

Minutes of Full Council Meeting
held on Monday 10th June 2024 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr Brake, Cllr Campbell (Chair), Cllr Irvén, Cllr Johnson, Cllr Moss, Cllr Murphy, Cllr Richards, Cllr Stevens, Cllr Westcott, Cllr Whetlor

In Attendance: Jo Grellier - Town Clerk, Annie Robinson – Deputy Clerk, County Cllr Davies – Somerset Council

Before the commencement of the meeting Cllr Whetlor informed Council that it was the 25th anniversary of the day she was Co-opted on to the Council.

- 24/01 To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))
Cllr Whetlor proposed that - '**apologies given by Cllrs Terrett and Young are accepted**'. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.
- 24/02 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
Cllrs Irvén, Murphy & Whetlor	24/08 A	Members of FOSL & WLF	Personal	Cllrs remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting.
Cllrs Irvén & Murphy	24/14 (i)	Directors of WCCT	Personal	Cllrs remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting.
Cllrs Whetlor & Brake <i>murphy</i>		Members of Museum Committee	Personal	Cllrs remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting.

- 24/03 **Town Council Minutes** - To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on the 13th May 2024 (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41 (1) (*circulated prior to the meeting via Appendix 1*))
Cllr Whetlor proposed that – '**the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th May 2024 are a true and accurate record**'. Seconded by Cllr Richards. Carried.

24/04 **Reports:**

- Chairs report - verbal
Cllr Whetlor reported the following:
 - On 14th May 2024 I attended the Installation of the Taunton Town Mayor at Taunton Minster.
 - On Thursday 6th June in the evening I attended, along with Cllr Brake, a Commemoration of D Day at the Watchet War Memorial. Cllr Brake initially spoke to me, as Chair of the RBL, to ask if we were doing anything. I said no, although I believed the Ladies Branch might be. He then advised that he was going to purchase a wreath from his own pocket to lay. I asked him if he would organise another wreath, which I paid for, which could then be laid by Mr Richard Overall on behalf of the RBL as I had advised I was not going to be here. Due to many comments about what was Watchet doing I decided to change my plans and attend as Mayor. I laid a sheath of red roses. Between us we arranged for Deacon Woods, as RBL Chaplain, to conduct the service, I provided service sheets given by Williton RBL, we had the Watchet RBL standard bearer, some members of the Sea Scouts, a bugler to play The Last Post and the National Anthem and the Court Leet Bell Ringer/Town Crier, David Milton, who read out the names on the memorial and rang the bell along with other towns and villages at 9.15pm. Deacon Woods also mentioned the three men who had been killed in action during that part of the war. Again, my thanks to Cllr Brake for initiating this and within 48 hours we had a tribute to the brave men and around 70 members of the public in attendance. It was widely publicised on social media.

- Clerks report – See **Appendix 2 – updates & recommendations**

The Clerk reported the following:

1. Lease for the Market House Museum

Sarah Reed under her capacity as my Clerk consultant was delegated by me to contact Risdon Solicitors as seemingly Foot Anstey has taken a query of the lease term extension as an instruction and now want to charge extra fees on top of the £2,000 WTC has already paid. They are now also proposing a 150% rent increase as part of the rent review due on 29 September 2024, which needs to be clarified and justified. We are awaiting a response from Risdon's following a strong worded email from the previous Clerk who has been dealing with this lease extension for many years.

2. Staffing

The new hours and job descriptions have now commenced for the Asset Co-ordinator and the newly named Enquiries & Community Vehicle Co-ordinator, after the departure of the Admin Support Officer. They are settling into their roles and I will be conducting appraisals next month to ensure that they are comfortable and supported with their workload.

The Deputy Clerk and I are coming to the end of our 6-month probationary period which ends on 30th June 2024. I will be conducting an appraisal with the Deputy Clerk this month and intend to sign contracts for a permanent position. The Personnel Committee will be conducting my appraisal in the next month.

24/05 Reports from the Principal Authority Members:

Somerset Council, County Cllr Davies and to receive questions from the floor.

Somerset County Cllr Davies reported the following:

1: RE OUR RECYCLING SITES,

At this moment I have no further update will seek any info this coming week.

2: STRAY DOG AND KENNELING SERVICE PROVISION by ST GILES KENNELS.

The Somerset wide contract with ST GILES KENNELS will go LIVE on 1st June 2024. The officer has produced a new webpage so the public can report lost or stray dogs. Telephone contact is 01823 490333.

3: 1,000 FIRE-STARTING GAS CANISTERS FOUND IN SOMERSET'S RECYCLING.

As camping season gets underway, Somerset Council and its kerbside collections contractor, SUEZ, are reminding RESIDENTS of the DANGER of putting GAS CANISTERS in their recycling. This year alone, more than 1,000 potential fires from GAS CANISTERS have been avoided, THANKS to the vigilant crews at the material recovery facilities in Taunton and Evercreech.

4: ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION?

If you are already registered and received a poll card for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May, you do not need to take any further action. The deadline to register to vote is MIDNIGHT on Tuesday 18th June. It takes just five minutes to apply online www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. The deadline to apply for postal vote is 5pm Wednesday 19th June 2024. If you have recently turned 18 or move home, it is particularly important that you act to ensure that you registered to vote. If any doubt, you can check with Somerset Council on 0300 123 2224.

5: NEW CONSTITUENCIES IN SOMERSET COUNCIL AREA:

TIVERTON and MINEHEAD: This is the single biggest redrawing of the map, with Somerset and Devon joining up together. The constituency combines the western, more rural end of the current Bridgwater area West Somerset seat, including Minehead and Watchet, most of Exmoor National Park and the entirety of the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty(AONB) It also crosses the Devon boundary to include Tiverton and the surrounding villages, part of the former Tiverton and Honiton constituency.

6: OPEN HOUSE AT RAINBOW WAY, MINEHEAD.

The first home in Somerset Council's Rainbow Way Minehead is nearly finished-and ready to open doors to prospective tenants. A special Open House event is being held on Tuesday 18th June from 2pm-5pm. Visitors should enter the new development Located the end of Rainbow Way(TA24 5EQ) to access the property. Watchet is not classed as 'local connection'

7: Please note, Cllr Rosemary Woods and I have agreed that I will cover the even date month and Cllr Woods the odd.

8: Woolavington are to hold a Play inspection course, speak to Cllr Davies if wish to attend.

Questions from the floor:

Cllr Westcott asked – From today it is illegal for Cats not to be microchipped. Who will be enforcing this?

Cllr Davies responded that he was not aware but he will find out from Somerset Council.

Cllr Whetlor thanked Cllr Davies for his report.

24/06 Reports from Representatives of Outside Organisations, Verbal

Cllr Murphy as WTC representative for **WACET** gave the following report:

- At the Full Council meeting last month I reported on the WACET AGM held on 7 May 2024 which only 7 members attended. The constitution was much discussed and the chair, John Richards undertook to go away and look carefully at whether better to adopt a "model" constitution or update the existing one
- Concerned that WACET chair does not think it necessary due to lack of interest in the organisation. It seems that, after the discussion at the AGM about the future of the organisation and its constitution, nothing has happened, and nothing is likely to happen. I think this calls into question the legitimacy of the organisation, how it is being run and what it is for.
- WACET has occupied an important role in the commercial life and vibrancy of Watchet for many years. People still talk of the influence of WACET as exemplified by such as Molly Quint, a former Chair of WACET, and of Sally de Renzi Martin, a former Town Councillor and WACET representative to Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee.
- I think Watchet Town Council should formerly call for the constitution of WACET to be revised so as to be fit for purpose and the organisation to hold an Extraordinary meeting to adopt it and rebuild for the future.

A long discussion ensued. The Chair agreed for this item, if acceptable with the Clerk, to be brought back to the July Full Council meeting for a full discussion as an excluded item.

Cllr Brake as WTC representative for **Market House Museum** gave the following report:

Watchet Market House Museum committee meeting Tuesday 14 May. The Treasurer reported that the finances are strong. The museum has had a visit from Dunster school who are looking to return in June 2024. April visitors were 2830, 535 of which were children. It is also reported that there are 2 new stewards. The annual stewards outing is planned for the 18 October with Sherbourne in Dorset the favoured destination. In late July 2024, there is to be an exhibition on the Balmoral currently moored in Bristol. The Museum has been asked to do an exhibit which will be on the theme of Watchet's link to Bristol via the Bristol Channel. The next committee meeting will be held on the 11 June in the Holy Cross Chapel.

24/07 **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)
None

24/08 **Reports from Working Groups and appointed representatives:** - Any relevant paperwork will be issued prior to the meeting:

a. **Watchet Library – Update and recommendations**
Nothing to report

b. **Wheeled Park – Update and recommendations**
Nothing to report

c. **Climate Change- Update and recommendations on de-carbonisation action plan**
Nothing to report

d. **Watchet Task Force – Update and recommendations**

Cllr Murphy in the absence of the WTF Chair reported the following:

- Last meeting held on 14th May.
- Received a grant application from Back Yard Theatre, £2000 granted for an event in October.
- Social media campaign funding coming to an end – Cllr Murphy proposed that '**an item be put on the R&T agenda to explore options for its continuation**'. Seconded by Cllr Moss. Carried
- Flowers originally funded by WTF – Cllr Murphy proposed that '**an item be put on the R&T agenda to discuss the WTF floral displays being funded by WTC**'. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.
- Inform Council the Feria, Urban Design will be conducting the second stage of consultation at the Community Centre on 27th & 28th June. A notice will be published on Social Media to inform the public. WTF will be attending the Street Fair on 23rd June to promote.

e. **EH&S Policies – Update**
Nothing to report

24/09 **Committee Appointments:**

(i) To appoint one member from the Recreation & Tourism Committee onto the Asset Management Committee.

The 4 attending R&T Committee members voted. Cllr Whetlor proposed that '**Cllr Richard is appointed on to the Asset Management Committee**'. Seconded by Cllr Brake. Carried.

(ii) To approve Environment & Planning Committee recommendation to appoint Cllr Irven onto the Environment & Planning Committee due to an existing members decision to stand down

Cllr Brake informed members that Cllr Irven attended the May E&P meeting to present the Parsonage Farm development Entran report to members as he was delegated to work with the traffic analysis consultant and to speak at the planning meeting. Cllr Irven was delegated to work with the Clerk on many other projects under the remit of the E&P committee, such as, liaising with Geckoella on the SLA Subsidence reports for WSCP, including receiving confidential reports from SC and ensuring

LHM

they are reported correctly in the public domain, appointed representative of the PFAG, continuing liaison on Cleeve Hill opposition or appeal, and all other EH&S matters relevant to E&P.

Cllr Irven expressed his disappointment not to be reappointed as a member of the E&P committee in light of the work and reports he undertakes for E&P on a continual basis. Cllr Irven expressed a desire to be reinstated on to the committee so he can continue to carry out his ongoing delegated duties for the Committee, which he does not want to continue unless he is reinstated as a full voting member of the Committee.

It was put to the Committee if there were any other members wishing to take on the delegated powers given to Cllr Irven, and this was a resounding no. Cllr Young, at the meeting, offered to stand down from the Committee as she was unaware of the work Cllr Irven was doing and as a new Councillor happy to take a step back this year to learn the roles within Council. This was followed up by an email to the Clerk to reiterate her desire to stand down to offer Cllr Irven a seat on the Committee on this occasion.

A long discussion ensued. Cllr Murphy proposed that **'Cllr Irven is co-opted on to the E&P Committee for the full term with voting rights, and Cllr Young is invited not to stand down as a Committee member'**. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

- 24/10 **Unveiling of War Memorial 10th anniversary:**
- (i) To approve ceremony event (budget to be approved by Asset Management at June meeting) – verbal update by Clerk
The Deputy Clerk updated Committee members that ceremony planning has commenced for Friday 28th June at the War Memorial to celebrate this milestone and remember those no longer with us who were instrumental in having it installed 10 years ago. A discussion ensued. Cllr Johnson proposed that **'Council approve the ceremony event and the Deputy Clerk is delegated to organise and call upon help if required'**. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried with 1 abstention.
- 24/11 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023-24:**
- (i) To approve section 1 'Annual Governance Statement 2023-24' – (See Clerks report – **Appendix 3a**) – circulated to members prior to the meeting.
The Clerk updated the committee. A discussion ensued. Cllr Johnson proposed that - **'Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2023- 2024 be approved and duly signed'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried. Cllr Murphy, as Chair of F&S commended the Clerk on her first ever AGAR. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor.
- 24/12 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023-24:**
- (i) To approve section 2 'Accounting Statements 2023-24'- (See Clerks report - **Appendix 3b**) – circulated to members prior to the meeting.
Cllr Whetlor proposed that - **'Section 2 Accounting Statement 2023- 2024 be approved and duly signed'**. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.
- 24/13 **Councillor Surgeries** – update from Councillors who attended the Surgery held on Saturday 1st June 2024 and any matters arising
Members noted that there was no attendance, for the second month in a row.
- 24/14 **Community Ownership Fund:**
- (i) Potential bid by Watchet Town Council (WTC) and Watchet War Memorial Ground Management Committee (WWMGMC) – update by Cllr Irven if required
Cllr Irven reported the following:
- I had prepared and submitted the draft application, business plan and more than 20 appendices, totalling 370 pages, to the COF bid advisor (Locality) by Friday 24th May. They have been supporting us via our £10k support programme to make the bid as robust as possible. The aim had been to review with Locality any remaining deficiencies and insert any improvements they may advise in time to finally submit in the 2nd and final window of phase 4. However, at 00.00 25th May the COF fund issued the following announcement. "We have now entered a pre-election period. There will be no further Community Ownership Fund announcements at this time." We, and those expecting to have heard the result of awards in the first window of phase 4, asked for further clarification, and today received the following "The Support Programme's understanding of this statement is that no decisions will be made about the Community Ownership Fund (including whether applications for Round 4, window 1 will be addressed or whether Round 4, window 2 will go ahead) until a new government is in place and operational. The support package that has been approved for your project can still be honoured and the remaining support days can be completed to help progress your project to become investment ready. We can review how best to use the remaining support days with your group." So, nothing will be clear until after the election, but we will continue to finalise our bid package with Locality in the meantime and have a session scheduled for 11 June. The window for submission in phase 2 did not open as scheduled as a result of the decision so we are not currently able to submit even when our bid is finalised. If the new government decides not to continue, however, it will be extremely disappointing, but even more so for those expecting to have heard already about their adjudicated bids submitted in window 1 of phase 4, which were due to have been announced by 25th and have been scuppered by the election announcement. All because of an early surprise election call

- Memorial Committee gained quotes on drainage issues by pavilion/grounds shed, also by football club over £11k. Cllr Whetlor and Richards declared an interest this stage as members of the Memoria Ground Management Committee.

Cllr Whetlor thanked Cllr Irven.

24/15 **Somerset Council Budget cuts:**

(i) Updates if required

Cllr Whetlor informed Council that Bill Revans is keen to meet Councils. Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'the Clerk contact Bill Revans to invite him to meet Watchet Town Council'**. Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

24/16 **CCTV:**

(i) To approve set up of WTC CCTV working Group – *report and recommendation from Cllr Richards*
Cllr Richards verbally presented his report, as follows:

With the current financial situation at Somerset Council and the fact that the Watchet CCTV set up has at least one faulty camera that has not yet been repaired, I am concerned for the security of residents and the town. County Council have said they will keep CCTV within their remit and have put Jonathon Stevens in charge. However, they have no money to repair any items from what I can see.

Previous meetings have asked that County Council meet with us, but as of now, now official response has been received. It is quite possible that local CCTV will be offered to Town Councils in the future and we need to be prepared, if this were to happen. We also need to insist that the County Council keep the CCTV in fully working order, replace the camera that they should not have removed at Goviers Lane and to update any policies on viewing the data, data protection and access to the recordings for evidential purposes. The CCTV for Watchet has sadly been almost "put to the bottom of the pile" and this is really not good enough for Watchet. The CCTV working party should be reconvened to examine the current situation, work with County Council to get the equipment fully functioning and to ensure all legal requirements are met. Whilst this could all be done by the clerk, it is a serious amount of work, requiring technical knowledge and a working party would be the ideal way to save office time and investigate everything fully.

Recommendation:-

Watchet Town Council's CCTV working group be reconvened with the remit to research the current position with County Council, check compliance with current legislation, research costings for the future and prepare a report for full council to discuss.

The Clerk, prior to the meeting, circulated the report to members and advised the following: The Clerk and Officers have been in continuous communication with Jonathan Stevens, Somerset Council to establish a collaborative approach to the CCTV operation in Watchet and this is ongoing, I would recommend that there is not a need for an additional group to take on this role at this stage.

A discussion ensued. Cllr Richards proposed that **'his recommendation as presented is approved'**. With no seconder the motion fell. Cllr Whetlor proposed that **'the Clerks recommendation to refrain from a working group at this stage due to ongoing correspondence is approved with a nominated member of Council to assist the Clerk'**. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

Cllr Moss proposed that **'Cllr Richards is nominated to assist the Clerk'**. Seconded by Cllr Whetlor. Not carried

With the permission of the proposer and seconder of the original carried motion, Cllr Irven made a substantive proposal that **'Cllr Whetlor's original proposal is amended to include that the Clerk is delegated to continue ongoing communication with Unitary Council and able to call upon assistance from any members of Council she requires'**. Seconded by Cllr Murphy. Carried. With 2 against and 1 abstention.

24/17 **Matters of Correspondence for Report** - Correspondence is addressed daily and filed - *The Clerk will report on any relevant correspondence.*

- The Clerk advised that a letter had been received by a resident regarding WTC organising a Hustings. A discussion ensued. Cllr Westcott proposed that **'contact is made with the resident to inform that this Council must remain apolitical and as such cannot host or have involvement with or undertake a Hustings'**. Seconded by Cllr Richards. Carried.
- Invitation for the Chair to Ashley Cain Sponsored Kayak for Leukaemia – Members noted.

24/18 **Accounts for payment:**

(i) to approve the May schedule (paid in June) – *The schedule circulated to all members prior to the meeting for their consideration.*

Cllr Johnson proposed that **'the May Accounts for payment are approved, signed and duly paid'**. Seconded by Cllr Campbell. Carried.

(ii) to approve all payments made outside of Full Council meetings (May - June) - *The schedule circulated to all members prior to the meeting for their consideration.*

Cllr Richards proposed that **'the payments of accounts made outside of Full Council meetings (May-June) are approved'**. Seconded by Cllr Johnson. Carried.

24/19 To note **Matters for the next meeting** – no discussion or decisions made

LAJ

- Internal Audit report and payment
- WACET concerns
- Liaise with Clerk

Meeting closed at 8.26pm

Signed L.A. Whetcor

Date 8th July 2024