland

(d) 21 0834

Proposed single storey rear extension and extension to first floor bedroom at rear.
26 High Street North, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Stapley

- (e) 21 0874
Proposed replacement dwelling.
75 Queen Anne Road, West Mersea – Mr R Brown
- (f) 21 0383
Single storey garage with pitched roof.
46 Firs Road, West Mersea – Mr J Mussett
- (g) 21 1024
Replacement of 1.8 (6ft) high timber close boarded fencing panels with 2.4m (8ft) high timber close boarded fencing panels to northern part of east boundary (22.3m in length). To give privacy to neighbouring property.
Dunoon, 3 Cross Way, West Mersea – Mr S Bloyce
- (h) 21 1045
Remove existing external timber staircase and replace with metal for fire protection.
15 Wellhouse Avenue, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment
- (i) 21 1046
Remove existing external timber staircase and replace with metal for fire protection.
19 Wellhouse Avenue, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment
- (j) 21 1047
Remove existing external timber staircase and balcony; replace with metal for fire protection.
27 Wellhouse Avenue, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment
- (k) 21 1048
Remove existing external timber staircase and balcony; replace with metal for fire protection.
24 Saltings Crescent, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment
- (l) 21 1049
Remove existing external timber staircase and balcony; replace with metal for fire protection.
30 Saltings Crescent, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment
- (m) 21 1050
Remove existing external timber staircase and balcony; replace with metal for fire protection.
40 Saltings Crescent, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment
- (n) 21 1051
Remove existing external timber staircase and balcony; replace with metal for fire protection.
46 Saltings Crescent, West Mersea – Mr G Pamment
- (o) 21 1265
Extension to existing porch/sunroom.
35 Victoria Esplanade, West Mersea – Mr D Chadwick

(p) 21 1166

Single storey front, side and rear extension.
4 Westwood Drive, West Mersea – Mr A Head

Application withdrawn

(a) 21 0931

Replacement of an existing boundary fence with new nominal 2m high rendered wall fronting a highway.
3 Firs Chase, West Mersea – Mr & Mrs Haddow

21/112 TO NOTE THE CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

Please see report attached. There were no questions arising.

21/113 TO CONSIDER THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Responsible Finance Officer explained the AGAR process to Councillors.

21/114 TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Council approved the Annual Governance Statement.
Proposed: Councillor Akker, Seconded: Councillor Banks. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/115 TO CONSIDER, APPROVE AND SIGN THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

The Council approved the Accounting Statements.
Proposed: Councillor Akker, Seconded: Councillor Bragg. ALL IN FAVOUR.
Councillor Powling signed the AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return).

21/116 TO REVIEW THE INTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT TO YEAR END 31 MARCH 2021

The Internal Audit report was shared with Councillors, copy attached, with the following items being addressed in 2021/22:

- A list of regular contractual payees will be approved (FR 5.6, 5.7 and 6.7).
- Payments will be approved by resolution of the council (FR 5.2).
- A summary Asset Register will be published on the website.
- In future years the final precept amount will be minuted.
- The petty cash held will be agreed to the cash book.

The Council gave its thanks to Val Henry and Councillor Jenkins for their hard work on the Council finances.

21/117 TO APPROVE PAYMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS' INVOICE AT A COST OF £400

The Council approved payment of the Internal Auditors' invoice.
Proposed: Councillor Bragg, Seconded: Councillor Weaver. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/118 TO AGREE RENEWAL OF SELECT FOR LOCAL COUNCILS INSURANCE POLICY FOR PERIOD 1 JULY 2021 UNTIL 30 JUNE 2022 WITH ZURICH MUNICIPAL AT A PREMIUM OF £5052.92. THIS IS PART OF A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT THAT IS ACTIVE UNTIL 1 JULY 2023 THAT WAS AGREED AT THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 6 JULY 2020, MINUTE REFERENCE 20/148

The Council agreed the renewal of the insurance policy for period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.
Proposed: Councillor Jenkins, Seconded: Councillor Banks. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/119 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE UPDATING THE OFFICE COMPUTER SYSTEM TO MICROSOFT SHAREPOINT CLOUD BASED SET UP WITH RESTRICTED ACCESS COSTING £400

The Council agreed to updating the office computer system to Microsoft SharePoint.
Proposed: Councillor Jenkins, Seconded: Councillor Banks. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/120 TO RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVE THE SECURITY CCTV CAMERAS AT VICTORIA ESPLANADE CAR PARK COSTING £462

Colchester Borough Council have not been asked to contribute 50% as they are cash strapped, and Colchester Borough Council do not always chase West Mersea Town Council for funds. Agreement with NEPP for 50/50 split on parking charges. There was £1800 stolen from car park pay machines, before CCTV installed.
Proposed: Councillor Powling, Seconded: Councillor Weaver. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/121 TO REVIEW POSSIBLE UPGRADES TO THE WEBSITE AND AGREE A SPEND OF UP TO £1500, AS PER THE BUDGET

Councillor Jenkins gave an overview of the need to revise the look and content of the website. Councillor Banks demonstrated a new visual concept received from Datapartners Internet which was discussed briefly.
Proposed: Councillor Jenkins, Seconded: Councillor Weaver.
Councillor Bragg abstained, Councillor Banks did not vote as pecuniary interest had been declared. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/122 TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM DEVOLUTION COMMITTEE AND TO DISCUSS WHETHER TO CONTINUE WITH THE ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS DEVOLUTION GRANT

Councillor Powling advised that some footpaths had been cut, last year's fund due to Covid remained unspent. Essex County Councillor Kevin Bentley is aware that unspent funds are to be used to fix the Strood railings, currently waiting for Essex County Council Highways response on traffic management to enable the repairs to take place.
Proposed: Councillor Powling, Seconded: Councillor Akker.
Councillor Bragg abstained. Councillor Banks AGAINST. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/123 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE RESTRUCTURE OF COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINT COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Deferred until next meeting.

21/124 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE RESTRUCTURE OF WORKING GROUPS AND MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINT WORKING GROUP CHAIRPERSONS

Deferred until next meeting.

21/125 TO ENDORSE THE SECTION 50 LICENCE AGREEMENT WITH REGARD TO THE FLOOD BARRIER

The agenda item was deferred to enable further information to clarify. Councillors Banks and Powling gave an update.

21/126 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE POTENTIAL OF MOVING FORWARD WITH THE ACCESSIBLE CHANGING PLACES FACILITY AND TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS

Councillor Weaver gave an update on progress. Three sites have been identified in Victoria Esplanade car park on Victoria Esplanade. Planning permission will need to be sought from Colchester Borough Council as they own the land. Application could be made to the Community Initiative Fund.

21/127 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM WEST MERSEA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The draft Neighbourhood Plan was amended following the consultation that took place toward the end of last year (2020) which was extended a couple of times because of Covid-19, finishing on 4 January 2021. Along with supporting documents it was submitted to Colchester Borough Council (CBC) 18 May 2021. CBC eventually acknowledged receipt on 15 June 2021 and issued a formal response that they will now consult on the Plan. Subsequently the Plan will be independently examined.

The latest, revised version of the plan and the supporting documents can be viewed at merseamatters.uk

21/128 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE RED LINE WORKING GROUP

The Working Group has not met yet due to Covid restrictions.

21/129 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP

Deferred until next meeting.

21/130 MAYOR'S NOTES

Things are getting back to normality and the Council is meeting face to face, and it is hoped that Committees and Working Groups will begin to meet.

Thanks were given to the new Clerk. The Mayor thanked all Council staff for all their hard work over the past year, working through the lockdown period. The Mayor thanked all Councillors for the work being done.

21/131 CHAIRPERSON TO MOVE THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED DURING THE TRANSACTION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ON THE GROUNDS THAT PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST BECAUSE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

21/132 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE PURCHASING A REPLACEMENT A1 NOTICEBOARD FOR THE LIBRARY WALL

A replacement notice board is required to replace the rotten one removed from the library wall. It was proposed by Councillor Jenkins to purchase the Fitzpatrick Woolmer noticeboard, which is the same as the one outside the Council Offices and in the Cemetery.

Proposed: Councillor Jenkins, Seconded: Councillor Banks. ALL IN FAVOUR.

21/133 TO CONSIDER QUOTES FOR 3 CUTS TO STRIM ALEXANDERS IN WEST MERSEA PARK AND THE GLEBE

It was proposed by Councillor Jenkins to accept the Skippers quotation to spot trim (flail not to be used) the alexanders in the Glebe, West Mersea Park, Reymead, Willoughby car park and Broomhills. There would now be just the one cut as it is late in the year, with the cut alexanders being removed to avoid any possibility of seeding. Cost not to exceed £1500 + VAT.

Proposed: Councillor Jenkins, Seconded: Councillor Akker. ALL IN FAVOUR.

There being no other business, the public meeting closed at 9.38pm.