



# WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

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## COUNCIL MEETING

You are summoned to attend a meeting of Wellington Town Council to be held remotely by ZOOM meeting on **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020** at 7.00 pm.

*Members of the public are cordially invited to join this meeting and should contact the Town Clerk prior to the meeting to request joining instructions.*

Due to Coronavirus (Covid-19) measures Wellington Town Council is conducting its meetings until further notice using 'ZOOM' technology. Members of the press and public who wish to attend this remote meeting will be given an access code to enable them to join. A device such as a mobile telephone, laptop or computer will be required.

Please contact the Clerk on 07983 697740 or [kathryn@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:kathryn@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk) to request joining instructions. Members of the public who wish to have the opportunity to address the council will need to advise the Clerk in writing by no later than 12 noon on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Kathryn Hemensley  
Town Clerk  
07983 697740  
[kathryn@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:kathryn@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk)

**1. TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**2. TO RECEIVE A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE PETER HORSFORD**

Former Town Councillor for many years, as well as serving on Taunton Deane Borough Council, including as Taunton's Mayor, Peter Horsford sadly died in late May of this year. The Mayor will lead a tribute.

**3. TO NOTE AND AGREE APOLOGIES FOR THE MEETING**

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive declarations of personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Standing declarations made by Councillors are set out at the end of the agenda.

**5. MINUTES**

To approve and formally adopt the minutes of Council Planning and full Council meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 (copies attached).

**6. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT FROM THE MAYOR**

**7. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM**

A report has been requested for verbal presentation by the Chairman or Clerk to the meeting.

**8. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING CHANGES ARISING FROM THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

**9. TO REVIEW PLANNING MATTERS**

(a) To receive a summary of Councillor feedback on recent planning applications submitted to Somerset West and Taunton Council and referred to the Town Council. Due to Coronavirus restrictions applications since mid-March have been circulated electronically for comment and a collective response sent to Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT).

(b) To consider reinstating the Council's planning meeting, and if agreed, to set a date for the next meeting.

**10. TO REVIEW COUNCIL DECISIONS MADE ELECTRONICALLY SINCE MID MARCH**

At an emergency meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March, held as a result of impending 'lockdown' due to the Coronavirus pandemic the Council made several proposals that were subsequently approved by full Council. This included electronic voting for decisions about the Council's affairs. A summary report is attached.

**11. TO RECEIVE THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 2019 – 2020 OPERATIONAL YEAR**

The Council's annual report, jointly prepared by the Clerk and Mayor, is attached for consideration and approval.

## **12. TO DISCUSS THE MANAGEMENT OF FUTURE LONGFORTH FARM ALLOTMENTS**

The Longforth Farm Development agreement requires the developer, Bloor Homes, to provide allotments, originally intended to be managed by the District Council. The plot size will be 0.66 hectares. SWT have since taken the decision to no longer manage allotments and has approached the Town Council to propose that we take ownership and management of this amenity. An informal waiting list exists. In principle agreement to manage is sought from the Council, and if agreed the Deputy Clerk will join a working party with Bloor and SWT representatives to progress negotiations. There is no timescale yet but the process is triggered by the building of 400 homes, and around 350 have now been completed.

In making the decision certain considerations should be noted :-

- Allotments, although a land asset, result in an overall cost to the Council as management time and actual expenditure is not covered by the modest annual rental charges.
- The allotments are obligatory and therefore will be created – who is best placed to manage them?
- There are long waiting lists for the Council's allotments at the Basins and the informal list for Longforth Farm (about 20 on each). Demand has increased during lockdown.

Negotiations with the developer are at an early stage so there is the opportunity to influence outcomes. For example, there is no stipulation as to how many plots should be created within the designated area, nor any requirement on the developer to create the divisions. It should also be noted that there is no provision in the Section 106 agreement for a financial sum to be paid with the transfer of the allotments to the Council. There is also an issue around the provision of water. It is therefore recommended that this Council, if giving in principle agreement, should proceed with caution, retaining the option to decline management if the final product is not viable due to costs, or staffing resources to manage the process.

## **13. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To present to Councillors any written submissions received in advance of the meeting from members of the public.

## **14. TO FURTHER CONSIDER THE RECENT ADVISEMENT OF A POSSIBLE UNITARY AUTHORITY FOR SOMERSET AND SEEK COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT**

Following the presentation to Councillors at their March meeting by the Leader of Somerset County Council (SCC), plans to seek a unitary authority are progressing and SCC have entered a public consultation phase. Councillors have been invited to reply to the consultation as individuals due to disparate views. Following the circulation of a SALC/SLCC report and feedback request forwarded to Councillors on 9<sup>th</sup> June, further discussion is required to enable the Town Council to agree its direction going forward, and to enable a collective response. The report and feedback form are attached.

## **15. TO DECIDE GRANT APPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Wellington Community Counselling**

A grant has been received from Wellington Counselling CIC requesting £6,000 to support their work in providing free and low-cost counselling to local children. The organisation has also been providing free online counselling to key workers during the Coronavirus pandemic. The Council granted this organisation funding of £6,000 in the previous financial year.

The application form has been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting.

**(b) Review of Feedback from the 2019-2020 financial year Grant recipients.**

As the Council's Annual meeting did not go ahead it was not possible to have feedback at the time from recipients of grants in the last financial year. Instead organisations were contacted in writing with a request for an update of how their funding was put to use and the benefits to the town and its residents. A summary report is attached.

**16. POP UP SHOP**

Staff have carried out a full review of the documents and management arrangements for the shop. These have been previously circulated to Councillors. We are currently bringing the shop in line with Coronavirus guidelines and the intention is to re-open for business from the 13<sup>th</sup> July. Councillors are asked to formally approve the revised documentation, reviewed hiring costs, and increase in the deposit taken at booking. Delegated authority is also sought for staff to be able to refund deposits and take care of day-to-day management arrangements.

**17. TO REVIEW COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON AND GIVE CONSIDERATION TO THIS AND FUTURE YEAR'S CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

(a) Somerset West and Taunton Council's costs for Christmas 2019 were finalised as £22,738 net of VAT. Other costs of £6,195 related to the hire of Christmas lights, public address system, refreshments and roundabout hire. Councillors resolved to discuss these costs as part of reviewing the event. It should be noted that the former 3-year contract for the hire of Christmas lights is now ended. It had originally been planned to seek a new contract for a different set of lights but this had to be put on hold due to the Coronavirus situation.

(b) There remains an ongoing problem with defective light fittings and timers – many of which do not actually belong to the Town Council – which resulted in Christmas lights being on at different times last year. A report with costings has been requested from SWT, the plan having been to carry out repairs during this summer. However, the impact of Coronavirus on the Council workforce has further complicated matters.

(c) The future of public events for the rest of the year remains uncertain, but tentative discussion could now be helpful. Particularly if the Council wishes to have a different format or range of Christmas activities.

**18. TO CONSIDER ADDING A NAME TO WELLINGTON'S WAR MEMORIAL COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE**

A request has been received from the acting Head of Court Fields school to add the name of Private Eleanor Dlugosz to the town's commemoration to service men and women who have fallen in action. In summary:-

*Eleanor, a former student of Court Fields School was killed whilst on active duty in Iraq in 2004. Previous rules appear to have prevented the name of a fallen member of the armed forces to be added to one memorial and Eleanor's name is on a memorial in Hampshire where her mother lived in 2004. It has been suggested that this ruling has now changed, hence the request. Court Fields, as her former secondary school, feel it would be most fitting to have her name added. Eleanor was local to Wellington for many years before she and her family left the area, and the addition of her name to the memorial would be supported by the many local people who still remember her.*

**19. TO REVIEW COUNCIL OPERATIONS AND CONSIDER FUTURE CORONAVIRUS-RELATED ARRANGEMENTS**

With the social situation changing at pace, discussion will be helpful in reviewing the Council's plans for the near future, particularly relating to the work of its committees and working parties, and suspended operations.

**20. TO NOTE AND APPROVE FINAL YEAR END ACCOUNTS FOR 2019 – 2020**

In readiness for completion of the audit of last year's financial statements Councillors are asked to approve final accounts for the year end, as adjusted for this and last year's debtors, creditors and any re-coding of expenditure. A spreadsheet detailing the final year end accounts and summarising changes to the accounts previously presented as at 31 March 2020 is attached.

**21. TO REVIEW AND APPROVE NEW COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

A suite of Committee TOR is being created/reviewed so that each Council Committee or working party has a reference point for the scope of its operation, and clear instruction on its delegated authority to incur expenditure in line with its specified aims without first seeking approval from the Council.

Councillors are asked to review and approve the attached TOR: -

- (a) Environment and Open Spaces Committee
- (b) Allotments Committee
- (c) Community Safety Committee.

The Finance Committee Terms of Reference will be discussed at a future Council meeting.

**22. TO CONSIDER A TOWN COUNCIL BENCH FOR THE BASINS**

Although the Council has not agreed what benches to purchase and install this year, the offer of a donated bench is expected. This was due to be fitted in a local beauty spot, but this is no longer possible. A proposal has been made to accept the bench and to install it at a location at the Basins (an alternative beauty spot), at a location to be agreed with the Wellington Basins Volunteer group. Councillors are asked to review this request.

**23. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE MONTHLY ACCOUNTS TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2020**

The monthly accounting statements comprising cash book entries for the month and the accounts for the year-to-date are attached.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Members of Somerset County Council:**

Councillor Andrew Govier  
Councillor James Hunt  
Councillor John Thorne

**Members of Somerset West and Taunton Council:**

Councillor Janet Lloyd  
Councillor Andrew Govier  
Councillor Mark Lithgow  
Councillor Ross Henley  
Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams  
Councillor Marcus Barr  
Councillor Chris Booth