

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 23rd JANUARY 2023**

Meeting Commenced: 7.02 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Sonia Russe (Town Mayor), Ray Armstrong, Gill Bute, Mark Canniford, Gill Carpenter, James Clayton, Sarah Codling, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Ciaran Cronnelly, Dace Dash, Peter Fox, Catherine Gibbons, Jan Holloway, Pete McAleer, Clare Morris, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim, Timothy Taylor, Helen Thornton and Richard Tucker.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE : Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk, Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Rebecca Saunders (Mayors Civic Officer/Committee Officer), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk Operational Services), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Molly Maher (Development Officer), Inspector Graham Hall (Avon & Somerset Police) and Reverend Peter Ashman (Town Mayors Chaplin).

The Town Mayor invited his Chaplain to say prayers.

No members of the public were present.

259 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roger Bailey, Ian Porter, Roz Willis and Mike Bell.

Councillors Dot Agassiz, Marc Aplin and Dave Hitchins were absent from the meeting.

260 To receive Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

261 To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 21st November 2022

The minutes had been previously circulated.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

SECONDED BY: Councillor Ray Armstrong

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

262 To receive announcements and communications from The Town Mayor

The Mayor's announcements and communications had been circulated prior to the meeting.

There had been 26 engagements for the Mayor, 5 for The Deputy Mayor and 1 for the Leader which was a total of 170 to date.

Significant events were:

26th November Christmas Light Switch On

5th-9th December trip to Hildesheim

13th-17th December Mayor's Art Exhibition

15th December Staff, Councillors & Volunteers Christmas Party

18th December Christmas Carol Service

The Town Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for stepping in and covering her engagements whilst she was away over the Christmas period. In particular, accompanying Sayed Ahmed delivering takeaways and raising £1,000 for the Mayors Charity on Boxing Day.

Upcoming Events were:

21st January Mayor's SEN Learn to Float Session

21st January RNLI Burns night celebration

28th January Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony

28th January All Saints Winter Choral

2nd February Weston College Celebration of Success

14th February Diamond Batch Nursing Home Open Day

25th February Mayor's Nautical Cocktail evening

The Town Mayor reported that due to the cost of living crisis and the date of the King's Coronation there would be no Mayor's Charity Ball. The Town Clerk's advice, endorsed by the Civic Consultation Group, was to hold alternative, smaller events to raise money for her good cause. The most significant of the events being the Mayor's Nautical Cocktail evening on the 25th February and she appealed to the meeting for support and good attendance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

263 To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meeting

It was noted that there had been no Youth Council meetings held since November.

A member informed that due to lack of interest from schools, there would be no Hildesheim youth exchange this year. However, Axe District Scouts had shown interest in pursuing an exchange and more would be reported in due course.

The Town Mayor added that since she had returned from Hildesheim she had actively spoken to Sidcot school and Weston College regarding youth exchange opportunities both of whom seemed very interested. Doctor Paul Phillips was planning to visit Hildesheim in the spring to start planning.

264 Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-Super-Mare

The Town Mayor invited Inspector Graham Hall to address the meeting who reported on the following areas:

- The Bournville beat team had secured a new premise at Lonsdale Avenue and it would be in situ by May.
- Partnership meetings had taken place to tackle the county lines issues which included rival gangs from Merseyside and Liverpool. December was a very busy

month and a huge impact on resources, however he was pleased to inform that after working with various partners, three suspects had been arrested and a further individual remanded in custody. The overall risk assessment had been reduced from high to nearly zero and Merseyside Police were working with Avon and Somerset Police to tackle and resolve to keep control of the situation.

- Large efforts to tackle the antisocial behaviour (ASB) from groups of youths in the town centre were being taken and successes with arrests had been made, which has seen a reduction in ASB. Four Patrol Officers were on street every day and fines of up to £75 would be issued in order to deter ASB.
- Staffing across NSC was up to good level, with a few vacancies in the town centre team to fill and the NSC Police Community Support Officer Supervisor had been recently replaced.

A ward councillor for the Bournville thanked Inspector Hall for addressing the council. He conveyed frustration that the Bournville beat team did not engage or communicate with the ward councillors enough. He also reported in his capacity as a Street Warden the levels of ASB which should be judged as crime, which was causing angst to businesses and people's lives in the town centre. There were a few lawless ring leaders controlling the town who needed to be targeted and questioned. In the criminal justice system this was being hindered by the courts not wanting to penalise young people with a criminal record into adulthood.

Inspector Hall agreed that there was a reluctance to criminalise young people and that methods such as trauma informed custody schemes were being utilised where possible. However, arrests were being made and at least 30-40 % of officers' time was being spent going to court. The Police will keep tackling the issue, targeting ringleaders with the intention to deter the groups.

In response to a question regarding involvement in delivering the trauma schemes, Inspector Hall encouraged involvement and would contact members directly on how to do this.

A member thanked the Inspector and the Police for their continued efforts and incredible work and strategies undertaken which had made her feel safer.

A Hillside ward councillor reported that his ward had frequent neighbourhood meetings with the beat team which were very helpful and proactive. However, he felt that the joined up working of agencies could be improved.

Inspector Hall agreed the need to recognise more joined-up thinking and would seek to address this.

A member, referring to her professional experience of working with young people, championed the use of the trauma schemes in tackling youth crime and felt it was very helpful for the Police to engage in this way.

Inspector Hall reported that there were a few individuals that would not engage with the schemes and needed to be dealt with in other ways.

The Town Mayor thanked Inspector Graham Hall for his report and he left at 7.34 pm

Councillor James Clayton left the meeting at 7.34 pm.

<p>265</p>	<p>To approve the Calendar of Meetings for the year 2023/2024</p> <p>The proposed Calendar of Meetings for the year 2023/2024 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that the dates could subject to change if necessary, but it would be helpful for planning the year for council to approve a calendar at this time.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Calendar of Meetings for the year 2023/2024.</p> <p><i>Councillor Sarah Codling joined the meeting at 7.35 pm.</i></p>
<p>266</p>	<p>Freedom of the Town 2023</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated and recommended members to agree to host a Freedom Parade of the Royal Marines 40 Cdo in the summer and to increase the current EMR to a total value of £9,500 to cover the costs of the event.</p> <p>The date of the event was still to be confirmed for security reasons but would be a weekend in the early summer. The parade would include the Royal Marines Band and would attract people into the town.</p> <p>The arrival at the proposed figure (£9,500) was queried to which the Town Clerk informed that this had been the figure agreed and suggested to be EMR in previous years and he was reasonably comfortable that it should be sufficient.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council and Armed Forces Champion concurred that £9,500 was allocated annually for this event but as the event had not happened the budget had been moved into General Reserves.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Fox</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To host a Freedom Parade of the Royal Marines 40 Commando in June, date TBA and to approve the increase of the current EMR to a total value of £9,500 to cover the costs of this event.</p>
<p>267</p>	<p>Town Council Budget and Precept for the year 2022/2023</p> <p>The Town Council Budget and Precept requirements for the year 2023/2024, the report of the Deputy Town Clerk including Policy and Finance Committee (P&F) resolutions on the budget and the Band D figures from North Somerset Council had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Band D Properties for Weston super Mare – 26,567.00</p> <p>It was therefore</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak</p>

SECONDED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton

To approve the budget and precept for the year 2023/2024 as reported.

An AMENDMENT was then

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Fox

To look at a single figure increase and reduce the total budget from 10.97% to 9.97% by the following means:

- £10,000 from the EMR Parks and Play areas budget
- £10,000 from the Climate Change budget
- £10,000 from the Community Events budget

(This equated to £30,000 reduction and a 9.3 % increase on the 2022-23 budget)

Opposing members aired their concerns over the amendments to the budget and requested the monetary value of the amendments to taxpayers to which the Responsible Financial Officer advised this equated to £1.13p per band D property.

Councillor James Clayton re-joined the meeting at 7.46 pm.

Further debate ensued regarding the council's duty to the tax payer and the need to assess outcomes for expenditure.

It was suggested that reducing the Community Events budget by £10,000 would not have much impact as the council subsidised events in the town in other ways. Parks and Play Areas would not be affected by the reduction as the general play provision budget included reactive and planned maintenance and as such, was felt it would not impact on service delivery. The Council was committing to its climate change pledge by following the roadmap to zero by 2030 through procurement works at HQ and the Museum for the installation of solar as one example.

Concerns were raised by other members that the Play Areas budget had already been reduced and some play areas needed repair/replacement, that supporting Events was investing in the economic development of the town which was important and lastly and most importantly, that Climate Change was the biggest threat to humanity.

Discussion ensued regarding the climate change budget allocation and achievements.

A vote on the AMENDMENT was taken and **lost** (9 for; 13 against)

A vote on the substantive motion was then taken and was **carried** (15 for; 6 against)

RESOLVED: To approve:

1. The net revenue budget for the year 2023/2024 as reported at £2,936,237 and
2. The Town Council precept value at £2,936,237 for submission to North Somerset Council.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.15 pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Town Mayor