

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD
VIA ZOOM ON
MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2020**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: pm

PRESENT: Councillors Mark Canniford (Town Mayor), Dot Agassiz, Mark Aplin, 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, 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), Chris Millard (Civic Officer), Kathryn Askew-Smith (City Fibre), Steve Watson (Middlemarch Associates LLP), Rev Peter Ashman, Nneka Opene (BLM) and 6 members of the public.

The Town Mayor invited his Chaplain to say prayers.

The Town Mayor extended a very warm welcome back to Councillor Richard Tucker and invited questions from parishioners present.

Nneka Opene addressed the council in support of the Anti-Racist motion that was on the agenda. She explained that racism was an issue in Weston–super-Mare and referred to a number of Police incidents involving black people. The motion supported inclusivity and her thanks were given to Councillor Catherine Gibbons for proposing the motion and to the council for hearing the address.

No.	Item
96	To receive Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence received.
97	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received.
98	To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 21st September 2020 The minutes of the meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons SECONDED BY: Councillor Ian Porter A vote was taken and carried . RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

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99	<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 8 engagements and the Deputy mayor 2. This was a total of 208 to date.</p> <p>The Town Mayor thanked officers involved with the filming of the Remembrance service, which had been well covered by the BBC.</p>
100	<p>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meetings held in September and October 2020</p> <p>Councillor Sarah Codling as Youth Champion reported that the Youth Council had met regularly and had recruited new members. There were plans for a workshop to take place in December with members that sat on the Youth Council advising of protocols.</p> <p>It was noted that the Youth Council were always keen to recruit new members.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.</p>
101	<p>City Fibre Presentation – Presentation by Kathryn Askew-Smith of City Fibre</p> <p>The Town Mayor welcomed Kathryn and invited her to make her presentation to the council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Fibre was building the UK’s third full fibre digital infrastructure platform. The mission was to invest £4bn to make open source full fibre available to over 8 million premises. • This was approximately 100 towns and cities representing 30% of the UK. To enable this, they were also creating 10,000 jobs via construction partners, prioritising local jobs, for local people. • The well-planned city design and build model was tried and tested and designed to serve all major markets. They aimed to ‘plan twice and dig once’. Underpinning data intelligence and automation with gigabit speed connectivity enables businesses to innovate and thrive and helps local councils to achieve public service efficiencies, solve local challenges, safeguard citizens and enrich lives. • Fibre was important to the UK because out of one of the leading industrial countries of the world and one of the leaders in infrastructure development for hundreds of years, the UK had fallen behind. • Individual build programmes could extend to 5 years, Weston would be 2-3 years and an investment of more than £20 million. • Communication with the local community really mattered. From identifying the supervisor in the street (wearing a black hard hat), to knowing how to get in touch (one number), there was a robust plan for timely and relevant comms. Door knocking flyers informing residents of the project and notices, letters and cards and social media adverts. <p>The Town Council could help by putting City Fibre in touch with local groups and invitations to community events and surgeries. As well as promotion through social</p>

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	<p>media. Anybody was welcome to come and see them on a 'Dig Walk'. Kathryn then invited questions from members.</p> <p>Kathryn advised that City Fibre was fully UK backed and funded. Vodafone and TalkTalk were amongst their signed partners and that any company registered with City Fibre could offer it. In response to further questions, Kathryn explained that:</p> <p>Where they could share fibre and minimise disruption they would rather than lay their own. Laying fibre was a 2-day process.</p> <p>That City Fibre would have its own exchange sited at Hutton Moor and would fully operate their own network.</p> <p>Fibre would be laid in public streets and not private roads, unless invited. Fibre could also be accessed through telephone boxes.</p> <p><i>The Town Mayor thanked Kathryn for the presentation and she left the meeting at 7.38 p.m.</i></p>
<p>102</p>	<p>Community Led Housing – Presentation by Steve Watson of Middlemarch Associates</p> <p>The Town Mayor welcomed Steve and invited him to make his presentation to the council.</p> <p>Steve advised that a Community-led Housing (CLH) was an opportunity for communities to come together to deliver affordable homes for local people: typically, a Community Land Trust (CLT) would be formed which worked in partnership with a Registered Provider (RP) of affordable housing. He had been in post for over 10 years and had been involved with many projects during this time. The presentation indicated 3 plots of land identified in Weston for CLH situated at Staples Green, Constable Close and Wentworth Drive.</p> <p>If the Council was interested in this approach and technical advice could be arranged by North Somerset Council, the next steps would be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the Town Council to consider whether, in principle, it supports the establishment of a CLT for Weston. • If so, for the Town Council to host a public meeting to make the wider community aware of the CLH approach. The purpose of the meeting would be to gather support and to recruit volunteers for an initial steering group. • The steering group would then be supported on its journey to form a CLT and develop homes for local people by accredited technical advice. <p>Steve then invited questions from members.</p> <p>Concern was raised regarding the danger of taking away designated open spaces from residents. It was clarified that the 3 plots of land identified were not designated open space and were considered for infill development.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding the Town Council's role in the project, Steve advised that town and parish councils were the starting point in the creation of a</p>

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	<p>CLT. Once established a CLT could then receive finance and acquire freehold of land.</p> <p>In response to further questions, Steve informed that the public meeting would consist of a fuller 20-minute presentation organised and facilitated by the Town Council. Housing associations would not be invited at this point as the CLT would be able to select these. Most CLT 's provided 90% of affordable social housing for rent with a small percentage of shared ownership housing for sale.</p> <p>A member was very informed of the shortages in affordable supported housing in the town and would be very interested in the opportunity of a CLA.</p> <p>Concern was raised on how this would be imposed on surrounding residents and what measures were in place for consultation and dealing with objections. Steve explained that the CLT would consist of volunteers who would undertake consultation with no obligations.</p> <p>The Town Mayor informed that NSC were undertaking an asset review and questioned whether land would be identified for a CLT as part of this. Steve advised that land was deemed appropriate by the community and not by housing departments.</p> <p>The Town Clerk referred to the paper circulated to members prior to the meeting outlining the proposal for the Town Council and questioned that it would not commit the council financially or to a specific timeframe.</p> <p>Steve confirmed that it would not and advised that he would not recommended a meeting just yet.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Town Council, in principle, supports the establishment of a CLT for Weston and agrees to host a public meeting to make the wider community aware of the CLH approach. The purpose of the meeting would be to gather support and to recruit volunteers for an initial steering group. The steering group would then be supported by Middlemarch on its journey to form a CLT and develop homes for local people by accredited technical advice.</p> <p><i>The Town Mayor thanked Steve for his address and he left the meeting at 8.04 p.m.</i></p>
103	<p>Local Plan Choices for the Future Consultation</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that North Somerset Council were seeking parish and town councils' views as part of a wider public consultation on the 'Choices for the Future' to form development of the new Local Plan that would govern development for around 15 years until 2036. The consultation would run until 14th December and the council's instructions were requested on how it wished to respond on its behalf. Members were also encouraged to respond in their individual capacities.</p> <p>A dual hatted member informed that North Somerset was facing problems by not</p>

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	<p>responding to the algorithms and White Paper. He felt it appropriate that single hatted members should form a response and that he was happy to assist.</p> <p>Concern was raised regarding North Somerset Council's lack of commitment to improve junction21 and that they needed to be pushed on this.</p> <p>The Town Mayor advised that £4 million was planned to be spent on junction21.</p> <p>A suggestion was made for the Planning Committee to look at the consultation on behalf of the council.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley SECONDED BY: Councillor Ian Porter</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That a working group be set up via Group Leaders, supported by members with a particular interest/knowledge of the Local Plan to respond on behalf of the council.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that the consultation period was only for a further 3 weeks and so Group Leaders needed to meet quickly to form the working group.</p>
104	<p>Town Council's Risk Register Action Plan</p> <p>Members were requested to note that the full Risk Register had been overseen by the Expenditure and Governance Working Party (Nov 2020) and was available upon request (68 pages). The Action summary had been previously circulated for members to adopt and approve.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk added that the actions had either been completed or were underway.</p> <p>It was questioned whether page 7 'staff COVID risk' should include elected members. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed it would include.</p> <p>A member referred to the recent good news on COVID vaccines and whether this needed to be considered within the budget.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there would be two budgets submitted to the Policy & Finance Committee in December. One COVID safe budget and one on the basis that business may resume back to normality by April 2021. Any guidelines from government would be considered before the budget setting at January's Town Council meeting.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>RESOLVED: To approve the Town Council's Risk Register Action Plan.</p>
105	Future provision of Grove Park Public Toilets

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	<p>The draft minute of the Community Services Committee held on the 9th November 2020, report of the Deputy Town Clerk and Tender Analysis had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Members were requested to approve the recommendations of the report and appoint Healthmatic to undertake works as per the specification to the following values:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A = Annual Maintenance and Management Cost £36,600.00</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">B = Contactless Payment point installation Cos £5,950.00</p> <p>Also to note that any variation to the opening of Grove Park toilets would need to be negotiated with the contractor and may affect the costs and contract parameters.</p> <p>To aid debate, the Town Clerk informed that the procurement process had started before the incident that took place at Grove Park toilets. As a result of this, the decision was taken to temporarily close the toilets and there was now an opportunity to review the provision and make some cost savings. He was aware that members had questions but requested approval of the recommendations, subject to the procurement process.</p> <p>In response to a question, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that as part of the Town Council's pledge to become a Real Living Wage employer, there was a pass/fail section at the Expression of Interest stage and so any contractors appointed should be Real Living Wage employers.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>105.1 To approve the recommendations of the report and appoint Healthmatic to undertake works as per the specification to the following values:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A = Annual Maintenance and Management Cost £36,600.00</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">B = Contactless Payment point installation Cos £5,950.00</p> <p>105.2 To note that any variation to the opening of Grove Park toilets would need to be negotiated with the contractor and may affect the costs and contract parameters.</p> <p>105.3 That the contract be awarded only after confirmation that employees would be paid the Real Living Wage.</p> <p>Members questioned whether they were not able to discuss the future provision of the toilets at this point and as per the Community Services recommendation.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Community Services Committee reiterated the committee's resolution that Grove Park toilets be temporarily closed with immediate effect until a better solution could be found and the matter be reviewed and voted on at full council on 23rd November. Despite various steps taken to deter antisocial behaviour there had been no change. He had met with Group Leaders since the committee</p>

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	<p>meeting who had agreed that Town Council should make the final decision.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that on reflection the future provision of the toilets could be further debated.</p> <p>It was reported that Group Leaders had met and decided to close the Grove Park toilets until the spring. There was an opportunity to consider the Grove Park area as a whole for a regeneration project taken forward with Placemaking.</p> <p>Concern was raised for vulnerable people if the toilets were permanently closed. There were also known drainage problems with the site and exploration into a feasibility study for an alternative new toilet block was suggested.</p> <p>Debate ensued. The committee had decided to act to protect members of the public, staff and contactors but it was their aspiration not to permanently close the toilets. A suggestion was made that new supervised toilets should be provided, creating jobs. Members agreed that the entrance area to Grove park was very unpleasant and spoilt by the current use of the toilets.</p> <p>It was suggested that If the toilets were to be closed, then a temporary toilet facility should be provided as an interim measure. In response, the Town Mayor highlighted that Grove Park was a conservation area.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>105.4 That Grove Park toilets be temporarily closed with immediate effect.</p> <p>105.5 That a full review of future provision be undertaken by the Community Services Committee to include alternative options and opportunities.</p>
106	<p>Motion under SO 11 – Anti Racist Council by Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>Councillor Catherine Gibbons was invited to propose her motion as stated on the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons SECONDED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling</p> <p>Amendments to the wording of the motion were proposed and seconded by further members. These were in 1, to replace the words ‘black people in Weston-super-Mare’ with the words ‘BAME and all our diverse communities’; to add ‘for all our communities’ at the end of 3 and to replace the word ‘produce’ with the word ‘include’ in 6.</p> <p>Debater ensued on the amendments. A vote was taken on the amendments and was lost.</p> <p>Discussion reverted to the substantive motion. There was concern that the wording of the motion was too general and was implicit rather than explicit. Point 6 of the motion was considered too dictatorial and should read that councillors be invited and not expected.</p>

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	<p>The Chairman of the Personnel Committee advised that all employees already undertook regular E&D training and it was planned to undertake Unconscious Bias training with its training provider. There was a risk of doubling up on training.</p> <p>The proposer of the amendment explained that the amendment had been meant to strengthen the motion and feared that it had been turned into a political issue. The motion was not reflective of all minority groups and there were some groups that were feeling very disenfranchised. Another member felt the council should be seen as leaders in tackling not just racism, but discrimination of any kind.</p> <p>Debate ensued over the importance of the wording. Councillor Gibbons explained that, while recognising there were issues for other groups, the council needed to recognise and take action on the specific issues of racism faced by black people.</p> <p>A vote was taken on the substantive motion and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the council notes that:</p> <p>The Black Lives Matter Movement was set up in 2013 after the death of Trayvon Martin and subsequent acquittal of his killer. Global protests increased following the killing of George Floyd in June 2020, for which Minneapolis police officers were charged with second-degree murder (and aiding and abetting second-degree murder.)</p> <p>Peaceful protests in support of Black Lives Matter have been held in Weston super Mare and throughout the UK. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are 54% more likely than white people to be fined under the new coronavirus lockdown laws in the UK. Around two thirds of healthcare staff who have died as a result of COVID-19 are from a BAME background whereas they make up 20% of the overall workforce.</p> <p>Racism in all forms, both structural and in individuals, continues to be a serious and often unseen problem in the UK. Although progress has been made in combating racism, work to eradicate it entirely is far from complete. This Council, representing people in Weston super Mare has a duty as a public leader to actively lead that work. Thus:</p> <p>That the Council resolves as follows:</p> <p>106.1 To stand together unreservedly with black people in Weston-super-Mare</p> <p>106.2 To work to eradicate racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, Antisemitism and discrimination which impact the entire community and blight our society.</p> <p>106.3 To establish further initiatives to ensure Weston-super-Mare is actively inclusive and anti-racist.</p> <p>106.4 To initiate a review involving Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of our community of our processes, policies and organisational attitudes, hold listening and engagement events seeking the views of BAME communities on the issues rising from recent protests, and work with and support Community groups, youth groups, and places of worship in engaging with these issues.</p>

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	<p>106.5 To update our Equalities Policy and produce a plan addressing matters identified by these reviews and consultations.</p> <p>106.6 To invite appropriate speakers on these issues to deliver training which will be mandatory for staff and expected for all councillors.</p>
	<p>The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.</p> <p>There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.34 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated: Town Mayor</p>