

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
NOTES OF THE WORKING PARTY TO REVIEW  
EXPENDITURE AND GOVERNANCE  
HELD AT VIA ZOOM ON 4<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020**

**Meeting Commenced:** 10.16 am

**Meeting Concluded:** 11.05 am

**PRESENT:** Councillors Robert Payne (Chairman), Mike Bell, Gill Bute, Peter Crew, Ciaran Cronnelly, Jan Holloway, Alan Peak, Sonia Russe, and Peter Mc Aleer (S).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Dot Aggassiz, Roger Bailey, Marcia Pepperall, Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO), Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer/Office Manager), Fay Powell (Grounds Manager) Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager), Matt Hardy (Visitor Services Manager), Emma Williams (Tourism & Marketing Officer) and Becky Walsh (Communications Officer).

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Richard Tucker who was substituted by Peter McAleer.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest received.
<b>3.</b>	<b>To agree the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020</b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.
<b>4.</b>	<b>To receive notes of the Health &amp; Safety meeting 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>  The notes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.  The Town Clerk apologised that the notes from the February meeting had not been circulated.  <b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That the notes of the Health & Safety meeting be noted.
<b>5.</b>	<b>Financial effects on the town council as a result of the Covid-19 disruptions</b>  The reports of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining the income loss due to COVID-19 and income/expenditure for month 1 of the financial year had been previously circulated.  The Chairman explained that it was at his request the item be discussed. He felt that members should be aware of the position the council were in to date and at what point to review the situation again.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the reports were a snapshot based on the last 2 previous years' averages. She had worked closely with service managers to produce them. The figures were indicative and not fully reflective of what would have happened and they were based on when invoices were paid.

Other than those points, the report was self-explanatory based on what was known and balancing the budget against this. There were some suggestions made on where savings could be made/budgets unspent outlined within the report.

Members were asked to bear in mind that the cleaning contract was being utilised to tackle the emergency deep cleaning of premises as a result of COVID-19 (at no extra cost) and off set for when there was no cleaning undertaken. The report recommended members to note the content and provide direction at this point in time and to consider and approve a full 6-month financial review (Sept 2020).

The Chairman then opened the item up for debate from members.

The following points were raised:

The report was a good overview of where the council was and was in support of the suggestions made to save on expenditure, in particular points 2,3 & 4 Community Orderlies and events.

The community grants budget should be preserved so that the council were able to support the community.

The council needed to be robust in communications with North Somerset Council (NSC) around the SLA for the Water Park and articulate the additional costs to them to obtain government support.

In respect of community orderlies, there had been a noticeable increase in fly tipping/littering and antisocial behaviour as well as the overgrown walkways/ cycleways which was too much for Glendale to cope with. The council must begin with the scheme as soon as practically possible to address these issues.

In response to questions raised with regards to closure of the toilets and Water Park, furloughing of staff, and savings on seasonal and casual staff the Town Clerk advised that:

The toilets and Water Park had been closed since the lockdown but North Somerset Council had taken the decision to reopen their seafront toilets the previous week so the town council had followed suit a week later after checking on health and safety with its contractors.

No staff have been furloughed as it was understood that the scheme did not cover posts funded through precept. He had tried to strike the right balance between being prudent with public money and at the same time trying to protect the employment of loyal permanent staff. Savings had been made by not appointing seasonal staff to the Visitor Information Centre (VIC); secondly by not employing casual staff who are heavily relied on to run both the Blakehay Theatre and the VIC, and thirdly not

employing temporary staff at the Museum or (via NSC) the Water Park. Nobody who had a contracted post, full or part time, had lost their job. Where people were not doing their normal job, we had either found ways for them to provide service online, or redeployed them into the Coronavirus Community Support team.

There was no cost payable to NSC for gate staffing of the Water Park as the SLA had not been completed (approx. £30k saving). There was a question over the opening of the Water Park splash pad this year given the uncertainties, water safety issues and staff vacancies within the grounds team and whether it should be opened as a 'dry play area' only, in conjunction with the reopening of other play areas. It would also be very tricky to try to reopen the VIC in terms of staffing and abiding by social distancing measures.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the council will take savings where it can, for example there will be a saving on the PPM budget as a result of the toilets being closed. The council has been told that the NNDR costs cannot be recovered, but this was being challenged. All utilities are metered and savings could be made there.

Members were in agreement that the Water Park should only open as a 'dry play area' only in conjunction with other play areas.

The Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee informed that the VIC would be a very challenging service to open and would need to await government guidelines.

A member was pleased that the decision had been taken to reopen Grove Park toilets and requested to see the income/loss figures as a result of all toilets being closed. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to produce and circulate these to members, however she pointed out that the income generated by the toilets was minimal and was not taken into account when balancing budgets. The toilet expenditure year to date was £80k and this was not including Locking Road.

It was questioned how the council would manage the volume of people entering the Water Park if it was not supervised.

The Town Clerk advised that with no staff present to supervise the park, it would be difficult to enforce social distancing measures. Ultimately, people would have to take some responsibility for their own safety as they would in any park or play area about there would be clear advisory signage on the gates.

The Grounds Manager agreed that appropriate signage could be erected and that people would have to take responsibility for their own safety with social distancing.

It was therefore

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew

**RECOMMENDED:** To note the content of the report and provide initial direction as deemed appropriate at this point in time and outlined above.

	<p>1. To approve a full 6-month financial review (Sept 2020) across all revenue budget codes with a revised budget considered to recognise loss of income to date and to identify/ determine where savings are needed to balance the 2020 2021 year budget final position.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Delegated Decisions During Lockdown</b></p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk detailing 7 items of Coronavirus emergency measures taken had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk clarified that 'E/W' referred to in item 3 was an abbreviation for Ellis Whittam the council's Health &amp; Safety and employment law consultants.</p> <p>A member queried the background information on item 7 which was an agreement of urgent grants to Hope Church £250 for facemasks, £500 from WPD grant (to be deducted from ROC group). She raised concern that this may open up the flood gates for other organisations tapping into funding to support COVID-19 response.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that the two-part application had come through for emergency COVID-19 response and underwent a diligent process. Group leaders had been consulted along with the chairman and vice chairman of Community Services and the Mayor who had all supported the grant.</p> <p>This was supported by the Leader of the council.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk reported that together with the Development Officer funding had been sought from Weston Power and Quartet in the region of £10k for COVID-19 related causes and had been very careful to distribute then funds working with funders. Funds had been distributed to churches across the town, the YMCA and the Stables to provide a meals on wheels service for vulnerable people.</p> <p>A member raised her disappointment that she had not been approached to provide face masks as she had been making and distributing them free of charge in a business capacity.</p> <p>It was therefore</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That the Coronavirus Emergency Measures report be noted.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Future Areas to be considered by the Working Party</b></p> <p><b>CCTV Procurement</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk updated that approval had been received by NSC from other parish councils to go ahead and that camera locations had been agreed. As soon as he received any further information, he would notify group leaders and the Mayor.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk informed that she had just heard that work on the costs of mobile cameras would be started the following week. She would be happy to set up a</p>

	<p>meeting for interested members with Howard Potheary and Chris Harrison of NSC.</p> <p>A dual hatted member advised that the police would like to set up a direct link into the CCTV system as they would have 360degree rotation. Mobile cameras have been used to target hot spot anti-social behavior etc. the council needed to decide whether they wanted to purchase the cameras or share the cost.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk explained that members needed to decide if they wanted to share the costs of the cameras with other parish councils.</p> <p>In answer to a question the Deputy Town Clerk reported that the technology of the new mobile cameras was very good and the images were as good as fixed cameras. She advised that there needed to be clear justification for their use as there was legislation surrounding this which the CCTV control room would need to apply.</p> <p><b>Grounds Service Review</b> <b>Big Worle – Dartmouth Close Play Area</b></p> <p>These items would be discussed at the next meeting.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 11.05 am.</p>
	<p>The Leader of the Council wanted to record his thanks to all the Town Council staff for working and operating remotely during this difficult time.</p> <p>Debate ensued regarding the future of meetings and it was agreed that Grove House meeting room would not allow for social distancing measures and should not be used at this time. Members were in favour of holding virtual meetings via Zoom for the meantime and agreed that it may be a way of meeting for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The ability to record future meetings was discussed and agreed. The Communications Officer asked that members provide their mobile numbers in case of technical difficulties and they could then call in and listen to the meeting.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised members to be mindful that if meetings were recorded then the recordings would be available to view on request by members of the public.</p>

Signed..... Dated.....  
Chairman