



TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

**Meeting held on Thursday 9th November 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. C. Powling
Cllr. R. Jenkins	Cllr. M. Parsons
Cllr. B. Holmes	Cllr. T. Gibbons
Karen Kuderovitch, CILCA – Locum Town Clerk	10 Members of the public

23/229.	RECORDING OF MEETING Chairman requested anyone present to identify their intention to record the meeting. The Town Clerk declared she was recording the meeting.
23/230.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST All Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests (pecuniary/non-pecuniary) 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.
23/231.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 🖱 Cllr. S. Jarvis – work commitments, Cllr. B. Hart – personal commitment Councillors voted to accept the absences and the reasons given. All in favour.
23/232.	<i>In accordance with standing order 3(e), a question shall not require a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given.</i> PUBLIC PARTICIPATION 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. Priority will be given to those members of the public wishing to share information relating to items on the agenda. 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. Priority will be given to those members of the public wishing to share information relating to items on the agenda. MOP1 – Bathing Rafts – requested for the rafts to be covered up. MOP2 - Coastguard Compound – member of public thanked Council for reviewing the previous decision. A suggestion was made for the fencing spikes to be capped with wood and works also done to the side spikes. Attention was also bought to the steep embankment. MOP3 – Referred to democracy and gave an opinion that the recent election had been undermined with the absence of polling cards and poor publicity. Raised a concern about a social media comment which appeared to have come from the Town Council and how the comment was approved. Mersea Island Society meeting – a public consultation was requested on the allocation Section 106 monies and voiced a formal request. Commercial development Sandling Reach – any development on the island was administered in connection with the Neighbourhood plan. Finance & Strategy Meeting (26.10.23)– stated no minutes had been published. An opinion was shared that West Mersea Town Council was looking increasingly clandestine and requested the minutes be published. The Mayor was questioned about the apparent social media post. The Town Clerk advised the Mayor to allow her time to investigate the allegation and report back. The Mayor asked for further details of the post and the MOP had made an assumption it originated from West Mersea Town Council.

	<p>MOP4 – Referred to an article in the Mersea Courier about erosion and the shoreline management plan. Recent storm & high winds had caused further erosion of the main beach. A complaint had been made to Colchester City Council and a response was received confirming the commitment to maintaining & improving the seafront area. Further damage had occurred. An assessment was undertaken 30 years ago and was stated to be required to maintain the beach area. Some further key information was shared and suggested West Mersea address the issue</p>
23/233.	<p>COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLORS REPORTS</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Cllr. J. Jowers, Mayor of Colchester & Cllr. R. Davidson, Colchester City Council.</p> <p>Cllr. Powling gave a report on the green waste scheme. December would be the last collection under the current service. Urban exception sites – gave an explanation on the scheme and the requirement for social housing included with developments. The Town Clerk asked Cllr. Powling to update the recent waterside forum meeting. Essex Marine unit was present together with waterfront users and a representative from Colchester City Council. The main focus was the possibility of a water bailiff, a Public Protection order and a review of bye laws. Constructive first meeting with lots of advice received. Only 69 complaints had been received this year for the whole of the coastline Brightlingsea to Burnham. Marine unit had stressed the importance that there was a need for reporting of any incidents to Essex Police via 101 or on-line. Next meeting 6th February 2024. The Town Clerk added Cllr. Jenkins and herself had also attended and it was a very useful meeting for her to understand the issues.</p>
23/234.	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES 🖱️</p> <p>The minutes of the Town Council meeting of 14th September 2023 were approved and signed. Proposed: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconded: Cllr. Powling. All in favour.</p>
23/235.	<p>SANDERLING REACH – COMMERCIAL AREA 🖱️</p> <p>The Mayor referred to the report from City & Country and the attempt by West Mersea Town Council to push for affordable homes. The Mayor invited Councillors to discuss. The Town Clerk confirmed the documentation was issued with the agenda as supporting documentation. The Mayor gave an overview of the proposals. Cllr. Powling gave a report on the history and the options to be considered. Colchester City Council was keen for a response from West Mersea Town Council and the community. Any options must be connected to the Neighbourhood Plan. A discussion took place on the proposed type of housing and the local need. The houses would be gifted to a trust. It was agreed for further discussions to take place with Colchester City Council (Cllr. Powling will lead on this). The Town Council will also consider an open public meeting to gauge the residents views, if time permits.</p>
23/236.	<p>MAYOR'S REPORT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School children came to visit ages 5-11 from Mersea School and a session was held in the Council Chamber. A very engaging event with lots discussions (including play park ideas), a letter had been received which the Mayor read out and photos had been received. • Mayor & Town Clerk had met with Neighbourhood Watch representative and discussed Oyster Close. A meeting was offered with the Town Council, Neighbourhood Watch rep & residents. • The Mayor thanked everyone for their continued hard work and advised after the election, in December 2023 the Town Council would be at full complement.
23/237.	<p>CLERK'S REPORT</p> <p>The Town Clerk gave a summary as follows:</p> <p>The Town Clerk echoed the Mayor's comment that the Mayor, Councillors & Staff were being very supportive and she felt huge progress was being made, Committees formed, but still lots of work to be done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit completed 30th October 23 and sent to Councillors. • Initial works to war memorial completed in time for Remembrance Sunday. • Finance & Strategy met on 26th October – minutes to be finished (the Town Clerk reported she had been unwell so a delay in some areas). • NEPP Meeting – Cllr. Powling to report



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings – H&S Officer and Senior Groundsman Coastguard Compound and Glebe – awaiting advice from an on-site visit re the fence spikes. A minor accident had been reported at the Glebe and awaiting advice. • Coast Road toilets – WCL camera down the sewers the following day to establish the issues. • Waterside Forum – very interesting – minutes to follow. • New bins at Cemetery planned to be installed next week. • Signage arrived for all the toilets (replaces the Danfo signage) • Quote received for removing the hedging around the office & for erecting a fence • Xmas lights on lime tree completed. • Sud planters giveaway scheme – Carol pursuing with Essex County Council. • Look at meeting room table/layout • Glebe accident – H&S review awaiting – lights not working for 18 months • Dec agenda – Annual Town Meeting 25th April 2023. • Free Code on Conduct Training on Monday 20th Nov 2023 for Councillors (CCC). The Town Clerk recommended Councillors make every effort to attend.
23/238.	<p>POLICIES/TERMS OF REFERENCE/COMMITTEES 🖐️</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves Policy. – it was agreed to defer to December 2023. • Newsletter Policy - .views and suggestions were expressed by Councillors. Item 241 was brought forward by agreement into the discussions. The Town Clerk reported that feedback has been very positive with essential information being shared by many residents and this was echoed by a number of Councillors. A suggestion was agreed to adjust the policy to ensure the main focus was on Town Council business and that the newsletter was very important and will form part of the criteria for when the Town Council applies for the Local Council Administration criteria to ensure community engagement. Local paper reports would also continue. A local paper had shown an interest in the production, printing and distribution which could save costs (approx. 42p per copy). Further investigations to be made. The Town Clerk recommended a quarterly issue with the June 24 edition to form an Annual Report which was agreed. . Frequency to be reviewed in 6 months. Proposed Cllr. Parsons, all in favour. • Following the resignation of Weaver as Chair of the Finance Committee – a discussion took place and Cllr. Jenkins was proposed as the new Chairman by Cllr. Powling and seconded by Cllr. Weaver. All in favour.
23/239.	<p>PLANNING APPLICATIONS 🖐️</p> <p>a) To consider planning applications received (separate document).</p> <p>232302 – 81 Empress Avenue, West Mersea. Replacement of existing timber veranda and balcony with one and two storey extension, with some internal remodelling.– after discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Jenkins to support seconded by Cllr. Holmes. All in favour. TC Comment: supported</p> <p>232315 – . 51 Firs Road, West Mersea Proposed single storey rear and side extension including alterations to existing roof – after discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Jenkins and seconded by Cllr. Holmes. TC Comment: supported.</p> <p>232331 . West Lodge, 1 Willoughby Avenue, West Mersea Change of Use – Conversion of existing garage/workshop into self-contained holiday accommodation lodge in compliance with Policy DM5: Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Heritage of Colchester City Council’s Adopted Local Plan– after discussion it was proposed not to support by Cllr. Powling and seconded by Cllr. Jenkins . All in favour. TC Comment: not supported.</p> <p>232405 –New build dwelling occupying the same footprint as existing property, including new curtilage. 124 Coast Road, West Mersea. After discussion it was proposed to support by Cllr. Parsons and seconded by Cllr. Jenkins. All in favour. TC Comment: supported.</p>

	<p>232411 – 5 Empress Avenue, West Mersea. Removal of existing front wall and gate. New front wall/railing and gates. After discussion, it was proposed to support by Cllr. Weaver and supported by Cllr. Gibbons. All in favour. TC Comment: supported.</p> <p>232536 - 3 Windsor Road, West Mersea. Proposed single storey side extension (annexe). After discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Weaver not to make any comments, seconded by Cllr. Holmes. All in favour. TC Comment: No comment.</p> <p>b) To receive notification of planning decisions. Applications passed</p> <p>(a) 231023 Changes to approved conversion of an existing office building to a short-term holiday let including remedial structural works, general refurbishment and the addition of a first-floor balcony. Resubmission of 230312. 110 Coast Road, West Mersea - Decision link 231023</p> <p>(b) 232056 Application for removal or variation of a condition 2 following grant of planning permission (230119) 25 Mersea Avenue, West Mersea - Decision link 232056</p> <p>(c) 231897 Single storey rear extension following removal of conservatory, garage conversion to form annexe and home gym. 3 Farthings Chase, West Mersea - Decision link 231897</p> <p>(d) 232087 Single storey rear extension utilising the footprint/brickwork of existing conservatory. Internal changes to provide open plan living, kitchen dining area. 75 Seaview Avenue, West Mersea - Decision link 232087</p> <p>(e) 232201 Application for variation of condition 4 following grant of planning permission of application 231680. 21 Prince Albert Road, West Mersea - Decision link 232201</p> <p>Application refused (a) 232145 Demolition of existing rear extension, rebuild new extension. Alter and extending existing dormer. Cladding the gables and inserting new windows. New windows to utility room. Resubmission of 230750. 7 Strood Close, West Mersea - Decision link 232145 WMTC Recommendation: It was resolved that consent be granted in respect of this application.</p> <p>8.25pm – Cllr. Holmes left the meeting.</p> <p>A discussion took place on application for rural designation – comments by 8th December 23.</p>
23/240.	<p>COASTGUARD COMPOUND (PREVIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS GRANNY'S GARDEN) 📍£</p> <p>Proposal (submitted by 4 Councillors as per Standing Orders - Cllrs. Weaver, Powling, Jarvis & Jenkins). Details: to revoke the decision – new information has come to light.</p> <p><i>Agenda item 14th September 2023, Item 23/205 item e)</i></p> <p><i>Granny's Garden Improvement Project – expenditure of £2,400 for metal fencing works – approved.</i></p> <p>Members considered the previous resolution, in particular in relation to removing the metal spikes from the fencing. The Mayor reported that new information had come to light causing the decision to be requested to be reversing the decision. A health & safety review was taking place. The Mayor asked for approval to reverse the decision. A discussion took place about the fence spikes and protecting the heritage.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised to put this item on the December agenda. All in favour.</p> <p>Members to consider the quotation received for sanding & 2 coats of paint in the same colour @ £1,500 - deferred.</p>
23/241.	<p>COMMUNITY PROJECTS/ACTIONS 📍</p> <p>a) Report from Cllr. Powling - Glebe Meeting held on 31st October 2023. Cllr. Powling reported that it was a successful meeting and the reports had been reviewed. Outcome was for clubs to go away and come back in December 2023 with what the clubs perceive is required in relation to the building.</p> <p>b) Newsletter – Town Clerk to report on feedback. Council to discuss and resolve the potential future editions and associated costs. – item covered at 23/238.</p> <p>c) Web site – Council agreed for the Town Clerk to investigate & seek quotations for a gov.uk website (soon to be compulsory). The Town Clerk recommended the West Mersea Town Council web site could benefit with an overhaul to include transfer of the current information. All agreed. The Town Clerk to send information to Councillors.</p> <p>d) Public Conveniences – Council to discuss Christmas & New Year arrangements. The Town Clerk reported a member of staff would be taking holiday and her duties would need covering on certain days. After discussion about the busy period over Christmas, a rota was suggested by the Town Clerk as a last resort should the Town Council not be able to find a company to cover. The Town Clerk to make investigations.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised members that she was feeling unwell.</p>



	<p>e) Proposal by Cllr. Parsons - The council notes with pleasure the new coins marking the reign of HM King Charles III which feature wildlife, including the red squirrel and note His Majesty's particular interest in their conservation. As councillors we respectfully invite HM King Charles personally to visit Mersea Island, Essex to see its wide range of wildlife, including its red squirrel population which was successfully reintroduced to the Island's unique habitat in 2012. Cllr. Parsons reported that no reigning monarch has ever visited Mersea Island and relayed some information on other rare wildlife (birds). Cllr. Powling seconded the proposal for the invitation to be sent, written by Cllr. Parsons and with a request for support from East Mersea Parish Council. All in favour.</p> <p>f) Town Clerk to report on progress on all other community projects – already covered..</p>
23/242.	<p>TRAINING 🖱️£</p> <p>Clerk recommended to defer in-house Councillor training to January 2024 to include the newly elected Councillor.</p>
23/243.	<p>REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY</p> <p>Councillors discussed and agree the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday.</p>
23/244.	<p>FINANCE 🖱️</p> <p>a) Payments approved (presented at the meeting).</p> <p>b) Town Clerk reported on the interim internal audit completed on Monday 30th October and the Internal Auditor was pleased with the work put into it by the Town Clerk. Councillors noted the recommendations. The Town Clerk to action. The Town Clerk reported she had allocated two days to focus on finance information for the web site.</p> <p>c) Section 106 – the Town Clerk had made contact with Colchester City Council on Section 106 process.</p> <p>d) Emergency expenditure. Zip wire £1,000 maintenance – approved by the Mayor & Town Clerk.</p> <p>e) Members to review and consider the following expenditure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 quotations for the removal of hedging on Footpath 20 were reviewed. Mersea Mowers were proposed to be used by Cllr. Powling. Cllr. Parsons called for a point of order and it was resolved to defer to the confidential section of the meeting. - Donation to Royal British Legion. £75 was counter proposed by Cllr. Powling and seconded by Cllr. Weaver. All in favour. - The Town Clerk reported the lime tree Xmas lights and a suggestion for further expenditure (£850-900 in the budget) was approved. An additional lead was required to turn on the lights. All agreed. An additional sum for Christmas lights. <p>f) Clerk reported on further finance information. £7,000 received from Colchester City Council in relation to toilets. Town Clerk reported VAT return to be done next week.</p>
23/245.	<p>CONTACT FROM RESIDENTS/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS</p> <p>Town Clerk to reported: Councillors had been sent all the contacts as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterside Forum • Bathing Rafts • Newsletter positive feedback • Tennis Club request • Mission statement • Section 106 monies • Boundary wall (Spa supermarket/Upland Road) <p>The Town Clerk reported that the flood defence Coast Road update received from Colchester City Council would be publicised on the web site/Facebook page as follows: <i>Given the start/ stop nature of the work and the frustrating delays I have asked the team to give me some certainty that the start dates I am giving you will be met. The work being undertaken has to be right and this</i></p>

	<p>means making sure all works are planned, resourced and delivered properly. That said, the team have not been sitting back waiting for the temporary works approval. Our supply chain contractor has been working to plan the work, but this could only be taken so far while we were obtaining the approval from Colchester City Council. The team are applying for permits, agreeing the Health and Safety documentation, notifying the HSE, etc. I am advised that the mobilisation date will be Monday 4th December for the establishment of the site compound, with the construction programme for the remaining works being 12 weeks (not including a 2-week Christmas shutdown).</p>
<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC 🖱️ 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.</p>	
23/246.	<p>LEASES/LAND 🖱️ £</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Town Council – Melrose Road Lease – a discussion took place. b) Changing Places Lease – further adjustments to be made c) Land at Coast Road – update – final stage of completion
23/247.	<p>GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 🖱️ Clerk reported from a meeting held on 31st October 2023.</p>
23/248.	<p>PERSONNEL 🖱️ £</p> <p>Christmas and New Year office closure were approved as follows: Friday 22nd December 2023 – closes at midday. Re-opens Tuesday 2nd January 2024 at 8am..</p>