

## **MPAPP Minutes – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

In attendance: Fiona Toms (FT), Zara Aitken (ZA), Maureen Smith (MS), Ray Tew (RT), Cllr Craig Palmer (CP)

Apologies: Paul Matcham (PM), Ben Parker (BP), Ben Jewell (BJ), Cllr Marcus Kravis (MK), Cllr Andy Hadley (AH)

### **1. Minutes Of Last Meeting/Matters Arising/Action Log Review**

Minutes of last meeting agreed.

Actions log update:

Retail Mentoring – Action to be carried forward. BJ sent FT a note explaining his reasoning for not taking the retail mentoring programme forward.

Action: Meeting between FT and BJ to be arranged.

Swimming Pool – FT updated the group that a meeting was held between the two swimming pool groups on 4<sup>th</sup> March to look at how the two groups could work together. The meeting was positive and there seemed to be a lot of commonalities between the two proposed approaches.

FT advised that there is another meeting planned between MSL and MHW on 31<sup>st</sup> March to develop the conversation.

Action: FT to provide update at next MPAPP meeting.

Somerset Council Economic Development Team – FT advised that Lara Bell will attend the MPAPP meeting in June or July. James Gilgrist will attend in May.

Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership (HTAP) Contact – RT confirmed that AH had provided him with a contact at Somerset Council to discuss the remaining HTAP funding. RT gave a further update under the next agenda item.

Seahorse Centre – AH provided an update on the progress of the Seahorse Centre development. Update included below:

*The facility is now operational with delivery of training taking place out of the Satellite Site. Reviewing the wider delivery timetable, alongside the delivery of training for Health and Social Care, we are also working in partnership with local PCN's, Maternity Services and St Margaret's Hospice Care moving forward to fully utilise the space.*

Tidal Lagoon – Action to share presentation for Tidal Lagoon is complete.

### **2. Individual Updates**

#### **i. Maureen Smith, West Somerset Green Forum (WSGF)**

WSGF will be meeting with the board next Monday to determine way forward.

MS gave an update on a new project being run by one of their board members called the 'Green Blueprint'. This project will look at connecting hedgerows between Minehead and Taunton with a focus on nature recovery.

FT gave an update on the Beach Fish project. After MTC had decided against the project, FT approached Plastic Free Watchet. Although they initially expressed interest, they have now decided against the project as they didn't like the appearance and also feel Watchet doesn't have a big problem with plastic litter. FT advised that the funding has been returned to Wessex Water.

**ii. Cllr Craig Palmer, Minehead Town Council**

CP gave an update on the devolution of green spaces from Somerset Council to Minehead Town Council. CP advised that additional covenants will likely be added to the land to protect the land from future development. MTC are also looking at a 'wilding' programme to improve biodiversity. FT commented on the fact she had seen many positive comments from the community directed towards MTC online recently. The group collectively commended MTC for their hard work.

CP informed the group of an MTC community engagement event being held in the Community Centre that evening (18<sup>th</sup> March). MTC are also planning to hold a town meeting on the evening of the 20<sup>th</sup> May, with plans to invite community groups to have a stand at the event.

RT queried whether MTC had made any progress in filling councillor vacancies. CP advised that there were currently still 5 councillor vacancies but the method of applying for co-option has recently been changed. MTC are encouraging people to speak to BP in person at the council offices to ensure the individual understand the requirements, workload and duties of a town councillor.

**iii. Ray Tew, Minehead and Coast Development Trust**

RT provided an update on the closure of the Minehead Information Centre. Redundancy notices have been issued for 5 part-time members of staff. The directors of the Information Centre are confident that the direction taken was the correct course of action due to the changing visitor economy and digital landscape. However, RT advised that the local MP, Rachel Gilmour, has shown an interest in the closure of MIC and has tasked members of her staff to review options to help explore future possibilities for an information service in Minehead.

RT updated the group on the remaining HTAP funding. There is 12 months left of the funding agreement, but RT still needs to identify the best person to speak to at Somerset Council for renegotiations.

**iv. Zara Aitken, Minehead and Coast Development Trust**

ZA informed the group that MCDT are reaching the end of their first year of National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund funding. ZA requested feedback from group members on MCDT's work and projects that could be included in their end of year report to their funders. Responses to Maya by 28<sup>th</sup> March please.

### **3. Tidal Lagoon**

The group received a presentation at the last meeting from Steve Pickard and Chris Binnie regarding the proposed West Somerset Tidal Lagoon (WSTL). FT asked the group whether they had any feedback on what WSTL may have missed from their proposal, any other benefits that could be included, and what support MpaPP might be able to provide to the project.

MS commented on the need to provide sufficient infrastructure inland to account for the increase in tourism bringing people to the area. For example, improvements to the road network would be required. MS also queried whether or not the Lagoon would help to mitigate flooding.

Action: MS to share a report on the Severn Estuary that relates to this proposed project. Report link attached with minutes.

FT also commented on the fact that during construction of the project, WSTL have proposed 8000 jobs would be required. FT feels that thought needs to be given early to how an influx of workers would impact the community, including training provision for local residents depending on the skill sets for construction required, with potential lessons learned from the Hinkley Point construction.

CP commented on the need to ensure other road network 'pinch points' such as at Quay Street. CP also feels thought needs to be given to silt build up. CP commented on a tidal stream system in Utah.

Action: CP will share the research with the group. Complete.

FT queried how the group can support WSTL. RT feels the group is already providing support in the form of consultation and constructive criticism. FT and CP feel that part of the support could be in the form of assistance with community consultation and stakeholder engagement as this may evidence community support and need, which in turn could help with funding applications.

Action: FT to share MpaPP feedback with the Tidal Lagoon project team

### **4. AOB**

No AOB.