

## **WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE WORKING PARTY HELD VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 2.33 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 3.10 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), David Dash, Pete McAleer (S), Alan Peak, Gillian Carpenter, John Crockford-Hawley, David Hitchens and Jan Holloway,

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk and Grounds Manager), Zoe Scott (Grounds Co-ordinator) Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager) and Emma Williams (Tourism Marketing Officer).

<b>45.</b>	<p><b>Election of Chairman</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk invited nominations for the position of Chairman for the year 2021/2022</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor David Hitchens</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Peter Crew be elected Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Working Party for the year 2021/2022.</p>
<b>46.</b>	<p><b>Apologies of Absence and Notifications of Substitutions</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ray Armstrong</p> <p>Councillor Catherine Gibbons was substituted by Councillor Pete McAleer.</p>
<b>47.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
<b>48.</b>	<p><b>Election of Vice Chairman</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice Chairman for the year 2021/2022.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor David Hitchens</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Alan Peak be elected Vice Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Working Party for the year 2021/2022.</p>

<p><b>49..</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<p><b>50.</b></p>	<p><b>Tourism Function Update</b></p> <p>The reports of the Tourism Manager and Tourism Marketing Officer had been circulated prior to the meeting and were shared on screen as a Powerpoint presentation.</p> <p><b>50.1 Spring/Summer Verbal Update</b></p> <p>The Tourism Manager reported on the recent launch of the ‘Tic Tuk’ vehicles and thanked the Working Party members that attended the event, alongside the Mayor.</p> <p>Despite previously receiving assurances from Avon and Somerset Police, the Tourism Manager reported that an application for a Peddlers License for staff manning the Tic Tuks, had been declined. This was owing to the trading being based from a vehicle and not solely on foot. A street trading license would now need to be sought in order for merchandise to be sold from the Tic Tuks, at a cost of around £3,000.</p> <p><b>50.2 Reopening VIC</b></p> <p>Seasonal staff had returned to the Visitor Information Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, and had been working to prepare for a planned reopening on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021.</p> <p>Lightweight shelving and display units had been purchased for displaying merchandise, that would be suitable to relocate to a future VIC site, or the Water Park VIC, if deemed necessary going forward.</p> <p>Recruitment was underway for casual seasonal staff.</p> <p><b>50.3 Visit Weston collaboration with the Weston Place Agency</b></p> <p>The Tourism Manager described the content and purpose of Visit Weston’s involvement on the Weston Place Agency Events Project Group; meeting fortnightly over Zoom with a number of local stakeholders including NSC, Weston Artspace, the BID, The Sovereign Centre and Weston College.</p> <p>Further to these meetings, the Tourism Manager reported that she had received an invitation that day from Alex Hearn of the WPA to a meeting focussing on the ‘future of the Visit Weston website’. This had been a surprise to the Tourism Manager, as she was unaware there were any further plans to co-ordinate the WPA with the Visit Weston website, since it had been decided against in 2020.</p>

The Town Clerk suggested the Tourism Manager reported back on this discussion with Alex Hearn, at the next Tourism and Leisure Working Party meeting.

#### **50.4 Website and Social Media Updates**

The Tourism Marketing Officer discussed the statistics and data as shown in the slides; reporting on the top-performing website pages and the number of visitors to the site, along with their geographical locations.

Despite the total number of visitors being reduced during the reporting period, there was a strong growth trend throughout those dates which had continued as 2021 progressed, along with the subsequent Covid-19 'unlocking' milestones as outlined by the Government.

There had also been an introduction of a referrals add-on application called 'Link in Bio' to the Visit Weston Instagram and TikTok accounts, designed to operate as a 'work-around' to combat a lack of live URL/hyperlinks embedded in posts and captions on those platforms. This add-on acted as a broker between social media and the Visit Weston website, where pages of their choosing could be created as quick links in the page biographies, for users' ease.

It was reported that on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021, the social media followers for Visit Weston stood at 12,653 accounts across five platforms.

#### **50.5 Destination Marketing**

The Tourism Marketing Officer went on to outline the forthcoming Destination Marketing campaigns for Visit Weston. These included a half page print advertisement in Camping & Caravanning Club Magazine (July '21), which was said to have a readership of 400,000 club members. Nationwide Royal Mail distribution would provide exposure to market of dedicated holidaymakers, and capitalise on the increase in popularity and demand for self-catering holidays following the pandemic.

Also detailed was a campaign at eight of the approaching 'Hundred Tournament' cricket matches played at Warwickshire County Cricket Ground (Edgbaston) via Elonex Outdoor Advertising. All games would be televised on BBC and Sky Sports - four ladies' and four gents' matches, organisers expected a large in-ground crowd and global television audience; the LED scoreboard placement of advertising materials would be shown every 60 seconds throughout the matches.

Questions and comments were invited from members, one responding that they were impressed with the new layout and content of the Visit Weston website, despite having been previously critical of its list sorting and overall look.

**RESOLVED:** That the reports be noted

### **51. Parks and Play Areas**

#### **51.1 Renovations to Water Park and VIC Cabin**

The report of the Assistant Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.

The Assistant Town Clerk reported that the recent spell of bad weather had led to delays in the Water Park renovations, and after a busy week during the Half Term Holidays, the park was closed to complete these repairs to equipment and testing of the water system for splash toys.

The VIC cabin office had been delivered that day, with internal fit-out scheduled for week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Fencing solutions were being considered for the rear wall to the Water Park, to better secure the area against unauthorised entry.

**51.2 Verbal update on all Parks and Play Areas**

There were no pressing issues in relation to the remaining WTC play areas, however litter was identified as an increasing problem across all sites. Many play areas were being occupied out-of-hours by individuals leaving behind large amounts of refuse, beyond the current waste bin capacities. As a result, a meeting was being organised between the Assistant Town Clerk, Grounds Co-ordinator and Senior Groundsman to discuss potential solutions.

In relation to the acquisition of Dartmouth Close play area, the Assistant Town Clerk had received an email detailing a number of specialised repairs necessary before the lease was transferred. These were the findings of an independent inspection as part of pre-contract due diligence.

**RESOLVED:** That the reports be noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 3:10 pm.

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

**Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Working Party**

# 4.1 Tourism Statistics

Although the season in Weston-super-Mare made a good start when the schools broke up, we have experienced poor weather since. We are in discussions for a number of campaigns to kick-start the autumn season's destination marketing. This is vitally important in this period of fierce competition across the UK, not just other seaside resorts.

12% of London's income is directly attributable to the visitor. Spending by tourists in central London is set to plummet by £10.9 billion this year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic – far more than the amount lost from fewer commuters travelling into the city – according to new analysis published by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

Over the course of 2019 (pre-pandemic) the value of the visitor economy to Brighton & Hove was estimated at £976 million. The city attracted over 12m visitors and supporting in excess of 24,000 jobs, which equated to 17.5% of all employment. In 2021, from Jan – Mar, occupancy dropped approximately 63% against the equivalent period in 2019.

## 4.2 Visit Weston Partners

We are in constant touch with a variety of partners, even though at present they are not paid for services. Hotels are reporting that they are running very high occupancy. On 27<sup>th</sup> July, Wednesday, a visitor requested a one night stay, 5 hotels were tried and all were full.













- **Duets Restaurant** and **Rowan Tree Tea Rooms** at the quarry were added during summer lockdown. From 1<sup>st</sup> Feb – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021, Duets was viewed 664 times and Rowan Tree 753 times. The owners of Duets are delighted with the introductions and they received 91 click throughs to their website along with a number of bookings.
- For the month of July only, hotel/guest house accommodation were searched 14,833 times and self catering 15,053 times. In 2019 the same month returned 9,644 hotel searches and 8,399 self catering searches.

## 4.3. Website & Social Media

- This slide shows the top 12 locations of visitors to the website as shown on our Google Analytics.
- It is useful to note that Manchester, already identified from visitors to the VIC, now appears in the top 12.
- To date we have received approximately 6,500 visitors to the VIC in the Tropicana (estimate as footfall counter began working after 2 weeks).
- Visitors are staying longer (3 – 7 nights) and are coming from further afield (Margate, Morecambe, Huddersfield, Manchester, Leeds and 2 from Iceland).

1. London	2,988 (19.21%)	7. Chicago	219 (1.41%)
2. Bristol	1,898 (12.20%)	8. Taunton	200 (1.29%)
3. (not set)	1,510 (9.71%)	9. Bridgwater	193 (1.24%)
4. Birmingham	864 (5.55%)	10. Coventry	189 (1.21%)
5. Weston-super-Mare	682 (4.38%)	11. Southampton	173 (1.11%)
6. Cardiff	228 (1.47%)	12. Manchester	145 (0.93%)

# Page Insights

-  Overview
-  Business Suite
-  Creator Studio
-  Followers
-  Ads
-  Shops
-  Likes
-  Reach
-  Page Views
-  Actions on Page
-  Posts
-  Branded Content

All Posts Published

[Create Post](#)

■ Reach: Organic / Paid
 ■ Post Clicks
■ Reactions, Comments & Shares

Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Engagement	Promote
07/30/2021 9:03 PM	 What do you see from the shapes of tonight's sunset? I dare not say what I			959 	41 6 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/29/2021 9:00 AM	 Frustrated by people telling you they didn't know your event was			685 	6 0 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/28/2021 11:27 PM	 So Marine Lake has to remain closed for safety reasons for a while, even			2.4K 	192 36 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/27/2021 11:43 PM	 Some time ago we were permitted to use this fab photo of SuperWeston so			3.4K 	576 98 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/23/2021 12:34 AM				1.6K 	115 8 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/21/2021 10:43 PM	 We think it's about time that Visit Weston welcomes visitors from a			828 	3 7 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/19/2021 3:36 PM	 Here is an update from the fabulous Weston Museum. Definitely worth a			1K 	2 5 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/19/2021 7:50 AM	 On Saturday August 14, between 2pm and 10pm, Sporting Weston FC			650 	9 0 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/16/2021 8:57 AM				1K 	13 3 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/16/2021 8:54 AM	 Worth investigating!			553 	4 4 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>
07/15/2021 9:13 PM	 With great regret we are forced to close the Visitor Information Centre			912 	6 1 	<a href="#">Boost Post</a>



# 4.4 Procurement of Website

Simpleview remain the market leaders in the field of destination marketing. We have traditionally signed a 3 year contract as this attracts an annual discount. The contract is due for renewal and we have two options:

- Procure a like-for-like website with the same functionality that we enjoy at present
- Procure a brand new website, for which a full specification document will be required

Members are requested to consider and instruct.

## 5.1 Update on VIC at the Tropicana

- We were unlucky in hiring sufficient Team Leader staff with only 2 candidates applying for 4 positions, which has left us short staffed to man two facilities.
- The Tourism Manager has committed to work all weekends up until first week of September in order to open the Tropicana at busiest times.
- As of 31<sup>st</sup> July, the footfall counter reports 6,212 visitors
- Visitors are coming from further afield, Margate, Macclesfield, Morecambe, Norwich, Huddersfield, Leeds, Manchester being just a few. They are also staying longer, between 3 and 7 nights

## 5.2. Waterpark Satellite VIC

- The facility was opened on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> July. Hot weather on 23<sup>rd</sup> July saw takings of over £1,000.
- Between 10 and 11am a minimum of 2 staff are needed to cope with queues when the weather is fine.
- We shall do some in-resort advertising to bring the VIC to people's attention, currently we are not receiving tourist inquiries though this will come with time.
- The 2 Team Leaders are supervising the facility along with casual staff

## 5.3. Tuk Tuks

- The Grand Atlantic Hotel has generously provided free parking for the 2 vehicles, if any Members know of lock-ups we would be very grateful!
- There are challenges with parking them at the Waterpark as it's not easy and illegal to reverse them onto the main road, along with manoeuvring them with children about. We are investigating alternatives.
- The vehicles are being used across the council services, with Grounds using them to transport judges for Weston in Bloom and the Museum has booked one for later in August for an event.

## 4.4 Supplementary Report - Tourism and Leisure Committee 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021

### Visit Weston Website Procurement

#### Report of the Deputy Town Clerk

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Members will be aware that the current provider for the Visit Weston website is Simple view (formally New Mind). We have been in contract with them since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. The contract was for an initial period of 3 years so up to 31.03.2019. After this date it was extended to another year and then due to the COVID pandemic and need for consistency was extended again without going back out to the market (so a total of 6 years in contract). This exceeds the recommended years without formal procurement. The current extension will therefore now expire on 31.03.22. The notice period to cancel this contract which needs to be given to terminate is 3 months.

With this in mind the following procurement timescales has been produced by the DTC to enable any notice periods to be recognised and for the successful provider to provide a new site with little or no 'downtime' to website functionality. Please note the current provider may well wish to tender again for the website contract and is able to do so via this procurement process only, as such this guide allows for every eventuality with no pre determination.

#### 1.0 Procurement timeline for Visit Weston Website: -

Date	Detail
1 <sup>st</sup> April 2022	New Website fully functional as per design specification
8 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	Contract award issued to relevant company along with Notice if necessary to existing contractor following T & L resolution
7 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	Tourism & Leisure Committee award contract for Website provision
29 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	T & L Agenda contract report submitted with recommendations from Interview panel & or Officer assessment depending on option chosen
w/c 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	Period allowance for Interviews and presentation of design of website by relevant companies Panel required = 3 councillors and 2 x tourism staff ( DTC will oversee but not score process)
29 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	Tender return deadline for Website procurement (2 x Cllrs & DTC to open min)
3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2021	Tender specifications sent out to EOI companies who meet criteria – 8 week allowance for tender return
w/c 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	EOI Assessment against Criteria set
30 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	EOI deadline
13 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	EOI completed on contractors finder and emailed out
10 <sup>th</sup> August 2021	T & L committee agree tender type for procurement exercise to start

As you can see from the timeline above this is going to be a strict programme to allow adequate time for companies to prepare their tender (8 weeks allowed). In relation to the tender itself the following are options for members to choose: -

#### 2.0 Tender documentation and approval

##### Option 1 – Full specification tender

With this option the DTC will need to work with the tourism team to write a full specification for the website to allow for tender submission. Due to the nature of this procurement this may be restrictive and there may not be the required technical knowledge to write a IT specification adequately – this should be considered by the committee.

### **Option 2 – Design and Build tender (recommended due to specialist nature of the procurement)**

With this option the DTC will work with the tourism team and take direction from the committee on what objectives need to be met within a tender submission, there will need to be consideration of what is essential for companies to include as part of their bid be able to submit a proposal for consideration. These should have regard for; minimum technical requirement, ongoing maintenance and support, does the website need to have additional functionality to the current site, should it purely be for destination marketing as some examples of consideration needed.

#### **2.1 Specification approval**

It is suggested that the DTC works with the Tourism team (Matthew Hardy in liaison with the Visitor Services Manager) to agree criteria for the chosen option above. With the recent changes to staff there is going to need to be a dedicated person in the Tourism team to work on this with the DTC, (IT knowledge to be able to produce the required EOI and specification is essential). Due to the timescale deadlines we are needing to work to it is further suggested that delegated authority be given to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Town Clerk to approve this document ahead of the tender going out. (there is not time to bring it back for full committee approval)

#### **2.2 Tender scoring**

All tenders received need to go through a scoring process via way of a matrix to be able to demonstrate we have a robust and transparent process in relation to the procurement this is an essential part of the council process and is pre-set before tender commences. In the past for similar types of procurement this has been based as follows:

70% based on price (this will now need to have regard for social value)

30% based on presentation / interview (or having met criteria detail if option 1)

#### **Members are requested to:**

1. Approve the timeline for procurement of the Visit Weston Website.
2. Decide which form of tender should be advertised choosing from option 1 or option 2 above in 2.0.
3. Approve delegation of tender specification to Chairman, Vice Chairman and Town Clerk above in 2.1
4. Decide ratio for scoring contract as indicated above in 2.2
5. Appoint 3 x Councillors to be able to receive presentations from company's week commencing 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (dates, times and locations to be confirmed and will have regard for COVID restrictions, ie may be done via zoom if required).