

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER ON
MONDAY 23rd SEPTEMBER 2019**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.10 pm

PRESENT: Alan Peak, Peter McAleer, Marcia Pepperall, Catherine Gibbons, Sonia Russe, Dave Hitchins and Ella Sayce.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO) Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Grounds Manager (GM) Zoe Scott (Community & Grounds Officer, (CGO) Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager (TM), and Emma Williams (Tourism Marketing Officer (TMO).

	<p>The TM welcomed the Committee to the Lauriston Hotel and on behalf of their management. Using the venue for the meeting gave an opportunity for Elected Members to see first-hand the facilities on offer which had been provided by them for free of charge for the meeting. The venue had been chosen due to Grove House being too crowded when all members were in attendance the meeting. The room was used for regular functions and the hotel, whilst now owned by Weston College, still followed the original ethos of providing a place for those to stay with visual impairments.</p> <p>Members were most welcome to view and use the bar facilities after the meeting.</p>
180	<p>Apologies of Absence and Notifications of Substitutions</p> <p>In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Alan Peak took his place as Chairman of the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Crew, Helen Thornton, James Clayton and David Dash.</p>
181	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
182	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 22nd July 2019</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: It was proposed by Cllr McAleer and seconded by Councillor Gibbons that the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.</p>
183	<p>Parks and Play Areas</p> <p>To award the contract for Coniston Green –</p>

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk and Town Council's Surveyor had been previously circulated. The designs of the proposed contractor Kompan, were on display for the committee to see. It was discussed how the proposed design met the consultation criteria and also included an accessible swing and roundabout.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Dave Hitchins

SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons

RESOLVED: To approve the recommendations from the interview panel and contents of the tender report and appoint Kompan Limited to undertake refurbishment works as per their submission to a value of £75,000.

General Updates

The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated. The GM now 7 weeks into her position was partaking in a Grounds review with the Deputy Town Clerk, assessing efficiency and understanding more about the role.

It was confirmed another that another 12 burial plots had been identified in Milton Road cemetery. A member made reference to the report and wondered what improvements could be made at the Waterpark. The GM explained this was an ongoing process of assessing overall efficiency in the team and reviewing the previous season to see what changes could be implemented the following year. The GM invited members to have a look around the Cemetery and other facilities the Grounds Team maintained. The committee thanked the GM for this invitation and appreciated the offer.

Replacement of Splashpad at the Waterpark

The report of the Town Council's Surveyor had been previously circulated. The previous GM had expressed concerns for the Splashpad and its condition. Quotes were sought for the replacement of the Splashpad surfacing. The 2 received quotes were:

DCM Surfaces – £29,708.00

Abacus Playgrounds - £26,425.00

The quote from DCM Surfaces was rejected due to them not being competitive on price.

During the quotation period the waterpark was visited by the consultant designer engaged by the Town Council and the contractors who had submitted quotes, the feedback from these visits was that there was some life left in the existing surface. Some areas had faded and patch repairs would still be needed over the next 5 years if members decided to postpone the works.

Members were made aware of the window for the work to be carried out before the summer season. If it was decided to postpone the works, the next available window would be between October 2020 - January 2021.

	<p>Discussion ensued with some members questioning if the work would affect the budget. It was confirmed the works would come within the budget allocated, as set out within the EMRRP plan. It was also pointed out by members how the Waterpark was a key tourist attraction and the need for it to be look its best as well as meeting safety needs.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ella Sayce SECONDED BY: Councillor Pete McAleer</p> <p>RESOLVED: To appoint Abacus Playgrounds to undertake refurbishment works as per their submission to a value of £26,425.00 within the financial year 2019/2020.</p>
184	<p>Transfer to the Town Council of West Wick Play Area</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated. Discussion ensued about how much of a community there was in the area and the want for a play area. Permission was still needed from Persimmon Homes and this had been ongoing for some time now. It was decided that a letter to NSC clarifying the situation would be helpful.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Dave Hitchins SECONDED BY: Councillor Marcia Pepperall</p> <p>RESOLVED: That a letter be sent to NSC asking for clarification on the adoption of the West Wick Play Area.</p>
185	<p>Transfer to the Town Council of Dartmouth Close Play Area</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk explained how Dartmouth Close play area was being funded by Big Worle. Works commenced on the 16th September 2019 which were due to finish in the next couple of weeks. Alliance Homes were prepared to transfer the asset in full with Big Worle giving up their lease entirely.</p> <p>Big Worle were currently funding all works and upon completion of transfer the Town Council would take full control of the asset.</p> <p>Members expressed how the community was excited for this new play area and the GM commented on how the open space surrounding it made it clearly visible and somewhat less susceptible to vandalism; with the area potentially 'policing' itself via residents and those in the local area.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that it would be sensible not to take full control of the asset until a post installation inspection had taken place.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Sonia Russe SECONDED BY: Councillor Marcia Pepperall</p> <p>RESOLVED: To recommend to the Town Council that upon a successful Post Installation Inspection and any queries arising resolved, the Town Council accept the transfer of the asset at Dartmouth Close Play Area.</p>

186	<p>Refurbishment Schedule</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk asked that this agenda item be deferred to the next meeting, at which point the Annual Inspection of all the Play Areas would have taken place and would help shape the EMRRP moving forwards.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the item be deferred until the next Tourism and Leisure Meeting.</p>
187	<p>SEN Session Retrial at the Waterpark in 2020</p> <p>The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated. The GM stated that the idea was good but the implementation needed to be looked at for 2020 in terms of the structure of sessions, ensuring all parties involved were well informed and robust process were in place.</p> <p>A member commented on a similar initiative which took place in Kingston Seymour which was funded by the Lions. It was thought that the Lions of Weston seemed reluctant to support an initiative similar in Weston. They also explained the possibility of a Community Interest Company being set up to help support the construction of a SEN friendly play park in Weston.</p> <p>It was agreed the need for SEN sessions was there, with such a good response on social media. The Deputy Town Clerk reiterated the importance of managing expectations and working alongside NSC with the SLA in place and the contractual agreements. It was also pointed out that the decision as to whether or not to shut the park for a period of time to host the sessions, fell to the Town Council.</p> <p>Some thoughts on how the sessions could be managed involved pre booking and the use of E- Tickets to ease access on the gates were added.</p>
188	<p>Residents Discount Scheme</p> <p>An extract from the Expenditure and Governance meeting on the 10th September 2019 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The committee discussed the need for a review of how a discount scheme could be implemented. It was agreed that with any system put in a place, an element of trust would be needed by all. Some options discussed were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pre-paid entry card offering so many visits • Showing a council tax bill on entry <p>It was noted that the council had never received complaints for paying to enter the park.</p> <p><i>Councillor Catherine Gibbons left the meeting at 7.50pm</i></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that the £2.50 entry fee supported the costs to run the Water Park. The fee was never designed to make a profit.</p> <p>The Chairman raised concern over a donation box at the waterpark on entry, insinuating a donation was needed to use the toilets and very poor picnic</p>

	<p>signage that had been hand-written over which did not look professional and required attention.</p> <p>RESOLVED The Grounds Manger would raise both matters with NSC who operate the park.</p> <p><i>Councillor Catherine Gibbons re-entered the meeting at 7.53pm</i></p> <p>It was noted that the sign on entry to the Waterpark was looking tired and run down.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To establish a meeting with NSC and Councillors Alan Peak and Peter Crew to discuss options for a Residents Discount Scheme.</p>
189	<p>Destination Advertising and Visit Weston Website Stats</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Marketing Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The TMO added that added that in addition to the content of the report which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website updates and statistics • Top ten visited web pages • Social media activity • Destination marketing campaigns <p>There had been a good response by BBC Bristol on the Beach Wheelchair initiative which had been a social media success. The TMO offered to help promote SEN sessions in 2020 if needed.</p> <p>Unfortunately, it was not possible to link visually the details of the current years and upcoming marketing campaigns due to IT connections at the venue but the imagery was detailed in the report and shown at the partners event, hosted by the Mayor on 18th September at Grove House.</p> <p>A member added that the marketing campaign with Bristol City had been an excellent initiative and had been very pleased to have represented Visit Weston at the Bristol City v Leeds match as part of the package. The TMO confirmed that it had been a particularly well received campaign and regarded as successful and worthwhile, which had included national advertising as it was a Sky TV broadcast, effective pitch side promotion, programme advertising, social media promotion. The timing of it being the opening weekend of the football season was extremely helpful and several membership sign ups have been received as a result of this campaign. We also received a signed framed shirt which we intended using to promote Visit Weston over the winter and align with some charitable causes.</p> <p>Members noted the other campaigns for the 2019/2020 period, including those with Bristol Airport and Breeze Radio which were still ongoing and the Christmas campaign targeting high footfall areas with shoppers and commuters around Bristol including Temple Meads station and Cabot Circus in December.</p>

190	<p>Visit Weston Partners</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Manager had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The TM confirmed that the annual 'Partners Event' at Grove House had been well attended and hosted by the Mayor who had enabled some great photo opportunities with our Members in Weston's new Giant Deck Chair which had been an ideal opportunity to promote Visit Weston further on social media as it had been an extremely sunny day enabling great photos.</p> <p>One of our partners, Wookey Hole were planning on replicating Visit Weston's idea of match day sponsorship with Bristol City during the season.</p> <p>A verbal agreement had been made to site the Giant Deck Chair in the Sovereign Centre throughout the winter.</p>
191	<p>Visit Information Centre</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Manager had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Members noted report content including an update on Visit Weston Partner numbers; Visitor Information Centre footfall and frequently asked questions data; VIC closure date; beach and regular wheelchair provision; the giant deckchair initiative, internship input; tick sales; donation box; plastic re-cycling beach scheme, recent media coverage; the PRIDE event and tourism awards.</p> <p>The TM added further details for the benefit of Members as follows which was noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor numbers inside the VIC were up by 18% compared to 2018. • The closure date for the VIC was 30th September, in line with North Somerset's staffing of the lost children and first aid provision. • End of season meetings and feedback exercise were planned with the VIC staff in order to gauge staffing requirements and VIC offer for 2020/2021. • Discussions were ongoing with the newly appointed Sovereign Centre Manager on usage of the giant deckchair over the winter period and a joint promotional opportunity for Visit Weston the Sovereign Centre, Weston AFC and identified charities in relation to the Bristol City shirt.
192	<p>2020 – 2024 / 2020 – 2030 Town Council Strategy</p> <p>An extract from the current Town Council strategy had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Members noted the referral from the Working Group set up to prepare the new Town Council Strategy and the current elements of that which particularly related to the remit of Tourism and Leisure Committee which were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play Areas and Recreation Grounds • Water Park • Parks • Skateboard Park • Destination Marketing

	<p>The Chairman advised that this was a requirement undertaken every four years and that all Committees would be required to look at their own remit and feedback to the Town Council Strategy Group.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Councillors Peter Crew, Alan Peak, Catherine Gibbons and Sonia Russe meet to discuss the Tourism and Leisure Committee strategy and edit where necessary (as per the Town Clerk's recommendation in the report) and make their proposals back to the Working Party for the new Town Council Strategy;</p> <p>a) To be implemented in the period to 2024, and b) Any longer term aspirations</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated: Councillor Peter Crew Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee</p>

Tourism & Leisure Committee

02nd December 2019

Water Park Management Report

Entrance Ticket Sales

Month	2019/20	2019/20
April	£4,958.00	-
May	£5,111.50	-
June	£6,352.50	-
July	£15,896.50	-
August	£16,153.00	-
September	No Charge	-
Totals	£40,392.91 ex VAT	19,389

The above tickets sales information relates to figures received from North Somerset Council (supplied monthly at month end).

Operational Management Update

During the period August / September operational management tasks included: -

- There was a continued focus on the Splash pad and plant room management operations. The frequency and diligence of these activities throughout the summer was at an increased level due to the hot weather and high levels of usage.
- Continuing routine independent lab tests of water quality. These tests have given assurance that our plant room operations are maintaining water quality within safe levels.
- Routine and ongoing inspections of the fixed play equipment and site.

Service Level Agreement Update

The SLA between the Town Council and North Somerset Council staff at the Water Park continues. The NSC team deal with front line meet and greet roles whilst the Town Council's Grounds Team looks after the operational aspects of the Water Park such as the Plant Room and the fixed play equipment.

An operational de-brief for the Waterpark will take place on Thursday 5 December between WTC and NSC operational staff, to discuss issues experienced and improved ways of working for the season ahead.

Fay Powell, Grounds Manager, December 2019

Tourism & Leisure Committee – 2nd December 2019

4.3 Residents Card

Draft Minute Extract from the Expenditure & Governance Working Party held on 4th November 2019

Review of the Water Park charging schedule

Officers were asked to explore the possibilities for offering a residents' scheme for discounted entry to the Waterpark. The report of the DTC was available at the meeting and requested members to: consider the introduction of a charging scheme and set year of implementation; consider the financial risk in introducing a scheme; and make recommendations to P & F for inclusion within the 2020/2021 charging schedule based on the report findings.

The Chairman informed that the item had been referred from the Tourism & Leisure committee and that the report proposed a way forward on a resident pass.

It was queried if visitors had the opportunity to purchase a pass as a way of paying in advance. The DTC advised that they did not, but the council already offered a loyalty scheme for frequent users. She pointed out that a scheme would involve some risk to income which was difficult to quantify.

Members suggested broadening the concept of a residents' pass for other facilities and encouraging other facilities to get on board. This would help and promote local businesses and support residents. The scheme could be offered to the 95 Visit Weston members to consider and include the Museum and Blakehay Theatre. Debate ensued regarding the application and card issue process and specifically the need for a council tax/utility bill to prove parish residency.

The council needed flexibility and the scheme could be trialled with a few local businesses to build on. The council had time to plan the scheme as it would not be needed until April 2020.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons

A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried:

RECOMMENDED:

1. To introduce a residents' card scheme for inclusion within the 2020/2021 charging schedule;
2. To note the financial risk in introducing a scheme;
3. Explore the possibility of widening the scheme to other facilities outside of the council and
4. To recommend the Policy and Finance Committee to make allowance for the costs of the scheme.

Report to the Tourism and Leisure Committee – December 2019

Destination Website and Marketing Campaigns – Visit Weston-super-Mare

Report written by Emma Williams, Tourism Marketing Officer

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): Website Statistics

Committee Reporting Period (01/09/19 - 31/10/19)

The website visitor numbers have 'held steady' throughout this reporting period, with Simpleview (the Visit Weston website support company) reporting that all their client Destination Marketing Operations received a drop in visitor numbers in October owing to poor weather around the half-term holiday, and a subsequent reduction in online enquiries to DMO websites. Therefore, to see a slight increase year-on-year for this reporting period of visitor numbers, is satisfying.

Year to Date (01/03/19 – 19/11/19)

As reported in the 2019/20 Tourism Team Plan, the KPI target for 'website hits' (page views) is 550,000. We are pleased to report that at the time of writing this report - 19th November, this target has been surpassed.

The numbers are reported below:

Period	Visitors	Page Views	New Visitors	Top 10 Visitor IP address locations
1 st September – 31 st October 2019	69,578	140,015	84.2%	London Bristol (not set) Chicago, IL Weston-super-Mare Birmingham Southampton Bridgwater Cardiff Taunton
(2018)	(69,117)	(134,720)	(82.3%)	
1 st March – 19 th November 2019	261,244	715,632	84.8%	London Bristol (not set) Birmingham Weston-super-Mare Chicago, IL Southampton Bridgwater Cardiff Taunton

(Please note: 2018 comparisons cannot be made for March – November, as the Visit Weston website only launched in June 2018)

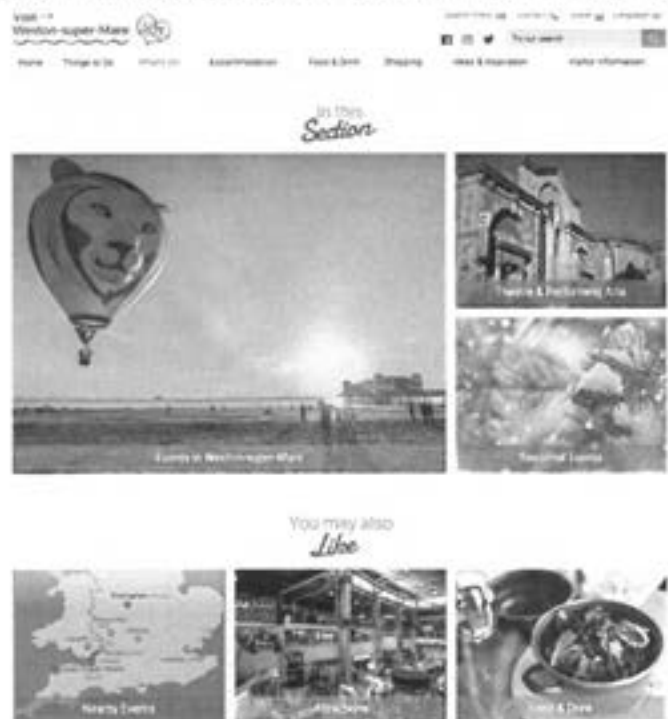
Top Ten Visited Website Pages

1 st Sep - 31 st Oct 2019	1 st Mar – 19 th Nov 2019
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home 2. Things to Do 3. Carnival 4. What's On 5. Beach Race 6. Monthly Highlights Calendar 7. Attractions 8. Shopping 9. Icescape 10. Accommodation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Home 2. Things to Do 3. What's On 4. Carnival 5. Air Festival & Armed Forces Weekend 6. Monthly Highlights Calendar 7. Beach 8. Attractions 9. Shopping 10. Accommodation

Website News and Updates

We felt that the 'What's On' section of the Visit Weston website could be better organised, simplified and more user-friendly. This was based on our own experiences of navigating the site, as well as feedback from some Visit Weston partners, including The Blakehay Theatre.

Questions were asked to Simpleview, as to how we could achieve a more streamlined section for the website, as well as also researching other Simpleview DMO websites for nearby resorts, including Visit South Devon and Visit Bristol. This was done to test out pre-existing 'What's On' page templates built by Simpleview – navigated them as website users, and see if they were suitable to implement on the Visit Weston site. A new page template was constructed in consultation with our Simpleview account manager, and then designed, built and 'made live' by the Tourism Marketing Officer. Site visitors now retain the option of navigating the 'Monthly Highlights Calendar' should they prefer, but the default landing page now offers events sorted by their location, either 'in Weston-super-Mare' or 'Within an hour's drive'. This facilitate a drive to encourage local residents to use the Visit Weston website the 'go-to' site for events taking place in the town, not only visitors. We are looking forward to receiving feedback on the new design, to gauge its efficacy in due course.



There are now large and attractive navigation links, more clearly indicating what kind of events can be found in each section. We can alter these coloured photographic 'buttons' to create events lists for many categories, or pages – even to specific one-off events such as the Air Festival or Water Park opening.

Users can still access a full and comprehensive list of all events listed on the site, should they choose, but we felt that simplifying the page in this way would make it more user-friendly for site visitors that may not be wholly tech-savvy. It also allows the page to be more easily navigated for web users with compromised accessibility capabilities, e.g. visual impairments.

On the topic of website accessibility, we have been researching third-party software add-on options to ensure the Visit Weston site's compliance to incoming legislation surrounding the issue. The functionality of some of these add-ons includes text-to-speech readers, display alterations (zoomed text, high-contrast, colour changes etc.) and audio descriptions of page elements and 109 language-translation capabilities.

Following the Visit Weston and Visitor Information Centre's wins at the Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards, our 'Gold' award images – supplied by the organisers have been added to our social media accounts and website. This is to demonstrate and publicise our industry excellence and credibility. Soon we will add feedback from the judging by the BBS panel, taking quotes from their findings when visiting the team and the centre. This extra source of critique from industry experts will give customers, members and potential stakeholders an added level of faith in the Visit Weston brand and what it can offer.



We have recently met with a Weston College Media Production student, whose creative content currently features on the Visit Somerset website. They have agreed to compile a montage video of drone shots of Weston-super-Mare for our usage across the website and social media. This will be provided free of charge to Visit Weston as we will credit their work for their portfolio and publicity. We are also discussing the possibility of commissioning them for further video work, their time taken to shoot and edit this material will form part of required industry placement hours for their degree.

Following a recent meeting with the Visitor Services Supervisor at Weston Museum, we have collaborated on new and more dynamic content for their pages within the Visit Weston website. Combining both our fields of expertise we are confident that with the VSS's direction for the Museum's marketing, along with our excellent SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) position, we will reach a far greater and more effective audience for Museum advertising. This will be particularly marked by the launch of 'Weddings in Weston', a new section on the Visit Weston website promoting partner businesses that offer wedding facilities, with Weston Museum taking centre stage.

Social Media

Our combined social media post reach (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram users that follow Visit Weston on these platforms, seeing our content displayed to them) was 210,138 – with Facebook accounting for 168,238 impressions of that total. This is an 84% increase on same period in 2018. We have also accumulated 258 new followers across the three social networks during September and October.

A companion Visit Weston Facebook page has been established, for the exclusive use and participation with Visit Weston partners. The group encourages our partners to use it as forum to discuss tourism in the town, share news and ideas and as an easy solution for the Tourism Manager and Tourism Marketing Officer to speak to the partners en masse. This is still very much in its infancy, but we continue to maintain the page and remind partners to 'like' the group to begin receiving the shared content, allowing the page to establish momentum.

We saw notable successes with many image-led posts netting the greatest engagement and overall reach. Our 'Autumnal Photography Competition' continues to receive good participation as well as posts containing photographs shared from Weston Carnival taken by the TMO. Our best-performing post during the reporting period, is shown here.



Actor Simon Bird was amongst the cast staying in Weston to film the UK Gold mini-series written by David Walliams. Crew and producers were asked if any cast members would be willing to have their photograph taken in our 'Weston-super-Chair', and Simon was happy to oblige. This post was seen by 29,500 people – around seven times more than our physical Facebook follower numbers.

Destination Marketing Campaigns

Current Campaigns

September and October have seen reduced activity on destination marketing campaigns, with summer campaigns having come to an end,

including the Breeze Radio jingle that finished airing in September. We have supplied updated 2019/2020 artwork to Kingfisher Publications that produce the 'Welcome to' guides we feature in, those being Somerset, Bristol, Worcestershire, Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan, Birmingham & The Black Country, London, Bath and Gloucestershire. We declined the offer to purchase space in an eighth title: a newly launched Newport guide, as we felt our coverage in South Wales was sufficient with titles we already purchase advertising space in. However, with a year's more market research and investigation into the visitor numbers from South Wales, we may give consideration to inclusion in the 2021 guide.

We have finalised artwork for a December campaign that runs with the JC Decaux agency in Bristol city centre and Temple Meads station. This will be the last campaign of 2019/2020 – excluding the aforementioned Kingfisher guides. Following announcements of departmental budget allocations for 2020/21, we are looking forward to launching new and dynamic Visit Weston campaigns at the earliest opportunity.

Future Campaigns and Growth Aspirations 2020/21

In order to reach a larger customer base during the next financial year, we have submitted a budget allocation proposal that requests an increase to the Destination Marketing budget for 2020/21.

Based on market research undertaken since the TMO's appointment in March, emerging markets have been identified in previously unexplored areas for Visit Weston, these include the East Midlands and the North West of England. 'Out Of Home' (billboards, digital screens etc. in outdoor spaces) advertising campaigns in these areas have been suggested as a potential method of reaching this new audience, as well as DAB radio campaigns with Heart and Smooth radio. Opting to broadcast on digital radio, rather than traditional FM radio, means we can broadcast in several regions at once without the financial restraints of paying per transmitter and have greater capabilities for receiving feedback on its value and success.

We are also proposing to schedule a campaign with Pear Communications, the print material distributors for Visit Bristol and Visit Somerset. Whilst it was decreed by the Committee that Visit Weston would work to reduce print advertising, with 2020 seeing the first year with no involvement or financial contribution to the Mercury's 'Explore' guide, this campaign would take the place of the printed content we were previously committed to.

Pear have the exclusive rights to place marketing materials in Road Chef and Welcome Break branded service stations, several of which are located on main motorway routes to Weston-super-



Mare along the M5, M6, M42 and M4. These routes have been previously identified as geographic target areas for pre-meditated visitors to the town, as well as the opportunistic 'detour' visitors, en route to/from other destinations.

We would place some attractive printed material - perhaps resembling a glossy holiday postcard, that would advertise the resort and point enquiries towards the Visit Weston website. These racked postcards would be accompanied by a Visit Weston-super-Mare animated screen advertisement, displayed on the Pear Communications digital screens located throughout the motorway services complex. Committing to a campaign of this nature would be a year-long obligation, but would offer promotion and exposure for the Visit Weston brand 365 days a year - 24 hours a day, to a large audience with fewer ongoing work hours required by Visit Weston staff. This is because Pear oversee the distribution and restocking of the materials throughout the duration of the campaign. Pear Communications designed

this campaign in consultation with the Tourism Marketing Officer and have confirmed that it would be the first combined digital and print campaign of its kind, and would be thrilled to launch this campaign type with Visit Weston at the vanguard of a new product model.

Pear are well-respected in the industry, evidenced by their client list which, in addition to the two aforementioned destination marketing operations, also includes Visit England, Longleat Safari Park, the BBC, English Heritage and the National Trust. They were also an award sponsor at the Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards that Visit Weston were recently prize-winners at.

The embedded image above, shows the Pear Communications presence by the entrance/exit doors at Hopwood Park services, on the M42.

6.

Report from Caroline Darlington, Tourism Manager, to the Tourism & Leisure Committee December 3rd 2019

6. VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The Annual Performance Plan and related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs for the council's tourism function were created within the Annual Performance Plan to define the Tourism Team's delivery of several key functions, namely destination marketing to global audience via the Visit Weston website and target specific advertising campaigns along with the in-resort service provision of a seasonal Visitor Information Centre (VIC) which serves the local, wider and business communities.

VIC Footfall

The VIC closed to the public at the end of September our when the electronic footfall counter showed 54,238 people had entered the VIC so the season ended with an increase on 2018 of approximately 20%. The KPI target was 45,000 for the 2019 season, so the VIC returned plus 20% of annual target.

Community Projects

The VIC is conscious that the local community is of equal importance to the tourist visitor. The town is fast becoming a more and more spread out conurbation along with outlying districts and villages. Many of them receive visiting friends and family, a key growth area of tourism. The VIC is one of only 2 outlets in Weston-super-Mare from which residents can obtain bus timetables, for example. We try to reach out to the community with 3 projects a year.

In addition to attending Pride in the Park the VIC took a table at the "Stop Hate, Celebrate" event in the Winter Gardens in mid-September organised by Weston Pride.

In mid-October the VIC hosted a group of students from Lydiard Park Academy in Swindon who were commencing a Travel & Tourism course using Weston-super-Mare as their project. These were 14-year-old students accompanied by their course tutor and 2 other teachers and both the Tourism Manager and the Tourism Marketing Officer addressed them for an hour then took questions.

KPIs for destination marketing, the Visit Weston website are reported separately in the Tourism Marketing Officer's report.

VIC Revenue and Shop Sales

We are delighted to be able to advise the Committee that the VIC reached 105.5% of income target at the end of September 2019. This was from VIC Advertising revenue, ticket sales and shop sales, totalling £15,401 against a target of £14,000.

Awards

The VIC currently displays the following awards:

Tourist Information Service of the Year (2018)	Bristol, Bath & Somerset Tourism Awards (Silver)
Services to Tourism Winner (2018)	Weston Business Awards (Chamber of Commerce)
Outstanding Contribution to Tourism Winner (2019)	"
LGBTQ Workplace Award Winner (2019)	Weston-super-Mare Pride/N Somerset LGBT+ Forum
Plastic Free Approved Status (2018/9)	Surfers Against Sewage
Plastic Free Champion (2018/9)	plasticfree.org.uk

The VIC has been nominated for the Bristol, Bath & West Tourism Awards Tourist Information Service of the Year. Visit Weston was nominated for the Tourism Innovation Award. The awards took place in Bristol on 21st November.

We are delighted to advise the committee that the VIC was the winner of the Tourist Information Service of the Year, receiving a beautifully crafted Gold Globe Award created by Shakespeare Glass.

We are equally proud to advise the committee that Visit Weston received the Silver Award in Tourism Innovation, receiving a second globe created by Shakespeare Glass.

We have congratulated Visit Weston partners, the Blitz Tearoom won Gold for café of the year and Stonebridge Farm Caravan Park took gold for Camping & Holiday Park of the Year.

Visit Weston Partnerships

Visit Weston has, since last report, signed up Ocean Adventures, a new children's entertainment attraction in Cheddar, at Platinum.

Bronze £150	Silver £250	Gold £350	Platinum £500	Platinum Plus £700
27	15	13	18	9

For ease of reference, the above partnership number translates in annual rather than fiscal year terms to £27,650. The breakdown in business type is as follows:

Accommodation	Attraction	Restaurant	Shopping
38	23	11	10

To consolidate our relationship with the current partners, we arranged an open meeting with them on 18th Sept at Grove House with The Mayor as guest speaker. This showcased our destination marketing campaigns, provided an opportunity to review the summer season and to network. Several partners have since called to express their thanks for the event, which proved very successful.

In the winter months when the VIC is closed to the public, the permanent tourism staff are consolidating customer relations and developing sales to new partnerships. We have a number of confirmed appointments and fully expect to report new signings at the next Tourism & Leisure Committee.

Wider Tourism Matters

Visit Somerset

As members of Visit Somerset, The Tourism Manager met with their CEO and assisted with agenda setting for their Coastal Summit meeting held on the Grand Pier on 17th September. The meeting was attended remotely by Visit Somerset's PR agency who are based in London. We have forged a direct business relationship with them and have since hosted several journalists in Weston-super-Mare, resulting in a number of positive articles in the national press such as The Guardian newspaper.

OYO Hotels have commenced talking to a number of accommodation providers in Weston-super-Mare and we met with their local sales representative to discuss our partnership programme. OYO has exploded into the market with surprising speed and is now the second largest hotel group in the world. In essence they are a revenue management company, they offer hotel owners the opportunity to remain independent

and to manage the day-to-day running of their property, but manage their income and revenue remotely. They also work with a huge network of investors who might purchase or lease properties. From what we can gather, they are currently in negotiation with 4 or 5 hotels in Weston-super-Mare and once these deals are concluded, they will partner with Visit Weston to assist with promoting the destination.

Growth Aspirations for 2020

The 2019 team was highly engaged and enthusiastic, they also showed a great deal of initiative with merchandising and exploited every opportunity to increase sales. Their experience this summer would be a tremendous asset for 2020 and would prevent the necessity to train new staff into the ethos, allowing the VIC to hit the ground running right from the beginning of the season. We are hopeful that many of the team will re-apply as job satisfaction and team cohesion were given top marks by all who completed the end of season staff questionnaire.

If we remain in the Tropicana and if we are successful in re-employing seasonal staff from the 2019 team in 2020, we believe it is realistic to suggest that 2020 VIC shop sales target should be raised to £16,500 or a 17.5% increase, to include ticket sales. This is a high increase, but we are committed to making every effort to reach this.

We recommend that the partnership fees agreed for 2019, which were significantly increased from 2018, should not be further increased for 2020. Detailed below are the current prices and a table of current partner numbers, showing also a target increase in partnership numbers. The 2019 financial year target is £25,000 and the figures below are calculated as a sales total, not a financial year total. You will see that this aims to increase partnership fees by 30%. Again, the success of this lofty aim will be affected by staff retention from the 2019 team, who have opened many doors to new partners and have experience and a track record of being able to work alongside the Tourism Manager and Tourism Marketing Officer and confidence with the signing up procedure.

Please see overleaf for a breakdown of our vision for 2020 income.

Visit Weston Partnership Programme

	£	No. of current partners	Target to increase to
Bronze	150	27	35
Silver	250	15	20
Gold	350	13	15
Platinum	500	18	20
Platinum Plus	700	9	10
		£27,650	£32,500

VIC Shop sales **£16,500**

VIC advertising income **£2,400**

Estimates of total income **£51,400**