

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 8th DECEMBER 2014**

Meeting Commenced: 10.30 pm

Meeting Concluded: 12.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Sonia Russé (Chairman), Derek Mead (Vice Chairman), Mike Bell, Peter Crew, Cyril King, Len Purnell, Simon Stokes, Michal Kus (Sub), Ray Armstrong (Sub) and Fred Parsons (Sub)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Rob Thurston (Grounds Manager), Debbie Matthews (Tourism Consultant), Ian Jefferies (Tourism Assistant), Karen Morledge (Director, Plum Communications) and Jennifer Lawley, (Committee Officer)

The committee was quorum with the criteria being met with a minimum of 5 Members present.

There were no parishioners in attendance for questions at the commencement of the meeting. Karen Morledge, Director of Plum Communications was, however, in attendance as an observer.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

279.	To receive Apologies for Absence and Notifications of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Crockford-Hawley, David Hitchins, Jan Holloway and Ian Porter, Councillor John Crockford-Hawley was substituted by Councillor Ray Armstrong. Councillor Hitchins was substituted by Councillor Michal Kus. Councillor Jan Holloway was substituted by Councillor Fred Parsons.
280.	To receive Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received.
281.	Minutes of the previous Tourism & Leisure Committee Meeting held on 6th October 2014. The Minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Len Purnell SECONDED BY: Councillor Ray Armstrong RESOLVED: That the Minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
282.	Tourism & Marketing Draft Budget 2015/16 The draft budget had been previously circulated with the agenda.

	<p>The Town Clerk advised that the Tourism & Leisure draft budget would be presented at the next Policy & Finance Committee on the 15th December 2014. The Responsible Financial Officer was in attendance in order to answer any questions offered by Councillors.</p> <p>A query was raised regarding the £7675 (code 4039) increase in advertising. In the 2014/15 budget the budget was £30000 and the figure now drafted was £37675. The Responsible Financial Officer advised of a £6000 increase for a tourism vehicle, £4000 of which was funded by BID and included within that figure.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council also informed that the draft budget would be taken to the Town Council's Group Leaders' meeting if deemed necessary, post the Policy & Finance Committee meeting, for review of any proposed amendments.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the draft budget be noted and taken to the next Policy & Finance Committee meeting on the 15th December 2014.</p>
283.	<p>Love Weston Update</p> <p>283.1 The report of the Love Weston Consultant had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Tourism Consultant and Tourism Assistant were in attendance to answer any questions raised.</p> <p>The Tourism Consultant's report indicated the statistics for the Love Weston website during the second and part of the third quarter of the year, and updated Members on the various topics associated with Love Weston.</p> <p>The Chairman acknowledged the impressive strides made with Love Weston in comparison to the previous year.</p> <p>Members were informed of the Tourism Consultant's attendance at Bath University and the consultant's role in introducing 2nd year students undertaking a Business Management course, to the world of tourism. Tourism was an optional unit for their course and the Tourism Consultant had been asked to return.</p> <p>The Rugby World Cup due to be held in the UK will offer an exciting opportunity for Weston-super-Mare. The Rugby venues include Sandy Park in Exeter, the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff and Kingsholm in Gloucester. Enquiries and some accommodation bookings have already been made in Weston-super-Mare for rugby matches being held in Exeter. The Chairman advised Members that a second Rugby World Cup workshop was being held at Weston Museum on Thursday the 11th December at 11.00 am organised by Love Weston. The workshops are scheduled to occur every two months to promote linking accommodation and local events to attract rugby football fans to Weston-super-Mare.</p> <p>The Tourism Consultant and Tourism Assistant visited Bournemouth to explore the status of 'Approved Family Friendly' accreditation. The Tourism Consultant informed that 'Family Friendly' Accreditation which was recognised by Visit England and Visit Britain aims to make resorts and businesses more family friendly. In seeking accreditation for Weston-super-Mare, only 20 businesses would need to be 'on board'. As a family orientated destination this could promote Weston-super-Mare if the town were to become the first in the UK. Each applicant would need to pay a £60 subscription funded either by Love Weston or part funded by the Town Council. However, caution in potentially setting a precedent needed to be observed. Accreditation and market penetration would only work if the status 'took off and only the Bella Vista Hotel has currently achieved this status.</p>

Debate ensued during which reference was made to the SEO and the recommendation to add 'super-Mare' to the domain name. Members were advised of the redirect facility and branding, the latter requiring no change with the continued use of Loveweston.com.

Councillor Mead joined the meeting at 10.47 am.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michael Bell

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

RESOLVED: That the Town Council purchase alternative domain names, as it was an investment that would reap benefits for the future.

283.2 The budget requirements for the Love Weston Website 2015/16 had been circulated previously with the agenda

Members were advised that Love Weston's 'annuals' had increased due to the increase in website traffic and the need to move up to a larger band width. The report on budget requirements for 2015/16 included advertising options for Love Weston were offered purely as a flexible guide to ever changing demographics. However scope for debate around plausible web enhancements remained on offer only if required at this stage. Some web enhancements including social media links do not incur ongoing annual costs. However integration with Trip Advisor would incur a set up fee of £1,200.

The Leader of the Town Council advised that keeping web enhancements in the budget offered flexibility. Businesses welcome the link with Trip Advisor which raised the question as to whether this would be a selling point? To cover costs Destination Bath charge £25.00 per Member. There were, however, no guarantees of a return as currently there were no individual Members in Weston.

The Chairman requested that website costs and budget requirements for Love Weston be noted by Members although one Councillor wished to record his disagreement to any of the proposed advertising options. The Town Clerk reiterated that the Tourism Budget was due to be presented at the next Policy & Finance Committee meeting on the 15th December 2014 for further debate and opportunity for comment.

RESOLVED: That the Love Weston website costs for 2015/16 be noted.

284. Tropicana Update

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

The decision had been made by North Somerset Council to undertake refurbishment of the Tropicana site as an event space. At the previous meeting the Tourism & Leisure Committee had requested an approach be made to North Somerset Council to explain their change in direction on the future of the Tropicana from demolition to refurbishment at a cost of £75,000. The reply to the Town Clerk contained a link to a report and key passages of the report were highlighted in the Town Clerk's report. The Town Clerk indicated that after several years of the Tropicana being a derelict site, the view could be taken that this was a positive step although not a major investment.

The debate that followed identified possible tourist opportunities to utilise the Tropicana site through 'Love Weston' with space for a potential Museum display which the Town Clerk advised would fit well with the requirement of the HLF bid during the closure of the Museum.

	<p>The Vice-Chairman informed Members that The Trop Trust had not yet received Heads of Terms from North Somerset Council. The Chairman advised that North Somerset Council's report was consistent with The Trop Trust's aims and while a temporary refurbishment was underway, there were opportunities for joint working. The Vice-Chairman made it clear that in his opinion, difficulties would be encountered with regard to joint working with the current regime.</p> <p><i>The Grounds Manager joined the meeting at 11.04 am</i></p> <p>A Councillor recognised the short term use of the site and the potential for tourism. However, he emphasised that it was not the Town Council's remit to make North Somerset Council look good, and the Town Council still required a long term plan.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Town Council welcomes the potential for joint working at a re-opened Tropicana in the short term with a view to a long term plan for the benefit of tourism in Weston-super-Mare.</p>
<p>285.</p>	<p>Tourism Bus</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk's report set out the timeline of proposals and resolutions for a tourist bus for the town extending venues of interest around the town. Subsequent reports had finalised the route and timetable, based on advice from the Transport Team at North Somerset Council and representations from the selected bus operator. However concerns to extend the route in 2014 had not been possible at that time due to the timescale needed for permissions for a new bus route. A new bus route was now proposed.</p> <p>The Town Clerk's report advised that within the one hour time span it was not practicable to extend the route to include remote locations such as Puxton Park or the Helicopter Museum. However, Crosville had agreed to include Uphill Village and the Hillside area and the report included a map of the new route and the timetable.</p> <p>Debate ensued. The Chairman informed that advertising livery on the bus to promote Love Weston and sponsorship by the Town Council had been disappointing. The Leader of the Council said that this would be addressed with the new wrapping, an example of which was available to view at the meeting.</p> <p>Some Members were not in favour of the tourism bus as it was looking more and more like a normal bus route subsidised by the Town Council and less like a tourism bus and guided tour. The success of the 2014 tourism bus venture was questionable as a tourism priority and as the best use of £20,000. Instead it would be better to spend the money bringing more events to Weston such as the Sand Sculpture Festival in 2015 and match funding for other events.</p> <p>The Leader expressed that the bus was part of the 'tourism product' as a whole as it introduced people to the wider areas of Weston. He added that the 2015 service would be enhanced either by Weston Welcomers on the bus or an audio transmission explaining the locations as the majority of passengers would be the elderly or families.</p> <p>It was noted that senior citizens' passes were not valid on this route and that the timetable would need to incorporate the August bank holiday.</p>

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew
SECONDED BY: Councillor Len Purnell

RESOLVED:

1. The extended tourism bus route for 2015 be approved.
2. That the 31st August 2015 (a Bank Holiday) be included in the timetable and a further meeting to 'fine tune' the timetable be organised.

286. Joint Working with the Seafront and Events Team

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

The Leader referred to previous difficulties working with North Somerset Council and it was hoped that Members would agree to a joint working arrangement with the Seafront Team that incorporated the Weston Welcomers and Water Park Staff for 2015.

The Town Clerk pointed out that the list of bullet points on page 2 of his report were speculative in terms of the Tropicana's use and it would only be possible to progress if the building became available to the Town Council.

It was noted that there was a provision of £6,500 for Weston Welcomer staff.

Debate ensued on the involvement of North Somerset Council Executive Members, public perceptions that Somerset was still flooded and difficulties with Somerset Tourism Association who do not support Love Weston and have refused to share information.

It was agreed that the CEO and Chairman of STA be invited to the next Tourism Consultative Group on 15th January 2015 for an open discussion.

Further debate ensued on the matter of Destination Management Organisation (DMO) status and whether Love Weston could progress in its own right. Frustrations were aired on the lack of grant aid, the lack of clarity on the expenditure of North Somerset's tourism budget and the lack of shared tourism statistics that might help direct future planning. What was clear was the distinct lack of investment in advertising Weston-super-Mare as a tourist destination. The Chairman said that these were key areas of discussion for the Tourism Consultative Group.

A Member expressed that a DMO which was independent of North Somerset and Weston Town Councils and was industry led would be the way forward. Caution was aired that the proposals would expand the empire of North Somerset Council by £35,000.

Debate turned to the matter of Water Park charging, the monitoring mechanism of the SLA and whether any obligations existed in relation to the onsite concession which was due to expire in October 2016.

North Somerset Council's £4,000 underwriting was queried to which the Leader clarified that it represented good value as the cost of advertising for Crosville, Museum, Blakehay and Water Park would have needed to be recognised in the budgets of the individual departments. He stressed that the pocket guide was an 'in-resort' guide as opposed to a 'destination guide' and that the expansion to 48 pages was being pushed by the BID Company who wanted all businesses to advertise in it.

The Chairman requested, following extended debate, that decisions be made in order to determine resolutions.

	<p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposals for joint working set out in the report be approved and an agreement be entered into for one year for joint working with the Seafront and Events Team, including commissioning seafront welcomers. 2. The Seafront and Events Team together with John Turner (CEO, Visit Somerset, Head of Marketing and Advertising) and Bob Smart (Chairman of the Somerset Tourism Association) be invited to the next Consultative Group meeting for open discussion. 3. The Seafront and Events Team be requested to present a report at the next Consultative Group meeting indicating key areas relating to the amount of budget awarded, how it is spent and how information is collated.
287.	<p>Update from Carrier Direct on the 2015 Destination Guide</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Following a competitive procurement process the Town Council had contracted Carrier Direct to produce the 2015 Love Weston destination guide. The Town Clerk's report at the time of writing quoted that £3,300 of advertising revenue had been confirmed. This figure had now increased to £5,960. The guide was due to be published and launched in January but would be available to order online over the Christmas period before the hardcopies were available. A digital version was planned to be included on the Love Weston website.</p> <p>Debate ensued on the destination guide versus North Somerset Council's in-resort guide with their content and advertising and whether the town had the capacity for both? The Leader did not see a conflict as long as the destination guide and its content were managed. He did however recognise that there may be one or two clashes and those hotels would possibly advertise in both.</p> <p>Concern was expressed on the various publications being produced, including the Mercury Explore guide, all with competitive interests and aimed at the same market. A situation should be brought about where upon all parties came together to consolidate as one body to produce a brochure. The Leader advised of the decisions already made and carried through which could not be changed this financial year.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Len Purnell</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the position be noted for this financial year 2015/16 and reviewed for the following financial year 2016/17.</p>
288.	<p>Volunteer opportunities with Love Weston via VANS</p> <p>The Town Clerks report had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk updated Members and advised that following on from his report, talks had taken place with VANS for volunteers for the Museum and The Blakehay Theatre. He advised that VANS was a useful organisation and he hoped volunteers would be forthcoming.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>

<p>289.</p>	<p>Waterpark Kiosk Concession</p> <p>The Town Clerk’s report had been previously circulated with the agenda together with a letter from the kiosk concessionaire at the Water Park.</p> <p>The Town Clerk’s report advised that the refreshment kiosk concessionaire at the Water Park had written requesting an extension to his franchise of a further 5 years. The current concession granted for 5 years in 2010 and due to expire in July 2015, had already been extended until October 2016.</p> <p>Members were reminded of the previous committee resolution that it would not to be appropriate to extend the concession indefinitely as an option might be available to explore the operation and staffing of the entire Water Park from the kiosk, both providing refreshments and controlling entry to the park.</p> <p>Debate ensued.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the concessionaire be informed that the current concession for providing a refreshments service from the Water Park kiosk will terminate on the 1st October 2016.</p>
<p>290.</p>	<p>DMO (Destination Management Organisation) Update</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that as requested by the committee, he had made enquiries with Visit England about the Destination Management Organisation status of North Somerset Council and Visit Somerset. He had been informed that North Somerset Council did not receive any funding from Visit England. The Tourism Consultant and the Town Clerk had made enquiries with Visit England about whether Love Weston could be given DMO status. To-date a reply had not been received. However, as resolved under agenda item 8 (minute no 286), all parties are to be invited to the next Consultative Group meeting when the subject of DMO status might be addressed. Members raised no objections to the proposal.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the position be noted.</p>
<p>291.</p>	<p>Grounds Services Management Report</p> <p>The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Grounds Manager’s report gave an overview and update on the Town Council’s managed Parks and Open Spaces, the Water Park, other play areas and the Skate park. The report was self-explanatory and the Grounds Manager was in attendance to answer any questions. A problem was highlighted with playground equipment at the Worle recreation ground which the Grounds Manager noted.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the Grounds Manager for all the hard work undertaken by him and his grounds staff in the maintenance of the flower beds and upkeep of the cemetery.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>

<p>292.</p>	<p>Standing Orders 35 - Admission of Public and Press to Meetings: <i>The public and the press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its Committees and Sub-Committees, which may, however, temporarily exclude the public or the press or both by means of the following resolution: Standing Order 35.1 'That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be excluded and they are instructed</i></p> <p>In accordance with Standing Order 35.2, the Town Clerk stated the special reason for exclusion of the public and press.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the public and press be excluded from the business about to be transacted.</p> <p><i>Debbie Matthews (Tourism Consultant), Ian Jefferies (Tourism Assistant) and Karen Morledge (Director, Plum Communications) left the meeting at 11.30 am</i></p>
<p>293.</p>	<p>Quotations for Operational Tree Surgery at Ellenborough Park</p> <p>The confidential report of the Grounds Manager in line with Standing Order 39.2(h) <u>Limitations of acceptance of tenders</u> had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed Members of the Health and Safety planned maintenance programme and inspections of the tree stock in Town Council managed parks, play areas and the cemetery. These had been assessed and prioritised on a health and safety basis. It was noted that the work identified included a number of trees at Ellenborough Park overhanging the highway. During September the Town Council had requested quotations from five contractors. Four quotations were returned and one company advised that they were currently unable to take on the work due to other commitments.</p> <p>Debate ensued on Health and Safety requirements. Method statements on how the work would be undertaken were provided by the four companies at the request of the Town Council. Of the four returned quotations three were priced relatively close together and one was significantly cheaper, but failed to meet Health and Safety requirements.</p> <p>During debate, Members gave due consideration to Standing Orders regarding procurement of operational works.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Simon Stokes</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That based on the Health and Safety and other information provided, Alltree Services quotation of £5,800 be accepted subject to a detailed and satisfactory method statement being received prior to the works being undertaken.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 12.10 pm.</p> <p>Signed Dated</p> <p>Councillor Sonia Russe Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee</p>