WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 29TH JUNE 2026

Meeting Commenced: 7. 00 pm
Meeting Concluded: 9.17 pm

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

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk), Helen Morton (Responsible Financial Officer/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), Inspector Lee Kerslake and 13 members of the public.

Paul Howe addressed the Council regarding the Keep Weston High Street Safe campaign and pedestrian safety within Weston-super-Mare High Street. He welcomed the introduction of additional signage but considered that further measures, including consistent enforcement and partnership working, were required to improve pedestrian safety. He thanked the Council for its continued support of the campaign and encouraged it to continue advocating for improvements with North Somerset Council and partner agencies.

Nick Smart addressed the Council regarding proposals to establish a community library in Worle. He outlined the work undertaken with local stakeholders to explore the proposal and highlighted the importance of maintaining an accessible library service for the Worle community. He emphasised the wider social benefits of a community library and urged the Council to support the motion before it.

The Chair thanked both for their addresses and invited them to stay for the rest of the meeting where their concerns may be addressed later on the agenda.

25	**Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions** Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Harrison-Morse, Tim Taylor, Martin Williams and John Standfield, prior to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Bambridge and Aplin from the floor.

26	**Declarations of Interest** There were none received. Councillor Charlie Williams declared a pecuniary interest in item 16.1 Community Event Grant Application for Reset Youth Awards on the agenda.
27	**To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 28th May 2026** The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried.** **RESOLVED:** That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.
28	**To receive the Minutes of Youth Council Meetings held in March and May 2026** The minutes of the meetings had been previously circulated. The Chair welcomed members of the Youth Council to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He commended the breadth of work being undertaken by the Youth Council, including its community initiatives, newsletters, website development and social media engagement. Particular reference was made to the *Adopt a Spot* initiative, recognising its contribution to improving local public spaces. The Leader echoed the Chair's comments, congratulating the Youth Council on its continued engagement and effective use of social media. A Councillor clarified that Hans Price Academy did not currently provide gender-neutral toilets, in relation to a point recorded within the Youth Council meeting notes. **RESOLVED:** That the minutes be received and noted.
29	**Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-super-Mare** The Chair welcomed Inspector Lee Kerslake, who provided an update on neighbourhood and response policing across Weston-super-Mare. Due to technical difficulties, the presentation could not be displayed and will be circulated to Councillors following the meeting. Key updates included: • Weston-super-Mare's detection rate currently stands at **43%** against a target of **15%**. • Neighbourhood policing teams are achieving a **78%** success rate in targeted activity, although further work remains. • The Organised Crime Panel has recorded **819 disruptions**, with approximately **18%** relating to Weston-super-Mare. • **Operation Anomic** continues to deliver positive outcomes, including arrests, remands and convictions.

	• **Operation Align** has resulted in bicycle seizures within the town centre. • The independent policing panel, chaired by David Crossman, meets quarterly, with Youth Council involvement encouraged. In response to Councillors' questions, Inspector Kerslake advised that: • Crime prevention concerns at Castle Batch would be discussed further with the Worle neighbourhood policing team. • An arrest had been made in relation to graffiti linked to the flag incidents; however, there was insufficient evidence to identify those responsible for erecting the flags, which had been recorded as criminal damage. • Proactive policing continues through Operation Anomic and Operation Avatar where appropriate, with six officers now regularly patrolling the town centre. • Marine Lake continues to receive targeted patrols, dispersal powers have been used where necessary, and e-bikes have been seized. Although the area is not currently classified as a policing hotspot, anti-social behaviour may be under-reported. Existing CCTV coverage remains in place. • Partnership working with HM Revenue & Customs continues in relation to illegal tobacco sales and drugs. • Additional patrols and Section 35 dispersal powers will continue to be used during the summer period where appropriate. • A written response would be provided to the Councillor who had submitted multiple pre-meeting questions. A Councillor suggested that regular crime statistics would assist the Council in monitoring local policing trends. Inspector Kerslake offered to meet with individual ward Councillors to discuss local policing matters. The Chair thanked Inspector Kerslake for his attendance and update. Inspector Kerslake left the meeting at 7.48 pm.
30	**To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor.** The Town Mayor's announcements and communications had been previously circulated. It was noted that the report contained an error relating to the names of the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The Mayor had attended 24 engagements and the Deputy Mayor 3, totalling 27 engagements to date. The Mayor highlighted recent engagements including the Crematorium Open Day, Weston Pride and the Ordination Service at All Saints Church, noting his commitment to promoting the positive aspects of the town. **RESOLVED:** That the Town Mayor's announcements and communications be received and noted.
31	**Appointment of Council Representative to Citizens Advice Bureau** To appoint Councillor Roger Bailey as the Town Council's representative to Citizens Advice Bureau, replacing Councillor Robert Payne. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

	A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried.** **RESOLVED:** That Councillor Roger Bailey replace Councillor Robert Payne as the Town Council's representative to Citizens Advice Bureau.
32	**Monthly Financial Reports at Year End 31st March 2025/2026** The monthly financial reports had been previously circulated. **32.1 For Approval** 1.1 Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure (page 19) **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried.** **RESOLVED:** That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure be approved. **32.2 For Noting** 2.1 Bank Reconciliations (page 20) 2.2 Budgetary Control Report (pages 21-39) 2.3 Bank Interest Report (pages 40-41) 2.4 Schedule of Receipted Income (page 42) 2.5 Outstanding Balances report (page 43) 2.6 Overspend report (page 44) 2.7 Cash Flow Movement between Approved Council Bank Accounts (pages 45-52) **RESOLVED:** That the Financial reports for items 8.2.1-7 be noted.
33	**To receive the Final updated Second Internal Audit Report for the year 2025/2026** The report from Auditing Solutions and Supplementary action report (internal) had been previously circulated (pages 53-62) A Councillor sought clarification regarding the overspend on payroll software and cleaning expenditure. The RFO advised that the additional payroll software expenditure related to the integration of the payroll system with the Council's HR system. In response to the query regarding cleaning expenditure, the CEO/Town Clerk advised that the Council's existing cleaning contractor(s) had failed to meet the required standard, resulting in the appointment of alternative contractors and an increase in costs. She further advised that the matter had previously been reported to the Finance & General Purposes and Personnel Committees, following which the Personnel Committee approved bringing the cleaning service back in-house. **RESOLVED:** That the Final updated Second Internal Audit Report for the year 2025/2026 be received.
34	**Year End Accounts for the financial year to 31st March 2026** To note the period for the Exercise of Public Rights in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.

Year End Accounts for the Year 2026/2027

The CEO/Town Clerk introduced the supplementary report and advised that, due to delays in the completion of the year-end accounts by the Council's accounting contractor, it had not been possible to comply with Standing Order 17.5. She confirmed that the statutory deadlines for the approval and submission of the AGAR had nevertheless been met, advised that a meeting with the contractor was scheduled, and that the matter would be reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The CEO/Town Clerk apologised for the late circulation of the accounts.

The Leader expressed confidence in the accuracy of the accounts, noting that the issue related to the timing of their completion rather than their content.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Cronnelly
SECONDED BY: Councillor Reynolds

A vote was taken and **carried.**

1a. RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received.
2. That the Council notes the non-compliance with Standing Order 17.5 arising from the delayed completion of the year-end accounts by the Council's accounting contractor.
3. That the Council further notes that the statutory deadlines for approval and submission of the AGAR were met.
4. That the circumstances surrounding the delay be reviewed by the Finance & General Purposes Committee in due course.

.1b To receive the Final Internal Audit Report for the financial year 2025-26 (pages 63-76)

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

RESOLVED: That the Final Interim Audit Report for the year 2025-26 be received.

.2 AGAR Year End Accounts for the year ending 31/03/26

As part of the Audit requirement members considered the requirements of the AGAR as follows;

a) Consideration of the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) was undertaken by members as a whole;

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly
SECONDED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds

RESOLVED: That the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) be approved.

bi) Approve the **Accounting Governance Statement** (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and sign and date as required

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly
SECONDED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds

RESOLVED: That following consideration by council the Accounting Governance Statements, the Chair be authorised to complete and sign / date the AGAR – Annual return

bii) Approve the **Accounting Statement**s (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and Sign and date as required

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly
SECONDED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds

RESOLVED: That following consideration of content the **Accounting Statements** the chair be authorised to sign/ date the AGAR – Annual return .

b) Receive and Note the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the AGAR – Annual return

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Gill Bute
SECONDED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

A vote was taken for the above items a – c and **carried**.

RESOLVED: That the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the AGAR – Annual return be received and noted.

35 **Formal Adoption of Council Policies Reviewed by Committees**

The report seeking formal adoption of policies and strategic documents previously recommended by the relevant committees was received.

It was noted that:

- minor administrative amendments would be made to the Social Media Policy prior to publication.

PROPOSED: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly
SECONDED: Councillor Hugh Malyan

A vote was taken and the motion was carried.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Leave of Absence Policy, Social Media Policy, Community Arboretum Management Plan and Roadmap to Zero Monitoring Report be formally adopted; and
2. the CEO/Town Clerk be authorised to make any minor administrative, formatting, typographical, numbering or legislative amendments prior to publication.

36 **Capital Project installation of Ramp at 32 Waterloo Street**

The report seeking approval to include the accessibility ramp project within the 2026/27 Capital Programme and progress to procurement was received.(pages 81-85)

Members noted:

- planning permission and listed building consent had been obtained;
- an updated Quantity Surveyor's cost plan had been prepared following project delays.

	During discussion, Members: • sought clarification on why project costs had been included within the public report, with Officers advising this reflected procurement and transparency requirements; • expressed concerns regarding the overall project cost and value for money; • noted that no accessibility complaints had been received and that, as a listed building, the property could not be made fully compliant with modern accessibility standards; • questioned the increased costs, funding source and whether alternative options had been fully explored; • noted that the planning permission remained valid until June 2027 and requested further information before reaching a decision. In response, Officers advised that: • alternative options, including a temporary/mobile ramp, had been explored but were not considered viable due to the building's entrance arrangement; • the project had been referred to Full Council following consideration by the Finance & General Purposes Committee; • a further report reviewing the project, available options and supporting information would be presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Mark Canniford A vote was taken and carried. **RESOLVED:** That Option 2 of the report be approved, namely to defer the project pending a further review of financial priorities.
37	**Devolution Programme Updates for Approval** **37.1 Appointment of Wellers Solicitors for Legal Services (Asset Transfers)** To receive the report of the CEO/Town Clerk (pages 86–90) The report seeking the appointment of Wellers Hedleys Solicitors LLP as specialist legal advisors for the Council's Devolution Programme was received. Members noted: • the recommendation had been brought directly to Council to avoid delaying the programme ahead of the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting; • Officers had undertaken due diligence and were satisfied that Wellers Hedleys LLP possessed the specialist expertise required. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew A vote was taken and the motion was carried (**1 abstention**).

RESOLVED: That:

1. Wellers Hedleys Solicitors LLP be appointed as specialist legal advisors for the Council's Devolution Programme;
2. legal work relating to the programme be transferred from the Council's current solicitors; and
3. authority be delegated to the CEO/Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, to progress associated legal matters.

37.2 Play Area Transfer – Approval of Interim SLA with North Somerset Council (Play Areas)

To receive the report of the CEO/Town Clerk (pages 91–95)

The report seeking approval to enter into an Interim Service Level Agreement (SLA) with North Somerset Council for the maintenance and operational management of eight play areas from **6 July 2026**, pending completion of the freehold transfers, was received.

During discussion, Members noted:

- concerns regarding the proposed transfer of the Thompson Way play area, as the site had not yet been adopted by North Somerset Council, remained in Persimmon Homes' ownership and presented ongoing maintenance issues.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly
SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and the motion was carried (**2 abstentions**).

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. approve the principle of entering into an Interim Service Level Agreement with North Somerset Council for the maintenance, inspection and operational management of the eight identified play areas from **6 July 2026**;
2. note that this forms Phase 1 of the Devolution Programme pending completion of the legal freehold transfers;
3. delegate authority to the CEO/Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, to negotiate, finalise, approve and execute the Interim Service Level Agreement and any non-material amendments;
4. confirm that entering into the Interim Service Level Agreement does not constitute acceptance of the freehold transfer or liabilities beyond those set out within the agreement;
5. approve expenditure from the existing Devolution Programme budget; and
6. note that a further report will be presented to Council, if required, following completion of the legal transfer process.

38 **Library Services**

Motion received under Standing Order 10

To consider a motion submitted by Councillor Catherine Gibbons concerning Library Services (pages 96–98)

Councillor Catherine Gibbons introduced the motion, highlighting the role of library services in supporting education, digital inclusion, community wellbeing and reducing social isolation.

	PROPOSED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly During discussion, Members: • expressed disappointment at the loss of the library service in Worle and acknowledged strong community support for its retention; • noted that Castle Batch Children's Centre could provide a potential location should a community library prove feasible; • agreed that, given the Council's ongoing Devolution Programme and other strategic priorities, it would be premature to commit to supporting a community library before its feasibility, governance, staffing, resource implications, costs and funding opportunities had been assessed; • referred to existing community library models, including Congresbury. Following discussion, Councillor Gibbons agreed to amend the motion to focus on investigating the feasibility of a community library rather than expressing support in principle. The CEO/Town Clerk confirmed that the Devolution Start & Finish Group would lead the work, with relevant Ward Councillors invited to participate. A vote was taken and the amended motion was carried (1 against, 1 abstention). **RESOLVED:** That the Devolution Start & Finish Group investigate the feasibility of establishing a community library in Worle, including potential locations, governance, staffing, resource implications, costs and funding opportunities, and report its findings and recommendations to the appropriate committee and subsequently to Council.
39	**Grove Park Toilets – Execution of Lease** To receive the report of the CEO/Town Clerk (pages 99-101) The CEO/Town Clerk introduced the report, advising that North Somerset Council had provided confirmation that the matters previously raised by the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee had either been completed, programmed or approved for delivery. Council was therefore asked to consider whether the assurances received were sufficient to enable the execution of the lease agreement for the Grove Park toilet facilities. **PROPOSED BY :** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Caroline Reynolds A vote was taken and **carried** (2 votes against). **RESOLVED:** That Council: 1. Notes the update received from North Somerset Council regarding the works requested by the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee. 2. Notes that North Somerset Council had confirmed the delivery, programming or commitment of the requested works and considered these assurances sufficient to enable progression of the lease arrangements. 3. Approve the execution of the lease agreement for the Grove Park toilet facilities.

	4. Authorise the CEO/Town Clerk to complete all necessary arrangements associated with the execution of the lease.
40	*At 8.55 pm The Council resolved that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3 of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person/organisation (including the authority holding that information).* *Councillor James Clayton left the meeting at 8.56 pm.*
41	**41. Community Events Grant Applications** To receive the report of the Senior Development Officer The report regarding the deferred grant applications from Reset WSM and the British Bangladeshi Association was received. It was noted that both applications had been deferred by the Grants & Governance Sub-Committee pending additional information, which had now been provided for consideration by Full Council due to the timing of the events. **41.1 British Bangladeshi Association – Mela Event (£2,500)** Members noted: • the requested additional information, including a breakdown of costs, had been provided; • the Community Events Grant budget for 2026/27 totalled £60,000, of which £25,000 had already been allocated. During discussion, Members: • questioned whether annual events should become self-sustaining rather than relying on repeated grant funding; • noted that the Grants & Governance Sub-Committee had sought further information to encourage reduced reliance on future grant funding; • noted that the grant criteria do not permit repeat annual applications for the same event. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Catherine Gibbons **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Caroline Reynolds A vote was taken and the motion was carried (2 against, 2 abstentions). **RESOLVED:** That a Community Events Grant of £2,500 be awarded to the British Bangladeshi Association. **41.2 Reset WSM – Youth Awards (£5,000)** Members noted:

	• this was the organisation's first application to the Community Events Grant Scheme; • the requested supplementary information, including a breakdown of costs and bank statements, had been provided. During discussion, Members: • supported the aims of the Youth Awards and the recognition of young people's achievements; • expressed concerns regarding the proportion of funding requested for staffing costs for a one-off event and the organisation's financial reserves, questioning whether sufficient need for grant funding had been demonstrated. Councillor Charlie Williams declared a pecuniary interest as a relative of the applicant and abstained from the discussion and vote. **PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Mike Bell **SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew A vote was taken and the motion was carried (11 for, 1 against, 6 abstentions). **RESOLVED:** That the application from Reset WSM for a Community Events Grant of £5,000 be refused on the grounds that the level of staffing costs and the organisation's available financial reserves did not demonstrate sufficient need for Council grant funding.
	There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.17 pm. Signed: ………………………………………………………… Dated: ………………………