

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
held on Monday 10 July 2023 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr Brake, Cllr Campbell (Chair), Cllr Ellwood, Cllr Irlen, Cllr Moss, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Richards, Cllr Summers, Cllr Westcott and Cllr Whetlor.

In attendance: Sarah Reed, Town Clerk, Somerset Cllr Davies

23/21 To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1)- Cllr Campbell proposed that '**apologies from Cllr Terrett are accepted**'. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried.

23/21 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	23/28a	Member of WLF	Personal	Cllrs remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting.
Cllr Irlen	23/28a,	Member of FOSL and WLF, Director of WCCT	Personal	
Cllr Murphy	23/32 23/28a			
Cllr Irlen	23/30(ii) 23/33	Finance Director (WCCT), Director of WCCT	Personal & Prejudicial	Cllr withdrew from the meeting and did not participate in the discussion and voting.
Cllrs Murphy & Summers	23/30(ii) 23/33	Directors of WCCT	Personal	Cllrs remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting.
Cllr Richards	23/32	Member of the WWMGMC		

23/23 **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 12 June 2023- (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1))
Cllr Campbell proposed that '**The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 12 June 2023 are approved as a true and correct record.**' Seconded by Cllr Summers. Carried with 9 votes for and 1 abstention.

- 23/24**
- (i) **Chairman's Report:**
 - Together with the Vice-Chair, attended the 'Armed Forces Day' at Vivary Park, the event was very well attended.
 - (ii) **Clerks Report-update on previous matters:**
 - a. **Grant from the War Memorials Trust** - the Clerk having submitted the completion grants form to the Trust for the funds to engage a consultant to undertake a condition survey of the pavilion on the Memorial Ground, has been informed that the paperwork is in order and the grant will be transferred in the next 2days. Upon receipt the consultant will be paid £1,400 and as the grant only covers 75% of the survey costs, £1,050, the WWMGMC will be invoices for £350 to make up the shortfall. This has been agreed with the Chair of WWMGMC.
 - b. **Market House Museum Lease** - the Clerk reported, having chased this matter up, the services of Risdon Hosegood Solicitors have been engaged who are liaising with Foot Anstey, the solicitors for the Orchard Wyndham Estate and this matter is progressing.



23/25 Reports from the Principal Authority Members:

Members noted the generic report from Somerset Cllr Woods.

Report from Somerset Cllr Davies was circulated prior to the meeting, and he brought the following correspondence to the attention of members:

- A letter from a resident which was sent to the Department of Transport regarding the closure of the B3191 and the response from Cllr Hunt, and the Service Director, Infrastructure and Transport, Somerset Council which seem to dismiss the idea of preparing and submitting a bid for the realignment of the road. This instigated a debate whereby members felt that this statement should be challenged. Cllr Irvén proposed that **'the Council should make an appropriate response and share it with the resident who raised this matter'**. Seconded by Cllr Richards. Carried.

Somerset Cllr Davies was thanked by the Chair for his report.

23/26 Reports from Representatives of Outside Organisations, Verbal – no Decisions

- Cllr Whetlor as the Council representative on the **'Watchet Twinning Society'** referred to the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and mentioned the French Breakfast which is to be held at the Phoenix Centre on 22 July from 9am to 12noon, everyone is welcome.
- Cllr Whetlor as the Council representative on the **'Market House Museum'** referred to the report which had been circulated prior to the meeting and mentioned the Stewards outing to Totnes in October, and the updated version of the Heritage Trail leaflet.

The Chair thanked all representatives for their reports.

23/27 Verbal reports from sub-committees, working groups, and other outside organisations, where Watchet Town Council does not have representation: (Notification to the Clerk prior to the meeting) – notification had been received from Cllr Murphy who had attended the **'Bus Users and Stakeholders Group'** remote meeting held on 13 June 2023, report circulated prior to the meeting and noted.

23/28 Reports from Working Groups: *any relevant paperwork will be issued prior to the meeting.*

- Watchet Library** – Cllr Irvén informed the meeting that the working group had been invited to meet the new Library Manager on 31 August at the library premises. Members were informed of a FOSL meeting he had attended where it was encouraging to see that the Library Management Team, run by the Strategic Manager are keen to ensure that Library operations stay in the forefront.
- Wheeled Park** – Cllr Ellwood presented the update report which was circulated prior to the meeting and collated by the Deputy Clerk.
 - The project is now able to progress due to the approval of the Certificate of Lawful Development, which Somerset Council Planning approved on 15 June 2023.
 - The Council is now in a strong position to seek funding, and the Deputy Clerk has researched several funding streams, listed for members' information.
 - It was reported that an expression of interest had been submitted to the Section 106 fund (Somerset Council), this was then followed by a series of questions around the S106 criteria, of which Cllr Ellwood answered appropriately.
- Climate Change** - no update
- Watchet Task Force** – in the absence of the Chair of the working group Cllr Terrett, Cllr Murphy presented the updated report which was circulated to members prior to the meeting-he referred to the following:
 - Successful street fayre, over 30 people engaged and outlined their views on the comments sheet.
 - £30,000 funding from Somerset Council secured - action plan rewritten, thanks to Jess Prendergrast for her input. This has been submitted and the funds will be transferred soon to the Town Councils account as the accountable body to hold the funds on behalf of the Task Force working group.
 - Social media work can commence, with set up costs of £2,000 from the Town Council (agreed at a previous meeting) together with a contribution of £500 from WACET.
 - Only 26 out of 144 businesses completed the business survey issued by Somerset Council, so difficult to ascertain from the data received the exact impact on the businesses.

23/29 Councillor Surgeries – update report by Cllrs Johnson and Murphy who attended the Surgery held on Saturday 1 June 2023 with 2 attendees:



- Parking obstruction of access at St Decumans Road- *referred to the Environment & Planning Committee*
- (i) Increase of traffic on Brendon Road, associated footpath overgrown- *Environment & Planning Committee to check this.*
(ii) Concerns raised on trees overhanging private property – recipient given contact of tree officer at Somerset Council, and Mill owner.
- (i) **Councillor Surgery 6-month trial has expired, do the Council wish to continue-** a brief discussion ensued, whereby Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'the Councillor surgeries continue for a further 6-month winter period trial from September as they are proving beneficial to the community'***. Seconded by Cllr Summers. Carried.

23/30 **Annual Report for 2022-23:**

- (i) To approve the draft Annual Report for 2022-23- *circulated via Appendix 2* -members were very impressed with the new format and thanks was given to the Deputy Clerk for the innovative design, Cllr Campbell proposed that ***'the draft is approved, and delegation is given to the Clerk and Deputy to complete the last page'***. Seconded by Cllr Richards. Carried

Cllr Irven having declared a Personal & Prejudicial interest in the next item, left the meeting at 8.02pm

- (ii) To approve a grant for printing and to be included in the next Watchet Connects Newsletter delivered to all households in Watchet – Cllr Richards proposed that ***'a grant of up to £600 is allocated for printing'***. Seconded by Cllr Moss. Carried with 7 Votes for and 2 abstentions.

Cllr Irven returned to the meeting at 8.04pm.

23/31 **Internal Auditors report 2022-23:**

- (i) To note the internal auditors report and the address the matters contained within – *Clerks report circulated as Appendix 3 – the Clerk reported:*

Please see attached the Internal Auditors report in relation to the 2022-23 Audit.

Members to note the points raised and how they have been addressed with special note to the following comments:

I have found again, that Watchet Town Council is a very efficient and pro-active Council and is operating in a very satisfactory manner.

I want to thank the Clerk and staff for their help and support during this audit.

Thank you again for providing excellent accounts and documents in order to carry out the internal audit.

Recommendation 1 – 'to note the report compiled by the Internal Auditor and the recommendations contained therein'. Proposed by Cllr Murphy. Seconded by Cllr Summers. Carried.

Recommendation 2 – 'it is good practice for the Council to give their approval in the form of a letter signed by the Chair of Council to the Auditor informing him that his report has been noted and all the points raised have been addressed and actioned'. Proposed by Cllr Whetlor. Seconded by Cllr Summers. Carried.

Recommendation 3- 'to approve payment for the services of the Internal Auditor as stated in the attached invoice as £675.00'. Proposed by Cllr Campbell. Seconded by Cllr Richards. Carried.

23/32 **Community Ownership Fund:**

- (i) Potential bid by Watchet Town Council (WTC) and Watchet War Memorial Ground Management Committee (WWMGMC) – report by Cllrs Irven and Campbell via ***Appendix 4*** and presented by Cllr Irven:

- As this is a UK Government levelling up fund, requirements are very detailed and much more stringent than Lottery requirements.
- Strategic and management case justifications
- Fully costed bid including QS justified costs, plus full, cash flow projection.
- Full project plan and schedule, together with risk register
- Identification of where matched funding will be obtained.
- **Full governance of all parties/partners**
- **How community supports bid, and most importantly evidence that the community has full access to facility in use**

Key Issues

- Need guidance that we can legitimately claim for the revenue component of the bid.
- The match funds via WWMGC, community and WTC will be available.
- Current use by WWMG **primarily for cricket/football rather than whole community**
- **Current committee and governance structure with WTC and community is questionable.**
- **Changes may be required to be shown in the bid or before bid submitted.**

Recommendations

1. WTC approve in principle draft budget shown in annex1. Go for full renovation costs not just immediate needs as this only delays the inevitable.
2. Clerk, representative to WWMGC and Asset chair need to meet with WWMGC to assess how to address the key issues over governance and use of asset by community, and basis for bid.
3. Continue preparing bid documentation aiming for subsequent window (Nov 23, - Feb 24)

Element Total	Category						
£	A	B	C	D	F	I	Other
£136,521	£25,739	£5,927	£34,136	£28,130	£7,730	£32,971	£1,889

Annex 1 - detailed quantity surveyor cost breakdown for the £140k total received 7/7/23.

Cllr Summers proposed that the '**3 recommendations as presented are approved**'. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Carried with 9 votes for and 1 abstention.

Cllr Irven having declared a Personal & Prejudicial interest in the next item, left the meeting at 8.44pm.

23/33

Community Car Scheme:

- (i) To approve the Vehicle -Co-ordinators post to be brought in-house and managed by Watchet Town Council – *report by Cllr Murphy circulated via **Appendix 5*** and he gave the following update:

When Watchet Town Council applied for grant funding to purchase Evie and employ a Community Vehicle Co-ordinator, the vehicle was taken into the ownership of the Town Council, but the co-ordinator post was out sourced to Watchet Coastal Community Team under a SLA which gave WCCT funding for the first year of the post but required WCCT to provide the funding for year two of the post.

The project is managed by the BickWatch Project Group (BPG) which consists of representatives of the five partners and the Village Agent, on behalf of Community Council for Somerset. The BPG is further supported by Nick Margison, Commissioning Transport Manager of Somerset Council. T

WCCT has funded year two of the co-ordinator post which has now come to an end.

The wish of the partners through BPG is that Watchet Town Council bring the co-ordinator post in house so that the ownership of the vehicle and its management are the sole responsibility of the Council. The co-ordinator will continue to manage both electric community vehicles.

Town Council in setting the precept for 2023-24, included budget provision for taking on the employment of the co-ordinator role.

Currently the post of Community Vehicle Co-ordinator is employed by Watchet Coastal Community Team and the post will transfer to the Council under her current conditions of service and remuneration.

Subject to Council approving the recommendations, the timings of the employment transfer will be finalised by the Clerk in consultation with the Directors of Watchet Coastal Community Team so as to make best use of grants held by WCCT and the precept raised by the Council for funding the employment.

Members had the opportunity to raise questions with Cllr Murphy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Council approve the use of funds precepted for the purpose to complete the transfer of the employment of the Community Vehicle Co-ordinator post from Watchet Coastal Community Team to Watchet Town Council.

2 The timing of the transfer to be agreed by the Clerk in consultation with the co-ordinator and the Directors of Watchet Coastal Community Team.
Cllr Murphy proposed that the '**recommendations as presented are approved**'. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Unanimously carried.

Cllr Irven returned to the meeting at 8.56pm.

23/34 **Matters of correspondence for Report** – Correspondence is addressed daily and filed. *The Clerk will report any relevant correspondence.* Nothing to report.

23/35 **Accounts for payment** - to approve the June schedule for payment in July.
Cllr Richards proposed that '**the Payment Schedule is approved, and the invoices duly paid.**'
Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

23/36 To note **Matters for the next meeting** – no discussion or decisions made.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed: 

Dated: 