



# MANNINGTREE TOWN COUNCIL

*Clerk to the Council: Mrs Ruth Frost*

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## **Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council Meeting held at the Masonic Lodge in South Street, Manningtree on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Cllr. R Stocks (Mayor)      Cllr. F. Gee  
Cllr. L Lay-Flurrie      Cllr. M. Taylor  
Cllr E. Dunnett      Cllr J Charlesworth

*The meeting was termed an Extraordinary meeting as in the Clerk's absence it had been called by the Mayor, but in every other sense it was an ordinary meeting of the Council.*

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

### **12.24.186 To receive and approve any Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr J. Lewis and District Cllr Barrett and accepted by the Council.

### **12.24.187 To receive any Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Stocks: Business Chamber; Cllr Taylor Business Chamber

Cllr Dunnett: Street Keepers

### **12.24.188 Minutes of the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024 to be approved and signed**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 21 November 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### **12.24.189 Public Announcements**

The Mayor reported PACE are planning another Earth Festival which would be held on Sunday 15 June, and that they are seeking volunteers to assist with the planning and the event on the day.

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

No members of the public were present

### **12.24.191 Reports from the District and County Councils**

In advance of the meeting both reports had been emailed to the Mayor for circulation.

The Mayor highlighted an item of interest, in the District Report, relating to a consultation running from 2 December 2024 to 2 June 2025 to identify non-listed heritage assets.

After some discussion, it was agreed to look at this in more detail after the Christmas period.

### **12.24.192 Report from Essex Police**

No report was available, due to issues in forwarding emails from the Clerk's email account

### **12.24.193 Report from Street Keepers**

Cllr Dunnett reported for the last two sessions the Street Keepers had undertaken the perennial planting of the tubs. Cllr Dunnett reported the planting had come in under budget at £722.33, as some of the plants had been donated.

#### **Action Point:**

*Mayor to send an email of thanks to Sharon Barker (Street Keepers) and Lucy & Dominic Watts for the design and sourcing of the plants.*

### **12.24.194 Report from Business Chamber**

Cllr Stocks reported that at the December meeting a representative from the Colchester Business Enterprise Agency had given a presentation on funding available for the refurbishment of shops and shop fronts. There had been a shortfall in funding received for the town's Christmas lights, with the only donations having been received from Lawford Parish Council and Manningtree Town Council. As a result, the display was less than originally planned; it was therefore work in progress for another year. The Business Chamber is still looking for a Secretary, which is a paid position of £15 per hour. Cllr Taylor reported that until a Secretary can be found, she has agreed to remain as Chair of the Business Chamber until March.

### **12.24.195 Report from other committees and representatives**

No meetings had been attended by Councillors

### **12.24.196 Progress report from the Clerk**

In the Clerk's absence reports were received from Councillors:

- **Appointment of a handyman contractor:** The Mayor reported she had contacted the handyman used by Lawford Parish Council who had advised her that he charges £16:50 per hour. Cllr Dunnett had contacted the handyman (Dave Childs) used by Brantham Parish Council who turned out to be the same person used by Lawford. In discussion with him, he confirmed that he did grass cutting. It was therefore agreed by Council to dispense with the services of Environmental Design, and to arrange future grass cutting of Quay Street Wildlife area and South Street Green with Dave Childs.

#### **Action Point:**

- *Mayor to email Environmental Design to inform them of the Council's decision to no longer use their services*
- *Dave Child to be advised that the Council would like to use his services for future grass cutting*
- **Asset Register:** Cllr Dunnett and the Clerk had checked the Council's assets during August, the Clerk was in the progress of updating the register with current prices
- **Repair of a broken bench at The Walls:** Cllr Charlesworth was thanked for undertaking the repair of the bench
- **Provision of slabs at the entrance to the riverside path:** Due to the Clerk's absence this had not been progressed, as she had previously agreed to provide the slabs. It was agreed to hold this over until March
- **Bathing Signage for the Beach:** The Mayor reported that The Sailing Club Commodore Colin Garnham had agreed to put up the sign on the wall nearby where the swimmers enter the water. Cllr Dunnett reported that Signs Made Easy Ltd could supply an A4 sign panel for £31.10 + VAT created from the BWQ details downloaded by the Council from the government site. In future, new annual BWQ information could be downloaded by the Council, and an A4 vinyl sticker printed at a cost of £14:80 + VAT could be placed over the panel. It was proposed by Cllr Taylor, seconded by Cllr Gee and unanimously agreed to accept the quotation.

#### **Action Point:**

*Cllr Dunnett to place an order with Signs Made Easy Ltd for the purchase of a sign panel*

- **Participation in Quasar Local Policing:** District Cllr Barrett had advised by email that he was still awaiting a response from officers. However, he anticipated that it was unlikely that cost will be significantly less than £5000 per parish
- **Fly Tipping:** TDC had confirmed with Cllr Barrett that they would follow up the incident with The Mogul. There had been no other reports of fly tipping in the area, so it appeared that this had had a successful outcome
- **Purchase of a replacement seat for the riverside path**  
Cllr Dunnett had previously circulated details of the Glasdon Phoenix Recycled Material Seat: £585 + VAT. Although, it had been agreed at the November meeting (Ref: 11.24.177) to put this on hold, in view of the Clerk's continued absence, it was decided to proceed with the purchase of the bench.

**Action Point:**

*Cllr Lay-Flurrie to contact Rose builders to see whether the bench can be delivered to and installed by them. Once confirmation is received Cllr Lay-Flurrie to notify Cllr Dunnett who would place the order*

- **Provision of a new website and email addresses**

In view of the difficulties, due to the clerk's absence, in accessing the Council's emails and Website, Cllr Taylor considered that the Council should progress this sooner rather than later. It was proposed by Cllr Lay-Flurrie, seconded by Cllr Charlesworth to accept the quotation from VCS Websites Ltd (Ref: 11.24.176).

**Action Point:**

*Cllr Taylor agreed to progress this item; Cllr Dunnett to provide her with the quotation*

#### **12.24.197 To discuss the 2025/2026 Budget & Precept**

In the absence of the RFO/Clerk, Cllr Dunnett reported to Council:

In consulting with EALC on staffing matters, it had been advised that the Council should increase its contingency figure. Provision under capital projects had also been made for a new website (£500). As a result of these additional costs, the proposed precept would be £36K, and using the TDC 2025/2026 Ready Reckoner this would equate to a 7.6% increase from the previous year. TDC require an explanation for any increase over 5%, and this could be explained by increased costs relating to staffing.

It was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Cllr Taylor, and unanimously agreed by Council to request a precept of £36K for 2025/2026 from TDC.

In the absence of the RFO, Cllr Stocks as Mayor signed the precept request.

**Action Point:**

*Cllr Dunnett to scan the precept request form to TDC with an explanation for the increase*

#### **12.24.198 To consider and approve a Sickness Absentee Policy**

Prior to the meeting, Cllr Dunnett had circulated a NALC template for a Sickness Absentee Policy. Council discussed the policy and was in full agreement to adopting the policy with a few minor alterations to the wording.

**Action Point:**

*Cllr Dunnett to amend the policy and reissue to Councillors*

#### **12.24.199 To receive nominations for the Council's Community Achievement Award**

There being no other nominations, it was proposed by Cllr Dunnett, seconded by the Mayor and unanimously agreed that the Manifest Theatre should be the recipient of the 2025 MTC Community Achievement Award, to be presented at the Annual Town Assembly on 16<sup>th</sup> April.

**Action Point:**

*Mayor to email the Manifest Theatre to notify them of the Council's decision*

#### **12.24.200 To consider the purchase of a replacement CA shield**

The previous shield had been stolen and to date not recovered. Cllr Dunnett reported that a similar 12" perpetual shield could be purchased on-line from the Trophy Store at a cost of £97.99.

Council agreed to the purchase which would include the engraving of the centre with the wording:

*Manningtree Town Council Community Engagement Award (£5) and the engraving of two of the smaller shields: Rotary Club MSV 2024 and Manifest Theatre 2025.*

**Action Point:**

*Cllr Dunnett to place an order for the purchase of the shield from Trophy Store*

**12.24.201 To consider any Planning Applications received**

None had been received

**12.24.202. To note any Planning Decisions received**

50a High Street, conversion to an annexe

PERMISSION GRANTED

**12.24.203 Finance**

a) To review the monthly financial Bank Reconciliation - as of 2 December 2024:

Community Account: £14203.60      Business Account: £15,578.23 (Total £29,782.03)

Cllr Dunnett had circulated a bank reconciliation document prior to the meeting

b) To approve new payments for December 2024, in accordance with the 2024/2025 budget  
In the absence of the Clerk, Cllr Dunnett had compiled a payments list. She explained that It wasn't possible to create this in Scribe, as she did not have access to the system, despite requesting access details from the Clerk

*For transparency, it was agreed that Mayor/Cllr Dunnett would upload the payments on the on-line Barclays payments system, and that Cllr Taylor would action them for payment.*

*Personnel Committee to be notified once this has been actioned.*

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

Nothing to report

**12.24.205. To pass a RESOLUTION to exclude the Press and Public:**

It was proposed by Cllr Lay-Flurrie, seconded by Cllr Taylor and unanimously agreed by Council to exclude the press and public for the Council to receive an update from the Personnel committee  
IN CAMERA

**12.24.206. Items from councillors to be added to the next agenda**

None received

**12.24.207. There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 9:15 pm.**

Next Town Council Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025, 7.30 pm, at the Masonic Hall.

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