



**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 23rd MARCH 2026**

Meeting Commenced: 7.01 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.43 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Martin Williams (Town Mayor/Chair), Marc Aplin, Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mike Bell, Gillian Bute, Mark Canniford, Annabelle Chard, John Carson, Jemma Coles, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Ciaran Cronnelly, Catherine Gibbons, Simon Harrison-Morse, Owen James, Hugh Malyan, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Justyna Pecak-Michalowicz, Marcia Pepperall, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen, Tim Taylor, Helen Thornton, Richard Tucker and Charlie Williams.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk), Helen Morton (Director of Finance and Resources), Samantha Bishop (Democratic Services Manager), Rebecca Saunders (Civic Officer & PA to CEO/Town Clerk), Warren Parker-Mills (Communications and Marketing Manager), Sergeant Pitman and four members of the public.

A member of the public raised concerns regarding adherence to the Council's Code of Conduct and planning processes in relation to a recent planning application. It was alleged that the Town Council's position had been misrepresented during the NSC Planning Committee "call-in" process, and that due process had not been followed. Further concerns were raised about communication, accuracy of reporting, and lack of correction by involved Members and officers.

The speaker requested that the Council notify NSC of the alleged error, review its policies and procedures to prevent recurrence, and undertake an audit of similar cases.

358	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Standfield, Lisa Pilgrim and James Clayton. It was noted that Joe Bambridge was absent from the meeting.
359	Declarations of Interest There were none received.
360	To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous Town Council Meeting held on 19th January 2026 The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated.

	<p>Councillor Williams requested that minute number (25) be amended to reflect that he had voted against this item which was not recorded in the minutes.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Hugh Malyan</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That noting the above amendment, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.</p>
<p>361</p>	<p>To receive the Minutes of the Youth Council Meetings held in January and February 2026.</p> <p>The minutes of the meetings had been previously circulated.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be received and noted.</p>
<p>362</p>	<p>Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-super-Mare</p> <p>The Town Mayor welcomed and introduced Sergeant Joe Pitman to address the meeting.</p> <p>Sergeant Pitman provided an update on neighbourhood and response policing in the absence of Inspector Kerslake, highlighting current operations including Operation Anomic (street homelessness), Operation Aline (targeting e-scooters/e-bikes, drugs and associated activity in the town centre), and Operation Breakthrough (violence against women and girls and safeguarding issues).</p> <p>During questions, Members raised concerns regarding e-scooter and e-bike use, enforcement powers, and links to local businesses. Sergeant Pitman confirmed targeted action was being taken, although enforcement was balanced against wider policing priorities. Members welcomed the positive impact of Operation Anomic, with reassurance given that it would continue on a fortnightly basis, albeit with challenges following the loss of Operation Haven.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised regarding anti-social behaviour at Hildesheim Court, identified as a hotspot, with confirmation that enforcement action had been taken and monitoring would continue. Questions regarding offender origins and contributing factors were discussed, noting the complexity of the issue.</p> <p>The Chair thanked for Sergeant Pitman for his attendance. <i>He left the meeting at 7.27 pm.</i></p>
<p>363</p>	<p>To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor.</p> <p>The announcements and communications from the Town Mayor were previously circulated.</p> <p>There had been 34 engagements attended by the Mayor, by the Deputy Mayor 3 and 0 by the Leader which was a total of 282 to date.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the announcements and communications from the Town Mayor be noted.</p>

<p>364</p>	<p>To approve the AMENDED Calendar of Meetings for the year 2026/2027</p> <p>The amended calendar of meetings, had been previously circulated, which incorporated previously requested changes.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Owen James</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the amended calendar of meetings for the year 2026/2027 be approved.</p>
<p>365</p>	<p>Formal Adoption of Council Policies Reviewed by Committees</p> <p>Members considered the previously circulated report of the CEO/Town Clerk which sought Council approval to adopt the policies listed in Appendix A, previously reviewed by the Personnel and/or Finance and General Purposes Committees, in accordance with Standing Orders, and to review and adopt the policies set out in Appendix B prior to implementation.</p> <p>It was noted that the Bad Debt Policy had not been circulated and would be deferred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in April.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To formally adopt the policies listed in Appendix A, previously reviewed by the Personnel Committee and/or the Finance and General Purposes Committee. 2. To formally review and adopt the policies detailed in Appendix B (B1 Co-Option Policy; B3 Records & Retention Policy). 3. That the absent B2 Bad Debt Policy be deferred for consideration by the Finance and General Purposes Committee in April.
<p>366</p>	<p>Website Accessibility and AGAR Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Governance</p> <p>Members considered the previously circulated report of the CEO/Town Clerk which updated on website accessibility requirements in relation to Assertion 10 of the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR 2025/26) and presented the findings of accessibility audits of the Council’s websites. Members were also asked to consider the Council’s approach to achieving compliance in light of the procurement of replacement websites for Visit Weston and the Town Council.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Hugh Malyan</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the previous report considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 16 February 2026 regarding AGAR Assertion 10 – Digital and Data Governance Compliance.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To receive the accessibility audit reports for the Visit Weston, Town Council and Museum websites attached as Appendix A. 3. To acknowledge that the audits identified areas where improvements would be required to fully meet WCAG accessibility standards. 4. To note that the Council had already procured replacement websites for both Visit Weston and the Town Council, which were being designed to meet accessibility requirements both of which would be in place early 2026 (May/June) to mid-2026 (September). 5. To agree that undertaking significant accessibility redevelopment of the existing Visit Weston and Town Council websites would not represent best value for money. 6. To note that the Council was taking proportionate steps to ensure compliance with digital governance requirements in advance of completing the AGAR 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement.
<p>367</p>	<p>Local Council Award Scheme Update</p> <p>Members noted the previously circulated report of the Democratic Services Manager which provided an update on progress and sought agreement to revise the anticipated timescale.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the update regarding progress on the Local Council Award Scheme. 2. That progress towards the next level of the Local Council Award Scheme become a priority during Quarter 1 of the 2026/27 financial year.
<p>368</p>	<p>To Approve the Earmarked & Capital Reserve Requirements for the Year 2026/2027</p> <p>Members considered the previously circulated report of the Director of Finance and Resources outlining the need to maintain adequate financial reserves and to regularly review earmarked and capital reserves.</p> <p>PROPOSED: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Earmarked and Capital Reserve estimates for the year 2026 / 2027 (appendix 1 & 2) at this point in time, approving further that any final adjustments to the figure be approved by Finance and General Purposes Committee at its first meeting in the new financial year (April 2026).</p>
<p>369</p>	<p>Implementation of Modern.Gov Governance System</p> <p>Members considered the previously circulated report of the CEO/Town Clerk regarding the implementation of the Civica Modern.Gov committee management system and the authorisation of a Purchase Order in advance of formal budget provision for 2026/2027.</p> <p>Some Members sought reassurance on existing efficiency issues and whether the system would address them, with late reports highlighted as a concern. The proposal was supported as a positive step, with benefits including improved usability, reduced printing costs and training provision. It was noted that the ongoing Peer Review would help identify further improvements to support the investment.</p>

	<p>PROPOSED: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried. (5x abstentions and 1x against)</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the implementation of the Civica Modern.Gov governance system. 2. To authorise officers to issue the Purchase Order to Civica in accordance with the quotation provided. 3. To approve the commitment to the project ahead of the formal 2026/2027 budget provision in order to allow integration with the new Town Council website project.
370	<p>Designation of the Town Mayor for the year 2026/2027</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Hugh Malyan SECONDED BY: Councillor Owen James</p> <p>There being no further nominations, it was by assent</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Councillor Owen James be designated Town Mayor for the year 2026/2027.</p>
371	<p>Designation of the Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2026/2027</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>There being no further nominations, it was by assent</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Councillor Caroline Reynolds be designated Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2026/2027.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 7.43 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated:</p>