

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 18TH JANUARY 2021**

Meeting Commenced: 7.02 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.47 pm

PRESENT: Councillors James Clayton (Chairman), Roger Bailey, Gill Bute, Sarah Codling, John Crockford-Hawley, Ciaran Cronnelly, Peter Fox, Peter McAleer, and Helen Thornton.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Ian Porter, Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Grounds Manager), Samantha Bishop & Emma Williams (Committee Officers), Ali Waller (Youth Services) and Claire Arbery (West of England Institute of Technology (WEIT)).

132	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roz Willis with no substitution. Councillors Mark Aplin, Gillian Carpenter and Ella Sayce were absent from the meeting.
133	At this point in the meeting, the Chairman was advised that there was an address from a member of the public in relation to item 7 on the agenda. <i>Standing orders were suspended at 7.03 pm to allow for the address.</i> Claire Arbery, Director of West of England Institute of Technology (WEIT) spoke to support of the Weston College proposal for funding from the Community Events Fund. The proposal had been previously circulated, detailing aspirations to bring an autonomous pod to Weston-super-Mare. She advised that by receiving support and financial contributions from various stakeholders in the town, that a four-day showcase event for the pod, could be held in Weston-super-Mare in July 2021. The pods were manufactured and operated by 'Westfield', but worked in partnership with Weston College.
134	To receive Declarations of Interest There were no declarations on interest received.
135	To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Community Service Committee meeting held on 2020 The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda. Councillor Sarah Codling requested that minute 75, her declaration of interest be amendment to reflect that she was not a volunteer Street Pastor. The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Roz Willis had requested that her declaration of interest also be amended to reflect that she was a volunteer street pastor.

A member questioned whether the Literary Festival Working Group had taken place and if not, could one be arranged.

An update on the resolution that *'the Council award £20,000 towards the Winter Lights and that the remaining £12,000 application be considered at a future Community Services or Town Council meeting'* was requested.

The Town Clerk advised that he had received no further communication on the event.

The Deputy Town Clerk added that the Heritage Arts and Culture Committee (HAC) were authorised to monitor the expenditure for the event and so there was cross over between committees. The budget would be held as the event had been postponed due to COVID and weather restrictions.

A member informed that the second event was an outdoor event planned for people who had lost their lives to COVID and that clarity was needed on whether the event could still go ahead.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there was a HAC meeting planned that week, where Culture Weston would be present and the question could be put to them.

Councillor Roger Bailey requested that minute number 82 be amended to reflect that he proposed the motion and then requested a progress update on the Uphill Play area.

The Grounds Manager informed that Somerset Wood Recycling had replaced the fencing and that the bins and benches had been agreed and play equipment ordered. It was hoped that works would be completed by the end of the month.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Fox

RESOLVED: That with the above amendments, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

136 At this point in the meeting, the Chairman brought forward item 7 for discussion.

To consider Weston College proposal for funding from the Community Events Fund

The proposal for Future Tech event at Weston super Mare and a request for funding from the Town Council had been previously circulated to members.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the proposal linked into the council's newly adopted Strategy (page16) and the request for £30,000 funding from the council's Community Events budget, was before members for consideration.

In response to members' questions on how the £30,000 would be spent, Claire Arbery informed that the money would be used to pay for vehicle licenses, site surveys, risk assessments, event management plans, street furniture and technical fees.

Claire reported that she had been in communications with North Somerset Council Events team and confirmed that it would be a three-four-day event.

Like events had been run and very successful in the Lake District, Queen Elizabeth Park and Cribbs Causeway. As the events were not run by WEIT Claire was unsure of how the success was monitored.

A member questioned the location of the terminal and vehicle routes.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Ian Porter volunteered to aid debate and declared a personal interest as an employee of Weston College. He informed that the terminal would be located outside of the Odeon.

In response to a question, Claire explained that 'Future Weston' as referred to in her proposal was a working title name.

It was queried how much North Somerset Council were contributing to the cost of the event, to which Claire advised that there was no contribution from them at that point.

The proposal outlined 'anchor partners' and the committee wanted to know had they also been approached for funding and had any been forthcoming.

In terms of the costs for licenses, a member questioned whether this was necessary as the locations for the events were owned by both North Somerset and Weston College.

Claire reported that the event was funded by the Department for Education, but for the use of the buildings only, with no revenue funding. The other anchor partners had been approached and would fund the event in time. Their priority would be the schools. It was Weston's opportunity to be forward thinking and lead from the front by supporting the event. Claire was working with the Placemaking Agency, North Somerset Council and Weston College and the proposals were an opportunity to showcase what could happen. Any Town Council branding would be included to promote the council's sponsorship. There would only be one indoor event scheduled at the Winter Gardens where social distancing measures would be put in place. Most of the event would be located within the Italian Gardens. There were community benefits such as students learning how the technical coding worked and take them forward into future employment.

Members were reluctant to commit to the full £30,000 and felt that other funders should be formally approached including the statutory highway and transport authority for Weston.

To aid debate, the Town Clerk informed that the town council could act under the General Power of Competence and that there was a section within the Town Council's Strategy where 'Autonomous vehicles' were to be promoted.

Debate on whether the town council should fund the event commenced.

Claire added that the event would attract international interest and that there were ways of varying the pods.

A member was concerned about the short duration of the event and considered it not value for money.

It was therefore

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton

'To commit £5,000 to the event in return for town council branding of the pods and to set an example to other possible funders to come forward.'

The Chairman advised that members should not wait for the offer of financial support from North Somerset Council. The town council was one of the largest in the country and should operate proactively in promoting its town.

The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that the proposal had been received as an application for the Community Events budget. Claire had been provided with the Town Council's Strategy in order to create the proposal. She advised that the council had £30,000 uncommitted expenditure within its 2020/21 Community Events budget and had budgeted for £50,000 within its draft 2021/22 budget. Any underspent funds would then be placed into general reserves.

Councillor Ian Porter reported that the test demonstrations so far had been internationally recognised and Weston would benefit greatly from hosting an event. Other interest parties such as the Pier and Placemaking Agency were interested in the new technology. The College was investing a lot of its time and resources in the event. It would be a great way of getting the elderly and disabled people around and would attract families. The new technology would pave the way for the future and Weston should be part of it. The council had pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 and so investment such as this was needed now to achieve this.

In response to a question regarding the pod capacity, it was informed that the pod could hold between 4-6 people and could accommodate wheelchairs. The pods could be designed in many ways and would be wrapped in vinyl branding.

The proposal was

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter McAleer

An AMENDMENT was then

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

SECONDED BY: Councillor Gill Bute

To commit £10,000 to the event in return for town council branding of the pods, to set an example to other possible funders to come forward.

Claire advised that a commitment from the town council would give her leverage when approaching other funders such as Bamboo Technology and Leonardo Helicopters. They had not been formally approached or given the level of detailed proposal that the town council had had at this stage.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT and **lost**.

A vote on the substantive motion was then taken and **carried** and it was therefore:

RESOLVED: To commit £5,000 to the event in return for town council branding of the pods, to set an example to other possible funders to come forward.

It was recorded that the Chairman voted against this proposal.

	<p>Members requested that any future proposals for funding should be presented to members in advance of committee meetings to allow for informal discussions to take place.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Claire for her address to the committee.</p> <p><i>Claire thanked members and left the meeting at 8.19 pm.</i></p>
<p>137</p>	<p>References from other Committees</p> <p>There were none to report.</p>
<p>138</p>	<p>Management Reports:</p> <p>138.1 Youth Services</p> <p>The report of the Operations Manager – YMCA had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Chairman invited Ali Waller to add anything to her report.</p> <p>Ali added that as a result of the 3rd COVID lockdown, the team had been continuing their services remotely as well as delivering meals into the community.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Ali and her team for their work and dedication.</p> <p>The Town Clerk added that the YMCA were a very important partner of the council and had been an invaluable support in dealing with the effects of COVID and homelessness.</p> <p>Members concurred the comments of the Chairman and thanked Ali and her team for all their work.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report of the Operations Manager - YMCA be noted.</p> <p><i>Ali left the meeting at 8.24 pm.</i></p> <p>138.2 Grounds</p> <p>The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Grounds Manager added that the Grounds team had been operational throughout the entire pandemic and that there had been a significant increase in cemetery services and funerals.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked the team for their continued work.</p> <p>A member queried the reference to cemetery signs within the Grounds Manager’s report.</p> <p>The Grounds Manager reported that the team had seen a significant increase in vehicles entering the cemetery and at speed. Speed bumps had been considered but would not be appropriate for funeral hearses. There had been an increase in families using the cemetery as a place to visit and exercise and there had been a near miss with a child at the top entrance of the cemetery. The signs would be a good reference point and would be in keeping with the facility.</p>

The Deputy Town Clerk added that the signs were required from a Health and Safety and Insurance perspective.

The Grounds Manager explained that the team were very keen on the signage for these reasons and also to keep safe the cemetery cat which had been hit by a car in the past.

It was queried as to why the cemetery had become a more visited place and were there cemetery plots available.

The Grounds Manager felt it was to do with the lockdown restrictions specifying only local exercise to be taken. There had also been a surge in funerals due to COVID and winter. In relation to available plots, there were 18 new single depth plots only for immediate use and not for pre purchase. There were some ex common graves available and that other options for further burial plots were being explored.

The Town Clerk informed that it had been an officer decision to not allow pre purchase now, due to the shortage of new graves. He added that the town council over the years had spent a deal of time and money on the cemetery making it a pleasant place to visit. The development of projects, funding and films had helped with the public interest in the cemetery.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Grounds Manager be noted.

139 Grant applications

The summary report of the Finance Officer had been previously circulated and further application details sent to committee members prior to the meeting. There were two grants for consideration.

Before discussion commenced, the Chairman took the opportunity to consult members on their thoughts for delegating grants to a specific working party for consideration.

Discussion ensued and members agreed that the consideration of grants took up much time at committee meetings, however thought must be given to the proper management of the applications. Overall it was felt that grants should remain with the main committee as members should be able to reflect on their own points of view and experiences when considering grant applications.

It was advised that the current community grants budget for the year 2020/21 was £3,068.

139.1 Friends of Grove Park

Grant applied for £900.00

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

The grant was being specifically applied for to replace the two bin bags currently used tied to the bench adjacent to Jill Dando's garden with a bin for the cost of £498. The remainder of the grant would be used to replenish the tools, fixings and protective clothing for the volunteers. This would benefit the Forty volunteers whom are all residents of WSM and the residents who enjoy the Grove Park.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

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

RESOLVED: That £900.00 be granted from the 2020/2021 Community Grants budget.

139.2 Homestart

Grant applied for £1,500

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

The grant was being specifically applied for to pay for the recruitment, training and expenses of one volunteer who would work with several families over their time volunteering. Homestart have worked with 20 families in Weston super Mare over the past year.

Members agreed that the grant was needed immediately and therefore £1,000 could be agreed straight away without requiring approval from the Policy and Finance Committee which would delay the award of the grant.

It was therefore

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

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

RESOLVED: That £1,000 be granted from the 2020/2021 Community Grants budget.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

RESOLVED: That grant applications be considered at the next Community Services meeting on the 8TH March as it was the last meeting of the financial year to award any further grants.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.47 pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Community Services Committee