

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
held on Monday 12 July 2021 at 7.00pm**

Present: Cllr Bowden, Cllr Brake, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Corlett-Shaw, Cllr Irven (Chair), Cllr Murphy, Cllr Terrett, Cllr Westcott and Cllr Whetlor

In attendance: Sarah Reed – Town Clerk, County Cllr Davies

- 21/301** To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1)- Cllr Irven **proposed** that '**apologies from Cllrs Ellwood, Johnson and Richards are accepted**'. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried. It was agreed to note the apologies from District Cllr Aldridge.
- 21/302** 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 a Watchet Ward Member	Personal	Cllr remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting
Cllr Irven & Cllr Murphy	21/312 (ii) and (iii)	Directors of WCCT who produce the 'Watchet Connects' newsletter	Personal	Cllrs remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting

- 21/303** **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 14 June 2021, (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))
Cllr Irven proposed that '**The minutes from the Council meeting held on 14 June 2021 are approved as a true and correct record.**' Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried with 8 votes for and 1 abstention.

- 21/304** **Chairman's Report:** – verbal
Cllr Irven reported the following:

- Govt COVID latest. Although easing from 19th July, with 3rd wave continuing suggest we complete July meetings to current protocol. Review when we return in September.
- As chair, pleasure in attending ceremony on July 3rd to accept the formal handover of Watchet war memorial from Remembrance project. Firstly, at memorial itself where a plaque was unveiled by family members to Anne Cleveland who did so much for not only the remembrance project, but as ex member of this council, and founder of Watchet Library friends. Then at Boat Museum for speeches. I was presented with a certificate and medal on behalf of WTC for our support to the group over its history.
- I confirmed that WTC or any successor would be holding the memorial on behalf of the people of Watchet in perpetuity as a statutory authority and will care and maintain it. Fitting that it stands on grounds of Watchet library which recently WTC has obtained back from SW&T to hold in trust for the people of Watchet...

- Worked with the clerk on the draft annual report and chair's summary which is on the agenda later as 21/312 **Annual Report 2020-21**:
- AS EH&S Officer and Chair, attended Knights Templar school with Chair of Governors, to assist John de Renzy Martin and whether we could help produce an acceptable risk assessment. We explored whether in the light of continuing UK Govt COVID restrictions the memorial event for Sally de Renzy Martin could proceed on July 7th. Unfortunately, it was not possible to do so, mainly due to the strict requirements imposed by the Licencing authority. John de Renzy-Martin has decided to postpone again and is not yet possible to reschedule.
- Attended Henry Davey skate park to review with Tourism & Leisure (T&L) Committee possible upgrades or a new system. This will be reported by the T&L Committee Chair.

21/305 **Reports from the Principal Authority Members:**

The report from County Cllr Davies was tabled at the meeting for members information, the following points were highlighted:

- SCC have invested in ambitious plans to support Somerset young people with a 10-year programme to deliver a new way of working which will address the needs of Somerset's most complex children and young people who are cared for by the Council.
- £500K fund to help Somerset communities open safely – this fund is being launched by SCC to help parish and towns to reopen facilities safely and bring people back together. As COVID 19 restrictions ease, SCC is working in partnership with Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) to help towns and parishes open village halls, meeting rooms and other facilities in a COVID secure way. The fund is due to launch in September 2021 and will be led and administered by SALC with support from SCC.
- Road Closures – Swain Street, Watchet from 16 July 2021 for approx. 5 days. Wristland Road, Watchet from 23 July 2021, order effective and expected to commence on 26 July 2021 for approx. 5 days.
- In the absence of District Cllr Aldridge, no report was submitted.

The report from District Cllr Whetlor was tabled at the meeting for members information, the following points were highlighted:

- a. Liberal Democrats managed to secure two more vacancies; this puts them back as the ruling party.
- b. Marina is being dredged on a regular basis by the Marine Group and there is a significant change to be seen, thanks to the Marine Group for their hard work. Repairs to the Marina wall also going well.
- c. Lack of car parking still a matter of discussion, in communication with the owners of the former mill site for temporary parking to be made available on the site for street fair stallholders and visitors to the town attending the Wednesday Market, which is now in hand, whilst also trying to find a permanent solution. Stallholders have been using the site.

Cllr Whetlor added that information on the Hinkley Fund will be forwarded to the Clerk.

Questions from the floor:

Cllr Murphy asked: *Exactly where is the Swain Street Road closure?*

Clerk responded: *It is outside the former angling shop premises, Cllr Davies corroborated this.*

Cllr Westcott asked: *part of the road closure on Doniford Road is to install the culvert for the Liddymore Farm development, if the stream floods, the culvert will not be big enough, can this be checked?*

Cllr Davies responded: *He will check this*

Cllr Irven thanked County Cllr Davies and District Cllr Whetlor for their reports and asked that members note the contents.

21/306 **Reports from Representatives of Outside Organisations, Verbal – no Decisions**

A verbal report from Cllr Terrett as the Council representative on the **Watchet Conservation Society' (WCS)** reference was made to a recent enquiry from the Society regarding tree planting. The Chair had been informed of the work the Climate Change Working Group had been involved with regarding tree planting, and there was a suggestion that a member of the Society should be invited to become a member of the Climate Change Working Group where projects such as these

can be discussed and progressed. This matter will be addressed under agenda item 21/309 (b). Cllr Terrett also referred to comments the Society had made about the renaming of Hellwell Bay as 'Fossil Beach'.

Cllr Murphy interjected as Chair of WCCT to report that the Chair of WCS had written to Onion Collective regarding this and read out the response as follows:

'The signs were part of a WCCT project, funded by LEADER and led by Onion in 2017. The signs are intended for tourists, not locals. Therefore, the library was not considered an appropriate finger sign. It was discussed and rejected at the time. A toilet sign is in the process of being added to the Esplanade signage, with a reference to the water fill point as well.'

Re: Helwell Bay / Fossil Beach: This was discussed at a full CCT meeting in October 2017, which the notes record you as attending. At that time, it was agreed to keep the naming as it is. Fossil Beach was chosen as a name as it was already signed this way on the SW Coastpath, so we were looking for consistency for tourists. It was also felt that Fossil Beach was a more helpful name for people alighting from the trains, making reference to our significant but under marketed geology here. After concerns were raised by the WCS, the Visitor Centre Manager gathered feedback, tourists think the current signage is really helpful, but some locals don't like them. On balance, we decided to keep them as they are as they are delivering on their intended purpose, to help guide visitors around the town. Having said that, if WCS were to bring a proposal to WCCT for WCS to fund and re-install re-named signs we could discuss it as a wider group again'

A report from Cllr Whetlor as the Council representative on the 'Market House Museum' was circulated at the meeting, and summarised as follows:

- Museum has opened on a trial basis of 3 days per week and are extending that after the 23 July 2021 and numbers are slowly building up.
- The Museum has embraced new technology and stewards have been trained on how to use a card machine rather than taking cash payments and this seems to be working well.
- Next meeting on 13 July where the date for the AGM will be discussed

Cllr Whetlor added that there is an HMS Fox exhibition currently on at the Museum and she will send details to the Clerk.

Cllr Whetlor as the Council representative on 'SALC' reported the following:

- SALC has finally become a Ltd Company and as from 1 July 2021 it will be known as 'Somerset Association of Local Councils Limited'.
- First board meeting held on 30 June 2021 and David Mitton was elected as Board Chair, Justin Robinson remains as CEO.
- Four founding Directors are Jean Allgrove, Jenny Lawrence, David Mitton and Loretta Whetlor.
- At the first meeting another member of the management Committee was co-opted, David Aldridge, other members of the former county committee will be asked if they wish to join the board, two have indicated that they would, so they will be co-opted at the next board meeting later on in the month.

Questions from the floor:

Cllr Westcott asked: *why is it a limited company and a not-for-profit company, do they expect to make a profit?*

Cllr whetlor responded: *any money made is put back into the company and used for training purposes, as SALC is a training provider across the sector*

Cllr Westcott asked: *Do any of the Directors/board members receive a salary?*

Cllr Whetlor replied: *absolutely not*

Cllr Murphy as the Council representative on 'Watchet Harbour Advisory and Harbour Board' reported the following:

Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee met on Monday 21 June and the Harbour Board met on Monday 8 July. The business of both was concentrated on Watchet harbour and marina. No representative from Minehead Town Council or Minehead harbour nor a Minehead District Councillor was in attendance at Harbour Board. Assistant Harbour Master, Craig Butler reported he had attended and passed training courses on VHF radio and powerboat handling. It was agreed he and a marina worker would attend training on oil spill containment. Watchet harbour passed its biannual inspection by Trinity House of navigation lights etc with no issues to action. Signs and painted lines re no fishing have been repainted / reinstated in time for the summer season. Action taken to deal with gate and access to the trailer park on west pier head. Repainting of railings around the Visitor Centre had been undertaken by a young man who wanted to put something back into the town. Fiona at VC had facilitated with risk assessment etc and he was

keen to do more work on the railings around the marina and west pier. Cllr Whetlor reported that monies had been found through the High Street Emergency committee for equipment, paint etc. Kate Marks reported progress on TMS work on the marina wall, east quay, previously circulated. Good progress was reported by the marina on their dredging operations. Discussion about car parking in Watchet took place at both meetings. Chris Hall from District Council reported that discussions with Tameer Homes are being sought to try and provide extra parking when events are on and to increase capacity within the mill site planning application. Regarding access to the Esplanade, Cllr Murphy reported that the Town Council was discussing with District through Kate Hicks how to manage access in the future. In the interim it had been agreed that the current use of padlocks to secure the gates would be discontinued so as to secure proper access when events were authorised by Town Council T&L Committee. Cllr Whetlor requested that car park signage in Watchet be reviewed, and this was to be actioned. Events were being planned to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the marina. Suitable tides dictated choosing the weekend of 24 /25 July. What happens will be governed by government guidance so details will be released later.

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

A meeting of members was held on the evening of Thursday 24 June. This gave members an update on financial matters and there was an opportunity to update each other about how their organisations were faring during the Covid restrictions. Subsequent to the meeting, the directors of WCCT have since sent out a statement clarifying the work that has had to be undertaken on the accounts since the ex-finance director was removed by members. The directors have recently co-opted two directors onto the Board. They are Dr Andy King of Geckoella who re-joins after previously being elected at the last AGM, and Janet Tapp of Cotton Street in Swain Street.

Cllr Bowden as the Council representative on **'Watchet Twinning Society'** reported that the society had met up for the first time in 18 months to discuss the plans for the future.

Cllr Ellwood as the Council representative on **'Bickwatch'** in her absence sent in a report as follows - the SLA had been approved by WCCT directors and Georgie Grant had been authorised to sign it on their behalf. No updates for 'Plastic Free Watchet'.

21/307 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 (17 June 2021)
Cllr Whetlor, Chair of the Committee, proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Terrett. Carried.
- Finance & General Purposes (21 June 2021)
Cllr Murphy as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Corlett-Shaw. Carried with 1 abstention.
- Environment & Planning Committee (23 June 2021)
Cllr Westcott as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

21/308 Verbal reports from sub-committees, working groups, and other outside organisations, where Watchet Town Council does not have representation:
No notifications received by the Clerk

21/309 Reports from Working Groups: any relevant paperwork will be issued prior to the meeting

- a. **Library – Update and recommendations-** no update.
- b. **Climate Change –update and recommendations –**Cllr Murphy proposed that **'approval is given for a member of the Watchet Conservation Society to be co-opted onto the working group if they wish'**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

Cllr Murphy referred to correspondence he had received from Somerset Wildlife Trust who were looking for a letter of support for the 'Wilder Coastal Connections' project a follow-on project from the 'Somerset's Brilliant Coast'. As not enough information had been received on this project, Cllr Murphy proposed that **'Somerset Wildlife Trust are invited to do a presentation on what is envisaged for the new project, together with a chance to demonstrate the success of the first phase at the next Full Council meeting'**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

21/310 Legal Matters:

- (i) To approve the draft lease for the Watchet market House Museum – *deferred to the next meeting due to lack of information or communication from the Orchard Wyndham Estate*

21/311 To address points made in the Internal Auditor's report as per Clerk's report- *circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 1-* After a brief discussion, Cllr Irven proposed that **'the contents of the Internal Auditors report are noted, with particular reference to the statement that Watchet Town Council is a very pro-active and efficient Council and are operating in a very satisfactory manner. The Clerk is commended for her work in contributing to this statement and the Internal Auditor is paid for his services at a cost of £675.50'**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

21/312 Annual report 2020-21:

- (i) To approve draft copy- *circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 2-* Cllr Irven proposed that **'the draft copy is approved with agreed amendments'**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.
- (ii) To approve that the final draft is included in the print run for the August/September 'Watchet Connects' Newsletter and delivered to every Watchet household
- (iii) To consider a financial contribution towards the print of the newsletter
Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'recommendations (i) & (ii) are approved and a financial contribution of up to £300 is agreed'**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried with 7 votes for and 2 abstentions.

21/313 Matters of Correspondence for Report - Correspondence is addressed daily and filed, the file is available for all Councillors to inspect at their leisure.

21/314 Accounts for payment – to approve the June Schedule for payment in July.
The June schedule (Payment in July) was tabled at the meeting. Cllr Campbell proposed that **'the Payment Schedule is approved, and the invoices duly paid.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

20/315 To note Matters for the next meeting – no discussion or decisions made

- Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed: 

Dated: 