

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 3rd APRIL 2017**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.11 pm

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Zoe Scott (Community and Grounds Administrator), Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager), Tricia Brabham (Communications Officer) and Jennifer Lawley (Committee Officer).

319.	<p>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roz Willis, Ian Porter and Derek Mead together with Rob Thurston (Grounds Manager).</p> <p>Councillor Roz Willis was substituted by Councillor Roger Bailey.</p>
320.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest received.</p>
321.	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 6th February 2017.</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
322.	<p>Tourism Publications 2017</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>322.1 Explore and In-resort Map:</p> <p>Everyone had seen the publication ‘Explore’ which was now in circulation. A draft part of the in-resort map had been tabled and the key features explained. Following debate on cartography, design and content, the Chairman reminded members that the in-resort map had cost the Town Council £0 and that the circulation to 30,000 had been helped by a contribution from Weston BID all of which was a good thing. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that we would collate feedback, including that of the users over the course of the summer which would be fed into the 2018 edition.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted.</p> <p><i>The Community and Grounds Officer left the meeting at 7.10 pm and returned at 7.15 pm.</i></p>
323.	<p>Love Weston</p> <p>323.1 Love Weston Membership</p>

The Chairman informed members that Caroline Darlington was now the Town Council's Tourism Manager. The Chairman was pleased with progress. Love Weston membership had increased from 48 to 60 and the Tourism Manager was in continuing talks with potential members.

323.2 Staffing

Members were advised that:

- Ellie Allen-Somers had started in her role as Love Weston's Tourism Marketing Officer. She had experience in promoting tourism having trained with North Somerset Council's events team.
- Elaine Buss would begin in her role as the Visitor Information Centre Supervisor on the 24th April 2017, leading a small team of staff. She had worked at the VIC last year and had considerable experience having worked at Weston Museum and for the SS Great Britain.

323.3 Training

- The Tourism Manager and the Tourism Marketing Officer had attended training with NewMind for CMS and DMS.
- The Tropicana's Fire evacuation procedure had been completed as part of the Service Level Agreement and WsM Town Council staff had undertaken fire evacuation with North Somerset Council.
- The Tourism Manager had completed a course with Visit England and was now qualified to undertake Hotel assessments.
- The Tourism Marketing Officer was due to attend First Aid training on the 4th April, and Equality and Diversity Training was scheduled for July.

323.4 Website

The Chairman was pleased with the transition to in-house management of the Love Weston website.

RESOLVED: That the Love Weston report be received and noted.

324.

Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

The report of the Tourism Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.

324.1 Opening of the VIC 2017

Members were advised that the VIC was on course to open for the four days of the Easter weekend and officially on the 1st May 2017 for the summer season. This was in conjunction with North Somerset Council's staff who have responsibility for lost children and first aid provision on the seafront. Pride organisers had decided to put a samba band in front of VIC as part of their pre-launch for Pride 2017 on the same date as the VIC summer opening.

A Cheese and Wine event on 25th April at 6.00 pm was being planned by WsM Town Council staff to attract new Love Weston members and introduce new staff to existing accommodation and attraction providers ahead of the 2017 season. The Chairman advised that this was about business engagement and numbers were limited and, therefore, Councillors were not as yet included.

	<p>RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted.</p>
<p>325.</p>	<p>Love Weston Progress Report The final report of the Tourism Consultant had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>325.1 Website and Social Media: Queries were raised and answered on organic traffic and bounce rates.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The report was received and noted.</p> <p>325.2 Exhibitions and Events:</p> <p>RESOLVED: The report was received and noted.</p> <p>325.3 Destination Marketing:</p> <p>Debate ensued on the campaigns that had taken place, raising questions on how success with advertising was measured. The Chairman acknowledged that one could never tell for certain. However, he advised of the distinct increase in Love Weston website hits when advertising in Birmingham. The effect was similar for Cardiff, Bristol and London.</p> <p>Queries on the costs and location of advertisement panels at Birmingham Airport was raised and information confirmed by officers.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk advised that destination advertising was about promoting Weston-super-Mare in front of other seaside holiday resorts by way of branding promotion, positive messages and good imagery and that prestigious campaigns such as Birmingham Airport where footfall was very high and busy shopping centres like Gloucester Quays and Merry Hill served this purpose well. In addition, high profile advertising helps to sell website packages to accommodation and facility providers e.g., Wookey Hole and Puxton Park which in turn give us quality website content and raises our SEO profile.</p> <p>Some members doubted the merit of advertising and the associated costs. However, the Chairman felt that advertising was beneficial, highlighting the increase in Love Weston membership after the high prestige advertising campaigns in 2016/17.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Love Weston Progress report be received and noted.</p>
<p>326.</p>	<p>Tourism Events Budget The report of the Finance Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that tourism event applications for funding no longer came under a Tourism Grant award and, as requested, would now be considered through a Tourism Events Budget. However, the grant criteria previously approved via the committee would still be used for assessing an application for an award from the Tourism Events Budget. This form provides consistency with all other grant awards given by the Town Council (i.e., Small and Voluntary via the Community Services Committee) for financial checking.</p> <p>Members noted grants for £20,000 against a budget of £10,000.</p> <p>326.1 Weston Sand Sculptures Award applied for: £10,000 Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137</p>

The accounts had not been received and cash at bank had not been made available.

The organisation had put in an application to the Town Council to provide them with financial support for two important aspects of their event. They would like to focus on two key elements that would first improve interactivity and secondly encourage tourism and visitors to the town. Awards had been previously given in 2013, 2015 and 2016.

Debate ensued. The Chairman made note that an image of one of Weston's sand sculptures was featured on the front page of Explore (Weston-super-Mare and the South West essential 2017 guide). Members were informed that the organisers had already expressed their appreciation. In consideration of the feature in Explore and the wide publicity this afforded, it was suggested that no award be recommended this year.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Clive Webb

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey.

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED: Not to award this application £10,000.

326.2 Weston super Food Festival

Award applied for: £2000

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

The accounts had been checked and cash at bank had been made available. Awards had been given in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

The award would be used to contribute towards the increased costs of the infrastructure of the event. For example, venue hire costs, marquees, cleaning services, recycling and waste removal.

Debate ensued. The Food Festival which was becoming quite an event had moved from the Town Square to the Tropicana. Cash in bank was noted and members were advised of the audited accounts for 31st March 2016 which showed a net loss for the 2016 event. The loss was attributed to the costs involved with making the new site at the Tropicana fit for purpose. A member believed it important to 'kick start' an event but questioned whether awards should be given year on year. However, it was recognised that the festival was a huge operation and a tourism attraction which attracted 1000s of visitors to the town.

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED: To award this application £2000.

326.3 The Dairy Festival (Weston Arts Social Enterprise Ltd)

Award applied for: £4,000

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

Audited accounts had not been received and cash at bank not made available due to the nature of this enterprise set up. Awards had been given in 2015 and 2016.

An award of £4000 had been applied for in order to cover costs. At the point of the application no other grants had been applied from elsewhere.

Debate ensued. Concern was expressed on the limited information that had been made available to the committee for members to make a decision. Members recognised and had

sympathy for small organisations seeking grants. However, it was acknowledged that organisations should be encouraged to make available financial information even if they do not have fully audited accounts. If financial information was forthcoming it was proposed that the organisation reapply at the next meeting on the 12th June 2017. One member also noted that the event appeared to only permit one purveyor and other local businesses were excluded.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Len Purnell

SECONDED BY: Councillor James Davis.

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED:

1. **Not** to award this application £4,000.
2. That the criteria for granting awards be updated to include the necessity for financial information and that at the least a bank statement be submitted before an application be considered.
3. That this application with financial information as indicated in the updated criteria be resubmitted at the next Tourism & Leisure Committee meeting.

326.4 The Helicopter Museum

Award applied for: £4,000

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

The accounts had been checked and cash at bank had been made available. No previous awards had been granted by the Town Council.

The application was for the restoration of the original structures on Weston Airfield adjacent to the control tower, including the arms store and signal square.

The Chairman proposed that £2,500 be awarded which prompted a member to voice his discomfort at awarding the Helicopter Museum a grant in consideration of the Town Council's own struggle in raising funds for Weston Museum. However, it was recognised that the two museums were complementary. The Responsible Financial Officer informed that the Town Council had been advised by HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) to partner, and confirmed that the two museums were working in partnership. In terms of tourism the partnership was beneficial. The question arose as to whether Weston Museum could apply for an award through the Tourism Events Budget.

Councillor Peter Crew had proposed an award of £2,500 but Councillor Roger Bailey proposed an amendment of £2000.

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED: To award this application £2000.

327.

Parks and Play Areas

The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.

In the absence of the Grounds Manager, the Community and Grounds Administrator was in attendance.

327.1 Water Park:

Members were advised that the park was on the brink of reopening for the summer season and that the partnership with North Somerset Council was going well as was the concession. The water splash pad was due to be commissioned on 8th April 2017.

A member voiced his concerns following a discussion with a North Somerset Council member of staff regarding graffiti on the Water Park's Stockholm Castle, evidence of drugs in the park; no sand in the sand pit and the gate near the café having been left open by the concessionaire. As far as North Somerset Council were concerned this gate was supposed to be closed. The Responsible Financial Officer advised that she would investigate the issues raised. However, the gate was allowed to be open if the concessionaire was on site; drugs were always a problem; the repainting of the castle was in hand and sand would be replenished for the start of the season. Members were informed that there were daily inspections with issues identified being actioned as quickly as possible. The Chairman noted the feedback of appreciation for the changing facilities now available at the park.

327.2 Play Area Refurbishment Programme: Year 1 was progressing and was on track.

327.3 Hutton Moor Skate Park Refurbishment:

Members were advised that all was now progressing well. The delay had been frustrating in view of the offer from North Somerset Council having been dropped due to the criteria set by the grant award to have spade in ground by the 6th February 2017. To meet this deadline, initially the skate park had been fenced off. Members noted the reason for the delays with the Responsible Financial Officer advising that the contractors had been informed of the Town Council's discontent.

327.4 Operational works – other Play Areas: The report was received and noted.

327.5 Parks and Open Spaces:

In response to a question from a member, it was confirmed that the Town Council received free flowers from North Somerset Council.

RESOLVED: That the report of Parks and Play Areas be received and noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.11 pm.

Signed: Dated:

Councillor Peter Crew

Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee