

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

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Councillors are hereby summoned to attend the following meeting.

Please inform the Clerk if you are unable to attend.

**NOTICE OF MEETING**

**MEETING:** Meeting of Weymouth Town Council

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 9th September 2020 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Zoom

A close up of a logo

Description automatically generated

This is a meeting in public, not a public meeting.

Due to the current restrictions in place the Council is unable to meet in person and so will be meeting virtually. The public can view the meeting on the Council’s Facebook page [www.facebook.com/WeymouthWTC](http://www.facebook.com/WeymouthWTC). Should members of the public and press wish to attend Full Council meetings or ask a public question, please email [office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk). Agenda and papers are available at [www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk)

J L Biscombe, FSLCC, CiLCA Town Clerk 03 September 2020 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the last meeting
5. Councillor Questions and Updates
6. Public Questions
7. Town Mayor’s Announcements
8. Committee Minutes and Recommendations from other Committees
9. Tumbledown Governance
10. Tumbledown Funding
11. Urgent Footpath Repairs
12. Motion – Veterans’ weekend
13. Motion – 20 mph speed limits
14. Community Development Champion
15. Investment Strategy
16. Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy
17. Transfer of Parsons Close Allotments
18. Information Items

## Welcome

## Apologies for Absence

To approve apologies for absence.

## Declarations of Interest

To receive Members declarations of interest in matters on the agenda.

## Minutes of the last meeting

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 02 September 2020.

### Recommendation:

That Members approve the minutes as a true and accurate record and agree they be signed as such on a future date.

## Councillor Questions and Updates

Prior notice preferred for questions. Updates require a written report within agreed guidelines.

Please note that this item encompasses the Councillor Questions, Councillor Updates and Updates from Representatives on Outside Bodies items on previous agendas.

**Question from Cllr Jan Bergman:**

Weymouth Football Club has recently gained promotion to the National League and I ask that the Council formally congratulates the club in this success. Although the football ground is not within the Town Council’s boundary, the main access roads are, and I also ask that the Council supports the club in improving access for supporters should the opportunity arise in the future.

## Public Question Time

Questions referring to the work of Dorset Council will not be taken at this meeting.

The length of time available for public questions will be determined by the Chairman.

## Town Mayor’s announcements

To receive announcements from the Town Mayor.

## Committee Minutes and Recommendations from other Committees

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Committee | Date | Minute Nos | Recommendations |
| None |  |  |  |

### Recommendation:

That Members note the minutes for the meetings listed above.

## Tumbledown Governance

**Purpose of Report**

To consider the setting up of a Tumbledown Project Board and the associated Governance arrangements in the form of the Terms of Reference attached at **Appendix A.**

**Background**

Weymouth Town Council (WTC) own Tumbledown Farm which is a 27-acre plot of greenspace which has previously been rented for farming, grazing and stables. In 2019 WTC passed a motion agreeing that the land should be developed for benefit of Weymouth Community potentially involving growing and delivering health and well-being benefits to the community.  This was fully supported by Council Members and forms an integral part of the Weymouth Town Council Strategy.

Recognising that to shape this development would require several authorities to work together the Tumbledown Partnership Group was formed between Weymouth Town Council, Dorset Council, Weymouth Area Development Trust, Public Health Dorset, Natural England Dorset. This group has met on a monthly basis and has held some public consultations in 2019 and 2020 which helped shape the intent for the site.  The advent of the COVID-19 crisis has delayed some of the initial plans.

Weymouth Area Development Trust (WADT) have been brought in as partners to assist in developing the Project.  WTC has designated monies that has supported the appointment of a Project Development Manager (PDM) and for the development of Tumbledown to cover the initial site costs and developing a plan for development.  Clive Tuck has been appointed as the Project Development Manager and is employed by WADT on two projects one of which is Tumbledown.

The PDM conducted an analysis of the original consultation data which articulated several key themes:

1. Climate change- ensuring Tumbledown endeavours to mitigate/ adapt in ways to save the planet;
2. Food security- particularly since COVID-lockdown, growing local food and preparing nutritious meals;
3. Health & Well-being- using the natural capital to support positive ways to promote healthier lives;
4. Family & Community- a sense of place, for leisure and recreation, on biodiverse-rich land;
5. Learning- developing opportunities for all ages and abilities to broaden knowledge and appreciation;
6. Sustainability- developing ways to generate income and reduce grant dependencies longer- term.

The PDM led an inaugural online community event of the Friends of Tumbledown on the 5th August 2020.

**Short Term – Key Priorities**

There are several key priorities over the short term, that set out the initial plans required to evolve Tumbledown into an exciting, community led greenspace.

* Risk assessments and controls of the site.
* Site readiness
  + Site (including removal redundant buildings – subject to planning) and access clearance - boundary and gate updates;
  + Provision and supply of safe utilities to / on Site (water/electricity);
  + Purchase and siting of temporary accommodation;
  + Parking;
  + Asbestos removal;
  + Initial planting;
  + Toilets and safe indoor renovations.
* Develop Core membership of the ‘Friends of Tumbledown Group’ with a strong membership to support developments.
* Carry out historical research and archaeological investigation

**Project Board**

To provide good Governance and decision making on the development and operational management/ direction of the project, the Tumbledown partnership group is recommending the formation of a Project Board.

The Project Board would comprise of four Weymouth Town Councillors (Cllr Jon Orrell, Cllr David Northam, Cllr David Gray and Cllr Graham Lambert of the Partnership Group), the Deputy Town Clerk, the Chief Executive Officer and Project Development Manager of the Weymouth Area Development Trust.

Full Council is being asked to delegate project, financial and operational decision making to the Project Board to progress the next steps of the project.

The Interim Terms of Reference of the Project Board are attached at **Appendix A**.

**Financial**

An initial operational budget for Tumbledown of £25K is being requested under a separate agenda item. Expenditure under £1,000 will be permitted by the project development manager on agreement of the Parks and Open Spaces Manager (or the Business and Finance Manager in their absence.) Expenditure over £1,000 will require sign off by the Project Board. The Project Board will retain oversight of all financial sums and future grants attributed to the project.

**Impact Assessment**

**Equalities**

The works to Tumbledown will mean they are far more accessible to those with disabilities. The project will offer a range of facilities and opportunities to help improve the quality of life for people of all age groups and varying abilities. Tumbledown will play a vital role in offering outdoor space that is not available to many people with low incomes who live in houses of multiple occupancy, flats or shared accommodation that have no gardens or outdoor space. This is especially relevant to adult mental wellbeing and the mental and physical well-being of children who need space to play and develop.

**Environmental**

Tumbledown is an important green space in the heart of an urbanised area. Important not only to people but also wildlife. There are areas on site which have SSSI designation with the presence of rare species. It is also adjacent to an RSPB SSSI nature reserve. Opportunities to conserve wildlife and to create and actively manage wildlife habitats will be included in the landscape design proposals, which will also increase people’s access to wildlife. Having nature reserves in such close proximity to urban areas is nationally rare and provides an opportunity for experience and learning to all, including difficult to reach groups and those who cannot easily afford to travel to or pay to visit.

**Crime and Disorder**

Well maintained/managed open spaces help to reduce anti-social behaviour and help to combat the ‘fear of crime’, which is historically a significant obstacle to wider use of public open space.

**Financial**

As detailed within the report.

**Resources**

Currently, the Council does not have the staff resources internally to undertake this tranche of work. However, the Parks & Open Spaces Manager will routinely meet with the Project Board and other stakeholders into the future to help to maximise the benefit gained by the community from the facility and ensure the project remains within the financial ability of the council to support and maintain. There will be a need for some additional support from the Senior Buildings Services Engineer to establish a safe environment overseeing the demolition of unsafe buildings and removal of asbestos. There may also be a need for some additional support from the Community Development Officer to carry out further consultation exercises and some administrative support.

**Economic**

Well maintained/managed open spaces can contribute to economic growth by helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and by contributing to the development of health and wellbeing.

Having high quality, well maintained facilities for people and their families to use and enjoy, that are located close to housing, is important in making the town attractive as a location to move to or re-locate business to. With a year-round rather than a seasonal appeal, Tumbledown is a prime example of just such a facility being located near residential housing.

**Risk Management**

The major risks to the council are as follows:

Financial

Tumbledown is in a state of decline. Many hard surfaces and buildings are of poor quality. The main risk area lies in the failing infrastructure creating a need for monies to effect long term repairs and bring Tumbledown to a point where modest revenue repairs can maintain it in good condition.

Health & Safety

With reference to the above, there are currently significant issues of health and safety within the farm in respect mainly of footpath and building quality. Failure to rectify infrastructure defects and replace other items will lead to an increased risk of accidents and a higher ongoing revenue cost to keep those hazardous elements secured to prevent access.

Reputational

Tumbledown is high profile and very visible within the community and is a clear and practical indication of the council’s aspirations and an example of what it provides as a direct service for the community to use and enjoy. Currently Tumbledown is in decline and offers little community value. As such, if unimproved going forward, it would pose a reputational risk to the council due to negative views and comment on the maintenance and management of a council asset.

### Recommendations:

Full Council is asked to consider the information detailed within this report and approve the following:

1. That the Council agrees to establish the Tumbledown Project Board, the Governance arrangements, and Terms of Reference at **Appendix A**.
2. Delegates approval to the Project Board to carry out the short term – key priorities as set out in the report.

## Tumbledown Funding

In order to support the work of the Tumbledown Project Board and working group, Councillors are asked to agree that £25,000 of funding is moved from the “Tumbledown and Green and Clean” reserve into an operational budget for Tumbledown. This will allow work to start and larger projects to be planned.

Expenditure under £1,000 will be permitted by the project manager on agreement of the Parks and Open Spaces Manager (of the Business and Finance Manager in their absence.) Expenditure over £1,000 will require sign off by the Project Board. There will be a standing item on all Tumbledown Project Board meetings to update on expenditure against this budget to allow monitoring and forward planning.

### Recommendation:

That Councillors agree to move £25,000 from the “Tumbledown and Green and Clean” reserve into an operational budget for Tumbledown.

#### Impact Assessment:

Equalities - The works to Tumbledown Farm will mean they are far more accessible to those with disabilities. The project will offer a range of facilities and opportunities to help improve the quality of life for people of all age groups and varying abilities. The farm will play a vital role in offering outdoor space that is not available to many people with low incomes who live in houses of multiple occupancy, flats or shared accommodation that have no gardens or outdoor space. This is especially relevant to adult mental wellbeing and the mental and physical well-being of children who need space to play and develop.

Environmental - Tumbledown is an important green space in the heart of an urbanised area. Important not only to people but also wildlife. There are areas on site which have SSSI designation with the presence of rare species and the site is also adjacent to an RSPB SSSI nature reserve. Opportunities to conserve wildlife and to create and actively manage wildlife habitats will be included in the landscape design proposals, which will also increase people’s access to wildlife. Having nature reserves in such close proximity to urban areas is nationally rare and provides an opportunity for experience and learning to all, including difficult to reach groups and those who cannot easily afford to travel to or pay to visit.

Crime and Disorder - Well maintained/managed open spaces help to reduce anti-social behaviour and help to combat the ‘fear of crime’, which is historically a significant obstacle to wider use of public open space.

Financial - as detailed within the report.

Resources - The Parks & Open Spaces Manager will routinely meet with the Project Group and other stakeholders into the future to help to maximise the benefit gained by the community from the facility and ensure the project remains within the financial ability of the council to support and maintain. There will be a need for some additional support from the Senior Buildings Services Engineer to establish a safe environment overseeing the demolition of unsafe buildings and removal of asbestos. Some administrative support may also be required.

Economic - Well maintained/managed open spaces can contribute to economic growth by helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and by contributing to the development of health and wellbeing. Having high quality, well maintained facilities for people and their families to use and enjoy, that are located close to housing, is important in making the town attractive as a location to move to or re-locate business to. With a year-round rather than a seasonal appeal, Tumbledown is a prime example of just such a facility being located near residential housing.

Risk Management - The major risks to the council are as follows:

Financial - Tumbledown is in a state of decline. Many hard surfaces and buildings are of poor quality. The main risk area lies in the failing infrastructure creating a need for monies to effect long term repairs and bring the farm to a point where modest revenue repairs can maintain it in good condition.

Health & Safety - With reference to the above, there are currently significant issues of health and safety within the site in respect mainly of footpath and building quality. Failure to rectify infrastructure defects and replace other items will lead to an increased risk of accidents and a higher ongoing revenue cost to keep those hazardous elements secured to prevent access.

Reputational - Tumbledown is high profile and very visible within the community and is a clear and practical indication of the council’s aspirations and an example of what it provides as a direct service for the community to use and enjoy. Currently Tumbledown is in decline and offers little community value. As such, if unimproved going forward, the site would pose a reputational risk to the council due to negative views and comment on the maintenance and management of a council asset.

## Urgent Footpath Repairs

At the Full Council meeting held on 02 September 2020, Councillors received a report regarding urgent footpath repairs. Councillors were asked to agree that £50,000 of funding was moved from the “Parks” reserve into an operational budget for urgent repairs to footpaths at Lodmoor Country Park, Nothe Gardens, Sandsfoot Gardens, Greenhill Gardens and Honeysuckle Close.

The footpath issues have occurred over recent weeks due to the exceptionally dry weather, which has resulted in large deep cracks appearing in the surfacing and/or land slippage. The repairs at Lodmoor are, in the main, due to tree roots and natural wear and tear.

In keeping with Financial Regulations, a request to supply a price was sent to 3 local contractors. Due to the urgent nature of the work, only one contractor was able to respond to carry out the work within a suitable timeframe. That quote was £50,290.

* Nothe Gardens £22,970
* Sandsfoot Gardens £8,447
* Greenhill Gardens £3,440
* Lodmoor Country Park £11,883
* Honeysuckle Close £3,550

At the meeting on 02 September, Councillors voiced concerns over the use of this reserve instead of an existing maintenance budget, why these repairs had not been picked up sooner and the effectiveness of the existing inspection regime, details regarding the quotes including the location of contractors, details regarding the environmental impacts of the repairs (e.g. tarmac production carbon loads) and the long term planning for The Nothe which is subject to regular land slippage. Tara Williams will attend the meeting to give a verbal update.

### Recommendation:

That Councillors discuss the repairs and the funding and determine a way forward.

Impact Assessment:

Equalities –  none

Environmental –  Impact reduced by using a local contractor. Replacing existing tarmac paths.Crime and Disorder –  none

Financial –  see report

Resources –  officer time = 8 hours, and is covered by existing staff capacity.

Risk Management – failure to carry out this work would leave the council at risk of insurance claims as a result of slips, trips, falls and personal injury.  In advance of works being carried out, normal requirement for RAMS documents will apply.  Failure to carry out these works or failure to carry out the works appropriately could lead to reputational damage to the council.

## Motion – Veterans’ Weekend

Proposer: Cllr R Nickinson Seconder: Cllr K Brookes

Weymouth has a long tradition of recognising the Armed Forces’ contribution to the security of this Country and honouring the sacrifices made to preserve that security. There has been discussion of the diminution of our commitment to this weekend. Councillors are asked to demonstrate WTC’s public commitment to continuing to support the Veterans’ weekend in Weymouth.

### Recommendation:

That Weymouth Town Council recognises the role of the Armed Forces by agreeing to hold our traditional weekend of remembrance and celebration, in its current form, for the rest of this administration.

#### Impact Assessment:

**Equalities** – The Council has a duty to meet the needs of veterans and other attendees during the event.

**Environmental** – The use of Military vehicles will have an impact on local air quality.

**Crime and Disorder** - None

**Financial** – A budget is already in place for this annual event.

**Resources** – Officer time is already allocated to this annual event

**Economic** - The relatively small investment by Town Council results in substantial income for shops and businesses in the Town.

**Risk Management** – There is a reputational risk to the Council should existing celebrations be cut without appropriate consideration.

## Motion – 20 mph zones or limits for all residential roads in Weymouth where appropriate.

Proposers: Cllrs Wakeling, Taylor, Orrell, Wheller, Barrow, Roos, Whatley, Tewkesbury, Frost, Fuhrmann, Northam, Huckle, Morgan, Gray, James, Legg and Weaving.

The purpose of this is to:

* Reduce injuries caused by road traffic accidents
* Reduce air pollution
* Reduce noise pollution
* Encourage walking and cycling
* Reduce road maintenance

There is good evidence that when the speed cars travel at in residential areas is reduced to 20mph there is a reduction in numbers of fatalities and casualties. Lower speed limits encourage less aggressive driving which results in a reduction in car emissions, reduced noise pollution and the need for less road maintenance and while it is acknowledged that these effects do depend on calmer driving on balance there is evidence that these effects will be realised. In areas where lower speed limits have been implemented there is an increase in residents using the streets for walking and cycling and the associated health benefits.

120mph zones and limits are supported in the UK by:

* NICE, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, recommended 20mph speed limits to reduce unintentional injuries to under 15 year olds, to contribute to reductions in obesity, to reduce premature mortality and support improvements in air quality
* The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) have called for specific and urgent action in setting 20mph limits for streets used by pedestrians and cyclists to help to improve the health of the population and reduce health inequalities by encouraging a shift away from car based transport to active travel.
* The British Medical Association (BMA) have stated that UK transport policy should include 20mph speed limits
* In 2010, the Association of Directors of Public Health, with the National Heart Forum, Living Streets and Sustrans, called for a default speed limit, for built up areas, of 20mph to reduce health inequalities, encourage active travel, and increase physical activity and social inclusion.
* Public Health England has highlighted the growing evidence base on the benefits of 20mph speed limits, including the strong public support for 20mph in residential streets.
* RoSPA believes that 20mph zones are very effective at preventing injuries and would like to see their wider use in residential areas.
* Brake have called for a default urban speed limit of 20mph.

1 References can be supplied for all of the above

It is noted that it is government policy is for 30mph in residential areas however local councils (in this case Dorset Council) have authority to implement 20 mph zones and limits as appropriate.

### Recommendation:

That Weymouth Town Council agrees to:

1. Undertake a public consultation to gauge the support for residential 20 mph limits
2. Requests that DC undertake a feasibility study of 20 mph speed limit or 20mph zones where appropriate for all residential roads in the Weymouth Town Council area and consider scheduling actions to be implemented resulting from the study.

### Impact Assessment:

Equalities – None

Environmental – 20 mph speed limits will reduce pollution and noise and could result in more people walking and cycling.

Crime and Disorder – Although speeding is a regularly occurring source of alarm and concern, the introduction of lower speed limits is unlikely to have any impact on those who chose to act in an anti-social manner.

Financial – To be determined.

Resources – This will require approximately 9 hours of officer time plus Member support

Economic - None

Risk Management – There are no risks to the Council at this time.

## Community Development Champion

At the Full Council on 24 June 2020 Councillors agreed to amend Standing Orders to include the following on Champions:

1. Member Champions
   1. A member champion is a member who has either an interest or specialist knowledge in a particular area. The role is to be a contact point, facilitator and communicator for either, an element of the council’s work and/or link with an external body(s). Member champions are required to provide regular reports to Full Council.
   2. Member champions will only be created where there is neither a committee nor a working group covering that subject. Member champions should only be created within the council’s current remit, not to expand the council’s remit.
   3. Member champions cannot make decisions on behalf of the council.
   4. Member champions do not direct officers or set policy.
   5. Member champions will be elected by a Full Council. They will be re-elected each year. The need for a member champion should be evaluated regularly as changes to the remit of working groups and committees may change the areas which need a membership champion.

Usually Members Champions are elected as part of the Annual Meeting in May each year. However, at the meeting on 24 June 2020, Councillors voiced a request to discuss electing a Community Development Champion.

### Recommendation:

That Councillors discuss the election of a Community Development Champion and hold that election if appropriate.

## Investment Strategy

**Background**

Weymouth Town Council (the Council) acknowledges the importance of prudent investment of treasury funds through adherence to the Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd Edition) issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003, effective from 1 April 2018

This Strategy sets out the requirement to prioritise Security, Liquidity and Yield in that order of importance, to achieve the prudent management of treasury balances throughout the financial year.

This Strategy is subject to annual review to ensure that it reflects all applicable legislative and regulatory requirements and meets the Council’s investment priorities.

**Current Banking Arrangements**

On 1 April 2019, the council opened a current account with the Unity Trust Bank.  This bank is used extensively by town and parish councils.  However, as a large town council there are limitations on the services provided by the Unity Trust Bank and the council has therefore opened a second current account with Lloyds Bank Plc and a deposit (call) account with the same bank that allows interest to be earnt on all surplus funds.

**Potential Investment Types**

As per the proposed Investment Strategy the following investment types may be considered.  It is proposed that a change in delegation would mean any additional counterparties will need to be approved by the Finance & Governance Committee rather than Full Council.

**Debt Management Office (DMO):** The DMO is an Executive Agency of Her Majesty's Treasury and provides direct access for local authorities into a government deposit facility known as the DMADF. All deposits are guaranteed by HM Government and therefore have the equivalent of a sovereign triple-A credit rating.

**Money Market Funds (MMF):** Pooled funds which invest in a range of short-term assets providing high credit quality and high liquidity.

**Call Accounts:** instant access accounts that attract interest on investments, traditionally 0.05% below base rate.

**Specified number of Days’ Notice Call Accounts:** No set term but a specified number of days’ notice required to make withdrawals or close the account.  These offer a higher rate of interest than the normal call accounts.

**(Short) Term Deposits:** Deposits of cash with terms attached relating to maturity and rate of return (Interest).

**CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (pooled):** An instant access account where funds are pooled and invested with a number of counterparties which therefore reduces counter party risk.  This deposit fund is widely used amongst town and parish councils.

**Approval of counterparties**

Additional counterparties currently need to be approved by the Full Council.

Members are asked to approve a recommendation that delegations are amended so that additional counterparties are approved by the Finance & Governance Committee.

**Ethical Investment Policies**

The Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments gives the framework in which investments can be made and sets out the requirement to prioritise Security, Liquidity and Yield in that order of importance.  However, the Council is very mindful that where possible investments should be made with consideration to a financial institutions climate emergency or ethical investment policy.

The council has already undertaken extensive research regarding financial institutions who deal with companies that make use of fossil fuels and other practices that go against the climate emergency agenda.  The Councils main banker is rated highest in this area according to the “Switchit.money” website out of the main high street banks and officers will continue to investigate the ethical investment policy of potential counterparties so that the Council can place investments with those institutions that have an acceptable policy where security and liquidity allow.

### Recommendations:

1. That the Investment Strategy (Appendix B) be approved.
2. That approval is given to open an account with the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund
3. That officers investigate the ethical investment policy of potential counterparties and place investments with those institutions that have an acceptable policy where security and liquidity allow.
4. That there is an amendment to the Standing Orders so that the approval of additional counterparties and the length of fixed term investments is delegated to the Finance & Governance Committee.

#### Impact Assessment:

**Equalities** – None.

**Environmental** - None

**Crime and Disorder** - None

**Financial** – The type of investment entered into will effective the amount of interest that is generated.

**Resources** – Officer time will be needed to monitor the councils cashflow projections and the credit scores of existing and prospective counterparties.

**Economic** - None

**Risk Management** – There is a counterparty risk should a financial institution fail.  This risk is managed by spreading the council’s investments and ensuring an appropriate credit rating is held.  There is also a risk that finances are not available should funds be invested in fixed term deposits.  This risk is managed by careful cashflow projections.

## Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy

**Purpose of Report**

To consider a Council wide policy prohibiting the release of Balloons and Sky lanterns from land and assets under the ownership and management of the Town Council.

**Background**

In recent years outdoor balloon and sky lantern releases have become a more common event at summer fairs, fundraising events, opening of new stores, or part of commemorative and celebratory occasions.  Many organisations have drawn attention to the problem of sky lantern and balloon releases which end up as litter on land or sea and pose a risk to livestock and marine animals which mistake balloons for food and are injured by the metal in some sky lanterns.

Balloons have been found ingested in endangered turtles, dolphins, whales and seabirds. Livestock have died after eating degraded lanterns, which are accidentally picked up by harvesting machinery and put into winter feeds. Lanterns also pose a fire risk to crops in the summer months and to thatched roof properties.

In April 2016 a sky lantern landed on a Dorset Nature Reserve near Wareham starting a major gorse fire and just after Christmas 2019 in Germany sky lanterns were believed to have caused the death of dozens of zoo animals.  In addition, sky lanterns are causing a number of false alarm call outs on the coast as people mistake them for distress flares.

The call to ban balloon and sky lantern releases nationally is supported by the Marine Conservation Society, RSPCA, RSPB, BASC and the National Farmers’ Union.

Following the public outcry about plastic in our oceans and the recent Climate and Ecological Emergencies declared not just here but across hundreds of councils and other organisations, now is the time to put an end to this unnecessary activity.

Although others have also undertaken research on this issue The Marine  Conservation Society (an internationally recognized charity for the protection of  seas, shores and wildlife) has produced a thorough and detailed Pollution Policy  & Position statement on Balloons and Sky Lanterns, asking UK Local Authorities  to recognize balloons and sky lanterns as a form of littering and to ban all outdoor releases as part of the “Don’t let Go” campaign:

<https://www.mcsuk.org/campaigns/dont-let-go>

This stance is actively supported by the RSPCA, the National Farmers Union, RSPB, Campaign to Protect Rural England as well as many local groups including Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset and Wilts Fire Service and Dorset AONB.

The Litter Free Coast and Sea has a Charter regarding Balloon and Sky Lantern releases which is fully supported by several national environmental organisations such as the Marine Conservation Society, RSPB, Campaign to Protect Rural England, National Farmers Union as well as many local groups including Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset and Wilts Fire Service and Dorset AONB.

<https://www.litterfreecoastandsea.co.uk/sky-lantern-and-balloon-release-charter/>

The Services Committee considered the policy at its July 2020 meeting and has recommended that Full Council adopts the Balloon and Sky Lantern Policy and enrols to the Litter Free Dorset Charter regarding Balloon and Sky Lantern releases.

**Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy**

**Policy Objective**

To define the intentional outdoor release of balloons and sky lanterns (“lanterns”) as an act of littering, thereby discouraging such activities in the Weymouth Town Council area and to prohibit releases from Council owned/leased land and premises.

The policy covers all types of balloon and lantern materials.  The main types of balloon are latex (rubber) and foil (also known as mylar) can include other materials.  Latex balloons, whilst biodegradable, may still persist in the environment for several years and sky lanterns typically contain a metal frame.

**Policy Wording**

This Council prohibits the release of balloons and lanterns from Weymouth Town Council owned, or leased, land and buildings.  This applies to Council run events and events run by third parties.  The Council considers the release of balloons and lanterns from any land or buildings as potential littering and will encourage action to be taken under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and  Environment Act 2005 where appropriate.

**Litter**

Where balloons and lanterns are released intentionally outdoors and are not disposed of responsibly, they litter the environment and as such this could be considered to be a potential offence under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.  Where the Council receives evidence of littering through the release of balloons and lanterns which are not disposed of responsibly, the Council will support enforcement under the appropriate legislation.

**Permitted releases**

For the avoidance of doubt, piloted hot air balloons are not covered by this policy.

Helium balloons may also be permitted when used for research purposes, for example weather balloons, as long as supporting evidence is provided, identifying any risk and/ or any hazards to the environment and with any appropriate mitigation.

**Working with event organisers/ third parties/ lessees/ licensees**

Once the Council is notified of potential releases within the area of Weymouth Town Council the Council will work with event organisers to suggest suitable alternatives to outdoor balloon and lantern releases and/ or to provide advice and guidance on the potential disposal of these items.

**Monitoring, Assessment & Review**

The Council will inform event organisers of the Balloon and Sky Lantern Release Policy by means of including relevant information within booking forms and other promotional materials.  The Council will also at its own discretion and where appropriate include details of this policy within any new leases or licences of land and/ or buildings where permitted events take place at those locations.  This Policy will be reviewed in two years’ time.

### Recommendation

That Full Council adopts the Balloon and Sky Lantern Policy and enrols to the Litter Free Dorset Charter regarding Balloon and Sky Lantern releases.

#### Impact Assessment:

Equalities – None identified.

Environmental - Introduction of the policy will protect and enhance the natural environment due to the reasons outlined in the introductory part of the report.

Crime and Disorder – None identified.

Financial – None identified.

Resources – None identified.

Risk Management – Minimal risk of reputational damage.

## Transfer of Parsons Close Allotments

In the original transfer of assets from Dorset Council’s Partnership, the allotments at Parsons Road were omitted. Councillors are asked to agree to the sealing of the Transfer of part registered title of the Parson’s Close allotments from Dorset Council to Weymouth Town Council.

Should Councillors agree the transfer the document will be sealed at the meeting. The transfer will then be signed by two Councillors at a later date.

### Recommendation:

That Councillors agree to the sealing and signing of the transfer.

#### Impact Assessment:

Equalities – None identified.

Environmental – None identified.

Crime and Disorder – None identified.

Financial – None Identified.

Resources – None identified.

Risk Management – The legal transfer will allow the Council to take on the legal rights regarding the management of the site to ensure risks are managed and sound management is in place.

## Information items

**Actions from previous Full Council meetings**

Please note that actions that have previously been reported to a Full Council meeting as “completed” are not shown in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Who | Action | Status |
| 24/06/20 | GW, CH, JB | Cllrs Winter, Huckle and Bergman to report back to Full Council as work regarding a potential ferry service develops. | In progress |
| 29/04/20 | All | Where an action from a meeting is for a letter to be sent, the letter to be attached to the next agenda in order that Members have sight of it. | Completed – will be done form now on. |
| 19/02/20 | IM | To discuss with WTC’s internal auditors the discontinuation of anything that remains high risk continuously and make amendments to Strategic Risk Register if appropriate and viable. | Discussions ongoing |
| 19/02/20 | JB/MR | Explore the organisation of an event in the Summer in the town centre for residents to speak with Councillors and Officers. | To be progressed at a later date. |
| 08/01/20 | JB | Social Media Policy to be put before Finance and Governance Committee | In progress |
| 20/11/19 | JB | Governance Working Group to explore the key differences and principles between WTC and DC | To be taken forward |
| 16/10/19 | MR | Develop a Community Emergency Plan in liaison with DC. Create an emergency planning page on the WTC website. | Draft plan to be progressed as officer capacity allows. |
| 31/07/19 | JB | Explore actions available to the Council to tackle fly-posting and leafleting | In progress – With DC looking at legality of leafleting in car parks. |
| 31/07/19 | TW | Update on work at The Marsh including CCTV | In progress |

**Forward Plan**

WTC Forward Plan – this is not a definitive list and is subject to regular change.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Meeting | Items for consideration |
| 16/09/20 | Services | Cemetery fees  Town Centre Decorative and Christmas Lighting  Highway Street Furniture  Amendments to the Allotment Tenancy Agreement |
| 23/09/20 | HR | Town Clerk’s annual appraisal arrangements  Out of hours arrangements  Policy alterations regarding accompaniment to meetings |
| 30/09/20 | F&G | Grant applications  Policy Review  Mid-year review of capital expenditure 20/21  Climate Emergency impact and mitigation reports  Brunswick Catering Kiosk |
| 14/10/20 | Full Council | Mid-year review of capital expenditure 20/21  Cleansing & Waste Contract  Town Councillor Vacancy Procedure  Complaints policy  PSPO Review?  Councillor Training (if DAPTC offer known?) |
| 28/10/20 | Services | Weymouth Town Council Events Policy  Laser lighting options |
| 11/11/20 | F&G | Grant applications  Appointment of Internal Auditors for 20/21  Asset Management Plan |
| 18/11/20 | HR | Town Clerk appraisal outcome  Reference policy  Union recognition agreement |
| 25/11/20 | Full Council | Appointment of Internal Auditors for 20/21 |
| 02/12/20 | Services | Draft Budget considerations  Community Emergency Plan |
| 16/12/20 | F&G | Grant applications  Draft Budget and Precept |
|  | Items to be scheduled | Community Emergency Plan  Winter maintenance plan  Business Continuity Plan  Full Assets Review – F & G March 2021 |

### Recommendation:

That Councillors note the above information items