

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting  
held on Monday 14 February 2022 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr Bowden, Cllr Brake, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Corlett-Shaw, Cllr Ellwood, Cllr Irlen (Chair), Cllr Murphy, Cllr Richards, Cllr Westcott, and Cllr Whetlor

**In attendance:** Sarah Reed, Town Clerk, County Cllr Davies, District Cllr Aldridge, 1 member of the public

- 22/410** To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1)- Cllr Brake proposed that '**apologies from Cllrs Johnson and Terrett, are accepted**'. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
- 22/411** 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
Cllrs Whetlor	All items	As a Watchet Ward Member	Personal	Cllr remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting
Cllrs Irlen & Murphy	22/420 (ii)	Directors of WCCT who produce the newsletter	Personal & Prejudicial	Cllrs withdrew from the meeting and did not participate in the discussion & voting

- 22/412** **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 10 January 2022 and the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 17 January 2022 (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))  
Cllr Irlen proposed that '**The minutes from the Council meeting held on 10 January 2022 and the minutes from the Extraordinary meeting held on 17 January 2022 are approved as a true and correct record.**' Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.

- 22/413** **Chairman's Report:** – verbal  
Last month I reported on the grant I attended a session on Unitary Authority on Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> and a report is to be given under 22/415  
On 9<sup>th</sup> Feb Supported Clerk in a meeting with Onion Collective, exploring potential for use of Taxi Office and a report is to be presented under 22/421

Western Power grant for fuel poverty - with Cllr Johnson I have been providing support to the clerk in negotiations with CA and VA partners on the administration of the scheme. This included agreeing a template for assessing potential beneficiaries and how to report back to the funder. We have also been exploring the extension of the date by which the programme has to be completed past 31 March 2022. Because of COVID, Christmas and following correct WTC governance at the EGM on 17 Jan this meant we took over a month before deployment could begin. It is proving challenging for the partnership to complete the complex task of assessing potential beneficiaries within the next 6 weeks. The Clerk has therefore submitted a formal request to extend the deadline to 31 May based on WTC, CA and VA inputs.

I have signed a statutory declaration for a local resident

I have advised the clerk on potential for annual Town meeting and publicising the work of the council and encouraging candidates for the upcoming election. A report/discussion under 22/423

**Clerks Report** – The Clerk updated members on Watchet asset transfers and that she was in the process of completing the register of interest forms for the assets agreed at the last Council meeting.





## 22/414 Reports from the Principal Authority Members:

County Cllr Davies gave the following report which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

- Free film events about flooding celebrate Somerset's community resilience – the film is called 'Down by the River' and premiers in February countrywide, nearest showing for our area is 5 March at Regal Theatre in Minehead and 20 March at Roadwater Village Hall.
- Funds on offer, new ideas to boost Somerset's tourism economy – grants of between £25,000 and £40,000 are available for small/medium sized Somerset businesses up to 250 employees. Deadline for application to this grant is 14 March 2022.
- Let the fizz go for your pocket and your health – fizz free launch in Somerset this month encouraging everyone to make the pledge to go fizz free, for better health. Save £438 per year if you stop drinking up to one bottle of fizzy drink per day, for 12 months. Drinking fizzy sugary drinks can add over a stone in weight gain per year and tooth decay in children.
- Somerset leads the way on climate action – Somerset County Council has been ranked as the top county council in the UK when it comes to taking the lead on climate change. County Cllr Davies then presented a certificate to Cllrs Ellwood and Murphy who were instrumental in securing a grant of £64,399.55 from the Climate Emergency Community Fund 2020-21 to fund the Bickwatch pilot project. A photograph was taken of the presentation, which also included the Chair of Council Cllr Irvén and the Clerk Sarah Reed.

*Questions from the floor:* None

District Cllr Aldridge gave the following report which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Aldridge highlighted the following points:

- Taunton Bus Station – this is now owned by SW&T Council having been purchased from First Bus over a year ago. The bus station is currently closed and when this matter was raised at a Community Scrutiny meeting, it was highlighted that facilities at Taunton bus stops are totally inadequate. It was accepted that a bus station is needed, but in the short term it has to wait while a transport plan for Taunton is produced, which could potentially lead to its relocation.
- On a related matter, Cllr Aldridge asked the thoughts of members on a direct fast bus to Taunton at peak times, with intermediate stops in Williton, Bicknoller, Crowcombe, Bagborough, Taunton Railway Station, and Taunton Castle Way. The Clerk was instructed to place this on the next Environment & Planning Committee agenda for further discussion.
- In a recent planning application for a junction to be added to Trenchard Way, Taunton, the new inner relief road, much was made of trying to make the new junction safe for cyclists, the disabled and pedestrians. There is an interest group who are promoting safe cycling who are struggling to have an impact. They operate in the main in Somerset County, but don't have representation in West Somerset. Bearing in mind the intentions to create more safe cycle routes, it poses the question that is the lack of representation the reason why little is being done in West Somerset. As this is potentially a tourism matter, the Clerk was instructed to place this on the agenda of the March Tourism & Leisure Committee.

*Questions from the floor:*

**Cllr Ellwood commented:** Steam Coast Trail is involved in creating safe trails from Washford to Dunster beach, and also engaged in a number of projects including a shared path with improvements and remodelling plans from Minehead to Carhampton.

Cllr Aldridge noted this.

**Cllr Westcott asked:** What are the statistics of people using the 28 bus to commute?

**Cllr Aldridge replied:** difficult to respond to that as not aware of how many cars are on the road, but people are being encouraged to use public transport.

The report from District Cllr Whetlor was circulated prior to the meeting for members information, Cllr Whetlor highlighted the following points and added to her report as follows:

- Involved in discussions around the creation of a town council for Taunton. This is a very lengthy process, with the decision on boundaries being the main topic of discussion.
- Watchet Lighthouse – strong winds brought down a small part of the roof and immediate action has been taken to secure the area whilst the damage is being assessed. Once an assessment has been undertaken a plan will be formulated for 2022-23, and the area will be closed until then.
- Swain Street Car Park update to include EV charging points – Two EV points will replace the two disabled bays at the top end of Swain Street car park opposite the gents toilets, and will



be installed by April. Two further disabled bays have been created further along the row to replace these. The single space by the co-op has been hatched in yellow to ease the situation when lorries are unloading. The central bays have been moved over a metre to aid access and egress, and the directional arrows on the surface have been repainted.

- Harbour Road Car Park – the hatching has been removed by the pay and display machine to create another parking bay; this will balance up the loss of income from the bay in Swain Street Car Park.
- New development at Liddymore Farm- due to complaints from residents, the Planning Enforcement Officer (SW&T) visited the site, and the times of access will be adhered to, a wheel washer will be used to prevent mud and grit on the road, and a street cleaner machine being used when needed.
- Oil slippage – alerted to a slippage of diesel/oil escaping from the boat storage area on the East Quay. Marina staff used an oil spill kit to contain the liquid and they are confident that this matter is substantially contained.

*Questions from the floor:*

**Cllr Ellwood asked:** Are there any plans to include cycle parking in the Watchet car parks?

**Cllr Whetlor responded:** There are currently 4 by the bus stop in Harbour Road. If funding can be secured, plans for cycle parking at East Quay development, the Esplanade, and East Pier meeting Splashpoint steps, all in hand.

22/415

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

Cllr Corlett-Shaw as the Council representative on the '**High Street Emergency Fund**' made reference to the report that had been circulated prior to the meeting and added that the QR codes were close to completion.

Cllr Murphy as the Council representative on '**Watchet Coastal Community Team**' reported that the Watchet Coastal Community Team has been formally awarded funding for Phase 3 Place Based Social Action by Big Lottery and Department of Digital, Media and Sport. This is for £120,000 spread over three years starting later this year. This builds on the Phase 2 funding which has seen the refurbishment of 7 Esplanade which has seen the following happen: The return of the Harbour Bookshop with the building also used for training courses led by local tutors. The community electric car driven by volunteer drivers is delivering people to medical and social events. This was a lifeline during the first lockdown for many as it delivered prescriptions and groceries to vulnerable people. This newspaper is put together and delivered by volunteers to every home in Watchet every two months. Projects have explored the connections between people in Watchet in order to encourage people to participate in the public life of the town. WCCT members have come together to share what they are doing and how they can work together. Young people have been encouraged to work together and explore how they want to see the town evolve. Phase 3 funding adds new work to make the town more sustainable in the future. This includes encouraging people to become involved in solving problems, developing projects to address climate change and supporting local businesses. The aim is for WCCT to enable the town to work together rather than just being a provider of services. If you would like to become involved, please contact the WCCT Project Officer, Carly Hughes at [carly@watchetconnects.com](mailto:carly@watchetconnects.com)

Cllr Murphy as Council representative on '**Watchet Harbour Board**' reported that the most recent meeting of the Harbour Board of the district council was held on 11 January 2022 via Teams. Research was being undertaken about the best way to provide lighting on west pier in a safe and secure manner. Dredging of the outer harbour had been undertaken by Marine Group and 6000 cu metres of mud had been removed. There was an ongoing budget for such work. Work was still ongoing to sort out the electricity supply for the east pier - currently, a generator was still required.

Berthing fees etc. would rise by an average of 2.5% from April.

The council was reminded of the recommendation from the West Somerset Council Scrutiny Committee that a percentage of the car park income received in Watchet and Minehead should be allocated to the harbour budget in recognition that some car parking was related to the existence of the harbours in both towns.

The annual audit of both harbours as required by the Port Marine Safety Code was underway. The possibility of Minehead harbour being on the itinerary of the Waverley for the coming season was being explored. A suitable fuel storage depot was being investigated for Minehead harbour. A definition of personal watercraft, commonly known as "jet skis" as a shorthand, was to be decided on so as to help control their use in both harbours.



Cllr Westcott as Council representative on the '**CCTV**' circulated an update report prior to the meeting and highlighted the following:

- All cameras are fully operational and have been serviced by ADT, this includes the new camera fitted on the corner of the Co-op building.
- The link to Minehead has been re-established and is working well. The Clerk has a contact at the Minehead control centre (housed in the Police Station) and recent requests from the Police and members of the public have been forwarded onto the volunteers to action. This system is working well.
- Discussions have taken place regarding the financial contribution per annum by Watchet Town Council.
- Outstanding queries – The Town Council through its former CCTV working group, asked on whose authority was the camera at the bottom of Goviers Lane removed, and where is it? The Council would like this camera reinstated. It is apparent that the ADT engineers removed the camera but, on whose authorisation cannot be confirmed, or whether it will be reinstated. Cllr Westcott and the Clerk will continue to seek an answer.

Cllr Irven as the Council representative on the '**Quantock Foodbank**' gave the following report: Activity levels for the foodbank providing free food parcels to alleviate urgent need has returned nearer to pre-COVID lockdown levels and continues to be based on referrals from agency partners.

The parallel food pantry pilot in Watchet has been working well. This is where a basket of balanced food is provided for a financial contribution towards the actual cost of the bought in items, and provides a steppingstone for individuals towards gaining self-sufficiency. For the first time the level of take up was similar to that of the food bank free parcels.

The scheme has worked well in Watchet with participants able to collect their food basket but has proven more challenging to extend initially to Williton due to problems of transport from Williton to collect baskets. An initial food pantry transport trial is being run where participants can claim back the cost of bus transport Williton – Watchet if they travel to the food bank to collect their basket.

In the midterm, as an alternative to trying to set up additional satellite food pantry locations in Williton and the Quantock area villages, we are evaluating a project to justify and fund an electric mobile food pantry vehicle that can visit remote rural locations e.g. local village halls once a week.

We are being helped by SW&T/SCC officers and Charitable groups in exploring how to set this up including holding an initial stakeholder meeting to gauge potential support and establishing a feasibility study.

The issue continues to highlight the inter-related challenges of food, fuel and transport poverty in Watchet, and the Quantock rural area.

As a calibration of the need for help with food poverty alone QF, over the last 3 years we have helped 11,350 people of which 5,975 were children.

Cllr Ellwood as the Council representative on '**Bickwatch**' reported that the vehicle had its first passenger carrying run last week conveying people to a funeral in Taunton. The vehicle now has its Section 19 permit so it is licensed to carry passengers and can charge fares.

Membership of the Somerset County Council concessionary fare scheme is nearing completion which allows for the scheme to reclaim concessionary fares charged to bus pass holders who are registered as members of the scheme.

Training for Watchet drivers who have volunteered to drive is due next month.

There has been much discussion of the trading name for the vehicle. The current preferred choice is:

EVIE Here4YOU

**22/416 To receive and sign the minutes of the following committees** and adopt the Resolutions and Recommendations contained therein. (LGA 1972, SCH12 Para 41 (1))

- Watchet Community Centre Management Committee (20 January 2022)  
Cllr Brake, Chair of the Committee, proposed that '**the minutes of the meeting held 20 January 2022 are adopted as a true and correct record**'. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.
- Environment & Planning Committee (20 January 2022)

Cllr Westcott, Chair of the Committee, proposed that **'the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 are adopted as a true and correct record.'** Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried

**22/417 Verbal reports from sub-committees, working groups, and other outside organisations, where Watchet Town Council does not have representation:** Cllr Irven gave notification on the 'Local Government Advisory Board Teams' meeting he had attended on 3 February 2022.

Focused on Local Community Networks

- Aim to give local communities power to influence decisions about priorities in their areas
- Anticipate based on geographies, population level and linked to schools
- Maybe 15 or so in Somerset
- Aim to be in place by end 2022

Membership to include

- Unitary Councillors
- Town/Parish Councillors
- Community Groups
- Social Enterprises
- NHS, Police, Schools
- Local businesses
- Residents

3 pilots have been running

1. Frome – focus on children, families and young people
  - They are pleased with openness and methodology of team helping set up and evaluate
  - Increased involvement of teenagers
  - Learned to 'go slow to go fast'
  - May not need funding
2. Exmoor – Highways and street scene in five themes
  - Improve communications as to what is going on
  - Give visibility of planned work
  - Deciding highway priorities
  - Highway practical works
  - More visibility of highways asset base and data

Aim to have a Parish Ranger as a Highway Steward who can visit parishes and undertake work

3. Wincanton – wellbeing
  - Across 3 parishes in E. Somerset & Mendip
  - Improve wellbeing
  - NHS and Police essential partners
  - Need a project Officer and funding
  - Capacity is a large problem for smaller parishes

Any and all parishes interested in setting up/being part of LCNs as these become clearer should contact the meeting organisers.

A follow-on Unitary session by Teams on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb

**22/418 Reports from Working Groups:** *any relevant paperwork will be issued prior to the meeting*  
**Climate Change** – Cllr Ellwood informed members that the beach clean that took place on Sunday 16 January 2022 at West Street Beach was a great success. There is an exciting project to create artwork from plastic picked up from the beach. Plastic Free initiative is ongoing, and it is encouraging that they are looking to form a plastic free West Somerset group and secure funding for a Project Officer.

**22/419 Legal Matters:**

(i) Draft lease for the Watchet Market House Museum – *update from the Clerk*  
The Clerk has chased up Savills and has received the following response – the current lease of the Museum is a secure tenancy and one that has not ended and will continue until either party serves notice on the other. The landlords notice requirements are strict and limited, mainly if the tenant defaults on the terms of the lease agreement or the building is required for redevelopment. The Council wish a new agreement which is outstanding, and Savills have asked for this to either be expedited or a simpler way of doing this is a simple minute of agreement agreeing to an extended term of the existing lease under the same terms as requested.



22/420

**Parish/Town Council 2022 May Election:**

- (i) To approve Election leaflet circulated to members via **Appendix 1.1**- Cllr Campbell proposed that the **'election leaflet is approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.
- (ii) To set a printing budget for the inclusion of the leaflet in the next 'Watchet Connects' Newsletter and to be delivered to every Watchet household

Having declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in this item, Cllr Irven and Murphy left the meeting at 8.05pm.

Cllr Campbell, Vice-Chair of Council presided over the meeting.

Cllr Richards proposed that **'a budget of £200 is approved towards the printing costs'**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

County Cllr Davies left the meeting at 8.06pm

Cllrs Irven and Murphy returned to the meeting at 8.08pm

- (iii) To approve Election poster (circulated prior to the meeting via **Appendix 1.2**) to be published on the Town Councils Facebook page and website pages with a link to the Election leaflet- Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'the recommendation is approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.
- (iv) To discuss other election publicity and promotional ideas- a few ideas were discussed, whereby members were in agreement that the Annual Town meeting would be a good public forum on which to advertise the election.

22/421

**Former taxi Office:**

- (i) To discuss options or future use – report circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 2** – a brief discussion ensued where some members expressed a concern in how high the rental charge was for a Watchet office premises. Cllr Richards proposed that **'the following recommendations are approved'**:
    1. **Agree to a rental cost of up to £2,000 per annum for the small office (former taxi office) for the period of 1 May 2022 - 31 April 2023 with the aim of assessing if this arrangement is mutually beneficial to both parties. Further negotiation to be delegated to the Clerk who was asked to explore with Union Collective comparable Watchet market rents for office space and any implications of shared space usage.**
    2. **After a 12-month period has elapsed, this matter will be reviewed in terms of the potential for ongoing rental or an option to purchase. In accordance with a 'letter of agreement' to be signed by both parties, the value of the office space will be assessed based on a current valuation at the time an option is granted to purchase the asset, as mutually agreed by both parties. If the purchase of the asset is agreeable to both parties, then as a good will gesture, Union Collective CIC will deduct the agreed rental payment from the agreed purchase price.**
    3. **If this recommendation is approved, then a 'letter of agreement' subject to final agreed terms can be drafted for approval at the next appropriate Full Council meeting and signed by both parties.**
- Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

22/422

**Recent acquisition of Grounds Maintenance Electric Vehicle:**

- (i) To consider works to improve security on the grounds store and associated costs
- (ii) To consider the installation of an electric charging point and associated costs – both reports circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 3**

After a brief discussion, Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'the following recommendations are approved'**

1. **To note the report**
2. **To approve the quotation for £1550 to supply and fit TWF 77 electric roller door, with wired safety edge with alarm and external entry on the memorial ground shed**
3. **Approval of a 16 Amp 230V 3 Pin Interlock Socket Switched 2P+E Single Phase Blue 2 with a budget of up to £50 to charge to EV at the Community Centre location**

Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried with 9 votes for and 1 abstention.

22/423

**To hold the 2022 Annual Town Meeting:**

- (i) With COVID restrictions easing and in accordance with (LGA 1972, part III (14) 1-5 **'Parish/Town meeting of the parish shall assemble annually on some day between 1 March and 1 June, both inclusive, in every year'**. Cllr Westcott proposed that the **'Annual Town meeting will be held on Tuesday 12 April 2022 @ 7.00pm'**. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

- 22/424 **Matters of Correspondence for Report** - Correspondence is addressed daily and filed, the file is available for all Councillors to inspect at their leisure. Nothing to report.
- 22/425 **Accounts for payment** – to approve the January Schedule (paid in February) circulated to members prior to the meeting. Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'the Payment Schedule is approved, and the invoices duly paid.'*** Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.
- 22/426 To note **Matters for the next meeting** – no discussion or decisions made
- Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.32pm

Signed: ..... 

Dated: ..... 