



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE  
SPECIAL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
HELD AT 32 WATERLOO STREET  
MONDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2025**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.05 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ciaran Cronnelly (Chair), Gillian Bute, Mark Canniford, John Carson (S), Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Robert Payne, Lisa Pilgrim and Robert Skeen.

**ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:** Sarah Pearse (Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk), Helen Morton (Director of Finance & Resources), Samantha Bishop (Democratic Services Manager), Molly Matthews (Senior Development Officer), and 3 (Members of the public).

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| <b>89</b> | <b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b><br><br>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Helen Thornton, substituted by John Carson and Charlie Williams and with no substitution.   |
| <b>90</b> | <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br><br>There were no declarations of interest received from committee members.   |
| <b>91</b> | <b>To approve the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b><br><br>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated.<br><br>Councillor John Carson conveyed his grave disappointed about the previous decision made on the allotments. He understood the legalities, however the lack of monitoring of the agreement between WSMTC and the Allotment Club, and consequently the waiting lists, was the reason for plot holders outside of the parish acquiring allotments over many years. Allotment plots were a huge part of people's lives and they should not be evicted for an administrative error.<br><br>The Town Clerk/CEO clarified that the law stated that all parishes should look to provide land for allotments for its residents only and therefore residents outside of the parish of WSM should address their parish council. |

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|    | <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew<br/> <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the Special Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>  |
| 92 | <p><b>To receive the Notes of the DRAFT Devolution Start and Finish Group Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b></p> <p>The Notes had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Notes of the DRAFT Devolution Start and Finish Group Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 minutes of the be received.</p>   |
|    | <p><b>FINANCE</b></p>  |
| 93 | <p><b>Audit</b><br/> <b>93.1 To Review the Effectiveness of the Auditor</b></p> <p>The council considered the report and had no comments with regard to the effectiveness of the Internal Auditor.</p> <p><b>93.2 External Audit-Conflict of Interests Declaration</b></p> <p>The report of the Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk had been previously circulated which advised that as one of the External audit requirements for the year ending 2024/ 2025, there was a requirement to sign and declare that there were either no conflicts of interest with our external auditor BDO LLP or list out any conflicts of interest (if applicable).</p> <p>It was not believed that were are any known reasons why the council would not be able to confirm this as being the case, and indeed they had signed the declaration in previous years.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford<br/> <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly, it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To sign the conflict of Interest form declaring that there are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP or issues with regard to the effectiveness of the Internal Auditor.</p> |
| 94 | <p><b>Old Town Quarry Project</b><br/> <b>94.1 Delivery of COF grant for the Old Town Quarry WP7 – South West Heritage Trust</b></p> <p>The report of the Senior Development Officer/ CEO/Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The purpose of the report was to approve use and allocation of work package 7 of the Community Ownership Fund (community interpretation).</p> <p>As part of the larger Community Ownership Funded project for the Old Town Quarry, £30,000 was allocated to Work Package 7 – Community Interpretation.</p>   |

It was envisaged that this funding would enable interpretation of the site, covering its historical, environmental and artist background, as well as developing the sites' identity moving forward.

It was noted that:

- There had been a delay in the development of the programme with Worlebury Hillfort, who now had their grant.
- Signage and interpretation was done in tandem, demonstrating great partnership working of two projects being coordinated through grant funding.

Members challenged finances, in particular the 5 illustrated signs for 24k and Drone footage costs. The Town Clerk/CEO advised that the signs were for interpretation of which the drone footage is needed and this figure stated was for the whole project rather than just 5 signs mentioned.

The associated time restrictions were noted as well as any grant monies not utilised, would go back to central government.

The need for council's to be able to challenge local government frameworks and pricing structures going forward was discussed.

The Town Clerk informed that SWHT needed to show due diligence in their procurement and had supplied a copy of their procurement procedures (attached with the report).

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the allocation/ transfer of monies from WP7 of the Community Ownership Fund Grant to the South West Heritage Trust for the delivery of grant aims, recognising that in the event that any monies are not utilised, the heritage trust will repay these to the Town Council. Total value of transfer as detailed in the table above £24,202.50.
2. In addition, officers to seek clarity on spend.

**94.2 Studio Management Strategy**

The DRAFT Strategy had been previously circulated (as recommended by the start and finish group 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025).

Members were requested to approve the attached strategy.

The Senior Development Officer reported that this would allow the WSMTC to let out studios at the quarry utilising a framework which would become a community resource if approved.

It was noted that the strategy had already been through review at QS&FG.

An amendment was suggested to page 53 (*visitors and occupants – toilets*)

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew

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|    | <p>A vote was taken and accordingly, it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That with the above amendment, Studio Management Strategy be approved.</p> <p><i>At this point in the meeting members of the public left at 7.25 pm</i></p>   |
| 95 | <p><i>To resolve under the Public Bodies (Admissions of Meeting) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the following item by reasons of the confidential nature of the business.</i></p>   |
| 96 | <p><b>Old Town Quarry Project</b></p> <p><b>96.1 Café Concession Procurement Exercise</b></p> <p>The report of the Senior Development Officer/ CEO/Town Clerk - Procurement for the Café Operation at the Old Town Quarry had been previously circulated. A further red report was circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>The Town Clerk/CEO advised that in order to have consistency across the town WSMTC have had guidance and support from NSC. There had been a change in procurement guidelines half way through, which meant officers had to restart process. Much networking and approaches were made to local businesses, however there was only one tender submitted which had come in just above the contract figure at £26k. The quality of the submission was of a very good standard, noting they had other concessions around the town. £33k investment was proposed in year 1, with a further £3k year 2. WSMTC may need to look at lease extension, with a 5year break clause and it was noted that NSC had approved this.</p> <p>A full breakdown of suggested investments was included within the report which suggested a 15year lease with one, 5year break clause and rent reviews every 5years.</p> <p>Members added that this was be to monitored by officers.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford<br/> <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly, it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That based on the high quality of the tender submission, to award The Food Hub (WSM) Limited the tender for operation of the café at the Old Town Quarry.</li> <li>2. On a15 year lease, with one break clause at year 5, rent reviews every 5 years to be monitored by officers.</li> </ol> <p><i>At this point in the meeting, both the Democratic Services Manager and Senior Development Officer left the meeting.</i></p> |
| 97 | <p><b>Blakehay Theatre Transfer to Weston Hub CIC</b></p> <p>The red report and appendix x1 of the Chief Executive Officer/Town Clerk was available at the meeting.</p> <p>Members considered the report in detail and acknowledged the needs and recommendations included within.</p>  |

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Jill Bute

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. To note the realistic timeline advised by the council's appointed solicitors Wards with regard to the lease execution and signing (late autumn/ before Christmas 2025).
2. For Officers to carry out an in year business review (financial positions to date) and financial forecast, identifying risk associated with a delay in lease execution from September 25.
3. Approve the MOU detail provided (Appendix 1) and authorise the CEO/Town Clerk to formalise this document (sign on behalf of the council) and issue to Weston Hub CIC for formal signature. Date of commencement upon signing.

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.05 pm

Signed.....Dated .....  
Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee