



TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**Meeting held on Thursday 7th December 2023 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. B.Hart
Cllr. R. Jenkins	Cllr. M. Parsons
Cllr. B. Holmes	Cllr. T. Gibbons
Cllr. D. Boylan	5 Members of the public
Karen Kuderovitch, Town Clerk & RFO	

23/249.	<p>RECORDING OF MEETING</p> <p>Chairman requested anyone present to identify their intention to record the meeting. The Clerk stated she was recording.</p>
23/250.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>All Members were 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. All Councillors declared an interest in planning items 232508 & 232632.. Cllr. Hart declared an interest in item 2/265 – allotments, (being Chairman of the Allotment Association).</p>
23/251.	<p>WELCOME TO CLLR. BOYLAN</p> <p>Cllr.Weaver welcomed Cllr. Boylan.</p>
23/252.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 🗑️</p> <p>Cllr. Jarvis – work commitments, Cllr. Powling – personal commitment. <i>It was resolved</i> unanimously to accept the apologies and the reasons given.</p>
23/253.	<p>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Priority was given to those members of the public wishing to share information relating to items on the agenda.</p> <p>MOP1 – Repeated a previous request in relation to bathing rafts being covered. The Town Clerk advised that all communications to come through the Chair of the meeting. Village Green South side signage– MOP had made representations to Colchester City Council (charging people to use village green, suggested a criminal offense). The Mayor asked the Clerk to look into the covering of the rafts.</p> <p>MOP2 – raised concerns about approx. 9 Lime Trees and the need for pollarding (undertaken by the resident). Mersea Avenue trees (approx.. 28 trees). Town Clerk to investigate and report back.</p> <p>MOP3 — Suggestion of open public meeting in relation to Section 106 monies (referred to item 256 on agenda). Referred to the Somme of 1917 and suggested close to that at Dawes Lane – damaged by heavy goods traffic). Town Clerk to investigate & report back.</p>

	<p>MOP4 – Referred to item 232/65 – water bailiff proposed contribution of £25,000 from West Mersea Town Council towards cost of employment, suggested a Street Warden could be funded from the Precept to protect the whole community, rather than a Water Bailiff who primarily protects yachts beach huts & other users (many of who are not residents). CCC own the main beach and pontoon and are responsible for compliance (not WMTC). E-mail had been received by the resident with full details. Referral was made to the 3rd August 23 minutes – draft Action Plan was discussed in order to keep residents informed. Clerk to review.</p>
23/254.	<p>COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS REPORTS Apologies received from Cllr. Jowers.</p>
23/255.	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES 🖱️ The minutes of the Town Council meeting of 9th November 2023 were approved and signed. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr. Gibbons – all in favour.</p>
23/256.	<p>SANDERLING REACH – COMMERCIAL AREA 🖱️ Councillors considered the report from City & Country and discussed the proposed options. Various views were shared with the focus being what was best for the residents. The Clerk advised that a response was required urgently as the planning application was being planned to be submitted before Christmas, which may not leave time for a public consultation. Proposed: Cllr. Parsons Seconded Cllr. Weaver. All in favour. It was resolved unanimously for a request to be submitted to Town & Country for 4 x 2 bed bungalows & 2 x 1 bed bungalows (instead of the 6 x 1 bed bungalows currently proposed), with e-mail consultation to come to a final agreement asap.</p>
23/257.	<p>MAYOR'S REPORT Mayor reported all current information was in the December news which was being distributed in the following few days. The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk & all those involved in getting the newsletter produced so quickly. The Mayor commended the refurbishment works to the War Memorial and reported she had met and welcomed the new Vicar.</p>
23/258.	<p>TOWN CLERK'S REPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting permission from CCC to remove hedge & erecting fencing around WMTC Office (extra storage space). • All Xmas tree lights are up – hamper created in house being delivered to MICA Centre ready for Lights up on Saturday • Skippers had cut pitches • Changing places awaiting permission from CCC for drainage works (Health & Safety Risk - emergency expenditure). • New Cemetery bins have been installed; 2 @ Firs Road & 1 @ Feldy View • Glebe incident – no further contact, Health & Safety report received. Advice was no dangers identified. No incident report received by WMTC. • Issue at Willoughby car park – on site visit today to review damage to ground. Could be a small cost to repair. • New signage erected at all public conveniences & Xmas holiday period cover arranged. • Clerk attended Finance for Larger Councils Forum, Worknest - Human Resource modules all completed. • All Councillors to sign letter to the King – awaiting support e-mail from East Mersea Chairman. • FOI request in relation to permissive footpath signs. • H&S advice on skate park signage had been requested. • Finance – Clerks continues to allocate time as a priority – November 23 remaining then reports can be issued.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proud of Mersea litter pick – Saturday 16th December @ 10-midday – fancy dress, all Councillors invited to join in.
23/259.	<p>POLICIES/TERMS OF REFERENCE/COMMITTEES/APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES 🖱</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves Policy - adjustments had been made. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins Seconded: Cllr. Holmes. All in favour. • Meeting Protocol – Proposed: Cllr. Hart, Seconded: Cllr. Gibbons. All in favour. • Home and Hybrid Working policy – adjustments had been made. Created by Worknest. Proposed: Cllr. Weaver, Seconded: Cllr. Holmes. All in favour. • Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) policy – adjustments had been made. Created by Worknest. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr. Hart. All in favour. • Cllr. Boylan was appointed to the Environment & Community Services Committee & Planning & Highways Committee. Cllr. Powling was appointed to the Personnel Committee. Cllr. Gibbons was appointed to the Personnel Committee. Cllr. Hart to review with the Town Clerk potential appointment to Committees (January 2024 Agenda).
23/260.	<p>PLANNING APPLICATIONS 🖱</p> <p>a) To consider planning applications received (separate document).</p> <p>PLANNING APPLICATIONS</p> <p>(a) 232508 Siting of 2no. single level portable cabins and re-instatement of existing access track to the rear garden. 24 Melrose Road, West Mersea – Plan link 232508 - Objection</p> <p>(b) 232604 Application for prior approval for proposed extension beyond the rear wall by 5.50m. Max height 5m. Eaves 2.25m. to form a new living/dining room having cavity walls faced in brick to match existing and a pitched roof covered with tiles. 22 Whittaker Way, West Mersea – Plan link 232604 No objections</p> <p>(c) 232405 New build dwelling occupying the same footprint as existing property, including new curtilage. 124 Coast Road, West Mersea – Plan link 232405 No objections</p> <p>(d) 232624 Demolition of dilapidated outbuildings with the erection of a staggered single storey rear extension. 42 St Peters Road, West Mersea – Plan link 232624 No objections.</p> <p>(e) 232607 Application to vary condition 1 (temporary permission) and 6 (scheme of restoration) following grant of planning permission 220023. Colchester Road, West Mersea – Plan link 232607 No objections, additional comments submitted to reject variations of conditions (land must be restored).</p> <p>(f) 232632 Erection of a replacement bungalow (with rooms in the roof space) following the demolition of the existing bungalow. 21 Melrose Road, West Mersea – Plan link 232632 No objections</p> <p>(g) 232683 Construction of two storey extension to provide study storage space and enlargement of master bedroom. 8 Beach Road, West Mersea – Plan link 232683 No objections, additional comments submitted There is a need for an on site archaeological survey before building works begin due to very close proximity to a Roman site of national importance (the Mersea Wheel tomb)</p> <p>b) To receive notification of planning decisions.</p> <p>PLANNING DECISIONS</p> <p>Applications passed</p> <p>(a) 232183 Proposed rear single and double storey extension. 9 Mersea Avenue, West Mersea - Decision link 232183</p> <p>(b) 232071 Proposed installation of 2no. velux Cabrio to front elevation. 7 Grove Avenue, West Mersea - Decision link 232071</p> <p>(c) 232315 Proposed single storey rear and side extension including alterations. 51 Firs Road, West Mersea - Decision link 232315</p> <p>Application refused</p> <p>(a) 232302 Replacement of existing timber veranda and balcony with one and two storey extension, with</p>

	<p>some internal remodelling. 81 Empress Avenue, West Mersea - Decision link 232302 WMTC recommendation: It was resolved that consent be granted in respect of this application.</p>
23/261.	<p>COASTGUARD COMPOUND (PREVIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS GRANNY'S GARDEN) £</p> <p>Town Clerk reported on the reversal of a previous decision, pending a health & safety assessment. Advice received:</p> <p><i>Strongly suggested replacing the spikes at your earliest convenience as these are a high risk to everyone. They are at a height where people could fall/slip/trip and cause a severe injury for both children and adults.</i></p> <p>Councillors debated the project. The Town Clerk had suggested capping with metal balls. Councillors resolved to look into 2 options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Add metal balls to the spikes Remove the spikes and add metal balls <p>The Town Clerk to action. The Town Clerk advised that she had consulted with the H&S consultant and a sign was advised to bring attention to the severe slope. January agenda for review. Members reviewed the project plan & associated costs supplied by the Town Clerk. Members to review the quotation received for sanding & 2 coats of paint in the same colour @ £1,500 – deferred to January 2024.</p>
23/262.	<p>COMMUNITY PROJECTS/ACTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> December Newsletter. Councillors were impressed. Thanks were given to Andrew Smith for working hard with the Town Clerk at short notice to produce the newsletter. Web site – Council considered a quotation for a gov.uk website for a 3 year period. Members discussed the information sent. After discussion, it was resolved to make contact with the current provider for a comparable quote. The Town Clerk suggested the current web had too much information on, was not easy to locate information. Public Conveniences – Town Clerk to confirm Christmas & New Year arrangements (via email). Cover was costed @ £611.80 for 4 days due to staff holiday (28-31st December 23). Opening all toilets for 8.00am Closing all toilets for 6.00pm, To clean all 4 toilets from 8.00am – 12 noon. Town Clerk reported progress on all other community projects – covered in Town Clerks report.
23/263.	<p>TRAINING/COUNCILLOR SURGERIES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Town Clerk suggested Tuesday 23rd January 2024 for in-house Councillor training (EALC). Town Clerk reported on Code of Conduct Training (CCC) attended by herself and some Councillors. The Town Clerk had requested acknowledgement from Councillors they had read & understood the Code. Councillor Surgeries – the Mayor suggested a trial run for 3 months on a monthly basis, to be held at the Town Council offices the first Saturday of each month, starting in April 2024. Town Clerk to prepare a rota.
23/264.	<p>CHANGE TO OFFICE OPENING TIMES/CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE</p> <p>Councillors discussed the removal of Tuesdays – to enable staff to be utilised better. <i>It was resolved</i> unanimously to proceed from January 2024. Office will be open Monday 9am – midday and Friday 9am-midday. Town Clerk to report on office closure and emergency cover – office closed Friday 22nd December at midday and reopens on Tuesday 2nd January @ 8am. The Town Clerk offered to be on call over this period for emergencies and the number will be published.</p>
23/265.	<p>FINANCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To approve payments to be made (to be presented at the meeting) – deferred to January 2024. Review of Finance Report – deferred to January 2024. Dates set for Finance & Strategy Meeting, Budget & Precept Meeting. Town Clerk confirmed the date for submission to Colchester City Council for 24/25 Precept as 24th January 2024. Town Clerk to set a meeting for Finance & Strategy for 8th/9th January 2024 to review the budget.

	<p>d) To review recommendations arising from the Finance & Strategy Meeting on 26th October 2023 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allotment lease – currently £1,100 per quarter. Increase due on 1st January 2024. Recommendation to full council, 5% up to nearest 50p = £200 per annum - agreed. Proposed: Cllr. B. Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr. Gibbons. All in favour. Cllr. Hart abstained. • allotment fees – Recommendation to full council, 5% increase up to nearest 50p – agreed. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr. Weaver. All in favour. • gate licences – 5% increase up to nearest 50p – agreed. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr. Holmes. All in favour. • recommendation from Cemetery Clerk re: cemetery fees (separate document) – agreed. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconded Cllr. Hart. All in favour. • car park charges – recommendation to full council – no increase – agreed. Proposed: Cllr. Weaver, Seconded: Cllr. Holmes. All in favour. <p>Cllr. Jenkins suggested the following would be considered at the next Finance & Strategy Meeting in January 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £8,000 to address future issues/outstanding junctions needing urgent attention. • £4,000 for footpath maintenance. • £12,000 for bathing rafts (MMO licence would be required). £4,000 already in the budget so an additional £8,000 to be added. • £10,000 for additional compactor bins (working with Colchester City Council matching the cost & installing). • possibility of a Water Bailiff, working with Colchester City Council, with powers to act. A water bailiff would cost around £45,000 and it was proposed £25,000 be added into the budget and approach Colchester City Council to match fund. • £5,000 for D-Day 80 • newsletters £6,000 • £1,000 staff welfare. • £1,000 for Councillor surgeries. • Town Clerk - confirmation of historic donations paid <p>Members reviewed and considered the following expenditure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donation for 60th anniversary of Colchester Samaritans – it was resolved to donate £200 to Refresh Mersea for planting in sensory garden in the appropriate colours. A confirmation letter to be sent to Colchester Samaritans to advise of this donation action to support marking the anniversary. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr. Weaver. All in favour. • Lime Tree works – members considered 2 quotations. It was resolved unanimously to appoint WM Tree Services @ £3,500 & VAT, taken from the £8,000 current budget for tree works. <p>The Town Clerk advised the Mayor that 2 hours had passed and it was agreed to extend the meeting to finish items on the Agenda.</p> <p>e) Emergency expenditure – Changing places drainage @ £1,275 – risk to public safety. Agreed.</p> <p>f) Clerk to report any further finance information.</p>
23/266.	<p>DATES FOR 2024/ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 25TH APRIL 2024 🙌</p> <p>a) Council agreed meeting dates for June – December 2024. January 2024 meeting – the Mayor stated she would not be available.</p>

	b) Members agreed the British Legion as the location & a theme to be discussed with the Mayor for Annual Town Meeting 25 th April 2024.
23/267.	CONTACT FROM RESIDENTS/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS Town Clerk reported: The Town Clerk reported on an FOI request being sent to the ICO for review. A resident was present to explain contact on matters.
EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC 🙅 <i>It was resolved unanimously 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>	
23/268.	LEASES/LAND 🙅 £ a) Changing Places Lease – awaiting a revised document from CCC. Agenda for January 2024. b) Land at Coast Road – Land Registry documents submitted.
23/269.	PERSONNEL 🙅 £ Town Clerk reported, a discussion took place and a recommendation from the Personnel Committee was approved. Proposed: Cllr. Boylan, Seconded: Cllr. Parsons. It was resolved to proceed by a majority vote. Town Clerk permanent contract confirmed.