

**Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 2pm – 3:30pm**

**Watchet Visitors Centre**

**Attendees:**

Members

James Burnell (JB)

Chris Danby (CD)

Cllr Hugh Davies (HD)

Matthew Driscoll (MD)

Naomi Griffith (NG)

David Mainwaring (DM)

John Richards (JR)

Cllr Loretta Whetlor (LW)

Steve Yeandle (SY)

Royal Yachting Association

Watchet Boat Owners' Association

Somerset Council

The Marine Group

Onion Collective

Watchet Sea Scouts Group

Watchet Association of Commerce,  
Environment and Tourism (WACET)

Watchet Town Council

Watchet Charter Boatmen's Association

Somerset Council Officers

Keith Badsey (KB)

Craig Butler (CB)

Dave Coles (DC)

Emily Glover (EG)

Jonathan Stevens (JS)

Jessica Tyson (JT)

**Apologies:**

Martin Stevens

Watchet Boat Owners' Association

**Note taker:** Emily Glover

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>1. Apologies</b>	Martin Stevens. Chris Danby attended as Watchet Boat Owners' Association representative.
<b>2. Appointment of Chair (and Vice Chair if required)</b>	Cllr Loretta Whetlor was voted as Chair of the Committee. Martin Stevens was voted as Vice Chair of the Committee.
<b>3. Minutes and actions of the previous meeting</b>	<u>Previous minutes</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EG to add which organisations members represent to the beginning of the minutes, expand abbreviated names and include the 22/23 dredging budget figure.</li> <li>• EG to ensure previous meet minutes are available on Somerset Council's website.</li> </ul> <p><u>Previous actions</u> All actions completed or to be covered in the following items.</p>
<b>4. Election of a representative to Harbour Management Committee</b>	Item postponed.
<b>5. Governance of the Advisory Committee under The Watchet Harbour Revision Order 2000 (Article 36) and new proposed Terms of Reference</b>	<p>JR asked for the guidance within The Watchet Harbour Revision Order 2000 (Article 36) to be revisited. JR added that this guidance should be followed when making appointments to the Committee. JR also highlighted that Somerset Council shall consult on all matters that involve the harbour and asked for a single point of contact for Somerset Council.</p> <p>Members discussed the draft Terms of Reference and agreed on amendments required. JR would make amendments and send to the Chair and EG. LW asked for any further comments to be directed to herself and they would be passed on to EG.</p> <p>Members agreed that minutes should be sent to the Chair as soon as possible following the meeting then circulated to members. Revisions should be sent via email to the Chair within 48 hours. Any amendments will then be made and the minutes made publicly available.</p> <p>KB informed members that the governance structure was being set up for the four ports. The Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee would be deemed a stakeholder group and representation would attend the Harbour Management Committee (HMC). This would be replicated across the other three ports under Somerset Council. Recommendations made at stakeholder groups would be brought to HMC for approval, then brought to the Executive for final approval. All decisions would be subject to the normal scrutiny process Somerset Council follows.</p>
<b>6. Port Marine Safety Code matters</b>	<p>KB provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty Holder training had been conducted for the Executive of Somerset Council, which included legislation for the four ports. Due to some changes to</li> </ul>

	<p>Executive members, more training was required. Port visits were being arranged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Designated Person had been appointed to the four harbours.</li> <li>• An inspection was completed at Trinity House, all was found to be in order.</li> <li>• Maintenance was required to three beacons at Blue Anchor.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Health and safety incidents</b></p>	<p>KB updated that there had been more incidents of people fishing in the harbour entrance and asked for incidents to be reported to <a href="mailto:Harbourmaster@somerset.gov.uk">Harbourmaster@somerset.gov.uk</a>. The reporting process could be included on member organisations' websites if appropriate.</p> <p>Options being investigated to manage fishing in the harbour entrance included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing wire cables from the lighthouse to prevent people fishing. Discussions were needed with the conservation society.</li> <li>• Introducing a Public Space Protection Order to allow on the spot fines to be issued. To be approved at Somerset Council committees, incident reports would be needed as evidence.</li> <li>• Extending the powers of General Direction, which could allow court action to be taken. This would take several years to be in place.</li> </ul> <p>Committee members discussed the issue of fishing and abuse being directed at the Sea Scouts. The introduction of a car barrier in front of the marina to prevent unauthorised vehicles on the pier was discussed. NG raised concerns over the appearance and atmosphere of the pier being affected by a barrier. Alternative placement of the barrier was discussed.</p> <p>CD highlighted that swimming season was nearing and raised concern that someone may be injured if swimming near harbour entrance.</p>
<p><b>8. Harbour matters</b></p>	<p>KB advised that Somerset Council has an obligation to maintain depths in the outer harbour, with DC adding that the dredging budget has been reduced based on what was spent the previous year.</p> <p>Discussion took place around the infrastructure of the harbour and areas of concern. JS confirmed that the responsibility for the Harbour and Marina infrastructure falls under Regulatory and Operational Services within Somerset Council. Areas of concern included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural damage to the esplanade/marina shared wall due to plants. JR advised the plants needed to be removed at the roots this summer. JT confirmed that Somerset Council are aware of the need to remove the roots and repoint as appropriate.</li> <li>• The impounding wall in the middle of the harbour and the need for regular pressure testing. JT and MD to liaise regarding plans for the impounding wall.</li> <li>• LW asked members to send any relevant historical information on the harbour's infrastructure to JT to allow forward planning.</li> </ul> <p>JT reassured members that a reputable company had visited the harbour to determine the works that were required, and an in-depth survey would be undertaken.</p> <p>LW had received a complaint from a member of the public about the lights on the West Pier not being on at night. CB confirmed the lights can trip on big tides.</p> <p>CB provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety navigation checks have continued</li> <li>• The ladders, fenders and tidal gauge were being looked at</li> <li>• The electrics on the East Pier may be upgraded as the solar panels do not get sufficient light.</li> <li>• The slipway had been cleaned with marine-friendly algae cleaner. Continuing to monitor.</li> <li>• Safety warnings were being given to children about swimming in the harbour entrance.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Marina matters</b>	<p>MD answered questions on the marina:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CD asked when the electrical checks were last done in the marina. MD advised the last check was 2017. A copy of up-to-date insurance is on display in the marina office.</li> <li>• The Marine Group's Health and Safety Officer is aware about the need for Port Marine Safety Code compliance.</li> </ul> <p>JS provided an update on the marina lease:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing lease arrangement remains in place. The option for The Marine Group to compulsory purchase remains.</li> <li>• The new lease is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2023. Somerset Council had seen a letter of comfort from funders confirming their intention to complete. Currently awaiting the refinancing deal to be</li> </ul>

	<p>completed and to see the schedule of completion, which is expected in the next week. The renegotiated lease remains in abeyance until The Marine Group arranges the finances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JS confirmed that the new lease is an operating lease, which specifies reasonable levels of dredging must be undertaken. JS advised the new lease would allow stronger enforcement and monitoring.</li> </ul> <p>Members discussed their concerns with the marina which included its operation, enforcement and the welfare of staff.</p>
<b>10. Harbour site visit for Duty Holders and Councillors</b>	<p>KB advised that site visits were being arranged.</p>
<b>11. Date of next Harbour Management Committee meeting</b>	<p>To be confirmed by DC.</p>
<b>12. Date of next Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee meeting</b>	<p>To be confirmed once the dates were set for the HMC.</p>