

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting**  
**held remotely on Monday 7 December 2020 at 7.00pm**

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

**In attendance:** Sarah Reed – Town Clerk.

- 20/203** To formally resolve to suspend standing order 1(z) – to allow this meeting to take place on the first Monday of the month due to the Christmas period  
Cllr Irven proposed from the chair that ***'Standing Order 1z is suspended to enable the meeting to take place on the first Monday of the month due to the Christmas period.'*** Seconded by Cllr Richards. Carried.
- 20/204** To receive **Apologies for Absence** (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))  
No apologies from Town Council, but members noted apologies from County Cllr Davies and District Cllr Aldridge.
- 20/205** 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	20/212(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 Murphy	20/212(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

- 20/206** **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 9 November 2020, (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))  
Cllr Irven proposed that ***'The minutes from the meeting held on 9 November 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
- 20/207** **Chairman's Report:** – verbal  
Cllr Irven, Chair of Council gave the following report:  
Since last meeting, the only engagement on behalf of Watchet Town Council was to attend the Remembrance Service on 11 November 2020 at Watchet War Memorial. UK government guidelines had been relaxed despite lockdown to permit small scale events provided they were COVID secure and restricted access. Parish/Town Councils became responsible for the services. Together with Deacon Wood and Royal British Legion an event was organised but not widely publicised to the public. A track and trace system was in place for attendees. Cllr Irven was asked at short notice to produce a Risk Assessment signed off by the EH&S Designated Officer with agreement of the Proper Officer to allow Watchet Coastguard to attend, they had required this before they could attend. Local Constabulary helpfully provided guidance over traffic control and





social distancing of 2 metres was allowed. This was a well-disciplined event with appropriate attendance in Watchet.

Cllr Irven continued that he was asked and delegated by the Clerk to liaise with the Councils Solicitor over potential agreements involving the transfer of the War Memorial to the Town Council and the cancellation of the lease held jointly with individual members of the Remembrance Project to site the memorial on land adjacent to the library. Having explained the approach the Council wishes to take and agreed between the Council and the Remembrance Group, the Councils Solicitor accepted this was an appropriate way forward, which could be regularised via a simpler 'letter of agreement' between parties rather formal deeds and transfers requiring legal drafts and costs. The draft letter formulated will be considered by Council at a future meeting.

In conclusion, Cllr Irven made reference to a query he had received by a resident on a footpath running from Woodland Road in Watchet to Williton and a report would be presented to the Environmental & Planning Committee at the meeting held on 17 December 2020.

At this point, Cllr Johnson interjected that under his role as 'Parish Path Liaison Officer' he may be able to assist. It was agreed that the Clerk would forward the report to Cllr Johnson.

#### 20/208 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 report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members agreed to note the report.
- District Cllr Whetlor made reference to a report she had circulated to members prior to the meeting and added a comment from District Cllr Aldridge who had given his apologies to Cllr Whetlor as he had a clash in meetings. Complaints regarding mud on the road outside St Peters School, Williton due to contractors doing building work in this area which was seriously affecting vehicular access for parents and was a potential danger to children. Cllr Aldridge is working with the contractors and school to resolve this.

Questions from the floor: None received.

#### 20/209 Reports from Representatives of Outside Organisations, Verbal – no Decisions

- Cllr Whetlor as Council representative on '**SALC**' reported that the SALC AGM will be held on 16 December 2020 and she will be attending on behalf of the Council. She has recently been on an adjudication panel for the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) as SALC representative, this has replaced former Quality Status Award Scheme which Watchet Town Council passed and was awarded the Q Mark. There are three awards, Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold. Cllr Whetlor concluded that as SALC representative she will be attending the National Assembly on 8 December and informed Council that she has been elected onto the Smaller Councils Committee at NALC as the Somerset representative.
- Cllr Murphy as the Council representative on '**Watchet Coastal Communities Team**' reported that WCCT had held the delayed AGM remotely where the election for directors had taken place. There are two new directors elected - Andy King and Elaine Preston with John Irven and Liz McGrath being re-elected. Thanks to the Town Clerk for overseeing and validating the election results as an independent person.
- Cllr Corlett-Shaw as the Council representative on the '**High Street Emergency Fund Governance Group**' reported that the Christmas trees have all gone up and the group are progressing the actions in the action plan.

#### 20/210 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))

- Tourism & Leisure (12 November 2020) - Cllr Whetlor as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held remotely on 12 November 2020 are approved as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.  
Cllr Campbell under 'Matters of report' that having liaised with the Clerk there will not be a December meeting of the Committee and business will resume in January 2021.
- Finance & General Purposes (16 November 2020) – Cllr Murphy as the Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held remotely on 16 November 2020 are approved as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.
- Environment & Planning (19 November 2020) – Cllr Westcott as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held remotely on 19 November 2020 are approved as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.



20/211 Verbal reports from sub-committees, working groups, and other outside organisations, where Watchet Town Council does not have representation:  
No notifications given to the Clerk prior to the meeting.

20/212 Reports from Working Groups: - Any relevant paperwork will be issued at the meeting:

a. **Library- Update and recommendations** – Cllr Murphy presented the following report:

Further to November's report, we agreed a joint interpretation of how our proposed operation during the recent lockdown met revised UK Government COVID guidelines. These allowed for a modified click and collect service (location of counter by library door) and computer usage (separate area segregated from click and collect at rear) to be operated by SCC staff during lockdown. Appropriate documentation was agreed to record the decisions in the relevant SCC and WTC EH&S files.

Now that lockdown has ceased from 2 December, we similarly agreed with SCC that because Watchet Town Council (WTC) uses no volunteers and the library is entirely staffed and operated by Somerset County Council (SCC) staff, that the Library could resume operation to the previously risk assessed and approved system which allows both controlled customer browsing of books and segregated public network computer use.

The assignment of the lease from SCC to WTC for operation of the library has now been finally completed, establishing for the record the clause documenting that the building is held in trust for the people of Watchet as a library. SCC as a result have paid the £7,000 in full and final settlement to WTC for any liability for ongoing building repairs which had applied under the full repairing lease. This will be recommended as earmarked reserves for future repairs to the fabric of the building.

Jack Stafford the Community Partnership Liaison Officer has been replaced by Cerian Amery who has been in contact with WTC.

The July-September 2020 quarterly statistics for library operation have been provided by SCC and are shown in figure 1. Attendance and usage were greatly affected by first lockdown but started to recover slightly as we resumed limited operation during July.

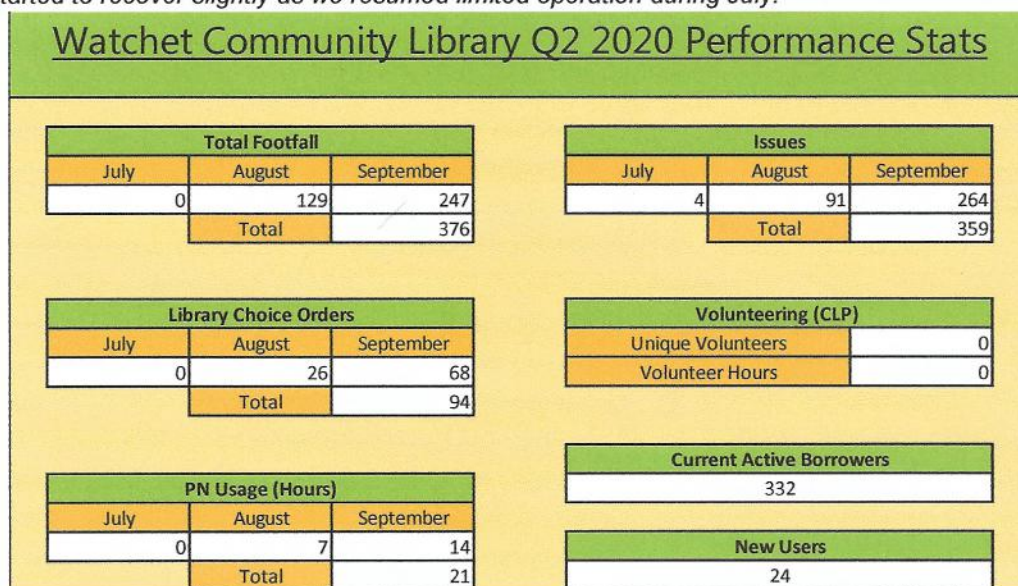


Figure 1

**Recommendation:**

That approval is given for expenditure of £320 + VAT for replacement of the failed water heater as a maintenance cost against the quotation shown in appendix 1.

Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the recommendation is approved.'** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

b. **CCTV – Update and recommendations** – Cllr Richards presented the following report:

There have been personnel issues at Somerset West and Taunton Council which have resulted in the CCTV system not being accorded the priority it deserves. There have been efforts made in Watchet to mitigate this but there has been no clear direction of travel and no strategy from the district council as to how CCTV across the council will be managed. The appointed representative on the CCTV Partnership is the Clerk together with Cllr Richards with a substitute to be arranged if he is unavailable. We feel that an urgent meeting of the CCTV Partnership which covers the Minehead and Watchet systems should be called to try and get things back on track.

SS



At the Council meeting last month, five recommendations were adopted by Council on recommendation of the Working Group. New information has come to light which causes us to ask Council to rescind the decision recommended no 2 which was to give delegation to Cllr Richards to access the system to install the appropriate privacy settings. It is now felt that it is more appropriate that the work done by professional representatives of the system owner (SWT Council) rather than a Watchet Town Councillor.

The link to Minehead which permits images from Watchet to be monitored in Minehead Police station has failed and been inoperable for some time. Somerset West and Taunton Council need to obtain a quotation and action this work as a matter of urgency. Watchet Town Council has budgeted for maintenance of the system but have not been called on to contribute since the system has been down. It is suggested, that as a gesture of good faith that the Council should offer to make a contribution towards the cost of re-establishing this link.

The Working Group acknowledges the work undertaken by Cllr Richards but feels that due to the complexity of the issues the group needs to be strengthened by the addition of one further Councillor bringing the total membership of the Group to five.

**Recommendations:**

- 1 That persons appointed by the system owner, Somerset West and Taunton Council, be instructed as a matter of urgency to install the appropriate privacy setting required on the Watchet CCTV cameras. Cllr Richard proposed that **'recommendation 1 is approved.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.
  - 2 That as a matter of urgency, Somerset West and Taunton Council be asked to secure a quotation to restore the link to Minehead Police office to permit images from the Watchet system to be monitored in Minehead. That Watchet Town Council, as a gesture of good faith offer to contribute to the cost the work required. Cllr Richards proposed that **'recommendation 2 is approved.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.
  - 3 That the Council calls for an urgent meeting of the Partnership Group to discuss the strategy that Somerset West and Taunton Council has for the management of CCTV in the district. Cllr Richards proposed that **'recommendation 3 is approved.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.
  - 4 That the Council appoint one further Councillor to the Working Group. The following nominations were made:
    - Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'Cllr Corlett-Shaw is appointed to the CCTV Working group.'** Seconded by Cllr Richards.
    - Cllr Terrett proposed that **'Cllr Johnson is appointed to the CCTV Working Group.'** Seconded by Cllr Irven.
    - Cllr Murphy proposed that **'Cllr Campbell is appointed to the CCTV Working Group.'** Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.
- It was agreed that as there is not a transparent voting system when a meeting is held remotely, that members will email the Clerk with their votes and the Councillor with the majority votes will be appointed onto the CCTV Working Group as an additional member.
- 5 That it be reiterated that for the avoidance of doubt that all communication between Watchet Town Council and Somerset West and Taunton Council regarding the CCTV system should be through the Town Clerk. Cllr Richards proposed that **'recommendation 5 is approved.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried

c. **Climate Emergency – Update and recommendations** – Cllr Ellwood presented the following report:

- 1 Plastic Free Watchet has continued to sustain momentum following a somewhat more dormant phase throughout the spring and summer. We have an interim Community Lead - Mark Ward from Somerset Wildlife Trust. We continue to seek a Community Lead and welcome all members of the community to join the steering group in any capacity.

We now have four businesses who qualify to achieve Plastic Free status:

1. Watchet Visitor Centre and Boat Museum
2. Corner Cafe
3. Chives Cafe
4. New Horizons

This means that these businesses have taken steps to replace single use plastics - such as wrapping materials, sauce sachets, drinking straws and takeaway food packaging and shopping bags and replaced them with reusable or biodegradable alternatives. I believe a ceremony is being planned in which Cllr Irven will present their certificates but in the meantime I wish to offer my congratulations to them for their efforts.

Cllr Murphy presented the rest of the report:

- 2 Forum 21 had proposed a project to employ a Project Officer to be shared among several West Somerset parishes to oversee projects that would help slow climate change.



Watchet Town Council had agreed to act as the Lead Council and a grant application was being written by Forum 21 to be submitted in January 2021. Unfortunately, due to capacity issues within Forum 21 and difficulties in coordinating other councils to commit to the project, this project is undergoing review as to its feasibility given the tight deadlines.

- 3 At last month's meeting in item 20/199c, the Council agreed:  
**Watchet Town Council provide a letter of support for the West Somerset Community Car Scheme Partnership bid to the Somerset Climate Emergency Fund.** Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the recommendation presented is approved.'** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

There have been discussions with parishes to seek support for the bid and depending upon their responses the scale of the bid will be determined. It is intended that the bid will include funding for a coordinator for bookings of the vehicle(s). The bid will be submitted by one council, thereafter, to be referred to the Lead Council and the grant funding will be paid directly to them. Council are asked to consider becoming the Lead Council for the bid.

The responsibilities of the Lead Council are expected to include the following:

- a. The Lead submits the Application on behalf of a multi council bid. The bid will be drafted for WTC to submit.
- b. The Lead technically owns the Assets (vehicle(s)) and is responsible for its management and delivery of the Fund Requirements and Compliance. WTC would be responsible via the appointed coordinator who would manage the maintenance of the vehicle(s) and who would manage the liaison with the car schemes involved.
- c. The Lead is responsible for the financial auditing and control of the Project for and on behalf of the partners involved (this would be undertaken by the coordinator or delegated to a suitable community organisation)
- d. The Lead is responsible for keeping partner Councils and other organisations informed of progress, Milestones and Compliance all being administered on behalf of the Lead Council (This would be undertaken by the coordinator or delegated to a suitable community organisation).
- e. The Lead Council would undertake the employment responsibility for the coordinator post. Again, this role could be undertaken by a suitable community organisation subject to agreement.

This bid is still very much evolving but continues to be an exciting multi parish project to widen the use of community transport in rural west Somerset which Watchet Town Council is urged to continue supporting.

**Recommendations:**

- 1 The Council is asked to note the updates at items 1 & 2 above. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'recommendation 1 is approved.'** Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried
- 2 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
- 3 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.

Cllr Terrett gave an update on the trees, that they had been delivered and planted in the agreed locations by the Grounds staff.

The Chair of Council thanked the working group on behalf of the Council for their work and commended the Council for taking leadership on this project.

**20/213 External Auditors Report:**

- (i) To note the contents of the External Auditors 'matters to report' – the Clerk made reference to Section 3 External Auditors Report and Certificate 2019-20, 'Matters to Report' which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting and its contents. *'On the basis of our review of sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR are in accordance with Proper practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.'* Members noted the comments from the External Audit and commend the Clerk/RFO for her work.
- (ii) To note the 'Closure of Audit' – the notice had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Clerk reported that in accordance with current audit regulations, the Closure of Audit notice must be published together with sections 1, 2 and 3 of the AGAR before 30 November 2020. The 'Closure of Audit' Notice was published on the Council noticeboard

on 29 November 2020 and also published together with sections 1, 2 and 3 of the AGAR on the Councils website on the same date. Members noted the report.

- 20/214 **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.*
- 20/215 **Accounts for payment** – to approve the November Schedule for payment in December – the Accounts for Payment for the November Schedule (payments in December) had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'the Accounts for Payment for November are approved and duly paid.'** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.
- 20/216 To note **Matters for the next meeting** – no discussion or decisions made
- Draft Precept
  - Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 7.52pm

Signed: ..... 

Dated: ..... 