

**Minutes of the Environment & Planning Committee
held on Thursday 15 December 2022 at 6.45pm**

Present: Cllr Campbell, Cllr Irven, Cllr Johnson, Cllr Moss, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Westcott, and Cllr Whetlor

In attendance: Jo Grellier, Deputy Town Clerk, Dr Andy King – Geckoella, and 3 members of the public

With prior consent from the Clerk. Jan Martin and Alison Mills spoke in the Public participation section of the meeting 15 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. They provided an update on behalf of the Cleeve Hill Action Group, so the Committee are aware of the arrangements ahead of the Cleeve Hill development planning meeting on 5th January 2023.

22/78B To receive apologies for absence: (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))
None to date

22/79B 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
Cllr Whetlor	Pending planning Applications Items: • 22/81B (ii) & • 22/82B (i) • 22/86B (i) • All Plans received for discussion	Member of the Planning Committee (SW&T)	Personal & Prejudicial	Cllr left the meeting and did not participate in the discussion or voting
Cllr Whetlor	22/81B (iii)	Member of the Planning Committee (SW&T)	Personal & Prejudicial	Cllr remained in the meeting but did not participate in the discussion or voting

22/80B To receive and sign the minutes of the previous Environment and Planning meeting - (24 November 2022) and adopt the Resolutions and Recommendations contained therein. (LGA 1972, SCH12 Para 41 (1) - (*Paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 1*)
Cllr Westcott proposed that **'the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24 November 2022 are approved as a true and correct record'**. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

22/81B **Goviers Lane Railway Crossing:**
(i) Goviers Lane crossing site meeting with West Somerset Railway and SW&T Planning offers – Report from attending Councillor, Cllr Irven- (*Paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 2*)
Cllr Irven verbally reported the report circulated. Key items from the meeting were as follows:
• At the start of the meeting SW&T planning officer revealed that the developers of the Paper Mill site have submitted a draft scheme to improve the crossing to cope with increased footfall to Knights Templar school.
• The system proposes reintroducing red/green signal lights.
• They did this without any consultation with WSR
• WSR via CR have already responded that they object to this proposal as the lights are not a viable solution even at a cost approaching £80k and that a footbridge would cost up to £3 million
• Although this scheme was proposed by Mill developer and is posted on the portal against that application 3/37/19/021, SW&T planning officer was asked whether Cleeve Hill developer had

considered Goviers in their plans. Answer no, and that therefore in the light of this SW&T planning may need to challenge them why not. Although raised initially against Mill site application, SW&T communications and WSR reply have now also been posted on the portal against the Cleeve Hill application 3/37/21/012 as well as the Mill application. The report was noted by members. Cllr Irven was thanked for attending the meeting on behalf of Watchet Town Council and for his informative report.

Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the next item Cllr Whetlor withdrew from the meeting at 6.55pm

- (ii) Cleeve Hill Development – to consider a comment to planning following the update report from the Goviers Lane crossing meeting with planning
Cllr Westcott proposed that ***“Watchet Town Council submit a statement against Cleeve Hill and that we support the position submitted by West Somerset Railway and as posted on the portal and the Committee confirm delegation of Cllr Irven to speak publicly on Jan 5th against the application”***. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.
- (iii) Papermill Development - to consider a comment to/ planning following the update report from the Goviers Lane crossing meeting with planning
The Committee agreed by acclaim to defer this until a later meeting when the Planning application has been submitted.

22/82B

Cleeve Hill Development:

- (i) Update – if required
At this stage Cllr Westcott, as Chair, proposed that ***“Dr Andy King is invited to provide a verbal update on the report due to be discussed under item 22/84B(i), appendix 3, as the report may be useful in informing members of the most recent subsidence update and aid any further correspondence to SW&T regarding the Cleeve Hill development”***. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

As this report formed part of 22/84B Cllr Whetlor was invited back into the meeting but did not take part in the discussion or voting.

Dr Andy King reported the following:

There have been considerable changes over the past few weeks since Geckoella's drone survey of the site (11th November) and our findings (reported in Survey #5). We anticipate that cliff failure at West Cliff is likely to occur in the relative short term, potentially within the timeframe of a couple/few weeks. Notably a period of heavy rain and freezing/thawing should be sufficient to cause further erosion and heighten the risk of significant cliff movement.

Since Survey #5 we noted:

- a) Cracks and fissures at the cliff top have now opened significantly and large patches of sky are visible;
- b) Cliff top blocks are becoming separated and inclined towards the foreshore;
- c) Patches of grass and vegetation (including tree roots from the cliff top) are sliding and falling towards the cliff base (indicating movement within the middle and lower sections of the cliff) where there are also signs of bulging;
- d) There has been significant falls of red mudstone blocks and debris which extend over the cliff base onto the shingle beach for a distance of several metres, especially to the west of the visible rock armour boulders;
- e) The zones of wet mud and very fine silts marking the likely boundaries of the anticipated main slip areas have widened indicating they are also moving;

Furthermore, there were two very minor, but audible, falls whilst we were on site with you. These were caused by fine material spalling from the middle section of the cliffs below the inclined cliff top blocks.

The attached annotated photographs indicate what we currently believe will happen in terms of cliff failure which can be considered as likely to occur in two parts:

- 1) Toppling event(s) as different blocks of the cliff top fail. As these are falling from height and are likely to be 'sudden' events with little or no warning, they have the potential to spread material out onto the shingle beach over a distance of several metres
 - 2) A rotational slip and failure of the cliff which may occur in a more incremental way and descend (possibly in a more 'gradual movement') to beach level where loose material will spread laterally.
- Neither of these parts are mutually exclusive and one will likely trigger the other.

At present the cliff profiles on either side of the main central area are looking in 'ok shape' but we note that cracks are appearing to open up in rock strata above the sea wall and these may spread and become compromised after a significant fall elsewhere.



We currently believe that it is unlikely that the seawall itself will be covered by rock fall material and so in our opinion the western end of the concrete seawall still clearly remains the best location for placing any additional Cliff Warning signs for the public to keep away (please refer to comments on this matter made in our recent West Cliff Survey Reports to Watchet Town Council).

Images referred to:



A long discussion ensued. It was noted that there were many areas in which the Council would like to comment further. Cllr Westcott proposed that ***“delegation is given to Cllr Irven to speak with SW&T planning officer after the report is released next week and Cllr’s Irven & Murphy are to support the Deputy Clerk to write to SW&T to cover the additional comments they wish to raise on the Portal ahead of the meeting on 5th January 2023”***. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried with 1 abstention.

Jill Martin and Alison Mills left the meeting at 7.24pm

22/83B

Traffic Evaluation Working Group:

- (i) Update – *if required*
Cllr Murphy proposed that ***“the Commissioned Traffic Analysis technician is contacted to encourage him to request to speak at the Cleeve Hill development planning meeting on 5th January 2023 and his costs covered from the reserved traffic management fund”***. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried with 1 abstention.

22/84B

Allotment/West Beach subsidence:

- (i) SW&T correspondence update & recommendation - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 3)*
The correspondence from SW&T was discussed by members. Cllr Whetlor reported that she had had email correspondence with SW&T. A long discussion ensued.

Cllr Irven proposed that ***“the deputy Clerk respond to SW&T explaining that the location of the sign was requested to be erected on the westerly sea wall not to the lane of Warren Bay. As a matter of urgency, Watchet Town Council agree to pay up to the value of £300 for the purchase of a warning/danger sign, purchased and installed, at the location agreed by Watchet Town Council, by SW&T as it will be erected on SW&T land”***
Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried with 1 abstention.

Cllr Westcott made an additional proposal that ***“retrospective approval is given for the initial urgent warning press/social media release this week and the additional information provided is approved for release to social media and press releases if and when required”***.
Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

22/85B

Doniford Road speeding:

- (i) Data Capture Box Speed Monitoring report - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 4)*
The report from Avon & Somerset Police was discussed by members.
Cllr Johnson proposed ***“delegation is given to the Deputy Clerk to highlight the report with Somerset Highways to obtain commitment to act on the recommendations provided in the report”***. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

At this point, having declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in the remaining items, Cllr Whetlor left the meeting at 7.43pm followed by 1 member of the public and Dr Andy King who left the meeting at 7.44pm

22/86B

Parsonage Farm Development:

- (i) To note correspondence from the Watchet Critical Group in response to the Parsonage Farm Draft Development proposals - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 5)*
Members noted the correspondence.

DW

22/87B

To address items received from the planning authority requiring attention prior to the next Somerset West & Taunton / Somerset County Council / planning meetings: *if required* – Nothing to report

Plans received for discussion

FPD/37/21/001 Liddymore Farm, Liddymore Lane, Williton, Watchet, TA23 0UA
Footpath Diversion Application - WL 28/20 and WL 28/21
The Committee recommend approval.

3/37/22/020 45 Helwell Street, Watchet, TA23 0FB
Erection of two-storey rear extension
The Committee are unable to comment as there is insufficient information provided on the application to make a decision.


3/37/21/032 32 South Road, Watchet, TA23 0HE
Appeal by: Mr & Mr Beaven & Roberts, Erection of 1 No. dwelling
The Committee stand by their previous objections to this application.

3/37/22/002 32 South Road, Watchet, TA23 0HE
Appeal by: Mr & Mr Beaven & Roberts Erection of 1 No. dwelling (resubmission of 3/37/21/032)
The Committee stand by their previous objections to this application

22/88B

Matters for the next meeting – verbal, no discussion

Meeting closed at 7.50pm

Signed..... 

Date..... 19.1.23