



WESTON LITERARY FESTIVAL EVENT REVIEW

Produced by the Community and Grounds Officer

1. Summary

This document has been compiled as an information tool for councillors to consider regarding future Literary Festivals.

The Town Council has hosted 2 Literary Festivals so far, both taking place in February and spanning over the course of a week. This document will re-cap over Weston Lit Fest 2018 and review Weston Lit Fest 2019. From this analysis, some recommendations have been made for Councillors to consider, which can be found at the end of this document.

1.1. Weston Literary Festival 2018

The councils first literary festival held at the Blakehay and Museum in February 2018 showed great potential. We had encouraging responses from local authors via our press releases in the Mercury and Facebook posts. Also when authors were contacted directly they were excited about seeing a Literary Festival introduced to the town.

The use of the Blakehay Theatre ticketing system worked well allowing us to track ticket sales and keep an eye on venue capacity. The event also showcased the new studio renovations as well as the recently refurbished Weston Museum. Some days throughout the festival had 2 if not 3 events running across the sites.

Waterstones attended our events as the official bookseller. This made offering a book signing/sale after an author talk simple and fuss free, not only for us but the authors too. They were fantastic to work with and supported the event entirely.

Marketing for the festival was carried out across the following platforms:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Leaflets (drops to schools, town council facilities, town centre shops and the YMCA groups)
- Radio (BBC Radio Bristol, The Breeze)

Within the first week of tickets going on sale (30th November – 7th December) “An Evening with Jeffery Archer” had secured an attendance of 46 out of 80 tickets available and Damien Boyd also secured an attendance of 32 out of 50. Both events had sold out their first batch of tickets by the 15th December where we then released more. The events had fully sold out by 12th January 2018.

Ticket Sales:

Members decided to keep all tickets free of charge.

Below you can see for each event how many tickets were secured by the public vs how many people then attended on the day:

Ticket Sales 2018	Tickets Available:	Tickets Booked:	Event attendance:
Constructing a Story 22 nd February 10.30am @ The Stable	58	58	46
"Why DIY?" Thursday 22 nd February 7.00pm @ The Blakehay Theatre	100	67	37
Making the Leap panel discussion Friday 23 rd February 1.00pm @ Weston Museum	50	40	17
"Voices along the road: an evening of poetry and flash fiction" Friday 23 rd February 7.00pm @ Weston Museum:	50	50	58
An evening with Amanda Prowse: Friday 23 rd February 7.00pm @ The Blakehay Theatre	100	98	50
Spacejackers by Huw Powell: Saturday 24 th February 11.00am @ Weston Museum	50	50	22
Justin Newland 24 th February 3.00pm @ The Stable	24	24	17
An evening with Jeffery Archer: Saturday 24 th February 7.00pm @ Weston Museum	80	80	60
An afternoon with Damien Boyd: Sunday 25 th February 2.00pm @ The Museum	50	50	41
Lois Elsdon: The Process of Writing Sunday 25 th February 10.30am @ Weston Museum	30	30	23
Lois Elsdon: Blogging Monday 26 th February 7.00pm @ Weston Museum	30	30	17
Eat Drink Laugh Repeat Monday 26 th February 7.00pm @ The Stable	50	50	21
"This is what a Romance Writer looks like" Tuesday 27 th February @ The Blakehay Theatre 7.00pm	56	56	25
Mark Lewis – Creative Writing Workshop Wednesday 28 th February 7.30pm @ Weston Museum	10	10	5
World Book Day Pirate Creative Writing Workshop 5 – 8 years old @ Weston Museum	-	Cancelled due to snow	-
World Book Day Pirate Creative Writing Workshop 9 – 11 years old @ Weston Museum	-	Cancelled due to snow	-

1.2. Weston Literary Festival 2019

The second Literary Festival was well received by those who attended. Events took place at the Museum and The Blakehay Theatre and as agreed by members at Expenditure and Governance on the 14th May 2018 a ticket charge was implemented. This resulted in a lower attendance in comparison to 2018 when tickets were free however whilst in 2018 many events sold out but then attendance was low on the day.

The charge was £5 per ticket for events held at Weston Museum and £12 per ticket for events held at The Blakehay Theatre. The Blakehay Theatre ticketing system was used once again allowing us to track ticket sales and keep an eye on venue capacity.

The festivals social media platform continued to grow and become more active. The page now has a total of 451 people following it. Some of our events, such as Helen Pankhurst, attracted good social media attention with 114 people registering their interest and the event reaching a total of 5.3k people.

Waterstones once again attended our events as the official bookseller, allowing us to offer a book signing/sale after an author talk.

The first week of tickets going on sale (10th November – 17th November) showed Helen Pankhurst as our most popular event however no events sold out this year.

Below you can see for each event how many tickets were secured by the public vs how many people then attended on the day:

Ticket Sales 2019	Tickets Pre Booked:	Tickets on door:	Event attendance:
Not Falling Apart and Broken Hearts 22 nd February 07.30pm @ The Blakehay Theatre	15	0	Cancelled
Children's Author Claire Barker – Knitbone Pepper 23 rd February 10.30am @ Weston Museum	11	0	11
Children's Illustration Workshop with Duncan Beedie 23 February 12noon @ Weston Museum	7	0	7
We Are Family Writing Workshop 23 rd February 2019 2.00pm @ Weston Museum	6	0	4
An afternoon with Amanda Prowse 23 rd February 2.30pm @ The Blakehay Theatre	24	11	32
Murder Mayhem and Mystery 23 rd February 3.30pm @ Weston Museum	36	4	40
Helen Pankhurst 23 rd February 07.00pm @ The Blakehay Theatre	97	3	98
How to get your book into the mainstream media! 24 th February 10.30am @ Weston Museum	18	4	17
What is Women's Fiction Anyway? 24 th February 12.00noon @ Weston Museum	26	3	19

The beginning, middle not muddle... 24 th February 03.00pm @ Weston Museum	24	0	18
The Pitfalls and Triumphs of self-publishing 25 th February 11.30am @ Weston Museum	20	1	8
Past Presence Poetry Writing Workshop 26 th February 10.30am @ Weston Museum	7	0	7
Poetry Reading Evening 26 th February 7.30pm @ Weston Museum	8	4	12
The Great Ming Code 27 th February 12.30pm @ Weston Museum	3	1	4
From the Aegean to the Severn Sea 07.00pm @ Weston Museum	12	6	18

Please see Appendix 1 for feedback received from the festival attendees.

2. Future Event Planning considerations

2.1 Potential Opportunities - Length of Festival

Option 1:

Currently the event spans over a week in total. In order to improve the festival atmosphere and increase the chance of on the door sales, the festival could be reduced to 3 days (Friday, Saturday, Sunday). Events could run in close succession one after the other, in one venue.

The benefits of this are:

- Venue hire would be more cost effective and beneficial to both parties
- Reduces staffing costs
- The weekend running slot could make staying in Weston and attending more than one event attractive and cost effective to attendees from outside town.

The Negatives of this are:

- Limited audience due to reduced times
- Less days to offer to authors to attend

Option 2:

Remain as previous years and span the festival over a week, incorporating a launch weekend of multiple events. This could then lead into a week of steady flowing events.

The benefits of this are:

- Longer festival
- Opportunity to engage with a broader author attendance

The negatives are:

- Staffing costs across venues is higher
- Less opportunity for secondary spend at the venues

2.2 Potential Opportunity - Venue

Option 1:

Whilst having the Festival across multiple venues offers variety in the spaces we can host events it does pose logistical issues, varying hire fees and high impact on staffing costs and time. Containing the festival to one venue is an option to consider. The benefits of this are:

- A centralised festival will create a hive of activity and atmosphere
- Venue hire would be more cost effective and beneficial to both parties
- Potentially increase footfall of 'on the door sales'
- Easier to offer and cost 'package ticket deals'
- Different tiers of 'support' or 'sponsorship' options could be produced.

Option 2:

Continue as previous years and hold events across different Town Council facilities. The benefits of this are:

- Showcasing Town Council Facilities
- More venue space to run events

2.3 Potential Opportunity - Marketing

Whilst the use of social media and local press/radio is beneficial and has its place, more needs to be done in order to keep audiences coming back and build momentum for the festival. A way of achieving this could be:

- Host pop up 'Weston Lit Fest' events during the run up to the event. Not just in Weston but in the surrounding towns and villages. These could be taster

sessions and stands at other community events promoting the festival. This will help build momentum to the main event.

A more robust marketing strategy could be developed and put in place.

2.4 Potential Opportunity – Tickets

Other festivals have 'Memberships' which offer added benefits. For example:

Henley Lit Fest:

Become a friend of the festival for £35 to include –

- A priority booking period
- Early announcement of the line up
- Email alerts for new ticket releases and special events
- Discounts and offers from retail partners and other cultural organisations

Hay Lit Fest:

Become a friend of the festival for 12 months, £32 for single or £55 for double membership to include –

- A priority booking period
- Regular email news letters
- Queue jump

Cheltenham Lit Fest:

Become a bronze or silver member for £25 per year/£50 per year each year to include –

- Priority Booking (Bronze)
- Priority Booking and Discounted Tickets (Silver)

Encompassing some of the above packages into our ticketing system could be beneficial.

Weston Lit Fest Ticket Structure 2020:

Option 1:

- Standard Event Tickets - set at a minimum of £5 each (with the ability for the Community and Grounds Officer to increase where needed for well-known/celebrity authors)

Option 2:

- Standard Event Tickets - set at a minimum of £5 each (with the ability for the Community and Grounds Officer to increase where needed for well-known/celebrity authors)

And also the chance for people to

- Become a Friend of Weston Lit Fest 2020 = £25
 - Access to 3 days of priority booking to all Literary Festival Events
 - 10% discount on all Literary Festival Events
 - 1 free ticket to an event of your choice
 - 10% discount in Clara's Café

Option 3:

- No charge for tickets, all events free.

2.5 Budget

The Community Events Budget for 2019/2020 is £6,500. The approved split within the budget setting process was:

- Weston Horticultural Society Flower show: £1000
- YMCA Summer Starter: £1000
- Literary Festival: £3000
- Christmas Lights: £1500

Members are requested to:

Decide the following for the Literary Festival February 2020 –

1. The start date and length of the Literary Festival.
2. Decide on a venue or venues.
3. Decide on a ticketing structure.

Brilliant morning @WestonLitFest today. Thank you to everyone who took the time to speak to us. As someone starting out as a writer I learned so much from you all.



↻ 1

♥ 2

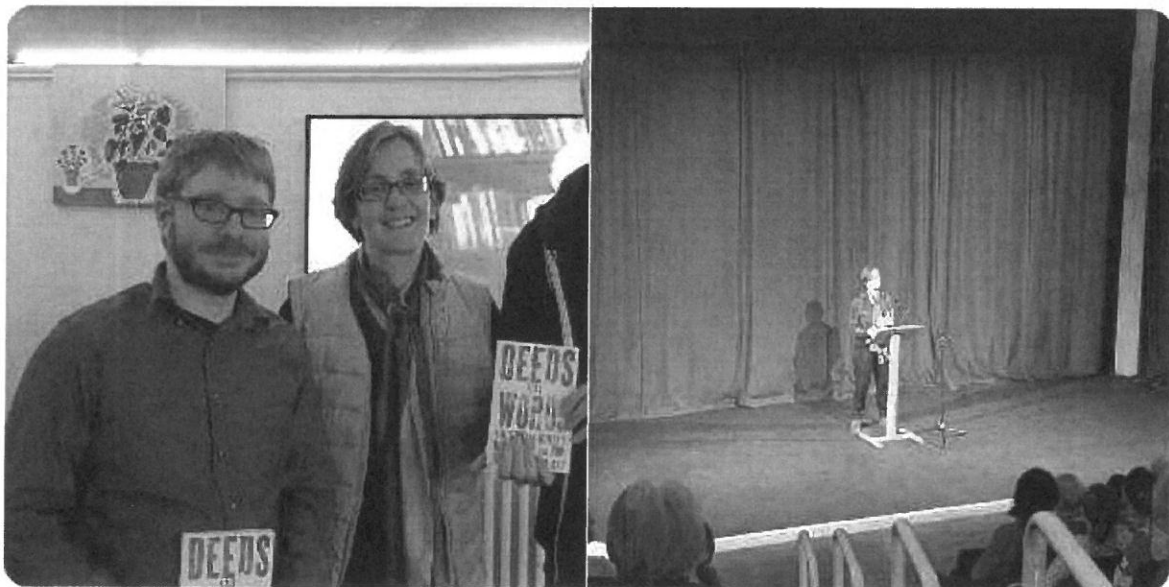
Great advice from @beckywalthcom at the @WestonLitFest this morning held @westonmuseum. Great chatting with @AliBacon too!

Fab event @westonmuseum @WestonLitFest What is women's fiction anyway? (My answer: It's awesome) and great to see @JennyKaneAuthor again! #chicklit #romcom #WomensFiction #romancewriter #authorlife

Waterstones Weston @Waterstoneswsm · Feb 23



Amazing talk tonight from @HelenPankhurst for the @WestonLitFest on the rights of women from the suffragettes to today.



Super interesting afternoon with @lgflannigan at @WestonLitFest listening to @CJSkuse @RachelWardbooks @CJ_Daugherty @TheVenomousPen @joannanadin 🙌

Nicky King Amanda Prowse talk was excellent we all enjoyed it x

Like Reply Message 1d

Jenny Kane Had a wonderful time talking about women's fiction- or fiction as we call it- today xx

Like Reply Message 1d



Helen Gilmore Thoroughly enjoyed Amanda Prowse's talk yesterday and all the talks today. Unfortunately not free to come tomorrow or Tuesday. Can't wait for the next festival. Thank you so much for organising Zoe xx

Like Reply Message 1d

Louise Pople Thoroughly enjoyed murder, mystery mayhem. Very interesting as was Lois Elsdon's writing workshop today. Great practical advice. Dr Helen Pankhurst's talk at the Blakehay was thought provoking. Excellent. I do wish that the festival had been more widely publicised. People now saying that they wish they had known about it.

Like Reply Message 1d

Sarah Ireland Helen Pankhurst talk was brilliant- shame we didn't have more time

Like Reply Message 1d

Linda Bishop Tilling Amanda Prowse talk which was great and such a lovely venue too x

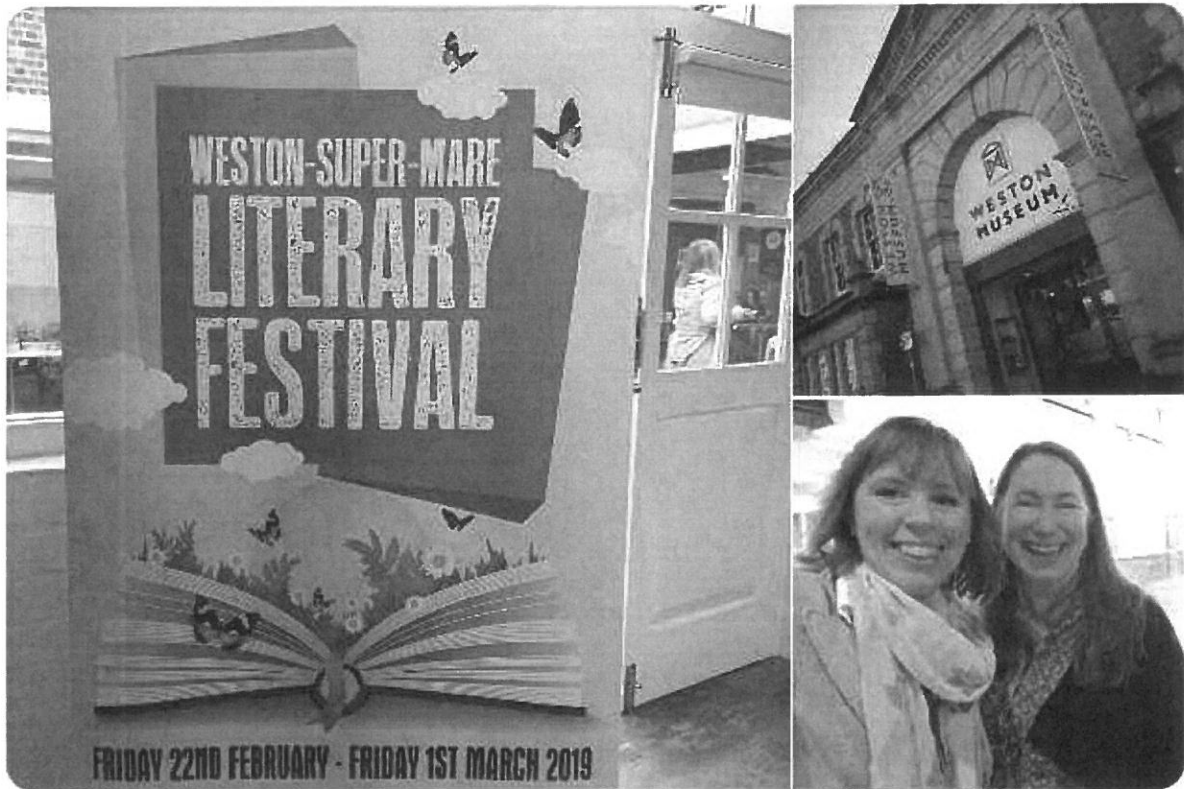
Karen Jarvis Billie had a lovely time thank you and is currently reading The dictionary of words at the back of Picklewitch and Jack



Like Reply Message 2d



Thanks @westonlitfest for such a fun & informative talk by @beckywalthcom. SO many useful real life tips! 📖 #VisitWeston



Waterstones Weston, Visit Weston-super-Mare and The Blakehay Theatre

@WestonLitFest Thanks to all the organisers of the 2019 Weston-super-Mare Litfest - it was great, I really enjoyed being part of it and look forward to 2020!

Fay Keenan

@faykeenan More Fay Keenan Retweeted Weston-super-Mare Literary Festival

Thank you, Zoe, for organising a brilliant festival. Here's to 2020 - would be delighted to do it again!

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 1st JULY 2019

DOG BIN CONTRACT – REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK

Background

The Town Council has installed up to 57 bins for dog waste all around Weston, Worle and Uphill. The majority of these were installed in the early 2000's on request from residents or ward members. Until 2013 North Somerset Council (which also owned over 50 dog bins) provided the bin emptying and disposal service at a cost of £1 per bin per empty, eventually increasing to £2 per bin.

Members will recall that, following North Somerset Council giving notice in late 2013 of withdrawal from providing the service to parish and town councils, this Council resolved in 2014 to procure a service from a new private sector provider. This proved not to be straightforward. Very few companies are able or willing to provide this service which requires a high level Waste Licence and a disposal permit at a licensed facility and despite combining with Clevedon and Nailsea Town Councils to offer over 100 bins the contract seems to have been insufficiently large to interest any of the big waste companies that do waste collection for principal authorities.

Two small companies did come forward and a contract was awarded in 2014 to Bin-It Ltd, expiring in early 2018, making savings of over 33% on collection by North Somerset. Also, the Committee agreed in 2015 to adopt a policy only to put in new bins where there was a demonstrable need, and not to provide bins on North Somerset Council land (such as parks and woods) or for the benefit of private premises or land. Although there were always occasional problems particularly in and around the Worle area, the contract was largely carried out for the first three years and given the then lack of any alternative providers the Committee agreed to extend their contract to 31st March 2019.

Position since 2018

However problems became more persistent after March 2018 with 17 missed collections overall. Service then ceased without warning after one collection at the beginning of December and it became impossible to contact Bin-It to find out what was happening, their office number became unobtainable and emails to the office manager were not replied to. Unemptied dog bins quickly become a health hazard as dog owners continued to pile up bags of dog waste, in, on and around them. In these circumstances I terminated their contract and payment was withheld for all missed collections.

I lobbied North Somerset Council who agreed for Glendale to empty a few of the worst bins but they insisted Glendale had limited capacity to provide a complete service. A third pest control contractor then offered to provide a service, but were then found to not have a permit to dispose of the waste. I applied for a permit, which had to be obtained from a company in Staffordshire, and after some delay this was obtained. However the contractor still failed to provide the promised service.

Finally in February 2019 a fourth, local, contractor Greenways Grounds Maintenance was given a contract, initially for 3 months. The company was already emptying bins for several smaller parish councils and had good reviews from them. There were definitely initial problems and three weeks were missed in February and March, for which payment was withheld, in addition the collection days have varied. However to be fair the company's owner is easy to communicate with, honest when there are problems and I believe is doing his best to provide a good service, including undertaking some collections himself.

The service has been improving but despite this there still appear to be persistent problems at a relatively small but significant number of locations, mostly around north Worle. Bins 2, 3 and 18 had to be removed as an emergency measure because it proved impossible to service them due to accessibility and abuse for general waste. I have personally inspected up to 12 bins which are frequently complained about on several occasions and can confirm that Greenways have always done the collections when they have said. It therefore appears that there are some specific problem locations.

Problems

Despite all the efforts made there have been continuing problems at some locations with a few bins filling up within 24-48 hours on occasions. Investigation, reports from councillors and the public, and discussion with Greenways suggests that a few bins are being abused for general waste disposal, or are being filled with general litter. It is harder to dispose of waste in 2019 than it was 15-20 years ago when the dog bins were put in. General (black wheelie bin) collections are only fortnightly instead of weekly and many items have to be sorted and recycled correctly, or the various bins are not taken.

We believe that at least one location is being used by professional dog walkers with large volumes of waste from walking several dogs at a time throughout the day resulting in bins filling very quickly. Signs on all dog bins politely ask people to use another bin or take it home if a dog bin is full. Unfortunately some selfish dog owners are unwilling to take any responsibility for their own dog's waste and merely dump it on, around and near full bins.

In a few cases we know people who live near dog bins actually bring their dog waste collected from their private gardens and dump it in public dog bins intended for dog walkers instead of putting it in their black wheelie bin. If they have several large dogs this can easily fill up a public dog bin in 24 hours resulting in complaints. In some cases black sacks of dog waste have been dumped around dog bins. The overflowing bins that result are smelly, and a health hazard, and cause reputational damage to the Town Council (which is not the street cleansing or waste authority).

Options

There may be alternative options to deal with this persistent problem. The ultimate option would be to remove all of the dog bins completely. However many genuine dog walkers who wish to be responsible would suffer from this and there would be a risk of irresponsible people leaving more dog mess untouched on the ground, despite this being illegal, or hanging dog waste bags in trees etc.

A second possible option might be to replace all of the dog bins with litter bins. It is now lawful to put dog waste in litter bins and it may be easier to find contractors to empty litter bins. However I am advised by North Somerset Council waste officers that this might lead to replacement litter bins in the same locations just filling up more quickly. This would at best be likely to increase costs and at worst might leave overflowing litter bins and a similar problem, unless a better collection and disposal arrangement could be made.

Thirdly therefore, I am also enquiring whether North Somerset Council will offer the option for parish councils to be included in their next big cleansing and waste contract due to commence on 1st April 2020. Officers have indicated that they might be able to do this. This will offer at least one further competitor for dog bin emptying, or alternatively a suitable arrangement for replacement litter bins.

The fourth option would be to make incremental changes to see if the service can be improved where needed and problem locations removed. Little thought seems to have been given in the past when the majority of bins were installed to whether the locations were either suitable or required, and in some cases circumstances have changed. Some bin locations are:

- Being abused for general rubbish/litter
- Being abused by people bringing dog waste from private premises
- Little used as not in a dog walking area
- Next to a children's play area and a health hazard
- Next to and duplicating North Somerset Council dog or litter bins

In other cases dog bins are used appropriately and offer a service to the public, but the volume of dog waste would justify a second bin, or a more frequent collection. Finally a few bins are damaged and if service is to continue, would benefit from being replaced. In at least one case replacement with a litter bin may assist.

Conclusion

While sweeping changes to remove or replace all bins are possible outcomes for members to consider, in my view the fourth option would be worth trying first. IE to make incremental changes to see whether the problem locations can be removed but a service can be continued where needed.

I am therefore working on detailed proposals for changes including removing some bins on a bin by bin basis based on our log of complaints, inspections, and discussion with the current contractor, which I will table at the committee meeting.

Recommendation

A recommendation will be made at the meeting.

Malcolm L Nicholson LLB DMS PSLCC
Town Clerk
20th June 2019

4.

Date: 23 May 2019
My ref: MDP/Legal/LS012322
Your ref:
Contact: Malcolm Pridmore
Direct dial: 01934 634936
Email: malcolm.pridmore@n-somerset.gov.uk



Legal Services
North Somerset Council
Town Hall
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 1UJ
DX 744900 Clevedon

Weston-super-Mare Town Council
Grove House
Grove Park
Weston-super-Mare
BS23 2QJ

24 MAY 2019

Dear Sirs

**Notice of Termination of Lease
Locking Road Public Toilets**

I enclose herewith formal notice to the effect that the Lease of Locking Road Public Toilets dated 1 April 2014 made between North Somerset District Council of the one part and Weston-super-Mare Town Council of the other part shall terminate on **30 June 2020**.

I would be obliged if you would kindly acknowledge safe receipt of the enclosed notice.

Yours faithfully,

**Malcolm Pridmore
Solicitor**

*A great place to live where people, businesses and communities flourish.
Modern, efficient services and a strong voice for North Somerset.*

www.n-somerset.gov.uk
Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ



4

NOTICE TO TERMINATE LEASE ON 30 JUNE 2020

To: **WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL** of Grove House Grove Park
Weston-super-Mare BS23 2QJ (Tenant)

From: **NORTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Town Hall Walliscote Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ (Landlord)

Premises: **LOCKING ROAD PUBLIC TOILETS** Weston-super-Mare as demised by the lease
dated 1 April 2014 made between the Landlord and the Tenant (**Lease**)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, for and on behalf of the Landlord, that the Landlord will
terminate the term of the Lease on **30 June 2020** in accordance with clause 5 of the Lease so
that the Lease will determine on that date.

SIGNED on behalf of the Landlord: *A. Rich*

~~Head of Legal & Democratic Services, North Somerset District Council/Solicitor for North
Somerset District Council~~

DATED: *23 May* 2019
