



## WILLITON PARISH COUNCIL

2 Killick Way  
Williton  
Taunton  
Somerset  
TA4 4PY

Chairman: Cllr Peter Payne  
Clerk: Mrs Michelle Francis

Tel: 01984 633979  
Email: [clerk@willitonpc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@willitonpc.org.uk)  
[www.willitonparishcouncil.org](http://www.willitonparishcouncil.org)

14<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Cllr Bill Revans  
Leader  
Somerset Council

Dear Cllr Revans

### Williton Recycling Centre

On behalf of Williton Parish Council I am writing to object and raise concerns regarding the potential closure of Williton Household Recycling Centre. Williton is a highly deprived area, and we urge Somerset Council to reconsider.

Whilst the financial crisis within Somerset Council is recognised by Williton Parish Council, which is further impacted by Central Government funding of only 6.1%, which is below the National average, it is felt all the recycling centres are an extremely well-used, statutory public service and should remain open. In addition to the letter written by ourselves and signed by neighbouring Parish and Town Councils, we also wish to raise the following points.

The Parish Council held a public meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024, which was attended by approximately 200 people and 17 local communities were represented over the West Somerset area.

The main reasons for Williton Parish Council's objections are:

1. Fly tipping – concern regarding the inevitable increase and cost for clearing - the countryside and waterways around cannot take an increase in fly-tipping. As ultimately it is the responsibility (in most cases) of Somerset Council and/or The Environment Agency to clear, then this is surely a false economy.
2. The site is used from a wider community, many of whom then shop in Williton, which will have a detrimental effect on the village economy.
3. Greater pressure on other sites if Williton closes, resulting in longer waits and queues, which may discourage recycling.
4. There is current and proposed rapid expansion of housing in Williton and Watchet and infilling in-between. This will have high impact and place added pressure upon the existing infrastructure, including the use of Williton Recycling Centre. Consideration should be given to enlarging the centre rather than closing it.

5. There is only one road between Williton and Minehead. With the closure of the coast road between Blue Anchor and Watchet there is no alternative for emergency vehicles other than to use the A39 for access and egress to Minehead. Large vehicles often cause tail-backs as they are unable to pass each other at the pinch points of Washford and Carhampton. This is exacerbated on the days that Butlins are checking-in/out visitors (Mondays and Fridays). If the cessation of the No.28 bus service goes ahead then even more traffic would be using this congested road and burning fossil fuels. How does this dovetail with Somerset Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency?
6. Adverse effect on disabled people with mobility issues, currently they are unable to use Minehead Recycling Centre as it has a small parking area and steep metal steps to access the bins; whereas at Williton disabled parking is spacious with a sloped access to the main bins.
7. Increasing the carbon footprint of having to travel further and possibly queue (with engines running) for longer times at other centres.

Within the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Guide 2018, it states:

*The NACAS recommendations for minimum levels of HWRC provision:*

- *Maximum catchment radii of three miles in urban areas and seven miles in rural areas covering a great majority of residents.*
- *Maximum driving times to a site for the great majority of residents of 20 minutes in urban areas and 30 minutes in rural areas; though preferably less than this by the order of 10 minutes in each case.*

Neither of these recommendations would be met for those who use the Williton Recycling centre.

Questions raised at the Public Meeting are listed below, we would appreciate a response to each please, so we can relay this information.

1. Is it not appropriate to consider capacity and road traffic management considerations as being the primary driver for determining closure rather than number of visits per site, given it's likely all visits from both centres will have to be accommodated by whichever site remains?
2. If only one site remains will this remaining site have the combined opening time of both sites?  
Please be good enough to disclose the impact statement of the research Somerset Council must have done, prior to arbitrarily publicising the potential closure of the Williton recycling facility.
3. How many additional vehicles will travel to Minehead per day especially in the summer when Butlins is the cause of mayhem on roads never designed for today's volume of traffic?
4. What is the anticipated additional tonnage of carbon pollution from this unnecessarily diverted traffic?
5. What contingency plans have Somerset Council considered would be necessary to police and control the inevitable surge in fly tipping? Who will police such acts? Is Somerset Council prepared for the task of picking up and where there is evidence, prosecuting those responsible for fly tipping? How much has been budgeted, as a contingency, to police and retrieve fly tipping? Is closure a significant "false economy"?

6. This potential closure of Williton recycling will inevitably lead to the public having no choice but to incinerate or activate bonfires on their properties with the result of further pollution and neighbourly disputes and in mid-summer out of control fires and emergency calls to the fire service. What additional impact assessments have been undertaken to consider the environmental harm caused by these fires and the additional cost of dealing with them?
7. If Williton and surrounding area residents are not going to drive to Minehead would Councillors be good enough to advise where they think all this recycling rubbish will be ending up. Given the 100's of new houses about to be built in and around Williton and Watchet the amount of recycling and green waste is likely to increase considerably.
8. Recyclable material being put inappropriately into kerbside refuse bins will increase the volume of those collections. Has the additional costs of increased kerbside recycling and refuse collections been taken into account?
9. Farmers and landowners will have to bear the substantial cost for removal of additional fly-tipping from private land in the event of any closure of recycling centres. Is this fair and reasonable?

We would implore you to consider possible solutions, which could include:

1. Altering running operations, including opening times, types of waste accepted, selling goods from site (please see Hampshire County Council current consultation – looking at ways to keep sites open and increase revenue)
2. Williton site and neighbouring sites on each side is owned by Somerset Council. This gives great opportunity for expansion to allow for a one-way system, a pedestrian access, greater storage areas and opportunities for increasing waste recycling.

These are initial comments from Williton Parish Council, and we reserve the right to further comment.

I will look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely



Clr Peter Payne  
Chairman  
Williton Parish Council

cc: Ian Liddell-Grainger MP; Cllr Leyshon; Cllr Darch; Cllr Davies; Cllr Woods; Somerset Council Executive Members; Mr Duncan Sharkey, Chief Executive; Cllr Ashton; Cllr Chilcott; Cllr Fothergill; Chard Parish Council, Crewkerne Parish Council, Castle Cary Parish Council, Dulverton Town Council