

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2015**

Meeting Commenced: 2.05 pm

Meeting Concluded: 3.20 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Sonia Russé (Chairman), Mike Bell, Peter Crew, David Hitchins, Jan Holloway, Cyril King, Mike Lyall, Len Purnell and Simon Stokes.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Rob Thurston (Grounds Manager), Debbie Matthews (Tourism Consultant), Ian Jefferies (Tourism Assistant), Karen Morledge (Director, Plum Communications), Nicola Wood and, Alec Messchaert (Co-directors of the Sand Sculpture Project) and Cindy Lap (Project Manager of the Sand Sculpture Project)(part attendance).

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the representatives of the Sand Sculpture Project to address the meeting in relation to agenda item 7.2 – Request for funding from Sand Sculpture.

The three representatives of Sand Sculpture Festival introduced themselves to the Committee and delivered their request for funding via a PowerPoint presentation. A video was played demonstrating the preliminary background work that takes place 2/3 weeks before the commencement of the event/festival.

Committee members were also informed that sand was moved from the Uphill end of Weston's beach to the sculpture site. The sand was unique and, therefore, did not need to be imported. The festival which began in 2006 used 5 tonnes of sand. Today, the festival uses 5,000 tonnes of sand. A crew of 25/30 people were involved with the festival with 20 sculptors attending each year, all of whom were medallists. Weston-super-Mare has been referred to 'as the sand sculpting capital of the UK'.

Councillor Ian Porter joined the meeting at 2.18 pm.

The year 2015 was the 10th year of the festival and the desire was to mark the anniversary with a special celebration. In 2014 the festival attracted over 90,000 visitors. One of the proudest elements of the festival was the sheltered workshop area which enabled activities to carry on even in the bad weather. They were also very proud of the event's press coverage stretching all over the world and which could be a huge spin off for Weston-super-Mare and the surrounding areas. Surveys indicate that 86% of visitors come from outside of Weston and that 58% visited just for the festival. The goals this year were to:

- Celebrate the 10th year of the festival
- Create an indoor workshop
- Increase visitor numbers
- Create more interactive workshops
- Spread the marketing of the event wider
- Attract a main sponsor/presenting partner

At other destinations the festival has a permanent site, eliminating site build and take down costs which equates to approximately £20,000. The festival in total costs approximately £250,000. The representatives advised that they would rather spend the money on achieving the indoor workshop which would cost approximately £40,000. They do have their own marketing vehicle which attends

events to promote the festival and although financial support for the festival was sought, they were also seeking partnership working. A request for £5,000 would help adapt the workshop area and support children's activities and a request for £10,000 would enable the Town Council to be a presenting partner. In return for sponsorship the Town Council would not only be acknowledged in the festival's sponsorship packages, the festival promoted the town expansively and enriched Weston-super-Mare.

Concluding their presentation, the festival representatives informed that they "would love to stay in Weston-super-Mare".

The Chairman thanked the representatives for their presentation and explained that the Committee would debate their request for sponsorship under the relevant agenda item. The Committee were asked, however, if they had any questions for the representatives, that they be put directly to them. A question regarding the security of the event in the absence of confirmation of funding from North Somerset Council was posed. Members were informed that the festival was still in an insecure position regarding funding from North Somerset Council.

The Town Clerk advised that he would contact the representatives the following day to communicate the Committee's decision.

The three Sand Sculpture Festival representatives left the meeting at 2.40 pm.

354.	<p>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notifications of Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Crockford-Hawley and Derek Mead.</p>
355.	<p>To receive Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
356.	<p>Minutes of the previous Tourism & Leisure Committee Meeting held on the 8th December 2014.</p> <p>The Minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Sonia Russè SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
357.	<p>Love Weston Update</p> <p>The report of the Love Weston Consultant had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Love Weston website was continually progressing and the Town Clerk informed that Matt Bassett from New Mind had confirmed that the website had well exceeded all expectations since its creation.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the Tourism income stream needed reviewing as it was not reflective of the success of the website. In response to this, the Tourism Consultant explained that if there was to be free advertising decisions made then it needed to be included within the income targets. In light of the fact that there seemed to be in-balances within the Tourism targets, it was therefore proposed that a full review of the Love Weston SLA (Service Level Agreement) take place.</p>

A review of the SLA was welcomed as it was considered good practice to review start up projects annually and the Town Clerk informed that the current SLA started on 1st May 2014. However it was requested that some expert advice on incorporating realistic targets was needed.

The Chairman pointed out consequences on income with the late arrival of the Guide which had been negotiated with Carrier Direct. A further proposal was made to write to Carrier Direct expressing the Council's dismay regarding the delay of the Guide. The Chairman praised the Tourism Consultant for her efforts on this publication.

It was queried whether the BID had been in touch regarding the positioning of the picture on the London underground. The Town Clerk informed that he had been approached by Steve Townsend and was exploring the BID's concerns and he reiterated the success of the website in which they had committed funds to the SLA. The Tourism Consultant added that the BID were aware of the proposed design and had approved it in writing prior to the advertising campaign being booked.

It was advised that North Somerset Council were in the process of reviewing their Tourism Strategy which may offer a good opportunity for the Town Council to converse with regard to pooling resources. The Leader reported that the Town Council had been in communication and were participating with the Seafront Events Team towards partnership working at the Water Park with Weston Welcomer staffing on the seafront.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Len Purnell

RESOLVED that:

1. A full review of the Love Weston SLA be undertaken.
2. The Town Clerk writes to Carrier Direct expressing the Town Council's dismay regarding the delay of the Guide.
3. The report of the Tourism Consultant be received and noted.

358. Joint Working with Seafront Events Team

The Leader verbally updated on the following:

358.1 Weston Welcomers

The SLA between the Town Council and Seafront Events Team was almost ready for signing, subject to an arrangement with the Weston Welcomers staffing the Water Park and their presence in the Tropicana building and the seafront.

358.2 Waterpark

The current operator of the Water Park Café's contract would cease in October 2015 and the plans to explore running the Café in house would commence ready for the start of the 2016 season. This would then be an opportunity to look at introducing a free resident's pass. The SLA with The Seafront Events Team would enable the Town Council to save money as it would only need to fund the attendants.

358.3 Tropicana

It was very disappointing that the Tropicana was not being developed into a fully functioning Tourist Information Centre as previously thought and that instead, a Tourist Information Service was being proposed that would consist only of self-service computers, a brochure display and café.

Negotiations were taking place regarding the agreement to offer a Museum display at the Tropicana building. Disappointment was raised as to North Somerset Council's lack of communication with partnering bodies in discussing the provision of a Tourist Information Centre. The Leader advised that the Town Council had approached Parkwood Leisure last year on the possibility of jointly providing a Tourist Information Centre from within the Winter Gardens. Initially the idea was received well and it was hoped it would progress. However, after a second meeting with the Director of Parkwood Leisure, progress came to a halt. The Town Council was expected to fund the Tourist Information Centre but could not have any input on how it was managed. North Somerset Council needs continual pressure in relation to the provision for a Tourist Information Centre in Weston.

359. Grounds Services Management Report

The Grounds Manager verbally reported on the following areas within the Grounds Services:

359.1 Play Area Inspection Reports

The Grounds team had been working through the winter works programme which consisted of tree pruning and the refurbishment of seats and benches within the Cemetery.

The tree work at Ellenborough Park had been completed.

In respect of the Water Park, the team had been working closely with the Seafront Events Team on a handover process for the 2015 season. The commissioning of the Splash Pad was due on 28th March 2015 and the Head Groundsman would be on site for this and for an operational cross over period. The team would continue the inspection of all the equipment and it was noted that the snake rope swing had been repaired.

As approved by Council, the position of a further Ground Person to add to the team had been advertised and this person would be specifically trained to support the Head Groundsman with Play Area Inspections.

It was noted that the play equipment at Worle Recreation Ground had been addressed since reported at the last Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting.

359.2 Skatepark – Match funding

The Development Officer had been investigating possible funding options and grant avenues for the Skatepark and there was currently a consultation in process with the YMCA and the local PCSOs the area. A full report on any progress made would be submitted to the next meeting.

Although the Council had allocated £10,000 match funding for the project it was hoped that the young people and users of the Skatepark would participate in fundraising and seek sponsorship themselves to further the case for funding.

There were two options for the refurbishment of the Skatepark:

Option 1: Use wooden ramps which was the cheaper option to take forward in terms of initial costs. This would, however, would cost more to maintain.

Option 2: Use concrete ramps which would involve higher initial costs but would cost less to maintain and was the preferred option by Skateboarders.

The Skatepark's current state was queried and the Grounds Manager advised that a number of repairs had been undertaken by Evolution Skatepark since the last meeting.

360.

Special Events

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

360.1 Request for funding from Weston Food Festival

The request for funding received in writing, was included within the Town Clerk's report which recommended the Committee to consider sponsoring the event in the sum of £5,000.

The Town Clerk advised that it was a non-profit making event and that he had been supplied with a breakdown of costs which were in addition to the initial request. There was a deficit of £7,101.

£3,000 funding from the BID had been confirmed.

The Town Clerk recommended that the Town Council support this event as it had always been very successful. In view that this year and next year were going to be difficult with the future of the Winter Gardens, he also recommended that the Town Council encourage North Somerset Council to urge Parkwood Leisure to reduce their fees for holding the event.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mike Bell

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

RESOLVED:

1. To sponsor the Weston Food Festival event with the sum of £5,000 (net of VAT).
2. That the Council puts pressure on North Somerset Council to encourage Parkwood Leisure to reduce the hire fees for the use of the Winter Gardens for the event.

360.2 Request for funding from Sand Sculpture

The Town Clerk's report requests the Committee to consider sponsoring the event and advised that this was a profit making organisation.

Members were informed that North Somerset Council were supporting the event in kind by approximately £40,000. It was, however, disappointing to hear that North Somerset Council did not consider the event to be one of theirs as what was really needed was a permanent site for the event.

It was suggested that Towns be contacted to help with the moving of the sand in order to reduce event costs. In order to guarantee the event this year for Weston -super-Mare then it was proposed that £5,000 in sponsorship should be allocated form the Council's events budget.

	<p>Comments were made regarding the state of the site left by the event in previous years and the Town Clerk advised that the Committee could make the comment that it wanted the site left in a clean and tidy condition after the event.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mike Bell SECONDED BY: Councillor Dave Hitchins</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To sponsor the Sand Sculpture Event with the sum of £5,000 (net of VAT) to support the adaption of a workshop area and children’s activities. 2. To send the comments that the site must be left in a clean and tidy condition after the event.
	<p>There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 3.20 pm.</p> <p>Signed Dated</p> <p>Councillor Sonia Russe Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee</p>