

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKING PARTY
HELD THE MUSEUM
MONDAY 17TH JANUARY 2022**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 9.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Sarah Codling (Chairman), Roger Bailey, Gillian Carpenter, Dave Dash (S), Peter Fox, Pete McAleer, Clare Morris and Alan Peak (S).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Gill Bute and Sonia Russe, Malcom Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk Operational Services), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Zoe Scott (Grounds Coordinator) Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Reece Evans (Community Response Officer), John Christopher, Paul Borthwick (members of the public) and David Crossman (Chairman of the Anti-Racism Working Group).

278	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ciaran Cronnelly who was substituted by Alan Peak, Helen Thornton who was substituted by Dave Dash and Roz Willis with no substitution. The Chairman welcomed newly elected Councillor Clare Morris to the meeting.
279	To receive Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received.
280	To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Community Service Working Party meeting held on 8th November 2021 The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda. The following amendments were noted: that the meeting had taken place at the Museum; page 3, minute number 203 'CPA' to replace 'WPA' and that 'the' be removed before Bournville. A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried . RESOLVED: That with the above amendments, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
281	References from other Committees: It was noted that there were none.
282	Grounds Management Report The report of the Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services) had been previously circulated and the following points were highlighted.

The team were currently working through their Winter Maintenance Programme and were tople testing memorials throughout the Cemetery. The council had been approached by Community Pay Back regarding taking on people to work, to which the cemetery was assessed as the most appropriate facility to accommodate this.

The tople testing process was queried by a member whom was advised that the grounds team were trained and instructed by the ICM (Institute of Cemetery Management). It was explained that human force was applied and no machines were used, with graves staked and banded where possible before laying head stones down.

Members were welcome to accompany the grounds team to witness the process and exact figures of graves tested and deemed unsafe, would be provided to members. It was confirmed that the 5-year tree works plan had been signed off by North Somerset Council allowing the Grounds Team to carry out minor tree works at WSMTC sites. It was advised that allotments had been subject to general vandalism, but it was hoped these incidents were easing off.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

5.1 Welcome Back Fund

A report of the Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Discussion with officers from North Somerset Council Economic Development Team regarding the Welcome Back Fund had taken place and detailed information regarding the fund was outlined within the report.

As a result, Weston-super-Mare council had been advised it had been successful in securing grant funding to the value of £40,000 which would be ring fenced by NSC. The money needed to be spent by 31st March 2022 and to be used in areas such as the High Street. The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed with NSC that it can be used in shopping areas such as Worle High Street, Milton Road shops and other locations, to be approved.

The fund criteria enabled local authorities to: Boost the look and feel of their high streets by investing in street planting, parks, green spaces, and seating areas to make high streets welcoming. Run publicity campaigns and prepare to hold events that would boost footfall and encourage people back into the high streets and thereby supporting local businesses. Install and refresh signage and communications on how people could stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Improve green spaces on high streets and town centres by planting flowers or removing graffiti.

The Assistant Town Clerk clarified that items funded must not be permanent and that bins/benches for example, were bolted in and therefore not permanent fixtures. It was noted that the timescale for spending the funds was very tight and the decision making process of how/where the money would be spent was queried.

It was agreed that a list of geographically proportionate proposals on a needs basis and, be provided as a starting point for member's consideration. Committee members could be consulted via email.

The Assistant Town Clerk added that DDA equipment could also be included. Discussion ensued regarding the utilisation of the funds and areas requiring attention. The Deputy Town Clerk informed that similar comments had been highlighted through the budget process and member's views was to concentrate on all areas of Weston and not just the town centre.

The Assistant Town Clerk was happy to organise site meetings with members and confirmed that any items replaced would be identifiable as town council property.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Pete Fox

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

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

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the application for funding from North Somerset Council.
2. To agree the funding could only be used for the purposes of the criteria.
3. To maintain items purchased in the future and the work be carried by the Community Rangers.
4. That a list of proposals on a needs basis and geographically proportioned, be provided to members via email for consideration.

5.2 Community Rangers work programme

A report of the Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services had been circulated prior to the meeting.

There were currently three Community Rangers in position with interviews scheduled the following week for a Kickstarter Position in the role of a 4th Community Ranger.

The Rangers had been getting familiar with all the sites and departments and were assisting with maintenance work at the Quarry, completing training requirements and providing a brilliant service of dog bin waste collection to other parish councils and local organisations such as Alliance Homes. Most recently, they had been helping to remove rubbish from other departments due to issues with the current contractor and this would be trailed bringing the service in house for a 3-month period from February.

The original plan for the Community Rangers was to have ad hoc tasks per ward, generated by ward members. From ongoing discussions with NSC, it was felt that this would not be the most effective and productive way of structuring their work pattern. An agreement had been reached which demonstrated good partnership working between the two councils and allow for the Rangers to make a real difference in the community.

They would have allocated areas (including Worle) throughout the town which were often neglected and hard to keep on top of. For example, lane ways which needed weeding and litter picking. These works could be scheduled in regularly and compliment the route the Rangers currently had for dog bin waste collections and litter picking parks and play areas. It would ensure areas like this were maintained regularly and not just ad hoc when complaints were received. The areas would be mapped and publicised on the council's website. Stickers and/or plaques would also be installed in the areas informing they were maintained by WSMTC.

The structure would give the grounds team the capacity to effectively plan and budget works. A level of flexibility would also be included so Rangers could respond to small ad hoc issues if/when they arise.

The Assistant Town Clerk had also negotiated with NSC their assistance in areas that were too problematic for WSMTC to maintain. For example, the roundabouts on the Queensway in Worle and cleaning of the Welcome to Weston signs, all of which were on main highways. The programme could be commenced as early as the following week and site meetings with ward councillors organised.

Members were pleased to see that good progress had been made.

In response to a question, the Assistant Town Clerk advised that the Rangers could not facilitate the removal of bedding left by rough sleepers and agreed to include a list of jobs/tasks that were within the Rangers remit for clarity to members.

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

RESOLVED: To approve and trial the alternative work structure.

283 Report from the Community Response Officer

The Council's Community Response Officer (CRO) reported that:

A Bag and Tag scheme had been set up by NSC in order to try and tackle rough sleeping and belongings such as bedding left behind. As long as the bedding was not soiled or contained needles then they would be taken to the Town Hall and kept for 14 days and a notice served explaining this. The three step process was explained and NSC were working together with Street Wardens to streamline the process and actively target the problem.

Debate ensued. Some members were very concerned about taking people's bedding away in the cold weather when they had nowhere else to go. Also about the scheme and how businesses would be shunned the responsibility and fined.

The CRO explained that most of the rough sleepers were known by name to the team and they had been informed of the new scheme. Members were advised that all rough sleepers had been offered a place to sleep by NSC but that some chose not to.

Members were encouraged to speak to Reece about their concerns after the meeting.

The CRO reported that cases of illegal camping at Ellenborough Park East and Clarence Park had been dealt with and tenants moved on.

It was noted that there was a rising youth antisocial behavior problem within the town that the team were aware of and tackling. The meeting was encouraged to report cases in through the correct channels.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

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Service Area reports:

.1 Youth Services

The report of the Youth Worker lead had been previously circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

.2 Community Events

The Grounds Coordinator reported that she had been liaising with cross department service managers on how to build on the wellbeing event held last summer and was working with Weston Place Agency and the See Monster team on how to complement their events. Proposals for next years (2022 / 2023) events would be brought back at a future meeting.

The Communications Officer added that she was also working in the capacity as the Community Project Manager for the See Monster which offered great linking up opportunities and a 'Think Tank' Facebook page had been created.

RESOLVED:

1. That the verbal report be noted.
2. That proposals for future event opportunities be brought back at a future meeting.

.3 Weston in Bloom

The Grounds Coordinator reported that engaging with Weston in Bloom members had been a real struggle during the pandemic and that there was no zest for virtual meetings. There was a need to establish a team of volunteers for the two main planting seasons and that she was working with the Volunteer Coordinator to reach out in a number of ways. Weston in Bloom needed to be revitalized and new volunteers recruited which the was aim of the new marketing strategy.

The Chairman of Weston in Bloom was fully appreciative of the efforts made to engage with the volunteers and was concerned about the decision making process whilst meetings were not operating.

He therefore requested that any decisions needed, be authorised through the Community Services Committee to which the Town Clerk advised that this could be done.

RESOLVED:

1. That the verbal report be noted.
2. That any decisions regarding Weston in Bloom operations be referred to the Community Services Committee until meetings were resumed.

285

Grove Park Public Toilets and Members' Visit to Wells

The Town Clerk verbally reported that as a result of the decision made by the Policy & Finance Committee to close the toilets until 31st March, due to budgetary concerns. Three meetings with NSC exec members and officers had taken place. NSC seemed interested in targeting the problem and were looking at demolishing the existing toilet site and relocating this with the café to another site in Grove Park. The previous heritage lottery grant would also be picked up by NSC officers again and pursued.

Councillor Pete McAleer reported on his findings from the site visit to Wells City Council as a result of the proposal made at the November Town Council meeting. Other members who also attended reported on their positive experience. The toilets were free, accessible,

clean, simplistic, colorful and an overall pleasant experience to which Weston should look to achieve.

Standing Orders were suspended at 8.18 pm in order to allow members of the public to address the meeting.

Paul Borthwick who also attended the site visit concurred the comments of members and informed that the toilets in Cheddar, owned by Sedgemoor District Council were also run to the same standard which was in partnership with Costa. He suggested the council look at opportunities on working with local businesses on toilet provision.

Standing Orders were resumed at 8.19 pm

Debate ensued and it was agreed that the cost of toilet provision was the issue and that any future design needed to deter vandalism and anti-social behavior.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that learning from other authorities should always be encouraged and informed that when the council took on the toilets back in 2013, a full procurement process had been undertaken and models from both Mendip District and Bristol City Council were considered. The chosen model was that of Mendip, aside from the door mechanism which council members decided at the time should allow for charging and should include the mechanism for security that the toilet blocks currently have. The current toilet sites used a very old Victorian drainage system which added to the blockage problems, which may not be the case in places visited.

The Chairman clarified that a decision on the future of the toilets would need to be made at the subsequent 7th March meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the item deferred for a decision at the next Community Services Meeting on 7th March 2022.

286 Community Resilience Update

The Chairman welcomed David Crossman to the meeting.

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced David as Chairman of the Anti-Racism Working Group who had really helped to improve the relationships between community groups and clarify the council's role as a facilitator.

David introduced himself and his role working for VANS and gave an overview of what the working group's focus was for the next 12 months. This included a calendar of events, increasing attendance at meetings and improving peoples understanding of the BME and the troubles the faced.

Members were encouraged to attend meetings.

The Chairman thanked David for his address and informed of how important it was for the council to support and build relationships with community groups and thanked the officers involved.

David advised how important it was to the members of the working group to have the town councils backing and how engagement with the Town Mayor had really inspired

volunteers in the BME community. David went onto advise that the group were currently working on varying project initiatives which not exclusive to but included:

- Local school Anti-racism initiatives
- Working with SARI (Stand against Racism and Inequality)
- BME network & the Community Hub development
- Black Lives Matter groups
- VANS (Voluntary Action North Somerset)
- North Somerset Council (NSC) – on population data and census results to understand the communities we live with.
- Safer Communities with NSC
- Hate Crime Initiatives in the area
- Race Equality events which are coming up in February 2022

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that a formal evaluation would be submitted at the next meeting to include the 6 principles of community engagement the council had pledged. Also that the community resilience team continued to go from strength to strength with many positive comments and outcomes including the awareness of the town council's identity in the community as an active community leader. Many projects were ongoing as previously reported but links had now been made via organisations such as ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) and For All Healthy Living Centre with communities that had been in the past hard to reach these included working with students and more recently with refugees within the town.

The Food Clubs were progressing well but securing premises was problematic.

The Food Fridge was officially due to be opened that week by the Town Mayor and was operating well following its trial period. In addition the project had been granted 6 months extra free use of the unit in the Sovereign Centre, thanks must go to the centre manager Jon Walton for championing this on the community's behalf.

COVID community Response calls were still trickling in and were referred to NSC directly now that our volunteering hubs had in the main ceased to be able to do these effectively now.

The Development Officer was working with the Deputy Town Clerk to identify ways the Town Council could support the BME, VANS and the Stable following their successful grant award for £250,000 to develop a community hub in the town.

RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.

287 Street Art Trail 2021 'Weston Walls'

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the trail had happened but the publicity of it didn't unfortunately happen to promote this project fully it was felt. This was possibly due to the pandemic. However, although it was disjointed it was still a very positive event and had been budgeted for within the 2022/23 budget to enable the event to happen again next year. There were plans to collaborate with the Sea Monster event and a bigger publicity launch. The Deputy Town Clerk was due to speak with the See Monster organisers to explore this as an option and would report this back to future meetings

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

288 Grant applications

The reports of the Finance Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.

The remaining budget for small and voluntary grants was £3,500.

The remaining budget for Community Event Grants was £49,000.

.1 The Priory Learning Trust

Grant applied for £1,000

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

The Priory Learning Trust were seeking financial aid for the “Community Art Connected to a School” fund. Their previous application was deferred due to lack of information and therefore they had resubmitted their application with new cost breakdowns and requesting a lower amount of financial support. The grant would be used to paint the underpasses that lead under the Queensway and Wansborough Road which were in a bad state of repair and covered in graffiti. The Priory Learning Trust have already commissioned local artist Martin D’arcy and the theme of the artwork would be the natural world and nature.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

A vote was taken and was **carried**

RESOLVED: That £1,000 be granted from the 2021/2022 small and voluntary grants budget.

.2 Weston PRIDE

Grant applied for £1,000

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

Weston-super-Mare Pride had previously been awarded £1,000 to help with the funding of sound and lighting, entertainment and Santa and his Grotto for their festive event to be held at the Tropicana Weston in December 21. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled and therefore WSM Pride have asked if they could use the monies towards the extension of Proud Bar instead. Additional information had been requested to support this, however nothing had been received.

Members agreed that grant monies could not be awarded for extending a bar.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

A vote was taken and was **carried**

RESOLVED: That the grant be refused for the purpose specified and that, unless additional information be received to support a further application, the money be returned.

.3 RESOLVED: That any small and voluntary grants received between now and the 7th March be considered the next meeting and that grant applications in the future be considered by the committee at each meeting to avoid a large tranche of applications

	<p>having to be considered, which was acknowledged as having taken considerable time when received in quarterly instalments in the past.</p>
<p>289</p>	<p>Weston-in-Bloom</p> <p>Item at the request of a member.</p> <p>The item was considered to have been addressed under item 7.3.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated:</p> <p>Chairman of the Community Services Committee</p>

5. Grounds Update Report

Report for Community Services - written by Fay Powell Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services

1. Public Toilets

Grove Park Toilets still remain closed and discussions continue between North Somerset Council and WSMTC for a future alternative.

Our other toilet sites have experienced a small amount of vandalism but nothing that has required them to close for extensive periods.

The Assistant Town Clerk will update the committee verbally regarding the latest update to change the door entry systems across our toilet sites.

2. Cemetery

The Grounds Team have been working extremely hard in the Cemetery and across our various sites following the extreme weather faced over the last couple of weeks.

The Cemetery has experienced damage to a number of some large established trees, fence damage has occurred around the Cemetery boundary and there is lots of debris scattered across the site.

The team have been working hard to get the Cemetery back into shape and ready for funerals booked throughout the coming weeks.

The Cemetery had to close on several occasions with no access to the public or the Grounds Team as the weather conditions meant it was not suitable to work safely.

3. Allotments

Tree works are planned for Rectors Way Allotments along with a new fence at the entrance of the allotment site. The Chair of the Allotment Association has been contacted to arrange a series of meetings for the coming year. These will be publicised once they have been agreed.

4. Welcome Back Fund and Community Ranger Work Programme

Assistant Town Clerk for Operational Services to give a verbal update regarding the Welcome Back Fund and the ever evolving Community Ranger work programme.

Recommendation – Members please read and note the report

8.1 Weston-Super-Mare YMCA and Town Council Partnership

Report for Community Services - written by Alli Waller, Senior Lead Youth Worker at YMCA Dulverton Group

1. Purpose of report

This report covers services and work delivered and supported by YMCA in the Weston-super-Mare areas, from the beginning of January 2021 to the end of February 2022. This includes the development and progress of programmes and services for young people and the community at YMCA Weston-super-Mare, 2 Bristol Road Lower and Weston Youth and Community Centre, Coleridge Road.

2. Work with Young People – Youth & Community Café

a) Open Access:

The Youth & Community cafe provides a youth focused, free, well-appointed space for young people after school with additional opening during school holidays.

Through this service we aim to ensure that every young person should:

- Feel safe and welcome.
- Have someone they can talk to and access to support.
- Have the opportunity to make friends, socialise and be active.
- Feel more connected with their community.
- Have the chance to achieve and challenge themselves to reach their full potential.
- Have fun.

The Youth & Community Café is continuing to support community groups in the Town. With the inside decorating complete and restrictions starting to lift more, the café is beginning to breath life again. The youth and Community team are working on a plan to open three more sessions for young people over the coming months to offer more one – one support to those in need. As there has been a lack of youth services within the town centre since the pandemic began, these sessions will be a welcome support for many young people living in Central Weston.

b) Targeted Work:

We recognise that for some individuals or groups what we consistently offer may not be easily accessible to them. So, we look at targeted work to support people to access our facilities and services who might not otherwise be able to. This work is predominantly carried out in partnership, and we currently work with:

- Young Carers – Junior & Senior sessions, Every first Tuesday of the month.
- Home Education Network - youth project, Every Friday.
- Young people with disabilities – Meet once every term
- Ups & Downs Southwest Youth Project- Every second Tuesday of the month
- Mental health support group for young men – Every Monday.
- College Neet support group – Every Wednesday
- Church Community coffee morning – Every Friday
- YMCA Residents engagement sessions- Every Wednesday & Thursday afternoons

3. Work with Young People – Satellites and Outreach.

The past month has seen a rise in memberships at all our provisions. Young People are feeling more confident around interacting with peers outside of their school environment. The Youth & Community team have addressed concerns young people have raised through discussions and supported members to work towards feeling comfortable with socially interacting and sharing concerns around returning to what we remember as being the norm.

South Ward

The Bournville youth club continues to grow. As in other areas, families are feeling more relaxed in allowing young people to take part in local activities. The smaller groups introduced in January have worked well and allowed the Youth & Community team to offer more targeted sessions. Especially during half term where they ran two sports sessions to encourage health and wellbeing and two family baking sessions which were well attended. A screen-printing workshop was also popular where young people aged 10-17 years learnt the process of making a bag through their own designs. The team are also working on starting a life skills programme for young people to help them gain confidence in becoming more independent.

Worle

The Youth Provision in the Big Worle hub has been very well attended and grown so much we are looking for a bigger venue within the catchment area. Young people have expressed how they enjoy the club and look forward to coming each week. We have introduced healthy snacks as we have noticed many young people arriving hungry. The team have also introduced regular cooking sessions offering basic recipes that young people can replicate for themselves at home safely.

Home Education

The Home Education group is going from strength to strength. Young people have told the team that they are more confident and are happy they have a safe place to come to. Our numbers of new young people have grown, and we average about 15 to 20 members a session. Next term we are going to introduce more outdoor gardening activities at our youth centre, as our members said they wanted to make a bed and do planting in our private garden.

Social Media

Our social media platforms continue to play a big part of our delivery. The Youth & Community team posted regularly each week offering support, activities and what's on in the local area. Throughout the pandemic we introduced our online support service to young people. This has been a vital support we will continue to offer this service to young people and continue to signpost to professional support services.

Instagram.

Reporting Period	Total Account Reach	Total Interactions	Total Followers
01/11/2021 to 31/12/2021	146	130	320

The data shows an increase in followers subsequently followed by an increase in account reach and user interaction. This can be attributed to the increased volume and consistent content created by the YMCA youth team, tailored to reach the target groups.

Facebook

Reporting Period	Total of New Likes	Total Reach	Total Engagement
01/11/2021 to 31/12/2021	5	1,133	214

The data shows an increase of 5 new followers for the YMCA DG Youth Clubs Facebook page. Total reach and engagement are positive following an increase of creative content from the youth team.

Community Partnership work

Our partnership with Swan continues with the Half term activities sessions. Young people (many new families) have accessed the provisions and parents have been encouraged to stay and take part with their children. Parents commented saying this has given them cheap ideas to continue to entertain their children at home.

Youth Council

The Youth council enjoyed a visit from the mayor this month and members of the youth council got the chance to ask him questions and find out a little more about the role of the Town Council Mayor. This month we seen the appointment of a new Vice Chair of the youth council who together the Chair is looking forward to attending a full town council meeting next month. This will give members a chance to see how decisions are made and meet some of the Towns Councillors. The main aim for the Youth council this year is to support youth groups and make young people aware of what is available for them in Weston-super-Mare.

Links to Town Council Strategy

The work being undertaken always strives to meet the presented needs of the community, whilst building the quality of provision for young people, and developing the scope of the work that the Town Council supports with young people. We are always keen to look at addressing the needs of young people across the area and are happy to look at establishing any new work, or work in new areas, that there is an identifiable need for.

8.2. Community Events Update

Report for Community Services - written by Zoe Scott Grounds Coordinator

1. Literary Festival - Collaboration Event Opportunity

Members will be aware at the previous meeting it was resolved:

1. That the verbal report be noted.
2. That proposals for future event opportunities be brought back at a future meeting.

On the 15th February the Grounds Coordinator attended a meeting with Culture Weston regarding the possibility of hosting a Literary Festival in the Town once again. The Town Council has previously hosted 3 successful Literary Festivals prior to COVID and established a good online presence and connections. Culture Weston were very enthusiastic about hosting a Literary Festival and already had ideas for events, themes and speakers.

An initial discussion revolved around whether an event could be pulled together in time for June 2022, using the stretch tent in Ellenborough Park East which will already be in situ for the Jubilee Celebrations. Both the Grounds Coordinator and Culture Weston felt this would not be possible due to current work commitments and capacity to staff the event over the bank holiday weekend. It was agreed, neither party wanted to host an event which wasn't going to be showcasing its full potential. Therefore, it was felt Autumn 2022 would be a more suitable goal, potentially utilising many venues across the town such as The Blakehay Theatre, Weston Museum and The Stables. The Grounds Coordinator explained at the meeting it would need to be decided at committee how the Town Council could work with Culture Weston on hosting a Literary Festival.

From discussions with officers within the Town Council (taking into consideration current work commitments and upcoming projects) the recommendation is, Weston Literary Festival be led and managed by Culture Weston with support and input from the Town Council and their knowledge of hosting 3 previous events. A way for both organisations to collaborate and work together. Culture Weston would have access to and take over the running of our "Weston Literary Festival" Social Pages and utilise the available Town Council Budget to support this event. It would be made clear through publicity the Town Council is helping to fund and support the event.

Recommendation –

1. Approve the breakdown of the Community Events Budget:
 - £1,500, Christmas Lights
 - £1,000, YMCA Youth Event
 - £2,500, Weston Literary Festival in conjunction with Culture Weston
 - £1,000, Wellbeing Event in Ellenborough Park West

2. Approve that the opportunity be presented to Culture Weston of a collaborative Literary Festival, being led and managed by Culture Weston with support from Town Council Officers where possible and the budget of £2,500 towards the event.

8.3 Weston in Bloom Update

Report for Community Services - written by Zoe Scott Grounds Coordinator

1. Weston in Bloom - Opportunity to reset

Members will be aware at the previous meeting it was discussed how volunteer engagement with Weston in Bloom Projects was low and having enough people to host a meeting was a struggle.

The Volunteer Supervisor and Grounds Coordinator have discussed ways of engaging new volunteers and projects within the town. It was felt in order to ensure a solid foundation moving forwards, time was needed dedicated to “re-inventing” Weston in Bloom. This would be a struggle to achieve if the Town Council entered the Britain in Bloom competition this year and it was felt by officers that we do not currently meet the requirements to enter the competition.

At a previous meeting of the 8th March 2021 the attached report was circulated, Appendix 1. It is this structure and culture we need time to implement and build, which is difficult to do when also entering a national competition with very few volunteers.

Weston in Bloom has seen a change in its network of volunteers. This loss of experience and knowledge within the volunteer group (through people retiring or moving onto other projects) has surfaced challenges. Though Volunteers and Councillors who support the initiative have pushed forward with enthusiasm and dedication, time is needed to ensure resilience for future years.

Recommendation –

1. Weston in Bloom does not enter the national competition of Britain in Bloom for the year 2022 to allow progress to be made in establishing a new structure, culture and resilience.

8.3 Weston In Bloom – Building Resilience

Appendix 1 - Report for Community Services Committee 8th March 2021

Written by Zoe Scott, Grounds Coordinator and Lisa Clemons, Volunteer Supervisor

Introduction

Weston in Bloom has a longstanding history of providing floral displays throughout the town. Not only are they well received by the community but also the Britain in Bloom judges, who attend each year as part of the national competition.

Throughout the past 3 years, Weston in Bloom has seen a change in its network of volunteers. This loss of experience and knowledge within the volunteer group (through people retiring or moving onto other projects) has surfaced challenges. Volunteers and Councillors who support the initiative have pushed forward with enthusiasm and dedication. With 5 Gold awards and a Silver Gilt achieved so far, it's important to look to the future and ensure we can continue to attract and retain volunteers, building resilience to drive us forward.

There are 4 key elements to Weston in Bloom:



This report aims to offer councillors a forward thinking framework for Weston in Bloom, helping to ensure it continues to grow and adapt to meet a sustainable community initiative, and ensure that floral features remain an engaging community project.

Guidance issued from the Royal Horticultural Society

Britain in Bloom is a national competition organised by the Royal Horticultural Society. It is the UK's longest running gardening competition with a strong emphasis on supporting community groups and people taking pride in where they live. It is fully inclusive, inviting community groups of all gardening levels to enter.

Over recent years the marking criteria has changed, with an increased emphasis on community involvement and the environment. This feeds in well to the Councils Climate Change initiatives and ongoing growing volunteer base. Please see Appendix 1 for detailed information on the new marking structure issued by the RHS.

The word "community" is embedded in the culture of In Bloom and something we would like to ensure grows within our own Weston in Bloom Group, through our volunteers.

Developing the Volunteering Role within Weston In Bloom and Grounds

In December it was approved by Personnel Committee that the existing volunteer coordinator role at Weston Museum would be expanded to Volunteer Supervisor for Weston Town Council. This new, expanded role will enable the successful volunteer program at Weston Museum to be adapted to other Town Council services including (but not limited to) The Blakehay Theatre and the Grounds Department. With this in mind we now have the exciting opportunity to adapt and use this structure to re-engage and grow the volunteer support for the much loved Weston in Bloom project.

The current volunteer program at the museum has evolved over the past five years through a combination of;

- Best practice (as observed in other organisations)
- Volunteer management training (ILM paid for by council)
- Evaluation (reviewing processes every year and making necessary changes)
- Keeping up to date with national trends and legislation

This will help Weston in Bloom to engage and more importantly retain a larger more diverse group of volunteers.

Working with the Volunteer Supervisor, we have been able to develop a vision for volunteer support of the grounds team and WIB which will all feed into one initiative "Love the Outdoors".

"Love the Outdoors" will be the umbrella for a pool of volunteers who can spend their time across multiple outdoor sites and projects, including Weston in Bloom. All the volunteering opportunities within Love the Outdoors have transferable skills which enables volunteers to have more choice and flexibility. Flexibility and variety are two of the key foundations to the existing volunteer program (along with support, respect, trust and inclusivity), once time constraints and role restraints were removed from the program in 2016, volunteer numbers doubled in a matter of months.



In accordance with good practice role descriptions have been produced and the same application/induction process would be used as is currently in place at the Museum and the Blakehay

After a successful interview volunteers will be invited to attend an induction which is split into two parts.

Part one - This is when volunteers will be introduced to our Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Safeguarding and GDPR policies and procedures. These are in place for the safety of all staff (including contractors), volunteers & visitors and are universally applicable to all Weston Town Council sites and services. Volunteers will also be given information about booking and cancelling shifts, their service manager/supervisor and their service venue/s. This part of the induction will (whenever possible) take place at Weston Museum where new volunteers will be able to see and meet existing volunteers and see the program in action.

Part two - This is when volunteers will be introduced to their specific service manager/supervisor and their service site/venue. Volunteers will be given a tour of all of the relevant areas and shown all fire/evacuation routes and procedures, along with any other site specific procedures that they will need to know. Depending on the chosen role they may also be given some initial information before relating to their first shift.

This induction process ensures all the essential elements are covered and there is consistency across all town council services. One of the main benefits of this 'across

all services' approach is that it widens the volunteer pool automatically. For example, of the 90 or so volunteers at the museum over a dozen have already signed up to help at the Milton Road Cemetery and half a dozen already for Ellenborough Park. The benefits to the council are that they have a larger pool of volunteers and the benefits to the volunteers is that they have more variety in their volunteering.

The relationship between the volunteer supervisor and the volunteers is essential to the support process volunteers need to feel happy and valued. The volunteer supervisor is the link between the volunteers and staff and councillors, the slight detachment from both groups forms a neutrality that enables the other key foundations (support, respect, trust and inclusivity) to be there without causing unnecessary time demands on other staff. In the case of Love the Outdoors, the recruitment and retention of volunteers will be managed by the Volunteer Supervisor, supported in the day to day operational requirements by the Grounds Coordinator, overseen by the Grounds Manager. It's important for volunteers to have a clear understanding of who they can go to for help, advice, feedback and problem solving

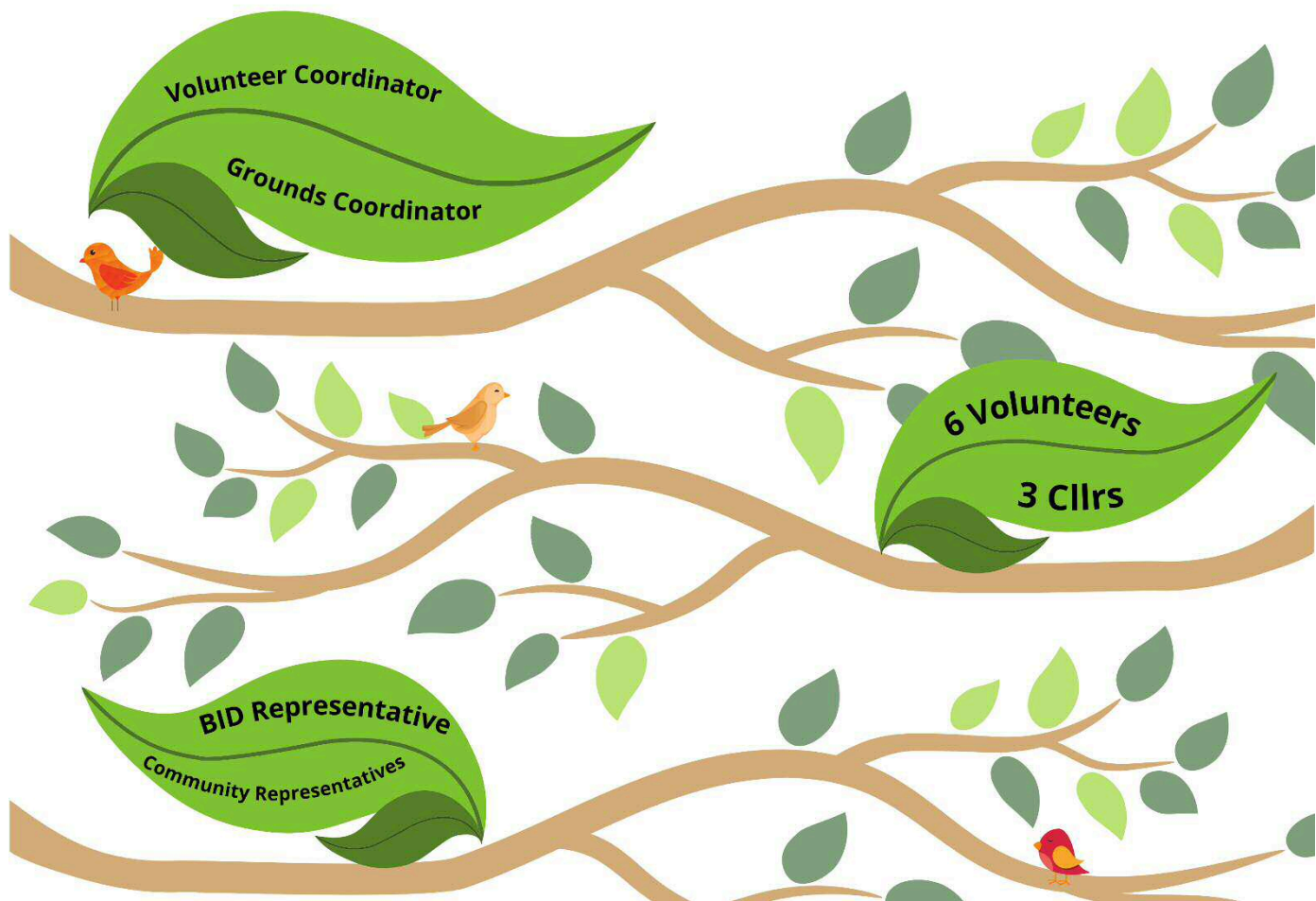
Working Party Structure

Weston Town Council has played a prominent part in supporting Weston in Bloom both financially and through Staff/Councillor time. The working party is where all the elements of the support network are pulled together.

In order to build culture based on the above outlined foundations where volunteers feel supported and thrive, it is felt essential that some adjustments would need to be made to fully realise the ambitions of the council's adopted strategy and 'Ever forward' ethos in mind.

Building from the community foundation which we already have, it would be beneficial to open the working party up to local community groups and engage them in our projects. Having a working party made up of a diverse group of people helps to engage the wider community and further promote our volunteering culture. For example, we envisage having representatives from the YMCA, Somerset Wood Recycling and possibly Westhaven School who grow some of our plants.

Volunteers need to feel able to have ownership of the projects they are working on, feel valued and receive recognition for their roles. A valuable way of achieving this is ensuring the correct balance of "Volunteer led – Councillor Support" in an aim to have the Working Party and Weston in Bloom projects led by Volunteers and Community Groups, with staff and councillors having the all-important supporting role. This links back to the guidance issued by the RHS and the community involvement this initiative needs.



Role Breakdowns

The Volunteer Supervisor:

- The link between the volunteers and the staff/councillors
- Responsible for the retention and recruitment of volunteers
- Primary contact for volunteers from the initial enquiry through to their induction and regular reviews/catch-up going forward
- Ongoing support and guidance for volunteers.
- To work closely with the Grounds Coordinator to facilitate all necessary training and development

The Grounds Coordinator:

- Support the volunteers and facilitate where possible their projects and ideas.
- Help with logistics, equipment purchase and on site inductions.
- Support volunteers in their day to day roles within Love the Outdoors
- Manages the Weston In Bloom entry to the RHS competition with support from BID representative.
- Oversee expenditure of the budget

Councillors:

- Represent the Town Council.

- Support volunteers with their ideas and how the Town Council could help.
- Approve expenditure
- Volunteer on projects if they would like
- Show the Town Council's appreciation of the volunteers and their continued support
- Attend volunteer recognition events where possible

Volunteers:

- Guide forward projects and discussions on new ideas or things they would like to do.
- Assist with the entry to the competition (form a steering group for works related specifically to the competition entry)
- Assist with the ordering of plants and materials, deciding on colour schemes and species.

Community Groups:

- Offer advice and guidance on how the wider community could be involved.
- Help the volunteers with any projects where they can.

Members are requested to:

1. Approve the report and its proposed structure for In Bloom moving forwards.
2. Adjust the Terms of Reference as required to fully reflect the changes outlined in this report:
 - The WIB Working Party shall consist of 3 councillors and up to 10 additional members from the volunteers and community groups.

Report for the Community Services Meeting March 2022

Anti-racist meetings are happening on the last Tuesday of every month.

Community Fridge.

The fridge of free stuff has a monthly infographic to demonstrate meals and CO2 saved.

Meeting with the MFA network to discuss support

What I took from our meeting is that the MFA needs to create a solid platform of communications to outreach more strongly to the wider community and create stability for the organisation. From this you would have more time to create events and serve members. With a view to having volunteers in vital positions moving forward such as communications and social media.

This would start with a relaunch of the MFA.

- Rebrand the MFA including new logo
- Work with you to create an identity strap line so people understand your purpose in one sentence.
- Create a Canva account that is the full paid version acquired for free
- Refresh /rebrand and control your Facebook page and control it whilst a social media person is sort
- Set up systemised social media posts by setting up free scheduling software
- Set up a mailchimp newsletter
- Outreach all of the above to grow members
- Hand over all of the above by training the person who will take care of it on a regular basis.

This has yet to be discussed with my line manager Sarah Pearse.

Somewhere

Pandemic Changes:

- The Pandemic in early (March / April 2020) severely affected the services we offer at a time we were modifying the centre to make better services for our service users.
 - 16 Booths/pods were built in June 2020 while the NAC remained closed, and a new toilet and shower block constructed – Total cost £26,000
 - New compliance regulations brought in by trustees found a lack of compliance in Health and Safety regulations and set a timetable of improvements to Fire safety, and gas regulations.
 - Fire safety improvements / alarms and gas regulations discovered a range of issues that had been neglected for several years. Example: heating and water gas boiler had not been serviced for at least 11 years (the time the manager had been there) I admit this news, as a Trustee, filled me with a horror considering only a few months earlier people had been sleeping on the premises and were still working there during the day.
 - Boiler subsequently condemned and gas pipes found leaking in two places.
 - New boiler and hot water system installed 2020/21 at a cost of £9750
 - Covid Regulations meant we had to close the day centre for a few weeks in early April 2020. Meals were still produced for those in B&B and other accommodation plus for our normal homeless community. We produced more meals during this period than normal as we were catering for those housed under 'Everyone in' policy via YMCA.
-
- Covid safe improvements to the centre to enable us to reopen took place in May 2020. These modifications were similar to public buildings during that period and since.
 - Screens on tables separated service users and masks were compulsory apart from when eating.
 - Hygiene and cleaning procedures were extensive. All surfaces were cleaned each day with bio fogging taking place each week. Extensive signage and a one-way system to further separate service users were produced.
 - Costs for equipment including signage, plastic screens, posts came to £5,846 with regular cleaning materials and professional cleaning at £1075 per month.
 - Furlough Payments: for a short time, most staff were on furlough but fully paid while not working. After one month only the NAC staff were furloughed (4) for a period of 6 months and Somewhere to Go made up their wages fully during this period until unfortunately they were laid off permanently when it became clear North Somerset Council and the minister for communities confirmed that Night Shelters of our kind would never reopen or be supported.

- Furlough costs: £ 4,827
- Toilet / Shower block: £26,000
- Boiler and Gas Safe: £ 9,750
- Covid Safe Equipment: £ 5,846
- Covid Cleaning (Period) £ 6,540
- Fire safety upgrades £ 3,455
- Total for 2020/21 **£56,418**

Outcomes:

All these actions and compromises during this period were to enable the needs on page one to continue.

The service users of our day centre are largely those who have a disadvantage. Our charity was set up over 20 years ago to assist those in poverty and deprivation. The outcomes we need to achieve is to level up those with a disadvantage whether that be drug or alcohol dependency, learning difficulties or mental health issues. We make no judgements on those we assist in finding the help they need and are a sanctuary for those to find respite from a world they may find difficult.

Covid could have had an impact on these service users much greater than those in more normal circumstances. We could not have gone through this period without the volunteers, many also in vulnerable groups, and staff who continued to provide a service during this extremely difficult period.

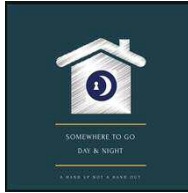
The Town Councils assistance and support from concerned councilors has been not only financially beneficial but immensely gratifying to all that are involved in our charity.

In no aspect of social care would it be allowed for service users to 'self-neglect'. When you think about individuals preferring to sleep rough and or obliterate their consciousness with substances, we feel there is a duty to help the recovery and assist individuals to find the services they need.

Somewhere to Go is a safe space for these individuals and well placed to develop services to retrain and softly, without pressure, re-able individuals to a less destructive future.

Board of Trustees

Somewhere to Go



Somewhere to Go Ltd

St Johns Hall, 4a Boulevard, Weston super Mare, BS23 1NA

Sarah Pearse Fda. FSLCC
Deputy Town Clerk
Weston super Mare Town Council
Grove House, Grove Park
Weston super Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2QJ

7th February 2022

Dear Sarah,

In response to the request from Malcolm Nicholson and yourself regarding how we re-purposed the expected funding from Town Council for 2021 we list on separate sheet the actions and expenses incurred during covid lockdown in that period.

As the funding has not been paid for the year in question (2021) the amounts paid out were from our limited reserves. Our normal funders were severely hit with lockdown, for example normal collections from religious organisations were almost zero as Churches were closed for services, other funders had closed applications and our food costs increased as donations ceased or were curtailed. For the limited time we closed our day centre (4 weeks) it didn't stop us delivering food both to those in B&B accommodation and at the door in containers. Making the centre Covid safe with screens and extra hygiene compliance and PPE costs also had an impact on our limited resource.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Barry Edwards

Treasurer / Trustee
Somewhere to Go

Charity Registration number 1080963
Telephone: 01934 641880

Company registration number 3928387

Patrons
Lord Cotter of Congresbury
The Right Reverend Ruth Worsley, Bishop of Taunton