

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BLAKEHAY ON TUESDAY 13th JUNE 2023**

Meeting Commenced: 2.30pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.18pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), John Crockford-Hawley , Roger Bailey , Simon Harrison- Morse, Annabelle Chard, Caroline Reynolds, John Standfield, Joe Bambridge and Richard Tucker.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE : Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk) , Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services), Jane Murch (Visitor Information Manager) Molly Mah er (Senior Development Officer), Sharon Miles (Grounds Manger) , Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer) and Councillor Mike Solomon.

19	<p>Election of Chairman</p> <p>Nominations for the position of Chairman were invited.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried, and accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED That Councillor Peter Crew be elected Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee for the year 2023-24.</p>
20	<p>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Catherine Gibbons.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Mike Bell who was substituted by Councillor John Crockford-Hawley.</p>
21	<p>Election of Vice Chairman</p> <p>Nominations for the position of Chairman were invited.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew that Richard Tucker should be elected as Vice Chairman of the Committee.</p> <p>Councillor Tucker respectfully declined the proposition and accordingly it was:</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Richard Tucker SECONDED BY: Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried, and accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse be elected Vice Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee for the year 2023-24.</p>

22	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
23	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 4th April 2023</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.</p>
24	<p>To Note the Committee Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk gave an overview of the terms reference for the benefit of new members of the committee</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference for the Committee are adopted and agreed.</p>
25	<p>Finance Reports</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this budget had only run for two months within this financial year and as such would not expect to see and concerns at this point in time. Members were advised that Budgets were tight this financial year and as such there would need to be robust overview of how money would be spent as there is little to would need to be robust with no scope for new projects within the budget provisions for 2023 / 2024.</p> <p>A member enquired if there was a £10k deficit in relation to the spending v's income at the Waterpark. The Deputy Town Clerk explained the detailed budget papers and their make up to allow new members to understand the figures provided within them. In addition, pointed members to the summary page and offered to go through with new members on a one to one basis if this would be helpful at any point in the year.</p> <p>A member requested to have a simple breakdown of what this committee is responsible for and how it is funded as budget is going to be tough next year. And would be useful for new members.</p> <p>RECOMMENDED-To include a breakdown of committee reasonability and funding along with a full list of play areas under The Town Council control in next meetings reports.</p>
26	<p>Tourism Update</p> <p>.1 Partner presentation from The Visitor & Information Services Manager</p>

The Visitor and Information Services Manager introduced herself and her role and that of the rest of the tourism team which included Dave Peters, the Tourism Marketing Officer and the roaming welcome hosts. It was also reported that a work placement student from Weston College to work alongside Dave had started that day.

The film "You'll be amazed at how much W-S-M has" was shown to members and it was explained the platforms in which the film could be viewed by members of the public.

The Visitor & Information Services Manager gave an overview and presentation of the proposed new 'Tourism packages' to the committee with a full description of what each level within this would contain, noting there were lots of opportunities not yet explored with businesses like tattoo parlours and barber shops that could be promoted with the new offers being proposed.

Going forward, and having undertaken extensive engagement with current partners it was reported that many now felt the existing package offer was outdated and did not provide value for money. It was further recognised that there was an essential need to update the package following the free 2 years that many partners had had afforded to them. They simply would not now pay for a package that was not offering more than the current one did. Consolidation of the packages was therefore required to add more value.

Further opportunities could be explored by working with the BID team with a 'discounted' package being offered for the first year to get a bite of the cherry. This would be classified as a 'new partner joining offer' of £99 in the hope that after a successful year they would be keen to continue at the full rate the following year.

A member reported that they had noticed some out of date signs for the sea aquarium on the way into Weston, Councillor Mike Soloman agreed to report this back to North Somerset Council.

It was noted that the Website had been the biggest financial commitment in recent years and that further work was needed once the new partner offering was in place.

2 Update Report

Statistics

From April Statistics look good for the website use, showing more people coming from Scotland since the Scotland route had been included at Bristol airport.

Social media stats are up over 204% as that was where the focus for the team had been. More live videos had been incorporated which had helped with engagement.

There had been a 248% increase on the visit Weston site which was linked to the social media increase.

A member enquired how many of the 8k followers were from within Weston and the surrounding area which was reported at 68%.

Partnership programme data was provided to demonstrate which businesses were signed up.

Other Areas

It was reported that an opportunity had arisen at The Sovereign to have a pop up Tourism Information Centre which could be a way to access an increased audience of visitors and residents as the footfall was reported as up to 60k people on a busy weekend and considered a good site.

Mendip base camp had done the first social media take over and increased our followers by £1k. They ran a competition at the end and 120 people were reported to have entered. This was over their busiest bank holiday ever. Incentives like this were felt to add value to the Tourism offer.

The Assistant Town Clerk informed it cost The Council nothing in officer time to run the social media takeover and gained £1k new followers.

The Chairman reported that North Somerset Council had put a lot into getting purple flag at night-time and there was a need to promote that more as this could improve evening footfall.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew
SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

RESOLVED:

1. That the new partnership programme be adopted (attached) and be implemented with immediate effect.
2. To continue to explore options for a 'pop up' VIC within the Sovereign centre for the upcoming 6 weeks school holidays 2023, any implementation must come from existing marketing budgets only having full consideration for all cost implications to do so. Final decision if there is any outside budget cost implication must be approved by committee in advance (noting necessary alternative to go to P & F to meet timings to enable project implementation).
3. To recommend the introduction of a new charge -'new partner' programme charge of £99 (one time offer) for implementation on approval in summer 2023.

.3 Silca Update

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she had met with the team at North Somerset Council and the Assistant Town Clerk. The final design concept was now in the final stages ahead of the transfer of asset to the Town Council. Metal cladding had been the preferred choice of the designers within the budget available and this had been considered by the Conservation Officer who had advised the colour should match the structure itself as much as possible. Discussion had taken place about the installation of the screens on the bus stop side of the structure (south facing) as there was some concern of heat from the metal with the proposed touch screens, therefore it was felt the other side maybe where the screen should now be located.

A member enquired why it was taking so long to which The Deputy Town Clerk reported that architecture drawings, material sign off had needed to be done which had caused a delay. (Noting this was being done by NSC).

It was also noted that day to day maintenance of the site would remain with North Somerset Council and the Town Council's only commitment would be maintaining the screen/s.

Cllr Soloman reported he would put pressure on the relevant officers to speed up.

Cllr Soloman reported that the recreational area at the 'Royal Sands' end of the Seafront was nearing completion. The space would include various recreational elements and would include a 'Bocce' (French ball) area within the plans. It was further noted that funding for the Cornish pilot training gigs had been approved and would be based on seafront.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

27 Castle Batch SEN Play Park

.1 Build Progress and opening to include pictures from A1 Camera Club

The Deputy Town Clerk explained a little about the project, explaining that was the biggest investment in a play area since the Water park in 2009.

Members were shown updated pictures in chronological order to show the progress to date.

The raised beds had been installed by Somerset Wood Recycling but still required final positioning and planting which was due this week. New turf had been laid but there had been some problems with making sure it would be watered enough in the current heat wave.

A member enquired if the grounds team could assist with watering as they had done for Weston in Bloom in the past, but the Grounds Manager reported they did not have the capacity to help currently.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that they were looking into how The Council watered the new turf, trees and plants and that it may well be necessary to outsource the watering to ensure the areas had the greatest opportunity to establish ahead of the opening date. It was noted there had been 2 delays but members felt strongly that the launch event needed to take place before the summer holidays, hopefully 2nd week July, midweek.

A member enquired about the security plan for the site once it was completed.

The Chairman reported that the community response officers were to have a base at the community centre at periods during the week and that further options to CCTV should be explored. New members were advised of the of the community engagement events that had been hosted which had resulted in a dedicated park watch (combining already in place neighbourhood watch initiatives in the area). Discussion with NSC with regard to surrounding hedges and improvements to the car park area were ongoing with actions to improve visibility and parking to be implemented ahead of the opening date ideally.

3.51pm Cllr Soloman left the meeting.

.2 Launch Event-Plans & Dates

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that after 2 delays a new launch date would not be released until the team were sure it would not be pushed back again and all snagging and plants and trees had enough time to bed in. It was felt that the launch could be in the 2nd week of July before the school summer holidays as members had requested.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

28 Water Park
.1 Plant Room

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that work to replace the plant room was in its final stages and was just waiting for an independent test to confirm installation was complete. It was noted the works had taken longer than hoped as there had been some back and forth with the contactor who had proved not to have been the easiest to work with on

occasion.

The Grounds Manager reported that the grounds team had undertaken training on the new equipment and the opening would happen as soon as the last Legionella test was back. This was due within the next week. All other tests had returned back clear and a rota for testing had been drawn up so the team were in a place to open as soon as the final test was back.

A member queried the financial implications of the delay in opening. The Deputy Town Clerk advised it was estimated that the delay had cost £17k in lost income but there was scope to extend the season longer if the good weather continued, to be able to recoup some of the loss.

Discussion about contractors and how they were selected ensued.

A member enquired if there was a guarantee in place to which the Deputy Town Clerk reported there was a 2-year guarantee.

The Assistant Town Clerk reported that every year the plant room was decommissioned and recommissioned every season and that it needed to be done as close to opening as possible.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that this had been very specialist work and so procurement had taken longer than usual. The contract was issued on 14th February as soon as the committee had agreed, in the hope it would be ready for Easter.

The Assistant Town Clerk informed the pad surface had been replaced for free (different contractor) even though it was out of warranty so that was now also in good condition.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

29 Parks and play areas

The Grounds Manager reported that she had now received training which allowed her to carry out inspections of the playgrounds and she would take over inspections from August 2023, this would result in a cost saving by keeping inspections in house.

Fuel savings were being made by planning route optimisation within the grounds team.

The new sustainably planted flower beds in Grove and Clarence Park had now been planted which had been very resource draining but it was hoped would lighten the time required in future years as perennial, drought resistance plants had been used.

The product to remove the paint from the spray jam at the Hutton moor skate park had arrived so work would now be carried out to clear the whole site to make the ramp surfaces safe again

4.11pm Councillor Roger Bailey left the meeting.

The Grounds Manager reported that some essential reinvestment in some play equipment was needed and that a review of the EMRRP programme would be undertaken during 2023 / 2024 now the Grounds Manager was in post.

4.12pm Councillor Roger Bailey re-joined the meeting.

The Grounds Manger further reported that a full equipment and asset inventory was being undertaken and that in particular (so far) the ride on Ransom mower which was used for larger areas was coming to the end of its useable life and would need replacing imminently.
Litter picking was also noted as a priority for the team currently.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 4.18pm