

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE  
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 9<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2017**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.10 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), Ray Armstrong, James Clayton, James Davis, Richard Nightingale, Alan Peak, Martin Williams, Roz Willis and Clive Webb.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager), Ellie Allen-Somers (Tourism Marketing Officer), Tricia Brabham (Communications Officer).

175	<p><b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</b></p> <p>Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Ian Porter, Len Purnell, and John Crockford-Hawley.</p>
176	<p><b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
177	<p><b>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2017.</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
178	<p><b>UK TIC Forum</b></p> <p>The report of the Tourism Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Tourism Manager advised members that she had been invited to join the UK Tourism Information Centre Forum which was an exchange forum recommended by Visit England and had offered to host their next meeting in Weston-super-Mare in February 2018.</p> <p>The forum had advised that we could call ourselves either TIC or VIC, however they strongly recommended retaining the word “Visitor” which in today’s era was better well known and associated with visitor economies. They also advised that we could use the letter “i” in branding and local signage to direct visitors to the information centre and did not required TIC status to do so.</p> <p>The Tourism Manager advised that the conference would be held in the Blakehay Theatre’s new studio and accommodation at a special travel industry rate has been offered by the Royal Hotel as well as a 3 course dinner for £20.</p> <p>A member questioned if the Town Council would be selling the tickets or underwriting the cost of the conference. The Tourism Manager advised that those attending pay for their accommodation and for a ticket to the conference and that under-writing had not been agreed.</p>

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Tourism Manager liaise with the Blakehay Theatre Manager on UK TIC Form arrangements.</p>
<p>179</p>	<p><b>Love Weston</b> The report of the Tourism Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>Love Weston Membership</b></p> <p>The Tourism Manager informed members that during the summer season the focus had been on the VIC and not membership sales. New and re-signings included the Corbiere, Jamesfield and Albany Guest Houses.</p> <p><b>Staffing</b> The Tourism Manager informed members that they had been frugal with casual hours over the summer which had enabled them to stay open seven days a week to mid September and on weekends up to the October half term where fuller cover would commence to 5<sup>th</sup> November to cover half term in England and Wales.</p> <p>A member requested the VIC stay open till the 10<sup>th</sup> November for carnival weekend. The Chairman advised that Love Weston members requested that the VIC open till later in the season and he felt that the VIC had done this. The Tourism Manager advised that she would look into the possibility of staying open until 10<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>The Tourism Manager advised that the North Somerset Council staff based in the VIC had been very helpful and friendly and that the joint working partnership had prospered during 2017.</p> <p>The Chairman requested that the Town Clerk to write to the North Somerset Council's Seafront Management and Executive to compliment them on work undertaken by staff at the VIC in 2017 and thank them for continued joint working relations.</p> <p><b>The Tourism Manager gave an overview on</b></p> <p><b>Shop Sales</b> The Committee noted that auditors had recommended a new system for recording 2018 shop sales to labour intensive system of work currently in place.</p> <p><b>Frequently Asked Questions</b> The Tourism Marketing Officer had developed the FAQ's and would be expanding them further.</p> <p><b>Visitor Numbers/Footfall</b> The VIC were in line to meet but not beat 2016 visitor numbers and had been greatly supported by a German Intern who was studying international tourism and who had been exceptionally well received by our staff and german visitors to the VIC.</p> <p>The Tourism Manager's report included footfall reports for Weston-super-Mare seafront from the Town Centre Partnership to August 2017, identifying that footfall was down on 2016. The Tourism Manager shared national press information with Members which suggested that the current economical climate suggested that 'staycations' could be up next year.</p> <p><b>Accommodation bookings</b> The Tourism Manager advised that during the course of the summer numerous bookings had been placed with Love Weston members – some of them 'on the day bookings' and were undertaken by VIC staff phoning round the accommodation providers, however the</p>

	<p>website needed to be improved and ‘up-graded for this to work well.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that the Florence Guest House had reported having increased help from Love Weston this year than in previous years.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report of the Tourism Manager be received and noted.</p>
180	<p><b>Destination Marketing</b></p> <p>The report of the Tourism Marketing Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Tourism Marketing Officer gave an overview of LW website’s performance.</p> <p><b>Website Statistics</b></p> <p>Despite statistics being down in August and September which was in line with footfall and national trends the overall stats were up 27% year on year.</p> <p>Members noted that The Tourism Marketing Officer informed members that she was currently working on ‘on-page’ optimisation and key word searches.</p> <p><b>Social Media</b></p> <p>Love Weston social media was performing extremely well with 5186 followers. On Twitter, Love Weston had earned 21.3k Twitter impressions and 1155 likes on Facebook.</p> <p><b>Destination Campaigns</b></p> <p>The Tourism Marketing Officer advised that the Clear Channel advertising campaign which had been running since July 17<sup>th</sup> had exceeded their expectations. The retina display screens at selected M4/M5 forecourt stations had predicted 10,378 views but it had actually been seen 15,946 times. The post campaign demographic analysis showed that the advertisement had been seen predominantly by adult men.</p> <p>A member questioned if there was a direct correlation between views and the website statistics. A second member asked if it was possible in future campaigns to target a female audience as this group were known to be the more likely decision makers on holiday and day trip choice. The Tourism Marketing Officer advised she would look into this.</p> <p>The Committee noted that LW had taken a half page colour advertisement in the 2017 carnival programme and were also supporting Weston RFC’s Touch Rugby Tournament for Primary Schools by providing 250 branded sports bottles for the tournament on 12<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p>The Tourism Marketing Officer advised that since April, 717 Explore Magazines had been requested via the Love Weston website And only 2765 by TIC’s around the UK. Swindon had last year requested 670 but none this year. It was generally felt by Officers that print requirements were rapidly diminishing to an extent that the print run should be reduced which would enable us to focus on website and digital advertising.</p> <p><b>Love Weston Website</b></p> <p>The Tourism Marketing Officer advised that New Mind had recommended upgrading the website to include the ability to deal with high quality images and themed experiences and a much clearer and easy to use navigation system. There were two options the ‘essential’ design or the ‘bespoke’ design. The cost would be in the region of £15,000 to £20,000 plus annual costs and an SEO arrangement.</p>

	<p>The Chairman concurred that the site was built in 2012/13 and was now in need of extensive re-development or replacement in order to meet both customer and visitor expectations.</p> <p>A member raised concern over the impact on SEO that a new website would have, the Chairman advised that they wouldn't do anything that would undo the critical SEO work.</p> <p>The Chairman requested a meeting with New Mind, the Vice-Chair and relevant Officers be set up to agree Love Weston website requirements.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> 1) That the report of the Tourism Marketing Officer be received and noted. 2) To arrange a meeting with New Mind as soon as practicably possible.</p>
181	<p><b>Purple Flag</b></p> <p>The Tourism Manager advised that she had been approached by North Somerset Council's Community Safety and Drug Action team about promotion of the the Purple Flag initiative and Mavis Bus. They were not happy with their website statistics and had requested to put their information on Love Weston website. They had also indicated that they would be prepared to put the Love Weston logo on their stickers.</p> <p>The Tourism Manager voiced concern about the message it would give for a destination website and could adversely impact on visitor numbers.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that this was a North Somerset Council Community Safety matter and that it would be more appropriate on the Town Council website which he would advise them of at the next meeting the NSC Community Safety Meeting.</p> <p>Debate ensued about Purple Flag, Green Flag and Blue Flag initiatives following an observation from a member that there was doubt as to whether Purple Flag Initiative would go ahead due to funding issues.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report of the Tourism Manager be received and noted.</p>
182	<p><b>Signs &amp; Banners</b></p> <p>The report of the Tourism Manger had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Tourism Manger advised that the seafront team were keen to renew the SLA for 2018. However discussions at the monthly meeting had continued to highlight rising complaints from tourists that they could not find the VIC. This was due in part to the fingerpost signs pointing in the wrong direction and a new key being arranged by North Somerset Council. It would be desirable to install a banner at the north end of the Tropicana and two 'i' on banners from lampposts on the seafront directly opposite the VIC in order to improve awareness to the public. Members noted that planning permission would be required, particularly for the latter.</p> <p>The Chairman asked if painted signs on the pavement could be explored. The RFO advised that permission for this had been refused for the Museum on seafront paving.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> 1) For the Tourism Manger to continue with the exploration of 'i' banners on the seafront. 2) That the report of the Tourism Manager be received and noted.</p>

<p>183</p>	<p><b>Parks and Play Areas</b></p> <p><b>Waterpark</b> The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that despite the weather the waterpark had done well, and the relationship was working with well with NSC.</p> <p>The RFO advised that the Waterpark had taken £6,000 over budget, despite a delayed opening as they were waiting or a part. Now have a maintenance agreement in place for repairs of this sort.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report of the Grounds Manager be received and noted.</p> <p><b>Play Areas</b> The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report of the Grounds Manager be received and noted.</p>
<p>184</p>	<p><b>Budget Considerations</b> The report of the Tourism Manger had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>Till</b> The Tourism Manager informed members that the audit had recommended a new till.</p> <p>The RFO advised that a new till would enable them to keep the same level of reporting as the Blakehay Theatre and the Museum.</p> <p><b>VIC Staffing</b> The Tourism Manager requested a minimum of 85 hours per week for seasonal staffing be retained including VIC Supervision. The VIC Supervisor post had been difficult to recruit for in 2016 and the postholder had soon resigned. The Tourism Manager requested that this year a Supervisor on JG4 for 25 hours a week but budgeted for.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk advised that JG2 was the grade for casual staff, however it was being impacted by the National Living wage and therefore the Personnel Committee would need to give consideration to this across the board, especially where there was clear supervisor responsibility.</p> <p>Members were keen to accommodate job-share and suggested that 2 x 20 hrs posts for VIC Supervisor be created along with Casuals to top up to 85 hrs per week in high season.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Members discussed the possibility of a touchscreen out of hours display, which would enable 24/7 service which could reduce staffing hours, but there was concerns as to vandalism.</p> <p><b>Website</b> Members discussed the costs of the new website, suggesting that this request would need to be tied in with increased income projections as well as aligning with the direction of travel for the tourism strategy of the Council. The Chairman felt that this was achievable and would arrange a meeting with tourism staff to progress.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> 1) That the report of the Tourism Manager be received and noted. 2) That budget bids be submitted for advertising, website, VIC staffing changes, 24/7 VIC screens, till, and that a price increase to reflect cost of living be included on website packages.</p>

	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10pm.</p> <p>Signed: ..... Dated: .....</p> <p>Councillor Peter Crew <b>Chairman of the Tourism &amp; Leisure Committee</b></p>