

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT
THE TOWN HALL ON
MONDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2014**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.55 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Roz Willis (Town Mayor and Chairman), Peter Crew (Leader of the Town Council) Raymond Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Mark Canniford, James Clayton, John Crockford-Hawley, Peter Fox, David Hitchins, Jan Holloway, Cyril King, Michal Kus, Mike Lyall, Frederick Parsons, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Lisa Pilgrim, Len Purnell, Sonia Russe, Simon Stokes, Tim Taylor, Richard Tucker, Clive Webb and Rose Warwick

IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Jennifer Lawley (Committee Officer), Bethan Evans (Weston Mercury), Thomas and Geraldine Burgess and Delyth Lloyd-Evans (Christmas Shoebox Appeal), Stewart Castle and Lew Hartley (Uphill Village Society) and Joan Dunne (Deputy Mayoress)

The Town Mayor invited Reverend Keith Berry-Davis to say prayers.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Town Mayor invited questions from parishioners.

The Town Mayor welcomed Lew Hartley and Stewart Castle, members of Uphill Village Society, who were in attendance to inform of the recent consultation document received from North Somerset regarding the de-designation of Weston-super-Mare Uphill Slipway as bathing water.

Mr Hartley thanked members for the opportunity to highlight recent events with regard to Weston-super-Mare Uphill Slipway.

The de-designation proposal for Weston-super-Mare Uphill Slipway (Uphill Beach) bathing water had a consultation period of 16 days dating from the 15th August until the 31st August 2014. Mr Hartley considered the consultation period far too short and advised that more time was needed but this had been denied.

Mr Hartley raised his concerns about the sewage discharge at Black Rock located at the mouth of the River Axe and the sewage plant further up the river. Water quality still required monitoring but with de-designation this would cease. He questioned North Somerset Council's statistics and their monitoring of bathers, and the reasons for North Somerset Council's proposed application to DEFRA. There was no cost saving involved by de-designation of Uphill Beach except perhaps the cessation of maintenance of the beach.

Mr Hartley thanked Councillor Roger Bailey, Ward Councillor for Broadoak and Uphill, for all his support.

The Mayor informed Mr Hartley and Mr Castle that consideration and debate would occur under agenda item 8 'To consider a Consultation on Uphill Beach' and that they were welcome to stay or leave the meeting if they so wished.

Mr Hartley and Mr Castle chose to remain the duration of the meeting.

186.	<p>To receive Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Porter, Holly Young, Keith Morris, Clive Darke, Derek Mead, Mike Bell and Claire Kingsbury-Bell.</p> <p>The Mayor advised of Councillor Bell's recent eye operation and informed that a card had been sent wishing him a speedy recovery.</p> <p>The Mayor welcomed the Town Council's newest Town Councillor, James Clayton, wishing him well and hoping that he would enjoy his term of office with the Town Council.</p>
187.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
188.	<p>To approve the accuracy of the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 7th July 2014.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be signed and approved.</p>
189.	<p>To receive announcements and communications from the Town Mayor</p> <p>The Mayor put forward a motion that Standing Orders be suspended by resolution (Standing Order 41.1) in relation to the following agenda item:</p> <p>Agenda item 4.1 Christmas Shoebox Appeal – Presentation</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>RESOLVED that: Standing Orders be suspended.</p> <p>The Mayor welcomed Geraldine Burgess.</p> <p>Ms Burgess had brought along a number of shoeboxes wrapped in Christmas paper and informed that the shoeboxes were part of 'Operation Christmas Child'. The gift of a shoebox containing toys, school supplies, hygiene items and other items such as a hat, cap or gloves was a drop of happiness to children who live in a world of poverty. For many, it would be the first present that they have ever received and lets them know that somebody somewhere cares. Boxes could be ordered online and Ms Burgess advised of the pickup process and distribution.</p> <p>Ms Burgess thanked Councillors and said that she would be happy even if only one box was filled.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Kus</p> <p>RESOLVED that: Standing Orders resume.</p> <p><i>Ms Burgess left the meeting at 7.10 pm.</i></p>

	<p>The Town Mayor hoped that all Councillors would take a shoebox and return the gifted shoebox to the Mayor's Parlour. If Councillors had any queries they were to contact her Civic Officer. <i>(Ms Burgess had advised that a lorry was booked for the 29th November for the distribution of the shoeboxes).</i></p> <p><i>Councillor Richard Tucker joined the meeting at 7.15 pm.</i></p> <p>The Town Mayor informed of the many events she had already attended and of those to come, advising that she would be dying her hair pink for charity on April Fool's Day. In total, to-date, there had been 105 engagements, 93 of which the Town Mayor had attended and 12 of which the Deputy Mayor had attended. <i>(A list of all events attended between the 7th July and 14th September 2014 can be obtained from the Town Mayor's Civic Officer).</i></p> <p>The Town Mayor gave her personal thanks to Councillor Raymond Armstrong the Deputy Mayor for his assistance in attending 3 events on her behalf when she was taken ill.</p> <p>The Deputy Mayor addressed the meeting and advised that Jennifer Bindon who had agreed to be Deputy Mayoress in May 2014 was unable to continue due to illness. The Town Mayor informed that she had sent a card of thanks to Jennifer Bindon and had wished her well on behalf of the Town Council.</p> <p>The Deputy Mayor introduced Joan Dunne who had been a Councillor between 2003 and 2007 and informed that she had agreed to be his Deputy Mayoress. The Town Mayor welcomed the Deputy Mayoress and hoped that she would enjoy her term of office.</p>
190.	<p>Political Balance and Review of Committee Allocations</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda and a supplemental report was tabled.</p> <p>Councillor Tony Probert sadly passed away in June following a long illness, leaving a vacant seat on the Town Council for Wyvern Ward. At the Town Council's meeting on the 7th July 2014, it was agreed to wait to review the political balance and committee allocation until the next full Town Council meeting on the 15th September 2014 following the outcome of the by-election. The Town Council's political balance before the by-election stood at Conservative 15, Labour 7, Liberal Democrat 7 and Independent 1.</p> <p>The result of the by-election on Thursday 11th September 2014 was the election of James Clayton as Town Councillor for Wyvern Ward. The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Clayton had indicated that he wished to join the Labour Group of the Town Council. The Town Council's political balance had, therefore, reverted to the position before July, namely Conservative 15, Labour 8, Liberal Democrat 7 and Independent 1. Accordingly, based on the customary method of calculation, the Town Clerk recommended that there be no change to committee allocations between political groups as a result of the by-election. However, this was an opportunity for political groups to put forward changes to individual Councillors on Committees which could then be approved en bloc by the Town Council.</p> <p>Councillor Tim Taylor, Group Leader of the Labour Party, put forward his proposals and accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Councillor Tim Taylor be replaced by Councillor James Clayton as a Committee Member of the Community Services Committee. 2. Councillor Simon Stokes be replaced by Councillor Alan Peak as a Committee Member of the Community Services Committee. 3. Councillor Alan Peak be replaced by Councillor Simon Stokes as a Committee Member of the Tourism and Leisure Committee
191.	<p>Renewal of the Leases of Grove House and Grove Lodge</p> <p>A minute extract from the Policy & Finance Committee and correspondence from North Somerset Council had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>At the last meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee on the 18th August 2014, a recommendation was motioned that the leases for Grove House and Grove Lodge be approved at the next full Town Council meeting on the 15th September 2014.</p> <p>A letter from North Somerset Council dated the 4th August 2014, set out without prejudice and subject to Contract and North Somerset Council's approval, outlined the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both leases to be granted for a term of 25 years to replace existing leases. 2. The rent for the House to be fixed at a peppercorn for the whole term of the lease. 3. The rent for the Lodge to be £5,000 pa subject to 5 yearly rent increases in line with RPI increases. 4. Both leases to be granted on full repairing and insuring terms and conditions. 5. All other terms and conditions to be as in the existing leases. 6. Each party to pay their own legal costs in entering into the leases. <p>The granting of the 2 new leases were conditional on the Town Council making a one-off contribution of £25,000 to North Somerset Council towards the costs incurred in repairing Grove Park's bandstand.</p> <p>The Town clerk reiterated that he had negotiated a tenant's break clause to coincide with the five yearly rent reviews for Grove Lodge. The Leader of the Council informed that the terms set out afforded security of tenure and were fair.</p> <p>Debate ensued with the view expressed by a Councillor that although he did not object in principle to the negotiations and terms set out for the leasing of Grove House and Grove Lodge, he was perturbed at the one off payment to North Somerset Council of £25,000 for the repair of the bandstand which he felt required repair due only to North Somerset Council's long term neglect and lack of maintenance. With reference to future maintenance of the bandstand, Members referred to the correspondence from North Somerset Council which informed that they were unable to commit a future Council to funding decisions which did not mean that the bandstand would not be maintained by North Somerset Council but simply that they were unable to provide an assurance/guarantee. Attention was drawn to other facilities neglected by North Somerset Council, adding that the Town Council should take credit for their excellent planned maintenance of their own assets and facilities.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the retail price increase index and the subject of 5 yearly rent increases for Grove Lodge set by North Somerset Council. The Town Clerk agreed that commercial rents had decreased but felt negotiations had reached a reasonable compromise which included five yearly break clauses and in his opinion was a good agreement.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Crew</p>

	<p>SECONDED BY: Councillor Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was unanimously:</p> <p>RESOLVED that: The terms and conditions of the 25 year leases as negotiated between the Town Council and North Somerset Council for Grove House and Grove Lodge be approved by the Town Council.</p>
192.	<p>Renewal of the Hutton Moor Skate Park Lease</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Council's ten year peppercorn lease for Hutton Moor Skate Park terminated on the 23rd November 2013. The existing lease did not cover the entire site and an increase in the area of the site was agreed informally some years ago. The Skate Park was extremely popular, 10 years old and nearing the end of its useful life. A redesigned new facility could cost somewhere between £50,000 to £70,000 for a similar type of facility or £90,000 to £120,000 for a longer term facility constructed from concrete.</p> <p>The Tourism & Leisure Committee had agreed on the 7th April 2014 to renew the lease of the Skate Park at Hutton Moor for a further period on the terms reported for a term of 10 years. However, on the 9th June 2014 the Tourism & Leisure Committee agreed, subject to amendment of the proposal and Heads of Terms, for a long term lease of 20 years to allow for the investment required to re-design the Skate Park. In the meantime steps were being taken to extend the life of the facility which would give the Skate Park a useful life of up to 4 years and allow time for grant applications and the encouragement of skateboarders to form a group for fundraising and to take on day to day operational responsibilities with the support of the Town Council.</p> <p>Although the Tourism & Leisure Committee had approved the following terms, the acquisition of land by freehold or long lease requires the approval of the Town Council.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leased premises shall be both the original and extended areas 2. Term shall be for a period of 20 years 3. Rent to continue at a peppercorn 4. Otherwise on similar terms and conditions as the lease dated 24th November 2003 5. Each party to meet its own reasonable surveyors and legal costs 6. Town council to meet the cost of registering the lease at the Land Registry <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was</p> <p>RESOLVED that: The Town Council approves the renewal of the Skate Park Lease on the terms reported.</p>
193.	<p>To consider a Consultation on Uphill Beach</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>North Somerset currently have four designated bathing waters on its coastline, Clevedon Beach, Weston-super-Mare Sand Bay, Weston Main and Weston-super-Mare Uphill Slipway</p>

	<p>(Uphill Beach). In a consultation paper, North Somerset Council advised that they had been monitoring Uphill Beach's use during 2012 and 2013 at peak times during June, July and August, the results for which indicated that the beach was underused as bathing water, the criteria being, a bather was anyone swimming or paddling in the water. Other water users are not affected by this process. De-designation would mean that bathing would no longer be promoted at Weston-super-Mare Uphill Slipway, signage would be installed advising against bathing and water quality testing would cease in the area.</p> <p>The Town Clerk received notice on the 15th August 2014 that North Somerset Council were consulting the Town Council and others on the proposal to de-designate the beach at Uphill as a bathing beach. The Town Clerk informed that he had no comments or expertise on the matter and ultimately it was the decision of the publically elected Councillors to respond to the consultation. However, the Town Clerk reiterated that a two week consultation period was inadequate and although officially the consultation period was at an end, the Town Council may still wish to respond.</p> <p>During public participation Committee Members had been informed of Uphill Village Society's concerns regarding de-designation of Uphill Beach.</p> <p>The Town Mayor invited Councillor Roger Bailey the Ward Councillor for Broadoak and Uphill to address the meeting. Councillor Bailey criticised the consultation period which equated to 9 working days including a Bank Holiday and reiterated concerns regarding the cessation of monitoring the water. North Somerset Council should look at their procedures. The consultation was targeted at people with access to the website and emails. Some older people do not have this facility. Councillor Bailey advised that he was totally against de-designation of Uphill Beach and felt that there was no merit in doing so. Simon Andrews from North Somerset Council recommended de-designation but did not actually provide the reasons for his recommendation. He considered that de-designation was 'bad' psychology for tourists. Would North Somerset Council continue to monitor the beach, empty the bins or clear the sands? There was also the question of water quality, pollution from the river Axe and warning signs not to bath – all negatives, resulting in bad feelings.</p> <p>Debate ensued during which it was highlighted that tourists consider Weston Main and Uphill Beach one stretch of beach. All the speakers opposed de-designation.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Town Clerk write to North Somerset Council in the strongest terms that the Town Council is opposed to de-designation of Weston-super-Mare Uphill Slipway and that the Town Council is appalled at the consultation period of two weeks. 2. Group Leaders and Councillor Bailey have sight of the letter to North Somerset Council.
194.	<p>Final Approval of the HLF Museum Stage 2 Grant Application</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk for the Community Services Committee dated the 1st September 2014 had been circulated together with a minute extract and the report of the Responsible Financial Officer.</p> <p>The Town Council had been successful with the First Stage Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in November 2012 and the Town Clerk informed that this was the last</p>

	<p>opportunity to review the project and approve the submission of the Second Stage Application for the HLF in November 2014.</p> <p>His report informed of the agreement reached in principle to commit money from reserves as match funding to support the grant application which was still to be finalised at a sum of up to £1 million and further supplementary documents requiring approval before the Second Stage Application submission date of 6th November 2014 with financial arrangements being finalised through the Policy & Finance Committee. The supplementary papers were agreed during Museum Working Party meetings and subsequently approved by the Community Services Committee on the 1st September 2014.</p> <p>The Town Clerk had emailed the supplementary documentation to all Town Councillors in readiness for full Town Council, hardcopies of which were available at the meeting with plans of the new museum displayed.</p> <p>Financial projections would probably change up until October. The Responsible Financial Officer's report illustrated second round costs of a draft working document dated the 5th September 2014 giving two options – Plan A and B. Plan A was the grand plan and Plan B the scaled back version.</p> <p>Debate ensued. The Leader of the Council gave tribute to Councillor Crockford-Hawley in recognition of his work with the HLF bid and new museum. In response, Councillor Crockford-Hawley informed that his participation had been an honour and he recalled the days when the museum was threatened with closure and abandonment. Although there was no guarantee that the HLF bid would be successful, it was the Town Council's faith in taking the risk to preserve the museum. It was now coming to fruition and future generations would thank the Town Council.</p> <p>The Town Mayor informed that all Town Councillors currently in office would be invited to the opening of the new museum in 2016 including the last administration.</p> <p><i>Councillor Hitchins left the meeting at 7.50 pm and rejoined the meeting at 7.53 pm</i></p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Kus</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The final submission be approved for the HLF Second Stage Grant Application as set out and based on the details circulated. 2. The Policy & Finance Committee be authorised to make any last minute financial or service adjustments that may be required.
	<p>There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7.55 pm</p> <p>Signed: Dated: Town Mayor</p>