



**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE AMENITIES, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT 32 WATERLOO STREET ON
MONDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER 2025**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.54 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Owen James (C) ,Roger Bailey, Annabelle Chard, John Crockford-Hawley, Simon Harrison-Morse, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen and John Standfield.

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (CEO/Town Clerk), Helen Morton (Director of Finance and Resources/RFO), Samantha Bishop (Democratic Services Manager, Warren Parker-Mills (Communications and Marketing Manager) and Luke Riviera (member of the public).

138	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Crew who was substituted by Councillor Gill Bute.
139	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received.
140	To agree the accuracy of the previous Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee Minutes held on 7th July 2025 The minutes of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee had been previously circulated. It was noted that the spelling of Natalie's surname was incorrect and should reflect 'Donbavand'. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse SECONDED BY: Councillor Robert Skeen A vote was taken and carried . Accordingly. RESOLVED: That with the above amendment, Minutes of the Amenities Culture and Leisure Committee be signed and approved.
141	Budget Considerations The report of the Director of Finance and Resources had been previously circulated which informed that a review of the budget setting process had been taken to the

Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) on 18th August 2025, whereby it was recommended that during September and October each year, that Committees and Sub Committees would provide recommendations/considerations to budget areas in line with set strategic aims of the council only (having regard for the councils Medium Term Financial Plan). (Available on the council's website).

The Grounds, Museum and Communications & Visitor Experience Managers were requested to undertake an initial first draft review of their service areas and identify income and expenditure that needed consideration against the budgets that were set in 2025/2026.

The Town Clerk advised that the committee were required to consider and approve in principal contents of the reports from the services areas to allow inclusion in the draft budget which will be received by F&GP in December 2025.

Appendix – 1- Considerations from the Grounds Manager

Points raised and clarity requirements were confirmed and noted as follows:

- The Tree allowance within the report was to enable a schedule of works to support the tree maintenance programme . 3 quotes would be obtained, noting that if they were over £7.5k, they would require a committee decision.
- Hausqvarna was an app for monitoring maintenance requirements and tracking of equipment – In addition it would allow HAV (hand arm vibration) monitoring where applicable which is a Health & Safety requirement.
- Confirmation with regard to disposal of old equipment would consider selling equipment for parts where it could be done.

Appendix – 2 – Considerations from the Museum Manager

Points raised and clarity requirements were confirmed and noted as follows:

- Committee were supportive of the free workshops.
- The shop stock was a combination of bought in retail and sale or return which was sustainable, unique and ethical. A designated member of staff was now in place to review this. Noting that the Museum took 40% of sales on linked exhibitions/events.
- Was the Café selling Fairtrade produce ? This would be checked and reported back.
- The Museum had maximised on wedding bookings, limited to 6x weddings per year as this meant closing the Museum.

Appendix – 3 - Considerations from the Communications & Visitor Experience Manager

Points raised and clarity requirements were confirmed and noted as follows:

	• The data produced by the Silica, demonstrated the benefits the council was receiving through publicity and accruing databases. An excellent resource and very positive asset. Underutilised resource opportunities identified were the charities and CIC's. • Positive feedback received on Seagull Boy and a learning curve for the team. Good return on investment for possible expansion. • Interactive Map – Energy and opportunity. The artwork had been utilised as a brand opportunity for expansion. • WsM was under optimised and there were opportunities to be more resourceful. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse SECONDED BY: Councillor Robert Skeen A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RECOMMENDED: That all of the costs and income identified within the managers' reports be included in the draft budget for 2026/2027.
142	Committee Forward Plan for the year 2025/26 The CEO/Town Clerk advised that all committees had been supplied with a Plan disk to help focus and encourage forward thinking. The committee were encouraged to suggest ideas they would like to see on future agendas. Suggestions were made as follows: • To schedule a review of Tourism and Visit Weston (VM) • Weston Museum business review The following was noted: • a review of Tourism/VW could be reported to the committee at least twice a year working with the Communications & Visitor Experience Manager. • The Museum was currently developing its Forward Plan as part of the accreditation process which would come to committee for approval. • A full business review would need to be planned due to resources available to do so, however individual areas could be identified and looked at. • Regular service area updates were reported in the monthly newsletter and that Managers had created team plans to deliver the councils strategic objectives through its Strategy, which could be reported to committee. • An annual review of the Old Town Quarry was due in September 2026, but an update on the development project would be brought to this committee following the conclusion of the start and finish project group. RESOLVED: That 1. A review of Tourism/Visit Weston be scheduled for twice a year. 2. To receive service area Team Plans to a future meeting and then annual at the beginning of each financial year.

	3. To bring a project review update for the Old Town Quarry to the next meeting (November).
143	<u>CULTURE</u> To approve the Notes of the Old Town Quarry, Start and Finish Group meetings held on the 15th April and (DRAFT) 19th August 2025 The Notes had been previously circulated. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Annabelle Chard A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RESOLVED: That the Notes of the Old Town Quarry, Start and Finish Group meetings held on the 15th April and (DRAFT) 19th August 2025 be approved.
144	To approve the Notes of the Heritage Arts and Culture Community Consultative Group held on the 26th June 2025 The Notes had been previously circulated. It was noted: • That the outcome for the future Birnbeck Project would be announced the following day. • How positive the community involvement was at meetings. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Caroline Reynolds A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RESOLVED: That the Notes of the Heritage Arts and Culture Community Consultative Group held on the 26th June 2025 be approved.
145	Big Worle The summary report of the Community Wellbeing Officer had been previously circulated which covered the following areas: • The Town Council had become Big Worle's Locally Trusted Organisation in April 2024, working with Big Worle to deliver their plan and leave a lasting legacy in Worle. • From the 30th September the council would no longer have a presence at the hub as the doors would be closing for good. • From 1st October 2025- 31st March 2026 the council would have oversight of some projects that were nearing completion. ('Edible trail' and 'Green Gym'). • Conclusion of the project administration. It was noted that this had been a challenging project for the council, who had only been involved in the last 18months. All grant funding had been spent and

	unfortunately, Big Worle had not built a sustainable enough model to remain open. The council would remain involved until the 31st March to close it down. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor Gill Bute A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RESOLVED: That the report be noted.
146	Blue Plaque – Jill Dando The report of the Civic Officer and PA to the Town Clerk/CEO had been previously circulated, recommending approval of the purchase and fitting of a blue plaque in honour of Jill Dando former journalist of Weston Mercury. PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RESOLVED: To approve the purchase and fitting of Jill Dando Blue Plaque utilising the Blue Plaque budget. It was noting that this will be ordered ASAP. Inviting young people from the newsroom to plaque unveiling.
147	<u>LEISURE</u> Tourism and Events - Proposals for Visit Weston site build 2026 The report of the Communications and Marketing Manager had been previously circulated which informed that: • In August 2021, the Council awarded a contract for the Visit Weston website to Simpleview (now T/A Cranicus) – 3 year contract with options to extend on an annual basis. • On 27 February 2025, the council served notice to Simpleview, as it was felt the current website no longer offered the flexibility and functionality that the it now required. • A decision was taken to extended the contract with Simpleview for a further 12 months, running until May 2026. • Simpleview's SEO package was not renewed at this time. • WSMTC took control of all additional Domains, previously managed by Simpleview. Priority for future procurement was reported as: • To ensure continuity of service for Visit Weston, with the integration of Google Analytics and continual use of Microsoft Clarity to track and optimise user experience. • As the contract with Simpleview was to end in May 2026, the council must ensure that a new website was fully operational, with all content migrated and SEO performance maintained.

	• The role of providing a visitor website for the town and was executing its Strategy objectives. • The proposal surmised that two tenders would be put out. One through an agency and the other for a hybrid shopify build. • Internal resource and obtaining more control. It was advised that officers were looking for direction on pursuing option: Option A - circa £35,000 for the initial build + 3 x £10,000 annual fees (£65,000) Or Option B - circa £20,400 for the initial build + 3 x £3,350 annual fees (£30,450) As outlined within the report on how it was to procure the new website. Concern was raised regarding the council's overall investment into Tourism/Visit Weston at the return on the investment. It was advised that the council could procure both options for exploration, considering resilience. It was not an option to stay with existing site without going out to procurement as per Financial Regulations and procurement guidelines. Discussion regarding timeline and planning for resilience was held. Noting that the architecture would be built and the council would manage. Councillors involvement in the process was suggested to which it was advised that the procurement process will allow for this and Group Leaders would appoint the ideal Councillors for the panel. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Owen James SECONDED BY: Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RESOLVED: 1. To procure both options (A&B) to allow the procurement process to commence with immediate effect. 2. That Group Leaders appoint suitable Councillors to be included and sit on the interview panel. 3. That tender results and final approval of new website be brought back to committee for final consideration and approval.
148	<u>AMENITIES</u> Christmas Lights The Town Clerk/CEO verbally reported that the council had received indication that the work to be undertaken at Orchard Meadows, access for ancillary work to replace the infrastructure was estimated to be between £20-30k. The committee were requested to either

- A)** Authorise this additional expenditure or
B) ask the contactor to utilise the lights elsewhere?

Discussion ensued as follows:

- the committee agreed that the costs were unjustifiable in the current economic situation
- concentration be on areas where the lights had the most impact i.e. The Italian Gardens, High Street and Big lamp corner.
- Suggestions of retailers contributing to a scheme was considered too late for this year, however this was something that could be planned in for the following year.

It was noted that this would be disappointing to the retailers of the Orchard Meadows area and that the council could look at working with BID to suggest something, working with the contactors to achieve an agreed outcome.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Simon Harrison-Morse

SECONDED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly.

RESOLVED: To work with the contactor to re locate the Christmas Lights to the suggested areas and work with the retailers of Orchard Meadows on a plan for the following year, at a suitable point in the year.

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Update on the Town Market

The report of the Town Clerk/CEO had been previously circulated, providing an update on the current Weekly / monthly town market provisions, noting;

- Bad weather and the impact to hold the market when bad had been recognised by the appointed contractor at procurement as potentially problematic.
- Cancellation of markets were assessed on weather conditions (wind / excess rain / snow) as forecast by the Met office.
- The Market Operator has been open and has advised that they would not be able to hold the market if this was the case as their Insurance would not cover them.
- The Health & Safety of traders and the public was always the priority and determining factor if there was need to cancel the market.
- The BID Manager was working with the council to identify contingency locations suitable for up to 40 stalls that could be mobilised with limited notice to provide an alternative location but this was not an easy ask.
- Talks with the Sovereign Management and with NSC officers to explore all options were being held. (noting existing considerations and leases that were still in place within the Sovereign).

	Suggestions on moving the market to the High Street were made, noting that it was the wind that was the biggest issue as the Italian Gardens was very exposed. Also considering traders would be losing money as well as public disappointment. It was noted that emergency service access to the in High Street would be compromised and the fact that the market was seasonal, rather than all year round. A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly. RESOLVED: 1. To note the contents of the report and acknowledge the reasons of the cancellation of the market (due to inclement weather).
150	Motion under Standing Order 10 - PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey Town Clerk/CEO advised that in accordance with Standing Order 8.1. <i>(A resolution shall not be reversed within six months except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least 4 Councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 10, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a Committee or a sub-Committee).</i> The Motion was invalid and therefore could not be discussed.
	There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.54 pm Signed.....Dated Chair of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee