

**Minutes of the Environment & Planning Committee
held on Thursday 19 January 2023 at 6.30pm**

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

In attendance: Jo Grellier, Deputy Town Clerk

23/89B To receive apologies for absence: (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))
None given

23/90B 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	• 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

23/91B **To receive and sign the minutes of the previous Environment and Planning meeting** - (15 December 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 15 December 2022 are approved as a true and correct record'**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

23/92B **Cleeve Hill Development:**
(i) Update – report from Cllr Irven following the SW&T planning decision meeting held on 5th January 2023 - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 2**)*
Cllr Irven gave a verbal update following the Cleeve Hill Planning meeting held on 5th January 2023, the report in brief was as follows:

The committee unanimously recommended to refuse the application on the 9 grounds cited by the officer.

The officer could not originally recommend including traffic as this was not supported by the statutory highways authority. Following the request in my statement to include the grounds cited by our experts, Entran, the following amendments were tabled and passed as grounds for refusal additional to those cited in appendix 1

Reason 4 states that the applicant has failed to demonstrate that there will be safe and suitable pedestrian access to and from the site. This reason should be extended to include "pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities and reduced mobility."

Reason 10 should be added as follows

"The applicant has failed to demonstrate that any significant impacts from the development in terms of highway capacity and congestion or on highway safety can be mitigated to an acceptable degree."

This was a significant achievement and gives us ongoing grounds for holding the new unitary highways and planning authority to account for ensuring that the combined traffic impact of all committed developments must be assessed in future rather than each development being treated in isolation.

The WTC statement made clear we would not conjoin with SW&T as a 'case 6 party' to the refusal as this would have made us liable for costs if any appeal overturned the decision, but did offer ongoing support and collaboration by WTC and our consultants on traffic and land instability in the event of any

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appeal, and more importantly on the ongoing challenge of finding a suitable rerouting of the B3191 in combination with appropriate coastal protection measures.

Cllr Whetlor thanked Cllr Irven for his well worded report presented at the SW&T Planning meeting.

23/93B

Allotment/West Beach subsidence:

- (i) Update - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 3)*

The update report from Geckoella was given following a recent visit to assess the situation of the cliff Subsidence on West beach. Cllr Irven gave a further verbal report, as EH&S Officer, who also attended the beach site visit with Geckoella, in brief the verbal report informed members of the following:

There is a concerning issue with regards to a new bolt moving closer to the Heras fencing erected as a safety measure to prevent access to the allotments. This new movement could change the higher risk area to now encroach on the car park, this will be monitored carefully.

Cllr Irven proposed to ***'to agree to support the recommendation from Geckoella, to contact the neighbouring properties on their behalf to gain approval for their property/land to be included in the next drone Survey data collection'***. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

A further discussion ensued. Cllr Irven proposed ***'that contact is made with Somerset County Council to request access to the data report and supporting evidence to clarify the reason for the closure of the road on Cleeve Hill, and share this information with Geckoella to gain their expert opinion'***. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

Cllr Johnson left the meeting at 6.58pm

At this stage Councillors Irven and Murphy declared a personal interest in the next item, as directors of WCCT. Both remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting.

23/94B

Rural transport study:

- (i) To discuss WTC involvement in the Rural Transport Study request - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 4)*

Members discussed the correspondence. Cllr Murphy informed members that WCCT also received the same invitation, it was discussed at a recent Directors meeting, and agree that Watchet Town Council involvement would be positive, but it would be beneficial for all groups to come together to discuss the rural transport issues, in an aim to help decrease mobility issues. Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'contact is made with Sarah Ellwood as the initial email request was sent from her in her role as SW&T Project Manager - Active Travel & Regeneration, informing her that the Watchet Town Council Environment and Planning Committee would support a collaborative meeting of all local parishes and Community groups if facilitated in the local area'***. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

23/95B

Doniford Road speeding:

- (i) Report & recommendation from the Deputy Clerk following Correspondence from Somerset Highways - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 5)*

Members discussed the report. Cllr Irven proposed that ***'delegation is given to the Deputy Clerk to write to residents of Doniford Road, Watchet and adjoining roads to invite interested members to make contact to assess the interest in a Community SpeedWatch Scheme, in an attempt to reduce the traffic speed'***. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

23/96B

Collaborative planning application meeting with Williton Parish Council

- (i) update report following a joint meeting of Environment and Planning members held on 17th January 2023.

Cllr Murphy updated the following:

It had been agreed on a suggestion of Watchet Environment & Planning Committee to meet with Williton Planning Committee members to explore matters of mutual interest with regard to planning applications surrounding both parishes.

The meeting was hosted at the Williton Pavilion commencing at 7pm.

Present

Watchet Town Council Cllrs Irven, Moss, Murphy, Westcott (Chair of meeting), Whetlor (also WPC)

Williton Parish Council Cllrs Denton, Hooper, Naylor, Payne, Peeks.

Apologies

Cllr White (Chair of Planning Committee WPC)

Introductions were made and DW in the Chair explained that the discussions around applications which already had outline permission could only hope to be around mitigations to proposals made when Reserved Matters applications came forward. When new Outline applications of mutual interest came forward we could discuss them in the future.

There was one outstanding Outline application to consider - the old paper mill site in Watchet.

There was one Reserved Matters application to consider - Normandy Avenue, Watchet.

There was one Outline application which had recently been passed - Priest Street, Williton.

There was one Outline application recently refused - Cleeve Hill, Watchet.

Other sites were being built out in both Williton and Watchet.

Cleeve Hill - outline refused.

This had been refused last week on ten grounds. (An unprecedented number). The officer report recommended refusal on nine grounds; Councillors added a tenth (traffic) upon the recommendation of the traffic consultant hired by Watchet Town Council. Watchet Town Council justified the employment of a consultant for the first-time using rate payers money due to the failure of Somerset County Council Highways to address the traffic concerns raised by the Council and multiple local residents and organisations.

Missing from the developer's traffic assessment was a consideration of the impact of the development on the local road network and a consideration of the cumulative effect on the local road network of all the various applications which had gained outline consent. Watchet Town Council had asked Highways to undertake such an assessment, but they declined. The consultant advised it should not fall to parish councils to undertake that work which was costly. It was noted that the developer's traffic consultants were Hydrock who had also been used at the Priest Street and Normandy Avenue sites.

Cllr Murphy proposed **'WTC Environment & Planning Committee press Somerset County Council Highways to ensure that developers carry out an assessment of the impacts of their development on the local road network. Also, to ask Highways to ensure that an assessment of the cumulative impact on the local road network of all the various proposals which reach outline stage is carried out, if necessary, by Highways'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

It was reported that the CCG had tabled a S106 request for a contribution to medical services of £80K from this site based on a consideration of the cumulative impact of Watchet housing applications approved in outline. A similar assessment was thought to have been made for the Priest Street application - below.

Paper Mill site - outline application being developed.

Watchet Town Council reported that the planning officer had approached the Council to ask if two Watchet Councillors would like to join a TEAMS meeting with him and the developer for an update before it went to the planning committee - he hoped to take it to the committee before 1st April when Somerset West and Taunton Council ceased to exist. This approach was building on the previous good engagement between the officer and the Council over Cleeve Hill and previous engagement over the mill site. WPC Councillors expressed an interest in joining the meeting as it was in this application that the proposal for a roundabout at Williton Coop first appeared. WPC had previously expressed concerns about this proposal. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'Cllr Irven and Murphy accept the invitation to join a TEAMS meeting with the planning officer and request that this invitation is extended to Williton Parish Council to join'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

Watchet Town Council had previously been approached to take on the maintenance of some of the public open space in the plans. E & P had asked for a larger car park, less housing but more industrial use on the site given that the paper mill had been the town's biggest employer until it closed.

With the closure of the B3191 at Cleeve Hill currently, consideration to the road being rerouted through the site could be back on the agenda.

Priest Street - outline approved.

WPC Councillors expressed concern at the scale of this approval - 350 houses - and its impact on the traffic directly in Williton. The number of roundabouts now planned would make traffic flow through the village considerably greater and slower. (Gliddon's site approved in outline also contained a roundabout)

Normandy Avenue - outline application for up to 139 dwellings approved, reserved matters application now published.

WPC reported that this was considered at their January meeting and making a response had been postponed until this joint meeting had been held. Watchet Town Council reported that it was due to be considered at their meeting later this week - Thursday. **It was agreed to recommend holding a joint site visit of the two committees.** Cllr Peaks agreed to coordinate this at a date to be agreed in February. Cllr Murphy proposed **'members support the idea of a joint Normandy Avenue development site visit in February'**. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried. With 1 abstention.

Cllr Peeks reported that, contrary to the statement in the approved Local Plan to 2032, S106 on a per house basis was not being required by officers under the various applications being referred to above. Representations had been made regarding this but not addressed by planning officers. Cllr Murphy proposed ***'the Environment & Planning committee press that S106 is reviewed on a per house basis when commenting on applications.'*** Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried with 1 abstention.

It **was agreed** to meet quarterly or as and when there was an urgent need to meet.

Cllr Murphy was thanked for his very thorough minutes of the meeting.

Cllr Whetlor left the meeting at 7.31pm

23/97B

To address items received from the planning authority requiring attention prior to the next Somerset West & Taunton / Somerset County Council / planning meetings:

The Deputy Clerk tabled an email received from SW&T Planning Officer, Simon Fox. Given Watchet Town Council's helpful dialogue regarding Cleeve Hill Simon believes it would be useful and helpful for himself and the agent to give Watchet Town Council a briefing on the application on week beginning 13th February 2023. A discussion ensued. Cllr Westcott proposed that ***'Cllr Irven and Cllr Murphy agree to attend the TEAMS meeting and request that the invitation is extended to Williton Parish Council to also have a representative attend'***. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

Plans received for discussion

3/37/22/015

Land between Beverley Drive & Goviers Lane, Watchet, TA23 0DF

Application for the approval of reserved matters following outline approval 3/37/21/006 for the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of the erection of 1 No. dwelling (amended plan incl. soakaway detail)

The Committee reiterate their previous comments. The new drawings do not address the previous comments made.

3/37/22/019

Land at the marina edge, The Esplanade, Watchet, TA23 0AJ

The Committee wish to support local artists and community initiatives and are supportive of the efforts of all involved in commissioning the design and production of this tribute piece in memory of Derek the goose but consider that as this memorial has been sited within a conservation area subject to stringent requirements it is in the wrong location. As a result, the Town council would like to see it re-sited elsewhere around the harbour side and is probably best suited to a site on the eastern quayside.

Therefore, the Council recommend refusal of this retrospective application.

The Council regrets that planning permission was not sought before proceeding to put the statue in place which would have enabled consultation to take place within the community."

The reason for this recommendation is that the installation breaches policy CA/1 of the Local Plan to 2032 in multiple respects.

The policy states:

POLICY CA/1: New Development and Conservation Areas Development proposals in conservation areas will be permitted only where they are compatible with the preservation or enhancement of the architectural and historic character or appearance of the conservation area. In particular, proposals should meet the following requirements: The proposal must be in keeping with the scale, architectural quality and features of the area and not detract from the setting of historic or architecturally important buildings. External building materials must be appropriate to those that are traditional in the conservation area. The proposal should not detract from the existing landscape elements of the conservation area including trees, hedgerows, walls, banks, footpaths and open spaces.

The proposal is out of scale with the mass and height of nearby features. The preserved sea anchor recovered mine and statues of the Ancient Mariner and Yankee Jack are substantial landscape features whereas the proposal is flimsy and see through in places.

The proposed sculpture is by a developing local artist and contains an advert for his work. There is a plaque containing a poem attached to railings. Previously, the District Council has not granted licences for the promotion of artists and businesses along the Esplanade railings. The adjacent Ancient Mariner statue is by a respected internationally renowned artist, Alan B Herriot, responsible for the internationally respected statue of Donald Dewar outside the Scottish parliament in Edinburgh. The statue of the Ancient Mariner was unveiled in 2003 by Dr Katherine Wyndham who at the time was the heir of the local Wyndham family. The Yankee Jack statue situated further along the Esplanade is also

by Alan B Herriot.

The proposal sits behind the marina railings overlooking the site where Derek the goose was frequently observed. There is a small copper model of a goose on top of one of the pontoon polls in the marina nearby already to commemorate him / her. The proposal has nothing in common with the maritime features of area which are exemplified by the marina setting, the adjacent preserved sea anchor, the reclaimed wartime mine repurposed as a collection box for the distressed sailors fund and the two statues. One commemorates a sea farer immortalised in the poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, written in Watchet and important cultural draw for visitors. The second is a statue to a local sailor, Yankee Jack who came to fame in the American Civil war and became an important source of sea shanties preserved by Cecil Sharp - he is also commemorated by a plaque outside his cottage in the town.

The proposed statue is made of stainless steel. This material is completely absent in the surrounding area. The mine, anchor and the aforementioned statues are not made of

stainless steel but are cast in bronze which is a recognised standard for sculptures and statues in the public realm. Stainless steel is much used in the new East Quay building which suggests again that the proposal would be better sited at the other end of the Esplanade from where it is proposed.

The lighting of the proposed statue introduces a new element by using a solar panel connected to four lights with the cabling contained within white plastic ducts. Whilst the use of solar power is welcome in terms of carbon reduction, the white plastic is a visually intrusive element in an area dominated by dark colours.

For these reasons, the Council believe the proposal is in breach of policy CA/1 which is designed to protect and enhance conservation area status.

3/37/22/020 45 Helwell Street, Watchet, TA23 0FB
Erection of two-storey rear extension
The Committee Recommend approval.

3/37/21/022 63 West Street, Watchet, TA23 0BH
Erection of replacement single storey rear extension
The Committee Recommend approval.

3/37/23/001 Land to the south of Doniford Road and Normandy Avenue, Watchet
Application for the approval of reserved matters following application 3/37/17/019 for the access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of up to 139 No. dwellings and associated works
The Committee intend to have a joint site visit with Williton Parish Council so will hold off any comment until this has been undertaken. Watchet Town Council are mindful to address traffic management and allocation of S106 request that the developer or County Highways carry out an assessment of the impact of the development upon the local road network and of the cumulative effect on the local road network of other applications with outline consent. The Council request that the appropriate amount of S106 funding is secured on a per household basis as set out in the S106 SPD and specified in the approved Local Plan to 2032.

3/37/23/002 Sea Mist, 24 Brendon Road, Watchet, TA23 0AU
Erection of two storey side extension and front porch
The Committee approve the side extension but would like to see a more sympathetic porch design to be in keeping with the 1930's curved window design.

23/98B Matters for the next meeting – verbal, no discussion
Liaise with Deputy Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.05pm

Signed.....

Date.....

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