

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE MUSEUM ON  
MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> JULY 2023**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8. 52 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ciaran Cronnelly (Town Mayor), Marc Aplin, Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Gill Bute, Joe Bambridge, John Carson, Annabelle Chard, James Clayton, Jemma Coles, Peter Crew, Catherine Gibbons, Simon Harrison-Morse, James Owen, Hugh Malyan, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen, John Standfield, Timothy Taylor, Richard Tucker, Charles Williams and Martin Williams.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer/Manager), Molly Maher (Senior Development Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Chief Inspector Jonathon Murray, Sergeant Jemma Harper (Avon & Somerset Police), Ray Green (Worle History Society) and Joanne Nicholson (Read Easy NS).

The Town Mayor invited members of the public to address the council.

Ray Green addressed the council on behalf of Worle History Society and extended a warm invitation from the Chairman to all Worle ward Councillors to their open day on a date to be decided, subject to availability. Councillors' availabilities were varied and so Worle History Society were encouraged to set a date and issue to Councillors.

Joanne Nicholson addressed the council on behalf of Read Easy North Somerset and thanked them for their previous grant funding. The grant had allowed the service to build up and extend out further into NS. Joanne reported that sadly, there were a significant amount of people who had fallen through the net of the educational system and were illiterate. As a teacher, she had a passion for this and explained that the council could help in other ways by sourcing either reading coaches who could give 2x ½ hour sessions per week, or by identifying readers in need of support with their communities and referring them to Read Easy.

<b>89</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Bell, Mark Canniford, John Crockford-Hawley, Justyna Pecak-Michalowicz, Helen Thornton and Tim Taylor.
<b>90</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  There were none received.
<b>91</b>	<b>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting &amp; Ceremony of Mayor Making held on the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Catherine Gibbons

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
<p><b>92</b></p>	<p><b>To receive announcements and communications from The Town Mayor</b></p> <p>The Mayor’s announcements and communications had been circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Mayor reported that he had had a whirlwind 9 weeks in post and thanked his Deputy Mayor for his support.</p> <p>There had been 54 engagements attended by the Mayor, 3 by the Deputy Mayor; which was a total of 57 to date.</p> <p>Significant events were:</p> <p><u>10<sup>th</sup> June-40 Commando Freedom of The Town</u> The Mayor had written to the unit and would be presenting them with a framed picture w/c 31<sup>st</sup> July.</p> <p><u>27<sup>th</sup> June-2<sup>nd</sup> July Hildesheim visit</u> The Mayor had written a thank you letter translated into German and a return visit was planned for December.</p> <p><u>15<sup>th</sup> July Castle Batch SEN Park opening</u> An incredible proud moment for the Town Council.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
<p><b>93</b></p>	<p><b>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meeting</b></p> <p>The notes of the Youth Council Meeting held in February &amp; June 2023 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>It was noted that their next meeting was planned for September.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the notes be received.</p>
<p><b>94</b></p>	<p><b>Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-Super-Mare</b></p> <p>The Town Mayor welcomed and invited Chief Inspector Jonathon Murray and Sergeant Gemma Harper to address the meeting who reported on the following areas:</p> <p>The Chief Inspector introduced himself and reported that he had been in post for 3 weeks. He was responsible for 6 teams across North Somerset (NS) which consisted of 26 police officers and 40 PCSO’s.</p> <p>The previous year’s Summer holidays had seen a 40% increase in emergency response and the Police force were experiencing what they called ‘growing pains’ as lots of work slows down on street policing to support emergency response.</p> <p>The past 12 months compared to the last 12 months had seen a 2% reduction in crime.</p> <p>There had been a significant increase in burglaries at night.</p>

Shoplifting had seen 348 reports, broken down into 189 in Weston, 82 in Worle and 77 in other areas of NS. Reporting mechanisms confidence had improved and the force were trying their best to tackle keeping close eye. A positive outcome was a 1.2% increase in court cases.

Social Media was used to target crime. i.e. The London - Cannabis Farm. There were links to organised crime here and wider harm i.e. victims of modern-day slavery.

Operation Scorpion – Drugs & organised crime in NSC had 3.6m Cannabis ceased.

South West organised crime ‘Clear hole build’ military term – working with partners on this.

NSC – App street safe had been released 2 years ago and referrals were building.

A question and answer session then took place.

In response to a question, the Chief Inspector reported that the Police were looking to revitalise the ‘Ask Angela’ concept as referrals had not been significant.

Also, the Street Safe App could also be a good tool to target racism.

In response to a question re the Police’s stance on dealing with travellers and unauthorised encampments, the Chief Inspector explained that this was challenging and complex. The current legislation was dated and the Home Office guidance was that it required a multi-agency approach, led by the local authority and supported by the Police. It was a key issue nationally and the National Police Chiefs’ Council say that this is because of a lack of space for these travellers to camp. Damage, destruction or distress were the key words in legislation. A further piece of legislation last year had been impactful. The travelling community is protected under article 8 of the Human Rights Act, for the Police to balance against this legislation and all actions need to be proportionate. The local authority needs to act first, then the police can support them to remove an encampment. This can become complicated as there are often other factors involved such as children, animals and caravans which were people’s homes to consider.

It was noted that shoplifting in Worle had reduced since the arrest of a ringleader and that street lighting and overgrown walkways were causing problems with street safety. NSC will need to do something to address this.

The Chief Inspector confirmed that the start date for Operation Hibiscus was hoped to be brought forward with an end date in September 2023.

*The Town Mayor thanked for their report and he left at 7. 52 pm*

**95 To consider the value of membership of NALC and ALCA**

A presentation from Justin Griggs and Councillors Mike Drew and Paul Harvey outlining the National Association of Local Councils & Avon Local Councils Association offer the Town Council was made. This included:

- Advice, guidance and resources – exclusive in members’ area of NALC website
- Legal and financial topic notes, briefings and financial briefings including standing orders, financial regulations and practitioner’s advice

- Toolkits/guides on subjects including data protection, employment, planning, social media and finance
- Working with the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and others on sector improvement and good governance. 5000 clerks had gained the Certificate in Local Council Administration, 700+ councils had achieved the Local Council Award Scheme
- Training and development for councillors via county associations, including e-learning
- Larger councils get direct access to legal, financial and a new HR advice service
- A wide range of networks to connect councils/councillors and share good practice eg. for coastal communities, climate emergency, women councillors, young councillors
- Monthly online events including with national service supplier partners – attended by 1,000s of councillors each year
- NALC's model standing orders, model financial regulations and Good Councillor Guides being updated and available exclusively to member councils
- NALC/Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge exclusive to larger councils in membership of NALC

Their “ask” was for the council to get involved and help make change and they concluded by offering a special deal:

- NALC fee via formula of 7.71p per elector £4,800, but capped at £1,978 (2023/24), waive until renewal 2024/5 financial year – so £0
- Avon county association fee – £600
- Access to Associate Membership of LGA £500, waive for 2023/24 - so £0
- 2024 study tour is to Yate Town Council, cost around £250 – offer 1 free place, so £0
- NALC online events £30, offer free places – so £0
- Invitation to NALC parliamentary reception in November 2023
- Bespoke induction day at NALC office in London or remote

Some new members felt unequipped to decide having had no information in advance and enquired as to what provision the council had in place for HR and H&S. The Town Clerk informed that the council had HR & H&S support from South West Councils and employment law help from Worknest but made the distinction that NALC was councillor led.

In response to a question regarding accessing services and in particular local conferences, Councillor Paul Harvey advised that before the pandemic, a national conference had been held annually and these opportunities were now starting to get going again. As members, the council could request more conferences to be here in the South West, however online sessions were available to any Councillors.

The Leader and another member had met with Justin, Mike and Paul earlier that day to discuss the value of the membership. Historically Councillors had not seen the need to join as members but due to the cap on the first year of the membership, he recommended joining, subject to further consideration and final decision by Policy & Finance Committee.

The notice period for leaving was 1 year and the membership fee would be due from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. The ALCA membership cap was still to be determined but Councillor Paul Harvey would recommend that WSM have this capped for the first year, saving £6-700.

	<p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried.</b> (17for 6ab).</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To accept in principle the offer from NALC/ALCA to become members, subject to scrutiny by the Policy &amp; Finance Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023 which was authorised to make the final decision to join.</p>
96	<p><b>To approve Committee Membership Changes</b></p> <p>The item had been requested by members. The current Committee Membership was viewed on the screen by members.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Harrison-Morse take the vacancy on the Planning Committee and Councillor Catherine Gibbons take the vacancy on the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee.</p>
97	<p><b>Proposed changes to Standing Orders</b></p> <p>The recommendations from the Policy &amp; Finance Committee 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk gave the background and process behind the recommendations for the benefit of new members.</p> <p>It was questioned that the recommendation stated 2 meeting cycles in May and July; to which members were advised that the view had been taken that the agenda for the Annual Council Meeting in May was not a standard business meeting.</p> <p>The Town Clerk stressed the importance of Standing Orders and recommended that all Chairmen and members familiarise themselves with them. These had been sent out in the Members' Handbook and were available on the website.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That with the included amendment, to reflect '5 pm the <b>working</b> day before', the proposals to change Standing Orders as proposed by E&amp;G be considered and sit on the table until the Town Council in September 2023 for approval</p>
98	<p><b>Proposal to streamline Committees &amp; Meeting Cycles</b></p> <p>The recommendations from the Policy &amp; Finance Committee 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 &amp; Expenditure &amp; Governance Working Party 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 had been previously circulated.</p>

	<p>The Town Clerk gave the background behind the recommendations for the benefit of new members.</p> <p>He had further conducted some research with other Town Councils of comparable size which demonstrated that this council was at the top end of numbers of both committees and meetings held.</p> <p>A member suggested, as was the recommendation by E&amp;G, to review this early in the new year, also considering impacts of the move to HQ for the council.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To defer the review of streamlining committees and meeting cycles until January 2024 for implementation by May 2024 and to re-circulate the proposal to all councillors.</p>
<p><b>99</b></p>	<p><b>Re-adoption of the General Power of Competence</b></p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk gave the background behind the General Power of Competence for the benefit of new members and confirmed that the Town Council met the statutory Prescribed Conditions to have the power but needed to formally re-adopt it for the term 2023-2027.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Catherine Gibbons  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Hugh Malyan</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Weston-super-Mare Town Council meets the conditions in the Schedule to the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012 no. 965; and therefore the Town Council resolves to re-adopt the General Power of Competence as described in the Localism Act 2011 for the current term of office 2023-2027.</p>
<p><b>100</b></p>	<p><b>Combining Armed Forces Day and Emergency Services Day 2024</b></p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated and recommended that the Town Council agree to the combining of the 2024 Armed Forces Day and Emergency Services Day events on 22nd June 2024.</p> <p>The Council had supported the Armed Forces Day event in late June for many years. When the Air Days were inaugurated by North Somerset Council it had been agreed to combine the two events on the same day and the Armed Forces Day show had then always took place on the beach lawns.</p> <p>Following the termination of the Air Days by North Somerset Council in 2023 the Armed Forces Day show as a smaller event was moved to the Italian Gardens but was magnificently supplemented by the Royal Marines Band playing in the arena, linked to the</p>

exercise of the Freedom of the Town by 40 Cdo Royal Marines. Military resources are precious and often required elsewhere so this will not be repeated in 2024.

It had therefore been suggested that the Armed Forces Day event be combined with the annual Emergency Services Day, managed by the Police but also featuring the other emergency services. Initial multiagency conversations had taken place and the combination is acceptable to the armed forces community and would enable the combined event to go back onto the Beach Lawns in 2024.

The proposed date of the combined event would be Saturday 22nd June 2024 and the lawns are available on that day. That date is also within one week of the national Armed Forces Day and would therefore enable a potential grant application to the MOD if required.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Martin Williams

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute

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

**RESOLVED:** That Weston-super-Mare Town Council agrees to the combining of the Armed Forces Day and Emergency Services Day events on 22nd June 2024.

**101 Amendment to Annual Governance and Accountability Return**

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO had been previously circulated.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Martin Williams

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

**RESOLVED:** To approve the revised Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and Sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return) as per the report.

The Town Clerk informed members that there was an Equality and Diversity training session in Grove House tomorrow evening, as per the Council's resolution that all staff were 'required' and Councillors 'expected' to attend if they hadn't already done so.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.52 pm.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

Town Mayor