



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
HELD ON 28TH APRIL 2025
AT THE TOWN HALL

Meeting Commenced: 6.37 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.24 pm

PRESENT: Councillors John Crockford-Hawley (Town Mayor), Ray Armstrong, Joe Bambridge, Gill Bute, James Clayton, Jemma Coles, Peter Crew, Ciaran Cronnelly, Catherine Gibbons, James Owen, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Marcia Pepperall, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen, Tim Taylor, and Martin Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk- Operational Services), Samantha Bishop (Democratic Services Manager), Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer), Evan Linde (Communications Officer), Warren Parker-Mills (Tourism and Marketing Manager), Elenor ?? (Chair of Youth Council), Oliver Masley and Zac ?? (Youth Council Representatives), Louise Hill-Davis (Health, Education & Community in WsM), Kaye Willoughby (Physical Development Lead Baytree School), Howard Pothercary and Clair Sandilands (North Somerset Council) and 80 members of the public.

The 25th Annual Report of Weston-super-Mare Town Council had been previously circulated and was available on the Town Council's website.

1.	<p>Opening by the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare</p> <p>The Town Mayor, Councillor John Crockford-Hawley was formally introduced, welcoming everyone and officially opened the Annual Town Meeting.</p>
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roger Bailey, Mike Bell Mark, Canniford, John Carson, Annabelle Chard, Simon Harrison-Morse, Hugh Malyan, Justyna Pecak-Michalowiz, Lisa Pilgrim, John Standfield and Helen Thornton and Richard Tucker.</p> <p>Councillors Marc Aplin and Charlie Williams were absent from the meeting.</p>

3.	<p>Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 29th April 2024</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly SECONDED BY: Councillor Alan Peak</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.</p>
4.	<p>Presentation of the Annual Report 2024-2025</p> <p>The Chairs of Committee's were invited to present their reports which were outlined within the 24th Annual Report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and General Purposes Committee - Report of the Chair, Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly • Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee – Report of the Chair, (Vice) Councillor Peter Crew • Planning and Environment Committee – Report of the Chair, Caroline Reynolds.
5.	<p>Presentations from Community Groups</p> <p>Presentations were made by the following community groups who worked in partnership with the town council over the past year:</p> <p>Kate Willoughby – Physical Development Lead - Baytree School Louise Hill-Davis – Across Health, Education & Community in WsM Claire Sandilands – North Somerset Council Elenor, Oliver an Zack – Youth Council</p>
6.	<p>Matters raised by members of the public</p> <p>Members of the public were then invited to ask questions to the panel consisting of the Town Mayor, Leader of the Council and Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Town Clerk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Question 1- Martin Slade, BS23 – Raised concerns over the council' decision to explore becoming a City of Sanctuary at its Town Council Meeting held on the 24th March 2025. Councillors needed to be representative of resident's views and concerns regarding public safety implications and not party lines. Residents needed to be able to express their concerns without being called racist. <p><i>Answer 1: The Leader informed that the motion was only giving the council permission to explore the accreditation process and that council were facilitating two public engagement sessions for members of the public to express their concerns regarding the City of Sanctuary motion on the 7th and 21st July. After which and 6 months, the motion would be reviewed by council. It was noted that the town council had no influence over immigration.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Question 2 - ?? – Regarding council elections. <p><i>Answer 2: The Leader advised that town council elections took place every 4years.</i></p>

- Question 3 - ?? – Regarding the City of Sanctuary motion and how nobody was aware of it.

Answer: The Leader of council informed that any member of council can put forward a motion to council and that that the agenda notifying of this was displayed on the town council website.

- Question 4 – Regarding the cancelation of the Waterloo Street bus stop on the NO 7 bus service.

Answer: The Mayor advised that the bus services were the responsibility of North Somerset Council. However as a dual hatted member he informed that the decision to remove the stop from the route was due to bus service subsidy and there would be an opportunity to review this decision in September.

- Question 5 – Ellis Rogers – Regarding City of Sanctuary and no prior information or consultation before a council decision was taken?. Why would a council support something that aided people breaking laws? On independent research taken, associated costs were in the region of £50k.

Answer: The Leader referred to the two public consultation sessions on the 7th and 21st July where concerns would be facilitated. The motion was to explore the process of accreditation only and associated costs were £250.

- Question 6 – Debbie – Regarding the Old Town Quarry and if the project was on track?

Answer: The Town Clerk confirmed that the project was on schedule and due to open in September as a refurbished Community Arts venue, identified through public consultation.

- Question 7 – Sue ?? – Regarding protection of existing allotment land and changing??

Answer: The Vice Chair of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee informed that all existing allotments sites would remain and that the council were looking at the potential of further land, through the devolution process.

- Question 8 – Sue ?? Regarding the small remit of the town council and funding important services such as public toilets for women and free of charge, rather than initiatives such as the City of Sanctuary, which does not benefit its residents.

Answer: The Vice Chair of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee explained that the town council took over some of the public toilets from NSC and took the decision through consultation and procurement to make all its toilets unisex.

- Question 9 – Christine – Regarding Ellenborough Park East and the use of dogs, when there is an unfenced play area?

Answer: The Town Clerk advised that the park was not a dedicated park for dogs only and that the play area had been in situ for a number of years.

- Question 10 – Diane ?? – Regarding the use of the Silica as a VIC and whether it would sell souvenirs? And what was being done about the homeless that were using the seating area on the seafront?

Answer: The Vice Chair of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee informed that the Silica was a satellite VIC, unattended and souvenirs could be purchased from either the Museum or 32, Waterloo Street. With regards to the homeless presence on the seafront, this would be addressed by NSC and Community Response.

- Question 11 – Nicky – Regarding the lack of trust in Councillors, after the recent Town Council meeting where the City of Sanctuary motion was passed, regardless of residents severe opposing views. Public comments were turned off on social media, which made people feel they were being silenced.

Answer: The Vice Chair of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee informed that he and his fellow ward councillors held monthly ward surgery meetings, where they listened to the views of their residents and answered any questions.

In relation to the social media, the Leader explained that the purpose of the social media posts was for sharing of information only.

- Question 12 – John ?? – WSMTC were struggling to deliver simple things such as the provision of toilets and bins, how would it be able to deliver a complicated process of becoming a City of Sanctuary? and surely it should look to address its homelessness issue as a first priority.

Answer: The Leader informed that the provision of toilets was been addressed and that the issues were due to vandalism and the need to repair. With regards to bin emptying, WSMTC had recently taken on some bins from NSC which were frequently emptied. However please contact WSMTC if there was a bin not emptied.

- Question 13 – James ?? – What was WSMTC’s strategy for bringing businesses into the town?

Answer: The Vice Chair of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee explained that there was a business development area ‘Hive’ alongside the motorway which was in the hand of the developer still. Economic Development was NSC’ remit however, WSMTC can influence this as a planning consultee and through tourism.

There being no further questions, the host thanked all in attendance and encouraged people’s thoughts and ideas to come through throughout the year, with the ‘Your Town Your Voice’ surveys and in person meetings.

There being no further business, the Mayor, Councillor John Crockford-Hawley thanked those for attending and closed the meeting at 8.24 pm.

Signed:Dated: Mayor of Weston-super-Mare