

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting**  
**held remotely on Monday 8 March 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, District Cllr Aldridge.

**21/253** To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1)- it was agreed to note the apologies from County Cllr Davies.

**21/254** 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	21/261(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

**21/255** **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 8 February 2021, (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))  
Cllr Irven proposed that **'The minutes from the meeting held on 8 February 2021 are approved as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Richards. Carried.

**21/256** **Chairman's Report:** – verbal  
Cllr Irven reported the following:

- Very little formally on behalf of WTC due to lockdown

As EH&S Officer

- Advised Clerk on COVID Roadmap for easing restrictions – update 21/262
- Advice report on water connection at the Police Office/store – update 21/264
- Clerk forwarded on a complaint from a resident via County Cllr Davies on access to the East Quay, in liaison with Onion Collective an assessment and survey report was drafted which has been made available to County Cllr Davies.

**21/257** **Reports from the Principal Authority Members:**  
County Cllr Davies  
District Cllrs Aldridge, Davies and Whetlor and to receive questions from the floor

- In the absence of County Cllr Davies his submitted report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Clerk referred to the following on his behalf:
  - 22<sup>nd</sup> February - IS THE TIME FOR ONE SOMERSET—ONE BIG OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES FOR ALL.

The government has begun a public consultation into changing the way local councils work in Somerset. It gives everyone the chance to have their say on setting up a UNITARY COUNCIL Approach. Disbanding all FIVE COUNCILS in the County and creating a new and better way of working.

Due to public this consultation, the Government has postponed the County Council elections on the 6 May 2021 until 2022.





- SCC under their programme to lower traffic speeds outside schools have written to County Cllr Davies with the news that Knights Templar has been assessed and prioritised for implementation. This proposal will be discussed with the Town Council, County Cllr Davies and SCC Traffic Manager before signs are implemented.

District Cllr Aldridge gave a verbal report as follows:

**1. Budget set by SW&T Council**

This is an ambitious budget which sets out to maintain or enhance existing services in the face of continuing cuts in funding by Central Government. Those cuts are notwithstanding the large grants given by Central Government to the District Council to distribute as assistance to local businesses and the self-employed. The efforts of the District Council are to be applauded, however in supporting the approval of the District's budget I have reservations that all the income needed to support the spending plans will be forthcoming. About 5% of the Council's income is to be generated as a return on investments. This in turn required the borrowing of tens of millions of pounds at very low rates and purchasing commercial properties with the funds. The income comes from the leases of these properties to commercial businesses. SW&T is not unique in following this method of plugging the gap in funding of services, so much so that Central Government has ruled that if an authority has engaged in this activity it can no longer borrow from the Public Works Loans Board. This, as we are all aware, is the usual first port of call for local authorities to approach for loans. Now SW&T will only be able to borrow on the open market. We can only hope that in the current economic climate the Council has got it right.

**2. Coastal Erosion.**

What was formerly the West Somerset Flood Board, has been adopting new terms of reference as it widens its geographical area of concern and becomes fully administratively supported by the District Council and has become a body within the Council. At a recent meeting of the board there was a discussion of the remit to look at flooding issues. It became apparent that little emphasis is being put on coastal erosion. The Board, by whatever name it comes to be known, will pay more attention to this aspect of problems caused by water levels rising be it from rainfall or sea levels rising. This seems obvious bearing in mind the large sums recently spent by SW&T on repairing Watchet Harbour and protecting the B3191 at Blue Anchor. It would be helpful to establish a coastal change management area. This not only sets out what is planned in the way of sea defences or not as the case may be but restricts development at planning level. It would be very helpful to the planners, not least the Planning Committee of the District Council, if there was a CCMA in place as a matter of policy in within the Local Plan now being drawn up.

The Chair thanked District Cllr Aldridge for his report.

District Cllr Whetlor tabled a report, and it was circulated to members prior to the meeting, she referred to the following matters:

Great news for Watchet regarding the Marina, outlined in the Press release circulated by Cllr Murphy last week. Thanks must go to the officers of SW&T, the portfolio holder and councillors who have worked hard to get this result. Cllr Whetlor continued that she had been informed that a contractor has been assigned to repair the middle section of the inner harbour wall at the East Quay. This work will start in about one or two weeks and is hoped to be completed before the opening of the East Quay Galleries.

The sea wall and Splash Point is now completed, and all snagging works have been done. It has been very well received by the locals and visitors alike. The steps are easier to negotiate now.

The Chair thanked District Cllr Whetlor for her report.

Questions from the floor:

**Cllr Johnson enquired** of County Cllr Davies, if an update could be given whether funding was approved at the recent SCC meeting relating to the Small Improvement Scheme (SIS)?

The Clerk will forward this enquiry onto County Cllr Davies

**Cllr Westcott asked** Cllr Aldridge if there will be an increase in Council tax because of continuing cuts to SW&T's funding by central government?

**District Cllr Aldridge responded** – An increase in Council tax in line with government allowances has been factored into the forthcoming SW&T budget



21/258

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

Cllr Corlett -Shaw as the Council representative on '**Emergency Town Centre Recovery Grant Scheme working Group**' circulated the minutes of the remote meeting held on the 26 February 2021 informing members of the following:

- Flower Troughs – paid for and in storage, NJ Nurseries to paint them
- Flags - 6 designs agreed on, Anchor, Ships Wheel, Fish, Ships Bell, Crab and Fossil, agreed to purchase flag poles
- Seating – on order
- Notice Boards – map discussion on what goes in them
- Bike Racks – paint bike racks by the bus stop in Harbour Road in Watchet blue and tidy up area.

Cllr Johnson as the Council representative on '**Watchet Market House Museum**' verbally reported the following:

- Meeting held pre-announcement of government COVID road map for easing restrictions, otherwise all healthy.
- Start reviewing lease renewal as it expires in September 2021, this is in hand.
- Meeting to be held on March 23, will be able to give an update regarding re-opening at the April Full Council meeting.

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

- Referred to a press release he had circulated from the Marine Group stating that it had acquired Watchet Marina and it will be operated and under their management from the 1 April 2021. Everyone agreed that this acquisition is great news for Watchet, and the Harbour Advisory Committee are taking steps to invite a representative from the company to a future meeting

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

The Board held a meeting this afternoon. The Board were saddened to receive and accept a resignation from the Board from Andy King. He and Elaine Preston were newly elected at the AGM last year and have now both resigned. The Board has arranged for an Extraordinary General Meeting of the members to be held on Friday 12 March 2021 to seek the removal of another Director. The outcome will be reported at the next Full Council meeting.

21/259

**To receive and sign the minutes of the following committees and adopt the Resolutions and Recommendations contained therein. (LGA 1972, SCH12 Para 41 (1))**

- Tourism & Leisure (11 February 2021)  
Cllr Whetlor as Chair of the Committee proposed that '**the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.**' Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.
- Finance & General Purposes (15 February 2021)  
Cllr Murphy as Chair of the Committee proposed that '**the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.**' Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.
- Watchet Community Centre Management Committee (17 February 2021)  
In the absence of Cllr Campbell, Cllr Whetlor presided over the meeting and proposed that '**the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2021 with the agreed amendment are adopted as a true and correct record.**' Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

21/260

**Verbal reports from sub-committees, working groups, and other outside organisations, where Watchet Town Council does not have representation:**

- (i) Market Sub-Committee – *notes circulated prior to the meeting.* Cllr Whetlor as Chair of the Committee proposed that the '**notes are approved**'. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

Cllr Irven had given notice to speak on the Food Larder and Pantry discussed at a meeting he had attended on February 25, set up by SW&T Council and interested parties. Cllr Irven reported the following:

There are two possible models discussed

Food Larder

Needs a fridge & shelving in a location.

Group to maintain it and handle EH&S with a leader.

Semi-stand alone

Takes donated food from allotments, food cupboards etc



People donate food  
Anyone can come and take food away  
Somerset CCS may have some funding to help with fridges  
Glastonbury have one and can provide a template free but ask for donations - Hubub model  
Food pantry  
Different set up  
Community led group eg Church, council, CCT  
Set up a membership scheme  
For £3.50 per month get £20 of food  
Tins, packets, meat, dairy veg  
Supplied by food partner – Fareshare  
Sedgemoor have 2 set ups operating  
Aim for 1 in SW&T by April, but challenge with food Partner in this area  
Work in Watchet & Williton via COVID help groups and Quantock Foodbank collaboration was shared, with stress of the need to ensure local traders are part of scheme as they were key locally during and out of Lockdown.  
Noted

- the need not only to address location, but facilities, storage, organisation, management, funding, EH&S, volunteers etc and that any scheme is properly set up and run.
- schemes need to address long term sustainability for those who require support, taking this load off foodbanks.
- Community facilities in Watchet & Williton requires consultation with relevant council facilities booking processes
- Overall support as ideas are defined would require review by full council.

Reconvene on March 17<sup>th</sup> organised by SW&T for wider group.  
Separate discussion on March 9<sup>th</sup> organised by Izzy on local possibilities

**21/261 Reports from Working Groups: any relevant paperwork will be issued prior to the meeting**

- Library** – Update and recommendations- Cllr Irven gave a verbal report on behalf of the working group stating that the re-opening of Watchet Library will be in accordance with the same protocols and COVID guidelines as the last lockdown. Members will be informed when the Library will re-open and in what format.
- CCTV** – Cllr Richards gave a verbal report on behalf of the working group that CCTV was now operational in Watchet, and the pattern and privacy zones of the cameras have now been set. The link has been re-established with Minehead, so this is good news.
- Plastic Free Watchet continues to meet approximately once each month. The initiative is currently looking to recruit support from 'Plastic Free Allies' which is one of the criteria required to achieve 'Plastic Free' status. Community groups are welcomed to pledge their support for making positive changes to reduce their single-use plastics. Anyone interested in the campaign can contact the Plastic Free Watchet Community Lead, Sam Westmacott, on [pfwcommunitylead@gmail.com](mailto:pfwcommunitylead@gmail.com)

**Other updates** - The Working Group is in the very earliest stages of considering measures which could help alleviate parking problems and congestion in the town with possible options to be explored in the coming weeks. The additional noticeboard to advertise job and volunteering opportunities is still being explored. The pay phone on Liddymore Road has been queried as a possible location.

**21/262 COVID 19 Roadmap:**

- (i) Too note report outlining re-opening of Council facilities- circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 1a**- The Clerk presented the following report:  
On 22 February 2021 government published a roadmap outlining a step-by-step plan to ease restrictions in England cautiously. Due to the current relatively uniform spread of the virus across the country, the four steps out of lockdown detailed in this report and the governments roadmap are designed to apply to all regions. The government has emphasised that decisions on easing restrictions will be led by data rather than dates. It takes around 4 weeks for the data to show an impact of easing restrictions and the government will provide a further 7 days -notice to the public and businesses ahead of any further changes. For that reason, there will be at least 5 weeks between each step in the roadmap.

**The Four Tests:**

Before taking each step, the government will review the latest data on the



impact of the previous step against four tests as follows:

1. The Vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
2. Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
3. Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
4. The governments assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new variants of concern

How do the roadmap steps affect Watchet Town Council and the Watchet community?

**STEP 1 - please see FIG 9 attached**

Part 1- **8 March 2021**- no change

Part 2 - **29 March 2021**

Stay at home rule will end and people are being asked to minimise travel. Rule of 6 or two households can meet outdoors, no household mixing indoors.

- Outdoor sport and leisure facilities and organised outdoor sport allowed (children and adults) so **Tennis courts, basketball and MUGA can reopen, and the Henry Davey, for youth football, but COVID protocols will still apply.**
- outdoor gym- difficult to maintain 2 metres distance between equipment – discuss re-opening in on 12 April 2021.

**STEP 2 - please see FIG 10 attached -12 April 2021**

- All shops reopen - so **market can reopen** from this date
- Libraries reopen
- **Community Centres reopen** - but **not** for indoor adult exercise
- Gyms and spas reopen
- **Children's indoor play reopen** with up to 15 parents attending
- Note social distancing 2m or 1 m+ and masks still applies unless exercising.

**STEP 3 - please see FIG 11 attached - 17 May 2021**

- Groups up to 30 outdoors, rule of 6 or two households can meet indoors and domestic overnight stays
- Outdoor entertainment can re-start - **for e.g Esplanade events**
- Limited attendance outdoor - half capacity - so **Esplanade <250 people, and with social distancing still applying, max individual groups of 30**
- Indoor entertainment and attractions

Members agreed to note the report and thanked the Clerk for the update.

(ii) Recommendations from the Personnel Committee on Office Staff rota – *circulated to members via **Appendix 1b***

In accordance with the government road map outlining the four-step plan for easing COVID 19 restrictions in England, the Personnel Committee has liaised with the Clerk as Line Manager to Council staff and would like to present the following recommendation to Full Council for consideration.

At the Council meeting held on 14 September 2020 the COVID Risk Assessment for office staff attending and working in the Council office was approved and signed. This supported up to 2 staff working in the office at one time and also supported a hybrid model of working i.e. a mixture of office and home working. I would like to recommend that the same model is applied until September 2021.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

To approve the work rota detailed below for the Council office staff's phased return to work in accordance with current COVID safety practices and procedures.



**Implemented at Step 2 level – Monday 12 April 2021:**

- *Monday - Clerk and Admin Support Officer in the office, Clerical Officer working from home so minutes can be issued and appointments for Cllrs and the public can be co-ordinated and booked in)*
- *Tuesday – Clerical Officer and Admin Support Officer in the office – Clerk working from home (from May the Market can be organised)*
- *Wednesday - Clerk and Clerical Officer in the office – Admin Support Officer working from home (from May the Market Administrator can oversee the market)- this may be reviewed after the market season ends*
- *Thursday – flexi day – each of the office staff rotate and come into the office for their assigned hours (depending on what needs doing and whose responsibility it is)*
- *Line Manager has the delegation to review and amend working days of the office staff when /if appropriate*

**Summary:**

**Clerk** – works Monday and Wednesday in the office, Tuesday at home and flexi day Thursday (in rotation)

**Clerical Officer** – works Monday at home, Tuesday and Wednesday in the office and flexi day Thursday (in rotation)

**Admin Support Officer** – Monday and Tuesday in the office, Wednesday at home and flexi day Thursday (in rotation)

The Risk Assessment does not support a third member of the office staff working in the Visitor Centre as this is not compliant with safe working practices during the COVID 19 pandemic. This will be reviewed in September 2021.

From the 12 April 2021, the office will be open to the public during office opening hours of Monday to Thursday 10-12.30pm with staff to cover these hours, but until Step 4 is implemented on the 21 June 2021, members of the public visiting the office and meeting council staff will be by appointment only. If all goes to plan and social distancing measures are lifted after this date, then staff members will make themselves available during opening hours to the public where an appointment will not be necessary, and drop ins accepted.

Arrangements will also be made after this date to reinstate monthly staff briefings for all members of Council staff.

After a brief discussion where it was agreed that it is vital to maintain a flexible works rota for Council staff in accordance with COVID safety practices, whilst also balancing the service delivery to the public, Cllr Murphy proposed that the '**recommendations as presented are approved**'. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

**21/263 Hinckley Point C plans to increase its workforce:**

- (i) Discussion on mitigation and impact on the community – *information had been circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 2***- A brief discussion ensued whereby members expressed the wish for more information, and agreed in the interim to note this matter, and when more details are available it is brought back to the appropriate meeting for further discussion.

**21/264 Town Council Assets:**

- (i) Update on the water connection at the Police Office- report from EH&S Officer was circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 3**- several options were considered. Cllr Irven proposed that '**Option 4 is approved as the only solution available to rectify the safety issues identified as follows -**

**Option 4 Cap off supplies to water and drain.**

- Request Esplanade Club turn off the stop tap supplying the water supply. Permanently cap this supply pipe in the Esplanade Club yard.
- remove supply pipe and tap on sink in the Police store.
- Remove and cap the drainpipe in Police store and remove U bend fittings

under sink.

- Either remove sink and replace with worktop, or source and place a wooden 'sink cover' over sink to turn it into a work top with a permanent seal in base of sink.
- This prevents inappropriate attempts to use tap and sink.

Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

**21/265 Request by Leader of Somerset West & Taunton Council to schedule a meeting to discuss local issues - the dates had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.** A brief discussion ensued whereby Cllr Murphy proposed that ***the offer for a meeting is accepted and scheduled for 28 April 2021, and topics for discussion finalised at the next Full Council meeting***?. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

**20/266 Matters of Correspondence for Report -** Correspondence is addressed daily and filed, the file is available for all Councillors to inspect at their leisure.

**20/267 Accounts for payment –** to approve the February Schedule for payment in March. The February Schedule (Payment in March) had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Irven proposed that ***the Payment Schedule is approved, and the invoices duly paid.*** Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

**20/268 To note Matters for the next meeting –** no discussion or decisions made

- Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.08pm

Signed: ..... 

Dated: ..... 14/4/21