

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting**  
**held remotely on Monday 9 November 2020 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** 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, County Cllr Davies

- 20/191** To receive **Apologies for Absence** (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))  
Cllr Irven proposed that '**apologies from Councillor Bowden are accepted**'. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.
- 20/192** 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	20/199(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	20/199(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

- 20/193** **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 12 October 2020, (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))  
Cllr Irven proposed that '**The minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 October 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record**.' Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

- 20/194** **Chairman's Report:** – verbal  
Cllr Irven gave the following Chairs report:  
Main activities. The Clerk has issued her update on WTC working arrangements. We have closed the outdoor gym, community centre, Henry Davey and office (except for essential activities) but kept open toilets, playgrounds and grounds staff continue their activities as key workers.

In addition the Clerk consulted me about meeting arrangements for Full Council and Committees, and her clarification of arrangements has been sent out to all councillors i.e. it is up to the Clerk with advice from Chair of Council or Committee to issue the summons to meetings, which can be virtual, live or hybrid, dependent on COVID restrictions and guidelines at the time of issue.

I also was consulted about the factually incorrect statements from a member of the public in the WSFP that "**Watchet Town Council is one of the few who will not hold virtual meetings and insist on face-to-face meetings**" and as a result '**did we have something to hide**' - as a result the Clerk's letter sent on behalf of the Town Council was published in the WS Free Press. It is a pity that such misinformation was somehow communicated to the member of the public. I would

*JP*



urge all Councillors to be mindful to ensure that WTC's reputation is properly maintained and that our social media policy is followed.

I attended one of the additional ZOOM sessions held by David Fothergill explaining their one Somerset proposal for a unitary authority and did not learn anything additional to that reported from the specific session held for WTC. I took the opportunity to request that their consultation when it happens follows the better practice used when undertaking library restructuring in 2019, where all areas of Somerset were consulted, even those not scheduled for library closure, rather than the very poor consultation implemented when children's centres were closed. He undertook to take the suggestion on board.

I attended the MUGA with Cllr Whetlor as Chair of T&L, Cllr Terrett and the Clerical Officer for the opening of the new MUGA, for which a press release and photograph was prepared for the story appearing in the WSFP of 6/11/20.

I also attended with Cllr Whetlor, the Clerk and John de Renzy -Martin at the children's playground for the dedication of the WTC bench in memory of Sally de Renzy -Martin, and for which a press release and photograph has been prepared.

In representing Council, because UK Govt had guidelines to stop ceremonies inc. national one at Cenotaph, SW&T Chair & Mayor asked for short video of remembrance from chairs of parish/town councils. With help from Deacon Woods, we recorded a short video the link to which the Clerk has already issued to you. Originally event in Watchet itself was banned, but Govt relented and even during lockdown when can't meet more than 1 person outside, gave derogation for remembrance events as long as they are small, well managed and socially distanced. On Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November, laid a wreath on behalf of WTC, and will again on 11<sup>th</sup> November. RBL did not encourage town wide participation and managed attendance log to ensure track and trace if needed.

Somerset Youth- I was contacted by Catherine Dance as the new engagement officer for this group. She asked for a meeting between James Brookes and WTC to explore what they are doing using SCC funds with a youth project in Watchet. I asked Cllr Campbell to attend as Chair of WCC and Cllr Whetlor as Chair of T&L to attend. Cllr Whetlor was unavailable. Cllr Campbell will give an update on the meeting under agenda item 20/198.

20/195

**Reports from the Principal Authority Members:**

County Council Davies, District Cllrs Aldridge, and Whetlor and to receive questions from the floor County Cllr Davies, made the following report:

1; **REMEMBRANCE DAY 2020** - With Covid-19 cases rising and the Country set for a month-long lockdown, Remembrance 2020 will be different from all previous years.

SCC Councillor Rod Williams, Chair of the Somerset Armed Forces Covenant Partnership, said "The reason for us to remember does not change but how we remember must change this year. We remember the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces community from Britain and the Commonwealth, not just in the two World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but all wars and conflicts.

We can still mark Remembrance Sunday by reflecting and remembering privately.

"And wherever you are, please observe the TWO MINUTES SILENCE at 11am on Wednesday November 11. Stop, be still, be silent and remember"

2; **WASTE SERVICES IN LOCKDOWN** - The plan is that all 16 sites will remain open on standard opening hours. Somerset sites have measures in place to protect the public and staff and these include; NO ONE WITH COVID SYMPTOMS OR THOSE ASKED TO SHIELD SHOULD VISIT SITES.

STRICT SOCIAL DISTANCING MUST BE FOLLOWED.

VISITORS ARE ASKED TO WEAR GLOVES AND LIMITED TO A MAXIMUM OF TWO PER VEHICLE.

MASK ARE DISCRETIONARY.

SITE STAFF ARE NOT ABLE TO GIVE THEIR USUAL ASSISTANCE IN LIFTING HEAVY OR LARGE ITEMS.

Collections including garden waste and the roll-out of Recycle more, will continue as normal and we will be re-emphasising our message about how people should dispose of personal waste if they, or someone in their household has symptoms. SWP, SUEX and VIDOR will continue to monitor the situation, guidance and any impacts on staff and will make changes if appropriate.



3; **NEW WALK-THROUGH CORONAVIRUS TESTING SITE OPENING** -At Bridgwater Town Hall. Anyone with one or more of these symptoms' high temperature, a new continuous cough, or loss or change to sense of smell or taste should book a test at: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or by calling 119. Those being treated will be required to follow public health measures. Social distancing, not travelling by taxi or public transport, practising good personal hygiene, and wearing a face covering throughout, while travelling to and from the Testing centre.

4; Healthcare workers are urged to get FREE flu jab which will protect patients, staff and themselves. Make sure that all eligible patients are encouraged to have a FREE flue jab.

5; **STAY HOME FOR SOMERSET** - From now until December 2nd the County is asking people to take a "Selfie" featuring the name of or photo of who they are staying home for. it could be protecting a vulnerable family member or friend or because you want to protect the NHS from extra pressure. The photos can then be uploaded to social media using the hashtag #StayHomeForSomerset.

6; **SUPPORT FOR SOMERSET RESIDENTS DURING LOCKDOWN**- Help is available in Somerset, the 5 Councils in Somerset are working together since the first lockdown to provide a single phone number 0300 790 6275. If they need help themselves or are concerned about a relatives or neighbour, please use help is available and phonelines are open 7 days a week 8am to 6pm.

7; **TRAVEL SENSIBLY THIS WINTER**- SCC fleet of 23 gritters are ready to be called upon as soon as it gets cold over the winter months. We will be maintaining the extended gritting service of last year. With approximately 900 miles of road up for treatment in 2020/21.

8; **£1 SOMERSET CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMUNITY FUND**- Deadline to apply this Thursday 12th November 2020 for window 1. Bids for between £5,000 and £75,000. Window 2 will be open on 1st December 2020.

9; **WESSEX WATER SERVICES LTD FINED FOR BREACHING SIGNAGE RULES**- The case was heard at Taunton Magistrates on 4th November 2020. Wessex Water Services Ltd pleaded guilty to one offence at Forton Road, Chard and were fined £12,000 for the offence and ordered to pay £1,907.16p and victim surcharge of £170.

Questions from the floor:

**Cllr Terrett asked:** had County Cllr Davies received the query relating to the accidents occurring at the corner of Five Bells?

**County Cllr Davies replied:** yes, he has received it, but had not responded yet as he has contacted the Officer at County to seek more information. He will send on any updates he receives to Cllr Terrett.

District Cllr Whetlor tabled a report and gave details on two items as follows:

1. Dredging – Cardiff Marine has started to dredge the outer harbour and have so far completed 4 of the scheduled 18 tides. The progress is good with a significant channel already formed from the slipway to the harbour entrance, and a wider deeper channel from the Harbour entrance to the marina gate – this matter will be updated further by Cllr Murphy, Council representative on the Harbour Advisory Committee and Harbour Board.
2. Pleased to witness the delivery of 1800 tonnes of rock armour at Blue Anchor, which will be used to shore up the cliff edge.

District Cllr Aldridge was asked to give his report but was having technical difficulties and was unable to do so.

District Cllr Davies interjected with a short report:  
DONIFORD ROAD, WILLITON.

1; Mud on road due to construction traffic from site to the west of Aller Mead. This is being cleared by heavy Road Sweeper on site each time lorries leave the site.

2; Concern safety of Children at start/finish of School. Site Manager has been approached and has been co-operative but with different contractors and sub-contractors it is not an easy task to control. Therefore, PCSO has asked that I contact SCC Highways to seek a temporary speed restriction for this section of the road. Awaiting response.

The Chair of Council thanked the Principal authority members for their reports.





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

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

- COVID practises in place, 6 people allowed in the museum at one time, seemed to be working well, with good attendance figures.
- Membership will be reviewed at the AGM scheduled for March 2021

Cllr Westcott as the Council representative on the '**St Decumans Charity**' reported:

- There is a zoom meeting scheduled for Tuesday 10 November, to review applications applying for grants from the charity.

Cllr Corlett-Shaw as Council representative on the '**High Street Emergency Fund Governance Group**' tabled the minutes from the group meeting held on 27 October 2020 for members information and reported that:

- Cllr Whetlor was appointed Chair of the Group, and members are currently formulating an action plan to submit to SW&T Council as the fund holders of the £25,000 grant.

Cllr Murphy as Council representative on the '**Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee**' reported that he had circulated a written report after the meeting held on 26 October 2020 for members information.

Cllr Murphy as Council representative on the '**Harbour Board**' informed the meeting that as the Board had only met this morning, he could not submit a written report and proceeded to give a verbal report as follows:

- Dredging of outer harbour started last week and is detailed in the report submitted by District Cllr Whetlor.
- Slipway has been jet washed and new signs erected at Blue Anchor
- West Pier – Quote for new fender, as fender has disappeared, and bolts are showing dangerously
- Lighthouse – looking at quotation for repair work, new lock and replacement of bulkhead light. Looking as installing a lighting column as recommended by the Harbour Master.

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

- Refurbishment of 7, the Esplanade progressing well with internal and external works nearly completed.
- In discussions with Harbour Community Bookshop on terms of lease.
- Consulted with members on what platform to hold the AGM, responses were evenly split, where it was agreed to hold a remote AGM on the 25 November 2020, notices gone out.

**Cllr Whetlor asked:** Where is the electric car charging point for the community vehicle, and is the charging point just for the community car? Is this subject to a licence fee to SW&T Council.

**Cllr Murphy replied:** A licence fee is not applicable, as the use of the car charging point formed part of the freehold asset transfer and can be used under the section 'operations specific to the premises'. The point is located on the premises on the left-hand wall as you enter from Esplanade Lane onto the Esplanade. This is not a public charging point and is for the community vehicle only. The community vehicle will be parked overnight on occasion specifically for charging purposes only.

**Cllr Whetlor asked:** is there ample room for emergency vehicle access?

**Cllr Murphy responded:** Emergency access is not impeded; a test has been carried out.

Cllr Whetlor as Council representative on '**SALC**' informed members that her report had been tables, and referred to:

- Date of AGM will be reported soon.
- NALC's response to the governments White paper on Planning has been circulated to members in a separate email which the Clerk has circulated, as the report was lengthy, mainly for the attention of members of the Environment & Planning Committee.

Cllr Irven as Council representative on the '**Quantock Foodbank**' reported the following:  
At the virtual AGM on 14/10/20 I was re-elected as a trustee as was Cllr Peter Payne of Williton Parish Council, the Clerk circulated a copy of the written report to all Councillors before the meeting, here is a summary of the key points:



- The Foodbank operated throughout lockdown, there was a dramatic escalation of demand due to COVID. From beginning of lockdown to mid-summer, demand quadrupled from those in need.
- To handle quadrupled demand, needed to expand from Methodist annex into school room by kind permission of church, as services and use was curtailed.
- Must stress the wonderful donations of food from Watchet & environs. When people could not get to shops, they donated cash, used to buy food from wholesalers. Tremendous co-operation with WCCT CIC Coronavirus help group. Established a joint telephone protocol where those who could pay were helped by volunteers with shopping/prescriptions. Those who could not, were prioritised via agencies for free food parcels from the Foodbank.
- The charts in the annual report show trends and detailed numbers.
- Foodbank grateful for donation and support from Watchet Town Council and grant awarded from the COVID reserve,
- I wish to stress to counter some suggestions on social media, that there were families who were benefitting who may not have managed their finances properly or who were exploiting free food parcels. On page 2 the chart shows where the referrals come from, and 98% are from external support agencies who have prioritised the referral, only 2% comes from direct requests from individuals.
- I would hope the Council fully endorse the outstanding work undertaken by the Foodbank, and that we are all doing this to help families who through no fault of their own require such help.

**20/197 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 (15 October 2020)- Cllr Campbell as the Chair of the Committee proposed that ***'The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record.'*** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.
- Finance & General Purposes Committee (19 October 2020)- Cllr Murphy as the Chair of the Committee proposed that ***'The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
- Environment & Planning (29 October 2020)- Cllr Westcott as the Chair of the Committee proposed that ***'The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2020 are adopted as a true and correct record.'*** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

**20/198 Verbal reports from sub-committees, working groups, and other outside organisations, where Watchet Town Council does not have representation:**

(notifications to the Clerk prior to the meeting)

The Clerk informed members that notification had been given prior to the meeting by Cllr Campbell to report on a meeting she had attended with organisers of the project 'Young Somerset'. The project involved engaging with 31 youths and identifying what the youths see as their needs and wants. Cllr Campbell concluded that the outcome report from James Brookes who undertook the consultation under the auspices of 'Young Somerset' did not include any actions, but identified 3 key streams of work:

1. Youth Work
2. Facilities
3. Engagement with Youth, isolation, and disenchantment with the Community

After a brief discussion, it was suggested that the report from the Young Somerset Leader is circulated to the Chair of the T&L and WCC Committee who will discuss a way forward with guidance from the Clerk, if there are any outcomes, they will be reported at the next appropriate meeting'.

**20/199 Reports from Working Groups:** - Any relevant paperwork will be issued at the meeting:

- a. **Library- Update and recommendations** – Cllr Murphy gave the following report on behalf of the Working Group:  
During the current lockdown from 5<sup>th</sup> November, Govt guidelines initially stated that Libraries could remain open for use of computers on the Public Network and to offer a click and collect book service as long as users did not enter the building.

55



SCC did not know whether this restriction was feasible, and closed libraries on 5<sup>th</sup> November until this could be resolved with Government. They wanted SCC staffed libraries to remain open, recognising that CLP partners might not wish to open if volunteers were reluctant to do so.

The WTC EH&S Officer recommendation, supported by Library working group, was confirmed by the clerk to SCC as

*'Because Watchet Town Council (WTC) uses no volunteers and the library is entirely staffed and operated by Somerset County Council (SCC) staff, the Town Council agree to the Library remaining open under whatever SCC find as a workable solution. If SCC decide they have to close, the Town Council will also accept this.'*

Subsequently the UK Govt ruled that provided the service desk for click and collect was immediately adjacent to the door, such that users did not need to enter other areas of the library, this would be permissible in a COVID secure building. Computer users could use the equipment 'for essential purposes' if separated sufficiently from the click and collect service.

As the layout of Watchet library is COVID secure and meets the criteria specified for such a modified click and collect service (location of counter by door) and computer usage (separate area segregated from click and collect at rear), no changes are required to the building. The changes required are mainly procedural and only require communicating to staff and public. It was agreed therefore, between SCC and WTC that the library can reopen from Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Nov on this basis, with a copy of the relevant correspondence documenting this decision to be entered into the safety file without the need for a new building risk assessment.

- b. **CCTV – Update and recommendations** – Cllr Richards reported that the notes from the working group meeting held on 6 November 2020, had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Richards proposed that the **'following recommendations are approved'**

**RECOMMENDATION 1:**

As data owners, SW&T Council are responsible for updating the Code of Practice for use of the Watchet CCTV system and will forward on a newly drafted policy when it is completed – *to note*

**RECOMMENDATION 2:**

Delegation is given to Cllr Richards to have access to the log in details for the Watchet system so that the tour and pattern of the cameras can be set up including the privacy settings. Another member of the working group is to be appointed to be present to validate the work undertaken, subject to the appropriate Risk Assessment and COVID safety practices being in place.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:**

The link for monitoring the Watchet CCTV system is re-established at Minehead Police Station.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:**

Delegation is given to designated personnel to access the cameras for emergency maintenance only, whereby a log/register issued by the Council Office staff is completed together with a signature to verify the reason for access and any actions undertaken to protect all parties. Two designated personnel should attend to verify the reason for access to protect all parties, subject to the appropriate Risk Assessment and COVID safety practices being in place.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:**

Town Council consult with SW&T Council as owners of the Watchet CCTV system to explore ways that evidential data can be accessed in the interim from the Watchet Police Office recorder, whilst the Minehead link is being re-established and in the event of the future failure of the system.

Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried with 8 votes for and 2 abstentions

- c. **Climate Emergency – Update and recommendations** – Cllr Murphy presented the following report on behalf of the Working Group:

Cllr Murphy recently took part in a zoom call organised by Izzy Silvester, ex Watchet Town Councillor who is the Transport coordinator for SCC. She is also part of the Watchet Drives working group for WCCT around the Community Car. Also, on the call was David Croxton, author of the attached paper, also Watchet Drives WG, Chair of West Somerset Community Car Scheme Partnership and Bick Lifts (Bicknoller's Community Car Scheme). Cllr John Irven was also on the call.



The proposal is to ask Watchet Town Council to sign up to use some of its £75K "allocation" of SCC Climate Emergency Fund to pledge a letter of support for this project. The project would put three electric vehicles on the road driven by volunteer drivers to widen the provision of community transport to young people by providing transport to Kilve Court and Minehead Eye in the morning and evening whilst the vehicles were available for normal Community Car Scheme use during the day. The bid to the fund would include employment of a coordinator who could be based in Watchet and (subject to discussion by Watchet Drives) also coordinate the Watchet Community Car booking. The three vehicles would be parked overnight in locations where they will be charged up, one possibly in Watchet using the charge point to be installed on 7 Esplanade building currently being refurbished by WCCT (subject to discussion by Watchet Drives).

The attached paper describes the funding mechanism whereby daytime users pay for their transport under the Community Car Scheme where bus passes are recognised. It is anticipated that the scheme will be self-financing.

Community Car Schemes in West Somerset, including Watchet and Williton Wheels have ceased operating during the first lockdown and this scheme is attempting to get desperately needed services back as well as widening the scope to encompass young people.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

***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.

- 20/200**    **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.*
- 20/201**    **Accounts for payment** –to approve the schedule of payments for November 2020 – *The schedule will be circulated to all members during the meeting for their information*  
Cllr Johnson proposed that ***'the schedule of payments for November are approved and duly paid.'*** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
- 20/202**    To note **Matters for the next meeting** – no discussion or decisions made
- Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed: ..... 

Dated: ..... *9/12/20.*