

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL ON  
MONDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 2024**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 7.56 pm

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Samantha Bishop (Committee & Office Manager), Rebecca Saunders (Civic & Committee Officer), Molly Maher (Development Officer), Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Inspector Lee Kerslake (Avon & Somerset Police), Paul Borthwick (MOP), Alan Rice (MOP) and Daniel Aldridge (MOP).

Daniel Aldridge (Head of Policy and the British Computing Society) addressed the meeting by asking the council to enhance its role in championing mental health in tackling the online safety crisis, safeguarding children and young adults. Other councils had started to lead in regional launches across the country and the town council could lead the South West in this. It was noted that the 26<sup>th</sup> January was great mental health day.

The Mayor thanked Daniel and encouraged him to submit his request in writing to the council where it would be discussed by group leaders accordingly.

**301 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Pilgrim and Marc Aplin.

It was noted that Councillor Bambridge was absent from the meeting.

**302 To receive Declarations of Interest**

There were none received.

**303 To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

The minutes had been previously circulated.

A member noted that Councillor Marc Aplin's own apologies had not been received and he was also not in attendance and asked if members' attendance was monitored?

The Town Clerk advised that members' attendance was monitored and the 6-month rule had not yet been breached.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Maria Pepperall

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes be approved and signed by the Mayor as a true record of the meeting.

304

**To receive announcements and communications from The Town Mayor**

The Mayor's announcements and communications had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Mayor gave apologies noting the numbers reported were not accurate.

There had been 59 engagements attended by the Mayor and 4 by the Deputy Mayor ; which was a total of 215 to date.

**SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:**

14<sup>th</sup> November-Christmas Card Competition Closed

20<sup>th</sup> November -Trans Remembrance Day

23<sup>rd</sup> November-VANS Annual Conference

28<sup>th</sup> November- Diwali Festival of Light

2<sup>nd</sup> December Christmas Light Switch On

Thanks, were given to all for their support and their attendance at a very well attended event, collaborated with by Eat Festivals.

12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> December-Hildesheim Visit

An extremely worthwhile and proactive trip, visiting Foodbanks, Tourist Information's, Museums and forging business twinning relationships where gifts to the towns were exchanged.

16<sup>th</sup> December-Christmas Card entries exhibition

24<sup>th</sup> December-Somewhere to Go Christmas Visit

6<sup>th</sup> January- Multicultural Christmas Celebration

12<sup>th</sup> January RBL Great Winter Get Together

20<sup>th</sup> January-RNLI Burns Night Celebration

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

27<sup>th</sup> January-Annual Braille Chess Competition

3<sup>rd</sup> Feb-Axe District Scouts Gang Show

8<sup>th</sup> Feb-Notable Club Visit

16<sup>th</sup> February-Old Manor Inn reopening

2<sup>nd</sup> March-Mayor's Marathon

More information was to come on this.

10<sup>th</sup> March-RNLI Weston Freedom

The Mayor congratulated Becky Walsh for the completion and successful achievement of a Diploma with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) which is a professional body in the United Kingdom for public relations practitioners. A certificate of this achievement was presented to her.

A formal vote of thanks to Malcolm Nicholson, the retiring Town Clerk, for his work for the town over the past 14 years was

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

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

The Town Clerk kindly accepted and thanked members for their kind words. He had enjoyed working for the Town Council over 14 years and wished it every success for the future.

It was then:

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Mayor's report be noted.

### 305 Neighbourhood and Response Policing in Weston-Super-Mare

The Town Mayor welcomed and introduced Inspector Lee Kerslake, to address the meeting

Inspector Kerslake informed that he was Acting Inspector, whilst Graham Hall was unavailable. He had been in the post for over one month and has good knowledge of the area through his previous positions and hoped for a smooth transition.

He gave a picture of policing and statistics and reported on the following areas:

The significant anti-social behaviour (ASB) which people and businesses were very worried about was acknowledged. In the last 3 months this was 15% up on last years 2,401 incidents. This included proactively sought crimes which were associated with a particular offender who was in remand. The Police were working across multiagencies to target and support this such as NSC youth offending service. The feedback since the offender had been off the street, was that the severity of the issues had reduced resulting in a positive impact in this area.

Worle had reported a significant improvement since 'no2' on the Police's list had been arrested. 'No3' on the list was a prolific shoplifter and it was noted that shoplifting items under the value £50 are not always reported to the Police, as the Police could not attend. However, lots of low value items added up and can damage small businesses, so recording and reporting these thefts were important so the police could deal with issues and build cases to enable criminal behaviour orders to be raised.

The town centre ASB gang was being addressed with ASB orders. The Police were aware of ASB in Sand Bay at the commodore and travellers at West Wick causing problems with residents and schools.

Over the Christmas period, arrests were made in connection with cannabis supply, which was reported to the Police. Again, the importance of reporting was reiterated so that Police could tackle this.

Resourcing was fairly stable with the town centre team awaiting a vacancy to be filled. It remained a priority to preserve WsM's resources.

In response to questions from members, Inspector Kerslake informed that the travellers at West Wick were being actively targeted with Police powers as they were causing significant disruption to the members of the public.

He confirmed that drinking was associated with the ASB in the town centre, but also significant H&S issues with bikes and buses. The Police were working with children's social care and youth offending services to try and help. Operation Avatar was lost over Xmas due to budget cuts but this was being reinstated using officer overtime.

The Police were aware that some of the big chain stores in Bristol were introducing bag searches to try and take effective control of shoplifting. This was to give staff and security more powers but was controversial.

Of the 2401 crimes recorded, 448 of these were thefts of which 80 were proactively

	<p>investigated. If members wished for further statistics, he was happy to provide them.</p> <p>The message is to always report even small thefts.</p> <p>The Town Mayor thanked Chief Inspector Kerslake for his report and reiterated the importance of public reporting of crimes to the Police.</p> <p><i>Inspector Kerslake left at 7.42 pm.</i></p>
<b>306</b>	<p><b>To receive the Notes of the Youth Council Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023</b></p> <p>It was highlighted that the notes of the October meeting had been previously circulated.</p> <p><i>Councillor Mark Canniford left the meeting at 7.42 pm and returned at 7.44 pm</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Hugh Malyan left the meeting at 7.44 pm</i></p> <p>A request was made to receive more up to date minutes of the Youth Council Meetings noting the one circulated appeared out of date. In response members were advised that none had yet been received for the meetings that had taken place in December and January.</p> <p>Members were advised that a recruitment drive had been undertaken and that there were now 8 active members on the Youth Council.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the latest notes of Youth Council Meetings taken place, be circulated to members.</p>
<b>307</b>	<p><b>To approve the Calendar of Meetings for the year 2024/2025</b></p> <p>The proposed Calendar of Meetings for the year 2024/2025 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>It was noted that the date of the Expenditure &amp; Governance Working Party on the 17<sup>th</sup> July needed to be amended to the 18<sup>th</sup> July.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and accordingly it was <b>carried</b>.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That with the above amendment, the Calendar of Meetings for the year 2024/2025 be approved and issued.</p>
<b>308</b>	<p><b>To approve the latest Contract Evaluation for 32 Waterloo Street</b></p> <p>The Minute Extract of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the building work was on track and a meeting with the council's surveyor was scheduled for the following day.</p> <p>Members were requested to approve £38,260 from general reserves noting that £16,700 had already been approved within the total reported sum of £55,000.</p> <p>It was noted that the report be amended to read 'indicative' costs.</p>

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

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

**RESOLVED:** To approve the latest contract valuation at £55,000 and to fund £ 38,260 from general reserves.

**309 To accept the Old Town Quarry – Community Ownership Fund Grant Award**

The Minute Extract of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and report of the Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated.

*Councillor Hugh Malyan returned at HM – back at 7.48 pm*

*Councillor James Clayton left at 7.49 pm and returned at 7.51 pm*

When questioned The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that North Somerset Council were working with the recent occupiers.

It was confirmed The Old Town Quarry project would report to the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee and that any subsequent 'Working groups' would be decided at this committee accordingly.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

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

**RESOLVED:** To approve the recommendations from the Policy and Finance Committee as follows:

1. To receive the grant application and adopt the Business Plan.
2. To recommend acceptance of the grant award to the Town Council.

To note resolutions made by the Policy and Finance Committee as follows:

1. To approve the timescale for Lease completion and procurement for the Quarry restoration and improvement in accordance with the Business Plan
2. To approve the provision of £20,000 recognised for professional fees to appoint an external project manager/ consultant with immediate effect to undertake the project works and evaluation for the COP grant. This would still sit under the supervision of the DTC whilst working alongside the Senior Development Officer to enable the grant to be completed within required timescales and provide the essential continuity to the project. The successful applicant would need to have demonstrable experience in grant project delivery of this kind and knowledge of council processes and procedures ideally.
3. That the suggestion to reinstat e the Climate Change Officer post be deferred pending investigation and options on staffing structure and costs.

**310 Town Council Budget and Precept for the year 2024/2025**

The Town Council Budget and Precept requirements for the year 2024/2025, the report of the Deputy Town Clerk including Policy and Finance Committee resolutions on the budget and the Band D figures from North Somerset Council had been previously circulated.

Total Budget requirement       £3,135,840  
 Total Precept requirement       £3,135,840  
 Band D Estimated numbers        26,670.10 Increased by (103.10 properties)  
 Band D cost £117.58 (6.39% on previous year)

It was therefore

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Gill Bute

To approve:

1. The net revenue budget for the year 2024/2025 as reported at£3,135,840.
2. The Town Council precept value at £3,135,840 for submission to North Somerset Council.

Councillor Helen Thornton formally requested that her vote against the decision to decrease the climate change budget and remove the Climate Change Officer post be noted in light of the council decision pledge to become carbon neutral by 20230 and flood risks to Weston.

It was pointed out that the flooding maps produced by the Environment Agency assessed flood risk did not consider any sea defences.

The importance of Climate Change was echoed and should be considered in every aspect of the town council’s our work.

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

**RESOLVED:** To approve:

1. The net revenue budget for the year 2024/2025, as reported, at £3,135,840.
2. The Town Council precept requirement value at £3,135,840 for submission to North Somerset Council.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7.56 pm.

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

Town Mayor