

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD VIA ZOOM ON
MONDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: pm

PRESENT: Councillors James Clayton (Town Mayor), Dot Agassiz, Mark Aplin, Ray Armstrong, Mike Bell, Gill Bute, Gillian Carpenter, Mark Canniford, Sarah Codling, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, David Dash, Peter Fox, Catherine Gibbons, Pete McAleer, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim, Sonia Russe, Tim Taylor and Richard Tucker.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Grounds Manager), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Rebecca Saunders (Mayors Civic Officer/Committee Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Reverend Peter Ashman (Town Mayors Chaplin), Mr John Simmons (Twenty's Plenty) and Mr John Cadwallader.

The Town Mayor invited his Chaplain to say prayers.

The Town Mayor invited members of the public to address the meeting.

Mr John Cadwallader addressed the meeting with a plea to erect a blue plaque for Ritchie Blackmore a born Westonian and well renowned guitarist and band member of Deep Purple. He felt that this would put Weston on the music map had a signed petition with 275 signatures. He had also agreed a place for where the plaque could be erected.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Cadwallader for his address and advised him that his request would be referred to the meeting of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee and welcomed him to stay for the rest meeting.

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Town Mayor advised that item 11 on the agenda was not a confidential item and would be brought forward and discussed as item 10.

147	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roger Bailey, Ciaran Cronnelly, Jan Holloway, Ian Porter, Helen Thornton and Roz Willis.
	It was noted that Councillors Mike Bell and John Crockford-Hawley would be late to the meeting.
	It was noted that Councillors Ella Sayce and David Hitchins was absent from the meeting.
148	To receive Declarations of Interest
	There were no declarations on interest received.

<p>149</p>	<p>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 5th May 2021</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
<p>150</p>	<p>To approve all Minutes of Meetings as listed: The Working party minutes had previously been circulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd & 30th June, 28th July - Planning Working Party • 8th June - Tourism & Leisure Working Party • 21st June - Policy & Finance Committee • 13th May - Heritage Arts and Culture Working Party • 5th July - Community Services Working Party <p>The Tourism & Leisure Working Party minutes 50.1 & 50.2 were queried by a member and it was clarified that a peddlers' license for the Tic Tuk vehicles was no longer required and that the town council were coordinating with the Weston Place Agency on the Visit Weston Website.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be ratified and approved.</p>
<p>151</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 two versions of the report circulated but the Mayor clarified that here had been 67 engagements attended by the Mayor and 5 by the Deputy Mayor, which was a total of 72 to date.</p> <p>Significant upcoming events reported were the Remembrance Service of 14th November and the October Fest taking place on 30th September – 2nd October.</p> <p>The Town Mayor was also engaging through a social media presence and encouraged members to like and share his Facebook page.</p>
<p>152</p>	<p>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meetings held in July 2021</p> <p>The notes of the Youth Council meetings had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that meetings were resuming to face to face as of the following day.</p> <p>The Town Mayor welcomed any members of the Youth Council wanting to attend Council meetings. It was advised that this offer had already been extended many times and would be continued to do so my members.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the notes of the Youth Council meetings for July 2021 be received.</p>

153 Twenty's Plenty Campaign – Presentation by Dr John Simmons

The Town Mayor invited Dr John Simmons to present to the meeting.

Mr Simmons presented the North Somerset Twenty's Plenty Campaign informing of the social/environmental and engineering cost factors for introducing 20mph speed limits in residential areas.

Members would be sent a handout electronically.

Depending on the size of the town/city the scheme would cost £3-5 per head to introduce and most of London and towns in Scotland and Wales were already operating this.

It was envisaged that in 15/20 years' time, driving at 20mph in residential and high pedestrianised areas such as schools/hospitals would be accepted as importantly as wearing a seat belt of drinking driving.

Weston was a flat town and was ideal for the promotion of cycling and reduction of driving. It was compared to Penzance in many ways such as being a coastal town, with a struggling town centre with pockets of deprivation and they had recently introduced the campaign.

Members thanked Mr Simmons for his presentation and a question answer session then ensued.

Debate ensued. The concept of the campaign was well received by members however concerns were raised that if a blanket approach was introduced, specific areas where there were already speed limits in place may be diluted and disregarded. The degree of enforcement of speed limits by Avon & Somerset Police was questioned.

Councillor John Crockford-Hawley joined the meeting at 7.53 pm.

It was felt that the residential roads would needed to be considered on an individual need basis and that driving at 20mph may not be conducive to newer and hybrid vehicles and that car manufacturers needed to be aware of this. In support of the council's climate change pledge, members would like to encourage more cycling and walking.

The evidence of success in Bristol was requested and it was suggested that it would be useful to know the campaign's degree of support from the CCG and NHS.

It was requested that North Somerset Council's highways engineers' views be sought.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Gill Bute

SECONDED BY: Councillor Marc Aplin

A vote was taken and **carried**.

RESOLVED: To seek further information of the success of the campaign in other areas and to engage in discussion with North Somerset Council's highways engineers to seek their views on the campaign.

154 Grove Park Toilets Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study and recommendation from the Community Services Committee meeting held on 13th September had been previously circulated.

Debate ensued and members were in general welcoming of the report's conclusions but concerns were raised in respect of costs.

It was agreed that discussions with North Somerset Council were paramount in moving forward with the long-term solutions, however a multi-agency approach including the Police was required to tackle the short term problems.

The council had done everything in its power to manage and keep the toilets open but the levels of anti-social behaviour and vandalism at Grove Park were extreme.

The wider brief of toilet provision in Weston needed to be discussed with North Somerset Council and other local facilities opening their toilet provisions. There were grant funding opportunities for Grove Park as part of the NSC bid and this needed to be considered within NSC discussions.

A short term solution to the problem was needed and it was suggested that the Police patrol times needed to be adjusted. The community toilet scheme should be revived and reaching out to other towns who ran the schemes was suggested.

Members felt that Grove Park toilets were not fit for purpose in location or design and that other towns/cities such as Wells should be contacted on how their schemes operated.

Councillor Mike Bell joined the meeting at 8.19 pm.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and **carried**.

RESOLVED:

1. To endorse and welcome the relocation of the Grove Park toilets and café and that discussions with North Somerset Council be commenced to find ways of funding this.
2. That other towns/cities to include Wells City Council, be contacted to explore design and operation of their toilet facilities.

It was raised that at a previous Community Services Committee meeting, it had been resolved that the Police Chief Inspector be invited to the next Town Council meeting. It was now felt that a lower level representative from the Police was required.

The Town Clerk advised that the invitation to the Police Chief Inspector had been made and that he would chase the invitation asking for the most appropriate representative to attend.

155 To formally approve and adopt the Councils Risk Register for the year 2021 / 2022

The Risk Register Action Plan recommended by the Expenditure & Governance Working Party held on 9th September 2021 had been previously circulated.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

SECONDED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford

A vote was taken and **carried**.

RESOLVED: To approve risk actions and to formally approve and adopt the Councils Risk Register for the year 2021 / 2022.

156 Review of Town Council Remote Meetings

The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated outlining the decisions for members' consideration. The Town Clerk apologised for the confusion of the red paper and clarified that the content was not of a confidential nature.

Members were reminded of their decision at the Annual Council meeting in May, to agree to resume normal committee decision making 'at the first opportunity' and that the decision be reviewed at the latest after 6 months (IE at the latest before the end of November 2021). Therefore, the Town Clerk advised that this was the council's first opportunity to review and he requested welcomed members' direction on how to proceed.

Debate ensued and members agreed that remote working had its place but was not the best way of conducting all meetings.

It was proposed that committee meetings should resume face to face and that working parties could still operate remotely.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and **carried**.

RESOLVED:

1. That committee meetings of the council resume to face to face meetings with immediate effect and that working parties continue to operate remotely.
2. To re-state the March 2020 resolution to approve the absences of councillors from council meetings by reason of the Covid pandemic until May 2022.

It was queried if members would be required to undertake lateral flow tests before attending meetings.

The Town Clerk advised that members and officers would be requested to take reasonable precautions in the form of tests, social distancing, provide ventilation and sanitiser. He added that the Museum had been booked for meetings of the council and committees.

157	<p><i>It was resolved 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.</i></p>
158	<p>To approve exploration into office relocation</p> <p>The Town Clerk gave the background on the decision to explore into an office relocation for its office based staff. Its current premises at both Grove House and Grove Lodge had been outgrown and were not fit for purpose. The previous decision to extend Grove House had been revoked by the Policy & Finance Working Party meeting held on 23rd August due to a 54% inflation in costs and building ownership. The Working Party had then recommended a review to look for alternative and better council office space and that the current proposals for Grove House dropped.</p> <p>The Town Clerk had been advised of two possible properties available at the present time which could be suitable for town council offices, namely Roselawn on Walliscote Grove Road and 32 Waterloo Street. These were discussed by the Expenditure & Governance Working Party held on the 9th September 2021, of which the draft minute had been previously circulated and was available at the meeting.</p> <p>As recommended, site visits to both of the buildings had been organized with the council's surveyor, leading members and officers attending.</p> <p>After assessment it had been agreed that of the two buildings Roselawn would not be suitable, it was in a very poor condition with poor disabled and vehicle access and only small rooms. A report of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining financial options, if members wanted to pursue the purchase of, along with estate agent's information had been previously circulated to members and was available at the meeting.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that the relocation of WSMTC offices would mean that both Grove House and Grove Lodge could be dispensed of in discussion with North Somerset Council. The building at 32 Waterloo Street, while not absolutely perfect, was large enough to accommodate meeting rooms and all town council departments, including the VIC, which would enable staffing efficiencies and improvement in internal communications. He recommended members to set up a small working party to take the exploration of premises forward and if appropriate make an offer.</p> <p>Discussion ensued and all members who spoke in the debate were in agreement that the town council had outgrown the current premises and they were no longer fit for purpose.</p> <p>It was noted that time was a factor when purchasing commercial buildings and that the council would need to act quickly. It was also agreed that the council must be situated in an iconic building, in a suitable location.</p> <p>It was advised that the council must consider some refurbishment costs in addition to the purchase price and also the possibility of any dilapidation costs associated with Grove House.</p> <p>Members requested that if an offer is accepted, the layout of the proposed building be considered by a member working party.</p>

It was questioned whether the building would be solely used by the town council or available for community use. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this was subject to the financial plan the council approved and the option to sublet was awaiting clarification. Once clarification was obtained, it was hoped that there would be opportunities to sublet and for community use. It was noted that the building was still partly occupied by the previous tenants.

In response to a concern, the Town Clerk confirmed that once a 'subject to contract' offer on the building had been accepted, a full building survey would be undertaken.

Members were in favour of option 3 of the financial report but wanted to increase the figure to include refurbishment costs.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the council had a healthy revenue budget and asked members to note that a resolution by town council was needed to approve the use on a PWLB borrowing and an additional meeting of council would need to be called to approve final amounts.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

SECONDED BY: Councillor Robert Payne

A vote was taken and **carried**.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader of Council, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Conservative Group (or their nominated substitutes), be authorised to negotiate and finalise an agreement to purchase the freehold premises at 32 Waterloo Street.
2. That Option 3 – Part Loan part funded by WSMTC reserves and Capital in Revenue provisions as follows; be approved.

Funds from capital and revenue allocations £290,000

Funds from General Reserves £150,000

PWLB Funding £200,000

Total £640,000

3. That If the offer is accepted, a working group be formed to discuss the future layout.
4. To note that if there was a requirement for PWLB borrowing an additional meeting of council would need to be called to approve final amounts.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.10 pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Town Mayor