

WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT
THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 23RD JANUARY 2017

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.48 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Peak (Town Mayor), Clive Webb (Leader of the Town Council), Raymond Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mark Canniford, James Clayton, Robert Cleland, John Crockford-Hawley, Peter Crew, Sarah Codling, James Davis, Peter Fox, Catherine Gibbons, David Hitchins, Jocelyn Holder, Jan Holloway, Michal Kus, Michael Lyall, Derek Mead, Richard Nightingale, Frederick Parsons, Robert Payne, Lisa Pilgrim, Ian Porter, Anita Spencer-Johns, Richard Tucker, and Martin Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Helen Morton (Finance Officer), Tricia Brabham (Communications Officer), Chris Millard (Civic Officer), Reverend Julie Birkett (Town Mayor's Chaplain) and Sarah Ford (Weston & Somerset Mercury).

The Town Mayor invited Reverend Julie Birkett to say prayers in which Mr David Horler a former Mayor of Weston- super-Mare was remembered who had sadly passed away on 9th January. The Council's thoughts were with his four sons, one of which was a former Mayor and Councillor himself, Andrew Horler.

The Town Mayor invited questions and observations from parishioners present of which there were none.

252.	<p>To receive Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clive Darke, Len Purnell, Steven Kane and Roz Willis.</p>
253.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
254.	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 21st November 2016.</p> <p>Councillor Richard Nightingale referred to minute 197 <i>Motion to the Council under Standing Order 1</i> which had been circulated at the meeting accompanied with the response to the letter written by the Town Clerk from NHS England. He suggested that the Town Council needed to do more than 'be involved in future discussions in the Primary Care Working Group' and suggested that a Working Party be formed to look at the health and well being in particular, central ward as had received reports of high level deprivation for this area.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that it was not lawful to make any formal resolutions on matters arising under the agenda item but suggested that he could put the matter on the agenda for Policy and Finance Committee on 20th February.</p> <p><i>Councillor Lisa Pilgrim joined the meeting at 7.06 pm</i></p> <p>In response to the member's suggestion, a further member urged that if the matter was going to be discussed by a Working Party then all statistical information discussed needed to be accurate.</p>

	<p>The Town Mayor informed of an amendment to minute number 197 (5th paragraph) to replace the word ‘Ashcombe’ Ward with ‘Central’ Ward.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Clive Webb SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>RESOLVED: That with the above amendment, the minutes be signed and approved.</p>
255.	<p>To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor</p> <p>The Town Mayor reported that he and the Mayoress had attended 149 engagements to date and that the Deputy Mayor had attended 11 engagements on his behalf.</p> <p>The Town Mayor then highlighted on the following significant events:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4 Day Twinning Visit to Hildesheim 2. Christmas Lights Switch On 3. Mayors Carol Service 4. Councillors & Staff Christmas Get Together 5. Attendance at Past Mayor David Horler’s Funeral <p>He then informed of his up and coming Charity Dinner Dance on the 18th March 2017 at the Royal Hotel, 6.45pm for 7.30 pm with a 4 course dinner. Entertainment would be provided by David Ford’s American Legends Show. Proceeds will be in aid of the Mayor’s Chosen Charities: Sunshine Hospital Radio and The Macular Society. The Weston-super-Mare Lions Club would be providing a casino and there would be a raffle and auction. He welcomed and encouraged attendance and support from all, to what would be a great night.</p>
256.	<p>Town Council Budget and Precept for 2017/18</p> <p>The budget requirements for 2017/2018 had been considered by Policy and Finance Committee at its meeting held 19th December 2016.</p> <p>Since the meeting the Responsible Financial Officer had received confirmation of the total Band D properties for the 2017 /2018 from North Somerset Council, the figure had been changed within the previously circulated Budget and Precept for 2017/18 documents to provide up to date precept requirement for members to consider.</p> <p>In addition, the Museum Working Party had approved the option of exploring the outsourcing of the café function at the museum when it reopens in August 2017. The Responsible Financial Officer was working with the appointed Café Consultant and expressions of interest adverts had gone out to achieve this. As a result and taking advice from the consultant, the budget for the café included in the revenue budget for 2017 / 2018 had been left at cost neutral.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Clive Webb SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>The previously circulated budget and precept for 2017/18 be approved with the following amendments totalling a budget of £1,809,164.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decrease Central Administration Training budget by £2,425 to reflect a total of £11,000 2. Increase Youth Grants budget by £500.00 to reflect a total of £3,500

3. Increase Welcome to Weston Signs budget by £982.00 to reflect a total of £5,100
4. Increase Play Area Equipment Repair budget by £1,985 to reflect a total of £38,200

An amended budget proposal was then proposed by the Liberal Democrat Party as follows:

FIRST AMENDMENT

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Robert Payne

SECONDED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford

The purpose of the Town Council was to provide services, facilities and improvements to the town which the people of Weston-super-Mare wanted and needed and which would otherwise not be provided. It was recognised that there was a difficult balance between the conflicting aims of the protection of services, the need to keep tax levels at an affordable level, and the long-term financial security of the council and therefore, the following amendments to the draft budget were proposed:

A. Demonstrating restraint in spending

1. Staff and councillors' training - That the headings be merged into one, which would help with transparency in what the council was spending on training, and that the total amount be set at £12,500.
2. Payment into General reserves from revenue - To reduce from £75,000 back to £60,000.

B. Investing in Weston-super-Mare

1. Sea-front lighting scheme - To set aside £16,000 into an earmarked fund and to commence working towards restoring the traditional seaside lights.
2. War memorial - To allocate an initial sum of £5,000 and investigate grant funding from the War Memorial Trust for the restoration of the Grove Park war memorial to its original commission.
3. Youth grants - To increase this to the current projected spend for the year of £3,500.
4. Museum shop stock – To increase this to £12,000

Debate ensued. A member in response to amendment A2 General Reserves felt that it was contradictory to suggest a reduction and explained that the amount was set to account for provision of the Museum project and the loss of the North Somerset grant. In relation to amendment B4 Museum shop stock an increase was not necessary as the council had undertaken professional advice. Amendment B1 Sea-front lighting scheme was a nice idea but lighting was a statutory obligation of North Somerset Council and the Town Council had been criticised in the past for taking on projects that were under the remit of the district authority.

In response to these comments the Liberal Democrat group felt that the Town Council should be seen to make a small contribution to the street lighting on the seafront as this was a great attraction for the town. In response to the logic behind the General Reserves amount the majority group should be open that they were preparing for loss of grant.

A member said that in his experience, he had never in his time served as a councillor, received a complaint regarding an increase in council tax, only complaints in connection with the lack of provision and quality of public services.

A vote was taken on the First Amendment which was **lost** (6 For; 14 Against).

A further amended budget proposal was posed by the Labour Party

SECOND AMENDMENT

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons

SECONDED BY: Councillor Michael Lyall

To raise the precept before any capping/ referendum requirements were introduced to make a very modest increase to the precept of 1.7% (£30,000) which would add £1.15 to a band D property. This would take the total amount for a band D household from £66.57 to £67.72. The money raised would allow the council to fund expanding existing responsibilities, and take on some additional ones, thereby strengthening the Town Council's role in, and commitment to, the well-being of the local community:

1. Create a Town Council Community Transport Fund to support our residents and ensure they retain access to the town, to health facilities as well as shopping and leisure. As an example, certain bus routes vital to local communities were being cut, such as the #14 Crossville service from Locking Castle via Earham Grove was to be cut during the school holidays, just when young families, as well as the elderly, needed it most. The 14 is going to become even more essential with the closure of the Stafford Place GP Practice. All the current patients will be transferred to the Locking Castle Medical Centre. The #14 is the most convenient service for any of those patients to get from Town to Locking Castle Medical Centre. Such a grant of £10,000 would keep important services like this running.
2. Give a Town Council grant of £10,000 to "Somewhere to Go" in order to allow it to extend its services either by opening for additional hours/days, or to fund additional paid staff.
3. Increase Town Council support of Citizens Advice North Somerset (CANS) to £20,000 (from £10,000).
4. That the Town Council uses funds from the Strategic Planning Budget examine the financial viability of the Town Council creating a much needed Community Building in the centre of town.

Debate ensued. In response to amendment 3, it was argued that while CANS carried out vital work for the community, the timing to increase the grant was not right considering their plans to move location. It was suggested that statistical information should be obtained that was comparable to other towns to allow the council to be in a better position to consider an increase the following financial year, which could be discussed via the Community Services Committee.

A member voiced support for amendment 1 reminding members that the council had the General Power of Competence to act on behalf of its community and help with projects that may fall under the statutory obligation of the district authority but which have fallen through the gaps as a result of budget cuts.

The proposer accepted a request to vote on each part of the Second Amendment separately. Therefore, a vote was taken and:

	<p>Part 1: was lost (6 For; 14 Against) Part 2: was lost (10 For; 15 Against) Part 3: was lost (11 For; 13 Against) Part 4: was lost (8 For; 16 Against)</p> <p>Accordingly all four parts of the Second Amendment were lost.</p> <p>The substantive motion stood unamended. A vote was taken and the motion was carried (17 For; 9 Against) and accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the previously circulated budget and precept for 2017/18 with the following amendments totalling a budget of £1,809,164. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Decrease Central Administration Training budget by £2,425 to reflect a total of £11,000 ii. Increase Youth Grants budget by £500.00 to reflect a total of £3,500 iii. Increase Welcome to Weston Signs budget by £982.00 to reflect a total of £5,100 iv. Increase Play Area Equipment Repair budget by £1,985 to reflect a total of £38,200 2. Approve the precept value of £1,685,637 for submission to North Somerset Council
257.	<p>Presentation by the Citizens Advice Bureau</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed that he had been contacted that afternoon by the Chief Officer of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Fiona Cope, to thank the council for the opportunity to present. However, she felt that it was not appropriate for them to attend this meeting as the Citizens Advice Bureau needed to remain politically impartial as a charity. However they would very much like to have the opportunity to present at a future meeting.</p> <hr/>
258.	<p>Town Council Bank Accounts</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer's report requesting members to approve the principle of changing the council's bank accounts to an alternative bank, had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The council currently banked with Nat West bank for all of its day to day transactions (not including all treasury deposit accounts). Over the last financial year there had been an increase in bank charges, which had resulted in the need to make a complaint in order to get the charges reduced. On this occasion, the council were successful and had seen a repayment to the general account of £1,900.</p> <p>Other issues with the bank included numerous changes of business banking managers assigned to the council. The support centre for day to day contact had been relocated twice which had resulted in a reduced service and difficulties in support. Problems with the administration of the accounts, in particular changing councillor's bank mandates to reflect the approved members agreed by council.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ian Porter SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried accordingly it was:</p>

	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the principle of changing the council's bank accounts to an alternative bank. 2. To delegate the decision on choice of account to the Policy and Finance Committee in February 2017 to allow the transfer to take place from the 1st April 2017 (or as near to this date as possible – subject to the timings of transfer and set up).
259.	<p>Museum HLF Project Costs</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer's report which requested members to consider the revised additional estimate sum of £89,000 required to meet building control conditions and approve the use of the revenue provision 2017/2018 of £55,000 to complete the project, had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The capital refurbishment element of the project was subject to all necessary planning, conservation and building control legislation, conditions and requirements. As a result of some of the building control needs, it had been necessary to implement additional works at the museum in particular to meet Fire regulations to operate the building upon opening. These works would include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An additional fire escape staircase located at the front of the building. 2. Fire prevention treatments to all existing and new Steels within the building. 3. Fire prevention treatments to all exposed wooden surfaces (this includes the cobbled courtyard and art gallery panelling). <p>The Responsible Financial Officer reported that since the circulation of the report, an updated estimate sum of £44,000 had been advised. This was due to the fire prevention treatments being reduced to some and not all of the new steels within the building.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michal Kus SECONDED BY: Councillor James Davis</p> <p>A vote was taken carried and accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the revised additional estimated sum of £44,000 required to complete the build costs for the HLF refurbishment project at the Museum and approve the use of the General Reserves to meet this requirement.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7.48 p.m.</p> <p>Signed: Dated: Town Mayor</p>