

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
NOTES OF THE
HERITAGE ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE
HELD VIA ZOOM ON 18th MARCH 2021**

Meeting Commenced: 10:01 am

Meeting Concluded: 11:33 am

PRESENT: Councillors John Crockford-Hawley (Chairman), Peter Crew, Catherine Gibbons, Jan Holloway and Pete McAleer; Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Molly Maher (Development Officer), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk – Frontline Services), Matt Hardy (Visitor Services Manager), Sally Heath (Theatre Manager), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Emma Williams (Committee Administration), Cara MacMahon (NSC Heritage Action Zones Project Officer) Tom Newman (Culture Weston/Theatre Orchard) Bethan Murraray and Sam Astill (South West Heritage)

220	Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes Apologies were received from Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk). Apologies were also received from Richard Blows in advance of the meeting, however they were not noted in the meeting.
221	Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest received.
223	To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 21st January 2021 The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman
224	Budget for 2020/2021 A detailed income and expenditure report had been previously circulated with the agenda. RESOLVED: That the report be noted
225	Blakehay Procurement A report written by the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated with a supplementary report from SJ Chartered Building Surveyors.

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded members that the agenda item had been discussed at the last Policy & Finance Committee meeting and it was recommended that the approval a contractor, be appointed by the HAC Committee.

Sam Astill joined the meeting at 10:03 am.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that members of the Policy & Finance had agreed to recommend the usage of general reserves, in order to finance the shortfall in funding for all the necessary maintenance work on the Blakehay Theatre. Utilising funds from general reserves meant all works were affordable and that CRF monies awarded in 2020, would not need to be returned unspent.

Councillor Catherine Gibbons joined the meeting at 10:05 am.

Steve Matthews added that all three contractors had now submitted their tender applications, one received the morning of the HAC meeting, which did not meet the required specification, as no offer of aftersales maintenance had been included in their submission.

Debate ensued, with members keen to see the contract awarded to the contractor able to deliver the best work, not necessarily that which submitted the lowest quotation.

Steve Matthews stated that the current maintenance contract was held by John West, and so members' may wish to give consideration to selecting John West's tender application, as it would mean a continuation of service, with all aspects for aftersales maintenance, fulfilled.

Cara McMahon joined the meeting at 10:12 am.

Discussions continued with several members expressing preference to appoint a contractor with whom the Council were already familiar, and one that was Real Living Wage accredited and locally-based.

Members were reminded that John West had submitted a costlier tender than others, but the difference was less than 3% of the contract value. Costs had increased as the ventilation system specification had been altered to include uprated filtration processes, better able to overcome airborne viruses. The alterations also included a roof-mounted flue for the ventilation system that had to be suitable for the theatre's location within a Conservation Area.

Several members expressed their desire to select John West as the awarded tender application and therefore

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

A vote was taken and **unanimously carried**. It was therefore

	<p>RECOMMENDED: That John West be the contractor recommended to Full Town Council as the approved tender applicant for works to the Blakehay Theatre which would require use of General Reserves to a sum of £133,920.</p> <p><i>Steve Matthews and Sarah Pearse left the meeting at 10:22 am.</i></p>
<p>226</p>	<p>Marketing Report</p> <p>A report written by the Communications and Marketing Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Communications and Marketing Officer invited questions from the Committee, adding that the planned North Somerset Council film profiling the High Street and retail in Weston-super-Mare, would not be a collaborative project between the filmmaker appointed by NSC and the Town Council. There was previous synergy between said filmmaker and the Communications and Marketing Officer acting as editor for their productions, however, this was not the case for this project.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>227</p>	<p>Weston Museum Management Report</p> <p>A report written by the Visitor Services Manger had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Committee were advised that a 3D interactive video tour of the Museum was now ready to film, with aspirations to create similar content for other WTC services. Viewers of the film would be able to virtually ‘walk’ through the Museum exhibits and interact with detailed information for key items. The service would also provide support to Museum visitors with sensory sensitivities and social anxiety, ahead of planning a visit once the Museum reopened; galvanising their Disability Confident accreditation.</p> <p>The Visitor Services Manager went on to update on activities by the Volunteer Coordinator, who had been working alongside the Grounds Officer in looking to recruit Weston in Bloom project volunteers.</p> <p>Discussions took place surrounding the use of ‘volunteer’ as title for the support staff; with some members expressing thoughts as to whether another word would better celebrate the volunteers’ commitment and passion for the work. The Assistant Town Clerk added that this was already under consideration, with aims to create a more inclusive team dynamic; lanyards were being deliberated as a way to spotlight the volunteer staff.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>228</p>	<p>Blakehay Report</p> <p>A report written by the Theatre Manger had been previously circulated.</p>

	<p>An update was provided by the Theatre Manager surrounding the ‘Road Map’ for reopening the Blakehay; the first step of which would see the return of classes in the studio areas, with filming in the auditorium and outdoor shows anticipated over the summer. The first show with an audience was planned for 28th August 2021, if all restrictions were removed as per Westminster’s current aspirations.</p> <p>Congratulations were given to the Blakehay as recipients of South West Theatre of the Year 2020. The Theatre Manager added that the Blakehay was also potentially being shortlisted as a winner at the South West Business Awards in the Tourism and Leisure category. The decision would be announced on 13th April 2021.</p> <p>One member asked if, as part of the reopening plans, the Blakehay was considering audience members provided ‘Covid Passports’ upon booking or admission to the building. The Theatre Manager replied that this was not planned and that they were taking guidance from UK Theatre’s national campaign of theatre safety, in order to build confidence in their returning audiences.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>229</p>	<p>WSMTC Grant Development</p> <p>A report written by the Development Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Development Officer delivered a precis of her report, explaining that a wider Fundraising Strategy had been drawn up in the summer of 2019 with the Visitor Services and Theatre Managers. The strategy was now being amended to reflect changes during the last year, with the hope that robust new objectives could be worked towards following the pandemic.</p> <p>A question was asked by a member as to the rationale behind the rejection of a grant application by Sainsbury’s PLC, to fund a sensory theatre project. The Development Officer replied that the response received from Sainsbury’s had been generic and without specific details as to the Council’s application, however it was possible to reapply for that funding every twelve months and it was her intention to do so.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>230</p>	<p>South West Heritage Trust Update Report</p> <p>A report written by Bethan Murray had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Sam Astill introduced Bethan Murray as the new lead officer for the Weston-super-Mare area, and was welcomed by the Committee.</p> <p>The report outlined the recently completed conservation work on the frame of William Mable’s portrait, and that a number of frames of Ivy Millicent James’ works would be restored in time for the upcoming eponymous exhibition.</p>

	<p>The Communication and Marketing Officer reminded Bethan that this exhibition was planned to coincide with the unveiling of an associated Blue Plaque, and that an event was planned for this.</p> <p>The SW Heritage Trust report continued to detail other recent improvements made at Weston Museum including the reorientation of the Fossil Fish exhibit and repairs to damp ingress in the temporary exhibition space. Rubber stoppers had also been installed to glass shelving to prevent exhibits slipping down the surfaces, caused by floor vibrations.</p> <p>The second scheduled exhibition was planned for May '21 entitled 'Wild Hares and Hummingbirds' which had previously been open at Somerset Museum. This had been adapted for opening at Weston Museum and as a result would have a greater family-friendly appeal. The third exhibition in the space was scheduled for February 2022 and plans were ongoing.</p> <p>Sam Astill added that these future exhibitions would be decided in collaboration with the Council and Weston Museum with funding plans integral to those ideas.</p> <p>One member enquired as to the process for submitting ideas for temporary exhibitions, as she believed that a local photography exhibition documenting redevelopments in Weston and North Somerset, may prove popular. Also, would space be available in Weston Museum to showcase amateur locals' artwork and/or photography? The Visitors Services Manager added that the new upstairs function room in the Museum would be a suitable location for such exhibitions.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>231</p>	<p>Friends of Weston Museum Verbal Report</p> <p>There was no representation by Friends of Weston Museum present at the meeting, however the Visitor Services Manager advised that the Friends' Annual General Meeting had recently taken place, and the minutes for which could be circulated at the next HAC Committee meeting if requested.</p>
<p>232</p>	<p>North Somerset Council and Heritage Action Zone Report</p> <p>A report written by the NSC Heritage Action Zone Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The HAZ Officer outlined ongoing developments to the Walker & Ling shop façade refurbishments, as well as an application to Historic England for a £70,000 Community Engagement program designed to bolster several projects on High Street and Town Centre promotion. Once a decision had been received from Historic England, it was the intention of the HAZ Officer to engage with Weston Museum over a number of these projects. Details of this project would be publicised once NSC were no longer subject to purdah restrictions.</p>

	<p>The Chairman provided a brief update on the commencement of works to Spider Lane, which had altered slightly, but would still see significant improvements to the area adjoining the Winter Gardens Pavilion.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>233</p>	<p>Culture Weston and Theatre Orchard Update Report</p> <p>A report written by Tom Newman had been previously circulated.</p> <p>A summary of the report was delivered by Tom Newman and questions invited from Committee.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that it was currently difficult to learn about cultural events and projects in Weston, and whether there were plans to create a more comprehensive listing in the future. Tom replied that the Culture Weston website may create a listing of this nature, and that in collaboration with the Visit Weston and the Weston Place Agency websites, would be better promoted going forward.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>234</p>	<p>Town Council Involvement in The Old Town Quarry – Verbal Update</p> <p>In the absence of the Town Clerk, a verbal update was provided by the Assistant Town Clerk, with the Chairman commenting that the lease had now been agreed with North Somerset Council for WTC to acquire the Quarry.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk added that whilst the final legal requirements were being finalised, the Grounds team were in regular communication with the sitting tenants at the Quarry, answering and resolving any questions or queries they might have.</p> <p>The Chairman reported that the Civic Society would hold their Annual General Meeting in April, and it would be preferable to have a more definite update to deliver to its members by that date.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the meeting concluded at 11:33 am.</p> <p>Signed.....Dated.....</p> <p>Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee</p>