

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT
THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2015**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 p.m.

Meeting Concluded: 8.43 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Raymond Armstrong (Town Mayor), Clive Webb (Leader of the Town Council), Roger Bailey, Mark Canniford, James Clayton, Robert Cleland, Sarah Codling, John Crockford-Hawley, Clive Darke, Peter Fox, Catherine Gibbons, David Hitchins, Jos Holder, Michal Kus, Michael Lyall, Derek Mead, Richard Nightingale, Frederick Parsons, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Lisa Pilgrim, Len Purnell, Anita Spencer-Johns, Richard Tucker and Roz Willis.

IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Tricia Brabham (Committee Officer), Chris Millard (Mayor's Civic Officer), Chief Inspector Tina Robinson, Father Andrew Hughes and Sarah Robinson (Weston & Somerset Mercury).

The Town Mayor invited Father Andrew to say prayers.

The Town Mayor invited questions and observations from parishioners present. Tim Nicholls raised concerns about the drug dealing in Weston-super-Mare. Whilst he recognised resources were tight, Mr Nicholls questioned the priorities of the police when he had witnessed 6 police officers and 3 police cars attending a shop-lifting incident but was unable to get police officers to respond to reports of drug-dealing. The Town Mayor advised that Chief Inspector Tina Robinson would respond to the points raised under Agenda Item 5.

140.	<p>To receive Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jan Holloway and Councillor Steven Kane.</p>
141.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
142.	<p>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 6th July 2015.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Roz Willis</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be signed and approved.</p>
143.	<p>To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor</p> <p>The Town Mayor informed that between 6th July 2015 and 13th September 2015 he had attended 40 mayoral engagements, and the Deputy Mayor had attended 2.</p> <p>In total the Mayor had attended 55 engagements and the Deputy Mayor 12.</p>

144.	<p>Presentation from Chief Inspector Tina Robinson</p> <p>Chief Inspector Tina Robinson informed councillors that she had joined the police in 1994 as a Police Constable and had been based in both Weston-super-Mare and Bristol. The last 6 years had been in the Serious Crime Group working across Avon and Somerset. She had taken up the post of Chief Inspector on the 29th June 2015. Weston-super-Mare police force had undergone massive organisational change, and resourcing and drug-dealing were the biggest issues for the force. The Chief Inspector outlined plans for tackling drug-dealing in the town, and the importance of a multi-agency approach to the issue as well as how vacancies in the police force were being filled.</p> <p>The Mayor invited questions from councillors.</p> <p>In answer to questions focussed on the plans to tackle drug dealing, the Chief Inspector advised that funding was a challenge but the police were recruiting and training officers. She agreed with a questioner that Weston-super-Mare's drug problems were not any worse than many other towns and resorts, and that towns like Swindon also had similar issues.</p> <p>The Chief Inspector agreed that the community response initiative could provide support to free up police officers and stressed the value of partnership working with the local community, including the Town Council. Despite the closure of the town centre police station, the police would remain visible and would use technology to reduce the need to return to a police station to file reports. In answer to a further question, the Chief Inspector assured the Council that burglary remained a local priority and that when a Police Officer was not needed, a Police Community Support Officer or Investigation Officer would attend as appropriate.</p> <p>Returning to the issue of partnership working, the Chief Inspector confirmed that CCTV was essential for the police and highlighted a new street safe bus dubbed 'Mavis' the 'multi agency vehicle in service' as an example of successful and effective multi-agency working. 'Mavis' was a single decker bus, kitted out to help ensure people had a safe night out in the town. It was a hub for police, ambulance, street wardens, street pastors, licensing and other local agencies working in the night-time economy. 'Mavis' would help the agencies offer immediate, highly visible assistance to vulnerable people after dark.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Community Response team be invited to attend a future Town Council meeting.</p> <p><i>Chief Inspector Tina Robinson and Father Andrew Hughes left the meeting at 7.40 pm.</i></p>
145.	<p>Town Council Strategy 2016-2020</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Concern was expressed that items being considered for inclusion in the strategy were outside the remit of the Town Council or too vague. The Town Clerk advised that another Strategy Group meeting for further debate on the Town Council's Strategy 2016-2020 would be scheduled in October.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p> <p><i>The Mayor left the meeting at 7.48 pm and rejoined the meeting at 7.50 pm.</i></p>

146.	<p>Weston Museum HLF Project</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised that the project was £84,000 over the budget that had been put on the application to the HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund). Three grant applications had been submitted but the shortfall should form part of budget consideration discussions.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Clive Webb SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p> <p><i>Chris Millard left the meeting at 7.51 pm.</i></p>
147.	<p>Sunday Trading</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council had been invited to respond to the Government consultation on devolving powers to decide Sunday trading hours.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Some members felt that decisions should be devolved to local level where possible. An alternative view was expressed however that if the decision was made locally, once one Council had decided to open, neighbouring Councils would feel pressure to do the same. Concern was expressed that national government favoured extended opening and that if the decision remained with them then Councils would be ordered to extend opening.</p> <p>Accordingly it was:</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>That the power to extend trading hours on Sunday remains with national government.</p> <p>A vote was taken and was lost (7 for, 10 against).</p> <p>It was noted that the Town Council were divided and no further proposition would be made.</p> <p><i>Councillor Canniford left the meeting 8.07 pm and rejoined the meeting at 8.09 pm.</i></p>
148.	<p>Motion to Council under Standing Order 11 – Winter Gardens</p> <p>A motion to Council by Councillor Catherine Gibbons had been previously circulated on the agenda as follows:</p> <p>“That while we recognise the excellent work of Weston College for the town and do not object to the transfer of the Winter Gardens to the College, the Town Council has a legal power to nominate assets of community value to give them statutory protection and has done so in respect of the town’s three main parks. We consider the Winter Gardens is a valuable asset to the town community that falls squarely within the definition.</p> <p>It has long been and is still used for many community events such as the Food Festival, dances, antiques fairs and of course the Mayor’s Ball. In view of its imminent transfer to the</p>

College this matter is becoming urgent and accordingly we PROPOSE that the Winter Gardens be nominated for registration as a Community Asset as soon as possible under the Localism Act 2011.”

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons

SECONDED BY: Councillor Michael Lyall

Councillor Gibbons in support of the motion said that the Winter Gardens had definitely been an asset to the local community since it opened in 1927. While people trusted Weston College under present management, individuals could change over time and designation as an Asset of Community Value would be a reassurance for local people for the future.

Debate ensued.

Concerns were raised that whilst the Winter Gardens was an important issue for the community, listing it as a Community Asset would only come into effect if the college tried to sell the building. Some members felt that the college were doing a good job and that listing the building as a Community Asset would be a ‘slap in the face’ for the college.

In answer to a question the Town Clerk advised that a covenant was in place enforceable by North Somerset Council to ensure community events continued to take place at the Winter Gardens. He confirmed that designation as a Community Asset would allow the community to request a moratorium while it prepares a bid if the College should decide to sell the Winter Gardens.

A vote was taken on the motion and was **lost** (9 for, 15 against and 2 abstentions).

Councillor Pilgrim left the meeting at 8.20 pm and rejoined the meeting at 8.25 pm.

149. **Motion to Council under Standing Order 11 – Dolphin Square**

A motion to Council by Councillor Robert Payne had been previously circulated on the agenda as follows:

“This council notes the on-going failure to deliver the promised development at the Dolphin Square site, and has been particularly disappointed in:

- The hasty emptying and demolition of the site before the scheme had been finalised and was ready to proceed;
- The unattractive appearance of the now derelict site;
- The resultant economic problems suffered by the businesses in the immediate area, especially in Oxford Street, St. James Street and the southern part of High Street, as well as by the wider town centre, and the effects on the sea-front tourism industry;
- North Somerset Council's laissez-faire attitude to whether any development takes place, and its failure to encourage or enforce the developer to commence construction.

We therefore call on North Somerset Council to:

- i. note these significant concerns of Weston-super-Mare Town Council and the residents of the town; and
- ii. take a more pro-active stance, make appropriate financial commitments to the scheme and incentives for operators to enable the development as required, and use its legal enforcement powers as a final resort if necessary, to secure a speedy outcome to the development of the Dolphin Square site.

The Town Council further resolves to offer to work with North Somerset Council and the developers of the site and provide any reasonable assistance to help resolve the problems which are preventing the development.”

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Robert Payne

SECONDED BY: Councillor Derek Mead

Councillor Payne in support of the motion said that the delay in re-developing the location was of concern to local residents and especially businesses in the St. James Street area, and that the Council should therefore express its concern to North Somerset Council as a matter of urgency.

Debate ensued. Frustration with the lack of progress on the development of the Dolphin Square site was expressed. Previous enquiries to North Somerset Council by Councillors had not provided any further information. The lack of development was having an impact on local businesses.

A councillor advised the reason that the details on progress had not been provided was at the request of the developer McClaren Life. He therefore put forward an amendment.

FIRST AMENDMENT:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roz Willis

To replace the words ‘North Somerset Council’ at the start of the second paragraph with the words ‘McLaren Life’ so as to read: “We therefore call on McClaren Life to note these significant concerns of Weston-super-Mare Town Council and the residents of the town...”

Further debate ensued. Concerns were raised that fault for the lack of progress lay with both North Somerset Council as landowner and McClaren Life as developer as well as questions about the ability of McClaren Life to handle such a large development.

A vote was taken and the amendment was **lost** (9 for, 14 against and 3 abstentions)

A further amendment was proposed as follows:

SECOND AMENDMENT:

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roz Willis

To add at the start of the second paragraph the words ‘and McLaren Life’; and in (ii) to delete the words ‘make appropriate financial commitments’ and ‘and incentives for operators to enable the development as required, and use its legal enforcement powers as a final resort if necessary’ so as to read:

“We therefore call on North Somerset Council and McLaren Life to:

- i. note these significant concerns of Weston-super-Mare Town Council and the residents of the town; and
- ii. take a more pro-active stance to the scheme to secure a speedy outcome to the development of the Dolphin Square site.”

