

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BLAKEHAY ON TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2023**

Meeting Commenced: 2.33 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.12pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Crew (Chair), Annabelle Chard, Caroline Reynolds, Catherine Gibbons, Simon Harrison-Morse, Joe Bambridge and Richard Tucker.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services) Sharon Miles (Grounds Manager), Jane Murch (Visitor and Information Services Manager) and Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer).

164	<p>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillors Roger Bailey and Mike Bell, with no substitutions.</p>
165	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
166	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 15th August 2023</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that page 6 under Waterpark should read as well not his well.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That with the above amendment the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.</p>
167	<p>Finance Reports</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk Informed that reports had not been circulated due to sickness but would be forward to members after the meeting. It was noted there were, no surprises in the finances with the partners packages selling steadily. The Waterpark concluded the season in a strong position.</p> <p>RESOLVED That the reports of the Deputy Town Clerk be circulated to members.</p>
168	<p>Tourism Update</p> <p><u>.1 General update</u></p> <p>The Visitor and Information Services Manager reported it had been a busy end to the</p>

season, the welcome hosts had now finished but were visible until the end of September and two contracted staff had also concluded their employment.

Website statistics had continued to go from strength to strength and social media following had also risen with lots of engagement especially around what to do and food and drink posts. A recent post announcing the knife angel exhibition in spring 2024 had gained 166k engagements.

It was further reported the Tourism team along with Visit Bristol & Visit Bath had travelled to Milton Keynes to host a stand at the annual leisure show on 5th October, this had given the opportunity to network where there was a lot of discussion with coach operators and the need to offer more varied packages which the Visitor & Information Manager would be working on in the coming months ready for next season.

The team had also attended Freshers week which had a footfall of 1 k students. The autumn Job fayre would take place on 2nd November at The Winter Gardens where there would be a Weston Town Council presence in the hope to meet new potential welcome hosts for next season.

Work had begun to introduce an Autumn Ale Trail working with new bars and Pinkers Craft Brewery who would be sponsoring trail maps. It was hoped that following the trail success Pinkers Craft Brewery would become partners. A draft map was circulated to members which when finalised, would go on website and in local bars.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Visitor & Information Manager be noted.

.2 To receive the Tourism Manager's Halloween and Christmas plans 2023

The Visitor and Information Services Manager reported that the new Platform partnership offer for Halloween was going well, with a new offering such as "*Find the golden pumpkin*" every day of half term from one of the Partners. It was hoped that following evaluation of this scheme a similar scheme for Christmas could be explored.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Visitor & Information Manager be noted.

.3 Update Partners Report

5.3.1 New partners and changes to partnership levels

The report of the Visitor and Information Services Manager reported that there had been some new partners signed up such as Willow House and Super Culture both as Gold partners and Loves Café & The Blues Bar taking advantage of the Special offer with some others in the pipeline.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report of the Visitor and Information Services Manager be noted.

5.3.2 Business Closures & Openings

The Visitor and Information Services Manager noted that she had not been made aware of any closures but openings had been plentiful with the Fat head brewery and substance restaurant to mention a few who had recently launched.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Visitor and Information Services Manager be noted.

5.3.3 Airbnb in North Somerset

Following previous committee discussion, a member questioned how the Airbnb aspiration to get more on the Visit Weston Platform was going. The Visitor and Information Services Manager informed members that the team had not yet had the opportunity to explore this but would make it a priority and report back at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Visitor and Information Services Manager explore options for promoting Airbnb properties through the Visit Weston website.

5.4 Silca Update – Asset transfer update from the Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that costs for Perspex paneling were being explored to report back to North Somerset Council who would install the wooden alternative if the Perspex could not be sourced. Some officer time would need to be committed to this now the work load of the Summer was over.

The Chairmen indicated that the Perspex option would be favorable as was more aesthetically pleasing and would also provide some shelter and make the space more flexible.

A member felt that information points such as this was much needed to engage with members of the public that do not use social media.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

169 Castle Batch SEN Play Park

.1 Launch Event – PowerPoint presentation produced by the Communications and Marketing Officer

The PowerPoint presentation was shown by The Assistant Town Clerk showcasing the castle batch playpark launch which can all be viewed on the website and the park now has its own Facebook page.

RESOLVED: That the PowerPoint be noted.

.2 Future Steps-Community engagement & safety

The Chair reported that there had been successful negotiations with the PCSO team and Community Response Officers who would now have a base at the Community Centre at Castle Batch and The Campus to provide security for both high risk areas.

It was further reported that the Community Response Officers had undergone training and now had powers to challenge people, take names and addresses and have traffic authority also.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the new security camera approved by Full Town Council would be installed in the coming week.

RESOLVED: That the Report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

.3 Future Area for development from The Development Team

The Chair reported that it was hoped that a next phase would see further exploration and viability studies to see if Weston Town Council could potentially take over The Community Centre building to further enhance the area at Castlebatch. This could enable the opening of a Café, and provide toilet facilities alongside other uses. In

addition there was a recognised need to find ways to expand The Car Park provisions to the area which was currently being repainted with more disabled bays.

It was noted that this site was being discussed by the Youth Offending Board.

The Deputy Town Clerk felt that partners such as Big Worle would be open to discussing further development especially an outdoor gym for older children and there was a need to start more formal discussions with North Somerset Council if the committee wanted to peruse this as a n option, a business plan to enable budget provision to be considered would also need to be undertaken . A community Engagement session would need to be carried out to establish what is wanted for any further development.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

SECONDED BY: Councillor Joe Bambridge.

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**.

RESOLVED: To agree in principle, to support the installation of an adult gym at Castle Batch in order to enable further conversations with North Somerset Council and the exploration of grant funding and any associated community engagement.

.4 Contract update from Deputy Town Clerk

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the contractor was due to return to do some final snagging such as painting . All areas that had been affected by vandalism had been repaired and were back in working order.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

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Waterpark

.1 2023 End of season update from Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services

The Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services reported that it had been a stop start season but overall the splash pad had worked much better than the previous season. The splash pad had now been decommissioned and annual maintenance would be carried out over the winter months. Criminal damage and antisocial behavior continued to be problematic.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the park area on the site needed work and this element of the park had cost £400k back in 2009, so there is a need to manage expectations as to what could be achieved and if investment could not be made, some elements of the park would need to be removed for safety.

RESOLVED: Noted

.2 Future Opportunities from the Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services

The Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services reported that the café concession could successfully be ran in house and would provide the opportunity have complete control of the site and avoid people getting in without paying and help with que management.

The café offering would be kept simple selling hot and cold drinks as well as ice-creams and snacks in environmentally friendly packaging, run by casual staff and volunteers. It would require a multi department operation with resources from the Museum, Grounds

and VIC being utilized. A small set up investment would be needed to purchase fridges and displays but future profit could be reinvested into the site. Staff on site could also undergo training to carry out the routine daily water testing which would decrease demand on grounds staff. It was also believed this could offer a year-round operation.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the committee that a business plan would need to be produced and approved by the Policy & Finance Committee ahead of being fed into the upcoming budget.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse

SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**.

RECOMMENDED: Members are requested to support the plans outlined and the development of a business plan to enable the Operational Grounds Team to move forward ready for the summer season 2024 to include but not exclusively:

- Feasibility of a 'Kiosk; style café function and waterpark entry point
- Volunteer run VIC satellite supported by Visit Weston staff
- Routine Water Testing to be done by staff on site (overseen by grounds department)

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Parks & Play Areas

.1 To receive the report of the Grounds Manager

The Grounds Manager reported that she was now undertaking park inspections rather than this being carried out by a third party. A schedule of winter works had been identified and were being carried out such as making improvement to wet pour areas. A lot of work had been done to renovate Finger posts around the town and had been well received on social media. Planters at the Train station and Italian gardens had been improved and now looked much more welcoming for residents and visitors.

Hutton Moor skate park was due to reopen to the public soon after the successful removal of the paint from the spray jam earlier in the year and graffiti had continued to be a problem in other parks.

Two new dog waste bins and one general waste bin had been installed in Wyvern Close and Haywood parks.

The Ride on mower would need replacing within the next year as it was now 7 years old and had undergone a lot of maintenance repairs, this is a high use piece of equipment and essential to have in good working order.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Grounds Manger be noted.

.2 To receive List of All Play Areas & Identify priority areas for future investment 2023/24

The Grounds Manager was still awaiting the Stock condition report & Capital Investment Report but informed that in the meantime, routine maintenance works were being carried out but no replacement works.

A member reported receiving lot of complaints around Millennium Green Park from members of public in their ward requesting a safe space that was well maintained for families to enjoy.

The Assistant Town Clerk -Operational Services acknowledged that a large number of Parks required investment but a play strategy was needed to decide what direction would be taken to improve facilities.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised there was a need to talk to communities to see what they wanted in their area, fewer Flagship parks and smaller parks in local areas could be a positive way forward.

A member enquired if grant funding would help for some sites but the Deputy Town Clerk informed that investment in the area was very hard to obtain.

RECOMMENDED: To Circulate the Capital Investment report to members and recommend consideration to the Policy & Finance Committee.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 4.12 pm

Signed: Dated:

Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Committee