

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2022**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 9.02 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Sonia Russe (Town Mayor), Dot Agassiz, Marc Aplin, Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mike Bell, Mark Canniford, Gillian Carpenter, James Clayton, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Ciaran Cronnelly, David Dash, Peter Fox, Jan Holloway, Clare Morris, Pete McAleer, Alan Peak, Ian Porter and Richard Tucker.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk, Rebecca Saunders (Mayors Civic Officer/Committee Officer), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk Operational Services), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Reverend Peter Ashman (Town Mayors Chaplin), Inspector Graeme Hall (Avon and Somerset Police), Carl Nicholson (NSC), Charlie Williams (Weston Mercury), and Lisa Cooper, Alan Rice and Deborah Allen (members of the public)

The Town Mayor invited his Chaplain to say prayers.

128	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gillian Bute, Sarah Codling, Catherine Gibbons, Dave Hitchins, Robert Payne, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim, Helen Thornton, Timothy Taylor and Roz Willis.
129	To receive Declarations of Interest Councillor James Clayton declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 – Somewhere To Go as a Trustee.
130	To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on the 18th July 2022 An amendment to the Agenda was required that 'Annual Meeting' be changed to 'Meeting' and that the final paragraph of minute number 90 be deleted. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Ian Porter RESOLVED: That with the above amendments, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
131	Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-Super-Mare The Town Mayor welcomed Inspector Graeme Hall to the meeting. <i>7.10 pm Deborah Allen (member of the public) joined the meeting.</i>

It was reported that it had been a very busy summer with 128 officers from the area being posted to London after the death of The Queen.

Members were updated on the Bournville team base and that they would be staying in their current location until the following year until a suitable new location on the estate had been acquired.

It was noted that there were 6,500 more calls a month being taken post pandemic. A new call back system had been put into place to put markers on properties and was working well ensuring callers got a call back within 24hrs.

The problem with street drinkers at the Silica site had been resolved by high visibility policing.

Injunctions had been served on a range of young individuals causing problems. They were at different stages of the process and some were now unable to enter the town centre.

7.15 pm Councillor Mark Canniford joined the meeting.

The Mounted Police were also patrolling the area fortnightly.

7.16 pm Carl Nicolson (North Somerset Council) joined the meeting.

August saw the conclusion of a big operation which successfully jailed a number of offenders running county lines in the area.

Summer demand had also ended on 2nd October and plans were in place to cover such events as Enduro weekend and Carnival.

The next area to be focused on would be car crime and criminal damage with more details to follow at the next update.

Questions were invited.

It was asked if CCTV had been actively used in regards to damage at WTC toilets, to which Inspector Hall reported he wasn't sure but could enquire and update at the next meeting.

It was enquired as to how the call back system actually worked, to which Inspector Hall explained it was a call back system for when the phone lines were in high demand.

7.23 pm Councillor Marc Aplin joined the meeting.

A member reported a problem engaging with the Police Sergeant on the Bournville team. Inspector Hall agreed to investigate as good relationships with residents on the estate was vital.

A member reported a positive response from the 'B Safe' team who had consistently been brilliant.

7.26 pm Lisa Cooper (Member of the public) left the meeting.

It was questioned what attempts were being made to relocate repeat offenders in drug dealing. Inspector Hall committed to engaging with the member outside the meeting to resolve the query.

7.29 pm Councillor Mike Bell & Lisa Cooper (member of the public) joined the meeting.

A member enquired if there was a place for social media and engaging with community groups to warn members of the public of crime. Inspector Hall agreed but his teams needed to be mindful of false accusations and data protection.

7.34 pm Councillor Peter Fox left the meeting.

The Town Mayor thanked Inspector Graham Hall for his time and report *and he left the meeting at 7.35 pm.*

132 Public Transport

The Mayor suspended Standing Orders and allowed Deborah Allen (member of the public) to address the Council under public participation, despite having arrived late. Deborah thanked the Mayor and apologised for arriving late.

7.37pm Councillor Peter Fox re-joined the meeting.

Deborah explained that routes were not published well enough as she had herself lived on the number 5 route for many years and had not realised. Bus shelter signage was not easily accessible due to be located above 6.5ft and was not in an easy font to read. Bus stops and bus shelters needed to be improved so less abled members of the public could use.

The Mayor resumed Standing Orders and invited Carl Nicholson of North Somerset Council to present to the Council.

Carl Nicholson acknowledged that while current bus stop signage was compliant it was not good enough. He reported a complete rebrand would take place by April 2023 so would improve.

His report dated 4th August listed route cuts but since publication the X5 excluding the Portishead to Clevedon leg had been saved; although the route would no longer include Locking Castle which was disappointing.

There had been a lot of unrest about the loss of route 126 but the route had struggled on subsidy for a long time and was no longer sustainable at a £5,000 loss a week to run.

The X2 had also been withdrawn.

The government funding of £48,000 would be spent over the next two and a half years with bus routes as a priority but this effort could still be hampered if more bus drivers could not be recruited, because this area had 20% fewer drivers than needed to cover all routes.

It was acknowledged that buses needed to be more reliable for passengers to have confidence in the service.

On a positive note he reported that some routes were well used and running at full capacity.

	<p>The Mayor reported herself waiting a lengthy amount of time for a bus to turn up at night and what an unpleasant experience it was.</p> <p>Carl Nicholson closed by saying some diversions would be needed in some areas with schemes such as DRT, (Demand Responsive Transport) which had been very successful in other areas.</p>
<p>133</p>	<p>To receive announcements and communications from The Town Mayor</p> <p>The Mayor's announcements and communications were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>There had been 45 engagements for the Mayor, 22 for The Deputy Mayor which was a total of 106 to date.</p> <p>Significant dates were:</p> <p><u>22nd July-Oppits Matilda Performance</u> <u>28th July-Lions Beer & Ale Festival</u> <u>5th August-Sea Shanty Festival</u> <u>6th August-Beach Rugby</u> <u>17th August-Horrible Histories Workshops</u> <u>30th August-SEE Monster Drone Show</u> <u>3rd September-Charity Sailing Day</u> <u>4th September-Big Worle Opening</u> <u>6th September-Sunshine Radio Appearance</u> <u>8th September-RBL Bike Night</u> <u>27th September-Tree Planting</u></p> <p>The Mayor thanked the Deputy for covering in her absence, the week following The Queens death. He had visited many Care Homes and Schools with the book of condolence.</p> <p>The Horrible Histories event at The Museum had been brilliant and was due to return on 22nd October.</p> <p>The North Somerset Parent Carers working together (NSPCWT) official launch at The Firs was great to support as her chosen beneficiary this year and the sailing day which she had held with the children from the organisation had been a brilliant success.</p> <p>She had enjoyed taking on the personal challenge of sailing in a gig boat.</p> <p>Lastly she reported on the graduation ceremony for Weston University Centre which had recorded some of the highest outcomes in the Southwest.</p> <p><i>7.54 pm Carl Nicolson (North Somerset Council) left The meeting.</i></p>
<p>134</p>	<p>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meeting held in June 2022</p> <p>The notes of the Youth Council meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the notes of the Youth Council meeting for June 2022 be received.</p>

135 To formally approve and adopt the Council's Risk Register for the 2022/2023

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk and Action Plan had previously circulated.

It was reported that this had been discussed at length at the last E&G meeting but was happy to share the full report with members.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

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

RESOLVED: To adopt the Council's risk register for 2022-2023, to meet Town Council Governance requirements.

136 Somewhere to Go-Service Level Agreement

The report of the Town Clerk and proposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) had been previously circulated prior to the meeting.

The Town Clerk summarised his report and advised that the council had supported Somewhere to Go since 2019 with £25,000 to fund an overnight shelter but this had changed over the pandemic. One year the funds had been spent to provide sleeping pods.

It had been proposed to raise this funding to £50,000 but a Service Level Agreement (SLA) was needed to understand and manage exactly how these monies would be spent.

This Item had been discussed at E&G and their resolution had been tabled, recommending to approve items one and two and that future funding be reliant on Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

8.03 pm Charlie Williams (Weston Mercury) left the meeting.

The Town Clerk also advised that North Somerset Council (NSC) had now received a large amount of funds for homelessness, so questioned if the funding would be duplicating NSC efforts.

Two members reported that it had been discussed in depth at E&G and while happy to vote in favour for this item, it would need to be monitored closely to ensure the funding was working.

It was questioned if the council needed to double support now that NSC would be able to give extra support.

Councillor James Clayton reported that only a small amount of the overall homelessness fund would be going to Somewhere to Go as much of it had been ring-fenced for prevention.

Another, dual hatted, member reported that the town council funding would complement the NSC funds not duplicate them.

A member asked Councillor James Clayton if there were plans underway to reopen the much needed overnight assessment centre. He reported that discussions were underway

for this but there were strict rules in relation to overnight accommodation and extra staffing and volunteers would be needed to implement this.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

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

RESOLVED: That the Town Council agrees:

1. To fund Somewhere to Go in the sum of £50,000 for the current year in accordance with the attached proposal.
2. To authorise the Town Clerk to enter into a Service Level Agreement with Somewhere to Go accordingly.
3. The suggested Key Performance Indicators within the Somewhere to Go report be fully monitored and reported quarterly; reports to come back to the Expenditure and Governance Working Party for review, to enable any concerns and monitoring to be referred to the Policy and Finance Committee.
4. Future years' funding would be dependent on the KPIs having been met and reviewed for the previous year.

137 Motion to Council under so 11-Bus cuts Weston-super-Mare

The Mayor brought forward item 11 for discussion, due to item number 10 being confidential and members of the public needing to leave.

8.16 pm Reverend Peter Ashman & Councillor Mark Canniford left the meeting.

In Councillor Helen Thornton's absence Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly addressed members and reported how the route cuts due to take place on 9th October 2022 would be devastating for passengers and some areas like Locking Castle were going from 2 buses to nine per day.

He shared stories from residents who explained how they would lose their jobs without bus access or have to walk many miles to reach education.

Communication from First Bus had been very poor and felt strongly the town council should flag their concerns.

8.20 pm Councillor Mark Canniford re-joined the meeting.

It was questioned if the wording of the motion should be softened.

Another member felt the motion had no real substance but would be happy to vote in favour as the council had a duty of care to its residents.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

SECONDED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

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

RESOLVED:

First Bus has announced a range of changes to its bus timetables across Weston-super-Mare including a reduced X5 service, and the withdrawal of the 126. These changes will be introduced from Sunday 9th October 2022.

It is noted that Weston-super-Mare Town Council:

- Is extremely disappointed with the withdrawal and reduction of buses across Weston-super-Mare and with the lack of public engagement from First Bus.
- Shares the concerns of residents that these cuts will make getting to work, school/college, running errands and attending medical appointments harder, and for some communities, impossible. As well as taking a step backwards in tackling the climate emergency.
- Welcomes the work of North Somerset Council to secure a reduced X5 but has concerns these changes will still see the communities in Locking Castle without access to any buses.
- Believes Weston-super-Mare needs a sustainable bus network and this requires the Government to provide local authorities with more powers and to receive sufficient funding.
- Acknowledges the Department for Transport's fare cap but due to the cost of living and need to increase bus patronage believe this should be introduced earlier and permanently.

Weston-super-Mare Town Council resolves to:

- Write to the Managing Director of First Bus outlining our concerns about the proposed cuts and calling on them to retain the 126 service
- Write to North Somerset Council calling for a solution to be put in place, such as rerouting an existing service, to ensure the communities in Locking Castle have access to a bus and to explore working in partnership with Somerset County Council to find alternatives should the 126 be cut.
- Write to the Secretary of State for Transport calling for local authorities to be given greater powers to run, manage and support bus networks and to provide additional funding.
- Should the cuts go ahead then undertake a review, within 6 months of all existing Town Council bus shelters to identify if these remain in appropriate locations. The review will be reported to the Community Services Committee.

8.35 pm a five-minute comfort break took place.

8.42 pm The meeting resumed.

To resolve under the Public Bodies (Admissions of Meeting) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the following item by reasons of the confidential nature of the business.

138 Old Town Quarry

The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

The Town Clerk advised that several problems were listed in the report. NSC had been very cooperative and the removal of the unsafe building 1 was due to start last month but had been hampered by ongoing Bat surveys, so would now be delayed for a year until September 2023. Also an unauthorised structure had been erected without landlord's, planning or building control consent and there were businesses on the site that needed to be relocated. Moreover, the Civic Society had lost all their documentation regarding the occupiers which meant there was uncertainty around occupation terms and in some cases whether there might be sub-leases with security of tenure rather than licenses.

Alex Hearn on behalf of NSC had come up with an imaginative alternative proposal but legal advice from the town council's solicitors had strongly advised against accepting and taking on a lease until NSC had got the problem areas resolved.

The Town Clerk accordingly felt that he had to advise members not to continue at this point as there would be serious legal risks and in addition obstacles preventing the use of the site for things the town council had planned, such as a base for the grounds team for example. However, he advised the council to keep communication going and to continue to provide basic maintenance of the grounds.

Councillor John Crockford -Hawley then read out his proposal as follows:

"Weston-super-Mare Town Council welcomes North Somerset Council's intention to take over the responsibility for the lease on the Old Town Quarry property from Weston Civic Society and subsequently to regularise management of the land and buildings.

The Town Council confirms that it will actively support the orderly surrender and transfer of the lease from Weston Civic Society to North Somerset Council, and will support continuing discussions with sub-tenants.

The Town Council will continue to manage the Quarry grounds in partnership with North Somerset Council.

The Town Council will actively pursue and develop investment plans for the future of the Old Town Quarry with the intention of taking over the lease at a future date to be agreed."

The Town Clerk agreed that this was a good formulation.

A member questioned if it would be advisable to consult the new proposal with the solicitors before passing.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried** For-16, Against-1, Abstained-2

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED:

Weston-super-Mare Town Council welcomes North Somerset Council's intention to take over the responsibility for the lease on the Old Town Quarry property from Weston Civic Society and subsequently to regularise management of the land and buildings.

The Town Council confirms that it will actively support the orderly surrender and transfer of the lease from Weston Civic Society to North Somerset Council, and will support continuing discussions with sub-tenants.

The Town Council will continue to manage the quarry grounds in partnership with North Somerset Council.

The Town Council will actively pursue and develop investment plans for the future of the Old Town Quarry with the intention of taking over the lease at a future date to be agreed

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.03 pm.

Signed: Dated:

Town Mayor



REPORT TO WESTON-SUPER-MARE

TOWN COUNCIL

21st November 2022

MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

3rd October 2022 – 21st November 2022

Town Mayor

Councillor Sonia Russé

ENGAGEMENTS SUMMARY

Council Representative	Number of Engagements
TOWN MAYOR Cllr Sonia Russé	28
DEPUTY MAYOR Cllr Peter McAleer	3
TOWN COUNCIL LEADER Cllr Alan Peak	1

TOTALS TO DATE

Council Representative	Number of Engagements
TOWN MAYOR Cllr Sonia Russé	107
DEPUTY MAYOR Cllr Peter McAleer	30
TOWN COUNCIL LEADER Cllr Alan Peak	1
TOTAL	138

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:

5th October-Scouts Awards Evening
11th October Anti Hate crime workshop
22nd October RBL Breakfast Club Meet
24th October Diwali Festive
27th October Poppy Shop Launch
29th October Hildesheim Exchange visitors lunch
5th November WODS Bad Girls Performance
11th Armistice Short Service
14th November Remembrance Parade

UPCOMING EVENTS

26TH November Christmas Light Switch On
5th-9th December Trip to Hildesheim
13th-17th December Mayor's Art Exhibition
15th December Staff, Councillors & Volunteers Christmas Party
18th December Christmas Carol Service

Reference from the Community Services Committee held on 7th November 2022 Regarding North Somerset Council CCTV - Minute Extract

North Somerset Council CCTV

Howard Potheary, the Safer Communities Service Manager was invited to make his presentation.

Howard introduced his colleagues Jim Stanbury and Natalie Thomas.

The presentation outlined the context, latest updates and the CCTV control room operations.

Safer Communities Service – there were 5 strands to this, The Community Response Team, CCTV Emergency Control Room, Community Safety Enforcement, Domestic Abuse and the Violence Reduction Unit.

Jim explained since Chris Harrison had departed there were challenges with staffing and recruitment, DBS checks were taking too long to process. Staff were working day and night to cover but it was hoped to be up to full strength by Christmas. Creating a structure which was fit for purpose was the objective.

The CCTV control room operates 24/7, 365 days a year, with 269 cameras; 145 public surveillance and 124 council spaces.

It was queried if cameras situated at Grove Park toilets could be linked to NSC CCTV and monitored to help tackle the antisocial behavior issues there.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this had been requested at procurement stage but due to cost implications and connectivity issues at the site, they had been advised by NSC that it was not possible.

Despite these challenges, the CCTV control room had remained operational and successes included involvement in 3371 incidents.

The Chairman enquired what the process of getting the cameras at Grove Park toilets linked to NSC were. The Deputy Town Clerk informed that if it was now possible to link them, a quote would need to be received from NSC and agreed by full Town Council as there was no available budget for CCTV.

Jim advised that the cost of installing two 360degree cameras was approximately £4,500, with the additional cost of the annual sim cards.

Members were reminded that that the Town Council funded two mobile cameras', which could be used at the site. It was confirmed that one was already in use, so there was one available. It was suggested to utilise the camera to cover the site for an interim period while a permanent solution was sought as it was considered a worthwhile investment to combat the vandalism costs.

The Committee requested regular reports from CCTV to be received.

Members were mindful that the next Town Council meeting was the 21st November and so Howard agreed that he could discuss a quote for the installation of two 360degrees cameras to cover Grove Park toilets, within the next two weeks before the meeting.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor James Clayton

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Mc Aleer

A vote was taken and was **carried**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. To request the full Town Council to receive a quote from North Somerset Council and consider funding for the installation of two 360degrees cameras to cover Grove Park toilets at its 21st November Town Council meeting.
2. That as an interim measure, utilise the mobile camera to cover the site while a permanent solution was sought.

Members viewed the CCTV incident heat map and were encouraged to make any additions. The map could be embedded into the Town Council's website.

Natalie Thomas introduced herself and informed that she had been in post since September. She was aware of WsM's reputations and was excited to improve/enhance North Somerset Council's CCTV mechanisms, which was pivotal in reducing crime. She also stressed the importance of working together to tackle and wanted to modernise, improve communications and reporting.

The aim was to work with key businesses in the public sector as a starting point to identify alarm response services, lone worker protection scheme options at highly competitive rates.

Natalie informed of the Dark Monitoring, Lone Worker scheme of which they were looking to launch a mobile app for in January 2023, of which further information would come out on the services.

Natalie advised that the scheme would be initially rolled out to the workforce, with a view to offering this out to members of the public. The long-term objective was a commercial venture, but they were not at this stage yet.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their presentation.

**NATIONAL CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT
REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK**

Throughout the parish and town council sector, concerns have been growing about the impact that bullying and intimidation is having on some councils, councillors and staff. Staff including clerks are employees and disciplinary procedures can be applied where justified. However, while the Standards Board arguably took things too far in the 2000's, the total abolition of the Board, the national code of conduct and all sanctions for misbehaving members in the Localism Act 2011 has clearly left a lacuna in which a tiny minority of people can cause a disproportionate amount of problems for fellow councillors as well as for staff.

The incident involving Jackie Weaver and Handforth Parish Council last year is now famous (or infamous) as an example of this. It would be nice to think Handforth was an isolated incident – but it is not. Problems can arise at any size of council although the impact can be hardest at smaller parish councils where a clerk has no colleagues to turn to for support and councillors may also have few or no sympathetic colleagues.

In response the civility and respect project was set up by a working group comprising representatives from across the sector including the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Society of Local Council Clerks (SLC) One Voice Wales (OVW) and county associations.

Collaboration on the project has also taken place with organisations including the Local Government Association (LGA), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG), Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), Society of Local Authority Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR) and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMG).

Initial research and analysis showed that it is a minority of individuals across our sector who engage in poor behaviour but the impact is significant and felt by many people. Bullying and harassment can affect councillors as well as clerks, and can be by other councillors or even the clerk him- or herself. With this in mind, the aim of the civility and respect project is to coordinate a programme of work designed to promote civility and respect in public life including good governance, positive debate and to support the wellbeing of councillors, professional clerks and staff.

Good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels. Some progress has been made to meet the project aims which include:

- Putting in place a civility and respect training programme which is already offered to councils by NALC, SLCC and OVW.
- Developing policies and procedures for councils to adopt, including member officer protocols, documents providing clarification of the role of the clerk and

councillors, social media policies, a dignity at work policy and a review of NALC's model grievance policy

- A collaboration workstream liaising and sharing best practice with organisations in other sector (See above)
- A legislative workstream to monitor and influence legislation and raise the profile of the issue with parliamentarians, government ministers and departments and civil servants
- Establishing a civility and respect pledge and introducing a 'kite mark' for best practice councils

It is of course important that councillors can debate issues with views strongly expressed where appropriate. Nothing in the project is designed to prevent this or to water down legitimate debate. If it were, we would not be able to support it.

The first, current phase is asking all councils who support the project to discuss the issue and to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge. In the past decade or so central government has questioned whether there is councillor support for, for example, a stronger code of conduct and so the project asks councils to sign up to the Pledge at a full council meeting. The pledge is as follows:

1. To treat other councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.
2. Commit to training councillors and staff.
3. Sign up to the code of conduct for councillors.
4. Have good governance arrangements in place.
5. Commit to seeking professional help at an early stage should civility and respect issues arise.
6. Call out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
7. Continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to be a role model/ champion council.
8. Support the continuing lobbying for the change in legislation to support the civility and respect pledge, including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

While I believe Weston Town Council is a well conducted body and we do have some, although not all, of the recommended documentation (such as an officer/ member protocol) etc already in place, I believe it is important for as many councils as possible, especially larger town councils, to support this national initiative for the sake of colleagues in other councils.

Recommendation

That the Council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge and the commitments set out above.

Malcolm L Nicholson LLB, DMS PSLCC
Town Clerk
9th November 2022

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING 21/11/2022
CASTLE BATCH PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENT
REPORT OF THE DEPUTY TOWN CLERK, DRAFTED 14/11/2022

Members will be aware that Castle Batch Play Area was designated for a refurbishment during the 2022/2023 budget setting process, with £200,000 allocated for the works. It had been agreed by members that the play area would specifically cater for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Consultation for the project began in April 2022, with SENCOs supporting the process to ensure it was accessible. With nearly 500 responses, the public consultation highlighted the level of desire and need within the community, and made it clear that the need went far beyond our budget provision.

We began exploring further options for funding, with the target of doubling the original budget. The following funding was confirmed:

- £20,000 - North Somerset Council: Improving Play Spaces Fund
- £30,000 – North Somerset Council: Section 106 contributions
- £46,868 - Community Infrastructure Levy
- £10,000 – National Lottery Community Fund
- Minimum £500 – Tesco Community Grant Blue Token Scheme (up to £1,500)
- £49,999 – Big Worle

Total raised so far: £357,367

Current shortfall: £42,633

During the procurement process, contractors were asked to design to play schemes, one to the value of £230,000, the other to the value of £400,000. Given the success in raising the funds in such a short space of time, and the likelihood that we would reach our goal, the contract award with the aspiration of a £400,000 scheme. The contractor has now confirmed that the final order for confirmed works and value is needed by the end of November 2022 to allow for manufacture and works to commence in January 2023 as scheduled.

Whilst we are continuing to explore further options for funding, we have to consider the possibility that we may not be able to fully reach the shortfall by the end of November deadline for work orders. There is a huge will from the community and with a recently held engagement evening we are following up on all potential leads to secure as much additional funding as we can.

With deadlines fast approaching we would ask that members consider the following to allow full scheme delivery, notwithstanding that we will continue to source grant funding in the meantime.

Members are request to:

1. Consider designating funding from next years EMRRP budget to cover the project shortfall, to the value of £42,633, should additional funding not be secured by April 2023.

2. Approve the order for unsecured monies £42,633 as 1 above be raised to Sutcliffe play along with monies raised since the first order (£327,363) was placed to a total project value of £400,000 which are included in the breakdown above.

Report to the Town Council – 21st November 2022

Report on Community Tree Nursery proposal

written by Andy Chappel – Climate & Community Development Officer in association with the Deputy Town Clerk.

The attached report was received from Emily Burnell, a member of the Weston-super-Mare Tree Forum and details the proposal to establish a community tree nursery in the town at a site adjacent to the Maltland's Play Area – WeSee Trees C.T.N.

To summarise, the report covers the following areas:

The aims of the project and its current status

Benefits and risks

Timescales

Current and earmarked funding

Requested considerations for the Town Council

Following on from the recent Tree Forum meeting held where the project gained unanimous support discussions held with the Climate and Community Development Officer and the Deputy Town Clerk to how the project could be enabled. It was concluded that this is something the Town Council may be able to easily facilitate. It meets strategy ambition and links in with the councils adopted 6 community outcomes as have been detailed in the accompanying report. The Council would be well placed to take ownership via a long term lease or licence with North Somerset council as land owner in order to facilitate its use as community-based asset. There will be no financial implications to taking over the site, but the project may need assistance of the Town Council grounds team as it progresses with task such as monitoring, adhoc watering and supporting the volunteers with any maintenance – all of which fall with the job roles of the Community Rangers. Noting this is a community led initiative / deliver as detailed in the plan and any grounds team involvement would be in a 'support role' only as and when required, with no expectation of anything more than this.

Members are requested to:

Approve that Officers in consultation with the Town Clerk pursue negotiations with North Somerset Council to act as governing body and take on the land at Maltland's, Locking Castle Weston super Mare as an asset for use as a community tree nursery.



PROPOSAL

To establish a community tree nursery in Weston-super-Mare

WeSee Trees C.T.N

Maltlands
W-s-M, N.Somerset, BS22 8QS
OS: ST 34910 61536
[///apples.museum.bunk](http://apples.museum.bunk)

07909 220224
ejburnell@live.com

WeSee Trees C.T.N - proposal

Establishing a community tree nursery

WeSee Trees community tree nursery came about via a SEEMonster Think-tank session at the beginning of 2022 where I joined the environmental session and met Steve Clark of Jack Pine Trees Ltd (Arboricultural Consultant <https://www.jackpinetrees.co.uk/>) and Alex Stone (Director of Forest of Avon Trust <https://forestofavontrust.org/>).

Weston Tree Forum has been formed since then and I have been involved in that from the beginning. The suggestion of starting a community tree nursery was warmly received by forum members, and as such I have been seeking support since then to formally bring it to life.

AIMS

Using locally collected seeds from our seed provenance area 404 [see map, p.8] to retain regional, genetic diversity and provide appropriate species to improve tree stock resilience. WeSEE Trees would like to support the increase in urban green infrastructure in and around Weston and North Somerset, and contribute towards the Town Council's objective to plant 10,000 trees by 2030.

By utilising trees grown by the community tree nursery, councils and land owners will be supporting a local initiative, that not only serves to grow trees but supports the local community in appreciating the wonders of growing trees from seed and will offer a low-cost alternative to the purchase of mature trees for planting. It is an educational opportunity for anyone who gets involved - both in sharing skills and enhancing experiences as well as boosting the wellbeing of people and our shared green spaces.

This is also well aligned with the Town Council's climate emergency declaration and subsequent strategy and objectives, particularly in relation to:

2.4 - To promote biodiversity. To create a 'rewilding' programme in cohesion with North Somerset Council in appropriate areas

2.5 - To maintain current and increase current tree stocks to offset carbon. In addition to look for more opportunities to plant trees in our area.

2.14 - To give preference wherever possible to the procurement of goods and services from locally based suppliers subject to best value principles

2.16 - Enable provision of parks and play areas as community facility

2.17 - To encourage visitors to respect the local environment.

CURRENT STATUS

The community tree nursery will be primarily volunteer led - as such the Climate and Community Development Officer was approached who has offered support with this project and contact has been made with North Somerset Council; James McCarthy - Tree Officer, Esther Coffin-Smith - Natural Environment Manager, John Flanagan - Community and Environment Service Manager, Cathy Lynch and Ed McKay.

North Somerset Council have offered the Maltlands site for the project on a peppercorn lease for community use.

It is imperative that the site, which is currently overgrown, is cleared before Spring 2023 when nesting birds may start taking over the site again. North Somerset Council have agreed to clear the site and restore services at the site once they receive confirmation that the project has been appropriately formed.

This project will be developed as part of a network to engage people across communities in North Somerset with different interests and backgrounds to be part of the solution to the climate emergency.

REQUESTED CONSIDERATIONS:

In order to proceed, the tree nursery needs to be part of an established and formally constituted group with a bank account and at least 2 independent signatories, a governing document, purpose, and a set of rules. It is for this reason, following positive discussions with Town Council officers and tree forum members, I am proposing that Weston-super-Mare Town Council act as the governing body to enable this project's progress.

The intention is for the Town Council to act as governing body to enable the start-up of the project, with an additional devolved agreement with the community tree nursery to be reviewed periodically.

Requests:

- Working to a devolved agreement (similar to allotment agreement) in which the group look after the day-to-day running of the nursery with an aim to becoming a self-sustainable entity of its own right.
- Weston Town Council take over the governance of land
- Set up cost support **ROUGH AMOUNT**
- Ownership of grant applications on groups behalf.
- Volunteer management support - including risk assessment relevant to the project.

FUNDING:

North Somerset Council hold CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding for the site circa. £16k which is solely ringfenced for the set-up of the site. They have offered a 5-year lease (with break clauses included) of the site on peppercorn rent.

Earmarked sources of funding for ongoing costs and operation to be applied for;

- DEFRA Biosecurity Grant - <https://fellowshipofthetrees.org/ctnc/>
- Enovert Community Trust - <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/council-democracy/priorities-strategies/climate-emergency/climate-funding>
- England's Community Forest areas have access to some funds for community nurseries

RISKS:

The space - In the event of the group being disbanded, this agreement would allow for the Town Council to safeguard the site for other community groups.

Access to water - the aim is to reinstall water services to the site, which North Somerset Council will assist with, and also to harvest rain water collection. The Town Council grounds team can also assist to water the site, if needed.

Anti-social Behaviour - The site already has secure fencing and the suggestion would be to have a locked unit on site for volunteers, including accessible toilet facilities. By merit of this being a community project, it is intended that the local community will encourage positive use and ownership of the space. CCTV can also be explored, if needed.

TIMESCALES:

July 2022 - Initial conversation with Weston Tree Forum about initiating a community tree nursery and contact with North Somerset Council about potential site.

August 2022 - Met with North Somerset Council officials to discuss the potential of the Maltlands site for the project.

Sept 2022 - Sought volunteer interest, promoted the idea across the area on social media, updated progress to the Weston Tree Forum, where support to grow the idea was offered by Town Council officers.

Oct 2022 - North.Somerset agree their commitment to clearing the site, upon the group being formally constituted. Seed collecting began.

November 2022 - February 2023 - Seed storage, site preparation led by North Somerset Council and seed stratification for germination

Spring 2023 - 5-year lease begins until 2028 (with break clauses included) and seeds are sown and volunteer involvement begins.

Summer 2023 - Trees are grown, and volunteer projects continue.

Autumn 2023 - Annual seed collection

November 2023 - March 2024 - Tree lifting and planting season

Spring 2023 - Annual review of project and group ownership, as per devolved agreement

2028 - end of initial 5-year lease with North Somerset Council

BENEFITS AND POSITIVES:

- To grow trees that will thrive locally
- To increase numbers of rare native species
- To enable growth of trees at a low cost, locally.
- To grow a specific species that can be difficult or costly to purchase.

Suitable species will be grown that benefit the regions biodiversity, climate and existing canopy cover.

Newly grown trees can be used to create woodlands, hedgerows, orchards or single trees in urban areas, for example trees along highways and streets. They can also be planted in dedicated green space such as local parks, school grounds, private farmland, community gardens or private household gardens.

Successful application for 'Copse in a Box' - with root trainers to grow 400 trees and copies of The Tree Growers Guide learning resource.

Will build upon successful community support for other Council-enabled projects such as the Fridge of Free Stuff, Food club, allotments and Tree Forum.

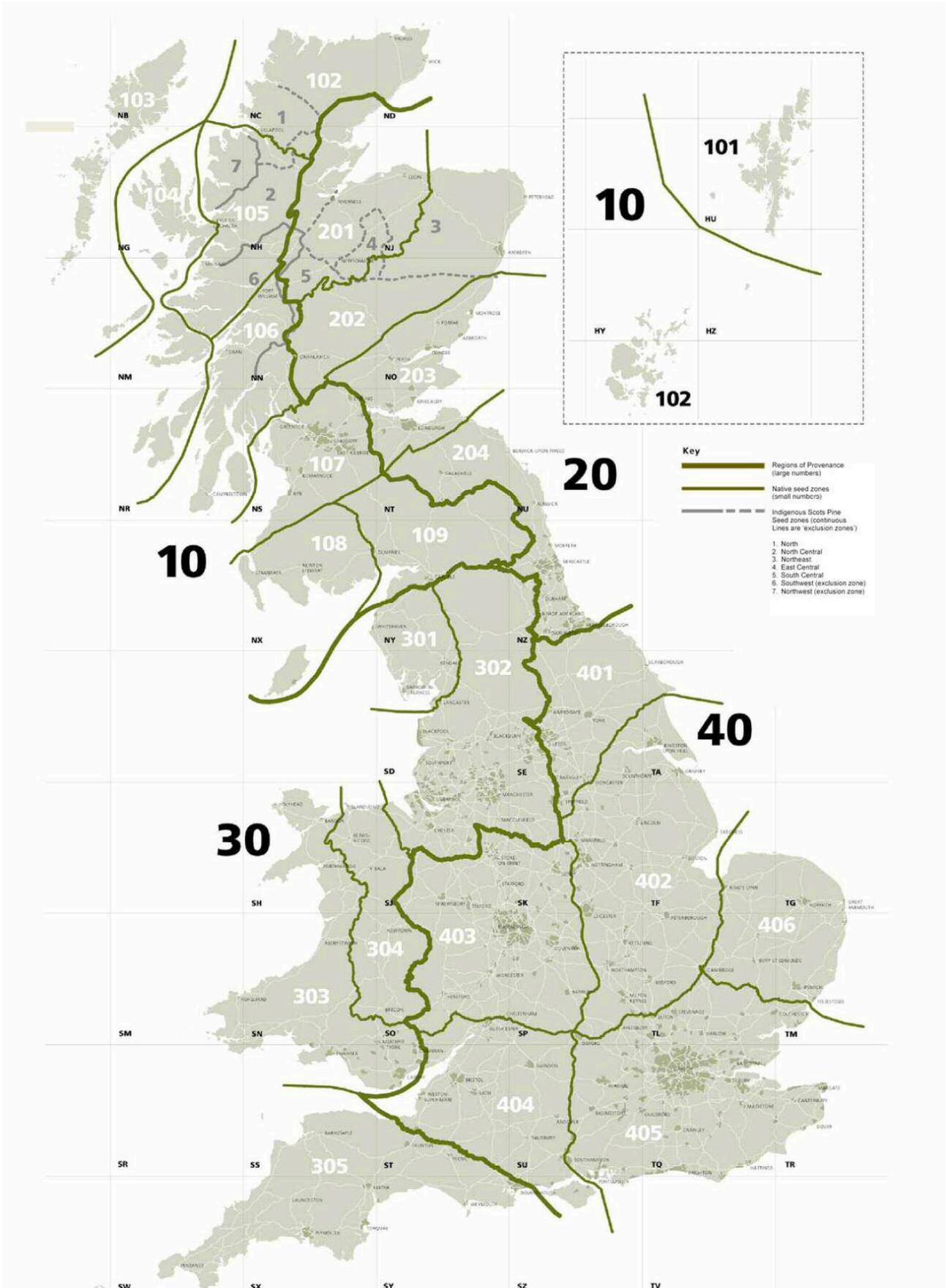
A community-led endeavour involving people from across the town and beyond to create something for future generations to come.

Partnerships have been made with groups such as Friends of Grove Park, Keepers Gate Forest School and Osprey Outdoors to help establish the site, gain volunteers, share skills and collaborate with wider community initiatives.

Part of the Community Tree Nursery Collaborative, set up by Fellowship of the Trees, for peer support and learning and aims to foster links with the Forest of Avon Trust

The experience current group members bring:

- Youth Worker in Merseyside (Rank Foundation)
- Volunteer Development Officer across Somerset
- Community Engagement Administrator for Knightstone Housing
- Resident Engagement Officer for LiveWest
- Resident Liaison Officer working in partnership with Bristol City Council
- PTLLS Level 3 in Education And Training



Seed Provenance Map [area 404]