

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD THE MUSEUM
MONDAY 17TH JANUARY 2022**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 9.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Sarah Codling (Chairman), Roger Bailey, Gillian Carpenter, John Crockford-Hawley, Dave Dash (S), Peter Fox, Pete McAleer, Clare Morris and Alan Peak (S).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Gill Bute and Sonia Russe, Malcom Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk Operational Services), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Zoe Scott (Grounds Coordinator) Becky Walsh (Communications Officer), Reece Evans (Community Response Officer), John Christopher, Paul Borthwick (members of the public) and David Crossman (Chairman of the Anti-Racism Working Group).

278	Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutions Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ciaran Cronnelly who was substituted by Alan Peak, Helen Thornton who was substituted by Dave Dash and Roz Willis with no substitution. The Chairman welcomed newly elected Councillor Clare Morris to the meeting.
279	To receive Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received.
280	To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the Community Service Working Party meeting held on 8th November 2021 The minutes of the last meeting had been previously circulated with the agenda. The following amendments were noted: that the meeting had taken place at the Museum; page 3, minute number 203 'CPA' to replace 'WPA' and that 'the' be removed before Bournville. A vote was taken and accordingly it was carried . RESOLVED: That with the above amendments, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.
281	References from other Committees: It was noted that there were none.
282	Grounds Management Report The report of the Assistant Town Clerk (Operational Services) had been previously circulated and the following points were highlighted.

The team were currently working through their Winter Maintenance Programme and were to be testing memorials throughout the Cemetery. The council had been approached by Community Pay Back regarding taking on people to work, to which the cemetery was assessed as the most appropriate facility to accommodate this.

The tople testing process was queried by a member whom was advised that the grounds team were trained and instructed by the ICM (Institute of Cemetery Management). It was explained that human force was applied and no machines were used, with graves staked and banded where possible before laying head stones down.

Members were welcome to accompany the grounds team to witness the process and exact figures of graves tested and deemed unsafe, would be provided to members. It was confirmed that the 5-year tree works plan had been signed off by North Somerset Council allowing the Grounds Team to carry out minor tree works at WSMTC sites. It was advised that allotments had been subject to general vandalism, but it was hoped these incidents were easing off.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

5.1 Welcome Back Fund

A report of the Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Discussion with officers from North Somerset Council Economic Development Team regarding the Welcome Back Fund had taken place and detailed information regarding the fund was outlined within the report.

As a result, Weston-super-Mare council had been advised it had been successful in securing grant funding to the value of £40,000 which would be ring fenced by NSC. The money needed to be spent by 31st March 2022 and to be used in areas such as the High Street. The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed with NSC that it can be used in shopping areas such as Worle High Street, Milton Road shops and other locations, to be approved.

The fund criteria enabled local authorities to: Boost the look and feel of their high streets by investing in street planting, parks, green spaces, and seating areas to make high streets welcoming. Run publicity campaigns and prepare to hold events that would boost footfall and encourage people back into the high streets and thereby supporting local businesses. Install and refresh signage and communications on how people could stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Improve green spaces on high streets and town centres by planting flowers or removing graffiti.

The Assistant Town Clerk clarified that items funded must not be permanent and that bins/benches for example, were bolted in and therefore not permanent fixtures. It was noted that the timescale for spending the funds was very tight and the decision making process of how/where the money would be spent was queried.

It was agreed that a list of geographically proportionate proposals on a needs basis and, be provided as a starting point for member's consideration. Committee members could be consulted via email.

The Assistant Town Clerk added that DDA equipment could also be included. Discussion ensued regarding the utilisation of the funds and areas requiring attention. The Deputy Town Clerk informed that similar comments had been highlighted through the budget process and member's views was to concentrate on all areas of Weston and not just the town centre.

The Assistant Town Clerk was happy to organise site meetings with members and confirmed that any items replaced would be identifiable as town council property.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Pete Fox

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

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

RESOLVED:

- 1.To approve the application for funding from North Somerset Council.
- 2.To agree the funding could only be used for the purposes of the criteria.
- 3.To maintain items purchased in the future and the work be carried by the Community Rangers.
4. That a list of proposals on a needs basis and geographically proportioned, be provided to members via email for consideration.

5.2 Community Rangers work programme

A report of the Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services had been circulated prior to the meeting.

There were currently three Community Rangers in position with interviews scheduled the following week for a Kickstarter Position in the role of a 4th Community Ranger.

The Rangers had been getting familiar with all the sites and departments and were assisting with maintenance work at the Quarry, completing training requirements and providing a brilliant service of dog bin waste collection to other parish councils and local organisations such as Alliance Homes. Most recently, they had been helping to remove rubbish from other departments due to issues with the current contractor and this would be trailed bringing the service in house for a 3-month period from February.

The original plan for the Community Rangers was to have ad hoc tasks per ward, generated by ward members. From ongoing discussions with NSC, it was felt that this would not be the most effective and productive way of structuring their work pattern. An agreement had been reached which demonstrated good partnership working between the two councils and allow for the Rangers to make a real difference in the community.

They would have allocated areas (including Worle) throughout the town which were often neglected and hard to keep on top off. For example, lane ways which needed weeding and litter picking. These works could be scheduled in regularly and compliment the route the Rangers currently had for dog bin waste collections and litter picking parks and play areas. It would ensure areas like this were maintained regularly and not just ad hoc when complaints were received. The areas would be mapped and publicised on the council's website. Stickers and/or plaques would also be installed in the areas informing they were maintained by WSMTC.

The structure would give the grounds team the capacity to effectively plan and budget works. A level of flexibility would also be included so Rangers could respond to small ad hoc issues if/when they arise.

The Assistant Town Clerk had also negotiated with NSC their assistance in areas that were too problematic for WSMTC to maintain. For example, the roundabouts on the Queensway in Worle and cleaning of the Welcome to Weston signs, all of which were on main highways. The programme could be commenced as early as the following week and site meetings with ward councillors organised.

Members were pleased to see that good progress had been made.

In response to a question, the Assistant Town Clerk advised that the Rangers could not facilitate the removal of bedding left by rough sleepers and agreed to include a list of jobs/tasks that were within the Rangers remit for clarity to members.

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

RESOLVED: To approve and trial the alternative work structure.

283 Report from the Community Response Officer

The Councils Community Response Officer (CRO) reported that:

A Bag and Tag scheme had been set up by NSC in order to try and tackle rough sleeping and belongings such as bedding left behind. As long as the bedding was not soiled or contained needles then they would be taken to the Town Hall and kept for 14 days and a notice served explaining this. The three step process was explained and NSC were working together with Street Wardens to streamline the process and actively target the problem.

Debate ensued. Some members were very concerned about taking people's bedding away in the cold weather when they had nowhere else to go. Also about the scheme and how businesses would be shunned the responsibility and fined.

The CRO explained that most of the rough sleepers were known by name to the team and they had been informed of the new scheme. Members were advised that all rough sleepers had been offered a place to sleep by NSC but that some chose not to.

Members were encouraged to speak to Reece about their concerns after the meeting.

The CRO reported that cases of illegal camping at Ellenborough Park East and Clarence Park had been dealt with and tenants moved on.

It was noted that there was a rising youth antisocial behavior problem within the town that the team were aware of and tackling. The meeting was encouraged to report cases in through the correct channels.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

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Service Area reports:

.1 Youth Services

The report of the Youth Worker lead had been previously circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

.2 Community Events

The Grounds Coordinator reported that she had been liaising with cross department service managers on how to build on the wellbeing event held last summer and was working with Weston Place Agency and the See Monster team on how to complement their events. Proposals for next years (2022 / 2023) events would be brought back at a future meeting.

The Communications Officer added that she was also working in the capacity as the Community Project Manager for the See Monster which offered great linking up opportunities and a 'Think Tank' Facebook page had been created.

RESOLVED:

1. That the verbal report be noted.
2. That proposals for future event opportunities be brought back at a future meeting.

.3 Weston in Bloom

The Grounds Coordinator reported that engaging with Weston in Bloom members had been a real struggle during the pandemic and that there was no zest for virtual meetings. There was a need to establish a team of volunteers for the two main planting seasons and that she was working with the Volunteer Coordinator to reach out in a number of ways. Weston in Bloom needed to be revitalized and new volunteers recruited which the was aim of the new marketing strategy.

The Chairman of Weston in Bloom was fully appreciative of the efforts made to engage with the volunteers and was concerned about the decision making process whilst meetings were not operating.

He therefore requested that any decisions needed, be authorised through the Community Services Committee to which the Town Clerk advised that this could be done.

RESOLVED:

1. That the verbal report be noted.
2. That any decisions regarding Weston in Bloom operations be referred to the Community Services Committee until meetings were resumed.

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Grove Park Public Toilets and Members' Visit to Wells

The Town Clerk verbally reported that as a result of the decision made by the Policy & Finance Committee to close the toilets until 31st March, due to budgetary concerns. Three meetings with NSC exec members and officers had taken place. NSC seemed interested in targeting the problem and were looking at demolishing the existing toilet site and relocating this with the café to another site in Grove Park. The previous heritage lottery grant would also be picked up by NSC officers again and pursued.

Councillor Pete McAleer reported on his findings from the site visit to Wells City Council as a result of the proposal made at the November Town Council meeting. Other members who also attended reported on their positive experience. The toilets were free, accessible,

clean, simplistic, colorful and an overall pleasant experience to which Weston should look to achieve.

Standing Orders were suspended at 8.18 pm in order to allow members of the public to address the meeting.

Paul Borthwick who also attended the site visit concurred the comments of members and informed that the toilets in Cheddar, owned by Sedgemoor District Council were also run to the same standard which was in partnership with Costa. He suggested the council look at opportunities on working with local businesses on toilet provision.

Standing Orders were resumed at 8.19 pm

Debate ensued and it was agreed that the cost of toilet provision was the issue and that any future design needed to deter vandalism and anti-social behavior.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that learning from other authorities should always be encouraged and informed that when the council took on the toilets back in 2013, a full procurement process had been undertaken and models from both Mendip District and Bristol City Council were considered. The chosen model was that of Mendip, aside from the door mechanism which council members decided at the time should allow for charging and should include the mechanism for security that the toilet blocks currently have. The current toilet sites used a very old Victorian drainage system which added to the blockage problems, which may not be the case in places visited.

The Chairman clarified that a decision on the future of the toilets would need to be made at the subsequent 7th March meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the item deferred for a decision at the next Community Services Meeting on 7th March 2022.

286 Community Resilience Update

The Chairman welcomed David Crossman to the meeting.

The Deputy Town Clerk introduced David as Chairman of the Anti-Racism Working Group who had really helped to improve the relationships between community groups and clarify the council's role as a facilitator.

David introduced himself and his role working for VANS and gave an overview of what the working group's focus was for the next 12 months. This included a calendar of events, increasing attendance at meetings and improving peoples understanding of the BME and the troubles the faced.

Members were encouraged to attend meetings.

The Chairman thanked David for his address and informed of how important it was for the council to support and build relationships with community groups and thanked the officers involved.

David advised how important it was to the members of the working group to have the town councils backing and how engagement with the Town Mayor had really inspired

volunteers in the BME community. David went onto advise that the group were currently working on varying project initiatives which not exclusive to but included:

- Local school Anti-racism initiatives
- Working with SARI (Stand against Racism and Inequality)
- BME network & the Community Hub development
- Black Lives Matter groups
- VANS (Voluntary Action North Somerset)
- North Somerset Council (NSC) – on population data and census results to understand the communities we live with.
- Safer Communities with NSC
- Hate Crime Initiatives in the area
- Race Equality events which are coming up in February 2022

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that a formal evaluation would be submitted at the next meeting to include the 6 principles of community engagement the council had pledged. Also that the community resilience team continued to go from strength to strength with many positive comments and outcomes including the awareness of the town council's identity in the community as an active community leader. Many projects were ongoing as previously reported but links had now been made via organisations such as ROC (Redeeming Our Communities) and For All Healthy Living Centre with communities that had been in the past hard to reach these included working with students and more recently with refugees within the town.

The Food Clubs were progressing well but securing premises was problematic.

The Food Fridge was officially due to be opened that week by the Town Mayor and was operating well following its trial period. In addition the project had been granted 6 months extra free use of the unit in the Sovereign Centre, thanks must go to the centre manager Jon Walton for championing this on the community's behalf.

COVID community Response calls were still trickling in and were referred to NSC directly now that our volunteering hubs had in the main ceased to be able to do these effectively now.

The Development Officer was working with the Deputy Town Clerk to identify ways the Town Council could support the BME, VANS and the Stable following their successful grant award for £250,000 to develop a community hub in the town.

RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.

287 Street Art Trail 2021 'Weston Walls'

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the trail had happened but the publicity of it didn't unfortunately happen to promote this project fully it was felt. This was possibly due to the pandemic. However, although it was disjointed it was still a very positive event and had been budgeted for within the 2022/23 budget to enable the event to happen again next year. There were plans to collaborate with the Sea Monster event and a bigger publicity launch. The Deputy Town Clerk was due to speak with the See Monster organisers to explore this as an option and would report this back to future meetings

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

288 Grant applications

The reports of the Finance Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.

The remaining budget for small and voluntary grants was £3,500.

The remaining budget for Community Event Grants was £49,000.

.1 The Priory Learning Trust

Grant applied for £1,000

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

The Priory Learning Trust were seeking financial aid for the “Community Art Connected to a School” fund. Their previous application was deferred due to lack of information and therefore they had resubmitted their application with new cost breakdowns and requesting a lower amount of financial support. The grant would be used to paint the underpasses that lead under the Queensway and Wansborough Road which were in a bad state of repair and covered in graffiti. The Priory Learning Trust have already commissioned local artist Martin D’arcy and the theme of the artwork would be the natural world and nature.

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 2021/2022 small and voluntary grants budget.

.2 Weston PRIDE

Grant applied for £1,000

Under power: Local Government Act 1972 section 137

Weston-super-Mare Pride had previously been awarded £1,000 to help with the funding of sound and lighting, entertainment and Santa and his Grotto for their festive event to be held at the Tropicana Weston in December 21. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled and therefore WSM Pride have asked if they could use the monies towards the extension of Proud Bar instead. Additional information had been requested to support this, however nothing had been received.

Members agreed that grant monies could not be awarded for extending a bar.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor John Crockford-Hawley

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

A vote was taken and was **carried**

RESOLVED: That the grant be refused for the purpose specified and that, unless additional information be received to support a further application, the money be returned.

.3 RESOLVED: That any small and voluntary grants received between now and the 7th March be considered the next meeting and that grant applications in the future be considered by the committee at each meeting to avoid a large tranche of applications

	<p>having to be considered, which was acknowledged as having taken considerable time when received in quarterly instalments in the past.</p>
<p>289</p>	<p>Weston-in-Bloom</p> <p>Item at the request of a member.</p> <p>The item was considered to have been addressed under item 7.3.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30 pm.</p> <p>Signed: Dated:</p> <p>Chairman of the Community Services Committee</p>