

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting**  
**held remotely on Monday 11 January 2021 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr Bowden, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Corlett-Shaw, Cllr Ellwood, Cllr Irven (Chair), Cllr Johnson, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Richards, Cllr Terrett, Cllr Westcott, and Cllr Whetlor.

**In attendance:** Sarah Reed – Town Clerk, County Cllr Davies, and District Cllr Aldridge.

**21/217** To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))  
None received.

**21/218** To receive any **Declaration of Interests** under Watchet Town Council's Code of Conduct (adopted on 9 July 2012) issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 Si No: 1464

Name	Minute No:	Description of Interest	Personal / Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr Whetlor	All items	As District Ward member	Personal	Cllr remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting
Cllr Irven & Cllr Murphy	20/225(a)	As a member of Watchet Library Friends (WLF) and Friends of Somerset Libraries (FOSL)	Personal	Cllr remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting
Cllr Irven	20/228(ii)	Person who made the request	Personal & Prejudicial	Cllr withdrew from the meeting and did not participate in the discussion and voting
Cllr Irven, Cllr Richards & Cllr Murphy	20/228(i) & (ii)	As Directors of WCCT	Personal	Cllr remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting

**21/219** **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 7 December 2020, (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))  
Cllr Irven proposed that *'The minutes from the meeting held on 7 December 2020 are approved as a true and correct record.'* Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

**21/220** **Chairman's Report:** – verbal  
Cllr Irven reported the following:

- Only formal role was to present Watchet Plastic Free awards to 5 businesses on 19 December on the Esplanade, having completed an appropriate COVID-19 secure risk assessment.
- As EH&S Designated Officer provided guidance to the Proper Officer on operational activities of staff and public access of WTC facilities. The Proper Officer has issued the guidance.
- Requested by Watchet CCT help group / good neighbours' scheme to continue supporting and endorsing volunteers delivering shopping, medicines, newsletters and providing transport to vulnerable residents during latest lockdown. Agree with Proper Officer that this is a continuation of the earlier collaboration WTC provided and that WTC would still provide letters of authorisation for volunteers as a key voluntary service allowed under current lockdown regulations.
- The Clerk has informed me that the Casual Vacancy which has arisen due to the sad passing of Sally de Renzy-Martin has been advertised today, 11 January 2021, in accordance with LG Act 1972 Sections 87(2) and 232. A public notice detailing one vacancy on the Town Council has been published on the Councils website and Facebook page and displayed in the Town Council noticeboard. The Returning Officer at SW&T Council has been notified and provided with a copy of the notice. The legislation dictates that the electors have up to 14 working days

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(up to 28 January 2021) to request in writing to the Returning Officer that a by-election is called. If there is no request by this date, then the vacancy can be filled by co-option whereby the Town Councils co-option procedures will be put in place and the vacancy must be filled within 35 days.

**21/221 Reports from the Principal Authority Members:**

County Cllr Davies

District Cllrs Aldridge, Davies and Whetlor and to receive questions from the floor

- County Cllr Davies gave the following summary of a report that had been circulated prior to the meeting for members in formation:
  1. Somerset vaccination programme expands on 8 January 2021.
  2. Vital work against erosion on A358 near Combe Florey, repair the verges near 'Yard Farm' temporary lights in place. This is for the safety of drivers as the verge between the road and embankment has started to move and there are cracks in the road surface. Work is expected to last from 25 January 2021 to 5 February 2021.
  3. There are currently no further updates on the two Unitary Cases, but a letter from the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government was circulated, it thanks all who work in local government for their services.
  4. Unitary Business case for SCC was circulated to all Clerks for circulation to members.
  5. SCC Press Release Survey to discover how Somerset residents access information and advice from 7 January to 28 January 2021.
  6. Request to members – as there may be a window of opportunity, do you want Cllr Davies to reapply to the Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) for funding for a 20mph speed limit through areas of the town, namely Swain Street, Brendon Road and West Street.
  7. HPC Community Bus Service suspended until further notice due to latest government guidance on COVID-19.
  8. SCC Climate Emergency Fund – delay on final decision due to increasing COVID-19 pressures.

The Chair thanked County Cllr Davies for his report. The Clerk reported that his request to re-apply to the SIS will be put on the agenda of the next meeting of the Environment & Planning Committee for consideration.

- District Cllr Whetlor gave a summary of a report that had been circulated to members prior to the meeting:
  1. Splash Point Wall is now complete, and the steps are being replaced. A SW&T Officer is meeting a contractor on Tuesday 19 January 2021 to look at this.
  2. Business Grant forms are being simplified as there has been some difficulty for businesses claiming the grants, Cllr Whetlor has been assisting local businesses in applying.
  3. Design work on Blue Anchor and of B3191 s progressing well, temporary measures of rock armour holding up well.

The Chair thanked District Cllr Whetlor for her report and asked District Cllr Aldridge if he had a contribution.

District Cllr Aldridge responded that things were quiet now, he will listen to see if there are any issues he can assist with. He did refer to a report on proposed locations of electric car charging points and had seen proposals for 2 charging points in Killick Way, Williton, but no mention of Watchet.

Cllr Murphy interjected and responded that WCCT put in an application to District Council in December 2019 for a grant to install an electric car charging point in Market Street Car Park. There has been no definitive statement on what has happened to the bid, could District Cllr Aldridge chase this up on behalf of WTC and WCCT.

The Chair thanked District Cllr Aldridge for his update.

County Cllr Davies left the meeting at 7.26pm to attend another meeting.

**21/222 Reports from Representatives of Outside Organisations, Verbal – no Decisions**

Cllr Whetlor as the Council representative on 'SALC' reported the following:

- On 16 December 2020, SALC held their AGM. The only business conducted was the Election of Chair, Vice-Chair, NALC representative, representation on the Playing Fields Association and Auditors. All posts remained the same with the exceptions of: Jenny Lawrence NALC rep, with Loretta Whetlor as Deputy, no representative to Playing Field Association as Jenny Lawrence stepped down but has agreed to remain in post until a successor is found.



Cllr Murphy as the Council Representative on **'Harbour Advisory Committee'** reported the following:

- Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee met this afternoon and members met the new Harbour Master, Marc Lawrence who updated on his taking over responsibilities from the former Harbour Master. He was reviewing the outstanding items from the last inspection. It was agreed that the completion of safety documentation by the Marina was an important matter and would be taken to the next Harbour Board to expedite.
- Craig Butler, the Assistant Harbour Master, reported on his current work: The flood boards are now in place to manage launching from the harbour slip. Launching by locals was permitted but not by people who have travelled far to launch. Twice recently fishing lines have been taken out by boats causing damage to the vessels. New signage is now in place drawing attention to the dangers of this and CB continues to speak to those fishing in the wrong place.
- Work continues on the steps and handrails by the now completed sea wall to permit public access to the path up to Splash Point. There is a review meeting of this work next week but it is not signed off yet so the route will not open to the public until this happens.
- Cardiff Marine reported that their recent dredging work removed 13,829 cubic metres of mud from the outer harbour which was thought to be a significant amount and they have optimism that the impact of water injection dredging both there and in the marina would successfully clear both locations if their vessels could be used.
- Work on the lighthouse is scheduled to be carried out soon together with outstanding repair to Esplanade railings.

Cllr Murphy as the Council representative on **'Watchet Coastal Communities Team'** reported the following:

- Directors of WCCT met today and the new Directors Elaine Preston and Andy King attended their first meeting after being elected at the AGM. Cllr Murphy was re-elected as Chair.
- Reported at the meeting that the 'Watchet Good Neighbour Scheme' had been launched and demand for help was not yet at the level experienced in the first lockdown. Since then, the Co-op and Quantock Pharmacy have stepped up their own service to customers, so there is expected to be less call on the services of the specialist support group. The Community Car is available for service following COVID-19 secure protocols and have received requests from clients for pick-ups. Clients have been delivered to vaccination hubs.
- A report on the progress of 7 The Esplanade refurbishment noted that planning for the internal refit was underway and budgets were being finalised to report to the three main funders, SW&T Council, PBSA Lottery and Lottery Reaching Communities.
- Directors agreed to launch a consultation about the strategic vision for the WCCT and what should go into the bid for the £120k on offer for phase 3 of PBSA.

Cllr Terrett, as the Council representative on **'The Conservation Society'** reported the following:

- On Monday 14 December 2020, Cllr Terrett attended the unveiling of the memorial bench for Sally de Renzy-Martin. Also in attendance was John de Renzy-Martin, Sally's husband, and Bob Cramp and Molly Quint of The Conservation Society. The Chair of the Conservation Society made a heartfelt speech dedicated to Sally de Renzy-Martin, Watchet Town Council and staff were thanked for their participation in the project. Stories were then shared about how one of Watchet's 'great servants' influenced the lives of so many in the community and in so many ways. In closing, the memorial bench is now available for seating in a place where one can admire just some of the hard work and legacy that Sally de Renzy-Martin strived for in the town that she loved.

21/223

**To receive and sign the minutes of the following committees and to adopt the Resolutions and Recommendations contained therein. (LGA 1972, Sch12 Para 41(1))**

- Watchet Community Centre Management Committee (9 December 2020)  
Cllr Campbell as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.
- Finance & General Purposes (14 December 2020)  
Cllr Murphy as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Corlett-Shaw. Carried.



- Environment & Planning (17 December 2020)
- Cllr Westcott as Chair of the Committee proposed that ***'the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record.'*** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

**21/224 Verbal reports from sub-committees, working groups, and other outside organisations, where Watchet Town Council does not have representation:**  
No notifications received.

**21/225 Reports from Working Groups:** - Any relevant paperwork will be issued at the meeting:

- Library- Update and recommendations** – Cllr Irven gave a brief verbal update that there was nothing to report as the Library was closed presently under COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.
- CCTV – Update and recommendations** – Cllr Richards began to give a brief verbal report but due to technical difficulties he couldn't continue, so Cllr Murphy reported the following:  
The Working Group had not met recently but there was some progress with the CCTV operation in Watchet as follows:
  - Quotation to establish the link to Minehead is £8,386.21. The Working Group, in liaison with the Clerk secured the allocation in the 20/21 precept for CCTV for £3,000 and this will be the Councils financial contribution towards the work.
  - Environment & Planning Committee agreed to a quotation of £1,599.97 to install a camera at West Street Car Park as a deterrent for recent criminal damage to the electrical barrier.
  - Manager of the Contractors installing the system has agreed to set the privacy settings of the Watchet cameras, this is dependent on a date to be confirmed and a COVID-19 safe risk assessment in place for attendance of key personal in the Police Office. When this is set up the Working Group will decide who the member will be to accompany the Contractors Manager.
  - Working Group to liaise with the EH&S Designated Officer on the H&S documentation.

**c. Climate Emergency – Update and recommendations** – Cllr Ellwood reported on the following:

- Climate Project Officer, Forum 21: Last year Watchet Town Council accepted a request by local environmental group, Forum 21, to act as lead council in an initiative to help slow climate change and create environmentally positive projects for West Somerset. The initiative - created in response to the Somerset County Council Climate Emergency Fund - would see Forum 21 employ a dedicated Project Officer to create and run environmental projects collaboratively with all councils who signed up to the initiative. Unfortunately, due to difficulty in coordinating and receiving commitment from other councils, Forum 21 have concluded the January deadline for the fund was not achievable so have decided to put the project on hold. I remain hopeful that we will be able to lead on this exciting and important project in the future and will update the council on any progress.
- Plastic Free Watchet: The exciting initiative to achieve Plastic Free status for Watchet continues to gain momentum. An outdoor ceremony was held on the 19th December during which Cllr Irven presented certificates to the local businesses who had achieved Plastic Free status which means they have taken the measures necessary to significantly reduce or eliminate single use plastic from their business. I am pleased to report the ceremony was well attended and successful in co-ordinating the necessary physical distancing requirements so thanks to all who played a part in organising and attending.

Cllr Murphy reported on the following:

- West Somerset Community Car Scheme bid to the Somerset County Council Climate Emergency Fund. At last month's meeting, the Council resolved as follows:
  - The Council is asked to approve in principle becoming the Lead Council for submitting the West Somerset Community Car Scheme bid to the Somerset County Council Climate Emergency Fund. Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'recommendation 2 is approved.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried
  - In pursuance of recommendation 2, the Climate Change Working Group is authorised to continue discussions with all interested parties to develop the bid. Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'recommendation 3 is approved.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
 Consideration was given to the role of a coordinator to coordinate the new EV and the current Watchet Coastal Community Team Community Car. The CCWP recommended, after taking advice from the Clerk that the post be outsourced to Watchet Coastal Community Team who would deal with the recruitment and employment of the post.  
Cllr Murphy being a director of Watchet Coastal Community Team declared a conflict of interest and did not take part in the discussion and voting on this matter.  
The Group also approved costings for the post compiled by the Clerk to form the basis of the bid for funding. Katherine Armstrong of Somerset Community Council is drafting the bid for the Council and we expect to see a draft shortly.

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- 21/226 Jubilee Stone:**
- (i) Update on the proposed relocation and update on Planning Permission  
The Clerk had circulated a background report on the stone prior to the meeting together with the proposal from the sculptor for a new location.  
After a long discussion, Cllr Johnson proposed that ***'the location agreed in February 2020 to the left of the Bookstop is progressed and planning permission sought. If there is a problem and planning permission is not granted, then other locations for the Jubilee Stone can be explored.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried with 10 votes for and 1 abstention.
- 21/227 Handover of the Memorial from the Watchet Remembrance Project Group to Watchet Town Council:**
- (i) Update and recommendations to include a draft letter of agreement  
A letter of agreement had been circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 1**. Cllr Irven proposed from the Chair that ***'the letter of agreement is approved.'*** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.
- 21/228 The Police Office:**
- (i) Update on the redecoration and renovation of the Police Office  
Cllr Irven had circulated a report on the redecoration and renovation of the Police Office prior to the meeting via **Appendix 2**.  
A short discussion ensued, whereby it noted that the Contractors had done a good job. Cllr Irven proposed that ***'the works contained in the report are noted and the Contractors invoice for £580.00 is accepted and paid.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
  - (ii) Update from WCCT on the Party Wall Act 1996 acknowledgement of party structure notice- ***(See Appendix 2.1) – circulated to members prior to the meeting***
- Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, Cllr Irven withdrew from the meeting at 7.57pm and did not participate in the discussion and voting.
- Cllr Campbell as Vice-Chair presided over the meeting for this item and reported that WCCT had written to WTC via Cllr Irven as follows: Further to the notification request for approval and permission being granted by Watchet Town Council under the Party Wall Act 1996, WCCT's principal contractor has completed the work on the renovation of 7 The Esplanade which shares a party wall with the 'Police Office' owned by this Council. As agreed in the Councils acceptance letter, a request is being made for the Town Council to confirm that the work has been completed and that the wall between the properties suffered no damage.  
After a brief discussion Cllr Campbell proposed that ***'Watchet Town Council acknowledge and accept the findings of the report and that the WCCT's works have been completed to the satisfaction of Watchet Town Council under the act.'*** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.
- Cllr Irven returned to the meeting at 8.00pm.
- 21/229 Dispensation to set the Town Council Precept –** Under the Localism Act 2012, members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in land in the Watchet Parish will need a dispensation in order to participate in the business of setting the Town Council's precept. The Clerk having received the completed Dispensation Forms from members by noon on Monday 11 January 2021 will grant the dispensation to all members accordingly *(forms sent out with the agenda)* - The Clerk granted a dispensation to those members who had submitted a signed dispensation form within the required deadline.
- 21/230 Exclusion of Press and Public:**
- "That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw"*** (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960)  
Cllr Irven proposed that ***'due to the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, Standing Order 1c is invoked and the public are instructed to withdraw.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

District Cllr Aldridge withdrew from the meeting at 8.02pm.

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See Excluded Notes 21/40 EX.

Cllr Irven proposed the '**re-admittance of the public to the meeting**'. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

**21/232 To consider the recommendations from the Finance & General Purposes Committee for the 2021-22 Precept:**

- (i) To approve the Running Costs, Committee Budgets and Project Costs - **(See Appendix 3.1) circulated to all members prior to the meeting**

Cllr Murphy presented the following report: The budget strategy this year has been to achieve a 0% rise in the precept. This is in recognition that this has been a difficult year for most of the Council Taxpayers in Watchet and the impact of Brexit is unknown but likely to put further pressure on people as the pandemic continues. This Council does not want to place extra burdens on residents at the present time. The Council needs to be able to deliver services to residents and visitors to the town so does not wish to reduce the precept demand.

The Town Clerk has produced a recommendation which accomplishes this and is to be commended for her work. The recommendation keeps the level of income offset the same level as last year - this is where the total required by the Council is reduced in anticipation of income being received during the year. The total precept is the same as last year at £182,980.

In recognition of the support to the town from the staff of the Council, there is provision for a 2% pay increase notwithstanding the announcement of a selective public sector pay freeze from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The hard work and loyalty of the staff during the pandemic is to be applauded.

The rise in running costs has been held down and all four committees of the Council have made budget requests at the same level as last year. Projects have been reduced and the level of reserves has risen during the year as not all budget headings have been spent. This means that when the Committee reviews earmarked reserves next month, provision can be made for such items as Climate Change and COVID-19 support from reserves as well as other items of spend that members wish to include in the Council's operational programme.

Cllr Murphy proposed that the following recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee is approved: ***The main aim of the Committee is to achieve as small an increase to the Band D Council Tax charge for the Watchet taxpayer, a consequence of this is a 0% increase in the 2021-22 Precept figure which remains the same as last year at £182,980, this equates to a 1% increase in the Band D charge from £2.83 per week last year to £2.88 in 2021-22. This allows the Town Council to maintain its existing services and effectively manage Council assets.*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor.

District Cllr Aldridge returned to the meeting at 8.07pm.

Cllr Whetlor asked that it is put on record thanks go to the Clerk and Cllr Murphy for their work in drafting the 2021-22 Precept.


**20/233 Matters of Correspondence for Report** - Correspondence is addressed daily and filed, the file is available for all Councillors to inspect at their leisure.  
***The Clerk will report on any relevant correspondence – Nothing to report – in file.***

**20/234 Accounts for payment** – to approve the December Schedule for payment in January  
The December Schedule (Payment in January) had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Johnson proposed ***that 'the Payment Schedule is approved, and the invoices duly paid.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.



- 20/235 To note **Matters for the next meeting** – no discussion or decisions made
- Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed: ..... 

Dated: ..... 10/2/2021