

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting  
held on Monday 13 September 2021 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr Brake, Cllr Corlett-Shaw, Cllr Ellwood (arrived at 7.45pm) Cllr Irven (Chair), Cllr Johnson, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Westcott and Cllr Whetlor

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

- 21/316** To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1)- Cllr Whetlor **proposed** that **'apologies from Cllrs Bowden, Campbell, Terrett and Richards are accepted'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried, with 6 votes for an 1 abstention. It was agreed to note the apologies from District Cllr Aldridge.
- 21/317** 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	21/324 (a)	Members of FOSL and WLF	Personal	Cllrs remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting

- 21/318** **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 12 July 2021, and minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 5 August 2021 (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))  
Cllr Irven proposed that **'The minutes from the Council meeting held on 12 July 2021 are approved as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.  
Cllr Murphy proposed that **'The minutes from the Extraordinary meeting held on 5 August 2021 are approved as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried with 5 votes for and 1 abstention.

**21/319** **Chairman's Report:** – verbal

Cllr Irven reported the following:

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Marina - July 24/25<sup>th</sup> -I was invited to cut the ribbon celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of Watchet Marina. For which I used then donated a pair of 'golden scissors' for future WTC ceremonies. The event was attended by representatives of several community organisations and local authorities working together with the marine Group for an ongoing future where the marina becomes a key driver with E.Quay of economic regeneration, following the excellent work on dredging and support of District Council. I also judged the 'best dressed boat'.

Summertime - August 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> -I was invited to formally open the event with the support of Watchet Carnival Queen, plus participating with Dave Milton Town Cryer for the Council fun day on Friday 20<sup>th</sup>. The event was reduced scope due to COVID but delivered themed markets/street fairs each day. A report on aspects related to approvals and EH&S will be given at T&L.

Bristol Channel Yacht Club 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend - Aug 28<sup>th</sup> -For several years the BCYA came to Watchet during Summertime but have been unable to attend due to low water levels. Following the success of the Marine group and the 20<sup>th</sup> celebration event, they came back to





Watchet to celebrate their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. I welcomed all the attendees and again judged the 'best dressed boat', encouraging them to return next year.

Avon & Somerset Police Commissioner – September 3<sup>rd</sup> -During a visit to Watchet I escorted Mark Shelford on the Esplanade and showed WTC Police station and excellent work by PCSOs in Watchet, and extolled the value of the 'smallest police station in the constabulary' and hoped for ongoing collaboration with WTC.

1940s weekend Sept - 11-12<sup>th</sup> September - I participated as Mayor, welcoming the PM, Winston Churchill and party, and escorted around town. It was an extremely successful event enjoyed by all and included a remembrance service at the war memorial. Feedback from the reenactors to WTC was as follows

'Just a note to thank you and Sara for looking after us so well (again) on Saturday. I know Stan (AKA Winston Churchill) was very impressed with Watchet and the very real feeling of community feeling that was present. He really enjoyed the experience and was talking about it for the remainder of the weekend. He was particularly positive about you and the difference it made to being shown around by "a community leader who cares so much about the Town and it's People" (his words)

#### **EH&S Issues**

Final risk assessment and insurance provided and approved 'just in time'. I provided advice on requirements including that for toilet provision following complaint by Esplanade club against non-provision of additional toilets at community events. Issue to be discussed at T&L.

WTC toilets at cemetery-were risk assessed and modifications made and new procedures agreed with staff, allowing reopening

Assessed failing locks at Harbour Road toilets and advised on replacement by Maglocks – see agenda item

Input on hybrid working arrangements for staff to personnel committee, and on space and COVID hygiene requirements for meetings and staff working

Jubilee stone relocation -The licence with SCC for location of the stone adjacent to Boat Museum has been finalised and was executed by the proper Office and Chair. At the end of the consultation period 17/9/21, assuming no objections received. It will be erected by our contractor Lynch who in the meantime has removed the stone from the sculptor's property for safe storage pending erection.

#### **21/320 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:

- Somerset domestic abuse service increasing from 10 August 2021, looking to increase its range of specialist services and the number of safe accommodation sites for survivors over the next 2-3 years as part of its response to the Domestic Abuse Bill which became law on 29 April 2021.
- Somerset steps up to help Afghan refugees – SCC alongside other councils in Somerset is ready to help the national effort to support those fleeing from Afghanistan and are ready to help government on any co-ordinated resettlement scheme to bring safety and security to those in need of help. There is a resettlement webpage with up-to-date information on the SCC website and current plans.
- Unitary joint message from Chief Executives of all 5 Councils in Somerset and details on local government re-organisation for 2022 elections, and the proposed unitary elections arrangements.
- Small Improvements Scheme - County Cllr Davies has chased up a starting date for submissions, wondered if the Council wish to re-apply for 20 mph speed limit in Swain Street and whether this could be revisited at a future Environment & Planning Committee meeting.
- 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. First face to face meeting of the District Council was held in accordance with COVID safety practices and worked well. Most of the meeting concentrated around the forthcoming transition to a Unitary Authority and how the Secretary of State had not listened to the views of the people.
- b. Recently been involved in the 'Bus Back Better Campaign' which relates to bus improvement plans produced by the Department of Transport earlier this year. SW&T Council has a public transport working group who have been reviewing this project.

District Cllr Davies added information regarding a report SW&T Council had produced on charging an electric vehicle and the costs associated with charging, the report was then tabled for members information.

*Questions from the floor: None*

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

## **21/321 Reports from Representatives of Outside Organisations, Verbal – no Decisions**

A report from Cllr Ellwood as the Council representative on the '**Bickwatch**' was tabled as follows: Bickwatch Community Electric Vehicle - Despite a few weeks of no meetings due to the summer break, the project is progressing well and is a collaboration of efforts between Bicknoller Parish, Sampford Brett Parish and Watchet Town Councils.

The electric vehicle is ready for collection, which we anticipate will happen next week.

An advertisement for a Community Vehicle Co-ordinator has been released and has generated much interest. This role has received full funding for one year and will employ an individual for 15 hours a week to oversee the day-to-day operations of both the existing Watchet Electric Community Car and the new Bickwatch vehicle, which is a larger, accessible EV.

This vehicle will be available to all members of the community for an affordable tariff, and subsidised rates will be offered to those in possession of a valid travel pass.

A report from Cllr Ellwood as the Council representative on the '**Plastic Free Watchet**' was tabled as follows: We had a successful little pick and plastic-free picnic with dozens of volunteers turning up to help clean litter from Watchet. I always thought Watchet didn't have a significant litter problem until I walked around the town with my children and collected full bin bags of rubbish. Thanks to Mark Ward from Somerset Wildlife Trust for organising and providing the necessary equipment for what turned out to be a very successful event.

Cllr Ellwood arrived at the meeting at 7.45pm and was asked if she wished to add anything further, she declined. The contents of both reports were noted by members.

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

- Visitor numbers remain steady and finances healthy.
- Accreditation held up due to the non-existence of the lease
- Want a local person to produce new website, looking into this.
- For the accreditation a forward plan, statement of purpose and a vision statement need to be produced, these are being prepared.
- AGM is on 15 September 2021, Methodist Schoolroom at 7.30pm.

A report from Cllr Corlett-Shaw as the Council representative on the '**Emergency High Street Fund**' was tabled at the meeting and summarised as follows:

- **Signs** – directing people to the shops and businesses in town are now in production and hope to be in place by end of August.
- **Flower troughs and displays** - now in place
- **Flags** – 55 x double sided flags now up within the town- taken down temporarily to allow 1940's union jacks to be displayed
- **Shopper's seat** – now in situ
- **Notice boards** – Maps are finished and will be in place this week
- **Bike rack** – decided to renovate existing racks in place

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Cllr Whetlor interjected that the blue banners showing that extra parking is available at the former mill site and directions how to find the site are now up around the town.

Cllr Westcott as the Council representative on **'Watchet & Minehead CCTV partnership'** made reference to a report circulated by the Clerk prior to the meeting as follows, and gave apologies for not being to attend the meeting due to work commitments on that day.

- Partnership meeting was held on 31 August 2021 at 2pm.
- The partnership now comprises of representatives from Avon & Somerset Constabulary, Minehead TC, Taunton Street pastors, Watchet TC and Wellington TC as key partners.
- SW&T Council as owners of the CCTV systems recognise that all systems are coming to the end of their shelf life, with Watchet's system having the newest equipment. They are aiming to deliver a cost effective, integrated network of new digital CCTV cameras that will compliantly deliver the current and future needs of the Communities and our Key Partners.

By

- investigating all CCTV camera sites to check compliance and suitability including value for money.
- considering digitising all CCTV cameras in Minehead, Watchet, Wellington and Taunton (the exact numbers and final locations are still to be decided).
- providing a fibre or wireless solution at all sites where it is economically feasible to do so.
- linking Minehead & Watchet to Sedgemoor District Council.

This will require reviewing:

- all the CCTV infrastructure, technologies and capabilities including the pros and cons of available options.
- the locations of cameras to make sure they are fit for current and future needs.
- and agreeing the differing service level options required across the areas.
- and updating legal frameworks, existing agreements, regulations and Code(s) Practice including compliance and performance measurement.

These reviews will take into consideration:

- an understanding of the changes to crime type and behaviour that have taken effect since the CCTV systems were installed
- the ongoing delivery costs to make sure we obtain value for money and achieve a cost-effective solutions that will meet the revised needs (within budgetary constraints)
- reducing operating costs of the CCTV function where possible i.e. wireless coms, improved contractual terms for monitoring and maintenance, reduction of cameras etc...
- establishing a CCTV user group to oversee and continue post project
- improving availability (up time) and evidential quality images for use in legal proceedings

As discussed, SW&T Council are in the early stages of reviewing the options and feasibility of delivering these items. Obviously, within significant budgetary constraints all aspects of the CCTV service and delivery are being looked into. At this stage this has not received any approvals as it is still in the scoping and feasibility stages.

Each area put forward a series of questions relating to their systems and the CCTV user Group Terms of Reference were agreed (see attached).

The Chair of Council then made reference to inappropriate comments made by a Councillor in regard to the role of Cllr Westcott as the Council representative on CCTV in a report circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Councillor in question was not in attendance. As Cllr Westcott had been named, he was asked by the Chair if he would like to respond. Cllr Westcott responded that it is a decision approved by Council who represents them on outside organisations, not down to an individual Cllr. He was democratically voted into this position by Council, and he will continue to do his best to represent them.



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

- A bid has been submitted to the PBSA by the deadline date of 10 September 2021. If successful, this will secure funding of £40,000 per year over the next 3 years.
- In the process of organising a members meeting
- Bickwatch Co-ordinators post will be appointed next week as per the SLA with the Town Council.

**21/322 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 (15 July 2021)  
Cllr Whetlor, Chair of the Committee, proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Ellwood. Carried.
- Finance & General Purposes (19 July 2021)  
Cllr Murphy as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
- Watchet Community Centre Management Committee (22 July 2021)  
Cllr Brake as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Murphy.
- Environment & Planning Committee (22 July 2021)  
Cllr Westcott as Chair of the Committee proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2021 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried with 3 votes for and 1 abstention.

**21/323 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

**21/324 Reports from Working Groups: any relevant paperwork will be issued prior to the meeting**

- a. **Library – Update and recommendations-** Cllr Irven reported that the working group are happy with the way the library is operating after it resumed after lockdown ceased, numbers are increasing, and the children's reading challenge is very impressive. The working group will reconvene soon to progress plans for the rededication ceremony to celebrate the library coming back into Town Council ownership on behalf of the town which was postponed due to the pandemic. The group will also review ways to increase the use of the library building after hours for local groups to hire and use and look at the way in which this can be managed.
- b. **Climate Change –update and recommendations –** proofs of new signs for the water refilling station to include the 'refill' logo were circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Ellwood proposed that **'the signs are approved and purchased at a cost of £146.68 and installed'** Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

**21/325 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*

At this point Cllrs Johnson and Murphy declared a Personal interest in this item as Trustees of the Market House Museum (Cllrs remained in the meeting and participated in the discussion and voting).

The Clerk reported that despite many emails, phone messages and texts to Savills, the agents who act on behalf of the Orchard Wyndham Estate there has been no response or communication since last March where the Council was informed that the lease for the Market House Museum was agreed and would be renewed. No communication or update on the lease renewal has distressed many of the volunteers who sit on the Museum Committee, as the museum accreditation is in October 2021, and as security of tenure must be demonstrated without a current lease in place, the future of the museum is jeopardised, so naturally this is of great concern. This is a valuable asset to the town and there will be a negative response from the community if the museum has to close. The Clerk concluded that she has tried to communicate this to Savills, but there has been no response.



After a brief discussion, Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'a complaint is lodged with the Orchard Wyndham Estate regarding the appalling service from their agents regarding the lease for the Market House Museum'**. Seconded by Cllr Ellwood. Carried with 7 votes for and 1 abstention.

**21/326 Harbour Road Toilets:**

- (i) To approve a quotation for new external locks and approve a refurbishment programme including allocating a reserve, as outlined in **Appendix 1 - circulated to members prior to the meeting**.

**Short - term projects:**

1. Install new Maglocks on exterior doors (£822 quotation attached)
2. Install new cubicle locks on all internal doors (x 5) – £200
3. Replace tube lighting with LED lights (x 2) - £100
4. Install automatic air freshener dispensers (£30 each, battery operated x 2)
5. Repaint walls & woodwork (£750 estimate from Joe Peterson)

Cllr Johnson proposed that **'a budget of up to £3,000 is approved to enable the short-term projects to be implemented'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

**Medium / long term projects:**

1. Repaint walls & woodwork (£750 estimate from Joe Peterson)
2. Replace gents waterless urinal units and reinstall the water flow on an automated flush system and stainless-steel trough (waterless cartridges are suitable for office environments, not for the excessive use that these public toilets get).
3. Remove existing old floor tiles and install a soakaway and new safety flooring surface, similar to that in the YCC.

Quotations will be sought for the medium/long terms projects and brought back to the appropriate meeting. Members agreed to note this.

**21/327 Governance:**

- (i) To approve amendments to Standing Orders- *circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 2*- Cllr Johnson proposed that **'the amendments as presented by the Clerk in accordance with the NALC model are approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.
- (ii) To note the review of Financial Regulations and that no changes are needed for 2021-22. Noted.

Ordinary Elections moved to 2022- views sought from SALC. This was discussed at length whereby Cllr Irven proposed that **'Members expressed that as democracy and transparency is paramount, they supported holding elections at the end of the current 4-year quadrennium in 2023 in line with what the electorate expect as the term of office for a Councillor. However, members also recognised the benefits of maximising turnout by continuing to align Watchet Town Council (WTC) elections with a 4-year quadrennial period of the new unitary elections, which could mean moving to a revised 2022 timescale. As there is no clarity on whether elections held in 2022 or 2023 would then recur on a 3 or 4-year basis for both WTC and unitary elections, WTC is unable to recommend a preference at this stage. WTC therefore seek more clarity on this issue, the decision process, and its timing before being able to indicate a preferred choice. WTC would hope that the costs of WTC elections would be supported within Unitary elections but considered that the determining factor for a decision should be ensuring appropriate accountability and transparency to the electorate'**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

Cllr Johnson left the meeting at 8.46pm.

**21/328 Matters of Correspondence for Report** - Correspondence is addressed daily and filed, the file is available for all Councillors to inspect at their leisure.

**21/329 Accounts for payment** – to retrospectively approve the July Schedule (paid in August) and the August schedule (Payment in September) both schedules were tabled at the meeting. Cllr Westcott proposed that **'the Payment Schedules are approved, and the invoices duly paid.'** Seconded by Cllr Ellwood. Carried.

**20/330 To note Matters for the next meeting** – no discussion or decisions made

- Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.48pm

Signed: Eden Turner

Dated: 11/10/21