

# **North Somerset Council**

## **Report to the Partnerships and Corporate Organisation Overview Management Policy and Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of Meeting: 2 March 2023**

**Subject of Report: The Winter Gardens Community Use**

**Town or Parish: Weston Town Council**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Julia Stuckey, Weston Placemaking  
Programme Manager.**

**Key Decision: No**

**Reason: To note the Winter Gardens Annual Report and community use  
2021-2022**

### **Recommendations**

1. That the panel considers and notes the Weston College Annual Report 2021-2022 (appendix 1) and update on the Winter Gardens continued community use.

#### **1. Summary of Report**

1.1 This covering report seeks to update elected members on the continued community use of the Winter Gardens and an update from the Community Board, which was established because of specific clauses in the Legal Transfer Agreement between North Somerset Council and Weston College in early 2016.

1.2 The Weston College annual report was received in February 2022 and is attached for elected members consideration as appendix 1.

1.3 This report also provides an update from the Winter Gardens Community Use Board which met in October 2022.

## **2. Policy**

2.1 The Councils Corporate Plan 2020/24 has several priorities that apply to the Winter Gardens iconic status within Weston-super-Mare and the commitment of the Community Board to ensure community access and usage continues to flourish.

These include:

- A thriving and sustainable place
  - a great place for people to live, work and visit
  - an attractive place for business investment and sustainable growth
- An open and enabling organisation
  - engage with and empower our communities
  - collaborate with partners to deliver the best outcomes

2.2 In particular, the Winter Gardens Community Board contributes to the following actions within the Corporate Plan:

- Flourishing arts, culture and heritage sector supporting inclusive growth and placemaking and healthier communities.
- North Somerset recognised as a key part of the regional visitor economy with places to visit across the year and throughout the day.

## **3. Details**

3.1 The Winter Gardens Community Board was established because of specific clauses within the legal transfer agreement agreed by the Council and Weston College.

The purpose of the board is to 'oversee and assist with the effective use of the property for community purposes.

3.2 The Scrutiny Panel has considered annual reports and updates from the Board for several years.

3.3 The board, which includes representatives from a range of community interests alongside the Weston Town Council, North Somerset Council and Weston College is chaired by a North Somerset resident who volunteers to support the involvement of the community in the development of the Winter Gardens.

3.4 The Officer attended the board meeting in October 2022, this is a summary of the discussion:

3.5 Weston College announced a new partnership 'The Winter Gardens Hospitality Group' with HotelBiz and The Royal Hotel in November 2022, which now runs the Winter Gardens event space.

3.6 The partnership is planning some refurbishment, and a renewed programme of events for the community and visitors. The Group now also manages the restaurants.

3.7 At the meeting, representatives of the Group suggested that 10 to 15 new jobs would be created at the site over the coming years.

3.8 A representative of the Hospitality Group has since joined the Weston Placemaking Agency events group, alongside other event organisers and venues, whose aim is to promote the town as an ideal place to visit and live.

3.9 The group discussed plans for a packed programme of events during 2023-2024 and has already hosted a regional business event, conferences, dances, concerts, dinners, weddings, etc.

3.10 They are very keen to attract more community groups and organisations to use the ballroom and have created a new website.

3.11 The Community Use board will continue to meet twice a year (April and October). Although the previous chair of 6-years has handed over the role to Mr Chris Bull (local businessman). The group thanked the previous chair for her generous voluntary work and time.

#### **4. Consultation**

4.1 The Community Use board brings together a range of stakeholders to oversee and maintain community access to the Winter Gardens.

4.2 Consultation with voluntary and community groups about best practice methods to improve community access is undertaken by board members when appropriate.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

None

#### **Costs**

Not applicable

#### **Funding**

There are no funding implications for the Council.

#### **4. Legal Powers and Implications**

Not applicable

#### **5. Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

Not applicable

#### **6. Risk Management**

6.1 Members of new Winter Gardens Hospitality Group are extremely experienced in operating event venues and restaurants. This will enable the Winter Gardens to recover from the difficult years faced by this industry during and since COVID-19.

#### **Equality Implications**

No – the purpose of the board is to work with partners and community representatives to ensure equal opportunities to access the Winter Gardens facilities

#### **7. Corporate Implications**

None

#### **8. Options Considered**

Not applicable

#### **Author:**

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North Somerset Council

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Weston College Annual Report 2021-2022.

**Background Papers:**