

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE HERITAGE ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BLAKEHAY THEATRE ON 14th NOVEMBER 2019**

Meeting Commenced: 10:07

Meeting Concluded: 12:40

PRESENT: Councillors John Crockford-Hawley (Chairman), Peter Crew, Catherine Gibbons, Peter Mcaleer and Sonia Russe (S), Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk and RFO), Molly Maher (Development Officer), Matt Hardy (Visitor Services Manager), Sally Heath (Theatre Manager), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Amal Khreisheh (South West Heritage Trust), Cara MacMahon (North Somerset Council HAZ Officer), Peter Johnson (Volunteer archivist), Richard Blows (Transformation Programme Manager Corporate Services) and Steve Matthews (SJ Surveyors).

231	<p>Election of Chairman</p> <p>The Town Clerk invited nominations for the position of Chairman.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Councillor John Crockford-Hawley be elected Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee for the year 2019-20.</p> <p>Councillor John Crockford-Hawley took his place as Chairman of the meeting.</p>
232	<p>Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jan Holloway, who was substituted by Councillor Sonia Russe, Councillor Daniel Marcos-Ashworth, Heather Morrissey and Fiona Matthews.</p>
234	<p>Election of Vice- Chairman</p> <p>The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Councillor Catherine Gibbons be elected Vice-Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee for the year 2019-20.</p>
235	<p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
236	<p>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 19th September 2019</p>

	<p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman</p>
<p>237</p>	<p>To note the Committee Terms of Reference, Name and Membership</p> <p>The Heritage Arts and Culture Committee Terms of Reference, Name and Membership were previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Richard Blows, the Transformation Programme Manager from North Somerset Council and Fiona Matthews who was unable to make the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that Arts Council England had shown an interest and would welcome the opportunity to have a member of their team on the committee as a co-opted member. Members looked on this favourably and asked for Richard to confirm this with the Arts Council.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>RECOMMENDED: - That Richard Blows, from North Somerset Council, Fiona Matthews of Theatre Orchard and all current members of the former Museum and Heritage Sub-Committee be co-opted onto the Committee; and the Terms of Reference and Name of the Committee be recommended to full Council for approval.</p>
<p>238</p>	<p>Budget for 2019/20</p> <p>The year to date budgets for both the Museum and Blakehay Theatre had previously been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The budgets were for members' information as suggested by the HLF and the committee were requested to determine whether they would like to see this as a regular item at future committee meetings.</p> <p><u>Museum</u> Learning and Events, the Café and the Temporary Gallery were currently running at a loss, whilst still being within budget levels. The Museum Shop and Functions were both running at a profit. The Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) advised that a lot of work had been undertaken within month 7 to address the loss areas. Members felt that as the Museum was providing a service, making a profit was not a primary concern.</p> <p><u>Blakehay Theatre</u> The Blakehay Theatre Bar and Box Office were running at an acceptable loss also, with the auditorium, studio and Live Shows making a profit.</p> <p>It was noted that expenditure for Live Shows took place the year previous to the performances and required an upfront cost, which was why the income was not immediately apparent from the Live Shows.</p>

	<p>Members agreed that reviewing the budget at future meetings would allow the committee to know how the services were performing.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Year To Date budget be noted and remain a regular agenda item at future meetings.</p>
239	<p>Marketing Report</p> <p>The report of the Communications Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>In answer to a question the DTC advised that marketing films were being shared on the website and social media channels for both the Museum and the Blakehay Theatre.</p> <p>The term 'unique user' with regards to website visitors was clarified as a brand new user to the website.</p> <p>Both the Museum and the Theatre were featured on the 'Go Bath Bristol' site.</p> <p>The Blue Plaque scheme was now reaching a wider audience and the Haile Selassie Plaque had featured in coverage by the BBC.</p> <p>The Communications Officer was attempting to tie plaque unveilings in with events to increase exposure. The Dwight Eisenhower plaque was to be installed on the water tower at Worlebury, with a couple of potential events to tie this in with, including armed forces day, VE Day or D Day. A member suggested a commemorative sleep over by the water tower to replicate Eisenhower with his troops.</p> <p>The Town Clerk explained that as the Town Council ran Visit Weston, there was already a clear advertising link and that members had also agreed to affiliate with Visit Somerset.</p> <p>Richard Blows reported that North Somerset Council were working on linking with Visit Somerset and with Visit Bristol. Website statistics were then discussed. Weston did not get the international coverage that Bristol and Bath did partly because of the standard of accommodation.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.</p>
240	<p>Weston Museum Management Report</p> <p>The report of the Visitor Services Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>It was clarified that the figures represented the period 1st April 2019 to 28th October. The bookings that generated income were not necessarily Museum related. The DTC advised that Museum related events such as History Week, whilst free to attend, generated a large secondary spend in the shop and café.</p>

	<p>It was queried whether community gallery exhibitions had opening events. It was explained that this was an option given to the community group, who often chose to hold private events for the community group. There was a Matilda Temperley talk taking place that evening, with tickets £6 each.</p> <p>A talk from Julia Farley regarding the Clevedon Torc was taking place at the Museum on the 28th November. Ticket prices were £9.50. Members noted that this was an important event, as Julia was visiting from the British Museum.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.</p>
241	<p>Blakehay Theatre Management Report</p> <p>The report of the Theatre Manager was previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The financial position of the Blakehay Theatre was different to the Museum which was supported via grant funding. The Theatre Manager's report was lengthy but covered the Theatre's position dating back to 2011. It was noted that shows put on by the community brought in larger audiences than bought-in shows, as they already had a large community following. As an example, 904 people had attended the late Evita show with only 1% of the audience not related to the production cast.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Marketing for bought-in shows was problematic due to limited budgets. Ann Widdecombe's talks sold out two weeks before the show, with the majority of the audience coming from Bridgwater, Taunton and Bristol.</p> <p>The negative opinion of the local population about their own town was destructive. Weston needed to be marketed as a cultural arts and theatre town, as currently many people would rather travel to Bristol and Bath for better quality performances and events. This was not an issue with visitors to the town who were often very complimentary about performances, events and the Town in general. It was agreed that a more aggressive marketing strategy was required to appeal to the local population.</p> <p>As a result of the successful bid for Weston to host Pride UK 2021, the theatre had been approached to hold a performance in relation to this free of charge. It was debated whether this would be a good idea in terms of publicity for the theatre and whether it might set a precedent regarding free events for community groups which should be avoided. It was suggested that instead, it may be an appropriate opportunity for the LGBT+ forum to apply for a Town Council grant to cover this cost. Similar conversations were being held at North Somerset Council regarding the Tropicana and the Beach Lawns. There needed to a project team formed from the two councils to ensure that they were working together.</p> <p>Discussion ensued regarding the council encouraging promotion and good relations with groups as part of the Equality Act 2010.</p>

	<p>Members requested a simplified format of financials with a list of shows indicating profit or loss and attendance figures.</p> <p>A member queried the charging premium prices for locally supplied drinks worked at the theatre. The Theatre Manager explained that it did work as complimented by the 20-minute intervals.</p> <p>The volunteer base at the theatre needed to be improved, as there were currently only 3 volunteers. It was noted that the Theatre Manager was working with the Volunteer Coordinator on this.</p> <p>A member queried if the £1,000 required to bring Bath Opera to the Theatre could be raised, could they be booked? It was noted that this type of performance attracted an older audience which was an issue as some felt the main theatre was not very accessible for those with mobility issues. It was explained that there was access to the auditorium without stairs, but this route was prioritised for wheelchair access, however could be managed to accommodate this.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that a tabulated report with a list of shows indicating profit or a loss and attendance figures would be acceptable.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.</p>
242	<p>Blakehay Theatre Electrics Upgrade</p> <p>An Electrical Installation report was previously circulated with the agenda which referred to two quotations received.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that full quotations could be provided upon request.</p> <p>Steve Matthews of SJ Surveyors advised that there were ongoing problems with the theatre's electrics as the system was now obsolete. Any repairs that were being done, contractors were having to use second hand parts as new parts could no longer be sourced. The last inspection at the theatre had required works totaling £15,000 to make it safe.</p> <p><i>Cara MacMahon joined the meeting at 11:16 am.</i></p> <p>It was reported that if this were to happen again, the building might have to close. There were two potential options for the replacement of the electrics, firstly that all be done at once or secondly, phased throughout the theatre. If done all at once, the theatre would be closed for at least 3 months, whereas the phased works would minimize closure time. The risk with a phased repair was that until all the work was completed, there could still be a risk of closure if parts of the system broke down before they were scheduled for repair. To minimize this, the highest risk areas would be dealt with first.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk informed that there was £65,000 in an EMR for the upgrade, with another £30,000 to be requested as part of the budget for</p>

	<p>2020/21.</p> <p>It was noted that the next periodic inspection would take place in April 2020.</p> <p>The way the original wiring had been installed meant that isolation of different parts was difficult. This would be dealt with as part of the upgrade to give the staff more control of the system. Income generation would be the main consideration when deciding where to start.</p> <p><i>Councillor Catherine Gibbons left the meeting at 11:21 am.</i></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk directed members to the recommendation within the report. She advised that one contractor to complete the entire project would work better than going through a procurement process at each stage, as different contractors may have different opinions about how to complete the project. One contractor would negate this concern, however, there would need to be systems in place to ensure cost certainty, including budgeting for material costs and inflation across the entire project.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>RESOLVED: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To note and approve the upgrade to the electrics2. To go out to procurement for one contractor to complete the electrical upgrade over 5 years.3. To appoint Edifice Design as design consultants for the project at a cost of £7,470 plus VAT
243	<p>WSMTC Grant Development Report</p> <p>The Development Officer's update report of grant applications and fundraising strategies for the Museum and Blakehay Theatre had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Development Officer reported that, although the previous application had been unsuccessful, a funding application to the Arts Council for a Sensory Theatre project was being completed and would be submitted by Christmas.</p> <p>Richard offered his help to connect with the schools and put the council in touch with the North Somerset Parent Forum. The Development Officer reported that partnership was one of the elements commented on by funding trusts. Schools outside of Weston were also being consulted and packages linking in with other partners such as Weston Museum and Clip and Climb were being developed.</p> <p>Richard requested to be kept informed on the project.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.</p>

	<p>12.2 HLF final report</p> <p>The final report from the HLF had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk informed that it was a good report. Since reopening the business rates for the building had increased hugely and the council were appealing through the court process which was a slow process.</p> <p>The Chairman commented on the increase in visitor numbers. He highlighted on the number of 94 volunteers which was very positive and queried whether there were regular social events to demonstrate the council's appreciation. The Visitor Services Manager confirmed that there were and would send the Chairman the dates of these events.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that the Learning and Events programme was carried out by two-part time post holders.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.</p>
	<p>Culture Development Company – CIC</p> <p>Richard was invited to present to members via a power point presentation. The strategy for the new Cultural Development Company was to be submitted to the Executive at North Somerset Council in the new year. The strategy would include a broad definition of Heritage, Arts and Culture. No major investment had been made in the sector by North Somerset Council for 30 years but since 2016 there had been £5 million of external investment across North Somerset.</p> <p>Around 1,500 people in Weston were employed in the sector, with 500 people directly employed in the sector. Data collected showed that people travelled to Bath and Bristol, rather than staying local for arts, heritage and culture. Bristol had become too expensive for many people to live and work so there was an opportunity for enhancement of the sector locally.</p> <p>The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England, Historic England and the West of England Combined Authority were all interested in the project. The aim was for Weston to become a distinct destination for heritage, arts and culture. By 2030 they wanted to achieve: participation and equality, support place making, raise the profile, grow and retain talent and build capacity.</p> <p>The "Culture Weston" initiative would bring together 12 organisations, including the Town Council. 3 major outcomes had been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcome 1 – outstanding and accessible arts and cultural experiences• Outcome 2 – culture is valued and at the heart of Weston-super-Mare's future• Outcome 3 – Nurture a thriving arts, culture and heritage sector <p>The first stage application would fund them to 2021, with a further two years available at the second stage. It was hoped that £170,000 could be</p>

	<p>obtained from Arts Council England.</p> <p>A member commented that the current plan sounded rather North Somerset Council centric as they had prioritised sites such as the Tropicana and the Sovereign Centre in the proposal. Richard advised that these sites were acting as place holders until the proposal was confirmed.</p> <p>Members welcomed the project.</p> <p><i>Cara MacMahon left the meeting at 12:12 pm.</i></p>
<p>245</p>	<p>Museum Redevelopment</p> <p>Clara's Cottage</p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The current aspirations for the museums ongoing refurbishment; Phase 2 - main building, Phase 3 - Clara's cottage.</p> <p>Following the meeting of the Museum & Heritage Sub Committee on 25th July consultation had commenced and funding streams were being explored. A key component of the consultation involved preliminary talks with partners at the South West Heritage Trust to discuss ideas and options for both phases.</p> <p>It had become apparent from initial exploration and research of costs that the easier project would be Clara's Cottage. There was opportunity to redevelop as a standalone project believed to be attractive to funders.</p> <p>Members noted the current obligation to use the £55,000 previously earmarked for any future phases to replace the Museum roof which was an essential repair. Whilst there was aspiration to replace the money it would need to be understood from the budget setting process how it would be replaced in forthcoming years. Therefore, it would be prudent to take the opportunity to develop the smaller project first by actively pursuing the development of Clara's Cottage ahead of the planned Phase 2 – the main building. A draft project plan would be produced for consideration at the next meeting to enable understanding of how this could be achieved. Phase 2 would continue the consultation works whilst grant options were exploring but would not be the priority, notwithstanding essential works to the roof currently being procured.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the development of Clara's Cottage take place prior to Phase 2 (in the main building).</p> <p>Interim Development of Existing Spaces</p> <p>The report of the building surveyor had been previously circulated with the</p>

	<p>agenda.</p> <p>Two potential options had been prepared for the former pottery gallery space to bring it into use before future redevelopment. This would act as another service and income generator, where there was currently none.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 – was to create an access from the landing outside the Art gallery into the room. Listed building consent had already been obtained for the work to access the room, but not for the construction of the double doors and partition wall needed. As these would be in effect temporary and could easily be removed, consent might not be required. This would cost £25,000 plus VAT. • Option 2 – was to remove the wall on the landing outside the Art Gallery and to construct the new walls and doors in line with the Art Gallery walls creating a longer landing. While this reduced space in the archivist’s rooms, it created access to the old costume gallery for future use. A new door was proposed from the landing straight to the fire escape which would mean that the old costume gallery was no longer required as a fire escape route and could be converted easily at a later date. There was listed building consent for the work to access the room, but no consent for the construction of the double doors and partition wall or the new single door to the fire escape. As the new double doors and wall were in effect temporary and could be easily removed consent might not be required. Consent would be required for the new single door as it involved changes to the historic fabric. This would cost £28,000 plus VAT. <p>Debate ensued. Option 2 would be preferable. Any development on the main building would not be happening for at least 4 years. This space would be empty until then. It was noted that for a year's worth of investment, at least 3 years of income would be generated. This would have a positive impact on footfall and income generation without any additional staffing costs. The museum team and the current hire offer provided were already at capacity. There was little difference in cost, yet the option offered the potential to open up another space in the future.</p> <p>In answer to a question it was advised that a second lift was not in the current plans but when the future main building redevelopment began the plans would go back out to consultation. Meanwhile the current lift could service this area.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the refurbishment of the former pottery gallery, be approved and recommend for inclusion within the budget setting process for 2020/21 favoring option 2.</p>
<p>246</p>	<p>South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) update reports</p> <p>A report from Amal Khreisheh had been previously circulated.</p>

	<p>A new assistant curator had been appointed at the South West Heritage Trust.</p> <p>The Civic Society had agreed for the Model House from Weston Quarry to be included in the Built Heritage Exhibition at the Museum and then put into storage in Taunton.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the private view event which was currently planned for the 7th February 2020 was to be on the same date as the Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. Amal noted that a date change may be needed and that the Chairman be notified.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.</p>
<p>247</p>	<p>To receive a verbal report from the Friends of Weston Museum</p> <p>Heather Morrissey from the Friends of Weston Museum was unable to attend the meeting.</p>
<p>248</p>	<p>Heritage Action Zone update</p> <p>The report of the Heritage Action Zone Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Thanks were given to Weston Museum for hosting retail seminars. The evaluation of these seminars could be circulated amongst members if they wished.</p> <p>A delivery plan for the High Street heritage action zone was being developed and a national design guide had been published. A new government scheme had been introduced to support Town and Parish Councils with gaining 'local listing' for buildings which were not necessarily listed buildings, but ones of local significance.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the report be noted.</p>
<p>249</p>	<p>Town Council Strategy – ideas for the next 5+ years</p> <p>.1 Strategy</p> <p>An extract of the current Town Council Strategy 2016-2020 had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed that a strategy working group had recommended that all committees be consulted. In due course a Strategy taking into account all views would be submitted to a future council meeting.</p> <p>It was felt that the current strategy regarding heritage arts and culture was very outdated. There needed to be more emphasis on the collaborative efforts of the Town's heritage arts and culture sector including Weston Town Council and North Somerset Council.</p>

	<p>The new strategy needed to consider built and spatial heritage.</p> <p>The Chairman suggested that he would write something and email it to members for their comments.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That the Chairman draft a Heritage Arts and Culture Committee section for the Town Council Strategy 2020-2024 and email it to members for their comments.</p> <p>.2 Budget Considerations</p> <p>Members were asked if there were any special considerations for the 2020/2021 budget.</p> <p>It was noted that as well as the aforementioned development of another hireable space for Weston Museum, there should be more investment in culture.</p> <p>RESOLVED: - That development of another hireable space for Weston Museum and investment in culture be considered for the 2020/2021 budget.</p>
250	<p>To agree the venue for the next meeting on 9th January 2020</p> <p>It was noted that the Chairman was unable to attend the next meeting unless there was a change of date. The 23rd of January was suggested as an alternative date.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the meeting concluded at 12:40pm</p> <p>The next meeting would be on 23rd January 2020 at 10am at the Blakehay Theatre.</p>

Signed.....
Chairman

Dated.....