

MINEHEAD AND WATCHET – HIGHWAYS SUB-GROUP

WEST SOMERSET HOUSE 10.00am – 1.00pm

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Attendees

Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker	Carhampton Parish Council
Cllr Loretta Whetlor	Watchet Town Council
Cllr Rosemary Woods	Somerset Council
Cllr Tony Brooks	Crowcombe Parish Council
Cllr Marilyn Crothers	Nettlecombe Parish Council
Cllr Ian Duncan	Old Cleeve Parish Council
Cllr Mark Philipson	West Quantoxhead Parish Council
Cllr Peter Payne	Williton Parish Council
Kali Martin	Highways Supervisor – Somerset Council
Kevin Bridgwater	Highways Supervisor – Somerset Council
Katherine Tyson	Highways – Somerset Council
Ryan Chamberlain	Highways – Somerset Council
Sam Murrell	Link Officer – Somerset Council
Pippa Hughes	Link Officer – Somerset Council

Introductions

Each Attendee introduced themselves.

Apologies

Cllr Andy Sully (Somerset Council), Kevin Francis (Williton & District Business Association), Cllr Mandy Chilcott (Somerset Council), Jon Richards (WACET), Andrew Turner, Highways Somerset Council, Bev Norman – Highways Traffic Management, Somerset Council.

Election of Chairperson

Sam Murrell – Link Officer, Somerset Council started the duty of asking the Members of the Highways Subgroup to elect a Chair.

Cllr Loretta Whetlor nominated Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker.

Cllr Ian Duncan – Old Cleeve Parish Council seconded this nomination.

Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker nominated Cllr Ian Duncan who announced that at this time he did not have capacity to take on the role.

Cllr Peter Payne- Willtion Parish Council spoke to the group and informed the group how mindful he was at the workload for such an appointee that could we possibly nominate Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker for this first inaugural meeting and once priority issues had been raised then at the second Highways Subgroup a Chair could be appointed.

It was agreed that for the first inaugural meeting that Cllr Brenda Maitland Walker would Chair temporarily and at the second meeting a Substantive/Permanent Chair would be appointed/elected.

It was also agreed a Vice Chair should be appointed to cover sickness, absence and for continuity.

To be on the Agenda for the second meeting.

Highway Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

Sam Murrell had circulated a draft copy of proposed Terms of Reference which Brenda had produced which mirrored that of the Exmoor Highways Sub-Group. These Terms of Reference were duly agreed by the group.

These to be ratified at the next full LCN meeting.

Highway Steward Presentation Q&A – Andrew Turner

Andrew Turner could not attend the inaugural meeting of the Minehead and Watchet Highways Subgroup. Senior Colleagues spoke in Andrew's absence.

There was a consensus of all the Members present that the Highway Steward Scheme had been heavily advertised via the Minehead and Watchet Local Community Network and the following concerns / questions were raised.

There was a general concern within Parishes that if they have a "section" of Highway that is a Priority to that Parish – how does this get conveyed to the neighbouring Parishes who have the same Highway in their Parish and how is the cost divided fairly and professionally.

After a lengthy discussion on the Highways Steward Scheme it was agreed that paying for a steward was not feasible financially Parishes, even if this was split between one or more LCN areas, but they were open to the possibility of being able to buy individual services, and this could be revisited once a full price list has been produced and Highways agreed to circulate this once printed.

Highways & Transport

Structural Maintenance Project 2024/2025 ~ Minehead and Watchet

LCN Link Officer Sam Murrell presented on screen the Structural Maintenance Projects for 2024/2025 for Minehead and Watchet.

A copy of the programme to be attached.

Actions

1. To create a template letter that Towns & Parishes can send out to landowners whose responsibility it is to cut hedges along the roads and pavements.

KBN/KM Highways

2. Highways to re-consider its hedge cutting from 1 cut to 2 swathe height cuts as 1 swathe cut means the top growth overhangs into walkers and cyclists eyes, and it does not meet current guidance i.e., hedges should be cut back to maintain the minimum required clearances for roads and footways:

- 5.2m height clearance for vegetation overhanging roads.
- 2.1m height clearance for vegetation overhanging footpaths.
- 2.5m height clearance for vegetation overhanging cycleways.

KB/KM Highways

3. Print off salt bag locations for circulation at the next meeting. KB/KM Highways

4. Ensure all Members of the LCN receive working papers not just the Clerks.

Somerset Council LCN Officer.

5. Luckes Lane Diversion – Weacombe. A request was made for streetworks to remove the requirement for using this road/route as a diversion.

Traffic Management – Somerset Council

6. To share all relevant emails for easy access to report.

Somerset Council LCN Officer

7. Concern was raised about Highways not commenting on outline planning permissions, and only sending correspondence referring to 'Standing Orders', as many people are not aware what this means. It was felt a copy of the standing orders referred to should be annexed to the correspondence.

The group were informed Planning training was taking place for County Councillors, and that this would be rolled out to Towns & Parishes.

Planning Department - Query whether there is a cost of training.

8. Concern was raised about the B3191 closure. August being the critical time when the current temporary road closure expires. The group asked if someone from the Highways Infrastructure team could attend the next meeting to give an update. WSP produced a survey for Highways in 2020 giving 5 possible options for alternative routes, and the group felt the Council should protect any possible routes from being lost to planning permissions.

Highways Infrastructure team

Next Meeting to be held in May 2024 – Date to be confirmed.