

## **WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD AT THE MUSEUM ON TUESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 2.30 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 3.43 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), John Crockford-Hawley, David Dash, Ray Armstrong, Jan Holloway, Catherine Gibbons and Marcia Pepperall.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Peter McAleer Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk and Grounds Manager), Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager), Matthew Hardy (Service Coordinator), Zoe Scott (Grounds Co-ordinator) and Rebecca Saunders (Committee & Civic Officer).

### **165 Apologies of Absence and Notifications of Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Hitchins and Alan Peak, with no official substitutions. It was noted that Councillor McAleer was intending to substitute Councillor Carpenter but no official paperwork had been received to allow this. Cllr McAleer was advised he would not be able to vote but could participate in the meeting on this basis.

### **166 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

### **167 To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

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

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor David Dash

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Jan Holloway

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

### **168 Tourism Function Update**

The report of the Tourism Manager had been circulated prior to the meeting and was shared on screen as a Powerpoint presentation.

#### **.1 Tourism Statistics**

Introducing the Tourism Statistics, the Tourism Manager was pleased to report that the situation for town businesses was very healthy over the summer with people coming from far to visit.

The presentation mapped where visitors to the waterpark were travelling from which was as far as Scotland and Manchester and this formed a good basis for understanding visitor demographics.

A councillor questioned if it was known how many people from each destination had visited. The Tourism Manager advised that the statistics were not to hand-but

that could be tracked for the next meeting. The DTC indicated that the revenue taken at the waterpark equated to 4465 paying customers for this years season. **RESOLVED-** That the Tourism Manger coordinate statistics from the waterpark and the VIC separately to provide the committee with the numbers of visitors from each area and how many people from outside BS postcodes in fact used the waterpark.

## **.2 Visit Weston Members Input**

The Tourism Manager reported that all accommodation in Weston was 100% full for July, August and September even though they had all raised their prices subject to the government Covid grant to improve facilities

There was a mixed response received for the BID Ballot as Hotels were looking at every penny with energy prices so high but did regularly rely on street wardens.

For the month of July hotel/guest houses were searched 14,833 times and self-catering accommodation 15,053 times, in the period 1<sup>st</sup> July-31<sup>st</sup> August the combination rose to 65,213 searches.

It was suggested it would be good to have air bnb data available for the next meeting.

**RESOLVED-** That the report be noted and that air BNB data be provided at the next meeting.

## **.3 Website and Social Media Updates**

The Tourism Manager reported that hits to the website were received from all around the country with London at no1 and views on the up.

The Tourism Manager and The Services coordinator were currently caretaking back end of website and had recently undertaken training to enable this.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## **4. Procurement of a New Website**

The Chairman reported that it has previously been decided to go ahead with new website as long as Partners were still on board.

The committee requested to know what was the total number of all businesses that meet the Visit Weston criteria? It was felt that this understanding was essential to be able to fully understand the data and have comparative for the actual number of customers we have signed up.

The Tourism Manager was happy to acquire the stats but requested the committee to note that hotels must be of visit England standard to be invited to be partners.

Visit Weston currently had 94 partners and the Chairman indicated he would like that number to rise to 120.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Catherine Gibbons

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

**RESOLVED-**

1. That the Tourism Manager;

- a. collect data on how many facilities were in Weston and the percentage signed as Visit Weston partners.
  - b. engage with all existing partners to see who would resign in 2022 / 2023.
2. That charges to be kept at pre Covid rates for the current year with a view to increase the following year when the new website was up and running. A discretionary discount of 20% was agreed could be used to secure new and existing customer signings.

## 169 VIC Update

### 5.1 Trop

The Tourism Manager reported that the season had seen a footfall of 40,954 at 24/9/21 and that the VIC would remain open until 31/10/21, due to opening later in the season.

Reports had been received-regarding the VIC's location and the team were keen to earn further awards like the VIC had done in previous years.

Discussion ensued regarding possible better locations and using resources like TUK TUKS as mobile VIC Centres.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there had been progress with the resolution to explore options for Town Council premises and that the Town Clerk would advise members of this in due course as appropriate, The Deputy Town Clerk further advised it was not appropriate to discuss this in anyway at this meeting at this stage.

**RESOLVED-** That VIC location discussions be deferred until after the Town Clerk had provided an update.

### 5.2 Waterpark Satellite VIC

It was reported that the waterpark opened on 22<sup>nd</sup> July and saw takings of over £1000 in the hot weather on 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

The total revenue was £8,930.95

Total visitor numbers were 4465

A member asked what in resort advertising was and the Tourism Manager explained that this was to encourage people from outskirts of Weston e.g. West Wick to come into the town centre to spend money.

### 5.3-Tuk Tuks

The acting Destination Marketing Officer gave a verbal report with photos and PowerPoint slides to support.

Under cover garaging was still being sought for the two vehicles for over the winter months, the town hall had declined the Town Clerks request for space in their carpark.

The vehicles were being used at the train station every Friday as a mobile VIC and

for advertising at other council events.

Members keen to make full use of the possibilities the TUK TUK'S could offer.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that it was fair to say that this season had seen some teething problems with both Tuk Tuks and how they work, as such there was need to go back to the supplier whilst still under warranty to fully resolve these issue and get them in full operational working order in time for next year.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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## **Parks and Play Areas**

### **.1 Water Park**

The Grounds Coordinator verbally updated Committee regarding the Water Park.

The Water Park season came to an end on 27<sup>th</sup> September and a debrief meeting with all staff was to take place on 18<sup>th</sup> Oct to discuss; any challenges over the season, the best way to pre-empt any problems next season e.g. getting spare parts that may go wrong in stock. Any actions from this meeting would be brought back to Committee at its next meeting.

Total admission income was £8,930.95 which was well under previous Covid seasons.

Maintenance had been carried out with new bins and a local artist providing a memoir on the side of building which has reduced the graffiti issue to zero, other measures such as painting the inside of the castle black have also resolved the graffiti problem.

It was advised that the waterpark would reopen at Easter,

### **.2 Dartmouth Close**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported the Town Clerk was still chasing Alliance Homes to finalise the transfer and that a lack of response from Alliance was increasingly frustrating the despite efforts by members of the Senior Management team to conclude.

Members reported they have also had problems engaging Alliance homes.

### **.3 Parks and Play Areas**

A member-reported that Castle batch was looking very run down.

The Grounds Coordinator updated on Parks and Play areas and advised that all play areas had been assessed and Castle batch was high on list for maintenance once staffing levels were back to normal.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised there was an earmarked reserves provision to enable a disabled play area but would also need some partners to invest, a member would direct some contacts that may be able to help fund from North Somerset e.g. Disabled parent and careers forum.

The development officer would be made available to support this once her workload eased.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the verbal reports be noted.
2. To address Castle batch play area and fencing issues and make improvements as soon as staffing levels allowed.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 3.43pm.

Signed: ..... Dated: .....

**Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Working Party**