

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD VIA ZOOM ON  
MONDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.30 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, 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 (Grounds Manager), Samantha Bishop & Emma Williams (Committee Officers), Chris Millard (Mayors Civic Officer), Sally Heath (Theatre Manager), Reverend Peter Ashman (Town Mayors Chaplin), Angela Hicks, Brian Price, Debbie Apted, Dr Richard Lawson, Chris Meyer, 5 other members of the public.

The Town Mayor invited his Chaplain to say prayers.

The Town Mayor invited members of the public to address the meeting.

Angela Hicks, Brian Price, Debbie Apted, Dr Richard Lawson and Chris Meyer all addressed the meeting individually in support of agenda item 14: Fair Trade Motion put forward by Councillor Pete McAleer.

The Town Mayor thanked the speakers for their address and welcomed them to stay for the meeting.

<b>235</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Pilgrim and Marcia Pepperall  Councillor Ella Sayce was absent from the meeting.
<b>236</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations on interest received.
<b>237</b>	<b>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  A member expressed her disapproval of the budget increase which equated to a considerable amount of money to the individual tax payer and would abstain from the vote to approve the minutes.

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.</p>
<p><b>238</b></p>	<p><b>To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor</b></p> <p>The Mayor’s announcements and communications were circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>There had been no engagements to attend due to the pandemic, this was a total of 235 to date.</p>
<p><b>239</b></p>	<p>At this point in the meeting, the Town Mayor brought forward agenda items 14. &amp; 15 for discussion.</p> <p><b>Motion under Standing Order 11 - Fair Trade – Councillor Pete McAleer</b></p> <p><i>“Weston Town Council, as a significant opinion leader, supports the aim of the Fairtrade Foundation to raise general awareness of the importance of ethical shopping in helping farmers receive a fair return for their work in disadvantaged countries.</i></p> <p><i>This Council welcomes the initiative from Fairtrade Weston Steering Group to campaign for Weston to make progress to becoming a recognised Fairtrade town, as our neighbours in Sandford and Winscombe has done. This council therefore agrees to work in partnership with the steering group and the retail sector to develop strategies encouraging progress towards achieving the Fairtrade Foundation Mark.</i></p> <p><i>Weston Town Council commits to providing where possible only products which are ethically sourced at internal committee meetings in all its venues that we have influence over, including the Blakehay, the Museum and the Town Quarry. In particular, that Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar are usually available as refreshment options. We further resolve to review our procurement policy to ensure this is taken into account.</i></p> <p><i>The Council agrees to actively promote awareness of Fairtrade issues through their web-site as well as in the email newsletter. Also, whenever practicable, the Council will assist in promoting annual events such as Fairtrade Fortnight”</i></p> <p>Councillor Pete McAleer was invited to present his motion.</p> <p>A supporting paper had been previously circulated to members.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Pete McAleer</p> <p>The motion was supported and therefore,</p> <p><b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Robert Payne</p> <p>Members spoke in support of the motion and an amendment was proposed, as follows:</p> <p>That the Council elect a member to sit on the Fairtrade Weston Steering Group at its Annual Council Meeting in May.</p> <p>The amendment was accepted by both the proposer and seconder and became the substantive motion.</p>

A vote was then taken and accordingly was **unanimously carried**.

**RESOLVED:** That Weston Town Council, as a significant opinion leader, supports the aim of the Fairtrade Foundation to raise general awareness of the importance of ethical shopping in helping farmers receive a fair return for their work in disadvantaged countries.

This Council welcomes the initiative from Fairtrade Weston Steering Group to campaign for Weston to make progress to becoming a recognised Fairtrade town, as our neighbours in Sandford and Winscombe has done. This council therefore agrees to work in partnership with the steering group and the retail sector to develop strategies encouraging progress towards achieving the Fairtrade Foundation Mark.

Weston Town Council commits to providing where possible only products which are ethically sourced at internal committee meetings in all its venues that it has influence over, including the Blakehay, the Museum and the Town Quarry. In particular, that Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar are usually available as refreshment options. We further resolve to review our procurement policy to ensure this is taken into account.

The Council agrees to actively promote awareness of Fairtrade issues through their website as well as in the email newsletter. Also, whenever practicable, the Council will assist in promoting annual events such as Fairtrade Fortnight.

That the Council elect a member to sit on the Fairtrade Weston Steering Group at its Annual Council Meeting in May.

The Town Mayor thanked speakers and other members of the public for their attendance.

**240 Motion under Standing Order 11 – Hidden Disabilities – Councillor Sarah Codling**

*“A ‘hidden disability’ is a disability that may not be immediately obvious. Hidden disabilities don’t have physical signs and include learning difficulties, mental health conditions as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments. It is deeply regrettable that there have been instances where people with hidden disabilities which require urgent visits to toilet facilities, have faced abuse from the public and even accusations by staff members of being ineligible to use accessible toilets.*

*The charity Crohn’s and Colitis UK is encouraging venues providing accessible toilets to install new signage. This is to help stop stigma and discrimination towards people with invisible conditions. The signage has two standing figures and a wheelchair user with the words ‘Accessible Toilet’ and the logo ‘Not every disability is visible’.*

*In view of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and as a demonstrable indication that it supports the dignity of all its residents, whilst aiming to do all it can to prevent and challenge instances of abuse and discrimination, this Council resolves to:*

- *Ensure that Town Council accessible toilets bear these signs;*
- *Encourage town and district centre retailers and leisure outlets to do likewise with their accessible toilets;*
- *Use its community leadership position to exploit opportunities to raise awareness of hidden disabilities and be explicit in condemnation of disability;*
- *Seek advice from disability charities on the information and training that could be provided for Council staff members, to further their understanding of*

*these conditions and to prevent potential embarrassment for those who have them.”*

Councillor Sarah Codling was invited to present her motion.

It was advocated that the Town Council support the hidden disabilities motion along with the work of Council Officers who were in discussions with North Somerset Council on the joint promotion of the Sunflower Friendly Scheme which aligned well with the motion and combined would progress inclusivity.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Sarah Codling

The motion was supported and therefore,

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Roz Willis

Members spoke in support of the motion itself and to encourage and promote the Sunflower Friendly Scheme via its own services and by working in collaboration with North Somerset Council to promote it as a more district wide aspiration.

In answer to a question as to the associated costs it was advised that these would be minimal in the first instance i.e. training, lanyards and signage but consideration would need to be given longer term if re-configuration of facilities was required.

A vote was then taken and accordingly was **unanimously carried.**

**RESOLVED:** That in view of its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and as a demonstrable indication that to support the dignity of all its residents, whilst aiming to do all it can to prevent and challenge instances of abuse and discrimination, this Council resolves to:

- .1 Ensure that Town Council accessible toilets bear the signs;
- .2 Encourage town and district centre retailers and leisure outlets to do likewise with their accessible toilets;
- .3 Use its community leadership position to exploit opportunities to raise awareness of hidden disabilities and be explicit in condemnation of disability;
- .4 Seek advice from disability charities on the information and training that could be provided for Council staff members, to further their understanding of these conditions and to prevent potential embarrassment for those who have them.
- .5 Continue to work with North Somerset Council in the joint promotion of Sunflower Friendly Scheme across Weston-super-Mare and wider district area.

**241 To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meetings held in January and February 2021**

Notes of the Youth Council meetings had been previously circulated with the agenda.

	<p>A member and the Youth Champion reported that the Town Mayor's offer to shadow dual hatted members had been relayed and would hopefully be taken up once physical meetings were resumed.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the notes of the Youth Council meetings for January and February 2021 be received.</p>
<p><b>242</b></p>	<p><b>Designation of Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2021/2022</b></p> <p>The Town Mayor advised that contrary to the agenda heading, the designations were for the year 2021/2022 and invited members to propose.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>242.1 RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor James Clayton be designated Town Mayor for the year 2021/2022.</p> <p>It was therefore</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Fox  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>242.2 RESOLVED:</b> That Councillor Roger Bailey be designated Deputy Town Mayor for the year 2021/2022.</p>
<p><b>243</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the draft Calendar of Meetings for June 2021 to May 2022</b></p> <p>The draft calendar of meetings had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised of a date change for the Expenditure and Governance Working Party from 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed that there was uncertainty around whether current meeting legislation, due to expire on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, would be extended. He advised that the Annual Council Meeting, scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021, be brought forward to the 5<sup>th</sup> May at 7.00 pm. This would be a virtual meeting purely to conduct essential council business and the legalities of electing the Town Mayor. The ceremonial part of the meeting (Mayor Making) could be postponed until July in conjunction with the Civic Service. The Town Mayor, Mayor Elect and Group Leaders via the Civic Consultation Group had been consulted and were in agreement. Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May had been suggested because there was a North Somerset Council by-election scheduled for the Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>A member requested clarity on the frequency of the Heritage Arts and Culture meetings, to which the Town Clerk clarified that these were bi-monthly with a gap in July (meeting brought forward to June) as this was a busy meeting period.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Helen Thornton  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p>

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Calendar of meetings dates for 2021/2022 be approved.
2. That the 2021 Annual Council Meeting be brought forward to the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7.00 pm to be held virtually.

**244 Committee Membership**

The recommendation from the Policy and Finance Committee had been previously circulated.

The Leader of the Council reported that the committee membership had been discussed at length by both the Expenditure and Governance Working Party and the Policy and Finance Committee and therefore

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

A member requested that it be noted that the request to reduce the number of committee meetings was not only made to reduce member time but also that of officer time, resources and decision making.

The Mayor reminded that all members were welcome to attend any meeting of the council where they had a particular interest.

A vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried**. It was noted that there were 2 votes against the motion.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Structure and Membership be amended to reduce the committee membership for large committees to 10 and small committees to 8; and to keep the frequency of the Tourism & Leisure and Heritage Arts and Culture committee meetings bi-monthly.

**245 Committee Terms of Reference – Events Grants Budget**

To report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

A new budget of £60,000 for event grants had been adopted at the January 2020 Town Council meeting for the 2020/2021 budget following a proposal from members. It was understood that from the January 2020 budget debate that the budget was intended to encourage artistic and cultural events, mainly in the town centre but possibly in other district centres, to encourage footfall and ultimately support business and jobs. By the time the budget came into effect on 1st April it was overtaken by events, namely the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown which lasted until June and following restrictions were gradually eased through the summer.

Under the current Committee Terms of Reference grants were allocated to the Community Services Committee (CSC). Since the autumn CSC and HAC have worked well together to consider applications from Culture Weston and more recently from Weston College.

Unfortunately, restrictions and ultimately further lockdowns in November and January had returned, largely preventing the envisaged events from happening.

In discussion with Group Leaders and the Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee (HAC), there was a general feeling that the Town Council needed a more clearly thought out approach to arts grants and events. There was a danger that without clear guidelines in future some outside organisations may just see the Town Council as a cash cow and applications made which may not be the best use of public money. It was felt that greater clarity was needed and some guidelines needed to be adopted for the £50,000 budget being used for arts event grants.

The Town Clerk suggested that two actions were needed. Firstly, to transfer the £50,000 'events grants' budget to HAC to separate it from the Small and Voluntary Grants and the own small in-house events' at CSC. Secondly for HAC to adopt some policy criteria as guidelines for consideration of applications, in a similar way that CSC had policy criteria and application guidelines for the consideration of applications to the small and voluntary organisations grants budget.

The Deputy Town Clerk clarified the £60,000 budget for 2021/2022 and supported the Town Clerk's recommendations, as it had been very hard to assist community groups and as such welcomed a policy.

The Town Mayor was in favour and encouraged best value. He therefore suggested that a small working group consisting of both members and officers be formed to allocate the grants.

A member referred to the Town Clerk's report where its stated that the budget was to be used for town centre events and would like to see that the whole of the town be considered.

The Chairman of the Community Services Committee welcomed the recommendations as the committee was overloaded with business, as such he recognised the advantages of it sitting within the Heritage Arts and Culture terms of reference going forward. It was felt another forum to discuss grants was needed whether it be HAC or a working group.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Mark Canniford

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Roger Bailey

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. To request the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee to oversee and produce draft ~~adopt some~~ policy criteria and application guidelines for the £60,000 events grants budget. This should be achieved via a small cross committee working group of councillors who have an interest in this policy content and relevant officers. The draft Policy when completed would then be adopted by the councils Policy & Finance committee.

**246 Town Council Strategy 2020-30**

The recommendation from the Policy and Finance Committee had been previously circulated.

	<p>The Town Clerk had also previously circulated a document indicating changes made.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council was proposed the adoption of the Strategy, advising that it was a live document.</p> <p>The Town Mayor advised that the Strategy would be presented to Full Council at 6monthly intervals.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Tim Taylor</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Town Council Strategy 2020–30, be approved.</p>
247	<p><b>Lease of Town Quarry</b></p> <p>The recommendation from the Policy and Finance Committee had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that after much debate on the future of the Town Quarry a recommendation was made to the Policy and Finance Committee which required approval from Town Council.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the acquisition of the Quarry on a 35-year Lease.</li> </ol>
248	<p><b>Blakehay Procurement</b></p> <p>The recommendation from the Policy and Finance Committee had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Also the recommendation from the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee and report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding use of General Reserves to enable project works had also been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee supported the recommendations and moved approval</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor John Crockford-Hawley</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the tenders had been re-negotiated to make savings, but there was an overspend which needed approval for the use of general reserves. The Heritage Arts and Culture Committee had approved John West as the contractors.</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p>

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That John West be approved as the tender applicant for works to the Blakehay Theatre.</li> <li>2. To approve the use of General Reserves to the sum of £133,920.</li> </ol>
<p><b>249</b></p>	<p><b>Supplementary Standing Orders for Remote Meetings</b></p> <p>A draft Supplementary Standing Orders to regulate remote meetings had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that it would be good practice for the council temporarily to adopt the supplementary standing orders to include a section on remote meetings. A full review of the Council's standing orders would be undertaken at some point in the next year.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Robert Payne</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve the Supplementary Standing Orders for Remote Meetings.</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 8.30 pm.</p> <p>Signed: ..... Dated: .....  Town Mayor</p>