

**Minutes of the Environment & Planning Committee**  
**held on Thursday 23 February 2023 at 6.45pm**

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

**In attendance:** Jo Grellier, Deputy Town Clerk

23/99B To receive apologies for absence: (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))  
Cllr Westcott proposed that **'Apologies given by Cllr Campbell are accepted'**. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

23/100B 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
Cllr Whetlor	• 23/102B (iii)(b)	Member of WACET	Personal	Cllr remained in the room and participated in the discussion and voting
Cllr Irven	• 23/102B(ii)	St Decumans Road Resident	Personal	Cllr remained in the room and participated in the discussion and voting

23/101B To receive and sign the minutes of the previous Environment and Planning meeting - (19 January 2023) 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 19 January 2023 are approved as a true and correct record'**. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

23/102B **Councillor Monthly surgery items raised:**

(i) Goviers Lane pothole concerns  
Cllr Whetlor informed members of a concern raised by a resident regarding the pot holes on Goviers Lane. The Committee discussed the matter and Cllr Johnson proposed that **'the Deputy Clerk, on behalf of Watchet Town Council, contact Somerset Highways to request action is taken to fix the pot holes on Goviers Lane'**. Seconded by acclamation. Carried.

(ii) St Decumans Road parking issues - *(paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 2)*  
Resident letter of concern discussed by members. Cllr Johnson proposed that **'the Deputy Clerk contact Somerset Highways to ensure that Traffic Management add St Decumans Road to their imminent traffic management review'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried with one abstention,

*DW*



(iii) Cleeve Hill Road Closure:

- a. Public participation from shop owner given at Full Council on 13 February 2023 following Councillor surgery enquiry and suggestions from Cllr Whetlor also presented to Full Council as Watchet & Williton Ward District Councillor.  
- (report circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 3**)

Cllr Johnson proposed that **'Appendix 3 is taken to the Road closure Task force meeting for further discussion'**. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried.

- b. WACET open meeting regarding road closure held on 15 February 2023 – Update report from Cllr Murphy as WTC rep and suggested action for way forward - (report circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 4**)  
Cllr Murphy presented an update report following the WACET open meeting as the WTC rep to the committee along with the Minutes of the meeting provided by WACET Chair. Cllr Irven proposed that **'as Watchet Town Council are the Local Authority, members adopt the recommendations provided in the WACET representative report and nominate Cllr Murphy as E&P representative and Cllr Johnson as deputy'**. Seconded by Cllr Moss. Carried.

23/103B

**Allotment/West Beach subsidence:**

- (i) Correspondence sent to West Street residents regarding drone survey data - (paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 5**)  
The Deputy Clerk advised members that the letter was sent to residents on 30 January 2023 informing residents affected that the next aerial drone survey will be collecting data within 50m of their property to obtain further data regarding the allotment slippage. To date we have received one response requesting the information be shared with them once the survey has been completed. Members noted.
- (ii) Cleeve Hill road closure – update report of meeting between SCC/WTC/Geckoella held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023 to share subsidence data - (paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 6**)  
Members were updated with the minutes of the meeting. A discussion ensued. Members raised concerns to SW&T lack of due diligence to residents of West Bay Park. Cllr Irven proposed that **'the Deputy Clerk, with support from Cllr Irven, write to SCC to establish an ongoing action plan of how WTC continue a working relationship moving forward. A copy of the meeting minutes are sent to SW&T S.Hughes superior and SW&T licencing manager to advise of his unacceptable comment made at the meeting'**. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried with one abstention.
- (iii) Latest update on subsidence and any remedial actions taken – Report from WTC EH&S officer (paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 7**)  
An update report was presented by Cllr Irven which informed members that the ground staff have moved the fence back 3m and made the following recommendations in his report:
- Until we can conduct further surveys and produce a new risk profile, the car park continues to be safe to use. If the new survey shows potential risk to part of the car park adjacent to the fencing, we may have to consider whether the boundary needs moving further south as shown in figs 10 & 11 and notice potentially given to current tenants of motor homes – **action WTC E&P committee**
  - We could be reviewing whether grass embankments banks and/or adjacent areas can be reconfigured to avoid losing parking spaces - **action WTC E&P committee & staff**
  - Acquire additional panels and re-site fence as indicated in this assessment - **action grounds staff**
  - Request tenants to move vehicles such that the fencing can be erected - **action Asset coordinator.**
  - Prior actions accepted by WTC insurer. Update actions as appropriate – **action Deputy Clerk**
- Cllr Johnson proposed that **'the committee accept the recommendations in the report'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried. Cllr Murphy thanked Cllr Irven for the extensive work he has conducted to date, showing due diligence.

23/104B

**Rural transport study:**

- (i) Update on WTC support to Rural Transport Study lead for collaborative meeting – verbal update – members to note  
The Deputy Clerk informed the committee that the Rural Transport Study lead responded to our request to organise a collaborative meeting of local Town/Parish councils and community groups was declined. Instead, opting to attend the first street fayre on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2023. Members noted.

23/105B

**Goviers Lane Railway Crossing:**

- (i) CCTV Update report from West Somerset Railway - (paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 8**)  
Cllr Irven updated the committee following correspondence received from West Somerset

23



Railways regarding the missing CCTV. Cllr Westcott proposed that **'Watchet Town Council press SW&T to move forward with the CCTV purchase reiterating the Full Council approved recommendation to contribute up to £3000 towards the costs'**. Seconded by Cllr Moss. Carried.

23/106B

#### **Collaborative planning application meetings with Williton Parish Council**

(i) Papermill development meeting with SW&T Planning officer on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023 - Update report (*paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 9*)

Cllr Irven updated members that a successful meeting with SW&T planning officer, Simon Fox, was held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023, adding that it was a positive and constructive meeting. He reported the following and members noted:

- Aim of meeting – organised by S. Fox to update WTC on the planning application 3/37/19/021 before it goes to committee.
- After introductions, we thanked Simon for organising the meeting and especially allowing our colleagues from Williton also to attend
- WTC noted that we were supportive of the brown field site being developed rather than being left derelict. We would have preferred industrial but accept the need for a mixed development to make it economically viable for a developer. We have some suggestions for better optimising the site, and concerns about specific issues that may be more relevant for the SW&T and SCC authorities to address in relation to overall traffic and infrastructure.
- Williton PC indicated they would not wish to object to the development of the site, encourage its development for Watchet, but have concerns on traffic plans that directly affect Williton.
- WTC were grateful for the amendments already made by the developer in response to our suggestions concerning;
  - More industrial space, if possible, less keen to see the small community space, so pleased with the latter's removal to be replaced by small business centre and larger industrial area
  - Appreciated the public car park. Would prefer larger, but accept that the 53 current may be the best available when balancing housing, industrial, retail, community open space and parking
  - Retaining sheltered and assisted accommodation.
  - Retail and hotel offerings
  - Open space and open water course
  - Option to consult with the developer about WTC managing community spaces. We queried whether there would be opportunity for allotments, not currently in plan, but might be part of such later discussions at reserved matters stage.
- The main area of debate was over traffic plans, including vehicular, pedestrian and cycle routes.
- The developer can only look at mitigating for Watchet which include;
  - Improved pedestrian via Whitehall to Watchet centre
  - Contribution to improved safety at Goviers Lane crossing with the WSR as a walking route to the primary school Knights Templar
  - Improved vehicular access and control onto the Brendon Road
- Williton PC pointed out that all traffic to Taunton will pass through Williton and they object to the current plan for a contribution specifically to a revised roundabout at the Co-op because it does not meet local needs. If approved as part of the Mill application, it would set a precedent for further developments.
- This led to a discussion of the need for an overall traffic plan led by the Highway authority.
- SW&T countered by suggesting removing the specific roundabout whilst leaving an overall contribution (£80k ?) from the Mill developer to traffic alleviation measures, and ring fencing an amount for Williton to undertake a traffic study to propose a solution.
- WTC and Williton PC countered that it remains a responsibility of the LA, not parish, and if one was undertaken by the parish would it be ignored by the LA, if they undertake it, it would carry more weight.
- Williton also queried why no safe pedestrian and cycle route to secondary school at Danesfield. Reply that not up to Mill developer to solve that, they had addressed Watchet specific.
- WTC & Williton said there was a responsibility by the LA highways to address this on a wider level taking account of combined impact of all developments on traffic, as proposed by WTC consultant Entran as being an obligation on the local authority. We queried whether there was an opportunity to arrange a joint meeting similar to the recent one organised by SCC Highways at which WTC, SWT Officers and cabinet members, Environment agency and consultants Geckoella attended to assess measures related to the B3191 road realignment.
- S Fox indicated it was not his remit to facilitate such a request, but agreed to suggest this to James Holbrook who will be leading the local plan review, which might potentially also consider infrastructure improvements required from the total housing load being imposed on Watchet and Williton.
- As far as the Mill application is concerned, there is no support technically or financially at this point for considering re-routing through the Mill site, and Simon's report to committee will justify this position.
- In conclusion all members felt it was a helpful and productive meeting and wished to thank Simon and Paul for arranging it.

*Handwritten signature*



(ii) Update on any collaborative meetings arranged – *members to note*

The Deputy Clerk updated members that the proposed forthcoming dates are Mon 27th February 2023 at 2.00pm for a site visit for Doniford Road development application 3/37/23/001, and Thursday April 13th at WTC/VC 7.00pm to host a quarterly joint meeting on overall planning to follow on from the prior successful one reported at the last meeting. The Deputy Clerk will confirm this date once confirmation has been given from Williton Parish Council.

23/107B

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

(iii) Changes to Somerset Council planning procedures – update provided by Cllr Whetlor - (*paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via Appendix 10*)

Cllr Whetlor informed members that she attended a meeting last week and was pleased to inform that Somerset Unitary Council has relented on their original suggestions of only 1 for and 1 against an application. They have now conceded and have increased this to 5 for and 5 against, although there are quite a lot of other changes in the detail. These will need to be looked at now they are in the new Constitution of the Unitary Council, the E&P Committee may want to discuss them in full to understand how they will work.

Cllr Whetlor also informed members that she attended a meeting earlier today with Somerset Highways And provide the following update:

- Further briefing to be scheduled with Old Cleeve and other parishes involved.
- Highways are happy to attend meeting with traders
- Face to Face meeting at West Somerset House for all stake holders asap?
- Home Farm to be contacted for comments
- List of actions and who is doing what, so the public are well informed
- Press release with comment from Chamber of Trade (went out last week)
- Alternative transport arrangements to be discussed in more detail

#### Plans received for discussion

3/37/23/003

**10 Ramon Avenue, Watchet, TA23 0EJ**

Erection of two-storey extension to the side elevation

**The committee recommends approval**

Cllr Whetlor left the meeting at 8.04pm

3/37/23/006

**23 Brendon Road, Watchet, TA23 0AU**

Erection of 1 No. bungalow

**The committee recommends approval**

23/108B

**Matters for the next meeting** – verbal, no discussion

- Liaise with the deputy Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.05pm

Signed..... 

Date..... 23.3.