

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON  
MONDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

<b>128</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</b>  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.
<b>129</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  Councillor James Clayton declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 – Somewhere To Go as a Trustee.
<b>130</b>	<b>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022</b>  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.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Ian Porter  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That with the above amendments, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
<b>131</b>	<b>Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-Super-Mare</b>  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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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><b>133</b></p>	<p><b>To receive announcements and communications from The Town Mayor</b></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>22<sup>nd</sup> July-Oppits Matilda Performance</u>  <u>28<sup>th</sup> July-Lions Beer &amp; Ale Festival</u>  <u>5<sup>th</sup> August-Sea Shanty Festival</u>  <u>6<sup>th</sup> August-Beach Rugby</u>  <u>17<sup>th</sup> August-Horrible Histories Workshops</u>  <u>30<sup>th</sup> August-SEE Monster Drone Show</u>  <u>3<sup>rd</sup> September-Charity Sailing Day</u>  <u>4<sup>th</sup> September-Big Worle Opening</u>  <u>6<sup>th</sup> September-Sunshine Radio Appearance</u>  <u>8<sup>th</sup> September-RBL Bike Night</u>  <u>27<sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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><b>134</b></p>	<p><b>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meeting held in June 2022</b></p> <p>The notes of the Youth Council meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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