

Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

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**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Full Council

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 24th June 2020 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Zoom Virtual Meeting Place

**Present:** Graham Winter Colin Huckle Mark Tewkesbury

**Councillors** Peter Barrow Alex Fuhrmann Jan Bergman

Howard Legg David Northam Tony Ferrari

Graham Lambert Luke Wakeling Tia Roos

Michael Frost Jon Orrell Gill Taylor

Ken Whatley Kate Wheller Lucy Hamilton

Trefor Morgan David Harris Ryan Hope

Kevin Brookes Oz Kanji David Gray

Richard Nickinson Ann Weaving Christine James

David Mannings

**Officers** Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk)

Matt Ryan (Deputy Town Clerk)

Ian Milne (Business & Finance Manager)

Tara Williams (Parks & Open Spaces Manager)

 Niki Ayles (Democratic & Administration Officer)

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| C0168 | **Welcome**Cllr Graham Winter welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed them that it would be recorded for posting on the WTC Facebook page. |
| C0169 | **Apologies for Absence**No apologies had been received. |
| C0170 | **Declarations of Interest**There were no declarations of interest. |
| C0171 | **Minutes of the last meeting**The minutes of the last meeting held on 29 April 2020 were unanimously agreed as a correct record and will be signed as such on a future date. |
| C0172 | **Councillor Question Time**No Councillor questions had been received prior to the meeting.  |
| C0173 | **Public Question Time**There were two members of the public present.**The following question had been submitted by a member of the public:**“Who paid for the original resurfacing of The Marsh when the track was taken up? It has been redone. Was this because of poor workmanship in the first place and so have local Council Tax payers paid for it twice?”The following response was provided by Tara Williams:“The work that has been carried out at the Marsh on the footprint of the old running track is to improve the soil profile.  Unfortunately, due to the exceptionally dry weather experienced over the last couple of years in the spring/summer, the soil has become very compacted and we need to allow more air and water to get into the structure of the soil.  During spring 2020, the ground was deep tined, over seeded and fertilised.  This will be repeated again in August/September.No blame lies with any particular party.  A topsoil analysis determined that the soil supplied is suitable for general landscape purposes, such as trees, shrubs and amenity grass and is compliant with the requirements of British Standard for topsoil (BS3882:2015).”**The following questions had been received from a member of the public:**“With the country now coming out of lockdown and the government now stopping the homeless funding, what are WTC doing to assist Dorset Council to send those not from or who haven't links to this town back to where they were prior lockdown?”The Park District area has had many issues but none have been resolved, resident and hotelier parking being just the tip of the iceberg and now Anti-social Behaviour caused by drug related issues during the lockdown.During lockdown people with mental health issues and dealing with domestic abuse became almost invisible. Mainly because it is all happening behind closed doors. What are councils doing to actively support those people and engage with them as lockdown is lifted?”Jane Biscombe provided the following response:“Weymouth Town Council has no powers to direct the work of Dorset Council’s Housing Team. However, we are working with Dorset Council to ensure that they are fully aware of local issues and kept up to date with developments locally so they can fully see the impact on local communities. Officers and Councillors from WTC regularly engage with officers from Dorset Council and Dorset Police, along with representatives from local charities to discuss the support needed by both vulnerable people and local communities.Local residents and interested parties are urged to sign up to the update emails from Dorset Council on this subject. This can be done by e-mailing comms@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk and stating ‘weekly email update’ in the subject line.The Council is currently looking at what it can do to sustain and support the excellent work by Councillors, staff, volunteers and local groups that has come out of the current crisis and what can be done to support our vulnerable communities as lockdown is lifted. This includes people in poverty, those suffering from violence, the lonely and the ill. Councillors are meeting on 07 July to determine how the Council can increase the support it offers and work with partners to support our communities.”Cllr Orrell added:“The government has this week announced further funding to extend homeless support until next year.  This national policy is welcome but has had unintended consequences for Weymouth.  In March the pandemic threatened to spread rapidly to vulnerable groups such as homeless people weakened by cold and hunger who could have spread the virus.  The national move to compel councils to provide hotels was therefore life saving.However, in Dorset we had moved from 6 district and borough councils to one unitary council being responsible. So instead of staying in 6 areas the only response for housing 150+ people with 48 hours notice, at the price on offer, was from some Weymouth hotels.  So our town looked after everyone from the whole of Dorset. Now as the lockdown eases and more accommodation is available WTC has been pushing hard for other areas to take their people home to their support networks, medical and rehabilitation teams. This has been from a joint letter from all the leaders of political groups of WTC to Dorset Council (DC) and latterly a joint all party group of councillors sending formal emails with detailed questions and requests. We have had an online meeting last Friday and have another this Friday with the housing officers, other agencies like the Police and housing agencies to press this agenda. This is open to affected residents.   It is not right that the area with the highest level of deprivation continues to carry the highest responsibility.  Vulnerable people would be better helped back to a settled life in their own areas, with known teams supporting them. Local councillors will not rest until this happens. With regards to domestic abuse, DC has a helpline and there are many groups and initiatives to help .<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-community/community-safety/domestic-abuse/help-for-those-who-have-experienced-domestic-abuse.aspx>With regards to mental health, DC support can be found here.<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health/other-support.aspx>**Statement from a member of the public**Cllr Louie O’Leary, Unitary Councillor, referred to a document sent to him as a Dorset Council (DC) Cabinet Member containing over 200 signatures from harbour residents and business owners opposing the pedestrianisation of the harbour area. Cllr O’Leary acknowledged that this is an issue for DC. Cllr O’Leary requested that these plans be halted as the DC cabinet member has not been informed of them and members of the public are concerned that it is a “done deal”. Cllr Winter informed Cllr O’Leary that he is sure DC will look at the concerns and make an informed and appropriate decision. **Statement from a member of the public**A member of the public had submitted a statement regarding a Weymouth Ferry Service which was shared with Councillors by Jane Biscombe as follows:“Poole offers no advantage to travellers as it takes the ferry 45 minutes to get out to the sea and speed up. Weymouth is not just closer to the Islands, the ferry can speed up very soon after leaving the harbour thus saving time. The old British Rail ships made 2 crossings per day from Weymouth.” A report regarding a potential ferry service will be discussed later in the meeting, under Item 17.**Statement from a member of the public**A further statement regarding a ferry service had been submitted by a member of the public, which Jane Biscombe shared with Councillors as follows:“If a ferry service is to be brought back to Weymouth, the lights at the Jubilee Clock need looking at. They already cause congestion and I have mentioned this before at meetings. A ferry service would further impact on this area which would make the roads impossible for locals and tourists to use.” |
| C0174 | **Town Mayor’s Announcements**With Cllr Wakeling’s assistance, the Mayor and Mayoress recently visited local shops that have reopened in order to wish them all the best. The Mayor also made a video clip regarding Armed Force weekend, and residents have continued to contact him regarding various issues, one of which is 5G which will be discussed at a later date. |
| C0175 | **Representatives on Outside Bodies and Local Updates**No reports had been received prior to the meeting. |
| C0176 | **Dorset Council Reports**No reports had been received.  |
| C0177 | **Committee Minutes and Recommendations and other Committees**The minutes are approved by their respective Committees. Members agreed unanimously to note the minutes of other Committees.  |
| C0178 | **Internal Audit Report**Ian Milne introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Cllr Winter highlighted that to get through the first year in such a positive position with such a good internal audit report shows how incredibly well the Council are doing in their first year.Cllr Gray highlighted that the Annual Return (Appendix B) talks about issues around standardisation of risk assessments and independent stock checks of the three petty cash accounts and asked whether this has been implemented. Ian Milne responded that when Officers return to the Commercial Road office, independent spot checks of the petty cash accounts will be implemented. Ongoing work is being undertaken regarding risk assessments. A lot were brought over from WPBC and Officers are looking towards having a standardised assessment to ensure that they are all of a similar format. When asked whether the asset module for Rialtas has been fully updated, Ian Milne responded that the module is implemented and is in the process of being populated with data. There is a lot of data to be input and as the year progresses data will be transferred to the specialised module. Proposer: Cllr Gray Seconder: Cllr BarrowCouncillors agreed unanimously to note the Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20 contained within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the final report from the Internal Auditors. |
| C0179C0180C0181C0182C0183C0184C0185C0186C0187C0188C0189C0190C0191C0192 | **Annual Governance Statement 2019/20**Ian Milne introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Cllr Gray referred to Assertion 1, paragraph 4 “Investments”, and asked how far away WTC is from developing investment plans. Ian Milne responded that an Investment Strategy is ready to go before the Finance and Governance Committee, and this will contain a strategy regarding where WTC can and cannot place investments. It is hoped that the Finance and Governance Committee will be able to consider and approve this so that there is a framework to expand on what WTC is doing currently. Councillors agreed unanimously to approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) and that the Annual Governance Statement be signed by the Chairman and Town Clerk of the meeting where approval was given.Cllr Winter (Chairman) and Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk) duly signed the Annual Governance Statement and shared the signed documents on screen as evidence that this had been done. **Annual Accounts 2019/20**Ian Milne introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Councillors agreed unanimously to approve the Annual Accounting Statements for the year ending 31 March 2020 (section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) and the Annual Statements be signed by the Chairman of the meeting where approval was given.Cllr Winter (Chairman) duly signed the Annual Statements and shared the signed document on screen as evidence that this had been done. **Earmarked Reserves**Ian Milne introduced the item as detailed in the report. Cllr Harris reemphasised that the Finance and Governance Committee thoroughly considered this aspect of the budget at its last meeting and was unanimous in its support for the proposal before Councillors this evening. Cllr James referred to Appendix D which mentions a play area at Wiltshire Avenue, and requested that Council members for this area are informed of what is to be done. Appendix D also mentions Fairway Court for improvements to a play area, however, she is unaware of a play area at that site and there is only a small green area. Tara Williams will contact Cllr James via email to discuss. Proposer: Cllr Gray Seconder: Cllr HopeCouncillors voted unanimously as follows:1. That the reserve balances as at 31 March 2020 be noted.
2. That the allocations from reserves that have already been agreed to be funded from the General Unallocated Reserve and Other Reserves be noted.
3. That the recommended Specific Earmarked Reserve allocations recommended by the Finance & Governance Committee be approved.
4. That Full Council approve the allocation of the balance on the General Unallocated Reserve to support any budget gap in 2020/21 caused by a net overspend.
5. That Full Council approve the use of other unrestricted reserves to fund the budget gap should this budget gap be greater than the balance on the General Unallocated Reserve.

**Governance Improvements for WTC**Cllr Wakeling introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Cllr Roos left the meeting briefly during this item. Following significant debate regarding the pros and cons of each of the recommendations, Councillors moved to voting. **Decision 1**Cllr Brookes proposed an amendment to the recommendation and that Councillors be asked to vote for Option B as the selected option. This was seconded by Cllr Ferrari.Proposer: Cllr Brookes Seconder: Cllr FerrariCouncillors voted by a minority of 5 in favour of the amendment detailed above, and 22 against. Therefore, the motion was not carried.Councillors then voted on the original recommendation.Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr HarrisCouncillors agreed by a majority of 23 in favour, with 4 against, to accept Option 1A as detailed in the report.**Decision 2**Cllr Brookes proposed an amendment to Option A, Changes to Standing Orders, that after “At the Annual meeting, after the election of the Chair of the Council, and Deputy Chair of the Council, the members will then elect a Leader & Deputy Leader”, the remainder of that option is deleted. Proposer: Cllr Brookes Seconder: Cllr LeggCouncillors voted by a minority of 6 in favour, with 21 against, to support the amendment above.Councillors then voted on the original recommendation of selecting Option A. Councillors agreed by a majority of 22 in favour, with 5 against, to accept Option A as detailed in the report. **Decision 3**Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr WakelingCouncillors agreed unanimously in favour of approving changes to the standing orders and appendices, related to the Services Committee, and that the Services Committee will review the Council’s performance.**Decision 4**Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr WakelingCouncillors agreed by a majority of 15 in favour, with 10 against and 2 abstentions, to approve changes to standing orders, related to Member Champions, as detailed in the report. **Decision 5**Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr GrayCouncillors agreed by a majority of 21 in favour, with 6 against, of a trial change to how the Council conducts committee meetings in person (café style). This would last no more than one year from the resumption of physical meetings, and would then need to be approved for permanent adoption.**Decision 6**Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr WakelingCouncillors voted by a majority of 23 in favour, with 4 against, to approve delegation changes to the Standing Orders in paragraph 6A of the report.**Decision 7**Cllr Wakeling requested that Decision 7 regarding appointing Member Champions be withdrawn from this evening’s considerations as there is a briefing regarding community development next month. Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr HarrisCouncillors voted unanimously for Decision 7 to be withdrawn from this evening’s considerations. **Covid-19 Business Tenants and Licensees Policy and Support**Matt Ryan introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Cllr Brookes left the meeting briefly during this item. Whilst there were concerns that it is unknown how much tenant and licensee support will cost, it was acknowledged that the current situation is unique and urgent, and the three Councillors who will be nominated to manage the process will have robust guidelines to follow.Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr LeggCouncillors agreed by a majority of 24 in favour, with 3 abstentions approve the setting up of a Business Tenant and Licensee Support Panel; and if approved Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr WakelingCouncillors agreed by a majority of 25 in favour, with 2 abstentions, to nominate Cllr Gray. Cllr Northam and Cllr Legg to the panel; Proposer: Cllr Fuhrmann Seconder: Cllr HopeCouncillors agreed by a majority of 23 in favour, with 3 against and 1 abstention, to:1. Adopt the attached Business Tenant and Licensee Support Policy; and
2. delegate authority to the panel to make decisions to support tenant’s/licensee’s financial hardship and the best interests of the Council as detailed within the report and Business Tenant and Licensee Support Policy.

**Motion – Weymouth Ferry Service**Cllr Bergman introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and stressed that the report does not state that Weymouth should have a ferry service but that further investigations should be undertaken, with support from officers. Proposer: Cllr Bergman Seconder: Cllr WhellerCouncillors agreed unanimously to:1. Agree to establish a short life task group to take forward the feasibility of a ferry service within the two criteria detailed in the report.
2. Request the task group to report back to Full Council as work develops.

**Neighbourhood Planning**Cllr Hamilton introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Cllr Ferrari proposed that the second bullet point of the recommendation be amended to read “seek views from our communities to inform the local planning policy work**, however the Sutton Poyntz Neighbourhood Plan will be carried forward as currently written.**”Proposer: Cllr Ferrari Seconder: Cllr BergmanCouncillors voted by a minority of 10 in favour, with 16 against and 1 abstention, to agree the amendment detailed above. Therefore, the motion was not carried. Members then voted on the original recommendation.Proposer: Cllr Hamilton Seconder: Cllr HarrisCouncillors agreed by a majority of 22 in favour, with 2 against, and 3 abstentions to:* formally seek area designation, from Dorset Council, of the area within the Town Council boundary,
* seek views from our communities to inform the local planning policy work
* apply for grants from relevant bodies
* engage a local consultant to assist in developing the Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan

**Sponsorship Policy**Cllr Taylor introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and said that she would like to see an amendment date of a year maximum. It was confirmed that if an organisation is not in keeping with the image of the Council before an agreement is reached, no agreement will be put in place. Behind the framework within which WTC seeks sponsorship will sit an agreement which outlines the conditions which must be adhered to.Proposer: Cllr Wheller Seconder: Cllr HarrisCouncillors agreed unanimously to approve the adoption of the Sponsorship Policy to maximise the financial return from activities carried out by the Councils services and functions.**Crookhill and Commercial Road Leases**Matt Ryan introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr HuckleCouncillors agreed unanimously to the official sealing and signing of the leases.**Play Area Leases**Matt Ryan introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.Cllr Harris asked for an update regarding the play area in Southill as discussions had be held regarding delaying the signing of the lease for the current play area so that the land adjacent to the play area, which is currently leased to SPARK, could be included as well as land adjacent to the play area which currently accommodates a derelict building which was knocked down by DC.Matt Ryan responded that a paper will be prepared which can be taken to DC, outlining the request, so that their position can be understood. This would then come back to Full Council for a decision. Signing the lease for the current play area now will protect that area and further areas can then be investigated. Proposer: Cllr Ferrari Seconder: Cllr HopeCouncillors agreed unanimously to the official sealing and signing of the three play area leases.**Suspension of Standing Orders**Cllr Wakeling proposed that due to the time, 9.55 pm, Standing Orders be suspended in order for Councillors to complete the last three items on the agenda and conclude the meeting. Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr FuhrmannCouncillors agreed unanimously to the suspending Standing Orders in order to conclude this evening’s business.**Response to Dorset Council’s Local Plan Consultation**Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr NorthamCouncillors agreed by a majority of 23 in favour, with 3 against and 1 abstention, to formally endorse the response sent to Dorset Council on 17 April 2020.**Committee Membership**Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr LeggCouncillors agreed unanimously to approve the following changes to Committee membership:1. That Cllr Ken Whatley become a permanent member of the P&L Committee to fill the existing vacancy.2. That Cllr David Northam is appointed as a permanent member of the P&L Committee to replace Cllr Kanji who wishes to stand down.3. That Cllr Kanji replaces Cllr Roos on the Appeals Committee to ensure that Standing Order (Appendix A) 1.6 that “Every Member shall serve on at least one standing committee” is complied with.**Nomination to the Melcombe Regis Board**Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.Cllr Orrell proposed that Cllr Whatley be nominated to the Melcombe Regis Board. This was seconded by Cllr Roos.Cllr Morgan proposed Cllr Taylor be nominated to the Melcombe Regis Board. This was seconded by Cllr Northam.Cllr Fuhrmann proposed that Cllr Roos be nominated to the Melcombe Regis Board. This was seconded by Cllr Hamilton. Cllr Harris read the following statement and requested that this be sent to DC with WTC’s nomination:“We are pleased that Dorset council have asked us to nominate a Town Councillor onto a revitalised Melcombe Regis Board. Our nominee is……….. We hope that in revamping the Board DC will consider two major changes which the town council would like incorporated in any new structure.The first is that we would like you to consider the name and possibly change it to “The Weymouth Redevelopment Board”. We feel that having a focus on just one of the deprived areas of Weymouth is failing to effectively use the expertise that will be drawn together. Weymouth has several of the most deprived wards in Dorset council and the solutions needed to counter this will cover economic development, social housing, health inequalities, community safety and education and solutions will not just apply to Melcombe Regis.The second is to ensure that the agenda of the Board covers all the issues we have mentioned above so that we are not just trying to control the problems found in one part of the Town. We would want the board to draw up a strategic plan that will tackle the fact that the old Weymouth and Portland Borough had one of the worst social mobility rates of the country and the lowest wage levels alongside this. Together with the huge list of residents on the housing register and problems of anti-social behaviour suggests that a wider and more strategic solutions are needed.Our nominee will be bringing this agenda to your meetings.”Proposer: Cllr Harris Members agreed by a majority of 20, with 4 against and 1 abstention, to agree that the wording detailed above be sent to DC with WTC’s nominee.Members then voted on the Councillor to be nominated on to the Melcombe Regis Board. Cllr Roos requested that she be withdrawn from the nominations.Councillors agreed by a majority of 18, with 7 against, to nominate Cllr Taylor to the Melcombe Regis Board.**Information Items**Councillors noted the information items.Jane Biscombe confirmed that the meeting on 1st July 2020 would not now be held as the Council had concluded all business on the agenda this evening.The meeting concluded at 10.27 pm. |
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