

**Minutes of the Environment & Planning Committee  
held remotely on 22 April 2021 at 6.30pm**

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

**In attendance:** Sarah Reed, Town Clerk, 3 members of the public

Before the meeting commenced one member of the public and District Cllr Whetlor having complied with the notice period for public participation made representations on agenda items 21/127B and planning application 3/37/21/012.

**21/124B To receive apologies for absence:** Cllr Westcott proposed that '*apologies from Cllr Campbell are accepted*'. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

**21/125B To receive Declarations of Interest:**

Name	Minute No:	Description of Interest	Personal / Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr Westcott	3/37/21/012	Lobbied by a resident	Personal	Councillors participated in the discussion and voting
Cllr Johnson	21/127B	Rental user of West Street Car Park	Personal	

Cllr Westcott proposed that the '*order of business is changed and planning application 3/37/21/012 is the next item on the agenda*'. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

Several members made comment and Cllr Murphy proposed that:

- The offer from Geckoella an ecological and geological consultancy that promotes sustainable coastal management, including along the Somerset coast, is accepted, to share the contents of an options appraisal report the company commissioned an independent consultant to undertake relating to a proposal for coastal works and road realignment relating to the B3191 (Watchet to Blue Anchor).***
- Submit the following observations to the Planning Authority -'whilst the Committee acknowledge that several of the previous concerns that led to the refusal of this application have been addressed by the applicant, members would like to challenge the traffic analysis report, as they believe it was undertaken at the wrong time of the year and is not a true reflection of traffic numbers, and as a result is flawed. The Committee consider that an independent expert should be commissioned to undertake a traffic analysis of this area. The Committee request that SW&T Council commission such an expert examination. The Committee expect a response from SCC Highways in due course but consider that an expert demonstrably independent from the benefits of the application should be commissioned. If Somerset West and Taunton Council decline this request, the Committee consider that alternative approach to securing this examination must be sought and therefore request an extension to the consultation timetable, recognising that this action cannot be commissioned within the current timeframe given. The Committee consider that this application has aroused extraordinary concern in the community and wish to be reassured that the SW&T will not seek to rush the application to the Planning Committee before residents have had sufficient time to put in their comments. Concern was expressed about the pedestrian access to the site and do not consider it is adequate to withhold details of suggested improvements to public footpaths until the reserved matters stage. It would be preferable to see them at the outline stage so that they can be fairly appraised.***





**The Committee cannot comment on approval or refusal definitively until these matters have been addressed fully and therefore reserve the right to make further comments as appropriate.** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried with 5 votes for and 1 abstention.

21/126B

**West Street Car Park:**

- (i) To agree an emergency contact to be included on signage and approve a budget up to £50 for the new sign – after a brief discussion Cllr Murphy proposed that ‘ **Cllr Johnson’s details are included on the sign as the emergency contact, and a budget of £50 is approved on the proviso that members see a proof of the sign before purchasing**’. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.
- (ii) Residents concern regarding drainage problems and running water by the entrance of the car park – The Clerk circulated the following report:  
The Clerk has dealt with complaints of water running down West Street and the dangers to residents especially in Winter when it turns to ice. This is the current situation:

Council staff have investigated this and made the relevant checks. The water is seeping through a crack in the wall of a vacant property (blue house) opposite the entrance to WSCP - see photo 1. As the property is on the market, the Estate Agents were contacted who in turn contacted Wessex Water who did some checks on the water source i.e whether the water was domestic and coming from the property or if it was a soak away, coming from an underground source. It has been established that the water is coming from an underground source, possibly running down from a field at the top of Cleeve Hill and running under the property and seeping out through the crack in the wall, and subsequently running down West Street as photo 2 shows. Wessex Water are aware of this but do not have a course of action to rectify it presently as the drainage problems derive from an external source. This is not a Town Council matter.

Photo 1



Photo 2



The Committee agreed to note the report.

21/127B

**Consultation by BT on the removal of the Public Telephone Kiosk:**

Swain Street – responses to SW&T Council – a long discussion ensued whereby Cllr Murphy proposed that ‘**Request that SW&T Council act on the behalf of WTC in recommending to BT that 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**

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**is a need for the telephone line to be retained. If however, BT make the decision to remove the telephone line, Watchet Town Council would like to adopt the box as a town asset'.**

Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

**20/128B To address items received from the Planning Authority requiring attention prior to the next Somerset West & Taunton Council/Somerset County Council/ Planning**

**Meetings** (i) Update on a meeting with SW&T Planning Officer on Planning application 3/37/19/021 Wansborough Paper Mill – Cllr Murphy gave the following report - Members of E&P Committee were invited to attend this meeting and Cllrs Ellwood, Johnson, Irven and Murphy attended. District Councillors Davies and Whetlor attended as observers.

The officer, Simon Fox, invited the views of Council on a range of matters relating to the planning application. Cllr Murphy chaired the meeting at the request of Cllr Westcott, Chair of E & P who was unable to be present. He made it clear that any views expressed were those of the attendees and they would report back to the Committee for an official response on behalf of the Council.

**Items**

1 What would be the Council's view about adopting and managing play areas and areas of public open space created in the development?

Councillors recognised this was a request not faced before but was an extension of District and County council devolving responsibilities to parishes such as toilets and libraries. Discussion with the developers could result in some facilities being provided on site in return for Council undertaking maintenance of such public areas. It was acknowledged that such areas would be available for all residents of Watchet to enjoy not just those living on site.

2 A need for a Community Centre on site?

This had been put into the submission as a result of the public consultation. It was unclear what size this would be and councillors expressed the view that the Watchet Bowling Club development would deliver a sizeable community centre alongside smaller facilities such as the CC managed by the Council and other smaller units in Watchet. It was thought there was no need for another CC of this smaller size. Councillors expressed disappointment that the care home proposal had been dropped and were given an explanation as to why. Pleased to see some housing provision for sheltered and assisted living on site.

3 Public car park provision.

Councillors said this needed to be 100+ in size rather than the 60 proposed and there was a need for temporary parking during the summer months. The officer agreed to pass this onto colleagues to contact Tameer Homes. Pedestrian access and exit from the site would need improvement such as that into the end of Whitehall.

4 Quantity of employment land.

Councillors expressed concern that the amount of employment land in the proposals had been reduced. There might be further land for employment provision coming forward in future near to the sewage works on land owned by Tameer Homes. The viability assessment from Tameer Homes had been challenged by the officer and if the Town Council were to engage with Tameer I think we would need access to that document.

5 Pedestrian access and routes from the site to town and Knights Templar School together with traffic management on Brendon Road.

Improvements to existing footpaths and pedestrian links would be part of reserved matters applications once outline approval had been granted. The traffic management on Brendon Road has to be acceptable as part of the outline application. The officer indicated concern with the current proposals, shared by SCC Highways, and had asked for a further investigation into the proposals. He was aware that the Cleeve Hill proposals would rely on the solutions that this application came up with and the issue of pooled contributions was touched on. Councillors reiterated what we had said before that a traffic light solution might be called for at the rail bridge junction and an assessment of this would be part of the investigation he mentioned.

A further meeting was agreed to be held in about two week's time.

Cllr Murphy proposed that **the following recommendations are approved**

**1 The Committee note the report.**

**2 The Committee agree to further meetings with the officer and to consider any invitation to engage with Tameer Homes regarding the site'.** Seconded by Cllr Johnson.

Carried.



**Plans to be discussed:**

- 3/37/21/008**    **High Bank House, High Bank, Goviers Lane, Watchet, TA23 0DG**  
Erection of 1 No. bungalow with associated works in the garden to the front  
**Committee recommends refusal due to overdevelopment of the site and the plot size is inadequate in relation to the main house.**
- 3/37/21/009**    **Neyburr, 25A Whitehall, Watchet, TA23 0BE**  
Erection of a shed attached to the side of dwelling  
**Committee recommends approval.**
- 3/37/21/010**    **Land to the west of 22B Lorna Doone, Watchet, TA23 0FD**  
Change of use of amenity land to residential garden  
**Committee recommends approval on the condition that any landscaping work needs to demonstrate that it does not undermine the stability of the land in relation to the Watchet fault.**
- 3/37/21/011**    **43 Risdon Road, Watchet, TA23 0HL**  
Erection of single storey extension to replace existing garage  
**Committee recommends approval.**

**21/129B**    **Matters for the next meeting - liaise with the Clerk**

Meeting closed at 7.22pm

Signed:.....

Date:.....

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