

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE BLAKEHAY ON TUESDAY 12th April 2022**

Meeting Commenced: 2.34 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), Ray Armstrong, David Dash, Jan Holloway, Alan Peak, Roger Bailey, Peter McAleer, Marcia Pepperall and Catherine Gibbons.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk-Operational Services), Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager), Matthew Hardy (Services Co-ordinator, Sally Heath (Blakehay Manager), Dena Smart (Welcome Host Team Leader), Bev Trevitt (Welcome Host Team Leader), Dave Peters (Welcome Host Team Leader) and Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer).

394 Apologies of Absence and Notifications of Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Hitchins Substituted Councillor Roger Bailey.

Zoe Scott (Grounds Coordinator).

395 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

396 To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 15th February 2022

The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Jan Holloway

SECONDED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Standing orders were suspended at 2.37 pm while a presentation on marketing and advertising for Visit Weston was given by the Service Coordinator, a brief History of the Blakehay Theatre was given by Councillor John Crockford-Hawley and a tour of the theatre was given by the Theatre Manager.

Standing Orders were resumed at 3.18 pm.

Councillor Catherine Gibbons and the Theatre Manager did not return to the meeting.

397 Budgets 2021 2022 & Overview of 2022 / 2023

The Assistant Town Clerk explained That Deputy Town Clerk was absent from the meeting due to heavy workload with End of Year cut off.

Therefore, it was decided to defer the item until the next agenda.

RESOLVED: That Budgets 2021/2022 & 2022/2023 be deferred until next agenda.

398 Waterpark

.1 Preparation & Maintenance

A report from The Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services) had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Assistant Town Clerk further reported that the water quality at the site had been passed earlier that day and would be opening as planned on 15th April.

It would be a 7-day operation for the season.

The plant room was well stocked with spare parts and chemicals, the grounds team would be visiting the site 3 times daily to carry out water checks to ensure the site would stay open and felt positive that the opening would be smooth running now maintenance had been brought in house and a new local supplier was being used.

A member enquired if the facility was self-supporting.

The Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services) reported that the team were hoping takings would be up for the season and would at least break even as payments could be taken via card machines.

3.25 Councillor Catherine Gibbons re-Joined the meeting

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

.2 VIC Satellite Update

A verbal report and presentation was given by the Services Coordinator.

It was highlighted that the visibility had been improved from the seafront with the addition of large flags.

Assets such as the Museum and Blakehay were now being advertised on the side and options were being explored to get third parties to pay to advertise too, with an open day planned to showcase this.

It had been a challenge preparing for operating at the new, smaller site but the team were confident they were now at a good starting point and had good processes in place to manage queues with hand held card machines and a new system in place where paid visitors would be issued with a wristband making them easily identified. The fee to enter the Waterpark would remain at £2.50 per child and adults free during 10am-4pm and all visitors free after 4pm.

A member enquired if prepaid season tickets was an option especially for local visitors.

The Tourism Manager advised that the option being looked into.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

399 VIC

The reports of The Tourism Manager had been circulated prior to the meeting.

.1 Tuk Tuk Locations

The Tourism Manager added that a rota of locations had now been put together which included The Tropicana, Grand Pier and the Silica but the Train station was going to be a focused site due to the high footfall.

Tesco was also a site that would be well used and the management at the site was very supportive. All new staff were being trained to drive the Tuk Tuk's as they had limitations which all drivers needed to be mindful of.

Although the Tuk Tuk's could not be used to sell products vouchers for Town Council facilities could be issued to visitors from them and they would also be used to replenish stock at the VIC.

A member suggested it would be good to site the Tuk Tuk's at out of town sites such as The Campus occasionally too.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

.2 Welcome Hosts

A verbal update was given by the Tourism Manager

It was reported that a great team had been put together from returning and new staff and introduced Dena Smart, Bev Trevitt and Dave Peters as Team Leaders to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

400 Tourism Function Update

The report of the Tourism Manager had been circulated prior to the meeting.

.1 Visit Weston Partners

The Tourism Manager advised that some great new partners had been signed up such as Revo on the seafront.

Partners already signed such as The Timbertops Hotel had reported good results with 3 months of full bookings as a direct result of the advertising.

A mixed response from businesses was noted with some keen to sign and some needing more encouragement.

A member reported that they were disappointed to see in the report that the BID had chosen not to renew as they had an SLA with the Town Council and would like any members on the BID Panel.

It was also questioned if Pride Bar owed funds for past membership and suggested that the new bus company Stage Coach may be good to approach with regards to membership.

RESOLVED: That members on the BID panel express the committee's disappointment in the decision not to renew their membership.

.2 Statistics

The Service Coordinator reported the Instagram account was proving very popular and going from strength to strength.

The Tik Tok platform was not being used due to the need to upload regular content but the new casuals may be able to utilise the new smart phones to provide more updates.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

401 Website – Progress Update

The report of the Services Coordinator had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the style of the new website reflected the style of the new logo which linked in well.

The timing was on track for the arranged launch date in May.

A member advised the importance of keeping the new site as up to date as much as possible with new events and older events removed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

4.03 pm The Welcome Host and Team Leaders left the meeting.

402 Castle Batch Update

The Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services) reported that a meeting was scheduled for the 26th April to discuss the consultation phase with external community groups. This would ensure the questions used during consultation collected the correct data needed and offered everyone the chance to express their views and opinions in an accessible way.

An initial discussion had been held with Big Worle so the intention was to pull funds from EMR, Big Worle and grant match funding for the site.

The next step would then be to go out to tender, a lengthy process but would eventually result in Weston's only SENCO Play area and the second in the whole of Somerset.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

403 Play Area Update

The Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services) reported that GB Sports & Leisure were now carrying out monthly inspections of all parks and play areas. Procurement for servicing, repairs and larger equipment to be replaced would soon be going out.

A member voiced their disappointment that the West Wick site had still not been fully adopted and the facilities there were deteriorating in the delay.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

AOB

A member raised the issue of Ashcombe Park toilets being out of use still.

The Chairman advised that this was out of this committee's remit to discuss.

Signed: Dated:
Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee