

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2016**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.25 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), Jocelyn Holder, David Hitchins, Michael Lyall, Len Purnell, Peter Fox (S) and Roger Bailey (S)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Ian Jefferies (Love Weston), Caroline Darlington (Visitor Information Officer), Tricia Brabham (Communications Officer), Sarah Robinson (Weston Mercury) and Jennifer Lawley (Committee Officer)

135.	<p>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clive Webb, Ian Porter, Roz Willis, John Crockford-Hawley, James Davis, the Grounds Manager, Rob Thurston and the Love Weston Consultant, Debbie Matthews.</p> <p>Councillor Roz Willis was substituted by Councillor Roger Bailey. Councillor Clive Webb was substituted by Councillor Peter Fox</p> <p>Councillors James Clayton and Derek Mead were not in attendance.</p>
136.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest received.</p>
137.	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 1st August 2016</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Jos Holder SECONDED BY: Councillor Michael Lyall</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
138.	<p>Parks and Play Areas</p> <p>1. Refurbishment of Play Areas</p> <p>The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman reminded members of the decision that had been made to refurbish some play areas. Various play areas had been acquired through special expenses from North Somerset Council. These play areas had been somewhat neglected over time by North Somerset Council and following inspections by the Town Council's trained Grounds Team, it was recognised that some play equipment also needed replacing.</p>

A full report from GB Sport & Leisure UK Limited had been tabled which listed: estimated costings for budgets; lead times & guarantees and the work required with quotes for the following play areas: Ashcombe Park Upper, Broadway Play; Canberra Road; Clarence Park; Grove Park, Locking Castle (Maltlands) and Uphill Toddler Play.

Clarence Park had been one of the first play areas taken over by the Town Council. A member considered that this play area was not very adventurous and if budget allowed, wondered whether play equipment could be installed that initiated imagination. The Community and Grounds Administrator referred to the future planned full refurbishment of the play area in Clarence Park. She believed that the replacement of only one item of play equipment at Clarence Park related to the planned full refurbishment.

The Grounds Manager's recommendation was that members approve the prioritised and phased approach to deliver the 2016/17 element of the play refurbishment programme as detailed in his report. It was a 5 year maintenance plan which was non reactive with a separate budget for reactive works. The work had been scheduled on priority, need and condition.

It was questioned whether the replacement and refurbishment of play equipment was due to wear and tear rather than vandalism. The response was that it was from resulting wear and tear but also a certain amount of vandalism. The refurbishment had been budgeted for. Another member questioned Health & Safety issues and the interim period from now until the equipment was refurbished or replaced. The Chairman advised that wear and tear was part of the normal maintenance programme and weekly inspections were undertaken by the Grounds Team and any H&S issues addressed. Clarification was given that although a full report had been supplied by GB Sport & Leisure UK Limited, the procurement process would follow Financial Regulations and 3 quotes would be sought.

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED:

1. That the Grounds Manager's report be received and noted.
2. That approval be given to the prioritised and phased approach to delivering the 2016/17 element of the play refurbishment programme.

2. Skate Park

The report of the Community and Grounds Administrator had been previously circulated with the agenda.

Members were informed that a £75,000 grant had been secured for the skate park through Sports England. The Big Lottery of £55,000 had been unsuccessful and the decision from the Police Commissioner's Fund for a considered £5000 grant was awaited. The Weston Skate Park Association were aiming to raise £5000 and the Town Council had earmarked £20,000.

An extract from the minutes of Full Town Council of 26th September 2016 had been tabled regarding a proposal from the Community and Grounds Administrator for a 'GoFundMe' fundraising online account to be opened for the skate park. There had, however, been confusion around administration costs and percentages. The agenda item was, therefore, deferred from full Town Council to the Tourism & Leisure Committee meeting for clarification and a decision. The Community and Grounds Administrator had, however, understood that this agenda item was deferred to the Policy & Finance Committee and not

Tourism & Leisure. Although a report had not been prepared for clarification, she had discussed 'GoFundMe' with a colleague that morning. From memory the deduction was nearer 1.6% and not 3% as previously stated and paid to the charge card company. 'GoFundMe' took 5% for their own administration costs.

Councillor Len Purnell proposed that the opening of the 'GoFundMe' account be approved.

RESOLVED: That the 'GoFundMe' account can be opened and go ahead.

The Chairman then advised that there were plans to move several facilities at Hutton Moor Leisure and a proposal had been put forward by North Somerset Council for the skate park's relocation at Hutton Moor. The Town Clerk circulated an outline of a draft plan for members to view, and debate ensued. If the committee agreed to relocate the skate park the Chairman believed that the new location would offer stability and security of tenure indefinitely. The Town Clerk reminded members of the negotiations for the 15 year lease agreement on the existing site and the probable need for planning permission of the new site. If the Town Council could achieve the relocation it was perhaps a better site for the skate park next to the tennis courts and dry areas. However, the Town Council would need to focus on planning permission for the new site and the lease of the existing site. Members had been reminded that the awarded grant of £75,000 came with a timescale. The Chairman felt that the Town Council needed to get an answer quickly for the Town Council to proceed. Members were advised that the 15 year lease agreement for the existing site could not be revoked by North Somerset Council once agreed and the Town Council could choose to remain on the existing site. With the terms of the grant, work needed to be completed on the skate park within an 18 month period with the deadline of February 2018. Debate ensued on preparing the ground for the new site using Town Council money and then moving the equipment. It was felt that not enough information was available yet but generally it was agreed that the new site appeared to be an improved location.

The Chairman in conclusion suggested that the committee wait until the next Tourism & Leisure Committee meeting to see whether North Somerset Council had proceeded with their remit of moving several new facilities to the new locations at Hutton Moor Leisure Centre.

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

RESOLVED: That the relocation of Hutton Moor Skate Park be an agenda item at the next Tourism & Leisure Committee meeting.

3. New Play Areas – Update

At the last Tourism & Leisure Committee meeting the acquisition by the Town Council of the new play area at Haywood Village had been raised. As a result the Town Clerk had contacted North Somerset Council's S106 Project Officer. The Town Council already managed most of the play areas in Weston-super-Mare and, therefore, it made sense that the Town Council acquired the new play areas. North Somerset Council advised that they would be happy to transfer the new play area at West Wick but not the two sites at Haywood Village – Eastern Green and Runway Park. The reason for this was unknown and the Town Clerk was pressing North Somerset Council to find out their reasoning. A member advised that there was also a new play area on a new development of property in the Mendip Road area which was previously an industrial estate. The Town Clerk was not aware of this particular play area.

RESOLVED:

1. That communication continues with North Somerset Council regarding the reasons for not transferring the two play areas in Haywood Village – Eastern Green and Runway Park - to the Town Council.

	<p>2. That the new play area on the development at Mendip Road be identified.</p> <p><i>The Community and Grounds Administrator left at 7.33 pm.</i></p>
<p>139.</p>	<p>Love Weston</p> <p>The reports of the Tourism Consultant had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked everybody for having worked well together this year with the ever more popular Love Weston website. The Assistant Tourism Consultant identified that the SEO approach had made the difference and the website had reached first page ranking. The Assistant Town Clerk highlighted that the statistics for visits to the website had increased from last year. Members were advised of the penalties introduced by Google to affect and lower ranking and how these penalties had been overcome by NewMind. Comment was made that SEO was not cheap. However, in response, the Assistant Tourism Consultant considered that its return was unquantifiable.</p> <p>A Love Weston membership list was circulated as a confidential document to committee members for their information. The list not only included hoteliers but attractions as far afield as Wells. Comment was made that Weston-super-Mare was a tourist centre but visitors who spend time in the town also wanted a taste of Somerset and places to visit. Holiday accommodation was scarce in Wells so it all worked together. A member observed that the town of Weston-super-Mare had never been so busy for years and he had met with visitors who had made comment that it was the best place ever. The Chairman had already stated that the town was the best seaside town in the country.</p> <p>The Chairman acknowledged the false starts in getting the Tourism element of the town up and running. This was the first year when everything had worked as it should. The town was on the map and it was about visitors' returning.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk advised that there had been some really good destination marketing and that some advertising remained in situ which had helped with continued presence and Love Weston website sales.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report of the Tourism Consultant be received and noted.</p>
<p>140.</p>	<p>Visitor Information Centre (VIC)</p> <p>The report of the Visitor Information Officer (VIO) had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The VIO advised that whilst the VIC was open, they had managed to service 22000 enquiries coming through the door. The VIC was now closed and after its closure in September, the VIO had taken annual leave for 2 weeks. During that time the VIC had received 58 missed calls.</p> <p>The VIO considered that investment in the VIC had been justifiable. The VIC had worked very well for visitors, Love Weston and accommodation providers. There had been a rush to open the VIC in 2016 and not everything had been in place immediately. However, the VIO advised that it would be easier to set up next year. The structure was now in place and the VIC team had 'taken on board' visitors' views and could service these requests more easily. Nevertheless they had done well over the season of 8-9 weeks. Shop sales had exceeded expectations, even though visitors tended to spend no more than £5.00.</p>

The Love Weston Open Day at the VIC on the 15th September 2016 had gone far better than had been expected. It was intended as a casual 'drop in' invitation for not only Love Weston Members but for prospective new members. The event was a showcase for the benefits of being a Love Weston Member. The Open Day created a nice atmosphere and did not feel intimidating. Advice was given on the various packages relevant to the type of business and how Love Weston and the VIC projected business.

The Vice-Chairman proposed that if budget allowed, the VIC should remain open from Easter to October 2017. The VIO confirmed that even though the VIC had been closed for the season in September 2016, visitors were continuing to look through the windows and 'rattling' the door in the hope that the VIC was open. The Chairman clarified the uncertainty in 2016 of the VIC remaining in the Tropicana. However, after a meeting with North Somerset Council today, the Chairman was able to confirm that the VIC would remain in its present location for the foreseeable future. He agreed that the VIC should remain open until October because of continued attractions and events in the town. The Assistant Tourism Consultant advised that the Tourism Information Centre (TIC) at Burnham-on-Sea remained open all year because of volunteers. Originally the TIC had only remained opened for the carnival in November. The VIO reminded members that she was the only VIC member of staff remaining as the contractual hours for the other 2 members of staff had concluded in September 2016 when the VIC had closed for the season.

The Chairman acknowledged that the VIC had 'run' very lean in 2016 but advised that it was about identifying the requirements, staffing and budget for the VIC in 2017. He agreed that the VIC had just about got through 2016 with the help of some North Somerset Council staff.

Debate ensued around the potential for carnival nights; not being able to book accommodation in real time on the Love Weston website; the impact of Hinkley Point on surrounding towns; the increase of VIC staffing from 2 to 3 contractual staff or an apprentice and also the increase in VIC opening hours.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report of the Visitor Information Officer be received and noted.
2. That next year's VIC staffing requirements be considered by the Personnel Committee.
3. That the increased opening hours for the VIC be considered in next year's budget setting.

141. Brochure 2017

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had contacted the Weston Mercury to negotiate the further production of the joint destination brochure 'Explore/Love Weston' for the 2017 season. For the 2016 season 120,000 Explore/Love Weston destination brochures had been printed and posted out on request and also to every tourism centre.

The Town Council had heard that it was unlikely that a pocket guide would be produced for 2017. However, negotiations were underway with BID (Business Improvement District) to produce a map, A3 or A2, of the town as an alternative to the pocket guide, funded by advertising. The Town Clerk had contacted several companies to ascertain the map's plausibility. The VIC had already ascertained that a map of the town with directions was very popular with visitors.

The Chairman advised that the Town Council had agreed with Weston Mercury to use just

	<p>the front page of the 2017 destination brochure for the Love Weston website before the brochure was actually completed or published. More destination brochures needed to be printed for 2017 rather than the 120,000 in 2016.</p>
<p>142.</p>	<p>Budget Considerations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extended working hours for VIC 2. Staffing of VIC 3. Destination marketing 4. Destination brochure and map 5. Tourism Open Day at the Blakehay 6. Skate Park refurbishment 7. Water Park 8. Birnbeck Pier to be taken to the Community Services Committee
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated:</p> <p>Councillor Peter Crew Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee</p>