



MANNINGTREE TOWN COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Ruth Frost

Po Box 12651, Manningtree, Essex, CO11 9AR. Tel. 07799 623529

email: clerk@manningtreetowncouncil.org.uk;

Website: www.manningtreetowncouncil.org.uk

Minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held at the Masonic Lodge in South Street, Manningtree, on Thursday 21st November 2024 at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. R Stocks (Chair) Cllr. F. Gee
Cllr. L Lay-Flurrie Cllr. J Lewis
Cllr E. Dunnett

In attendance: District Cllr T Barrett

Due to the Clerk's absence, Cllr Dunnett acted as minute taker.

11.24.162 To receive and approve any Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Charlesworth and M. Taylor and accepted by the Council.

11.24.163 To receive any Declarations of Interest

Cllr Stocks: Business Chamber

Cllr Dunnett: Street Keepers

11.24.164 Minutes of the 17th of October 2024 to be approved and signed

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 17 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11.24.165 Public Announcements

Cllr Dunnett reported that PACE has achieved the Kings Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE for the charity.

Action Point: *Letter of congratulations to be sent to PACE for achieving the award*

11.24.166 Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda and matters of mutual interest.

No members of the public were present

Agenda Item 11.24.175 – Update on Perennial Planting was taken at this point of the meeting

Dominic and Lucy Watts gave a presentation to Council on the plans they had drawn up for the perennial planting of the 10 tubs located in the town centre, highlighting the following points:

- Each tub would contain a 3 leg tripod, manufactured by DW, and placed securely in the bottom of each tub. The existing soil mixed with an additional soil based John Innes compost would be placed on top, thereby making the tripod difficult to remove
- The perennial plants would be wildlife friendly providing colour throughout the year
- All planting would take place in one session, and undertaken with voluntary labour
- Watering would be required in the first year, but thereafter the need for watering would be reduced, thus saving costs
- LW advised that she will be sourcing the plants with the viewing to planting imminent

Action Points

- Assistance with planting of the tubs:
 - DW to speaker with Sharon Barker – Street Keepers
 - Cllr Dunnett to contact John Hall – PACE members
- Cllr Lay-Flurrie suggested that a letter of thanks should be sent to Craft nurseries for their past service
- LW to contact the Council with a date for the planting to be carried out

11.24.167 Reports from the District and County Councils

In advance of the meeting the County Council report had been circulated.

The District Council report from Cllr Barrett had been sent, but not circulated to Councillors.

District Cllr Barrett advised that there was nothing of relevance to Manningtree contained in his report.

11.24.168 Report from Essex Police – circulated prior to the meeting

11.24.169 Report from Street Keepers

Cllr Dunnett reported that when weeding is undertaken, in residential areas, a brief note is hand delivered to households explaining the role of the Street Keepers. Similarly, there are also plans to have small boards, when weeding an area, to notify passersby that hand weeding is to avoid the use of harmful sprays.

11.24.170 Report from Business Chamber

Cllr Stocks reported that there would be a limited selection of Christmas decorations to be put up in the High Street. To date, the plans for more extensive lighting hadn't materialised; the target date for this had been set for the first late night shopping evening on Thursday 28 November. It was noted that £1000 had been donated from the three parishes towards the cost of new lights.

11.24.171 Report from other committees and representatives

- TDALC meeting scheduled for Wednesday 27 November – Cllr Dunnett had submitted her apologies. She advised that very comprehensive minutes would be provided from the meeting, and in due course these would be circulated to Councillors
- Three Parishes – in his absence, Cllr Charlesworth had provided a written update:
 - VE Day, it was agreed to ensure that events are not clashing. Cllr Charlesworth had suggested also marking VJ Day which is often overshadowed
 - Quasar (Policing), District Cllr Barrett would be obtaining a quote for a joint operation between the three parishes (**Ref: Agenda Item 11.24.172**)
 - Christmas Lights, it was agreed that the Manningtree Business Chamber is doing it's best, and that it is work in progress, with further enhancements over the next three years (**Ref: Agenda Item 11.24.170**)
 - TDC has received arts funding for the provision of four oak carved benches (£16K per bench/installation) to commemorate the women who were executed for being witches. The current plan was to locate one near to the Kiln Lane car park.
District Cllr Barrett advised that both he and District Cllr Guglielmi felt that due process had not been followed, as there is a need to treat the subject sensitively. As a result, they would be meeting with the TDC officer involved to discuss further

11.24.172 Progress report from the Clerk

Councillors had felt there was a lack of clarity in the Clerk's reporting method, with items not being progressed. In the Clerk's absence, Cllr Dunnett had tracked back on-going items and reinstated the previous method of reporting:

- **Appointment of a handyman contractor:** Cllr Dunnett reported after the September Council meeting, she had provided the Clerk with details of a handyman recommended by Brantham

Parish Council. Cllr Stocks reported that she was aware that Lawford Parish Council use a handyman for maintenance work.

Action Point:

Cllrs Dunnnett and Stocks to contact the respective handyman on their availability and costs

- **Asset Register:** Cllr Dunnnett and the Clerk had checked the Council's assets during August, and the Clerk was in the progress of updating the register with current prices
- **Repair of a broken bench at The Walls:** Cllr Charlesworth had placed an order with Thorogood for the wood and would be undertaking the work himself. Due to rusting under the planks he expected that the entire bench would need replacing within 10 years
- **Provision of slabs at the entrance to the riverside path:** Cllr Charlesworth had previously agreed to undertake the work, but needed the Clerk to advise him when he can collect the slabs from her, and what work needs to be done
- **Removal of the suncream dispenser at the beach area:** Cllr Charlesworth and the Clerk had removed the dispenser on 15 November
- **Bathing Signage for the Beach:** Cllr Dunnnett advised that funding had been received from Defra, and details of the supplier for the signs had been forwarded to the Clerk from the Manningtree Mermaids. However, permission from the Sailing Club to erect a sign near the bathing hooks had still not been actioned.

Action Point:

Cllr Stocks to contact Manningtree Sailing Club Commodore Colin Garnham re: siting of the beach sign on the sea wall

- **Participation in Quasar Local Policing:** District Cllr Barrett advised that the cost between the three parishes would be £15K. He was waiting for quotations from the police based on all three parishes participating, and another if just two. Due to budget constraints, Council felt it unlikely that it would be able to meet the necessary cost; however it was noted that Manningtree Business Chamber might be able to contribute towards the Council's cost in participating in the scheme
- **Fly Tipping:** District Cllr Barrett had been provided with evidence from Cllr Dunnnett relating to the two bags of rubbish that had been left adjacent to the rubbish bin at The Ox. He would be raising the matter with the TDC officer in charge of fly tipping

11.24.173 To receive an update from the Finance Committee on 2025/2026 budget/precept:

Prior to the Finance meeting, the Clerk had not submitted a draft budget in the requested format. The Clerk was not present for the Finance meeting held on 7 November. In her absence, Cllr Dunnnett had provided the meeting with an excel spreadsheet based on the limited data (projected costs to date) the Clerk had provided from the Scribe system. The Finance Committee had identified costs for 2025/2026, and Cllr Dunnnett had populated a newly formatted spreadsheet with this information and projected costs to March 2025. Prior to the Council meeting, a copy of this spreadsheet detailing the 2025/2026 budget and recommended precept had been circulated to all Councillors (Copy on File):

Recommended Precept: £34300

This would equate to a 4.85% increase; however receipt of the 2025/2026 tax base figure from TDC would be required, before a final decision is made

Council was in full agreement that no decision should be taken without the full Council present.

11.24.174 To receive a proposal from the Finance committee to appoint the Council's Internal Auditor

The appointment of Jan Stobart to undertake the 2024/2025 internal audit at a cost of £260 met with the full approval of the Council.

Action Point:

Cllr Stocks to contact Jan Stobart to request her to act the Council's Internal Auditor

11.24.175. Agenda item taken at the beginning of the meeting

11.24.176 To consider a quote for the provision of .gov.uk emails and a new website

A quotation received from VCS Websites Ltd was considered by Council:

- Complete Website based on standard Parish Council package: £210
- . gov.uk domain set up £25
- Ten year Purchase Cost £196 + VAT
- **Annual** Web Hosting, including on-line support £200
- Clerk + 7 Councillors Setup £65
- **Annual** Cost £98
- Two hours of training if required £60

Cllr Dunnett advised that the annual costs would be marginally higher than the current supplier Webfactory. However, there was no provision in the current budget to meet the cost of a new website which would be in the region of £500; this could potentially be recouped by making provision in the 2025/2026 budget.

In principle, Council agreed to progressing with the quotation; however due to the Clerk's absence it was felt that it should be held over until the new year. In the meantime, VCS Websites would be contacted to update them on the situation.

Action Point:

Cllr Dunnett to contact VCS Websites Ltd to advise them of the Council's decision

11.24.177 To receive a quote for replacing the bench at the river embankment

Cllr Dunnett had circulated details of the Glasdon Phoenix Recycled Material Seat:
£585 + VAT

She advised the lead time for delivery was 10-15 working days and that payment would be required 30 days from receipt of the invoice on delivery.

Council was in full agreement to the purchase of the seat, however in view of the Clerk's absence, and the current inability to make payments it was agreed to put this on hold.

Regarding the storage/installation of the seat Cllr Lay-Flurrie advised that Rose the builders should be contacted, as they had previously assisted the Council with the installation of street furniture. This met with the Council's approval.

11.24.178 To discuss plans for the VE Day Beach Picnic

It was agreed by Council that there would be no need for a road closure, as the event, on the afternoon of Saturday 10 May, would be located on the beach. However, Cllr Stocks suggested that the local shops should be approached to decorate their premises. Closer to the time of the event the Council would advertise the event, including the provision of posters.

11.24.179 To consider any Planning Applications received

None had been received

11.24.180. To note any Planning Decisions received

None had been received

None

11.24.181 Finance

- a) To review the monthly financial Bank Reconciliation - as of 30th October 2024, there was a total of £31,198.46 between the two accounts

Due to the Clerk's absence this could not be actioned

- b) To approve new payments for November 2024, in accordance with the 2024/2025 budget.

Due to the Clerk's absence this could not be actioned

- c) The clerk had confirmed that the second precept payment had been received
d) The clerk had confirmed the Rotary Club had refunded the £200 payment made in error

11.24.182 To discuss this month “What has your council been doing this month?”

11.24.183. To consider where the resolutions from the current meeting have an impact on biodiversity.

The planting of the flower tubs with wildlife friendly perennial plants

11.24.184. Items from councillors to be added to the next agenda

Cllr Dunnett: Community Achievement Awards – Nominees and replacement of stolen shield

11.24.185. There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.53 pm.

Next Town Council Meeting 12th December 2024 at 7.30 pm at the Masonic Hall.

.....signed.....date