

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 1st AUGUST 2016**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.50 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), James Clayton, John Crockford-Hawley, James Davis, Jocelyn Holder, David Hitchins, Michael Lyall, Len Purnell, Clive Webb and Roger Bailey (S)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Rob Thurston (Grounds Manager), Debbie Matthews and Ian Jefferies (Love Weston), Caroline Darlington (Visitor Information Officer), Tricia Brabham (Communications Officer) and Jennifer Lawley (Committee Officer)

74.	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roz Willis and the Town Clerk, Malcolm Nicholson. Councillor Roz Willis was substituted by Councillor Roger Bailey. Councillors Ian Porter and Derek Mead were not in attendance.
75.	Declarations of Interest There were no Declarations of Interest received.
76.	To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 6th June 2016 The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda. A vote was taken and carried . Accordingly it was: RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
77.	Variation of Order of Business (<i>Standing Order 10</i>) A motion to vary the order of business was put to the vote by the Chairman. A vote was taken and carried . Accordingly it was: RESOLVED: That the order of business be varied and agenda item 6 be brought forward.
78.	Parks and Play Areas (<i>Agenda item 6</i>) The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda. The Grounds Manager in an update to his report, advised that he had contacted North Somerset Council (NSC) in order to identify the timescales involved for the adoption by the

	<p>Town Council of the play areas at West Wick and Haywood Village. The West Wick site remained currently under the jurisdiction of the developer, Persimmon. NSC advised that land transfer would possibly take place next year but there were no specifics. With regard to the Haywood Village site, NSC were intending to manage this site themselves. The committee noted that this was likely due to S106 funding and agreement. In response, the Chairman advised that he would take the Haywood Village matter further with NSC, and reiterated the importance of West Wick's play area being part of the town and under the management of the Town Council.</p> <p>The Grounds Manager advised that the Town Clerk had felt it appropriate in view of investments and to safeguard the Town Council that a renewed lease for play areas be entered into. The Town Clerk had agreed a 7 year lease, less one day for legal reasons, NSC having originally offered 3 years. Members, after being asked for their comments, were advised that the proposal would go forward for ratification at the next Policy & Finance Committee meeting.</p> <p>A member, a Ward Councillor for Winterstoke, had received complaints about a dog bin which was full to capacity located outside the Haywood Village play area. He had established that neither North Somerset Council or Weston-super-Mare Town Council owned the dog bin, and that the unit belonged to the developer, Persimmon. The Ward Councillor's understanding was that Persimmon had refused to empty the dog bin, but that North Somerset Council had on this occasion emptied the unit. The member sought clarification about responsibilities and it was suggested that it remained North Somerset Council's responsibility for the time being.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report of the Grounds Manager be received and noted. 2. That the 7 year lease for play areas be taken forward for ratification at a future Policy & Finance Committee meeting. 3. That the dog bin owned by the developer, Persimmon, located outside the play area in Haywood Village currently remained the responsibility of North Somerset Council. 4. That the Town Council's acquisition and management of the play area at the Haywood Village site be raised with North Somerset Council.
<p>79.</p>	<p>Variation of Order of Business (<i>Standing Order 10</i>)</p> <p>A motion to vary the order of business was put to the vote by the Chairman.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the order of business be varied and agenda item 7 be brought forward.</p>
<p>80.</p>	<p>Water Park (<i>Agenda item 7</i>)</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>In the absence of the Town Clerk, the Grounds Manager addressed the committee.</p> <p>At the request of the Town Clerk, the Chairman informed that an amendment to the report was required. The actual income taken in admission fees since the Water Park reopened at Easter and up until the 30th June 2016 was £9,595 and not as stated, £2,125, which was up until the 1st June 2016 so the financial figures were looking quite good.</p>

The report advised that an extension to the evening period when the water remained on was being considered. Currently the water was switched off at 5.00 pm with no charge levied on the public after that time and the park remaining open until 6.00 pm but unattended by North Somerset Council staff. The Grounds Manager had looked at the Service Level Agreement and had identified that the Water Park should be covered by North Somerset Council up until 6.00 pm. The Chairman proposed extending the opening of the Water Park until 7.00 pm with the park being unattended from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm.

The Grounds Manager reported that the operations room was now running smoothly after having had issues in the early part of the season. The issues had arisen from the turn-key circuit board which had probably been struck by lightning.

The Chairman recognised that the Water Park was very popular and that the kiosk was doing very well. A substitute committee member informed that he had visited the Water Park on one of the hottest days. In his opinion the kiosk was not as well fitted out as previously and that it was empty of people, possibly because it was too hot inside which he likened to an oven. This was perhaps something the Town Council should address. He also noted that the tickets issued for entry into the Water Park were printed with North Somerset Council details and no mention of Weston-super-Mare Town Council, which he questioned as the Water Park was a Town Council asset. In response the Chairman advised that North Somerset Council managed the Water Park on the Town Council's behalf and although it had been pointed out that the Town Council take all the risks, it was felt prudent financially to use tickets already printed by North Somerset Council. In relation to the kiosk's ventilation, that was the responsibility of the concessioner. The substitute committee member had not attended a Tourism & Leisure Committee meeting before and he thanked the Chairman for questions answered.

A member wished to draw attention to the issue of people climbing over the wall to gain free entry to the Water Park and the often resulting threats of violence directed at Water Park staff when these people were challenged. He felt that more security was needed and that high fencing would help to address the issue. The Chairman advised that this type of issue would always arise and agreed that the area was not secure. However, if fencing were erected, be it at the front or back of the Water Park, there was always the probability that people would break the fencing down. There was also the problem of height restrictions and the site was a conservation area. This was an issue that the Town Council had lived with since the Water Park opened which had always been monitored. However, the Service Level Agreement may need to be revisited as there appeared to be a lot of problems occurring. The member confirmed that the Police were contacted by the staff and that he had been asked to bring this issue of concern to the committee's attention. The Grounds Manager advised that when the Town Council had their own staff monitoring the situation, they were told not to engage, and as the Chairman had indicated, it was a challenging site within a conservation area. The Chairman acknowledged that it was also common place for parents to put their children over the wall.

Members were asked whether they were aware that drug taking took place in the confines of the Water Park. The Chairman responded by advising that this was known but that it was a problem for the whole of Weston-super-Mare.

On a positive note, a member reiterated that the sum of £9,595 for admission fees since Easter and up until the 30th June 2016 was a very good figure and affirmed that the Water Park was a "fantastic" facility.

The Grounds Manager left the meeting at 7.20 pm.

<p>81.</p>	<p>Love Weston</p> <p>The reports of the Tourism Consultant had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>81.1 Love Weston progress report</p> <p>The report had been written two weeks previously and, therefore, a verbal update to the report was given by the Tourism Consultant at the request of the Chairman.</p> <p>The Tourism Consultant advised that the ‘Love Weston’ website was now outranking with Google rankings for most Weston-super-Mare searches being number 1. In simple terms this meant that the ‘Love Weston’ website had overtaken everyone when searching for Weston-super-Mare and events’ information relative to the town. The Tourism Consultant in giving examples of the success in rankings, advised members of a Google search by the Huffington Post which had resulted in an interview. There was also an increase in foreign website traffic linking in from all over the world due to the Weston-super-Mare Pride event and the town’s growing multi-cultural population.</p> <p>Debate ensued on the opening of Funland at the Tropicana and relations between North Somerset Council and Weston-super-Mare Town Council. Notice of 2 to 3 days for the VIP opening and events in the town was not good enough. The Tourism Consultant advised that event information required a 6 to 8 week lead time on websites to have any effect with publicity.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that discussions were currently on going regarding co-ordination and communication between NSC departments and the two Councils as the current predicament was not ideal and joint funding for a Tourism Manager was needed.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report of the Tourism Consultant be received and noted.</p> <p>81.2 Love Weston Membership</p> <p>Membership had increased with a target of a 79% income on the website being achieved so far. The Tourism Consultant was congratulated.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report of the Tourism Consultant be received and noted.</p>
<p>82.</p>	<p>Visitor Information Centre (VIC)</p> <p>The report of the Visitor Information Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman introduced Caroline Darlington to the meeting who was the recently appointed Visitor Information Officer.</p> <p>Members were informed that since her report, recorded footfall had increased, the automatic counter giving 5000 as an average over the past two weeks. The target had been 7000 people for the season but this would definitely be exceeded. Sales had increased on the shop floor and also advertising and displays.</p> <p>The Visitor Information Officer advised members on the success in the sales of accommodation and the good relationships being forged with the ‘Love Weston’ membership. It was proving to the Hoteliers that ‘Love Weston’ and the VIC were working for them and the website’s top ranking would make advertising even more appealing. Local businesses and accommodation providers had also been enquiring about the benefits of</p>

	<p>becoming ‘Love Weston’ members with sale leads being passed on to the ‘Love Weston’ team to follow up.</p> <p>The Visitor Information Officer thanked the ‘Love Weston’ team for all their support with the VIC and the committee congratulated the VIC on their enthusiasm and drive.</p> <p>During debate, it was recognised that the Town Council wanted more input from North Somerset Council, that larger signage was required to identify the VIC and that many external website links still identified the Winter Gardens as Weston-super-Mare’s Tourist Information Centre.</p> <p>The possibility of the VIC having to move from the Tropicana and the terms negotiated for the VIC’s occupancy in the Tropicana building was also a subject for debate. The Chairman confirmed that if an organisation wanted to take over the whole building then the VIC would have to move out. Unfortunately the Town Council had not been able to obtain agreement for on going terms.</p> <p>A member spoke of the relationship between North Somerset Council (NSC) and the town of Weston-super-Mare, and the unease of NSC’s investment in the town’s tourism. The member referred to other areas within North Somerset believing them to be sustainable in their own right, Clevedon being just one example. He held the view that it was Weston-super-Mare that needed all the capital and emphasis which was in-line with Weston-super-Mare’s regeneration programme.</p> <p>The Chairman was pleased with the contribution of the Visitor Information team who were very enthusiastic, and he hoped that the Town Council’s combined tourism provision would continue to grow with income supporting the way forward.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report of the Visitor Information Officer be received and noted.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated:</p> <p>Councillor Peter Crew Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee</p>