



**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT 32 WATERLOO STREET ON
MONDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2026**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.17 pm

PRESENT: Councillors John Crockford-Hawley (C), Ray Armstrong, Annabelle Chard, Peter Crew, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen, Tim Taylor, Helen Thornton and Martin Williams.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (CEO/Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Director of Community Services/ Deputy Town Clerk), Warren Parker-Mills (Visitor Experience and Communications Manager) and Rebecca Saunders (Civic Officer & PA to the Town Clerk).

110	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Standfield and Owen James with no substitutions.
111	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received.
112	To agree the accuracy of the previous Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee Minutes held on 13th July 2026 The minutes of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee had been previously circulated. It was noted that both Councillors Catherine Gibbons and Helen Thornton were recorded as present, but both had sent apologies. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RESOLVED: That with the above amendment the Minutes of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee be signed and approved.

113	To receive the DRAFT Notes of the Blue Plaque Start & Finish Group Meeting held on the 21st July 2026 The draft Notes had been previously circulated. The Chair provided a brief overview of the meeting. Discussion noted that: • The next round of Blue Plaques would focus on commemorating significant buildings rather than individuals. • Potential buildings included the Winter Gardens Pavilion, which would celebrate its centenary in 2027. • The Royal Hotel was also suggested, being reputed to be the oldest hotel in Weston-super-Mare, dating from 1810. RESOLVED: That the draft Notes of the Blue Plaque Start & Finish Group meeting held on 21 July 2026 be received.
114	Committee Annual Work Programme 2026/27 Progression Following the adoption of the Committee Annual Programme the following scheduled items would be deferred to the following meeting: Following adoption of the Committee Annual Work Programme, Members noted that: • The Summer Events Review (BID – Town Centre) would be deferred to the next meeting to allow the remaining scheduled events to take place. • The Weston Museum Review would be reported to the November 2026 meeting. An initial walk-around had taken place and a number of straightforward improvements had been identified. RESOLVED: That the update on the progression of the Committee Annual Work Programme 2026/27 be noted.
115	<u>AMENITIES</u> Markets Update The report of the Community Operation and Resources Manager had previously been circulated. The CEO/Town Clerk provided a further update following publication of the report. Discussion noted that: • Licensing issues had arisen with North Somerset Council in relation to the evening market, which the operator was working to resolve. • Following a strong initial start, recent market performance had declined, with reduced footfall and less variety among stallholders. • Extreme hot weather and the current location were considered possible contributing factors.

	- Options to extend the market further along the High Street had been explored but were constrained by existing street furniture. - Relocation to the Sovereign had also been considered but presented practical difficulties regarding available units and access for stalls. - Members requested further information on recent footfall and the reduction in the variety of stallholders attending. RESOLVED: That the CEO/Town Clerk request from the market operator: 1. footfall statistics for the preceding six months; and 2. information regarding stallholder attendance and 3. Confirmation of numbers of types (ie: food, produce, clothing etc) and stalls and if there has been a reduction in the variety of stalls.
116	Parks and Open Spaces Update The report of the Grounds Services Manager covering the period April 2026 – August 2026 had previously been circulated. <u>Milton Cemetery</u> Discussion noted that: - The Chair raised Concern regarding the number of areas sectioned off due to unsafe gravestones. - The CEO/Town Clerk confirmed The management of graves was subject to strict legislative requirements, although specialist companies could assist with the physical management of older grave headstones and this would be explored further. - Responsibility for older graves was often difficult to establish where family members were no longer maintaining or visiting them. - Consideration would be required as to the appropriate approach to unsafe gravestones, including whether they should be repaired or laid flat, and the criteria for intervention. - Members requested data on the number of unsafe historic gravestones to inform further consideration. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley A vote was taken and carried. RESOLVED: That a report detailing the number of unsafe historic gravestones at Milton Cemetery be brought to the next meeting of the Amenities, Culture & Leisure Committee. Members also discussed anti-social behaviour at the cemetery, noting that: - Incidents included suspected drug dealing and dogs being allowed off leads and fouling around graves. - Signage and social media messaging had been used, with suspected drug-related activity reported to the Police.

	- Reintroducing a ban on dogs was suggested; however, Members acknowledged the difficulties of enforcement and the needs of visitors attending graves with their dogs. <u>Waste Collection</u> Discussion noted that: - Approximately 34,000kg of waste had been collected between April and July 2026, an increase of around 5,000kg compared with the same period in 2025, resulting in additional disposal costs. - Household waste and larger items were increasingly being left alongside litter bins and within parks. - Members questioned whether North Somerset Council's recycling centre booking system and/or the introduction of three-weekly household waste collections could be contributing to the increase. - Data on the daily allocation of recycling centre booking slots was requested to inform further consideration. - Clearer public communication was required to distinguish between services provided by Weston-super-Mare Town Council and those provided by North Somerset Council. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley A vote was taken and carried. RESOLVED: That: - data be requested from North Somerset Council regarding the daily allocation of recycling centre booking slots; and - a communications plan be developed to clarify the respective services and responsibilities of Weston-super-Mare Town Council and North Somerset Council. Street Vitality and Anti-Social Behaviour It was further noted that: - Street vitality work remained important but was dependent upon Grounds Team capacity and could be deprioritised when staffing resources were limited. - Anti-social behaviour continued to affect other Council sites, with incidents being reported almost daily and some damage requiring external contractors to undertake repairs. - Discussions with the Police and Community Response teams were ongoing, alongside a planned poster campaign to raise awareness and help address the issue.
117	<u>CULTURE</u> Tourism and Visitor Services Update

	The report of the Communications and Visitor Experience Manager had previously been circulated. Discussion noted that: • The season had been challenging due to weather conditions, resource constraints and staffing pressures; however, initiatives such as the seagull competition had been well received and website engagement remained positive. • The Super Weston website was due to launch shortly and would provide a more town-focused platform, primarily aimed at residents, complementing Visit Weston's visitor and tourism focus. • Input from Bristol Airport had been welcomed, noting its significant local employment links. • Super Weston would provide an additional platform to promote positive messages about the town and support wider communications around issues such as vandalism. • The new website would also support the implementation of Modern.gov, providing improved functionality and opportunities for public engagement. • A networking event for existing and potential partners would be held in November, with Weston College attending to discuss its tourism offering. <i>At 7.58 pm, Councillor Annabelle Chard left the meeting.</i> RESOLVED: That the report of the Communications and Visitor Experience Manager be noted.
118	Christmas Lights Event 2026 The report of the CEO/Town Clerk/BID Town Centre Partnership Manager had been circulated previously. Discussion noted that: • The Christmas Lights event would take place on 14 November 2026. • Sponsorship had been secured to extend the evening event, providing additional entertainment and a longer programme to increase footfall and encourage visitors to spend more time in the town. • In response to a Member's question regarding the timing of the event, it was explained that the date had been selected due to a booking clash at the Italian Gardens on the following weekend, which would ordinarily have been the preferred date. <i>At 8.04 pm, Councillor Robert Skeen left the meeting.</i> RESOLVED: That the report of the CEO/Town Clerk/BID Town Centre Partnership Manager be noted. <i>At 8.06pm, Councillor Robert Skeen rejoined the meeting.</i>
	<u>LEISURE</u>

119	Play & Sport Strategy Development Update The reports of The Deputy Town Clerk and Sports and Play Consulting Limited had previously been circulated. Discussion noted that: • In response to a Member's question, the current cost of the play consultation was approximately £19,000, which had delivered extensive research, evidence gathering and engagement with relevant organisations. • The consultant had identified potential external funding opportunities to support future delivery of the Strategy. • Sports facilities were being considered alongside play provision, recognising the potential links and opportunities between the two. • The Youth Lounge had operated successfully over the summer, with attendance reaching up to 30 young people on some days. • The YMCA had been advised that continuation of the Youth Lounge fell within the scope of its existing Service Level Agreement and associated funding. • Subject to North Somerset Council agreeing use of the space with the Sovereign, the Youth Lounge programme could recommence. RESOLVED: That the update on the development of the Play & Sport Strategy be noted.
	There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.17 pm. Signed.....Dated Chair of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee