

# WATCHET COASTAL COMMUNITY TEAM NEWSLETTER

February 2023

Welcome to our first newsletter off 2023. A lot has happened since we last met in September including new challenges directly affecting our community, in particular the possible long term closure of the B3191 between Watchet and Blue Anchor. The directors believe that this significant issue requires a united community response led by the Town Council in which the WCCT will play its part supporting the council as appropriate.

## **Revising the PBSA Phase 3 programme**

Some members will recall a meeting held in the Watchet Visitor Centre when the directors presented the bid for PBSA Phase 3 funding to members before it was sent off to Lottery. At the time, several member representatives questioned the inclusion of an apprentice in the bid as an addition to our staffing compliment.

We were awarded the funding partially on the basis of appointing an apprentice to work alongside our Project Officer. Since then, the directors and Project Officer have been examining how to recruit to the position and how to make it work. We all concluded that it was and is not feasible. This meant that we had funding for a post we could no longer support.

We had two choices, either report to Lottery we were unsure how to best use the funding to continue delivering the programme or look at our staffing and put a proposal to Lottery to use the money differently.

We have put a proposal to Lottery which has been accepted. We wanted to share our thoughts with you to hear what you think which will help us refine the process for filling the two positions we will seek to staff.

We want to recruit a reconfigured full time post titled provisionally: "Community Coordinator" and provide a part time position provisionally styled: "Administration and Finance Support".

If you would like to express a view on this and to learn more, please come to our members' meeting on Tuesday 21 February at 7pm in the Phoenix Centre.

## **Trip To Bootle**

Recently, two WCCT Directors, Kate Williams and John Irven, along with Community Car co-ordinator Donna Stevens and Rachel Irven (as Connects Editor) took a long drive up to Bootle (Liverpool) to take part in two days organised by our Lottery funders.

We are one of nine groups who won the Place Based Social Action funding (for community projects stemming from the local communities from which they are generated) eight of which were there to share how their plans are progressing and what each is proud to have achieved. The other groups are from widely varying communities, mostly parts of cities such as London (Hackney), Bristol, Lincoln and Colchester.

Our organisation is quite different from theirs, as we are a small community and mostly volunteers – with only our Project Officer and Transport Co-ordinator being paid staff. All the other groups are being run by paid professionals and in co-operation with large Councils or other similar organisations. Our hosts, Safe Generation in Bootle run a Community Hub in a redundant primary school building

they acquired from the church, and a community Pub (we liked that!) where residents can get together. The Bristol team run a community space, community transport and several programmes for young children and adults and the Colchester team are working towards making Colchester a more dementia friendly place. All the groups have been affected by cost of living increases and higher fuel prices, and there are shared concerns too around making services, information etc accessible to diverse communities.

The Watchet group had an interesting two days. Safe Generation were good hosts and showed them their projects; music studio and technology; a brewery; a carpenter working to rehabilitate ex drug and alcohol abusers; street art – all along a part of the canal they have ‘adopted’ and the site where they hope to build their new Community Hub building when the old school building is redeveloped into housing.

Rachel recalled – ‘Bootle is a totally different environment from ours and both have their advantages and disadvantages. I found it interesting to think about Watchet while being away– it made me realise the parts of the community I treasure and helped me to get some perspective.’

Donna said, ‘After being in the company of seven other community groups I’ve come away feeling so inspired to do more for our community and proud to be a very small part of it already! Listening to each group and hearing what they’ve achieved with some very sad and eye-opening stories from within their communities was thought provoking. How they all come together from all walks of life to help each other is inspirational.’

We have plans to visit other groups and explore ideas that we could try and instigate here. All our peers and Lottery were very impressed with what we have achieved in Watchet.



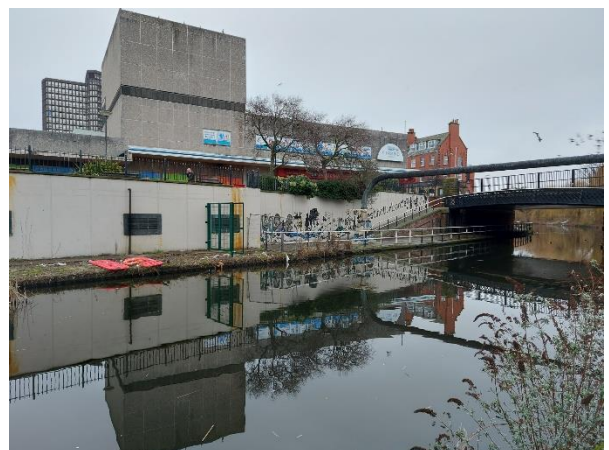
Wall Art



Carpentry workshop



Area for new community hub



Canal Side



Community pub and Burns night event

### **Car charger at number 7**

The good news is the electric car charger on the Esplanade has been repaired (many thanks to Mark Mossman). Following two bouts of vandalism which has meant the unit has been out of action for over 5 months in total over the last year, causing lots of consequential hassle, we have relocated it from the side wall to the front of the building so that it will be covered by the 24 hour cctv camera system on the Esplanade run by Somerset West & Taunton and Watchet Town Councils. The unit has been contained within a lockable steel box such that it cannot be accessed and hopefully these measures will ensure that no further damage is occasioned. A supervised test has shown that the unit is working successfully and the redesigned system validated. We have to finalise procedures for using and locking the new cabinet, and update users on their operation, but hopefully by the time you read this it should be up and running again.



### **WCCT CIC Website**

The new WCCT CIC website has been launched and can be accessed via this link <https://watchetcct.co.uk/>. As we owned the original domain name, we were able to secure its transfer from John Richards' web hosting company to be managed from now on by our designer, Alistair Whitely Web design and Creative media. After training and familiarisation we will be able to edit this and add material ourselves, as well as rationalising our email addresses for company contacts.



## **Learns Update.**

January saw the start of workshops provided by Somerset Skills & Learning (SS&L) and hosted by WCCT. The courses have been created from the results of a survey completed towards the end of last year. Local people were asked what courses they would like to see in the area, and we had a great response. Subjects like wellbeing, environmental awareness and art were top of the list. WCCT worked with Catherine Dance from SS&L, and organiser of the WSR Spooktacular, to create 6 months of workshops. To make sure we're reaching as many people as possible in Watchet we're now helping the cookery tutor get into local schools and toddler groups. SS&L and WCCT continue to work closely while we are looking for opportunities to host our own workshops. If all goes well, you'll see a range of workshops continuing through this year into next. It's been hard work from a lot of people to bring these workshops to Watchet and we hope you'll continue to support us in providing more in the future.