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**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Services Committee

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 28 October 2020 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Zoom

**Councillors**

**Present:**

Cllr David Northam (C) Cllr Kevin Brookes (VC) Cllr Alex Fuhrmann

Cllr David Harris Cllr Gill Taylor Cllr Mark Tewkesbury

Cllr Graham Lambert Cllr Ryan Hope Cllr Tia Roos

Cllr Ken Whatley Cllr Christine James

**Officers**

Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk)

Tara Williams (Parks and Open Spaces Manager)

Tony Hurley (Operations Manager)

Ed Warr (Town Centre Manager)

Niki Ayles (Democratic & Administration Officer)

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| S0085 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Northam welcomed attendees to the meeting. |
| S0086 | **Apologies for Absence**  **Resolved:**  Members voted unanimously to approve apologies from Cllr Bergman. |
| S0087 | **Declarations of Interest**  Cllr Hope declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 14 “Free parking to support events and the local economy in 2020”, as a member of Weymouth and Portland Lions Club. |
| S0088 | **Minutes of the last meeting**  With reference to minute number 079, it is noted that Members were updated at the Full Council meeting on 14th October 2020 that Weymouth BID are no longer proceeding with the proposed lighting scheme.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Northam  Councillors agreed unanimously that the minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 16 September 2020 were a correct record. The minutes will be signed at the first opportunity the Committee has to meet face to face. |
| S0089 | **Councillors Questions**  There were no Councillor questions. |
| S0090 | **Public Comments and Questions**  **Allotments**  A current allotment holder attended the meeting and asked the following questions:  It is common knowledge that the compost heap has become a community compost heap however members of the public are disposing of all manner of items, not all of which can be composted i.e. tyres, pieces of iron etc. People are also making their own compost heaps in various places. As people add more to compost, it makes plots smaller and is attracting rats to the site. There are gates at one end of the allotment site but not at the other, as the Council rents out 2 parking spaces, and it has become common knowledge that here is a communal compost heap.  The member of the public was concerned that part of his plot is darker and therefore it is difficult to grow things in that area. Tenants are told that they must cultivate their plots but there is no point in cultivating it if nothing will grow on it, and nearby trees are taking all of the nutrients from the land. The new allotment policy states that no trees over 8-foot tall can be grown on the allotments but his plot has a tree that is over 30 foot tall and is diseased. This tree was already there when he took over the plot.  **Response from Tara Williams (Parks and Open Spaces Manager):**  Tara Williams responded that there are no communal compost heaps on allotment sites, other than the one at Rodwell. This was introduced by the tenants themselves without obtaining permission from the Council and has been abused over the years. Another tenant has requested that the composting area be tidied up and Officers would work with tenants to get it in to good, active use. However, there needs to be consultation with all tenants to see if that is what they want.  Tara Williams has spoken to the Council’s pest control contractors who will look at the vermin issue.  There is no policy around maintaining fertility of the land, and this is something that needs to be explored.  With regards to the open access to one end of the allotment site, the Council is unable to lock the gates due to the rental of garages and parking spaces as drivers would be unable to pull over safely on the Buxton Road. The Council will look to fence off and install a gate within the grounds of the site to prevent public access.  Cllr Fuhrmann requested that Item 11 “Project Initiation Document – Weymouth Mural Project” be brought forward to this point in the meeting. All Members agreed. |
| S0091  S0092 | **Project Initiation Document – Weymouth Mural Project**  Fuhrmann introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and took questions from Members.  Members hoped that the murals will reflect the heritage of the town in some way. An Arts Policy will be developed in the coming months which will detail criteria on the type of artwork the Council envisages for the town. In terms of this project, in order to prevent delay, it was suggested by Cllr Hope that this be included in the scope of the project. Cllr Harris agreed that the final Project Plan needs to be a clear direction that the Council will give artists on the sort of thing WTC expects to be painted. However, others felt that artists should be given a certain amount of freedom in their work.  Cllr Northam asked how artistic activity can be encouraged by the Council without being over controlling and hoped that artists will present ideas for approval before the work is undertaken. Cllr Northam hoped that a process will be identified in the Project Plan. Cllr Fuhrmann agreed that it would be wise to ask artists what they intend to paint before they proceed.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Tewkesbury Seconder: Cllr James  Members voted unanimously in favour of the production of the Project Plan for the Weymouth Mural Project.  *Cllr Fuhrmann left the meeting at this point.*  **WTC Events and Festivals Policy**  Tony Hurley introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation, confirming that although the draft policy has a review date of 2025, the scales of charging will be considered annually, and the policy can be amended to reflect this.  Cllr Northam proposed the following amendments to the policy:   1. Vision Statement to be amended to read:   “That by 2025 Weymouth has developed a comprehensive programme of high-quality sustainable community inspired and tourism-based Events and Festivals that cultivates community creativity for maximum economic and environmental benefit and social enjoyment throughout the Town Council area.”   1. There appears to be a stronger emphasis on tourism however equal weight should be given to tourism and community events. 2. The policy gives a lot of detail regarding how other organisations should manage events on WTC land, but not how WTC manages events on its land. Therefore, a section should be added regarding WTC Managed Events.   **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Hope  Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposed amendments detailed above.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope Seconder: Cllr Whatley  Members voted unanimously in favour to:   1. agree Appendix A as the council’s response to the consultation; 2. agree the Events and Festivals Policy 2020-25 as set out in Appendix B, pending the agreed amendments, and refers it to Full Council for consideration.   Members agreed that prior to going to Full Council for consideration, the amended policy will be circulated to members of the Tourism, Events, Arts and Festivals Working Group. |
| S0093 | **Cemetery Fees**  Tara Williams introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and added that funeral directors have requested that fees be rounded down to the nearest pound in order to make their pricing clearer.  Cllr Harris proposed that the first part of the recommendation be amended to read “Apply an increase of 1.9% (rounded down to the nearest pound) to cemetery fees for financial year 2021/22 except on exclusive right of burial and exclusive right of cremated remains”. Members then voted on the recommendation as a whole.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Harris  Members voted unanimously in favour to agree to:   1. Apply an increase of 1.9% (rounded down to the nearest pound) to cemetery fees for financial year 2021/22 except on exclusive right of burial and exclusive right of cremated remains. 2. To increase the exclusive right of burial and the exclusive right of cremated remains to a period of 50 years. |
| S0094 | **Weymouth Cemetery – Felling of Trees**  Tara Williams introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation, and added that felled timber may be shredded, taken to Tumbledown for use, or used in parks and gardens for mulching. Members of the public also come and take the wood, which the Council is happy for them to do. WTC is unable to replace one felled tree with two new trees in the cemetery due to limited space. However, this year the Council is looking to plant another 200 whips at Links Road and is therefore exceeding the 2 for 1 policy.  *Cllr Brookes left the meeting temporarily at this point and was not present for the vote.*  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr James Seconder: Cllr Whatley  Members voted unanimously in favour of approving Option 4: fell and replant entire section in stages over a 2-year period. |
| S0095 | **The Provision of Public Litter Bins in Weymouth**  Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Members were asked to discuss their stance on the matter and determine a way forward and consider, if they wish, a bin allocation policy and an associated budget for 21/22. Members felt that it was important to have more details regarding costings and information regarding what DC will provide in Weymouth when a request for a new bin is received.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Harris  Members agreed unanimously that additional information should be provided regarding costings, that a bin allocation policy be drafted and presented to the Green and Clean Working Group and, following discussion, an appropriate budget will be explored. |
| S0096  S0097  S0098  S0099 | **Complaints Policy**  Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope Seconder: Cllr Taylor  Members voted unanimously in favour of the Complaints Policy being amended so that where the Mayor is referred to where disputes need further arbitration, the policy will read “the Leader or Mayor …”.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Hope  Members voted unanimously in favour of the Complaints Policy being amended to include an 8-week deadline for complaints to be submitted, unless in exceptional circumstances.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Hope  Members voted unanimously in favour of Section 9 of the policy being removed and that the availability of the Councillor Code of Conduct be included in Section 7.  Cllr Northam suggested that when people are encouraged to submit any complaints in writing, the subject line should include the word “complaint” in order for it to be addressed promptly. Cllr Northam requested that this be added to the process.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope Seconder: Cllr Taylor  Members voted unanimously in favour of approving the policy for recommendation to the next Full Council meeting, pending the amendments detailed above.  **Dorset Council Car Park Changes**  Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Following updates and a press release from DC, it would appear that the changes will come in to effect in early 2021 and will not be open to consultation. However, Members may wish to submit comments. There will be a consultation at a later date regarding shoppers permits. Members are invited to provide comments with a focus on shoppers permits but it may need to be brought back to this Committee when the full details of the proposal are known.  Members were deeply concerned about the impact of the changes to evening parking charges on local businesses. It was also felt that parking charges in Weymouth should remain the same until the rest of Dorset catches up, or that if parking charges are not increased in other areas then Weymouth’s parking charges should be brought in line with others.  Concern was raised regarding the environmental impact of fossil fuelled vehicles, and that use of public transport should be encouraged. However, it was acknowledged that this is difficult given the current pandemic as public transport is running at a reduced capacity.  It was suggested that a strong letter be sent to DC outlining WTC’s objections.  It was highlighted that most Weymouth car parks are located in the most deprived areas of the town and many residents use the car parks as they cannot park on the street. If residents have to pay until 8pm then this will obviously have a financial implication for them. Secondly, a lot of health workers visit the area to support Weymouth’s most vulnerable residents. They do not have parking permits and would therefore have to pay to park.  It was clarified that there are no planned increases to parking charges but that charges will apply for an additional two hours in the evening. There was some confusion regarding whether all Weymouth car parks will be included in the two additional hours. Jane Biscombe will obtain clarification around this as well as whether there are any proposals to increase the length of the summer parking period. The suggestion of a shopper’s permit was generally supported by Members.  Cllr Harris was concerned that if funds are going to be raised from car parks then the money raised should be spent on improving transport and bus services as well as repairing roads. Local residents cannot travel into the town centre in the evening as most bus services have been cancelled.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Northam  Members considered the parking charging changes being proposed by DC and agreed that a collection of statements be put before the TAG group before being sent to DC.  **Free parking to support events and the local economy in 2020**  Ed Warr introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and confirmed that Weymouth BID and Weymouth and Portland Chamber of Commerce have not been approached regarding their thoughts regarding the free parking days.  Members raised concerns regarding the proposed free parking day of Wednesday 23rd December and felt that by this date people will only be going into the town centre to buy last minute items. It was proposed that recommendation A be amended to read “Officers to consult with Weymouth BID and Weymouth and Portland Chamber of Commerce with regards to the most suitable day for free parking in the town centre in December”.  Due to time constraints, it was agreed that following consultation with Weymouth BID and Weymouth and Portland Chamber of Commerce, Officers would respond directly to DC rather than bringing the matter back to this Committee.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope  Members agreed by a majority of 9 in favour, with 1 abstention, for Officers to consult with Weymouth BID and Weymouth and Portland Chamber of Commerce with regards to the most suitable day for free parking in the town centre in December.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope  Members agreed unanimously in favour of the submission of a request to Dorset Council for free use of all Dorset Council car parks at the Nothe in Weymouth on 8th November for the benefit of the Remembrance Sunday service.  **Information Items**  **Actions from previous meetings:**  Cllr Whatley asked why it is taking so long to put up notices directing people to the toilets on the other side of the new toilet building. Tony Hurley apologised for the delay and said that Officers are currently trying to resolve other issues. Officers will get signage in place as soon as possible. Additionally, he has asked DC to talk to their contractors regarding changing the size of the red and green engaged/vacant dots on cubicle doors but will follow this up.  The meeting closed at 8.59 pm |