

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE WESTON MUSEUM ON  
MONDAY 25<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.36 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Ciaran Cronnelly (Town Mayor), Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mike Bell, Gill Bute, Joe Bambridge, Mark Canniford, James Clayton, Jemma Coles, John Crockford-Hawley, Catherine Gibbons, Simon Harrison-Morse, James Owen, Hugh Malyan, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Justyna Pecak-Michalowicz, Marcia Pepperall, Lisa Pilgrim, Caroline Reynolds, Robert Skeen, Timothy Taylor, Helen Thornton and Richard Tucker.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer /Manager), Fiona Gardner (Finance Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer), Inspector Graeme Hall (Avon & Somerset Police), Rachel Lewis (Birnbeck Pier – NSC), Mrs Amanda Lang and guest.

<b>151</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Annabelle Chard, Peter Crew, Charles Williams, Martin Williams, John Standfield, John Carson and Marc Aplin.
<b>152</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  There were none received.
<b>153</b>	<b>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated.  It was noted that Councillor Helen Thornton was not present and that the previous meeting had been held at the Town Hall.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Caroline Reynolds  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That with the above amendments, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
<b>154</b>	<b>To receive announcements and communications from The Town Mayor</b>  The Mayor's announcements and communications had been circulated prior to the meeting.  There had been 35 engagements attended by the Mayor and 5 by the Deputy Mayor; which was a total of 89 to date.  Significant events were: <u>27<sup>th</sup> July-Weston Lions Beer &amp; Ale Festival Opening</u> <u>29<sup>th</sup> July-Oppitts Addams Family performance at The Blakehay</u>

4<sup>th</sup> September A1 Camera club Exhibition  
14<sup>th</sup> September-High Sheriffs Garden Party  
15<sup>th</sup> September-Weston Collage Graduation  
40 Commando visit

Upcoming events were:

29<sup>th</sup> September-Weston Hospice Grand Opening  
4<sup>th</sup> October-Axe Scouts AGM & Annual Awards Evening  
28<sup>th</sup> October- RBL Poppy Appeal Launch  
12<sup>th</sup> Nov-Remembrance Service

It was noted that the Town Hall chambers were now back in use and that group leaders would decide where the next Town Council meeting would take place.

A thank you from the Worlebury Hillfort group for the grant they had received was conveyed to members and officers.

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

**155 Motion from the Town Mayor regarding Brigadier Thomas Lang**

The late Brigadier's wife Amanda Lang and guest were in attendance.

The Town Mayor introduced his motion and invited other members to share any words.

The Deputy Town Mayor shared his fond qualities of Tom 'Dignified humility with wry humour, tall, elegant and the most able and affable deputy Lieutenant for this part of Somerset.'

The Leader of the Council, Alan Peak also shared his fond memories of Tom and that his qualities will be sadly missed but treasured by the Town Council.

It was therefore

**PROPOSED BY:** The Town Mayor, Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

**SECONDED BY:** The Deputy Mayor, Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

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

**RESOLVED:** Weston Town Council expresses its sadness following the passing of Brigadier Thomas Lang, Deputy Lieutenant of Somerset, who was a long-time friend of Weston-super-Mare and instrumental in deepening our links with the armed forces community. The Council agrees to formally record its appreciation for his service and recognise his commitment to our town, and ask the Mayor to pass on our condolences to his family.

The Town Mayor added that a formal mark of the council's appreciation would be arranged with Amanda Lang.

*Mrs Amanda Lang and guest thanked the council for its motion and left with her guest at 7.20 pm.*

**156 Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-Super-Mare**

The Town Mayor welcomed and invited Inspector Graeme Hall to address the meeting

who reported on the following areas:

The appointment of Inspector Murray had really helped with staffing across the force.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Continued to be a challenge. Diversion and engagement tactics were used to target but when these methods failed young offenders were tried through the criminal justice system and placed in a Young Offenders Institute.

The force had experienced the busiest period ever since the Inspector had been in post. Operation Avatar was in motion and there was a real focus on ASB calls, with follow up calls implemented as routine.

In response to members' comments at the previous meeting regarding unauthorised encampments; there had been 9 incidents attended, with only 1 forced entry. The other incidents were unsecured premises to which work was being carried out with land owners on securing their premises. Training with patrol teams on enforcement powers had also been undertaken. It was noted that social media criticism had been received on this.

Operation Hibiscus had ended and good community work with Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) had commenced.

In response to questions from members, Inspector Hall advised that response times to ASB calls would depend on the threat and volume of other calls and that all calls would receive follow up call.

Persistent drug activity was reported in Milton ward and residents felt that their reports were not being acted on by the Police and that they were being a nuisance. The Inspector informed that the Police were aware of the problems and were looking into them. He encouraged the continuation of reporting as this helped to build a case and stressed that social media was not a report mechanism. Work with North Somerset Council (NSC) CCTV on data to target activity was carried out. The perception that nothing was being done was understood but there would be work going on and warrants awaited. If members wanted to advise him of particular addresses he would look into this.

Thank you to the Police for their response to the unauthorised encampments was conveyed and also to the officers who attended to the Hillside ward meetings, this was really helpful.

Keeping pressure on the central ward youth gangs was requested and it was enquired if there was a link between balaclava wearing and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the town centre to which it was advised that while balaclava wearing was not an offence, the Police were aware of the problems Bristol was having with this and motorbikes.

It was informed by a member that the Police had been working with Reset, a Special Educational Needs (SEND) organisation, on outreach with youths around town centre.

The Mayor asked for the Police's response to the ASB at Castlebatch. The Inspector reported that patrols had been increased and a patrol had attended the particular incident. The ASB was part of a wider issue which they were targeting.

Considering that most of the ASB was committed in either central or south ward a member asked if there was a way of looking at the neighbourhood policing structure and combining the teams to target. Inspector Hall explained that combining teams had been done before but staff and shifts was a factor. However, it was an interesting point and he would look at how this this could potentially work.

	<p><i>The Town Mayor thanked Inspector Hall for his report and he left at 7.40 pm</i></p>
157	<p><b>Birnbeck Pier Project</b> Presentation from Rachel Lewis, Heritage and Design Manager, North Somerset Council</p> <p>Rachel confirmed that NSC had bought the pier and was raising grant funding towards its restoration.</p> <p>Members thanked Rachel for the presentation which was wholly welcomed and exciting for the town.</p> <p>In response to members' questions regarding timescales for the project, Rachel informed that this would depend on the consenting process with wildlife and marine management agencies. However, work was planned to start in March 2025 with a hope to conclude by the beginning of 2026.</p> <p><i>The Town Mayor thanked Rachel for the presentation and she left at 8 pm.</i></p>
158	<p><b>Question Time for Committee Chairmen</b> Item at the request of group leaders</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that including Chairmen's Question time on Council agendas had been posed by some members and discussed at a Group Leaders meeting. The request was for members to decide. To aid discussion, he informed that the town council did not have the statutory powers of NSC and its services were less sensitive. No decisions could be made in a Question Time and the item would be for information only.</p> <p>Members were reminded that they could contact officers for information at any time, however ultimately, it was for members to decide.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Concerns were raised that the item would become political and the point made that the town council operated differently to NSC and without an executive committee system. officers and chairmen could be contacted directly and any time.</p> <p>It was the decision of the council to reject the item.</p>
159	<p><b>CCTV – Castle Batch - Recommendation from Community Services – 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b></p> <p>At the time of the Community Services Committee meeting, the council had received an estimated quote of £2,500 from NSC CCTV to upgrade the Castle Batch CCTV camera to infrared to which the committee recommended budget approval. Since the meeting, an actual quote had been received at an increased amount. The quote received from NSC was a total cost: £5,514.92 + VAT.</p> <p>The upgrade to the current camera provision would enable facial recognition and highly improved images to aid Police. There was no current budget provision available to cover this upgrade and as such approval would be needed to use General Reserves.</p> <p>Officers recommended the upgrade to protect the council's investment in Castle Batch to support the ongoing focus on Crime Prevention to the area with its community partners.</p> <p>Members were in full agreement and it was therefore</p>

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor James Clayton  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Roger Bailey

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

**RESOLVED:** To approve the use of General reserves (£5,514.92) to upgrade CCCTV cameras at Castlebatch play area with immediate effect.

**160 Proposed changes to Standing Orders**

The recommendations from the Policy & Finance Committee 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 had been previously circulated.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Helen Thornton

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

**RESOLVED:** That the Standing Orders as proposed be approved.

**161 To approve the use of Earmarked Reserves – reference from the Policy & Finance Committee on the 19th June 2023**

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

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the use of general reserves to the value of £67,040 for capital works at 32 Waterloo Street.
2. To note the need to include robust monetary provisions to be put place to replenish General reserves to reflect requirements of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and recommended reserve levels, considering predicted financial positions at the end of 2023/2024.

**162 Update from the HQ Working Party**

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

Members action was required as further works were needed outside of the original scheme for approval as detailed within the report (appendix attached additional cost of £16,583.10. To undertake these works whilst the scaffold is in place under the current work programme would require approval to use General Reserves for the additional sum

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. To note the update report and intention to: submit advertising permission for the exterior signage
  - a) Resubmit plans for the front ramp once all Highways conditions had been fully explored and considered

- Submit retrospective Listed Building Consent for the stonework repairs which were considered urgent.
2. Approve the use of General Reserves to a value of £16,583.10 for additional stone works at 32 Waterloo Street to be undertaken within the current work programme of work.

**163 Motion under Standing Order 11**

Councillors Helen Thornton and Caroline Reynolds were invited to present their motion to council.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Helen Thornton  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Caroline Reynolds

I propose that Weston-super-Mare Town Council stop the use of the outdated and sexist term ‘Chairman’ and replace with the gender neutral and inclusive word ‘chair’ in all council documentation. This will send a clear message to town councillors, whatever their gender identity, that they have an equal right to chair the Town Council and its Committees.

An amendment to the motion was proposed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

“That Weston Town Council’s documentation will henceforth use the word ‘Chair’ without gender identification”.

Debate ensued and comments were made for and against the original motion.

The amendment was accepted by both the proposer and seconder and a vote was taken and accordingly it was **carried:**

**RESOLVED:** That Weston Town Council’s documentation will henceforth use the word Chair without gender identification.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.36 pm.

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

Town Mayor