

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUALCOUNCIL MEETING &  
CEREMONY OF MAYOR MAKING  
HELD VIA ZOOM ON  
WEDNESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.02 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.04 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mark Canniford (Town Mayor), Dot Agassiz, Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mike Bell, Gill Bute, Gillian Carpenter, James Clayton, Sarah Codling, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Ciaran Cronnelly, David Dash, Peter Fox, Catherine Gibbons, David Hitchins, Jan Holloway, Pete McAleer, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Lisa Pilgrim, Ian Porter, Sonia Russe, Tim Taylor, Helen Thornton, Richard Tucker and Roz Willis.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Fay Powell (ATC – Public Services), Samantha Bishop & Emma Williams (Committee Officers), Chris Millard (Mayors Civic Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Reverend Peter Ashman (Town Mayors Chaplin) and Kaylee Rose (Incoming Mayoress).

The Mayor of Weston-super-Mare, Councillor Mark Canniford welcomed all to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council and Mayor Making.

The Town Mayor announced that he would make his end of office speech and make his presentations at the Mayor making Celebration Dinner to be held on 16th July 2021. He took the opportunity to show his sincere thanks and appreciation for the support of the Mayors Civic Officer, Administrative Officer and his Chaplain over his 2years of service.

The Town Mayor then invited his Chaplain, Reverend Peter Ashman, to say prayers.

The Town Mayor invited members of the public to address the meeting of which there were none.

**1. Election of the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare**

The Mayor invited Councillor Alan Peak and Councillor Catherine Gibbons to second the proposition that Councillor James Clayton be elected the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare for the year 2021/22.

Councillors Alan Peak and Catherine Gibbons respectively proposed and seconded Councillor James Clayton's ascension to the office of Mayor and affirmed that they would, with pleasure, endorse the election of Councillor James Clayton as Town Mayor.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:** That Councillor James Clayton be elected the Mayor of Weston-super-Mare for the year 2021/22.

Councillor James Clayton assented to his election.

At the request of the Town Mayor, the Town Clerk announced that there would be a short adjournment of proceedings.

The new Town Mayor, Councillor James Clayton, took his seat.

The Town Mayor, at the request of the Town Clerk proceeded to read out the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor of Weston-super-Mare for the year 2021/22, signing the document and returning thanks for his election to office.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Alan Peak for proposing and Councillor Catherine Gibbons for seconding and all members for his election as Mayor. He was honoured and delighted.

**2. Election of the Deputy Town Mayor of Weston-super-Mare 2021/22**

The Mayor invited Councillor Peter Fox to propose and Councillor Peter Crew to second the proposition that Councillor Roger Bailey be elected the Deputy Mayor of Weston-super-Mare for the year 2021/22.

Councillors Peter Fox and Peter Crew respectively proposed and seconded Councillor Roger Bailey's ascension to the office of Deputy Mayor.

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

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:** That Councillor Roger Bailey be elected the Deputy Mayor of Weston-super-Mare for the year 2021/22.

At the request of the Town Mayor, the Town Clerk announced that there would be a short adjournment of proceedings.

The Deputy Mayor, at the request of the Town Clerk, proceeded to read out the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as the Deputy Mayor of Weston-super-Mare for the 2021/22, signing the document and returning thanks for his election to office.

The Mayor announced the appointment of his Chaplain, Reverend Peter Ashman who returned thanks for his appointment.

**3. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ella Sayce.

Councillors Mark Aplin and Marcia Pepperall were absent from the meeting.

**4. To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations on interest received.

**5. To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021**

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Sarah Codling

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>Election of Leader and Deputy Leader of the Town Council</b></p> <p>The proposition to elect the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Town Council for 2021/2022 was put to council.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Councillor Alan Peak be appointed Leader of the Town Council for 2021/22.</li> <li>2. That Councillor Robert Payne be appointed Deputy Leader of the Town Council for 2021/22.</li> </ol> <p>The Town Mayor congratulated both members on their election.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>7.1 Decision Making Arrangements for 2021 – 2022</b></p> <p><b>Appointment of Town Councillors to Committees, Sub Committees, Working Parties and External Organisations</b></p> <p>The draft Committee Membership for 2021/22 had been previously circulated to members.</p> <p>A member queried that the decision made via the Community Services Committee, to abolish the Allotment Management Sub Committee and to nominate an Allotment Management Champion was not included on the list of external organisations.</p> <p>The Town Clerk agreed that this had been resolved by the Community Services Committee and would therefore be added to the list of external organisations accordingly.</p> <p>A member highlighted that there were two appointments listed for both the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust and the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee and was this correct.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed that he would check with the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust if two appointments were permitted but advised that only one appointment would be accepted by the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee and that this would require members to vote.</p> <p>Councillor Sonia Russe informed that she would be happy to concede to Councillor John Crockford-Hawley if the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust only permitted one appointment.</p> <p>Councillor John Crockford-Hawley graciously accepted and suggested that Councillor Sonia Russe be his second to step in on meetings if he could not attend.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p>

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor David Dash be appointed Allotment Management Champion and that this be added to the list of external organisations.

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

**7.1.2 RESOLVED:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley be appointed as the representative to sit on the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust, in the event that only one appointment was permitted.

Councillor Ian Porter explained that he wished to remain as representative on the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee. He had done so for two years and was currently Vice Chairman. He enjoyed the position and there were vast amounts of work being done of which he could like to see through.

A member and previous representative of the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee recommended that a four-year service as representative was ideally required for the role.

Councillor Dot Agassiz was happy to concede to Councillor Ian Porter as the representative.

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

**7.1.3 RESOLVED:** Councillor Ian Porter be appointed as the representative to sit on the Bristol Airport Consultative Committee.

The Leader of the council requested that the Wyndham Lecture Trust be reinstated on the list for external organisations and that Councillor Catherine Gibbons take the role as representative.

Councillor Catherine Gibbons then gave a brief overview of what the Wyndham Lecture Trust, for the benefit of members.

Clarity was requested on the number of representatives required for Weston Placemaking, to which the Town Clerk confirmed that there were two.

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

**7.1.4 RESOLVED:** That the Wyndham Lecture Trust be reinstated on the list of external organisations and that Councillor Catherine Gibbons be appointed as the representative.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Helen Thornton  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Sarah Codling

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

**7.1.5 RESOLVED:** That with the above inclusions, the Committee Membership for 2021/22, as circulated, be approved.

**7.2 Remote Meetings - Recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

The minute extract from the meeting had been previously circulated which outlined five recommendations for approval.

The Town Clerk updated that the recent court case seeking a declaration that under the 1972 Act that a remote meeting could be considered a 'place' had fallen.

He added that it would also be necessary to hold a physical meeting for the Policy & Finance Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> June to agree the audit. This was a legal requirement for the council and the Museum courtyard had been booked for the meeting.

A member asked for an update on the acquisition of the quarry as it could facilitate meetings and had better parking facilities.

The Town Clerk advised that the negotiation with North Somerset Council was going very slowly and the lease was unlikely to be completed by June. An option could be to hire a marquee and hold a meeting outside. The Museum courtyard was the safest option the council had to facilitate committee meetings inside.

Debate ensued for and against the idea of a physical meeting.

A member felt that outside meetings were deemed safer and would be a good PR opportunity for the council. The importance of ventilation was also highlighted.

A further consultation on remote meetings was being undertaken by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the result was awaited.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ian Porter

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That, until it is safe to meet in person (or the law is clarified to allow remote committee meetings), all committees operate as Working Parties to enable them to meet virtually and make recommendations either to Council or to the Town Clerk as appropriate.
2. The power of delegation to the Town Clerk of all statutory powers not reserved to the full Council, originally made in March 2020, be reconfirmed for the municipal year 2021-22 to enable implementation of decisions.
3. Any delegated decisions under this resolution which are not in consideration of working party recommendations be taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the relevant committee chairman and vice-chairman, or where they are unavailable the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.
- 4) That the Council agrees to resume normal committee decision making at the first opportunity and that this decision be reviewed at the latest after 6 months (IE at the latest before the end of November 2021).
- 5) That a letter be sent to John Penrose MP to inform of the Town Council's difficulties faced ahead of the change in legislation.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting and took the opportunity to thank the retiring Town Mayor, Councillor Mark Canniford for his two years in service.

The council's thanks were also given to the retiring Mayoress and the Town Mayor advised that formal thanks and recognition would be given at the Civic Service and Mayor Making Dinner on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021, to take place at St John's Church followed by the Royal Hotel.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.04 pm.

Signed: .....  
Town Mayor

Dated: .....

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKING PARTY  
HELD VIA ZOOM  
MONDAY 5<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.26 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Sarah Codling (Chairman), Gillian Carpenter, John Crockford-Hawley, Ciaran Cronnelly, Peter Fox, Pete McAleer, Helen Thornton and Roz Willis.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk Public Services), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Zoe Scott (Grounds Coordinator), Ali Waller (Youth Services) and Reece Evans (Community Response Officer).

**72 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions**

There were no apologies for absence received.

Councillor Ella Sayce was absent from the meeting.

**73 To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**74** At this point in the meeting, the Chairman brought forward item 5 (Grounds Management Report) for discussion in order to accommodate an update from Reece Evans, the council's Community Response Officer who was in attendance.

**Grounds Management Report**

The Assistant Town Clerk – Public Services verbally reported that the grounds team were not at full capacity and were doing the best they could with grass growing and staff shortages. Recruitment for Community Rangers had commenced with one post filled, phased in and already in place.

There had been a shortage of strimmers due to demand and a lawn mower breaking down.

It had been reported that strimmers had also been stolen from allotment sites.

There was an issue with the coin dispenser at Uphill toilets and one out of the three cubicles at Grove Park toilets was open.

There was continuing, very concerning anti-social behaviour taking place at the Cemetery which was actively being tackled via a multi-agency approach including the Police.

Reece reported that the anti-social behaviour (ASB) at the Cemetery was a growing and concerning problem. ASB problems previously experienced at Alexandra Parade had unfortunately been relocated to the Cemetery. PSPO's were being enforced to try and target the problem.

The Assistant Town Clerk reported the effectiveness of having this communication link with

Reece and the wider community response team and explained that the grounds team would really struggle without it. There needed to be a consistent presence in the cemetery to try and deter the ASB.

Members commented on the recruitment issues and explained that this was a national problem as a result of Brexit.

The Assistant Town Clerk informed that the redeployment of staff from other departments was being considered to help with staff shortages.

A member informed of ASB problems reported to her by a resident still being experienced at Worle church yard.

Reece urged members to encourage residents to report through 111 so that resources could be allocated effectively.

A member suggested contacting agencies like Addaction/Here for you now to help tackle ASB and urged staff not to approach anybody displaying ASB and put their selves at risk. The Assistant Town Clerk clarified that staff had been instructed not to approach anyone and informed that the toilets in the Cemetery had been closed after a police incident and were only opened for funeral services.

Reece reported that there would be some enforcement action taken with known individuals causing the ASB.

A member suggested the use of the mobile CCTV units the council had funded to try and tackle the problems. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this could be an option, however a case for the use of the camera would need to be established and electricity and internet connection ability needed to be considered. The grounds team were in communication with the occupier of the bottom lodge of the Cemetery to install CCTV cameras on the bottom gates.

Reece reported that he and his team had close links with the CCTV department and would work with them to obtain the consents required and incurred costs.

The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the steering group included multi agencies like Here for you now/Addaction and so they would be aware of the anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Members were concerned to hear of the ASB problems and therefore it was

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Fox

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Carpenter

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. That the new Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to the next Town Council Meeting scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> September to hear the of the extreme problems with anti-social behaviour being experienced in the Cemetery.
2. That the report of the Assistant Town Clerk – Public Services be noted.

	<i>Reece left the meeting at 7.28 pm.</i>
<b>75</b>	<p><b>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Community Service Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>In response to a member, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that grant applications would be considered at the next meeting scheduled for 13<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p>It was noted that the minutes had some errors and highlighted sections which seemed to be a draft copy. The final version was available to members and would be uploaded to the council's website as approved.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Sarah Codling  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Fox</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
<b>76</b>	<p><b>References from other Committees</b></p> <p><b>.1 Greenery in the Town Centre</b></p> <p>The minute extract of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee (HAC) had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Chairman of the HAC Committee agreed the perusal of more planting but noted that there would be costs implications.</p> <p>It was noted that NSC had withdrawn funding for planting over the years and that the Town Council should work with them to achieve.</p> <p>The Grounds Coordinator reported that £2,000 funding had been secured from NSC for WIB/Love the Outdoors to plant up the town centre and other areas of the town. The WIB volunteer base was expanding and bedding plants for Autumn and winter had been ordered.</p> <p>The Town Council through Weston-in-Bloom (WIB) were great contributors to the towns planting and their plans had been effected over the past year due to Covid 19. As a result of the expansion in volunteer base and restrictions lifting, WIB could begin to plan for the future.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The update was duly noted by the committee.</p>
<b>77</b>	<p><b>Appointment of a Consultant to review the Public Toilets</b></p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk and feasibility study had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had interviewed a consultant who had extensive knowledge of Weston super Mare and experience in producing reports of varying types</p>

for town and parish councils, as he was contracted to the Local Council Consultancy with the SLCC.

A proposal for works was attached for members' acknowledgement. The consultant would be coming down to work with the Deputy Town Clerk and relevant staff in order to understand the history of Grove Park toilets and collect data available to enable his research to commence. In addition, time was suggested to be spent with the Assistant Town Clerk and partnering organisations (PCSO, Community Response Officers) and to attend if possible a future toilet working group to coincide with his visit to allow members input.

The feasibility study would aim to provide all potential options for the council to consider, but it should be noted that some of the suggestions brought back may need approval and involvement from other parties (i.e. NSC if a suggestion for an alternative location was suggested as example).

The initial meeting of the toilet working group took place on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

A member welcomed the inclusion of a multi-agency approach and stressed the importance of considering the impacts on the local community, especially the elderly, vulnerable and tourism. A meeting with the toilet working group was necessary.

The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to take the points raised on board and explained that it had not been any easy task to appoint a consultant for the project. All findings would be reported back through the Community Services Committee and a date for the consultants next visit would be reported to members.

A member who wished to attend the toilet working group but was not aware of the date, stressed the need for the council to provide a reliable functioning toilet facility or not at all as this did not service the needs of the town's elderly and vulnerable residents.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the report would be an independent feasibility study and that it was important to note that the council only had jurisdiction over the footprint of the toilet block. The council was handing over all its information in order for the consultant to come back with various options of which would come back through Town Council, it would also include options that may require other parties involvement i.e. NSC.

A member highlighted that Weston would be in competition with other seaside towns.

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. To note the appointment of Stephen Butt, Consultant, to undertake a Feasibility Study on Grove Park Toilets and details of proposal provided.
2. That the report findings/options be reported to the next Town Council meeting for consideration.

**78 Service Area Reports:**

**.1 Youth Services**

The report of the Operations Manager – YMCA had been previously circulated.

Ali reported that the Blakehay had loaned some of its furniture which was looking great and very much appreciated. The YMCA was ready to open up with a coffee morning on 23<sup>rd</sup>

	<p>July. There had been a problem with the drains which needed to be signed off before opening.</p> <p>In response to a member, Ali advised the Youth Services team would be keen in helping with the ASB problems within the Cemetery as some of the young people would be known to them.</p> <p>Ali reported that there was still no designated place for youth services in Uphill to meet and that once restrictions were lifted, the team would actively pursue.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That the report of the Operations Manager - YMCA be noted.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Ali for her report and attendance at the meeting.</p> <p><i>Ali left the meeting at 8.02 pm.</i></p> <p><b>.2 Community Events</b></p> <p>The Grounds Coordinator was not able to be present at the meeting due to technical problems and would provide all member with an update via email.</p> <p><b>.3 Weston in Bloom – Love the Outdoors</b></p> <p>The Grounds Coordinator was not able to be present at the meeting due to technical problems and would provide all member with an update via email.</p>
<p><b>79</b></p>	<p><b>Request for Street Name, Planning Applications: 13/P/1909/F and 20/P/0201/MMA Land to the Rear of 44-46 Upper Bristol Road, Weston-super-Mare</b></p> <p>Correspondence from NSC Street Naming department, suggesting proposed street names had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Developer had suggested the following street names:</p> <p>Barton Close, Barton Grove, Barley End or Barley Grove</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That Barton Close be approved for Planning Applications: 13/P/1909/F and 20/P/0201/MMA Land to the Rear of 44-46 Upper Bristol Road, Weston-super-Mare.</p>
<p><b>80</b></p>	<p><b>Community Resilience Update</b></p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk verbally reported that the Community Resilience team were going from strength to strength. The Music Declares Emergency event which had just taken place was a really positive event. The Community Fridge Project was to get back on track now that restrictions were being lifted and now that confirmation of a unit had been received. Food Clubs set up and community engagement works were operating well with a presence in both Weston South Ward and Worle with a meeting scheduled for 2 weeks' time. Grants for community groups were being actively sought and finally, the Anti-</p>

Racism Group were meeting on the last Tuesday of every month and had had some very positive meetings. It was agreed that each meeting would have a theme and the next meeting would feature a speaker from the NHS.

A member reported that she had attended the Music Declares Emergency event and felt it was a great success and thanked all who were involved.

**RECOMMENDED:** Members noted the verbal update.

#### **.1 Music Declares Emergency event happening in Grove Park**

The briefing report of the Communications Officer had been previously circulated.

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

#### **81 Street Art Festival 2021 Update:**

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced Tom Newman from Culture Weston to verbally update the meeting.

Tom reported that the first live event had taken place at the Quarry the previous weekend which was very successful and well attended. There were also more regular events scheduled where tables and tickets could be booked in advance.

Unfortunately, an impromptu news article about the Street Art Festival had been released and details of the event were too premature to be advertised.

Culture Weston and Upfest were currently working to finalise locations for the street art trail.

Current locations include: Premier Inn – TBC, Regents Jewellers – confirmed, Sultan's, Kebab House – confirmed, Loves Cafe – confirmed, Brunello Lounge – confirmed, WsM station - as digitally printed panels and Apple Taxis – TBC.

Given the scale and cost involved of the Premier Inn should it be secured the number of murals overall may have to be reduced from 10 to 7/8. There were a number of backup locations also being worked on should the location not be secured.

A list of shortlist of artists had been agreed by the decision panel and could be circulated to members. It was noted that the list wasn't yet confirmed as it would be dependent on artist availability, and matching of artists to the various locations and therefore still subject to change.

Thanks to the commitment of £20k by Weston Town Council towards the mural trail, Culture Weston had been able to work with local artists Shruti Ashish and Lin Toulcher to secure a further £15k from Arts Council England towards community engagement activities around the new trail, including workshops in schools and a Sprayjam event for local artists to take place on the same weekend in Weston as Whirligig Festival, to create a critical mass of activity to drive local attendance but also promote Weston as a high quality cultural destination to audiences in the West of England and beyond.

Members that had attended the recent event at the Quarry were impressed with the use of the marquee and Tom advised that there was various equipment at the site which were assets intended for community use.

The timescale for the starting of the trail was estimated at approximately 6-8 weeks' time as it was to be tagged onto an event running in Bedminster '75 days', which had been delayed.

Tom confirmed that he would work closely with the Council's communications officer on the publicising of the event.

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

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.26 pm.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....

**Chairman of the Community Services Committee**

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING WORKING PARTY  
HELD ON ZOOM  
WEDNESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> JUNE 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.02 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.47 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Jan Holloway (Chairman), Dot Agassiz, Ray Armstrong, Gill Bute, Alan Peak and Tim Taylor.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Emma Williams (Committee Officer) and Suzy Birdseye (public)

The Chairman invited the public attendee to address the Working Party; they gratefully declined, wishing only to observe the meeting and its processes.

<b>37.</b>	<b>Election of Working Party Chairman</b>  Nominations were invited for the position of Chairman.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> , and accordingly it was:  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Jan Holloway be elected Chairman of the Planning Working Party for the year 2021/22.
<b>38.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  There were no absences or substitutions received.
<b>39.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest received.
<b>40.</b>	<b>Election of Working Party Vice Chairman</b>  The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice Chairman.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> , and accordingly it was:  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Alan Peak be elected Vice Chairman of the Planning Working Party for the year 2021/22.

<p>41.</p>	<p><b>To agree the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021</b></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Dot Agassiz</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>, and accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<p>42.</p>	<p><b>Matters for Consideration</b></p> <p><b>42a) Street Trading Applications</b></p> <p>The Working Party noted that there were no street trading applications for consideration.</p> <p><b>42b) Disabled Parking Bay Applications</b></p> <p>The Working Party noted that there were no disabled bay applications for consideration.</p> <p><b>42c) North Somerset Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document Consultation</b></p> <p>Details of the consultation had been previously circulated to all Elected Members prior to the agenda send out.</p> <p>The Chairman enquired as to whether members had received and read the North Somerset Council Parking Standards Consultation document; some had not yet had the opportunity. Debate ensued, some members showed an interest in responding to the document as a Working Party, rather than as individuals.</p> <p><b>42d) To receive suggestions from Councillors Taylor and Aggasiz on Planning Policy changes</b></p> <p>A discussion document suggesting planning policy changes and expansion of committee remit to encompass improving the appeal of the built environment was circulated to members of the committee prior to the meeting by Cllrs Taylor and Aggasiz.</p> <p>The Chairman reminded members of commitments stated in the new Town Council Strategy pertaining to planning; the existing four approved planning policy statements which provided very wide scope to consider local opinion, unsuitable dwellings, opposition to drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres and other inappropriate development. It was also noted that the current Terms of Reference for the committee contained a key remit which was to respond to planning applications as a statutory consultee.</p> <p>Debate ensued, with members referring to the highly regulated planning framework, National Planning Standards, the Local Plan and North Somerset scrutiny which did not necessarily cover newer environmental aspirations. Whilst there was a need to</p>

encourage North Somerset Council to preserve the historic architectural heritage of Weston-super-Mare alongside that of other planning stakeholders e.g. the Civic Society the Town Council were not the decision making authority. The Chairman reminded of NSC's remit as the local authority who held the final decision making capacity and employed a large team of qualified planning officers.

The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that the remit of our Planning Cttee/Working Party as set out in Terms of Reference was predominantly about responding to large levels of planning applications, which was our duty as a statutory consultee. This took a considerable amount of agenda time making it difficult to introduce increased remit without considerably prolonging meeting times and workloads if the agenda became loaded with broader remit and decision making items e.g. consultations.

It was noted also that environmental remit was discussed at the Climate Change Working Party so there was high potential for cross over especially given that they currently operated without Terms of Reference, ergo could more easily increase its purview. Councillor Taylor agreed to make contact with the Chairman regarding this matter and the planning proposals.

Other suggestions were made to invite Planning Officers from NSC to attend some Planning Working Party meetings to share insight into their decision making processes and discuss specific applications as required which Members were very responsive to.

Councillors Taylor and Agassiz were keen to articulate that their suggestions to alter the Planning Cttee/Working Party's remit were not a reflection on its current or previous operations, but to 'add value by focussing on the promotion of good development and planning, rather than predominately opposing bad planning. Reference was made that Civic Society did not feel Weston's historic environment was protected like it was in neighbouring Clevedon.

Another member stated that the Town Council Strategy had been designed to evolve with the changing needs of the organisation and the electorate over its ten-year life, therefore incremental changes could be enabled if necessary.

**42c) RESOLVED:** That the Chairman would coordinate formulation of a whole Working Party response to the consultation document, with feedback submitted by 21<sup>st</sup> June and members meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June ahead of the document deadline of 29<sup>th</sup> June 21.

**42d) RESOLVED:** That Planning Officers from North Somerset Council be invited to attend future meetings to share insight into planning decisions and current preservation policies.

**42d) RESOLVED** Councillor Taylor would contact the Climate Change Working Party to discuss proposals in the discussion document.

**43. Matters for Noting**

**43a) Town and Parish Workshop – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021** - to receive updates from Members in attendance and presentation notes previously circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Agassiz had attended the Town and Parish Workshop and reported her views as follows:-

It had been of concern that there was no mention of loss if Green Belt land in Weston-super-Mare who would take the largest share of new housing growth for the area. No plans for how to achieve carbon neutral policy. There were insufficient staff to manage enforcement issues. It was also reported that Weston-super-Mare was under-represented as a very large parish, to only be permitted one representative at the workshop.

The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that further places has been requested for this reason but due to virtual meeting capacity it had not been permitted.

**43b) Enforcement Notices - January 2021-May 2021** (emailed to all Councillors)

**43a) RESOLVED:** That the verbal report was noted

**43b) RESOLVED:** That the notices were noted.

**44. Planning Applications and other Planning Matters submitted to the Town Council for consideration.**

The Committee considered applications in respect of the weekly lists provided by North Somerset Council dated: 19-25 April, 26 April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 3-9 May, 10-16 May and 17-23 May.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council’s comments on planning applications be directly uploaded to ‘Uniform’ website as part of the system of work requirement by North Somerset Council. This information would also be reflected on the Town Council’s website with hyperlink back to North Somerset Council’s website for referral purposes.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.47 pm

Signed.....Dated .....

Chairman of the Planning Committee

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING WORKING PARTY  
HELD ON ZOOM  
WEDNESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.10 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Jan Holloway (Chairman), Dot Agassiz, Ray Armstrong, Gill Bute, Alan Peak and Tim Taylor.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Julie Smith (Admin Officer).

The Vice-Chairman chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chairman.

<b>67.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  There were no absences or substitutions received.
<b>68.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest received.
<b>69.</b>	<b>To agree the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021</b>  The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor  The Assistant Town Clerk referred to minute number 42 in respect of actions relating to recently proposed changes to Planning Committee Terms of Reference and advised that a request would be made to North Somerset Council's Planning Directorate for Planning Officer attendance at a future meeting of the Committee to in relation to sustainability and climate change matters. Additionally, Weston Town Council representatives had been invited by North Somerset Council to attend a liaison meeting on 6 <sup>th</sup> July which the Chairman of Planning would be attending.  Cllr Taylor confirmed that he would make contact with the new Climate Change Working Party Chairman to progress sustainable development and climate change proposals previously submitted.  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> , and accordingly it was:  <b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

<p><b>70.</b></p>	<p><b>Matters for Consideration</b></p> <p><b>a) Street Trading Applications</b></p> <p>The Committee noted that there were no street trading applications for consideration.</p> <p><b>b) Disabled Parking Bay Applications</b></p> <p>Members noted that an application for 5 Wooler Road had been sent to Ward Cllrs for feedback this week.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there were no further disabled bay applications for consideration.</p>
<p><b>71.</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Applications and other Planning Matters submitted to the Town Council for consideration.</b></p> <p>The Committee considered applications in respect of the weekly lists provided by North Somerset Council dated: 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May, 31<sup>st</sup> May – 6<sup>th</sup> June, 7<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June, 14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Town Council’s comments on planning applications be directly uploaded to ‘Uniform’ website as part of the system of work requirement by North Somerset Council. This information would also be reflected on the Town Council’s website with hyperlink back to North Somerset Council’s website for referral purposes.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm</p> <p>Signed.....Dated .....</p> <p>Chairman of the Planning Committee</p>

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE PLANNING WORKING PARTY  
HELD ON ZOOM  
WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> JULY 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.10 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Jan Holloway (Chairman), Ray Armstrong, Gill Bute, Alan Peak and Tim Taylor.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllr Peter Crew, Cllr John Crockford-Hawley, Tania Middlemiss (Assistant Town Clerk), Julie Smith (Admin Officer).

The Chairman thanked Councillors Crockford-Hawley and Crew for their attendance following the Planning Committee request to North Somerset Council for Planning Officer attendance for guidance on matters of planning policy.

<b>91.</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  Apologies were received from Cllr Dot Agassiz.
<b>92.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest received.
<b>93.</b>	<b>To agree the accuracy of the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>  The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor  <b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.
<b>94.</b>	<b>Matters for Consideration</b>  <b>a) Street Trading Applications</b>  The Committee noted that there were no street trading applications for consideration.  <b>b) Disabled Parking Bay Applications</b>  5 Saxby Drive - No Objection  <b>RESOLVED:</b> To inform North Somerset Council's Streets and Open Spaces department of the Town Council's response.

**95. Planning Applications and other Planning Matters submitted to the Town Council for consideration.**

A Member advised that relevant planning grounds were legitimate reasons for objecting which North Somerset Officers would determine on but gut feelings could be expressed at parish and town council level.

A Member voiced that his criteria for bringing applications to the attention of committee was if there were other objections showing online.

The Chairman referred to the weekly email communications to all Councillors which required that Ward Members inform the Chairman or Vice Chairman which applications they required 'calling in' before the meeting. This system ensured that significant applications were given consideration and negated to need to discuss every individual application at the meeting given that many were prior approval applications and North Somerset were the decision making authority.

The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that the categories for responding under to North Somerset were under three broad areas:

Support/ Neutral/Object with the latter needing to be supported ideally by material planning considerations where possible.

The Chairman advised of an email communications that due to essential maintenance on the online planning portal from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 it would not be possible to view the planning applications on North Somerset Council's website on the night of the next meeting 25<sup>th</sup> August.

**RESOLVED:** The Chairman would liaise with officers on whether to bring forward or defer the next meeting by one week.

The Committee considered applications in respect of the weekly lists provided by North Somerset Council dated: 21<sup>st</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June, 28<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July, 5<sup>th</sup> July – 11<sup>th</sup> July, 12<sup>th</sup> July – 18<sup>th</sup> July.

*The Assistant Town Clerk left the meeting at 8 pm.*

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council's comments on planning applications be directly uploaded to 'Uniform' website as part of the system of work requirement by North Somerset Council. This information would also be reflected on the Town Council's website with hyperlink back to North Somerset Council's website for referral purposes.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10 pm

Signed.....Dated .....

Chairman of the Planning Committee

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT THE MUSEUM ON  
MONDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7:00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.35 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alan Peak (Chairman), Mark Canniford, Roger Bailey (S), Gillian Carpenter (S), Dave Dash, Peter Fox, Robert Payne, Ian Porter and Tim Taylor.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk - Public Services) and Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer/Officer Manager).

**52 Election of Chairman**

The Deputy Town Clerk invited nominations for the position of Chairman.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Tim Taylor

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Dave Dash

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Alan Peak be elected Chairman of the Policy & Finance Working Party for the year 2021-22.

Councillor Alan Peak took his place as Chairman of the meeting.

**53 To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies were received from Councillors Helen Thornton who was substituted by Councillor Gillian Carpenter, Councillor Sarah Codling who was substituted by Councillor Roger Bailey and Councillor Lisa Pilgrim with no substitution.

**54 Election of Vice Chairman**

The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ian Porter

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Mark Canniford be elected Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Finance Working Party for the year 2021-22.

**55 To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**56 To approve the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that the date of the previous minutes should be corrected to the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Tim Taylor

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

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

**RESOLVED:** That with the above amendment the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**57 The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (unapproved)**

The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 (unapproved) be noted.

**58 Monthly Financial Reports: March & April 2021**

**a) For Approval**

Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ian Porter

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Pete Fox

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

**58.1 RESOLVED:** That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for March & April 2021 be approved.

**b) For Noting**

- i. Bank Reconciliations
- ii. Budgetary Control Report
- iii. Bank Interest Report
- iv. Schedule of Receipted Income
- v. Overspend Month end report
- vi. Bad debt report

It was clarified that Health & Safety across all cost centres was over budget subject to the pandemic and compliance requirements.

It was informed that the over budgeted figure for Uphill Play Area was the cost of the equipment and fence.

It was explained that the figure for the toilets was a holding budget and a rounding issue subject to call outs. The Deputy Town Clerk would be happy explain this to any members outside of the meeting if requested.

Since the writing of the bad debt report some of the debt had been cleared or written off and the debt was reducing. An updated report reflecting the debt to date could be emailed to members on request.

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

**58.2 RESOLVED:** That reports 5b i – vi be noted.

**59 To receive the Final Interim Audit Report for the year 2020-21**

The Audit report had been previously circulated.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that it was an overall acceptable audit with a few areas of improvement to be made. As a result of remote working and staff shortages, some accountancy housekeeping errors had been made. The team was now actively working on a time table from the office and were back on track with processes.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Final Interim Audit Report for the year 2020-21 be received.

**60 Year End Accounts for the year ending 31/03/21**

The yearend accounts had been previously circulated.

As part of the Audit requirement members were requested to

- a) Consider the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by members as a whole;
- b) Approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and Sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)
- c) Sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)
- d) Receive and Note the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the (AGAR – Annual return)

A vote was then taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was

**60.1 RESOLVED:** To approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by members as a whole;

**60.2 RESOLVED:** To approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and Sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)

**60.3 RESOLVED:** That the Chairman sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)

**60.4 RESOLVED:** To receive and note the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the (AGAR – Annual return)

**61 To receive the Planned Maintenance proposals for 2021 / 2022 and relevant update**

- a) To approve the PPM schedule for the 2021 / 2022 to enable works to occur within the year as per the report

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the PPM schedule was a 60-year schedule, broken down into 5year programmes of which 2020/21 was the last year within the current 5year programme.

It was reported that there were substantial works on the cemetery wall and trees to be done.

It was noted that there would be a 12 week delay in the alterations to Grove House due to the quotes for works exceeding the budget and having to go back out on contact finder.

The vandalism to Grove Park toilets had been partly addressed by the contract cleaners and Deputy Town Clerk was considering whether or not an insurance claim was needed.

The Museum roof had been completed and the leak fixed which was funded from the capital works budget from the previous year.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Council tendered for the PPM every 5years.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Ian Porter

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

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

**61.1 RESOLVED:**

1. To note the reported works completion for the year 2020/2021 (section 2.0, page 4).
2. To approve the recommendations set out in (section 3.0, page 6/7) for the programme of works for the year 2021/2022.
  - b) To consider and approve the recommendation for essential works at Milton Road Cemetery – quotation report and recommendation previously circulated.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the funds for the Quarry were separate to the PPM schedule and would come back to committee additionally. At December 2020 the works were reported at £120,000, which will have increased and would be funded from CIL monies and the capital works budget.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Peter Fox

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

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

**61.2 RESOLVED:**

1. To receive and note the contents of the tender report from SJ Surveyors.
2. To approve the recommendation to award contract to S Babbage at a value of £32,550.

**62 To review the updated Procurement Guide**

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated which explained that from further work carried out by the climate change working party, a review of the procurement guide was required in order to accommodate a social value policy.

It was advised that a social value policy would encourage the council to consider more than cost when procuring goods and services, as well as other considerations such as: real living wage, community engagement, community partners and stakeholders and the community.

The existing procurement guide had been updated and previously circulated for members to consider. Changes in relation to social value were highlighted in red for ease of finding.

Discussion ensued on the how the social value criteria would be weighted, as this would differ in perspective. Further investigation was needed around a scoring matrix.

The Deputy Town Clerk agreed that the criteria were very subjective and the weighting of design/cost/social value needed to be considered.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Mark Canniford

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ian Porter

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

**RESOLVED:** That the updated Procurement Guide be referred to the Expenditure and Governance Working Party for further investigation around criteria and a scoring matrix.

### **63 Notes for Tree Charter motion**

The reference from the Climate Change Working Party and report of the Deputy Town Clerk and Tree Officer had been previously circulated.

The Assistant Town Clerk - Public Services recommended the adoption of the Tree Charter as this would improve the Town Council's relationship with North Somerset Council and would benefit the Town Council long term. She had met with Officers at North Somerset Council who were very encouraging of the adoption of a tree charter.

It was advised that the Town Council had its own procedures in place for diseased or dangerous trees.

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

**RESOLVED:** To approve the adoption of the Woodland Trust Tree Charter.

### **64 Insurance**

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk updating on policy options for members' consideration within the current fixed term agreement had been previously circulated. The current insurance agreement was a 3 year fixed agreement with the option to extend for a further 2 years (1 year remaining).

Officers met with the insurers annually to review the policy detail to ensure that the insurance in place was adequate for the needs of the council, prior to the policy annual date of 1<sup>st</sup> July. The current insurers have provided the council with an option within the

current policy to change insurer - information had been previously circulated for member's consideration.

The current insurers, during their time insuring town and parish councils over the last 2 years, have identified that their core business was outside of the sector and as such were willing to allow transfer (at the wish of clients) to another more bespoke insurer. However, if councils wished to remain with them, no changes to the original agreement would be made and it would be fully honoured.

The benefits of changing insurers were outlined within the report. It was highlighted that changing to a Mutual Insurer, the council would not pay Insurance premium tax and the non-payment would enable a small reduction in the current policy (up to 5% saving).

Other considerations were Building revaluations, April 2022 and options for additional cover, Terrorism.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the council had procedures in place for Terrorism within its Health & Safety policies.

It was clarified that the council could move insurers without undertaking procurement and that the policies were like for like, subject to the 5% tax saving.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Mark Canniford

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Pete Fox

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

**RESOLVED:**

**64.1** To approve the change of insurer to MTT from RSA, with WPS remaining the Council's insurance broker, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

**64.2** That the 5% tax saving fund the re-evaluation of the insurance policy in 2years time, to include Building revaluation costs in the budget for 2022 / 2023.

**65 Renewal of NALC ALCA Membership**

The report of the Town Clerk requesting members' instructions on whether to renew the Town Council's membership had been previously circulated with the agenda.

Members felt that the council was adequately advised with the expertise of the senior management team and therefore should not renew the membership.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Pete Fox

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ian Porter

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

**RESOLVED:** Not to renew the **NALC ALCA** Membership.

*It was **resolved** under the Public Bodies (Admissions of Meeting) Act 1960 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for reasons of confidential nature of the following business.*

**66 Town Quarry Lease**

The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

On behalf of the Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk summarised that there were two areas of concern that had arisen and it was the recommendation of the Town Clerk to defer completion of the head lease of the Quarry for up to three months.

Discussion ensued and officers clarified queries from members.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Pete Fox  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ian Porter

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

**RESOLVED:**

- 66.1** To defer the completion of the head lease of the Quarry from North Somerset Council for up to three months.
- 66.2** That authority be given for necessary works to buildings 1 and 6 to enable the safety and financial issues to be resolved.
- 66.3** That authority for negotiation and completion of a sub-lease of Building 7 to The Stable and with individual occupiers be agreed.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35 pm

Signed.....Dated.....  
Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee

## **WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE TOURISM AND LEISURE WORKING PARTY HELD VIA ZOOM ON TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 2.33 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 3.10 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), David Dash, Pete McAleer (S), Alan Peak, Gillian Carpenter, John Crockford-Hawley, David Hitchens and Jan Holloway,

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk and Grounds Manager), Zoe Scott (Grounds Co-ordinator) Caroline Darlington (Tourism Manager) and Emma Williams (Tourism Marketing Officer).

<b>45.</b>	<p><b>Election of Chairman</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk invited nominations for the position of Chairman for the year 2021/2022</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor David Hitchens</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Peter Crew be elected Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Working Party for the year 2021/2022.</p>
<b>46.</b>	<p><b>Apologies of Absence and Notifications of Substitutions</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ray Armstrong</p> <p>Councillor Catherine Gibbons was substituted by Councillor Pete McAleer.</p>
<b>47.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
<b>48.</b>	<p><b>Election of Vice Chairman</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice Chairman for the year 2021/2022.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor David Hitchens</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried.</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Alan Peak be elected Vice Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Working Party for the year 2021/2022.</p>

<p><b>49..</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<p><b>50.</b></p>	<p><b>Tourism Function Update</b></p> <p>The reports of the Tourism Manager and Tourism Marketing Officer had been circulated prior to the meeting and were shared on screen as a Powerpoint presentation.</p> <p><b>50.1 Spring/Summer Verbal Update</b></p> <p>The Tourism Manager reported on the recent launch of the ‘Tic Tuk’ vehicles and thanked the Working Party members that attended the event, alongside the Mayor.</p> <p>Despite previously receiving assurances from Avon and Somerset Police, the Tourism Manager reported that an application for a Peddlers License for staff manning the Tic Tuks, had been declined. This was owing to the trading being based from a vehicle and not solely on foot. A street trading license would now need to be sought in order for merchandise to be sold from the Tic Tuks, at a cost of around £3,000.</p> <p><b>50.2 Reopening VIC</b></p> <p>Seasonal staff had returned to the Visitor Information Centre on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, and had been working to prepare for a planned reopening on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021.</p> <p>Lightweight shelving and display units had been purchased for displaying merchandise, that would be suitable to relocate to a future VIC site, or the Water Park VIC, if deemed necessary going forward.</p> <p>Recruitment was underway for casual seasonal staff.</p> <p><b>50.3 Visit Weston collaboration with the Weston Place Agency</b></p> <p>The Tourism Manager described the content and purpose of Visit Weston’s involvement on the Weston Place Agency Events Project Group; meeting fortnightly over Zoom with a number of local stakeholders including NSC, Weston Artspace, the BID, The Sovereign Centre and Weston College.</p> <p>Further to these meetings, the Tourism Manager reported that she had received an invitation that day from Alex Hearn of the WPA to a meeting focussing on the ‘future of the Visit Weston website’. This had been a surprise to the Tourism Manager, as she was unaware there were any further plans to co-ordinate the WPA with the Visit Weston website, since it had been decided against in 2020.</p>

The Town Clerk suggested the Tourism Manager reported back on this discussion with Alex Hearn, at the next Tourism and Leisure Working Party meeting.

#### **50.4 Website and Social Media Updates**

The Tourism Marketing Officer discussed the statistics and data as shown in the slides; reporting on the top-performing website pages and the number of visitors to the site, along with their geographical locations.

Despite the total number of visitors being reduced during the reporting period, there was a strong growth trend throughout those dates which had continued as 2021 progressed, along with the subsequent Covid-19 'unlocking' milestones as outlined by the Government.

There had also been an introduction of a referrals add-on application called 'Link in Bio' to the Visit Weston Instagram and TikTok accounts, designed to operate as a 'work-around' to combat a lack of live URL/hyperlinks embedded in posts and captions on those platforms. This add-on acted as a broker between social media and the Visit Weston website, where pages of their choosing could be created as quick links in the page biographies, for users' ease.

It was reported that on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021, the social media followers for Visit Weston stood at 12,653 accounts across five platforms.

#### **50.5 Destination Marketing**

The Tourism Marketing Officer went on to outline the forthcoming Destination Marketing campaigns for Visit Weston. These included a half page print advertisement in Camping & Caravanning Club Magazine (July '21), which was said to have a readership of 400,000 club members. Nationwide Royal Mail distribution would provide exposure to market of dedicated holidaymakers, and capitalise on the increase in popularity and demand for self-catering holidays following the pandemic.

Also detailed was a campaign at eight of the approaching 'Hundred Tournament' cricket matches played at Warwickshire County Cricket Ground (Edgbaston) via Elonex Outdoor Advertising. All games would be televised on BBC and Sky Sports - four ladies' and four gents' matches, organisers expected a large in-ground crowd and global television audience; the LED scoreboard placement of advertising materials would be shown every 60 seconds throughout the matches.

Questions and comments were invited from members, one responding that they were impressed with the new layout and content of the Visit Weston website, despite having been previously critical of its list sorting and overall look.

**RESOLVED:** That the reports be noted

### **51. Parks and Play Areas**

#### **51.1 Renovations to Water Park and VIC Cabin**

The report of the Assistant Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.

The Assistant Town Clerk reported that the recent spell of bad weather had led to delays in the Water Park renovations, and after a busy week during the Half Term Holidays, the park was closed to complete these repairs to equipment and testing of the water system for splash toys.

The VIC cabin office had been delivered that day, with internal fit-out scheduled for week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

Fencing solutions were being considered for the rear wall to the Water Park, to better secure the area against unauthorised entry.

### **51.2 Verbal update on all Parks and Play Areas**

There were no pressing issues in relation to the remaining WTC play areas, however litter was identified as an increasing problem across all sites. Many play areas were being occupied out-of-hours by individuals leaving behind large amounts of refuse, beyond the current waste bin capacities. As a result, a meeting was being organised between the Assistant Town Clerk, Grounds Co-ordinator and Senior Groundsman to discuss potential solutions.

In relation to the acquisition of Dartmouth Close play area, the Assistant Town Clerk had received an email detailing a number of specialised repairs necessary before the lease was transferred. These were the findings of an independent inspection as part of pre-contract due diligence.

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

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 3:10 pm.

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

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

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
NOTES OF THE  
HERITAGE ARTS AND CULTURE WORKING PARTY  
HELD VIA ZOOM ON 13<sup>th</sup> MAY 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 10:03 am

**Meeting Concluded:** 11:47 am

**PRESENT:** Councillors John Crockford-Hawley (Chairman), Peter Crew, Catherine Gibbons, Jan Holloway, Pete McAleer and Marcia Pepperall; Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Molly Maher (Development Officer), Matt Hardy (Visitor Services Manager), Sally Heath (Theatre Manager), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Jasmine Ryle (Marketing and Events Co-ordinator), Cara MacMahon (NSC Heritage Action Zones Project Officer), Richard Blows (Transformation Programme Manager Corporate Services), Tom Newman (), Fiona Matthews (Culture Weston/Theatre Orchard) and Bethan Murray (South West Heritage)

**NON VOTING MEMBERS:** Councillors Dorothy Agassiz and Alan Peak

<b>20.</b>	<p><b>Election of Chairman</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk invited nominations for the position of Chairman.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Catherine Gibbons <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Jan Holloway</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor John Crockford-Hawley be elected Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee for the year 2021-22.</p> <p>Councillor John Crockford-Hawley took his place as Chairman of the meeting.</p>
<b>21.</b>	<p><b>Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk) and Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services).</p>
<b>22.</b>	<p><b>Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
<b>23.</b>	<p><b>Election of Vice- Chairman</b></p> <p>The Chairman invited nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter McAleer</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Catherine Gibbons be elected Vice-Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee for the year 2021-22.</p>

<p><b>24.</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Jan Holloway</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman</p>
<p><b>25.</b></p>	<p><b>Marketing Report</b></p> <p>The report of the Communications and Marketing Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The last two blue plaques had been ordered, with building permissions in place. The plaque for Ivy Millicent James would be put up in line with the exhibition at Weston Museum.</p> <p>Whilst a film was planned for the Christmas Lights, it was cancelled due to COVID, but in its place a film was being created to highlight the work of each of the services from April 2020 – April 2021. This would include drone footage of the Quarry.</p> <p>An event would be taking place in Ellenborough Park West in September called ‘Love the Outdoors’.</p> <p><i>Councillor Peter Crew entered the meeting</i></p> <p>The Chairman suggested that members should consider the future of the Blue Plaque programme, noting that certain buildings in Weston could be considered for plaques. The Town Clerk advised that whilst the current year’s budget was already fully committed, it could be considered in the next budget setting process.</p> <p>A request had been made to replace or reposition the plaque at Anchor head, which commemorates the first person to swim the Bristol channel.</p> <p>A member queried if there was a blue plaque walk to which the Communications Officer informed that there was an audio tour on the website.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
<p><b>26.</b></p>	<p><b>Weston Museum Management Report</b></p> <p>The report of the Visitor Services Manager had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Museum would reopen to the public on 18<sup>th</sup> May at 10am. Not much guidance had been given by the government on how to manage the reopening, with the Museum Manager working off previous guidance for the</p>

	<p>meantime. There was a brand new temporary exhibition in place called 'Wild Hares and Hummingbirds'. The new function room would also be open.</p> <p>The Chairman asked how members would be able to see the new function room. It was advised that a press release would be circulated shortly detailing the 'Know Your Place' exhibition that would take place in the function room.</p> <p>It was queried if the Museum would be using a booking system when it reopened. It was advised that the Museum would have a maximum capacity, and would use the test and trace method, with no need to book.</p> <p>A member asked if there was anything planned for the first day opening. The working party was informed that due to the uncertainty of the opening date, it was decided to have a soft reopening. This would also be useful for building volunteer confidence back up.</p> <p>Wedding requests had been received, with a few already booked and more tentative bookings. The Chairman suggested that it would be good to understand the financial reward of the wedding offer.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
<p>27.</p>	<p><b>Blakehay Report</b></p> <p>The report of the Theatre Manager had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Cultural Recovery Fund building works were due to start on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May, with the end date unknown. Outdoor events were being planned for this interim period, including two evening events on the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> June at the Quarry, branded as 'Blakehay On Tour'.</p> <p>A five-year plan had been created for the theatre, with an integrated marketing plan. The Chairman asked if the theatre were collaborating and in contact with other cultural and arts organisations such as Culture Weston. The Theatre Manager advised that events were planned in line with the North Somerset Council events schedule, to which the Communications Officer informed that the schedule was formulated through place making meetings and was comprehensive.</p> <p>The Chairman reported that he had not seen much coverage of the theatre in the Weston Mercury. The Theatre Manager advised that publicity was difficult due to there not being a clear reopening date, however they had received generous coverage over recent months. The Theatre Manager was working with UK Theatre's regarding information about returning guests</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
<p>28.</p>	<p><b>WSMTC Grant Development</b></p> <p>The Development Officer reported that she would be placing a Buy a Block order the following week, with the Museum Manager and the Communications Officer having assisted with marketing in recent weeks.</p>

	<p>It was confirmed that Arts Council England had granted the extension to spend Cultural Recovery Fund monies until 30<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p>The Development Officer and Deputy Town Clerk had met with members of South West Heritage Trust to discuss Clara's Cottage, with a funding application having been abandoned due to COVID in March 2021.</p> <p>It was agreed that given the changes over the past year, research into funding applications and the project plan would have to start from the beginning.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the verbal report be noted.</p>
<p><b>29.</b></p>	<p><b>South West Heritage Trust Update Report</b></p> <p>The report of Bethan Murray had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Chairman asked if there would be an opening event for the 'Wild Hares and Hummingbird's' exhibition. It was informed that due to COVID restrictions, an official opening had not been planned. An interview with Steven Moss had been recorded which would feature in the exhibition, with the potential to relaunch the exhibition when more of the interactive elements could be implemented.</p> <p>The Clevedon Torc would be returning to the British Museum. It was suggested that this could be an opportunity to highlight the national acclaimed artefacts that Weston Museum had been entrusted with. A member asked if any progress had been made with a replica of the Torc. The Museum Manager informed that the company that made the replicas had gone out of business. It was suggested that local jewellers and artists could be approached to commission a replica. Bethan suggested contacting the British Museum as they may be able to suggest someone.</p> <p>Bethan informed that a meeting had been requested with the Town Council to discuss future exhibition programming.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
<p><b>30.</b></p>	<p><b>Friends of Weston Museum Verbal Report</b></p> <p>There was no representation by the Friends of Weston.</p> <p><i>Councillor Marcia Pepperall entered the meeting</i></p>
<p><b>31.</b></p>	<p><b>North Somerset Council and Heritage Action Zone Report</b></p> <p>The report of the NSC Heritage Action Zone Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Cara MacMahon informed that works had been affected by COVID, particularly engagement with retailers. There was a 6-month lag due to lockdown, but things were beginning to return to normal.</p>

	<p>With the success of the virtual Heritage Open Days in 2020, a hybrid model had been planned for 2021.</p> <p>Another project funded by Historic England would be the development of article 4 directions for stone walls and fences in Weston, with legal advice being sought. Once procedures had been agreed upon, elected members would be consulted and information reported to committees.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
32.	<p><b>Culture Weston and Theatre Orchard Update Report</b></p> <p>The report of Tom Newman had been previously circulated.</p> <p>A summary of the report was delivered by Fiona Matthews and questions invited from Committee.</p> <p>Fiona Matthews informed that the first date of the Weston Presents Rooftop Series had been pushed from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> June.</p> <p>The Chairman asked how long the temporary bandstand would be located in the high street as part of the 21st Century Super Shrines project. Fiona reported that it would remain in the high street for 3 years, clarifying that it would not be a bandstand in the traditional sense, like the one in Grove Park. The Chairman asked if permissions had been received, to which Fiona confirmed that applications were in progress.</p> <p>A member brought attention to the Town Council resolution to be an anti-racist council and asked what Culture Weston was doing to engage with all parts of the community. Fiona reported that Culture Weston's advisory board was representative, and that a number of upcoming projects engaged with the BAME Community.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
33.	<p><b>Greenery in the Town Centre</b></p> <p>A member had requested the item on the agenda to discuss the lack of greenery in the Italian Gardens and High Street and to find a way to make it brighter.</p> <p>The Chairman agreed and informed that new planters had been put in place around the Town Centre with nothing in. The development at Alexandra Parade should increase the amount of greenery, with more trees being planted than the amount removed. It was also suggested that there was potential along the seafront, with areas that could be planted.</p> <p>A member reported that he had had a meeting with North Somerset Council later that afternoon to discuss the topic. It had been suggested that the planters were being planted at the end of May.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that there was dispersed responsibility with regards to greenery around the town, with the Town Council maintaining Grove Park and</p>

	<p>Clarence Park, and the Town Centre Partnership traditionally maintaining the high street. Highways, the seafront, and the Italian gardens were all North Somerset Council’s responsibility.</p> <p>Richard Blows informed that collaboration was a theme running through the Place Agency aims and that he would be happy to feed this back.</p> <p>It was suggested that it would be an opportunity to work with the community, to encourage community ownership and that different displays could be themed, for example fair trade or surfers against sewage.</p> <p>Richard Blows informed that the Clinical Commissioning Group had just secured funding over three years for green social prescribing, which could be a useful connection.</p> <p>It was then suggested that this should be referred to the Community Services Committee who dealt with Weston In Bloom. The Town Clerk suggested setting up a meeting with the appropriate officers.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED:</b> That Greenery in the Town Centre be referred to the Community Services Committee for consideration.</p>
<p><b>34.</b></p>	<p><b>Town Council Involvement in The Old Town Quarry – Verbal Update</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that progress so far had been slow. The lease from North Somerset Council was still being negotiated via solicitors on both sides. It was hoped that proceedings would be completed by the end of June. Some important issues needed to be resolved before the lease was signed.</p> <p>The Chairman was concerned that negotiations had been taking a long time and asked if they could be speeded up.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that it was necessary to take the time with negotiations in order to ensure the town council’s objectives would continue to be met and to protect its investment in the site over the long term of the lease. The Grounds Team were assisting the Civic Society with maintenance, in the meantime. The negotiations had not affected normal service, with the café reopening, artists would be allowed back in studios and events would be taking place.</p> <p>A member cautioned against rushing lease negotiations, noting how a lease agreement had backfired in the past. The Town Clerk agreed and informed it was especially important given that the lease would be for 35 years.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the report be noted.</p>
<p><b>35.</b></p>	<p>A member referred back to items 7/8/9 on the agenda, and advised that as an Executive Member for Children Services at NSC there was a need for support. A project was being implemented to bring more poetry into people’s lives, and asked if there could be some collaboration from the Town Council through the services, and the noticeboards.</p>

	<p>The Chairman suggested that the Communications Officer, Museum Manager and Blakehay Theatre Manager get in touch with Councillor Catherine Gibbons on the matter.</p>
	<p>There being no further business the meeting concluded at 11:47 am.</p> <p>Signed.....Dated.....</p> <p>Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee</p>



**REPORT TO WESTON-SUPER-MARE**

**TOWN COUNCIL**

**20<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

**20 May – 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Town Mayor**

**Councillor James Clayton**

## ENGAGEMENTS SUMMARY

Council Representative	Number of Engagements
TOWN MAYOR Cllr James Clayton	67
DEPUTY MAYOR Cllr Roger Bailey	5
TOWN COUNCIL LEADER Name	0

## TOTALS TO DATE

Council Representative	Number of Engagements
TOWN MAYOR Cllr James Clayton	67
DEPUTY MAYOR Cllr Roger Bailey	5
TOWN COUNCIL LEADER Cllr Alan Peak	
TOTAL	72

## SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:

21<sup>st</sup> July-40 Commando Reception  
22<sup>nd</sup> July-Celebration of Mayor Making  
6<sup>th</sup> August-Sea Shanty Opening  
19<sup>th</sup> August-Paul Hobbs Charity Walk  
8<sup>th</sup> August-Beach Festival  
22<sup>nd</sup> August-Volunteers Picnic  
14<sup>th</sup> September-High Sheriff Garden Party  
18<sup>th</sup> September-Wellbeing Event

## Weston-super-Mare Youth Council Meeting Notes

A.	<b>Date of meeting:</b> 13/07/21
B.	<b>Meeting Start Time:</b> 6 06pm
C.	<b>Where is the meeting:</b> Via Zoom
D.	<b>Attendance –</b> Faith <b>(FH)</b> Ryan <b>(RP)</b> Tanisha <b>(TD)</b> Alli Waller <b>(AW)</b> , Lauren Easterbrook <b>(LE)</b>
F.	<b>Welcome –</b> N/A
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence –</b> Councillor Sarah Codling <b>(CSC)</b> Councillor Ciaran Connelly <b>(CC)</b> Olivia <b>(OF)</b>
2.	<b>Meeting notes accurate</b> Yes <b>Proposed -FH</b> <b>Second - RP</b>
4	<b>Grant Application-</b> The Town Council received the application from Hayward village football club The youth council were sent the updated information that was asked for at the last meeting (cost of goal posts and the reasons for the wheeled version) This satisfied the youth council however no agreement was met as three amounts were offered – <b>TD</b> , £500 – <b>RP</b> , £750 & <b>FH</b> , £1000. As we did not have a quorum to agree an amount, <b>AW</b> said she would send an email out to all members of the youth council so a decision could be made quickly.
5.	<b>Recruitment -</b> <b>AW</b> asked the youth council how they could encourage new members to join. <b>FH</b> said it might be a good idea to approach scout groups. A poster could be made and distributed to all groups. <b>LE</b> offered to run another recruitment drive on our social media platforms. She asked if the members could write a little bit about why they joined the youth council as it would help new members to join.
6.	<b>Comms Update-</b> FH told the youth council there had been no new progress with making the poster. AW suggested that she took up <b>CSC</b> and <b>CC's offer</b> of a brainstorming session to give her support. LE offered
7.	<b>AOB-</b> A discussion on whether the Youth council should meet through the summer was had. <b>FH</b> was happy to go with the majority. <b>RP</b> said it would be better to have a break and come back in September as a few would be having holidays. <b>TD</b> , said that September would be better. It was agreed that the youth council would come back in September to meet face to face.
8.	<b>Meeting ended –</b> 6.31pm <b>Date of Next Meeting Weston Youth Café 6pm – 7pm –</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2021

# Feasibility assessment of Grove Park toilets for Weston-super-Mare Town Council

Stephen Butt  
on behalf of Local Council Consultancy  
August 2021

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LOCAL  
COUNCIL  
CONSULTANCY



A SLCC ENTERPRISE

IMPROVING  
INFORMING  
INVESTING

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# 1. Summary

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The Grove Park toilet block has been a target for vandalism and misuse for several years. It has been necessary for Weston-super-Mare Town Council to close the facility on many occasions to repair damage and, most recently, because the pumping systems have been found to be inadequate.

There is a strong lobby nationally for towns to continue to provide public toilets with high standards of cleanliness, safety and accessibility. The condition of public toilets is seen as an indicator of a town's economic and social wellbeing, a view reflected by local opinion. Covid-19 has heightened the public's awareness of hygiene and cleanliness in public places. There are calls for all councils to develop a public toilet strategy.

Local councils have no legal duty to provide public toilets but are subject to Part 3 of the Equality Act, 2010, which prohibits 'discrimination, harassment and victimisation by providers of a service to the public or a section of the public, whether for payment or not'. Government funding is available to enable councils to provide equality of access by installing Changing Places facilities.

The options for the future of the Grove Park facility range from modifying and upgrading the existing facility to improve security and accessibility, to more radical actions including its removal or relocation.

There are further options in the wider context of the revival of the High Street and the regeneration of the town as a resort. These initiatives could attract funding and grants from commerce, charitable organisations and possibly through the Government's Welcome Back Fund.

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## 2. Introduction

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### 2.1 Brief

In June 2021, Weston-super-Mare Town Council commissioned Local Council Consultancy to propose options for, and to assess the feasibility of, the future of the toilet facility located in the car park at the main entrance to Grove Park.

This report sets out the findings and recommendations arising from the research carried out on behalf of Local Council Consultancy during July and August 2021 by freelance consultant Stephen Butt.

### 2.2 Scope

At the commission stage, council officers indicated that consideration of a wide range of options would be appropriate because this would reflect the breadth of views expressed by councillors and stakeholders. Consequently no option has been excluded solely on the basis of cost or timescale.

The broader social issues contributing to the vandalism and misuse of the facility are beyond the scope of this report, but the safety and wellbeing of the public, being of paramount importance, is an important factor which has been considered in assessing the available options.

### 2.3 Methodology

The research for this report has consisted of these elements:

- Review of background information provided by Weston-super-Mare Town Council.
- Review of relevant legislation, recent Government reports and research.
- Interviews conducted on site with park users and stakeholders.
- Remote discussions with stakeholders, councillors and local government officers.

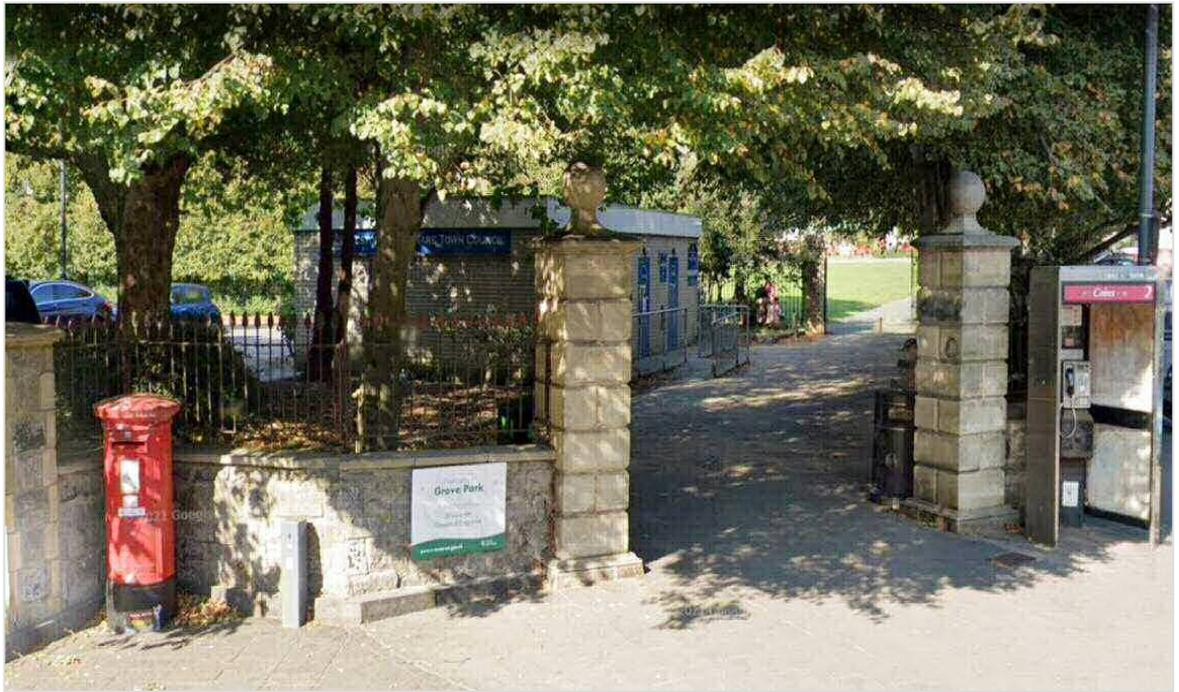
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## 3. Background

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In 2013, Weston-super-Mare Town Council adopted six public toilets which would otherwise have closed because of budget cuts by North Somerset Council. The Town Council received a grant of £97,000 from North Somerset Council towards the cost of operating the toilets in Grove Park, Clarence Park, Ashcombe Park, Locking Road Car Park, The Maltings in Worle and Links Road in Uphill.

Since adopting these facilities, Weston-super-Mare Town Council has spent over £400,000 on maintenance and repairs, and the Locking Road car park facility has been closed. The Town Council receives the income from these toilets. North Somerset Council continues to operate the toilet facilities along the promenade.



The toilet block and entrance to Grove Park from Grove Road and High Street. The building is partially hidden by trees and hedging. There have been calls for the removal of the telephone kiosk which, it is reported, has been used by drug dealers for communication.

For many years a toilet facility was provided within Grove Park, originally sited north of the War Memorial and later where the Royal British Legion Poppy Memorial has more recently been installed. The earlier building is still standing but is boarded up and roofless.

The present Grove Park toilet block is outside the main park gates at the northern end of the High Street in a Pay & Display car park managed by North Somerset Council. The car park has 80 parking bays including five for disabled drivers.

Previously, the building was supervised by attendants who were well-known to regular park users and whose diligence and commitment to their work gained positive coverage in local news media. The building is now maintained and cleaned by Healthmatic Ltd under contract. It consists of individual cubicles with coin-operated access and automatic overnight security and cleaning routines. There is an area of redundant space inside the building where the original facilities were located.

The toilet block has a long history of vandalism and misuse which has led to its closure on several occasions for major repairs. Most recently, at the time of the 2021 Spring Bank Holiday, the toilets and sinks were deliberately blocked. The building is used frequently as a shelter by homeless people and by drug users who leave materials including needles. The results of this misuse are manifest in incidents requiring the attendance of police officers and first aiders.

In the first week of August 2021, a peak time for visitors to the town, Weston-super-Mare Town Council was again forced to close the toilets. It appears that the pumps within the cleansing systems, were not capable of flushing the cubicles adequately, resulting in blockages.

At times when the facility is closed, the surrounding shrub area has been used as an alternative toilet. To prevent this, a border was cleared and replanted with holly saplings. However, this consultant found an 'unofficial' access to the park across this border where a number of the fence uprights had been removed and planting trampled.



Gap in boundary railings hidden by the toilet block, created for unauthorised entry to the park.

Clearly, the present situation is not acceptable nor sustainable. Vandalism, anti-social behaviour and misuse of the facilities are likely to continue if there is no change. Maintenance and repair costs will increase, and, in all likelihood, it will be necessary to close the facility either on a very regular basis or permanently. Relative to the extent of the Council's activities, facilities and delivery of services, over the past eight years this particular issue has occupied a disproportionate amount of officer and councillor time. A widely held view is that these toilets are becoming a blight on the relationship between the local authorities, park users and stakeholders.

The Town Council has considered various options to reduce the vandalism and misuse and to provide a well-maintained and safe toilet facility. These have included launching a Community Toilet Scheme and reintroducing toilet attendants. Councillors from the Town Council and North Somerset Council have discussed joint initiatives to maintain or upgrade all ten public toilets owned by the two authorities in the town.

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## 4. Contexts

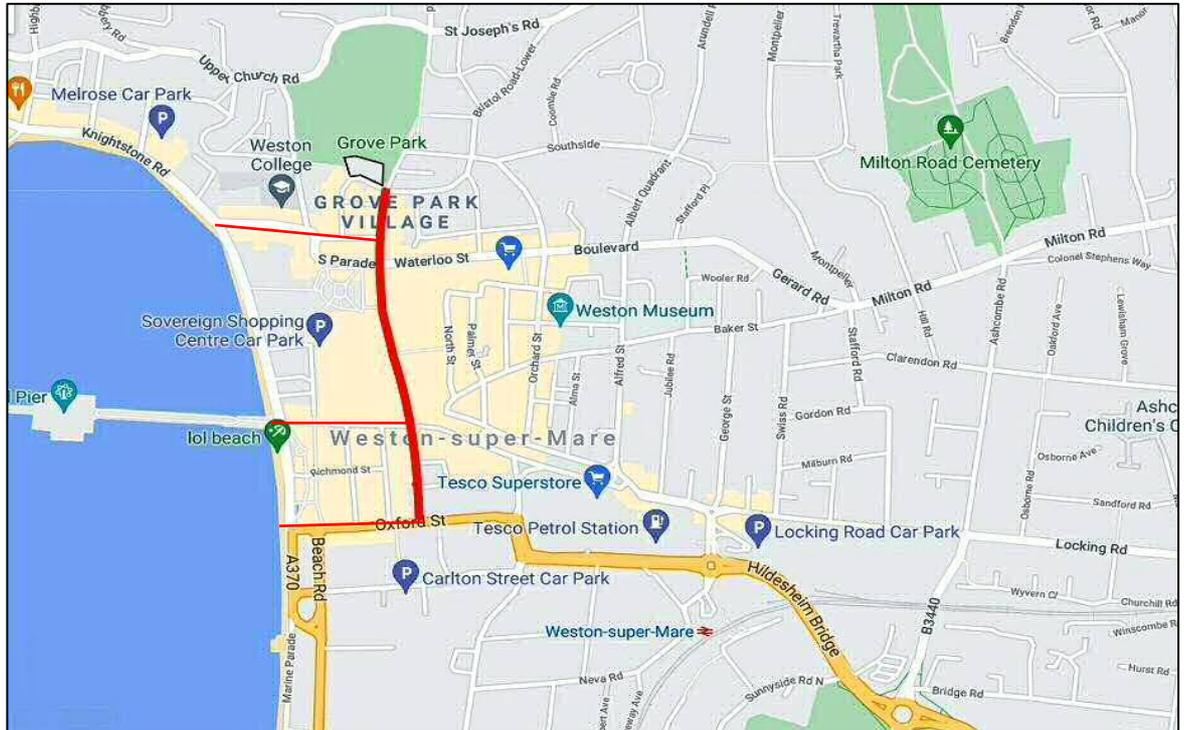
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### 4.1 Geographical context

The network of streets and lanes between Grove Park and the Waterloo Street-South Parade junction is identified as 'Grove Village' to point up its distinctive character. This is defined by the narrow streets, independent and artisan shops, cafes and bars, the two theatres, Weston College and the park.

The High Street forms a north-south spine leading south from Grove Park to the town centre. The southern section is of later construction and was originally called Union Street after the relatively large Co-op department store built in the 1960s.

South Parade (with the Town Square and Winter Gardens), Regent Street and Oxford Street provide connectivity with the seafront. Regent Street marks the southern boundary of the early town and is the modern focus for holidaymakers.



The location of High Street, Grove Park and Grove Village. East-west roads (Oxford Street, Regent Street and South Parade) connect to the sea front and promenade.

The Town Centre is the gateway to Weston for most visitors who now approach from junction 21 of the M5 junction along the A370 (Somerset Avenue and Herluin Way) crossing the railway line near the railway station over the Hildesheim Bridge. The Locking Road car park area, formerly occupied by the Locking Road Excursion railway station and goods yards, is designated for significant residential development.

## 4.2 Historical Context

The history of the town of Weston-super-Mare begins at Grove Park. In 1804 a house known as The Grove was the home of the Rev Wadham Piggott, curate of Weston, whose family had owned the manor of Weston since 1696. He developed the Grove as a seaside retreat, creating a small park with lawns, shrubbery, and a sweeping drive.

The estate was inherited through marriage by Cecil Hugh Smyth-Piggott who was forced to offer the house and park for sale for development because of a decline in his financial status. It was acquired for the town, and a Local Government Board loan of £2000 in 1890 enabled its conversion into a public park. This work was directed by the Town Surveyor, Arthur Elliston Collins who extended the terracing and landscaping and added paths, the bandstand, rockeries, ponds, a refreshment room in the former manor house, extensive floral borders, and shelters. It opened to the public on 20 June 1891.



A posed photograph c.1891 illustrating Arthur Elliston Collins' original landscaping of Grove Park using the natural contours of the hillside and a disused quarry to provide ponds, waterfalls and rockeries.

### 4.3 Architectural Context

There was considerable bomb damage in this area during the Second World War including the former Lance & Lance store on the corner of High Street and Waterloo Street and the Congregational Church at the junction of Waterloo Street and the Boulevard. The large glass-roofed concert pavilion, constructed in 1923 at the southern end of the park where the car park and toilets now stand, was also destroyed by incendiary bombs in 1941.

The congregational church (now United Reformed) was rebuilt largely using original material and is therefore relatively sympathetic with its surroundings, especially the important Weston Mercury building opposite. A Fine Fare supermarket replaced the Lance & Lance store in the 1960s to a design in keeping with the company's corporate style. When constructed, it was one of the first 'modern-builds' in the High Street and influential because of its key location. The building became an Argos store in 1988 after the demise of the supermarket chain. It closed in 2020 and is now (August 2021) empty.

Grove Park is in the Hillside area of the Great Weston Conservation Area which was adopted in December 2018. Despite considerable and sometimes unsympathetic redevelopment, the architecture of local architect Hans Price (1835-1912) still influences this area, as does the use of the distinctive local Weston limestone (quarried locally) and Bath stone dressings.

There are four listed buildings within Grove Park and a further eighteen in the vicinity of the toilet block. The nearest are the shop premises at 132-138 High Street, constructed in 1889, which are probably the work of Hans Price. Price also designed the nearby Blakehay Theatre (as the Wadham Street Baptist Church) and the School of Science & Art, now part of Leicester College



Plan of Grove Park and its geographical context. The present toilet block is shown at the eastern end of the car park accessed from Grove Road.

## 4.4 Legal Context

### Town & County Planning Act, 1990

Planning Authorities may use s106 (Planning Obligations) to require a new supermarket or similar building to include public toilets in their design.

Under Part 12 (Development by local authorities), 'the erection or construction and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration by a local authority [...] of any small ancillary building, works or equipment on land belonging to or maintained by them required for the purposes of any function exercised by them on that land otherwise than as statutory undertakers', is prescribed as permitted development and therefore does not require full planning permission. The specific small buildings include lamp standards, information kiosks, passenger shelters, public shelters and seats. Any building must not exceed four metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity.

### Public Health Act, 1936

Under s87, local councils do not have a statutory duty to provide public toilets but have the power to do so. The Act addressed the health issues of the time when many people lived in dwellings where the only toilet was in the back yard and shared with several neighbours. Clearly the intention of the Act was to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation, and this remains a relevant priority today.

### Equality Act, 2010

Local councils are subject to Part 3 of the Equality Act which prohibits discrimination, harassment and victimisation by providers of a service to the public or a section of the public, whether for payment or not. The 'provision of a service' includes the provision of a service in the exercise of a public function, and the exercise of a public function that is not the provision of a service. By definition, this includes the provision of public toilets. The following applies:

- It is unlawful to discriminate against or harass a person because of a protected characteristic or victimise someone when providing services. A person is protected both when requesting a service and during the course of being provided with a service, and when the service is terminated.
- Section 29 of the 2010 Act confirms that refusing to provide or not providing a service includes providing a person with a service of different quality, or in a different way or on less favourable terms than the service would normally be provided is unlawful.
- There is no protection for harassment related to religion or belief or sexual orientation in either the provision of services or in the exercise of public functions. Conduct that would otherwise have fallen within the definition of harassment may still amount to direct discrimination.

#### **Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill.**

This bill gained royal assent on Thursday 29 April 2021 enabling 100% business tax relief on public toilets, backdated to 2020. The relief applies to stand-alone facilities and not to those within larger buildings such as libraries, museums or community centres.

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## 5. Public opinion & perspectives

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### 5.1 General observations

#### **Usage and need**

The toilets are integral with the amenities provided by Grove Park. Many people enjoy being in Grove Park, and for different reasons. Children from the nearby flats and apartments come to play in the park. Other children and young people take part in organised games and sporting activities. Staff from care homes bring their residents to the park to stimulate their minds and to be able to socialise in a quiet, safe and undemanding environment. Those who work in nearby shops and businesses take their packed lunches to the park. Others exercise their dogs, practise yoga, or just 'chill out'. Grove Park is for families, visitors and individuals of all ages. By extension, the amenities within the park (and its curtilage) should be accessible to all park users.

#### **Alternative facilities**

Alternative public toilets are available in the Sovereign Centre. Although within walking distance, for a parent to take a toddler from the park to the Sovereign Centre, or for a carer to move someone using a wheelchair the distance would cut short their visit to the park. Some may decide not to return to the park because of the time taken, especially if they travelled to the park by car and have purchased a car park ticket for a fixed number of hours. Some interviewees have said that at times the Sovereign Centre toilets are not coping with the demand and are not always as clean as the public expects such facilities to be.

#### **Location**

Research elsewhere has shown that people who need to use a public toilet will consider their location and accessibility when planning their day. They are more likely to go to a shopping centre

or recreation area where they know there are toilets they can use. Most toilet and washroom facilities provided by commercial organisations are located within buildings. Many facilities provided by local authorities, such as the Grove Park toilets are stand-alone buildings. Close and continuous supervision and monitoring is therefore not feasible.

### The challenge for local authorities

Local authorities face the challenge of providing toilet and washroom facilities comparable in quality, cleanliness and security to those in the private sector such as motorway service stations, theme parks and national public buildings. Council tax payers judge the work of council(s) by the facilities they see and use. Modern, clean and welcoming facilities raise the profile of an area and of a community. Cleanliness and hygiene in public facilities has become consideration of greater importance to most people as an outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The creation of unitary authorities has led to the devolving of a significant amount of services to lower-tier authorities, the assumption or expectation being that town and parish councils are able to deliver the same services for less. In many cases, this assumption has proved to be correct. However, a commitment which, in the case of the toilets transferred from North Somerset Council to Weston-super-Mare Town Council, was calculated to save the higher authority in the region of £400,000, is a major financial challenge, even for a large lower-tier council.

### Design factors

An analysis of the causes of vandalism is outside the brief of this study. However, the design of public buildings can, to some extent, make them less vulnerable to attack, but the main factor is the building's location. Vandalism occurs largely when and where it cannot be observed. Managing and controlling access is the only certain means of addressing vandalism and misuse.

### Tourism

As with many towns and resorts, Weston-super-Mare has experienced an economic downturn in recent years. Several projects are in progress to encourage regeneration, and one strategy for the future is to make the town a good place in which to live and work, with tourist provision as an important but secondary provision. Clearly, tourism boosts the local economy, but the local economy should not be dependent solely on tourism. Tourists are influenced by online reviews which comment on the facilities in a town or seaside resort. Those considering a daytrip or a longer stay in Weston-super-Mare will compare the facilities described in reviews with those they find at motorway service stations, shopping malls, theme parks and airports which generally achieve a high quality of cleanliness and management.

### Equality of access

There is a view that if a toilet is large enough to accommodate a wheelchair, then it is 'accessible'. In reality, wheelchair users display the same wide range of dexterity as people who do not use wheelchairs. Some can play basketball to Olympic standards, whilst others may struggle to steer a wheelchair through a doorway. Many wheelchair users are new to the experience following recent surgery and some may only use a wheelchair on certain days when their health dictates.

The three key factors are access, space and time. Local wheelchair users report difficulties in accessing any of the facilities along the seafront because of the steepness of ramps and the width of entrances. If doors are designed to open outwards, then there needs to be adequate space for a wheelchair user to move back. Space is needed to be able to turn and move a wheelchair with ease, and without the psychological pressure of feeling that they are taking more time than other users. Both factors can be addressed by providing independent access to separate cubicle and facilities for people who use wheelchairs and others with severe disabilities.



councils to identify the potential to install new Changing Places toilets in their area. Expressions of interest must be received by 26 September 2021.

It is noted that Weston-super-Mare Town Council is working with North Somerset Council to submit an expression of interest for a Changing Places facility in the town, but not necessarily in Grove Park.

There is a growing trend towards returning to the provision of separate facilities for men and women. A government consultation on this issue closed in February 2021.

## 5.2 The views of park users

This is not a controlled survey, but merely a 'snapshot' of views and opinions canvassed during one morning in Grove Park in July 2021. The respondents were visitors to the park, local residents, tourists and stakeholders willing to voice their opinions.

Although cleaners make three visits to the facility every day, the general view is that it is 'unpleasant', 'run-down', 'too dirty to use', and lacking facilities for people with disabilities or those needing baby-changing areas. One respondent asked why there was no cubicle for RADAR key holders. Several interviewees said they would hesitate to use the toilets because of safety concerns.

There was a unanimous assertion that a toilet facility should continue to be provided. The reasons given were:

- The regular users of the park include many who live in bed-sits or are staying in bed & breakfast accommodation and who have no access to toilet or washroom facilities during the day.
- The public has an historic expectation that councils will provide such facilities, particularly in larger towns and seaside resorts.
- Single parents with young children and people with disabilities (and their carers) may need to access a toilet on a frequent basis. It would be discriminatory not to provide a facility because, in practical terms, it would render the park 'out of bounds' to them.
- No permanent facility would mean the temporary provision of toilets during public events such as those that occasionally take place around the bandstand. This would increase the cost of staging such events.
- No access to a facility in or near the park would increase the use of the bushes and woodland as an alternative toilet, with the obvious implications for public health.

## 5.3 A snapshot of the park

The author of this report visited the park on Thursday 8 July 2021 and stayed for several hours talking to users and stakeholders in all areas.

The verges, borders, flower beds and rockery areas looked tidy and well-maintained. The low-maintenance areas included well-established wild flowers. The high-maintenance flower beds looked colourful. Recent weather conditions (rain and warm temperatures) had encouraged the growth of weeds, but two members of the Friends of Grove Park were working on them. The lawns had been mowed fairly recently. A contractor was trimming the flowering shrubs and described his work as 'helping out the Friends'.

There was a noticeable lack of litter in all areas except on the bandstand and in one corner of Gill's Garden. Here, a quantity of litter, possibly drug paraphernalia, has been dumped over the wall from outside.

The café opened at 10.00am with the operator setting out benches and sun canopies. By 11.00am, several people were seated and taking refreshments. By this time, the park was busy but not bustling. Most of the benches were occupied (social distancing being evident) and there was a wide range of apparent age groups. A young woman was practising yoga beneath one of the large trees near the pond, using the fountain as a focus. No-one seemed to pay any attention to her.

Walking along the main path, several different languages could be heard, mainly eastern-European. At the top of the park above the rockery, five men were gathered, but not close together. Two of the men acknowledged me and one said, 'good morning'. Further on, a man was standing on his own at a vantage point, staring across the park. He seemed not to notice my presence and made no movement as I passed. I had the sense that these individuals were not seeking to engage but were looking for space. I did not see any evidence of drug use or alcohol consumption. Although I felt no anxiety, I can understand some park visitors being unnerved or frightened by their presence. I assume that most park users stay in the central areas.

Two Community Response Officers came into the park and walked around the perimeter. They engaged with several members of the public with a pleasant demeanour. Clearly, they were welcomed and were known to a number of the park users. They did not walk round the rockery area but kept to the main paths. Overall, there was a sense of tranquillity and of people enjoying the surroundings. Although this consultant was not constantly monitoring the toilets, he saw no-one approaching them or attempting to use them.



The entrance to the park from Grove Road and the location of the toilet block as it was in c.1910

## 5.4 The national perspective

The problems of vandalism, misuse and the rising cost of maintenance have led nationally to a reduction in the number of available public toilets. There are many organisations that are campaigning for better provision.

The British Resorts and Destinations Association (BRADA) highlights the importance of good-quality public toilets for tourists and other visitors who make a crucial contribution to local economies. The National Organisation of Residents' Association (NORA) points out the negative impact on residents where lack of good provision results in street fouling, an increasing problem because of extended licensing laws. Help the Aged and other groups stress the importance of public toilets to give older people the confidence to leave their homes and to avoid problems arising from isolation and dependency.

There is a strong lobby fighting for equal rights for disabled people, including the Changing Places Consortium, which has developed and introduced public toilets that are accessible to severely disabled people. Other campaigners work to redress the inequality of provision for women, arguing that, for a variety of reasons, there should be a 2:1 ratio in favour of women's toilets, whereas current provision is 1:1 or significantly worse. The British Toilet Association is a campaigning group with nearly two hundred organisations represented including more than sixty local authorities. It promotes the 'Loo of the Year' awards to recognise and reward excellence in public toilets.

In 2008, the Government's White Paper 'Communities in Control' supported community empowerment, giving local groups and organisations greater power to influence decisions that affect their local area. Together with the Government's Strategic Guide on the provision of public toilets, these organisations have a strong corporate voice.

The over-riding recommendation of the Communities and Local Government Report into the provision of public toilets (Twelfth Report of Session 2007-08) was that the Government should impose a duty on local authorities to develop a public toilet strategy, and this should involve consultation with the local community.

## 5.5 Community toilet schemes

Weston-super-Mare Town Council has previously considered a scheme to make available to the public, facilities within commercial business and organisations through partnerships between local authorities and business and commerce. There are many schemes in operation, some of which have been running for as long as twenty years. The nearest scheme to Weston-super-Mare is operated by Bristol City Council.

The standard arrangement is for the council to pay a business to make its toilet facilities available to the public. Toilet facilities must be maintained to a high standard of hygiene and cleanliness and must be available to all members of the public without exception or discrimination, but the owners would have the right to refuse entry if appropriate. Public Liability insurance would be essential. Participating businesses are asked to remain within the scheme for several years unless unexpected circumstances force an earlier withdrawal.

The viability of the scheme in the Grove Village area would depend on the number of businesses with suitable premises, and the willingness of their owners and/or management to take part in the scheme. Licensed premises would need to agree that their toilet facilities would be accessible to children. The potential benefits of joining such a scheme are described as:

- Increased footfall leading to increased custom and income.
- Free positive publicity online and through printed maps and posters.
- A regular payment by the local authority to cover cleaning and maintenance.
- The opportunity for an organisation or business to be seen to be community conscious.
- Potentially, more toilets are open to the public at less cost to the local authority.
- Incidents of anti-social behaviour in toilets that are part of the scheme are significantly lower than stand-alone council facilities.

Community Toilet Schemes have a number of limitations:

- The buy-in from local businesses cannot be guaranteed or even estimated in advance, and one isolated unfortunate incident could precipitate a mass withdrawal from the scheme, leaving the area with fewer or no facilities.
- It requires ongoing administration by a dedicated member of council staff but allows only limited control by the Council.
- Facilities are only open when the businesses providing them are open.
- Disabled access to some toilets may be difficult, and at an unreasonable distance from the park, particularly wheelchair users, and small children.
- Some users may be hesitant to enter a public house or bar. Evidence shows that older people do not always feel comfortable going into bars and restaurants, particularly as the day progresses and it gets towards evening. They would rather be anonymous and not be seen to be there having to go to the toilet.
- Constant monitoring of participating locations by visiting is necessary to ensure hygiene standards are being maintained.
- Signage needs to be extremely clear and visible at all times.

In the context of the Grove Park toilets, a community toilet scheme could be a supplementary facility, but not a replacement.



Two members of the Friends of Grove Park (photographed with permission)

## 5.6 Inter-council working

In general, council tax payers have little interest in or knowledge of which tier of local government is responsible for a particular service. The fact that of the ten public toilets in Weston-super-Mare, 50% are managed by Weston-super-Mare Town Council and 50% by North Somerset Council is irrelevant. Visitors and tourists have even less of an interest in such matters. They are likely to leave Weston-super-Mare with a favourable or unfavourable impression to pass on to their families and friends.

Although the Grove Park toilet facility is the responsibility of the Town Council, North Somerset Council has major interest because of its ownership of Grove Park and the car park. Also, any substantial change to the structure or appearance of the toilet block will require planning approval (within a Conservation Area) by North Somerset Council.

Currently, Healthmatic Ltd leases the five toilet facilities owned by North Somerset Council and pay rental for them. Their contract has been renewed recently. Healthmatic has a further contract with Weston-super-Mare Town Council to clean, maintain and manage the toilets they own. By having staff, vehicles and equipment in the locality, Healthmatic is able to offer a very reasonable deal.

Clearly, where two local authorities are able to work together whilst maintaining their independence in terms of contracting, council tax payers benefit. It is therefore recommended that the two tiers of local government serving Weston-super-Mare look at ways in which they can work more closely together regarding the future of the Grove Park area.

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## 6. Proposals

### 6.1 Introduction

There are four broad options to consider:

- Remove and not replace.
- Renovate or redesign.
- Remove by relocating.

The options within these strategies must be tested against the following criteria:

- Effective, as in significantly improving the situation for a significant length of time.
- Financially realistic.
- Justifiable in terms of need.
- Achievable within a reasonable timeframe.

### 6.2 Remove the toilets

The removal of the toilets would deprive the majority of people of a facility they need because of the misbehaviour of a minority. Solutions to vandalism and misuse are found for other local government facilities such as play areas, outdoor gym equipment and MUGAs. Very rarely are such facilities simply closed.

There are many reasons offered for why a toilet facility in or near Grove Park is beneficial and necessary, as set out above. In summary:

- Grove Park is a very popular open space. Its high usage, at normal times and when special events take place, means that public toilets are needed.
- Numerous social research indicators point up the importance of parks and open spaces in urban areas as important for public health, improving air quality, and encouraging a sense of community. Closing the toilets would effectively reduce the amenity provision of the park.
- A significant number of park users do not have access to toilet facilities during the day because they live in bedsits or are visitors who are using Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- The use of the park by people with disabilities and their families depends heavily on access to toilet facilities. Disabled people rely on such facilities being available.
- There is a strong lobby nationally for towns and resorts to increase their toilet provision.
- The toilets generate revenue. Although more than offset by the cost of vandalism, the facility generates more income than any of other toilets operated by the Town Council.

### 6.3 Renovate or redesign the present building

A general principle is that managing and monitoring the flow of people reduces the levels of misuse and vandalism. The visible presence of people, whether they are *bona fide* users, staff or security personnel, is also an effective deterrent. Vandalism and misuse occurs most when and where it is less likely to be witnessed. Hence there are a number of steps that can be taken to make a facility and its environment less vulnerable to vandalism and misuse.

However, the following options presuppose that the existing toilets are fit for purpose and serviceable. This appears not to be the case because recent blockages which have led to the closure of the facility have been caused by the inadequacies of the present mechanical systems. Retaining the toilets in the present location will therefore require an extensive refit in the short term. The decision that will need to be taken is whether such expenditure, which on its own will not significantly improve the facility, and which will still be susceptible to vandalism and misuse, can be justified. The following options assume the facility remains in its present location:

#### 6.3.1 Lock the car park overnight

##### Rationale

Locking the car park would secure the toilet block and reduce the likelihood of drug dealers and users accessing the park during the hours of darkness.

##### Assessment

Patrons of the theatres, bars and restaurants in the Grove Village area need late night parking. At present, parking is permitted overnight between 1800 hours and 0600 hours for a single charge of £1.50. There would be a substantial loss of income from parking fees and the possibility of increased on-street illegal parking if this facility were not available. This is not a feasible option.

#### 6.3.2 Adopt card only/contactless entry

##### Rationale

Although there are strict rules regarding the harvesting of personal data from bank and credit cards, the use of cards could add a level of security. In certain situations, such as when investigating a

crime, the police are able to make use of card details. Those who intend to misuse the facilities may hesitate if they believe their anonymity is threatened, leading to their subsequent identification. Additionally, contactless payment ,means no cash is stored in the mechanisms that provide entry to the cubicles

#### Assessment

The positive aspects of this option are that the use of contactless card readers has become more normalised during the Covid pandemic and is in accord with a general trend away from using cash for payments, and that storing cash on site increases the risk of criminal damage.

However, there remains the possibility that people without cards, possibly because of their financial status, would be excluded from using the toilets. Those intent on misusing the facilities for purposes such as dealing in drugs, could find ways to protect their identities such as top-up cards, or even stolen cards, and cards can be used as a means of trading. On balance, this option is not recommended as an effective solution to the ongoing misuse.

### 6.3.3 Increase security visits and patrols

#### Rationale

Community Response Officers pass by the toilets on their routine visits to the park and could do so more often, as well as beat officers at night.

#### Assessment

One of the important roles of Community Response Officers is to engage with the community. Their duties are wider than acting as security guards for a public toilet and it would be unreasonable and impractical to expect such a level of presence. A private security firm could be hired to make random visits at night, but it is probable that the limited effectiveness of such visits would not justify the ongoing cost. During the day, the presence of uniformed security personnel may not be seen by the public as appropriate.

### 6.3.4 Add additional CCTV coverage

#### Rationale

CCTV is regarded an effective and relatively inexpensive means of improving security because the presence of cameras is seen as a deterrent. It is an accepted aspect of modern public environments.

#### Assessment

CCTV is a deterrent in certain circumstances, but specific locations cannot be continually monitored, and experience has shown that those committing crimes or anti-social behaviour can easily disguise their identity by wearing hoods or similar clothing. CCTV can also create a false sense of security. CCTV is not recommended as a solution to the issues facing this location.

### 6.3.5 Convert to an attendant-managed facility

#### Rationale

A permanently manned facility would deter vandalism and misuse.

## Assessment

This proposal harks back to when the facility was supervised by attendants, one of whom became a local celebrity and was featured in the local news media because of her personality and commitment to her role. The current problems date back to when the toilets became unmanned.

The building would need to be extensively rebuilt if it was to revert to the previous arrangement. There are major social issues to be considered in employing people as cleaners and *de facto* security personnel, not the least being their health and safety. Providing staffing would be a high revenue cost for the Town Council.

### 6.3.6 Utilise the redundant space in the toilet block for a sales kiosk

#### Rationale

Using the redundant space at the rear of the building for an additional amenity or service would deter vandalism and misuse.

#### Assessment

To be effective, the kiosk would need to be open and trading for the same hours as the toilets (0900-1700 hrs, seven days a week). Although the concession could be offered at a peppercorn rent, or as an extension to the Grove Park café concession, it is doubtful whether it would pay its way. Keeping stock in the building overnight could increase the security risks.

## 6.4 Relocate the present facility

There are three options in this proposal which involve the present toilet block and the Grove Park café:

- Move the toilets to a stand-alone site in the park.
- Exchange the Grove Park café and the toilet block using the present locations.
- Merge the Grove Park cafe and the toilets into a new facility in the park.

### 6.4.1 Move the toilets into the park

#### Rationale

A modern accessible toilet facility in the park would enhance the park's facilities and would improve equality of access. Being located in the park, would reduce the risk of vandalism and misuse at night.

#### Assessment

The main issue is the location. For reasons already noted, the toilets need to be in an open area where they are visible. Many areas of the park are secluded by tall trees or hedges which are valuable elements of the park's historic landscaping and its present-day charm.

There have been incidents of vandalism within the park. In June 2021, pieces were chipped off the RBL Poppy Memorial, and rubbish including broken glass was dumped beside it.

### 6.4.2 Exchange the locations of the toilets and the Grove Park café

#### Rationale

Locating the toilet facility inside the park would enable closer monitoring and better security when

the park is closed overnight. The park location has utilities (water, electricity) already installed and there is space available to extend the present building's footprint. The café would add to the 'café culture' atmosphere of the Grove Village streets. A café situated within the car park at the entrance to the park would be more attractive to potential customers than a utilitarian toilet block.

#### Assessment

This is an option previously proposed by the holder of the café concession. However, comparing the attractiveness of the two sites, the car park would not seem to be an appropriate location for a café for several reasons;

- The limited space in the car park area for café furniture.
- The noise and pollution created by vehicles in the car park and passing along Grove Road and High Street.
- The dangers to small children who would need close supervision to ensure they did not leave the immediate area of the café.

Not only is the present café in an attractive and therefore more relaxed setting but it is also a safer environment.

### 6.4.3 Merge the toilets with the existing café

#### Rationale

The café is in a prominent position with easy access from all main paths. This visibility and the level of activity from passers-by and patrons would limit the potential for vandalism and misuse. The building would not be accessible when the park is closed, improving overnight security.

#### Assessment

This is the recommended option, and therefore a more detailed assessment is offered:

#### The café – background

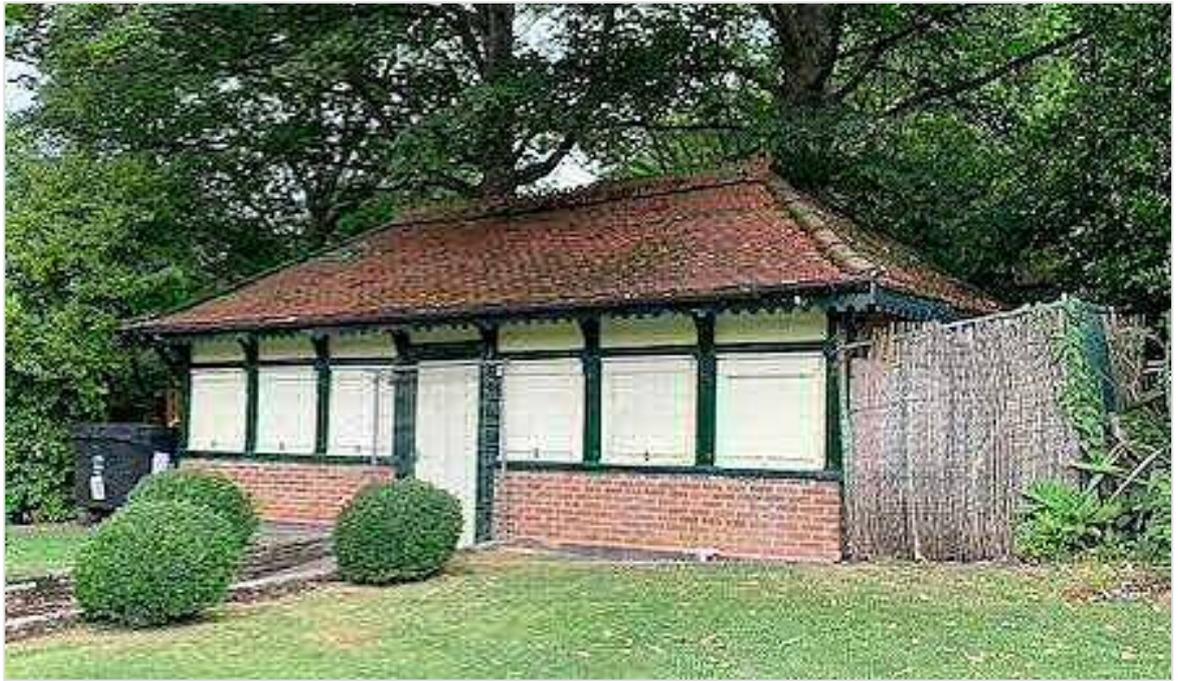
The building currently used as the café was constructed in 1890/1 as a public shelter as part of the conversion of the park from a private pleasure garden to a public amenity. It is built of brick and timber in an arts and crafts style and its location was chosen to enable park users to relax and enjoy the view across Weston bay to Brean Down. A second shelter in the north-west corner of the park served the same purpose. It is therefore an important element of the park's historic landscape, although the view is now obscured by trees and hedges. The present toilet block is purely functional, has no architectural merit and has a powerful negative visual impact on its location.

#### Conservation area and Listed Building implications

The new building should not mimic the arts & crafts design of the café, nor 'pretend' to be of antiquity. It should be a well-designed building by the side of the existing café, in keeping with the character of the park, with a shared access through a new entrance porch linking the two buildings.

Locally quarried stone from the derelict toilet block nearby (above the war memorial) could be utilised, thus maintaining the 'arts and crafts' concept. This would also remove a building which is ruinous, and potentially dangerous.

The design would enable flexible operation to allow for the toilets to be accessible when the café is closed. A separate entrance could be incorporated which could be opened when special events were



The present café

taking place. Together, the facility should enhance the area and fulfil the planning conditions relevant to its location in the Hillside Conservation Area.

#### Technical considerations

The location would enable connection to the main sewer servicing Grove House. The water supply to the toilets would be from the mains supplying the café.

#### The benefits of removing the existing toilets

Potentially, removing the toilet block would enable the car park and park entrance to be re-arranged. The priority should be to provide a safe, welcoming and enjoyable transition for pedestrians between the shops and attractions of Grove Village and the park. At present, the car park is a tarmac barrier between the two areas. It has a vital role in enabling parents and childminders to bring small children with pushchairs and buggies to the park, as well as people who use wheelchairs, but it needs redesigning.

The present layout is not by design, but the result of an incendiary attack in 1941 which created a space later used as an unofficial car park when car ownership increased in the decade after the end of the Second World War. Bringing the 'greenness' of the park closer to Grove Road and High Street would soften the present hard landscaping which is noted in the Hillside Conservation Assessment as a negative element.

#### Further considerations

The provision of canopies, awnings or a conservatory-style front extension to the café could enable it to operate during moderately inclement weather, thus improving its profitability.

It is suggested that the contract with the present concession holder is extended and amended to provide commercial stability and the requirement that the café is open for longer, possibly with an agreement as to set hours of trading. This could involve a servery hatch providing takeaway food, confectionery and drinks.

Although not directly relevant to this study, North Somerset Council could consider using that space created by the removal of the disused toilets above the war memorial for an observation

platform, constructed in wood, offering views of the park, the seafront and the town below. This vista was an important design element when the park was laid out for the public.

Near the children's play area is a level area which corresponds to the site of an early nineteenth century observatory erected by John Smyth-Piggott. This survived until fairly recently as a picturesque ruin. A raised observation tower would also indicate to those who may currently misuse the secluded rockery area at the north end of the park that their activities are visible.

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## 7. Conclusions

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There is overwhelming public support for the continued provision of a toilet facility in or near Grove Park. Reflecting national opinion and experience, such facilities provide demonstrable benefits in terms of public health, the increased mobility of many sections of the community, and the general economy of a town.

Grove Park is a great asset to Weston-super-Mare, for its residents and visitors alike. It is valued by residents as an open space rich in history, heritage and ecological diversity. For children, the rockery and winding paths provide excitement and adventure by stimulating the imagination. For older people, the park provides fresh air, the beauty of nature and a sense of peace and tranquillity. Yet it is only a few minutes' walk from the bustle of the High Street and from the amusement arcades and fast-food outlets of the sea front.

The present situation regarding the toilet block is not sustainable, but the potential cost of any remedial action other than minor modifications to the existing facility has been uppermost in the minds of everyone, without exception, who has contributed to this study. It is absolutely right that this should be the case, especially in the wake of the economic downturn caused by Covid-19. However, the time and expense of making good each incident of vandalism and attempting to limit the misuse could be better spent on providing an improved facility.

Finance is, of course, a key consideration for local councils, but it can also be a psychological barrier to finding a lasting solution to a problem. Various grants are available for *bona fide* ambitious schemes that strengthen community cohesion and work towards equality of access, and for projects that encourage young people to be aware of their natural environment.

Continuing misuse and the inadequacy of the systems that cleanse the toilets indicate that decisions on the future of the facility cannot be delayed. The present issues need addressing within a reasonable timeframe and certainly within the next twelve months. However, it is accepted that grant funding for a major replacement project could take several years to reach fruition.

The principal recommendations in this study have taken these challenges into account. Thus a facility that combines public toilets and the existing Grove Park café is proposed, to create a modern amenity which will enhance the experience of park users, enable equality of access for all, and offer the potential for future development.

STEPHEN BUTT  
AUGUST 2021

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## 8. References and acknowledgements

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### Consultees

Cllr Peter McAleer	-	Weston-super-Mare Town Council
Cllr Gill Carpenter	-	Weston-super-Mare Town Council
Cllr Mike Bell	-	Deputy Leader, North Somerset Council and Councillor, Weston-super-Mare Town Council
Paul Borthwick	-	North Somerset Disabled Access Group
Johnny Boxhall	-	Friends of Grove Park
John Horler	-	Grove Park Café concession holder
Alex Hearn	-	Deputy Director, Placemaking & Growth, North Somerset Council
John Flannigan	-	Community and Environment Service Manager, North Somerset Council
Mike McKee	-	Weston-super-Mare Civic Society

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[Against All Odds – Grimsey Review Research Paper](#), 2021.

### General reference material

Documents provided by Weston-super-Mare Council officers (minutes of meetings and reports to committees).

Newspaper reports in the Weston Mercury and the Bristol Post in print and online.

## Websites visited

[Historic England](#) (accessed 10 August 2021)

[The Garfield Weston Foundation](#) (accessed 14 July 2021).

[Friends of Grove Park](#) (accessed 14 July 2021).

[Weston-super-Mare Town Council](#) (accessed 25 July 2021)

[Superweston](#) (accessed 25 July 2021)

[Changing Places](#) (accessed 28 July 2021)

[UK Government Changing Places Fund Prospectus](#) (accessed 3 August 2021)

[UK Government Welcome Back Fund](#) (accessed 11 August 2021)

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Ref	Risk	Hazard	Control	Likelihood Impact	Score	Action to be taken	Action by person/position	Action by date	Action completed
<b><u>Council Property and Documents</u></b>									
307	<b>Physical</b>	Loss of assets	Allocate responsibility for and maintain effective security of all assets. Maintain an Asset Register Ensure that adequate and appropriate insurance cover is held.	<b>Medium</b> <b>Medium</b>	4	Recognising that staff are working from home due to Covid, need to ensure a log of files and documents are kept to ensure nothing is misplaced. Optimise the use of scanned documentation to avoid loss. All managers aware of where documentation is.	DTC	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b><u>Covid-19</u></b>									
0	<b>Financial</b>	Financial instability due to loss of income	The situation will be reviewed in the budget setting process which takes place sept/oct 2021 at which point necessary reports will be taken to council as necessary where the covid pandemic has further affected income in the year 2021/2022	<b>Medium</b> <b>Medium</b>	4	The situation will be reviewed in the budget setting process which takes place sept/oct 2021 at which point necessary reports will be taken to council as necessary where the covid pandemic has further affected income in the year 2021/2022	DTC	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>



Ref	Risk	Hazard	Control	Likelihood Impact	Score	Action to be taken	Action by person/position	Action by date	Action completed
0	<b>Physical</b>	Risk of Spreading of Infection	<p>Basic infection controls should be followed as recommended by Public Health England/Wales:            Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze.            Put used tissues in the bin straight away.</p> <p>Wash your hands with soap and water often – use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.            Regular communication/updates on hygiene practices with all            Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell by maintaining the two-metre guidance.</p> <p>Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.</p> <p>Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.</p> <p>Do not use desk or floor fans in the building, heat should be controlled by opening windows,</p> <p>All coats should be removed and placed on the hooks in the hallway prior to entering offices and clothing not worn should be kept in bags, on hooks in allocated place or lockers, no clothing or footwear to be left in offices at any time.</p>	<b>Medium</b>	6	Basic infection controls should be followed as recommended by Public Health England/Wales	DTC	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>



Ref	Risk	Hazard	Control	Likelihood Impact	Score	Action to be taken	Action by person/position	Action by date	
0	<b>Professional</b>	Lone Working in the Building	<p>Public Health England (PHE) recommended PPE available and to be worn.</p> <p>All staff have copies of the Councils Lone Working Risk Assessment, and must follow this guidance.</p> <p>Arrangements for access must be made with the Manager on site for all access to the building with at least 3 working days' notice, even if the contractor has their own key. This must include the name of the contractor working and their contact details, time that they will access the building and approximate time that they would leave and the nature of the work that they will be carrying out.</p> <p>All Contractors to have access to the Councils Lone Working Risk Assessment, and to follow this guidance.</p>	<b>Medium</b>	6	All staff have copies of the Councils Lone Working Risk Assessment, and must follow this guidance.	DTC	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Crime Prevention - CCTV**



Ref	Risk	Hazard	Control	Likelihood Impact	Score	Action to be taken	Action by person/position	Action by date	Action completed
0	<b>Physical</b>	Vandalism	<p>Ensure that under the devolved powers in service level agreement with North Somerset Council -</p> <p>Maintain efficient and effective security.</p> <p>Maintain liaison with local enforcement agencies.</p> <p>Take action as appropriate against offenders.</p>	<b>Medium</b>	4	The new agreement with NSC has robust measures in place to replace/repair camera function in the result of vandalism in a set period	DTC	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Employment of Staff</b>									
358	<b>Professional</b>	Loss of key staff	Ensure procedures for key functions are documented.	<b>Medium</b>	4	Review Staff salary banding. review flexible working arrangements and policies	Tania Middlemiss	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>
38	<b>Professional</b>	Inability to retain staff	Regular Staff Appraisals Complete exit questionnaire.	<b>Medium</b>	4	Review Staff salary banding. review flexible working arrangements and policies	Tania Middlemiss	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>
361	<b>Professional</b>	Inability to recruit	Review recruitment policy.	<b>Medium</b>	4	Review Staff salary banding. review flexible working arrangements and policies	Tania Middlemiss	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Land</b>									
413	<b>Environmental</b>	Vandalism	<p>Review security and monitor all areas on a regular basis</p> <p>Maintain liaison with law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>Define a policy for dealing with anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Instigate legal action against perpetrators where appropriate.</p>	<b>High</b>	6	Regular inspections to take place. Close liaison with Police and Community response for persistent problems. Ongoing	Fay Powell	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Public Conveniences**



Ref	Risk	Hazard	Control	Likelihood Impact	Score	Action to be taken	Action by person/position	Action by date	Action completed
294	<b>Environmental</b>	Vandalism	Maintain efficient and effective security. Maintain liaison with local enforcement agencies. Take action as appropriate against offenders.	<b>High</b> <b>Medium</b>	6	Regular inspections to take place with service partners WSS and John West. Close liaison with Police and Community response for persistent problems with known users. Ongoing	Fay Powell	01/04/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Social Media Accounts**

0	<b>Professional</b>	Being misquoted	Contact the media outlet straight away and asking them to change the article before it goes to print. Encourage media outlets to speak with Town Clerk to avoid in correct information being quoted.	<b>Medium</b> <b>Medium</b>	4	Review social media policy periodically. Ensure staff with access to social media platforms are aware of TC protocols.	Becky Walsh	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>
0	<b>Professional</b>	Admin site members posting on Town Council pages instead of their own	Restrict the number of employees who have access to social media accounts. Ensure training is in place if necessary for members of staff who are not familiar with certain social media platforms. Make sure staff members are aware of their personally accountability.	<b>Medium</b> <b>Medium</b>	4	Review social media policy periodically. Ensure staff with access to social media platforms are aware of TC protocols.	Becky Walsh	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Web Sites - All TC Websites**



Ref	Risk	Hazard	Control	Likelihood Impact	Score	Action to be taken	Action by person/position	Action by date	Action completed
0	<b>Administration/ Legal</b>	Content	<p>Ensure all necessary content is specifically approved by the council.</p> <p>Pages are static apart from the event and blog pages to avoid issues. The website designer checks that we are still within regulations.</p> <p>The full town council website content was checked by the Town Clerk.</p>	<b>Medium</b>	4	Officers to work with the parameters set by the Town Clerk in terms of media and press releases. If in doubt the Town Clerk should be consulted in the first instance. All press releases are sent to the Town Clerk for approval.	Comms officer/museum/blakehay/VIC	31/03/2022	<input type="checkbox"/>

No of issues listed: 13

**Submitted to council:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Minute reference:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by chairperson - Cllr James Clayton (Town Mayor)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by responsible Finance officer - Sarah Pearse** \_\_\_\_\_

*How to complete (individual risk section):*

1. Action to be taken - brief description of proposed action that will be taken to control this risk, including any Insurance or Health and Safety issues.
2. Action by person - the name or names of the persons taking the relevant actions.
3. Action by date - the proposed date that this action should be completed by.
4. Action completed - that the proposed action has been taken (ticked) (not recorded on LCRS .