

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD
VIA ZOOM ON
MONDAY 20TH JULY 2020**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 9.22 pm

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer/Administrator), Alex Hearn (North Somerset Council), Sophie Shepherd and Nneka Opene (Black Lives Matter).

The Town Mayor welcomed and thanked everybody for attending the first virtual full Town Council meeting.

The Town Mayor then welcomed Sophie Shepard and Nneka Opene to address the meeting in relation to 'Black Lives Matter'. Sophie began by explaining how positively Weston-super-Mare reacted to the 'Black Lives Matter' protest back in June. As a result, a Facebook page has been created and has over 1,300 followers. Sophie called upon the council for its councillors to undertake professional development in the way of equality and diversity training to show its support. It was clear that many in people in Weston would like to make a change and the council should look to recognise this.

Nneka Opene then introduced herself to the meeting and explained how the Black Lives Matter movement has been going on for some time before the death of George Floyd. Covid 19 has allowed people to have more time to think and actively join the movement. Nneka explained how being black affected so many people in terms of employment and housing and she gave personal accounts of how this had affected her and people she knew. The Facebook page was growing in its members every day and she invited engagement from the council.

The Town Mayor thanked both for addressing the council and advised that their request would be addressed through council officers.

1.	<p>To receive Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tucker who was recovery from an illness and Councillor David Hitchins.</p> <p>The Town Mayor informed that he had sent Councillor Richard Tucker a card and basket of fruit on behalf of the council.</p>
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 16TH March 2020</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Ian Porter</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor</p> <p>The Mayor’s announcements and communications were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Town Mayor and Mayoress had attended 4 engagements (2 at Grove House and 2 virtually), this was a total of 207 to date.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><i>The Mayor advised the meeting that he would take agenda item 11 next.</i></p> <p>Proposal for Weston Place Agency</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda which requested members’ instructions on the points outlined and any further issues raised in debate.</p> <p>There was clearly a lot of interest from local businesses and encouraged exploration with careful debate. His long term view was that it needed to become a Community Interest company. He had attended a few meetings as a town council representative and was happy to advise from a legal point of view but suggested that members be appointed also.</p> <p>The Town Mayor invited Alex Hearn to address the meeting.</p> <p>Alex joined North Somerset Council exactly 2 years ago and has the word ‘Placemaking’ included in his job title. Weston as the largest town in the county is a major interest for a regeneration opportunity. Work had been undertaken over the past several months where lots of public and business engagement had taken place. Several organisations are committed to making Weston ‘a better place’.</p> <p>The proposal was for a network of collaborative working using specific initiatives around events, cultural and connective activities and the online presence of the town.</p> <p>Towns are expected to do this, a ‘Towns Fund’ was granted to various towns, started the previous year. Weston was ahead of the game in this respect and can put itself in a great position.</p> <p>The views of the single hatted councillors were requested and given as follows. The history of trying to change Weston had been very hard, lacking coordination and collaboration. There was a danger of ‘reinventing the wheel’ and people being very busy with meetings but no real outcome achieved. If this was to work it</p>

needed to be very well coordinated, and clear what money was available and how it would be apportioned.

Members agreed with the comments made around this history. It was a difficult issue as the environment was changing and plans needed to be realistic.

There were two principal issues to be considered. One that assurances be given that the town council would be an important partner, as it was the only body that represented the town as a whole. Two, that the town council be recognised in terms of what it has already achieved in terms of Placemaking, eg. Visit Weston, tourism and its cultural and heritage services. The town council must make its own decisions on the use of its own resources.

The Leader of the Council endorsed the previous comments, however he had only become aware of the proposal in the first week of July. He felt the town council should have been consulted before this time.

Alex responded by agreeing that the town council had made an awful lot of place making contributions and that there was no hidden agenda. The intention was to collaborate and work together, no decisions as to any asset either physical or online had been made. He agreed that there had been regeneration attempts before and that it was time to deliver some actual changes. He accepted the feedback on how the proposal had been introduced to the town council and explained that it had been an evolving idea generated by dual-hatted Councillors Mark Canniford and Mike Bell.

Further debate ensued. One of the most major concerns raised was the selection of board members and their remit. There seemed to be no voluntary organisations on there and there was concern that the board would be meeting in secret.

It was felt that a board member should be nominated now rather than wait until May and it was proposed that Councillor Peak be appointed to the Place Agency board. A lot more information was still required and so the proposal should be deferred until the September council meeting.

Weston needed to be the place where businesses wanted to come. What had happened to Weston Enterprise zone and why did it fail, were questions to be posed to Alex to provide some clarity separate to this meeting.

One of the most positive things that has arisen from the proposal was the willingness of certain businesses and North Somerset Council to share information on events where reluctance had been experienced before. Regeneration was welcomed but concern was raised how young people and small businesses would feature and be heard on the board.

For a point of information, The Town Mayor directed members to page 17 of the full report which outlined the remit of the board and the advisory board.

Alex responded by explaining the challenges of defining/identifying a group of people to administer. The advisory board would be unlimited and any willing participants could become involved.

Some members felt there was no need to delay the proposal as the finer details could be ironed out later. Weston was extremely fortunate to have a lot of

active/diverse community groups with huge voices which can be utilised for engagement.

Concerns were raised over how the town council representative board members would report effectively back to the council. Their job would be to represent the council as a whole. It was questioned how it had been decided that Councillor Ian Porter would be proposed for this position.

The Town Mayor advised that Councillor Porter was proposed because of his leading role in the engagement group with business over the past 18 months. He had good contacts in business and found himself involved at the launch point. Board members could always be changed when necessary.

Alex explained that there had been a business group created by Councillor Ian Porter meeting for some time, which seemed a good place to start.

Members highlighted that the language employed by the place agency board implied that the advisory board was secondary to the other board who would make the decisions. Confidence and reassurance that the role of community groups would feature was not given and the structure of the agency was questioned.

Alex accepted it was a valid challenge and he could look into the terminology and terms of reference. He would look at the structure but advised that something smaller to administer it as a device would still be needed.

A member was concerned that the detail of the proposal was being prematurely discussed and urged moving to a recommendation that the town council should be involved. He amended the initial proposal to nominate that Councillors Ian Porter and Alan Peak represent the council on the board until May 2021 and a further report be requested outlining the progress and recommendations that might arise in the autumn.

The initial proposer was happy to accept the amendment but urged that she would not want to sign the town council up to anything at this point as there were concerns that the town council may lose its Visit Weston website.

Councillor Ian Porter advised that the idea had derived from the town council strategy that was created earlier in the year as the town council had never been involved with the business community before. The objective was to get businesses together and think collaboratively. When the opportunity for place making arrived, this fitted well into the agenda as lot of the work had already been done. There were many people and groups around that could always get involved. It cannot be a talking shop for 30 people, it needs to be proactive and change and support was needed right away.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mike Bell

SECONDED BY: Councillor James Clayton

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

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillors Alan Peak and Ian Porter be appointed town council representatives to sit on the Place Agency board until May 2021.

	<p>2. That a further report outlining the progress and recommendations that might arise come back to the town council in the autumn, when appropriate.</p> <p>3. That the town council is not making any firm commitment beyond that at this stage.</p> <p>The Town Mayor thanked Alex for attending the meeting.</p> <p><i>Alex left the meeting at 8.10 pm.</i></p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meeting</p> <p>The notes of Youth Council meetings held in February and March 2020 had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Youth Champion reported that the Youth Council had carried on their work valiantly helping and supporting many people throughout the pandemic. They were still struggling with recruiting new members and appeal was made to councilors to try and signpost any young people and organisations to the Youth Council.</p> <p>The Town Mayor enquired if the Youth Council were engaging with schools to try and recruit new members to which he was informed that they did, but recruitment was a cyclical problem. There would be certain burst of engagement then pupils would leave the school after a few years.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Noted.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Final EMR requirement at the Year end 31.03.2020 for the year 2020/2021</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this was the final report after the one submitted before the end of the financial year, showing alterations at the year end point. The total EMR WAS £343,499 the most notable changes were the CIL receipts (£104,601) and the Civic (£5,205) monies.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Earmarked Reserves for the Year 2012—21.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>To receive the Final Internal Audit Report for the year 2019-20</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this was the final a quarterly report given to the council and was pleased to report it was a clean audit.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To receive and note the Final Internal Audit Report for the year 2019-20.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Year End Accounts for the year ending 31.03.20 (attached)</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk/RFO advised that as part of the Audit requirement members were requested to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Consider the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by members as a whole;

	<p>b) Approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and 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)</p> <p>Members were directed to page 4 of the report where questions required an answer of yes or no. Based on the Auditors report and information provided to all members the Deputy Town Clerk recommended approval.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>9.1 RESOLVED: To Approve the Annual Governance Statement (Page 4 of the AGAR Annual return for the year ending 31.03.2020) answering YES to questions 1-8 and recognising question 8 is not applicable (No trust funds) Approved by members as a whole.</p> <p>9.2 RESOLVED: To approve the Accounting Statements (Page 5 of the AGAR – Annual return for the year ending 31.03.2020) by resolution.</p> <p>9.3 RESOLVED: That the Chairman sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return).</p> <p>9.4 RESOLVED: To receive and note the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the (AGAR – Annual return).</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>To approve the Financial reports for January – March (2019/20) and April – June (2020/21)</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed that the reports were a summarised version of what would normally be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee. If members wished for any further details on any reports then any scrutiny from members would be welcomed.</p> <p>a) For Approval Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for January – March (2019/20) and April – June (2020/21) be approved.</p> <p>b) For Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bank Reconciliations ii. Budgetary Control report iii. Bank Interest report iv. Schedule of Receipted Income v. Overspend Month end report vi. Outstanding Balances report <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That reports 9b i – vi for be noted.</p>

11. CCTV Upgrade Procurement

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated which outlined a recommendation for approval.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this report followed on from the agreement made by Town Council to upgrade the CCTV and procure upgrades to current CCTV cameras and provision for a mobile CCTV camera. Various meetings have been attended as per council's request. Attached to the agenda was a list of suggested improvements based on the meeting held with Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk, North Somerset Council and the Police back in November 2019; where some problem areas had been identified and comments from councillors discussed eg. Castle Batch.

The Town Clerk drew members' attention to the report where it stated that the council can afford to do all upgrades with a couple of thousand left out of the £100,000 budget.

It was asked where would a request for any new cameras be directed to. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that it was quite a lengthy process, assessed on statutory criteria. Any requests should be directed to the Town Clerk who would submit them in writing to the CCTV team for consideration.

A member queried why a camera installed at the bottom of Ashcombe Park did not meet the criteria. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the location had been discussed and it had been advised that there had not been enough reported crime in the area to meet the statutory criteria.

The Town Mayor informed that other measures such as Police patrols and lighting would be pursued first, before camera installations were considered. Crimes need to be reported to build a case to warrant a camera.

The location of the Queensway camera was queried to which it was confirmed that this was an additional camera as there had been quite dangerous problems at the bus stop outside the school. One advantage of the new cameras was that guaranteed servicing and cleaning of them every 6 months would be included. If there are ongoing problems in a certain area a mobile camera can be installed and if warranted a permanent camera installed. The other benefit to the cameras was that the Police are developing a system where they can tap into this CCTV rather than pick up a disc from the CCTV department. The Police were so impressed with it that they have rated it a gold standard system.

It was clarified that a meeting of the Community Safety Group (NSC) would be taking place the following week to plan the total number of additional cameras and when they would be installed. Installation was underway and cameras were starting to be installed. Weston's cameras would be transmitted through the roof of the college which eliminated line rental costs. The other 3 town are having to have other systems re the costs are higher.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed that the upgrade of the CCTV room had been started and the camera installation would follow when this was completed.

The Town Mayor advised that this was a 4 week project of which we were currently in week 3.

	<p>As per the request from the Policy and Finance committee to have better reporting, it was confirmed that the CCTV reports would be modified and more meaningful from now on.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Dot Agassiz</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the list of cameras to be upgraded based on the recommended order; to be funded from the Capital works provision budget 2020 / 2021.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Lease of Ellenborough Park West from the Clifton Diocese</p> <p>The joint report of the Town Clerk and Grounds Manager which outlined recommendations for approval had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that this proposal had been discussed at the Policy and Finance committee at least twice. The West Park was a wasted asset which was not being used, for health and safety reasons. There had been concerns expressed regarding taking a long lease for financial reasons and because the park was registered as a Site of Special scientific interest (SSSI). The Grounds Manager had come up with the option of a short lease over 3 years. This would be relatively risk free and the park should be cheap to maintain, at an estimated net cost of £4,300. This would be totally absorbed by efficiency savings within the grounds team and therefore he recommended approval as per his reports.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Members were strongly in support of this proposal. It was a good opportunity to bring a park in the deprived central ward back into use again and for health and wellbeing reasons. It was suggested that the use of the park should be opened up to other central ward schools such as Walliscote and Christchurch who don't have outside space. Members thanked officers for their work on this.</p> <p>The suggestion was made to make the park a no dogs zone so that there was somewhere designated for non-dog owners to enjoy. This should be well signposted to members of the public who could take dogs in the East Park.</p> <p>Officers were asked to explore the possibility of painting running tracks onto the mowed areas and approaching schools to use this for their sports days.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding and the risk of losing the par, the Town Clerk explained that there were two reasons for the length of the lease this. The first was that there were concerns regarding obtaining written permissions from Natural England regarding works including making paths and maintenance of trees and secondly, a short lease could be entered into more quickly. The option of including a caveat to relieve the risk of losing the park after 3 years could be included.</p> <p>In answer to a question, the Town Clerk explained that one of the reasons it was currently closed was due to drug use and paraphernalia in a secluded area which was attractive to drug users. The schools did not have the resources to manage this and the Grounds Team would actively manage this risk.</p> <p>A member requested a scheduled annual review of the park to the appropriate committee to manage the activities and costs incurred with adopting it.</p>

The Town Clerk advised that this would be included within the regular parks and play areas report that currently goes to the Tourism and Leisure Committee, although this may change with the ongoing review of committees at the Town Council meeting in September.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey
SECONDED BY: Councillor Robert Payne

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

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council enter into a 3-year peppercorn lease of Ellenborough Park West from the Clifton Diocese, with a view if the initial occupation is successful to considering a longer lease at the expiry of the initial lease.
2. That the lease make provision for an agreed and limited amount of use of the park as a school playing field and for church activities.
3. The Park be improved and opened as a wellbeing park, closed to dogs (which are permitted in the East Park,) as a quiet semi natural place for gentle activities and occasional community events.
4. That a scheduled annual review of the park be taken to the appropriate committee, to manage the costs incurred with adopting it.

13. Motion to Council under SO11 from Councillor Helen Thornton

The motion had been previously circulated and instructed the Town Clerk to:

- Increase the hourly pay rate of all Town Council employees including casual employees who are currently earning less than the Real Living Wage to £9.30 per hour.
- Make an application to the Living Wage Foundation to accredit as a Living Wage employer

Councillor Helen Thornton was invited to propose her motion. This motion stemmed from the Labour groups strategy. Covid 19 had exposed low wages for key workers. By paying the real living wage, the council would send a good message and set an example to other employers. It was noted that the council had not had to pay any casual staff this financial year and so there would be no real cost to do this. The cost would be very small but the message would be very big.

This motion was then seconded.

Debate ensued for and against the motion.

The Town Mayor for a point of information asked if the town council could insist on seeing contractors pay slips to their staff.

The proposer of the motion advised that this would not be required immediately and that a plan would need to be put together with the contractors to achieve this objective over time.

	<p>The Town Mayor noted that the report figures were not exact and that the actual cost would be higher due to contractors seeking additional compensation to pay their employees. He would abstain from voting.</p> <p>Debate ensued. It was inappropriate to do this when there had recently been a 30% increase to the tax payer and many people either furloughed or unemployed due to the Covid 19 crisis. Page 7 of the auditor's report stated that there were no issues with the wages and salaries. Others felt that whatever the economic situation, the council should pay the living wage and shouldn't pay people wages that they cannot live on.</p> <p>The Town Mayor asked that, if the living wage foundation increased the wage to higher than the government and local councils paid their employees how was this conflict managed?</p> <p>The proposer explained that this had not yet been seen but she was confident that that it may in the next year. There are hardly any other employees at the council who would be effected anyway. The cost would be minimal and the council should set an example as community leaders. By increasing the living wage, you will help to decrease the number of people in debt and claiming universal credit.</p> <p>A concern raised was how this would affect the council's equalities duties and appointment of contactors. The council would pass the responsibility onto its contractors which may affect their ability to trade as a result.</p> <p>Councillor Helen Thornton summed up the interesting debate and appreciated the concerns raised and therefore</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton SECONDED BY: Councillor Dot Agassiz</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried (16 for/ 8 against). Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To increase the hourly pay rate of all Town Council employees including casual employees who are currently earning less than the Real Living Wage to £9.30 per hour.2. To make an application to the Living Wage Foundation to accredit as a Living Wage employer.
	<p>The Town Mayor thanked members and officers for attending and particular the Communications Officer for facilitating the meeting and supporting members to attend.</p> <p>There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.22 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated: Town Mayor</p>