

**Minutes of the Environment & Planning Committee**  
**held on Thursday 23 June 2021 at 6.30pm**

**Present:** Cllr Brake, Cllr Irven, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Johnson, and Cllr Westcott (Chair)

**In attendance:** Sarah Reed, Town Clerk, Sam Westmacott, 1 member of the public

- 21/137B To receive apologies for absence: (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))**  
Cllr Irven proposed that ***"apologies given by Cllrs Campbell and Terrett are accepted"***.  
Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

- 21/138B To receive any Declaration of Interests:** none at this point

**21/139B Presentation:**

- (i) Sam Westmacott – preliminary evaluation of key planning issues in relation to the impact of traffic (i.e. vehicular, pedestrian, cycle) in Watchet – paperwork circulated to members via ***Appendix 1***

Sam Westmacott circulated a report to members (attached) and started her presentation by making reference to two traffic surveys she and Jan Hoare had undertaken in West Street supported by 25 residents, where some interesting facts were identified relating to Cleeve Hill Planning Application 3/3/7/21/20. She continued to give background information on the conducted surveys and highlighted the potential impact the Cleeve Hill development in relation to the intensification of traffic. She continued that once this Committee had agreed to make a recommendation to Full Council to engage the services of a consultant to undertake an independent traffic assessment and Full Council agreed and allocated a budget of up to £9,999 she offered her assistance to the Clerk in sourcing a consultant. Three companies were identified and a brief was sent to them, details of their comments and costings are on file. In conclusion, Ms Westmacott gave her opinion on the most suitable consultant who she felt had assessed the situation and understood that the traffic survey and the proposed development was raising longer term issues regarding planning and understood that the long-term aim was rationalisation of traffic and development for the whole town. She felt that in working with him on future traffic calming and future planning could ultimately lead to working with SCC highways in a constructive manner when addressing future developments in Watchet.

Sam Westmacott was thanked for her presentation and the work she and the other residents had undertaken to date was commended by the Committee.

**21/140B Traffic Evaluation in Watchet:**

- (i) Form a working group to assess and progress options to make recommendations to the Proper Officer in accordance with the budget set by Full Council.

Cllr Irven tabled the attached report and then proposed that ***'a working group is appointed to advise the Proper Officer'***. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

Members then expressed their interest in being appointed. Cllr Johnson proposed that ***'Cllrs Brake, Irven and Murphy with Sam Westmacott as an affiliated member are appointed onto the working group'***. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

- (ii) To consider immediate recommendations to the Proper Officer including the appointment of a consultant

After a review of the terms and conditions, proposals and costs submitted by three companies, Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'the Committee endorse the recommendation to appoint Richard Fitter, Entran as a consultant to WTC. Delegation is given to the Proper Officer as advised by the working group to progress all aspects of this matter, including agreeing scope, cost, contract terms and the commissioning of a report and compilation of a letter of objection to the Cleeve Hill development which can be submitted to the Planning Authority. Costs for the initial phase is approximately £2,330 of the £9,999 budget as in the detailed proposal'***. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Unanimously carried.

Sam Westmacott and 1 member of the public left the meeting at 7.01pm





**21/141B West Street Car Park:**

(i) New barrier and control system – *the Clerk presented the following report compiled by the Admin Assistant* - Once the electric issue had been fixed by a local electrician, the engineer tried to program in all the fob numbers, excepting those that had failed to pay and not been returned. However, he found that the fob numbers were not recognised by the new system. Therefore, I had to recall all key fobs so that we could allocate them with the new numbers.

Most fobs were returned, and the engineer helped me to program them in last Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> June. I have been programming any stragglers as and when they are returned, only one is still outstanding I have spoken to him.

We are in the process now of tenants coming to collect their fobs and I have informed them that I will be switching on the barrier on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> June at 9am. Any fobs not collected, or arrangements made for returning by post, will not be able to access the car park after that time.

The known two offenders continue to park illegally in the car park. One offender has also been parking a car on the pavement in the entrance to the car park for a couple of weeks now. The Operations Assistant is concerned that he may still be able to enter and exit the car park this way, by vandalising the black plastic bollard and manoeuvring between the barrier support post and the yellow bollards. Therefore, a quote from a local contractor has been sought (attached) for supply and installation of an extra bollard to prevent this. Members made reference to the CCTV in the car park for viewing any future offenders and criminal damage.

After a brief discussion, Cllr Johnson proposed that ***'the quote to install a bollard in the location recommended at net £445 is approved'***. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

**21/142B Grounds Maintenance:**

To add extra grass verge areas onto the ground's maintenance works rota – *paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 2* - the Clerk reported that there are two grass verges currently not on the cutting schedule which are owned by Somerset County Council, of which Watchet Town Council maintain for the town. The Council have received two separate emails from Watchet residents who are concerned that unadopted areas of grass verges in Watchet are not being maintained. The first email from a resident of Holm View Watchet raised concerns about poor visibility caused by uncut verges, which impede vehicle drivers from gaining a clear view of oncoming traffic. The second email was sent from a resident of Greenway, who has requested that the grass verge at the entrance to Greenway is adopted and maintained by Watchet Town Council, stating in the request that this area is a first impression on a main route to Watchet from Blue Anchor, it is also a greatly used area for the purpose of people 'exercising' their dogs and would make it far easier for them to clean up after themselves. Maps and photographs were tabled for members information.

**Recommendation:**

1. Holm View verges, as detailed above, are cut every three weeks and form part of the scheduled grass cutting rota. This area left unkept could lead to a health & safety concern due to poor visibility when pulling on to the main road.
2. Greenway verge, as detailed above, is cut four times a year to help residents maintain the area. This additional work will form part of the West Street Residents car park maintenance rota.

Cllr Westcott proposed that ***'the recommendation is approved'***. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

**21/143B Phone Box consultation:**

- (i) Swain Street phone box- to note the decision of the Executive Portfolio Holder for Community, SW&T Council to recommend to BT to retain the phone box as agreed by this Committee during the consultation period – *circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 3* – members agreed to note the decision and support the following statement ***'the telephone box in Swain Street car park is retained as a telephone box, as it has been reported to the Town Council that the mobile signal is not good in this area and there is a need for the telephone line to be retained. If however, BT make the decision to remove the line, Watchet Town Council would like to adopt the box as a town asset'***

**21/144B To appoint Committee members:**

- (i) Watchet Community Centre Management Committee – 1 member to join the Chair of Committee Cllr Westcott proposed ***"Cllr Brake is appointed to Watchet Community Centre Management Committee"***. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried



**21/145B** To address items received from the planning authority requiring attention prior to the next Somerset West & Taunton / Somerset County Council / planning meetings:  
Liddymore Farm- planning procedure and lack of consultation – *report from Cllr Irven circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 4** outlining the statement he made during the public session of the Planning meeting held on 10 June 2021.* A long discussion ensued where members put forward their views strongly on the process followed in delegating a development of this scale to a Planning Officer. It is considered vital by the Town Council and Knights Templar School that a 250-house scheme delivered in stages makes proper provision for the safety of school children, parents and staff at the first reserved matters application stage. Subsequent phases will only compound problems left unaddressed now. Watchet Town Council consider this as an abuse of process that members of the Planning Committee (SW&T) were not presented with a scheme which they could objectively appraise and condition as part of the approval decision. The Town Council consider the Planning Committee was misled by the Officer, and the Chair of the meeting failed to uphold the rights of members to make fully informed decisions. The tabling of updated additional documents on the day at the meeting is understandably necessary but to do so without consulting important consultees is reprehensible. Together with the claim that there was no need to further consult or make an untrue statement that consultation with the school had taken place, Watchet Town Council find to be is inexcusable. It was agreed that the Clerk together with Cllr Murphy will draft a letter of complaint to the Planning Authority, circulated to members prior to sending.

**Plans to be discussed:**

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>3/37/21/014</b> | <b>12 Cherry Tree Way, Watchet, TA23 0UB</b><br>Erection of triple carport in the front garden<br><b><i>The Committee recommends approval</i></b>   |
| <b>3/37/21/015</b> | <b>The Steamhouse, 42 Kingsland, Watchet, TA23 0UE</b><br>Erection of a single storey side extension<br><b><i>The Committee recommends approval</i></b>   |
| <b>3/37/21/016</b> | <b>12 Portland Terrace, Watchet, TA23 0DD</b><br>Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of new outbuilding and decking (retention of part works already undertaken)<br><b><i>The Committee recommends approval</i></b>   |
| <b>3/37/21/017</b> | <b>53 Helwell Street, Watchet, TA23 0FB</b><br>Erection of a two-storey side extension<br><b><i>The Committee recommends approval on the proviso that concerns from residents in adjacent properties regarding parking and access for the duration of the development are addressed</i></b> |
| <b>3/37/21/019</b> | <b>7 Mill Street, Watchet, TA23 0TG</b><br>Erection of a single storey extension to the rear<br><b><i>The Committee recommends approval</i></b>   |
| <b>3/37/21/021</b> | <b>43 Doniford Road, Watchet, TS23 0TG</b><br>Erection of two storey side extension and associated alterations<br><b><i>The Committee recommends approval</i></b>   |

**21/146B Matters for the next meeting**

- liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 7.35pm

Signed:.....

Date:.....