

WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 6TH AUGUST 2018

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), Ray Armstrong, John Crockford-Hawley, James Davis, Jos Holder, Richard Nightingale, Alan Peak, Ian Porter, Martin Williams and Clive Webb.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager), Ellie Allen-Somers (Tourism Marketing Officer), Rob Thurston (Grounds Manager), Zoe Scott (Community and Grounds Administrator), Molly Maher (Development Officer) Steve Matthews (Town Council Surveyor) and Henry Woodsford (Weston & Somerset Mercury).

The Chairman welcomed and invited Molly Maher, the Town Council's newly appointed Development Officer to introduce herself to the meeting.

92	<p>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</p> <p>Apologies of absence were received from Councillors James Clayton and Len Purnell with no substitution.</p>
93	<p>To receive Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
94	<p>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 4th June 2018.</p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED: Councillor Clive Webb SECONDED: Councillor Richard Nightingale</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
95	<p>Parks and Play Areas</p> <p>95.1 Canberra Road Tenders</p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer to accept tenders submissions had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer advised that in order to comply with Financial Regulations and contract specification, the committee were required to approve the late submission of three of the tenders for consideration. Unfortunately the tenders were delivered out of office hours and were held at the sorting office which breached the deadline. A caveat would be included within any future tender specifications that it was the responsibility of the contractors to deliver their tender within the deadline.</p>

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

RESOLVED: To approve the acceptance of all seven companies tendering information for the refurbishment of Canberra Road Play Area, acknowledging the late submission of three which should could also be considered (Variation on 1.8 of the contract specification) in order to approve and award contracts for works.

95.2 Canberra Road

The tender evaluation report from Steve Matthews, Surveyor had been previously circulated with the agenda

The report was for consideration in the appointment of a contractor for refurbishment works up to the value of £90,000 and recommended that one of the top three performing companies be chosen for the project and an order placed subject to agreeing contract terms, programme and final design.

The three designs from the shortlisted companies were available to view at the meeting. The Surveyor reported a 3% marginal difference between the three companies awarded scores.

The Chairman invited the Grounds Manager to report further. He advised that all three designs were of a good standard and advised that subject to clarification of the following, members instructions were awaited:

- That the gates needed to be of an agreed standard to prevent maintenance issues.
- Suitable litter bins, with lids to prevent litter spread from wind and seagulls.
- In respect of (pic 2) earth mounds which presented wear and tear issues.

Henry Woodsford joined the meeting at 7.08 pm

The Chairman advised that the contractors of design 1 had confirmed that if they were successful, they would like to further consult on the layout with members of the public.

The Vice Chairman informed that the users wanted specifically a zip wire and that the residents wanted it to be a quiet one. Therefore, as design 1 was the only option including this requirement, they should be the approved option contractor.

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

RESOLVED: That Proludic be chosen for the project and an order placed, subject to agreeing contract terms, programme and final design including the gates and litter bins provided.

95.3 Castle Batch

An update report on the frame and swing from Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.

The Committee noted that the swing at Castle Batch play area did not have a swing seat despite the frame being in place. On investigation with the Senior Groundsman it had been advised that the seat was to be removed as it did not meet Health & Safety requirements, in addition a replacement seat could not be fitted as the frame was no longer fit for purpose.

As a result the swing unit (frame) would be removed from the ground to avoid further

deterioration and expectation that the swing could be replaced. The Chairman added that the swing frame had since been removed and that consideration needed to be given as to its replacement.

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

RESOLVED: To note the actions taken and the removal of the swing frame at Castle Batch play area.

95.4 Parks and Play Area

The Grounds Manager's report had been previously circulated with the agenda.

Ongoing Play Area Refurbishment Programme Update

The play area refurbishment work was continuing as per the agreed plan. The replacement of a multi play unit at Wyvern Close Play Area was currently out for expressions of interest with a design and build project and the agreed budget of £14,000. Expressions of interest for this quotation were due in by Friday 3rd August 2018 with tender documents to be distributed week commencing 20th August.

General Play Area Management

Repairs and routine inspections at visual and operational level have been continuing. Because of the drought conditions tree specialist has been asked to include overhanging trees at Ashcombe Lower Play Area and the Water Park in his "in leaf" inspections during early August. This relates to "sudden branch drop" which was a condition exacerbated by drought.

Routine play area inspections were continuing as previously reported and our independent annual inspection has been booked to take place in the first two weeks of October.

Update training has been booked for RPII play inspection training to uplift one team member to "Operational Level" for the 11th and 12th September. In addition refresher training had been booked for other "Routine Visual" level inspectors so that their qualifications could be updated as these expired in October.

Parks and Open Spaces

The flower beds were planted according to the planting schedule. The drought has made it a challenging period where it had proved difficult to get sufficient water onto the flower beds. However, all those involved had worked hard and the flower beds were colourful and have made a positive contribution to the Weston in Bloom initiative.

A member enquired as to why the council divulged budget figures for tenders to which the Deputy Town Clerk advised that this was needed to provide a design and build specification. The Grounds Manager would research what was needed before the tenders were sought.

The Chairman added that the council assesses the element of value for money and responses from public consultation.

Steve explained that the process included specialist designers which were important and that if contractors were not given a budget figure they would not have a decent parameter to work to.

The Chairman reported that that all contractors were pressed in interview on what flooring and parameter fencing would be used before the element of play equipment was discussed.

For point of information, the Grounds Manager explained that there were 3 elements to consider when costing for the Canberra Road play area:

- 1 The new fencing which must be galvanised.
- 2 Safety surfacing which is at least if not more 50% of the overall cost.
- 3 The play equipment itself.

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

RESOLVED: That the Grounds Manager report be noted.

95.5 Waterpark

The Grounds Manager's report had been previously circulated with the agenda, a second report with updates on the Waterpark had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Annual income to the Town Council was £9,000 which was paid in monthly instalments. The recent hot weather has resulted in high visitor numbers and income during the recent good weather and the concession has been opened consistently. There had been no other issues reported.

Tickets sales information relates to figures received from North Somerset Council (supplied monthly at month end). There were no figures to report during April as we experienced cold weather and mechanical (plant room) problems.

During the period June / July operational management tasks included: -

Splash pad and plant room management operations. The frequency and diligence of these activities had increased due to the hot weather and high levels of usage

Continuing routine independent lab tests of water quality. These tests had given assurance that the plant room operations were maintaining water quality within safe levels.

Recently the splash pad was not in use due to a circuit board failure and so a part was ordered and installed which resulted in a week's downtime for the splash pad. The team pulled out all the stops to respond and get the splash pad up and running. Subsequently, the team have assessed how they can be more resilient in these situations and has undertaken an independent report of the lifespan of all the plant room equipment to be included within the financial planning process.

The Chairman thanked the Community and Grounds Administrator for her diligence in getting the Water Park up and running again with minimal downtime.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed that the concessionaire had been late paying the quarterly bills and to date had not yet received anything from the last quarter.

The Committee noted recent collaboration of various agencies including Police, NSC Community Response Team and Town Council officer in relation to anti-social behaviour. Actions to specifically help address ASB were continuing to be pursued but some may need

	<p>to be reviewed when setting budgets e.g. potential for a fence on the back wall and increased Police patrols.</p> <p>The SLA between the Town Council and North Somerset Council staff at the Water Park was working well. As was the SLA between Somerset Wood recycling where they were replacing any rotting wood on the sandpit</p> <p>A member enquired into the levels of antisocial behaviour to which the Chairman informed that after reports earlier in the year CCTV options had been explored and was happy to report that there had been no issues to report over the last 3-4 months..</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk added that the Water Park was over ten years old and we had experienced minimal problems with antisocial behaviour with the site.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Grounds Manager’s and Community and Grounds Administrator’s reports be noted.</p>
96	<p>Visit Weston-super-Mare</p> <p>Proposed Change to Partnership Agreements</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Manager & new contract form had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Tourism Manager reported that it had always been known that throughout the summer whilst the VIC was open, signing up new partners was a challenge. It was also apparent that renewing annual contracts had become equally difficult if their renewal date was in peak season, of which there were several.</p> <p>In most commercial businesses, contracts were ‘opt out’ rollover contracts. This prevented unnecessary administration time for the sales team. It was also an accepted, indeed recommended, method to make for a robust customer retention scheme. The Finance Department’s administration time would also be reduced as their system could diary and automatic issue renewal invoice where necessary, several weeks in advance of the due date.</p> <p>By introducing new contracts that auto-renew, valuable sales and administration time would be released so that the Visitor Information Centre could increase its efforts with business customer care throughout the course of the agreement and therefore, it was recommended that a new partnership be adopted as attached.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve and adopt the partnership agreement to include an auto renewal roll over clause and reminder that prices will be reviewed on the 1st April every year.</p>
97	<p>Destination Website - Visit Weston-super-Mare</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Marketing Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Tourism Marketing Officer demonstrated the new Visit Weston-super-Mare website which launched on 13th June 2018. The site had a brand new image-led identity which stood</p>

proud and was complemented by a fresh and contemporary design, up to date imagery and informative content.

Several pages including Weston Museum and Wookey Hole were viewed, Members commented that the pictures used for the Museum were not of great marketing impact and it looked sparse in terms of family visitor's e.g. Punch and Judy Shows. The Tourism Manager confirmed that we were reliant on imagery provided by facilities themselves. Discussion ensued on the challenges of safeguarding and permissions, and that good imagery in the Blakehay Theatre due to the stage lighting was difficult to achieve.

The Chairman confirmed that it was down to the facilities to provide the necessary marketing imagery and that the new website was much improved and had been well received by our partners and visitors.

97.1 Website Statistics

The Tourism Marketing Officer provided an overview to the Committee confirming that website figures within the report shown in brackets represented those from the same period in 2017.

The Committee noted that during the 2018 World Cup (14th June – 15th July) New Mind Tell Us reported UK wide traffic reductions across all DMO websites due to a relaxed interest in tourism related activities. Less people were looking for 'things to do' and 'what's on' as a significant number of the population were focused on the World Cup. The biggest losses in traffic corresponded with the England match days but the entire period saw a reduction.

The Tourism Marketing Officer advised that an e-newsletter announcing the launch of the new Visit Weston-super-Mare website had been sent out to all of our partners and that various initiatives and competitions were underway to promote further. Platinum and Platinum Plus partners have been sent their quarterly statistics and a system has been put in place to send these out every quarter.

The Assistant Town Clerk advised that Weston BID had also promoted the new website and benefits to businesses in the town in their latest newsletter and that we had received positive feedback from our partners on the new look and functionality.

Top ten pages – viewed in May and June were outlined with the report.

97.2 Social Media

Social media interaction remained excellent. With 2,029 likes on Facebook, 4,402 followers on Twitter and 341 on Instagram.

A member enquired on the rationale behind monitoring website 'likes', it was explained that Facebook, Instagram and Twitter were all platforms for the promotion of Weston-super-Mare as a holiday destination and in particular they increased newsfeeds and interest for the resort in general.

In June Visit Weston collaborated with The Helicopter Museum and The Great British Gin Festival event to run competitions on Facebook which boosted Facebook likes and engagement. On the Air Festival weekend the Facebook posts were viewed 28,658 times.

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

RESOLVED: That the report of the Tourism Marketing Officer be noted.

98	<p>Destination Marketing</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Marketing Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Committee noted 2018/19 Advertising Campaigns and Media coverage outlined within the report and report addendum circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>A member queried the logic behind advertising at Bristol Airport, to which the Tourism Manager reported that according to travel GBI statistics European visitor numbers were on the increase on last year, with Bristol Airport reporting a 60% increase in passengers and our VIC seeing this too with increases in German/Belgian and American visitors, some of which could be attributable to exchange rates.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that advertising is very consumer-led and that airport advertising in particular had been selected by us and other proactive businesses/organisations e.g. Grand Pier, North Somerset Council, Clarks Village and Puxton Park in response to this type of demand and high footfall.</p> <p>It was requested by a member if advertising could include attracting higher spending residents e.g. in Clifton to Weston-super-Mare.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that we recently advertised at Cribbs Causeway and in the upmarket publication 'Welcome to Bristol', on Heart Radio for this weeks Bristol Balloon Fiesta and next week on Breeze Radio which covered Bristol down to our other known demographic area and target market in the Bridgwater area.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report of the Tourism Marketing Officer be noted.</p>
99	<p>Visitor Information Centre (VIC)</p> <p>The report of the Tourism Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Tourism Manager provided an overview confirming that from Monday 23rd July the VIC had opened 10am – 5pm 7 days a week; previously it was until 4pm. Staffing hours were being monitored carefully and shall be in a position at the beginning of September to review the closing date for the season subject to budget. This was currently 15th September.</p> <p>Discussions were ongoing with North Somerset Council who provided staff for First Aid and Lost Children as to their end of contract dates.</p> <p>99.1 Shop & Ticket Sales were outlined within the report. Year-to-date audited figures had not been received, but turnover suggested that everything was on track to meet targets.</p> <p>99.2 Visitor Numbers & Footfall - According to the Town Centre Partnership's visitor numbers for the seafront itself Weston remained down approximately 15.6% down on 2017. However, it was understood that the TCP were querying the accuracy of these figures with their supplier. Footfall into the VIC itself had been high, with 11, 110 exactly counted at 11:37 on 24th July from 1st April. Members noted that new demographics for visitors were being seen this year from Wiltshire and Oxfordshire, possibly due the situation with Salisbury and recent national publicity surrounding making visitor's re-think destination</p>

choices.

Discussion regarding the methods used to ascertain visitor numbers was discussed to which the Tourism Manger informed that a new technology had been created which may be installed in Weston. A member felt that the press needed to justify their figures as this created bad publicity for Weston. The Council's visitor numbers spoke for themselves in this respect.

On this note, the Tourism Manager provided good publicity for Weston from the Daily Express as an example.

99.3 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) Update

The recording of FAQ's was developing well and being added to the internal spread-sheet. These had now been added to the Visit Weston website as a single point of reference for staff and visitors alike and were updated on a regular basis. VIC staffs were being encouraged to ask for Visitor questionnaires to be completed along with a daily log of where visitors came from. Noted within the report were some of the positive comments received.

99.4 Beach Wheelchair

The VIC received a donation from the Axentis Michael Trust and Weston Hospicecare of a specially converted wheelchair with large pneumatic tyres that was sand going. As far as it could be established, it was the only beach wheelchair in the whole of Somerset, with the next nearest in Newquay. A full risk assessment had been conducted and included with the hire agreement, and appended to the report. The Tourism Manager felt this was a tremendous asset to the town and was being positively reported in the press, and on radio along with social media coverage by the first person to use which included a lovely family picnic gathering on Weston's beach.

99.5 Water Bottles

The VIC had become a water re-fill station and received positive publicity from this venture as well as being listed on the Refill App that was available countrywide. The recycled water bottles that were purchased and branded "Weston-super-Mare" with a donkey were selling very well and were setting off the cost of purchasing filtered drinking water.

99.6 Interactive TV Screen

Finding a suitable location was proving challenging as single glazing was needed along with budget implications due to rental fees. In situ was a regular TV screen in the VIC window which remained on at all times, including overnight, but the aim was to have an interactive solution by the time the VIC closes for the season.

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

RESOLVED: That the report of the Tourism Manager be noted.

The Chairman advised that due to other commitments the date of the next Tourism & Leisure meeting would be on 8th October 2018.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.15 pm.

Signed: Dated:

Councillor Peter Crew

Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee