

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 22nd NOVEMBER 2021**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.53 pm

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Rebecca Saunders (Mayors Civic Officer/Committee Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Reverend Peter Ashman (Town Mayors Chaplin), and Mr John Christopher (Member of the Public).

The Town Mayor invited his Chaplain to say prayers.

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

230	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Aplin, Mike Bell, Gill Bute, Mark Canniford, Ciaran Cronnelly, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim and Helen Thornton.
231	To receive Declarations of Interest The Town Mayor declared an interest in item 11: Weston BID – Ballot for Renewal as he was an employee of the BID and would leave the meeting, whilst the Deputy Mayor chaired the meeting.
232	To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on the 20th September 2021 It was noted that the meeting had taken place at the Town Hall and the meeting conclusion time needed to be reflected. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak SECONDED BY: Councillor Sonia Russe RESOLVED: That with the above amendments, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
233	To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor The Mayor's announcements and communications were circulated prior to the meeting. There had been 109 engagements attended by the Mayor, 6 by the Deputy Mayor, which was a total of 116 to date.

	<p>Significant upcoming events reported were the:</p> <p>27th November Christmas Lights Switch On 5th December Weston Brass Concert 9th December Staff and Cllr Christmas Party 11th December Winter Pride 12th December Christmas Carol Service</p> <p>The Town Mayor was also due to visit Hildesheim on 19th – 23rd December but this was subject to COVID restrictions.</p> <p>Members were also asked to support the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal by either donating a box to be received or nominating local children to receive a shoe box.</p>
<p>234</p>	<p>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meetings held in September 2021</p> <p>The notes of the Youth Council meetings had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>In response to a query it was confirmed that the youth grant awarded was for a community group on Haywood Village for the purchase of Sports equipment which was recommended by the Community Services Committee.</p> <p>It was noted that a Chairman had been elected at the October Youth Council meeting and he had attended Remembrance Day and laid a wreath.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the notes of the Youth Council meeting for September 2021 be received.</p>
<p>235</p>	<p>Town Council Vacancy</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previous circulated. The Town Clerk reported that the Statement of Candidates had been received and distributed that day.</p> <p>Members were requested to note that Cllr Ella Sayce had submitted her resignation from the council in the summer and following publication of Notice of Vacancy a by-election had been called in Central Ward.</p> <p>The by-election date had been arranged by North Somerset Council electoral services for Thursday 16th December.</p> <p>The Town Clerk in consultation with group leaders had requested polling cards to be printed and issued. The council is advised that the cost of the by-election is likely to be £10-12,000 and the cost of printing and delivering poll cards was around £500.</p> <p>As a result of the resignation, there were vacancies on the Community Services Committee and the Youth Council which the town council could fill temporarily. However, it has been normal practice over recent years for the town council not to review its political balance until a by-election has taken place, given that it would have to be recalculated again after only one cycle and could involve newly appointed members being removed after only two months. If there was a member who would like to go on the Community Services Committee or on the Youth Council for one meeting, then this was an opportunity to put a name forward. Otherwise, it was suggested that no new committee appointments be made until January when the outcome of the by election was known.</p>

	<p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
236	<p>Reference from Planning Committee – Virtual Meetings</p> <p>The resolution from Planning Committee meeting held on 17th November 2021 was available at the meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Planning Committee proposed the recommendation to Council asking for the Planning Committee to be made an exception to meeting face to face, to go back to operating as a Working Party until the end of March 2022. The reason was that the committee met very frequently and to prevent members and officers coming out in the evenings to Grove House during the dark winter months.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Jan Holloway SECONDED BY: Councillor Alan Peak</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Planning Committee go back to operating as a Working Party until the end of March 2022 to enable meetings to be held virtually.</p>
237	<p>Year End Accounts for the year ending 31.03.21</p> <p>The External Audit report and sign off had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Members were requested to acknowledge receipt of the accounts and audit report.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk informed that the report included a comment regarding missing information, which had all been received.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the year end accounts and audit report be received and formally noted.</p>
238	<p>New Visit Weston Website</p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Members were requested to approve funds to enable the purchase to go ahead in advance of new budget provision commencing on 1st April.2022.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the necessary procurement had taken place and that authorisation to raise a purchase order was needed in advance.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee informed that four companies had been interviewed and the contract needed to be awarded and budget approved before the next Tourism & Leisure Committee meeting which had been postponed until 14th December.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Alan Peak</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p>

RESOLVED: To approve the necessary funds (£30k) to allow the procurement of the Visit Weston Website from the 2022 / 2023 budget provision to allow the design and build of the new website development ahead of the 1st April 2022 to ensure no disruption to the site.

239 Council HQ Premises Progress and PWLB Application for Loan

The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

The report outlined the background and progress since the September meeting and recommended that the full Building Survey and M&E reports which had been circulated to members be noted and approved and that the Policy and Finance Committee be authorised to make all further necessary decisions following exchange of contracts to conclude the acquisition.

The Town Clerk reported back the result of the negotiations authorised in September and the freehold purchase price (£450,000) and terms agreed. He said that the Town Council's Surveyor was in attendance to answer any questions regarding the surveys. He then passed the item over to the Deputy Town Clerk to speak to the Finance report.

PWLB Application for Loan

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

The report outlined options for funding the purchase of the building utilising the use of General Reserves and the level of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan required. The report also included any existing loans, other considerations and existing funding provisions for works required, environmental budgets, PPM budgets and grant opportunities for members' consideration.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there were sufficient monies' within the council's General Reserves to fund the purchase but that improvements would be needed over time and that members needed to decide on the value and term of the PWLB loan.

It was advised that the building was in relatively good condition and that the upgrading of heating/lighting could be funded from the environmental budget set aside for Grove House.

Surveys still to be undertaken were the Structural Engineer's, Asbestos and Fire Safety surveys.

Members should note that there was a small risk that if the PWLB loan failed then the council would be utilising a large percentage of its General Reserves.

Debate ensued. A member of the HQ working group reiterated the point that the building was in relatively good condition for its age and that in purchasing any building, there was always an element of risk.

The working group had cross party support and this was hoped to continue through the project.

The decision to purchase the building was to create more space for the Town Council's growing workforce and centralise its services and meetings thereby becoming more

efficient and this was the message that should be communicated to members of the public. The building also has the opportunity to provide community space for rent and it can be partly occupied whilst works are carried out.

Members were happy to utilise General Reserves to enable exchange of contracts ahead of receiving a PWLB loan and agreed that either the Policy & Finance Committee or full Council, depending on timings, could make all further necessary decisions following exchange of contracts to conclude the acquisition.

A member queried the legal minimum balance for General Reserves to which the Deputy Town Clerk clarified that there was no legal requirement, however best practice was 4 months' revenue which equated to (£600k) for the council and a replacement programme would be required.

A member alluded to some grant monies North Somerset Council had for external structural repairs to buildings and encouraged dual hatted members to investigate this.

It was asked if the subject of car parking had been explored further, to which a member of the working group clarified it had not.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

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

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Clerk's report, including the Survey and M&E reports, be noted and approved and Policy and Finance Committee be authorised to make all further necessary decisions following exchange of contracts to conclude the acquisition.
- 2) To approve the use of general reserves (cash flow) to allow the completion of the purchase (short term use) in the event the PWLB loan is not released in time (option 3.i of the DTC's report)

Discussion at the meeting then turned to the amount and term of a loan to be sought from the Public Works Loan Board.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Ian Porter

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

RESOLVED: That a loan of £200,000 be sought from the PWLB and a 20 year PWLB loan term and following figures be approved:

(1.1 of the DTC's report)

Revised figures following confirmation of purchase price £450,000

Funds from 2021 / 2022 Revenue Funds (GH restoration)	£55,000
Funds to be allocated from 2022/ 2023 Revenue budgets	£145,000
Funds from General Reserves (replaced over 3 years)	£150,000

	PWLB Loan requirement	£200,000
	TOTAL Funding	<u>£550,000</u>
	<u>Purchase price -</u>	<u>£450,000</u>
	Balance (EMR) for immediate works on purchase	£100,000
240	<p><i>The Town Mayor left the meeting at 7.43 pm. The Deputy Town Mayor took over as Chairman of the meeting from his seat.</i></p> <p>Weston BID – Ballot for Renewal</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The report recommended that the Town Clerk be instructed to cast the town council's votes in favour of renewal of the Weston BID.</p> <p>Members spoke in favour of the Weston BID and would be extremely disappointed to lose it, especially the withdrawal of the Street Warden's services.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roz Willis SECONDED BY: Councillor Ian Porter</p> <p>A member queried whether the council's contribution to the BID would change after its relocation to HQ.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the cost was (£6,000) which was nominal in comparison to NNDR costs.</p> <p>A member commented on the area the BID covered and suggested that this would be a good time to review this to include Grove Park.</p> <p>The Town Clerk believed that the area excluded Grove Park, however the Street Wardens were very helpful and in practice covered Grove Park for any issues reported.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be instructed to cast the town council's votes in favour of renewal of the Weston BID.</p> <p><i>The Mayor re-joined the meeting and resumed his place as Chairman of the meeting at 7.48 pm.</i></p>	
241	<p>Twenty's Plenty Campaign - correspondence with North Somerset Council</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reminded the Town Council that, at its last meeting in September, it had received a presentation from the Twenty's Plenty campaign group and had instructed the Town Clerk to write to North Somerset Council for their views on the topic.</p> <p>The report provided the reply from North Somerset Council which invited the town council to engage on a new policy and member's views were requested.</p>	

The Town Clerk advised that he would prefer members' involvement and recommended that he be instructed to arrange a meeting with North Somerset Council and suggested that three town councillors be invited to attend the meeting.

The Town Mayor informed that the campaign was gathering momentum and would become national policy for residential areas in the near future.

A dual hatted member reported that he had been involved with the North Somerset working party and would continue to do so.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Alan Peak

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and **carried**.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be instructed to arrange a meeting with North Somerset Council, and that interested town councillors contact the Town Clerk to attend the meeting.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7.53 pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Town Mayor