



**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON  
MONDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7:16 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.53 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors John Crockford-Hawley (Town Mayor), Martin Williams (Deputy Town Mayor), Marc Aplin, Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Joe Bambridge, Gill Bute, Mark Canniford, Annabelle Chard, James Clayton, Jemma Coles, Ciaran Cronnelly, Catherine Gibbons, Simon Harrison-Morse, Owen James, Hugh Malyan, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Justyna Pecak-Michalowicz, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen, John Standfield, Tim Taylor, Richard Tucker and Charlie Williams.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:** Sarah Pearse (Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Director of Community Services / Deputy Town Clerk), Samantha Bishop (Democratic Services Manager), Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer), Reverend Peter Ashman and 60 members of the public.

The Town Mayor welcomed everybody to the meeting and advised that he would invite known speakers to address the council of which there were 3, under the public participation section of the meeting (15mins in total) and would then formally open the meeting and bring forward item 13. on the agenda for discussion by members.

The Town Mayor therefore invited the following speakers to address the meeting:

1. Mark Kinsey, local resident and member of North Somerset Trades Council.

Mark was in strong support **for** the motion and felt that Weston super Mare (WSM) had a moral responsibility for the safety of its diverse communities such as the polish community who had been in the town for many years and to welcome those who were fleeing for safety.

2. Alison Bancroft, local resident – central ward and representative from the Other Place

Alison was in strong support **for** the motion, stressing the importance of the issue for all and that the motion had nothing to do with asylum seekers and refugees coming to the UK and especially WSM which was determined by the home office. It was about creating a community where people feel they can belong. The motion was to agree the start the conversation of a lengthy process and if it failed, its entire discussion would fail, so therefore encouraged members to vote for the motion.

3. Martin Slade, local resident.

Martin was neutral towards the motion but was against the process of the motion and was extremely disappointed to hear of it at such short notice, under Standing Order 11 without any public consultation. He believed that such a large commitment to an emotive issue should be open and transparent to the residents that the council represented and was concerned about the lack of published supporting information regarding council and resident expectations, project

management lead councillor(s), short, medium and long-term planned outcomes, 1-5 year expected costs and how this was financed, the risks and potential negative outcome mitigations. Until complete information required for more informed decision making was made available to councillors and the public, he requested that the vote be deferred.

The Mayor thanked members of the public for their address and reiterated that they were welcome to stay for the meeting, however were now not able to take part in discussion on the formal agenda items.

321	<p><b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Helen Thornton and Peter Crew in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Also, from John Carson at the meeting.</p>
322	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were none received.</p>
323	<p><b>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the previous Town Council Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2024</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Harrison-Morse</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair as a true record of the meeting.</p>
324	<p><b>To receive the Minutes of Youth Council Meetings held in January and February 2025</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meetings had been previously circulated.</p> <p>There were no observations made.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be received.</p>
325	<p>At this point in the meeting, the Town Mayor brought forward item 13. for discussion.</p> <p>For the benefit of members of the public, the Town Mayor clarified that the Town Council were not responsible for Housing and Social Services, these were the statutory duties provided by North Somerset Council.</p> <p><b>Motion under Standing Order 11 - PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Caroline Reynolds</p> <p><i>Weston Town Council supports City of Sanctuary U.K. in its vision that the U.K. be a welcoming place of safety for all and is proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.</i></p>

*This council is committed to support the initiative to make Weston-super-Mare a recognised Council of Sanctuary.*

*We already welcome those fleeing violence and persecution in their own country. We recognise their potential contribution to our town. We need a comprehensive, coordinated and forward-looking approach if both the welfare of people moving into our town and community cohesion between new and existing communities are to be supported effectively.*

The proposer of the motion was invited to address the meeting and did so making the following clarifications:

1. She was aware that the background information had not initially been circulated to all members, however this was rectified and they were all provided with the information in sufficient time for the meeting.
2. That the motion was not about inviting more people to WSM, immigration was the remit of the Home Office. It was about recognising that WSM was already a welcoming place, with a diverse community and that the motion would support this.
3. It was a process of approximately 3 years and that voting this through, was the first step of 7/8, where there would be plenty of opportunity for engagement and discussion.

*The meeting was suspended at 7.37pm for 5mins to regain order.*

*The meeting resumed at 7.42pm*

A seconder for the motion was invited.

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Catherine Gibbons

Who added that WSM had already proven itself a very welcoming place by taking in Ukrainian refugees 3 years ago, where 700 had settled in to the surrounding area of which it should be proud of and reiterated that refugees were determined by the Home office.

A supporting speech of the motion from Councillor Thornton was also read aloud to the meeting.

An amendment to the motion was then

**PROPOSED BY:** - Councillor Gill Bute

That consideration of this motion be deferred to the next suitable Town Council Meeting, explaining that she was not against the motion but concerned about an increasing number of emails, some in support but mostly against, received from very worried residents, who were not aware of the motion.

The council needed to give its local people (the people who voted for them) - a chance to have a voice. Having not been aware of the motion until its notice on the agenda, she did not feel that this was sufficient enough time to give such an important matter her attention to find out more and to have discussions with residents and colleagues, to be in a position to provide more information and possibly allay fears.

The urgency to get the motion voted through Council so quickly and without consultation, was not understood and should the amendment not be approved, then the reasons for this would need to be asked why? As this would result in leaving no choice other than to vote against the motion.

A seconder for the motion was invited.

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Martin Williams

Councillors James Clayton and Marc Aplin spoke in favour of the amendment.

It was noted that if the motion was deferred, the next suitable opportunity for this to be discussed would be the Town Council meeting in July.

Debate ensued as follows:

- clarity was requested from the movers of the amendment on the purpose and if the motion was deferred, what was to happen in the meantime.
- All councillors received notice of motions on the agenda at the same time.
- It was disappointing to hear that there were only two opposing sides for and against and that the lines between migration and sanctuary were being blurred by this view.
- An opposing member highlighted the fact that the reason for the amendment was plainly obvious by the public turnout at the meeting.
- The council should look into how it could communicate more effectively with members of the public
- Working groups should be considered for this project

The proposer of the amendment summarised that it was unfair that members had not been given the sufficient opportunity to consult with their residents and that she felt a few months delay was not unreasonable.

A vote was therefore taken on the amendment and was **lost** (10 for /14 against)

The original motion was now the substantive motion which was open for debate.

Rigorous debate ensued for and against the motion.

*Some members of the public left the meeting at 8.03 pm.*

Members against the amendment motion raised the following points:

- The scale of the miss communication and miss understanding of the purpose of the motion on social media was evident.
- How incredibly disappointing it was that the council had missed an opportunity to engage with its residents on such an important issue.
- Recognition that the motion lacked planning and focus and it was important that the community did not feel overlooked or left behind.
- The council had previously facilitated Anti-racism group meetings
- The Mayor was the President of Multicultural Friendship Association.
- Clarity on what the motion would mean for the council in terms of finance and resource
- Did it need a status/award for something it was already doing?
- The issue had become distorted and the attention and commotion could now make it potentially worse for the safety of any refugees.
- Services were already overstretched and committed to tackling the homelessness and addition problems within the town which should be the priority.

The proposer of the motion summarised up the benefits of the motion and award and reiterated that 3years would give the council the time to work together with the community.

	<p>A vote was taken on the substantive motion and <b>carried</b> (14for / 11against/ 2abstentions).</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Weston Town Council supports City of Sanctuary U.K. in its vision that the U.K. be a welcoming place of safety for all and is proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.</p> <p>This council is committed to support the initiative to make Weston-super-Mare a recognised Council of Sanctuary.</p> <p>We already welcome those fleeing violence and persecution in their own country. We recognise their potential contribution to our town. We need a comprehensive, coordinated and forward-looking approach if both the welfare of people moving into our town and community cohesion between new and existing communities are to be supported effectively.</p> <p><i>The meeting was suspended at 8.19pm for a short break.</i></p> <p><i>The meeting resumed at 8.26pm</i></p> <p><i>It was noted that Councillor James Clayton had not returned to the meeting and there were only four members of the public now in attendance.</i></p>
326	<p><b>Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-super-Mare</b></p> <p>The Town Mayor welcomed and introduced Inspector Lee Kerslake, to address the meeting.</p> <p>Inspector Lee Kerslake gave an overview of the current policing situation across the Weston to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jonny Murry had left to pursue an alternative post as such it was a priority to get a replacement.</li> <li>• Crime statistics - There was a small rise year on year and all figures available on Police UK. It was noted that the 140% increase in an ASB was predominately caused by 1 individual who had now been arrested and there had been an increase in burglaries. However, drug and violence against the person offenses were down, resulting in a 1.9% increase across the whole of Weston. Crime figures were useful but what was more important was the strategies on how the Police would tackle them. Changes in the Police models had been made which were having a positive effect.</li> </ul> <p>The Town Mayor thanked the Inspector and summarised that figures recorded as percentages skewed the results. Ultimately, was WSM a safe place to live was the question.</p> <p>The Inspector reported WSM was a safe place, but was not without its issues and If people did feel unsafe then they needed to report this and urged members to invite his neighbourhood teams to their residents' meetings. It was noted that 5 members would like to pursue the offer.</p> <p>Debate ensued as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thanks, were given to the Inspector for his and his teams support at the meeting as well as council staff.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Issue of late-night car racing causing problems was highlighted and it was requested if there was anything members could do to try and help tackle this, to which regular reporting was encouraged.</li> <li>Reports that a man trying doors at night in certain areas was worrying for residents. The Inspector was aware of this but explained that the team did not have the capacity for scanning officers on social media, so encouraged reporting again.</li> <li>In light of the behaviours associated with the earlier part of the meeting, a member asked about the Police's capacity to tackle Hate crime. The inspector informed that the Police could only deal with the crime aspect of the offence and where this escalated from freedom of speech. He encouraged the early reporting of any issues before they escalated as normally the Police were late to the party.</li> <li>Clarification was sought on the previous report of the number of PCSO's leaving? The Inspector confirmed that there were now plans in place to address this fully.</li> </ul> <p><i>Councillor James Clayton returned to the meeting at 8.47 pm</i></p> <p><i>The Town Mayor thanked the Chief Inspector for his report and he left the meeting at 8.48pm</i></p> <p><i>Councillor James Clayton left the meeting again at 8.48 pm</i></p>
327	<p><b>Changes to Committee Memberships</b></p> <p>Group Leaders reported that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Councillor Catherine Gibbons was to replace Helen Thornton on the Hildesheim Start and Finish Group.</li> <li>2. Councillor Helen Thornton be removed from the Quarry Start and Finish Group with no replacement.</li> <li>3. There was no current replacement for Joe Bambridge who would come off of the Planning and Environment Committee.</li> </ol> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the above changes to Committee Memberships be approved.</p>
328	<p><b>North Somerset Council's Community Governance Review</b></p> <p>Full details of the Community Governance Review had been previously circulated and members were requested to advise of any formal response to North Somerset Council as necessary.</p> <p>The Leader of Council had circulated an outline a recommendation for members consideration as follows:</p> <p>North Somerset Council's launch of the community governance review of towns and parish councils was an important consultation which may change the way governance was managed in Weston-super-Mare.</p> <p>The first phase of the consultation had launched and closes on the 30th April. It was really important that residents shared their thoughts, and Weston Town Council had an important role in encouraging the community to engage with the consultation.</p> <p><i>Councillor James Clayton returned to the meeting at 8.49 pm</i></p>

Grammatical amendments to the Leaders recommendation was suggested and accepted and it was therefore

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Tim Taylor

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**.

**RESOLVED:** That

- Weston Town Council promotes the consultation via its networks and social media and encourages residents to respond directly on North Somerset Council's consultation portal
- Weston Town councillors are encouraged to respond to the consultation either as individuals or political groups
- Weston Town Council responds to the consultation in its capacity as a local authority in a neutral way (either responding don't know or not sure) except for the following:
  - The parish of Weston-super-Mare should remain warded, but doesn't have an opinion on the number of wards, number of councillors nor the ward boundaries
  - The elections for the parish of Weston-super-Mare should remain the same frequency and date of North Somerset Council elections
  - The difference in the name of Bournville Ward (Weston Town Council) should revert to the same name as South Ward (North Somerset Council) if the boundary remains the same, as the difference in name causes confusion
  - The name of Worlebury ward should be changed to 'Worlebury and Old Worle' if the boundary remains unchanged
  - The town council supports a review of its boundaries and would encourage North Somerset Council to consider the new developments at, or near, the edge of the boundary when determining whether the boundary should be changed
  - Weston Town Council doesn't have an opinion on the number of councillors that should represent the parish of Weston-super-Mare, but would recommend care is given when using the 'National Association of Local Council guidance on the number of councillors' as this was developed in 1988 and was not developed for parishes as large as Weston-super-Mare (which has three times more electors than the upper limit in the NALC guidance.)

**329** *It was highlighted that item 5. had been missed and was therefore discussed at this point in the meeting.*

**To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor**

The Mayor's announcements and communications had been circulated prior to the meeting.

There had been 31 engagements attended by the Mayor 5 by the Deputy Mayor and 1 by the Leader which was a total of 285 to date.

	<p>Dates for diaries were highlighted as follows:</p> <p><u>26<sup>th</sup> March RBL Touchpoint Coffee Morning</u></p> <p><u>27<sup>th</sup> March Mark Youth Matilda Performance</u></p> <p><u>29<sup>th</sup> March Strictly Fun Dancing</u></p> <p><u>4<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> April Hildesheim Youth Exchange</u></p> <p><u>5<sup>th</sup> April Mayor's end of Term Dinner</u></p> <p><u>9<sup>th</sup> April Opening first weekly Market</u></p> <p>The Town Mayor congratulated Councillor Charlie Williams on achieving his Master of Arts degree.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Town Mayor's report be noted.</p>
330	<p><b>To approve the Updated Town Council Strategy following Strategy Workshops and community engagement</b></p> <p>The covering report of the Senior Development Officer, updated Strategy and Appendix had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Martin Williams</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Updated Town Council Strategy be approved.</p>
331	<p><b>To Approve the Earmarked Reserves for the Year 2025/2026</b></p> <p>The covering report of the Director of Finance and Resources and a summary and description of the Earmarked Reserves estimates for the year 2025 / 2026 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The estimates were based on known information at month 11 within the financial year 2024 / 2025.</p> <p>Any other movements in month 12 would also need to be reflected in the final figures available at the year end point (31.03.25).</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Ciaran Connelly  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve the Earmarked reserve estimates for the year 2025 / 2026 at this point in time, approving further that any final adjustments to the figure could be approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its first meeting in the new financial year (April 2025).</p>
332	<p><b>Designation of the Town Mayor for the year 2025/2026</b></p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>UNANIMOUSLY</b> carried:</p>

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Martin Williams be designated Town Mayor for the year 2025/2026.</p>
333	<p><b>Designation of the Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2025/2026</b></p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>UNANIMOUSLY</b> carried:</p> <p><b>.2 RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor James Owen be designated Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2025/2026.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.53 pm.</p> <p>Signed: ..... Dated: .....</p>