

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON 17 OCTOBER 2022 AT 4.00pm

Present: Councillors M Lithgow (Chair) M Barr, A Govier, J Lloyd, M McGuffie and K Wheatley
David Farrow – Town Clerk.

One member of the press was in attendance

298 Apologies

Apologies were received and noted from Councillor J Thorne. Councillor S Booker had emailed his apologies earlier in the afternoon, but this had not been seen at the time of the meeting.

299 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

300 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 8 August 2022.

301 Questions and Comments from Members of the Public

No members of the public were in attendance.

302 To Review the Town Council Complaints Procedure

The Town Council Complaints Procedure was last updated in 2019 and required reviewing as part of the Councils Policy Review timetable. A copy was circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that the Procedure is carried forward.

303 To Review the Town Councils Grievance Procedure

The Town Council Grievance Procedure was adopted in 2019 and required reviewing as part of the Council's Policy Review timetable. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that the amended Procedure is adopted by the Town Council.

304 Refurbishment of Longforth Road Toilet Block

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that a specialist contractor is commissioned to oversee the redesign and construction of the toilet block at Longforth Road.

305 Changes to the Circulation Arrangements of Council Meeting Papers and the Purchase of Council Tablets for Councillors

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that it ceases to provide paper copies of meeting documents to those councillors who give their consent to receiving them electronically and that it purchases tablets on the basis set out in the paper for councillors to access meeting documentation electronically.

306 Proposal to Sponsor Community Award Prizes at Court Fields School

A paper was circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that it sponsors an annual 'Contribution to the Community' prize for a pupil in each year group at Court Fields School and that the prize should consist of a trophy for each year group and a £25 token for Bookshop by the Blackdowns. The Town Clerk was asked to explore extending the offer to Wellington School.

307 Preparation for 2023/24 Budget Setting

The Committee members were asked to needs to consider any items they wish to include in the 23-24 budget and to inform the Town Clerk or Deputy Responsible Financial Officer.

308 To Resolve to Exclude Members of the Press and Public

The Committee **RESOLVED** to exclude members of the press and public for agenda items 12 and 13 in accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

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Councillor Mark Lithgow
Chairman

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 17 OCTOBER 2022
CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

298 CCTV Provision in Wellington

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. After some discussion it was **RESOLVED** that at this time the Committee would not recommend funding the upgrade of the CCTV system in the town and the Town Clerk was asked to seek further information from Sergeant Dan Bishop.

299 Future Community Warden Arrangements

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that the contractual relationship with ID Verde should be reduced to 10 hours per week as soon as possible and that the Town Clerk should develop a formal proposal for the appointment of a Community Warden and an apprentice by the Town Council for consideration at its December meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.40pm.

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Councillor Mark Lithgow
Chairman

CONFIDENTIAL

Wellington Town Council

Health and Safety Statement of General Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This is the statement of general policy for Wellington Town Council. The document has been compiled to provide information and guidance to all employees on this Council's Health and Safety Policy and organisational arrangements for implementation of that policy.

2. STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY

2.1 It is the policy of this Council to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health by managing the health and safety risks in the workplace. The Council will provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure employees are competent to do their work. The Council will engage and consult with employees on day-to-day health and safety conditions. The Council will have and implement emergency procedures, including evacuation in the case of fire or other significant incidents. The Council will maintain safe and healthy working conditions, provide and maintain plant, equipment and machinery, and ensure safe storage and use of substances. The Council also accepts its responsibility for the health and safety of other people who may be affected by its activities.

3. THE ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Town Clerk has overall and final responsibility for ensuring the provision and implementation of the Health and Safety Policy and for its review.

4. DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN THE COUNCIL

4.1 The officer responsible for making the arrangements for health and safety supervision is the Council's Assets and Events Officer. They will be responsible to the Town Clerk for

- Establishing, in consultation with the Town Clerk, arrangements to include safe systems of work and procedures for carrying out the Council's Health and Safety Policy incorporating any regulations, approved codes of practice and other relevant legislation.
- Investigating and reporting accidents/incidents and submitting a report to the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk can allocate another officer as appropriate to conduct further investigations if necessary.
- The Town Clerk will issue instructions to prevent further accidents/incidents and, where appropriate, make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee on accident prevention.
- Monitoring the maintenance of all plant and equipment within their department and to submit reports for replacing equipment that is becoming no longer fit for purpose.
- All employees have the responsibility to cooperate with management to achieve a healthy and safe workplace.

5. TRAINING

5.1 It shall be the responsibility of the Town Clerk to issue all newly appointed staff with a personal copy of the Health and Safety Policy and such supplements as are applicable to his/her duties and responsibilities.

6. CONTRACTORS AND VISITORS

6.1 Where contractors and subcontractors are engaged by the Town Council, they must maintain effective control of themselves and their employees/subcontractors, to ensure that they comply with their responsibilities and duties under the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974.

6.2 The Town Council shall ensure that those not in employment of the Council , including the public and volunteers, are not exposed to risks to their safety or health when on the Council's premises, or in the vicinity of other Council activities.

7. POLICY REVIEW AND MONITORING

7.1 Wellington Town Council will review this policy annually. The policy will also be reviewed in the event of a serious incident within the scope of the policy. The policy arrangements for its implementation will be monitored by means established by the Town Clerk and a report will be made annually to the Town Council.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

IF A COUNCILLOR OR MEMBER OF STAFF HAS CONCERNS ABOUT A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE RELATING TO A CHILD OR ADULT, THEY SHOULD CONTACT SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL ON 0300 123 2244 OR THE POLICE ON 999

1 Introduction

1.1 All organisations have a duty of care for the children and any vulnerable adults whom they provide activities or services. Wellington Town Council is committed to practices that protect children and vulnerable adults from harm and treat them with dignity and respect. At the same time, the Council will protect its staff from the risk of unfounded allegations. Wellington Town Council will seek to ensure that any child or vulnerable adult using Council services or facilities can access them in safety without fear of abuse.

1.2 The Council seeks to implement its policy on child and vulnerable adult protection by:

- Ensuring that all staff, Councillors and volunteers who have regular, direct and unsupervised contact with children and vulnerable adults are carefully selected, including a check with the Criminal Records Bureau, at least two written references, trained and accredited where necessary.
- Ensuring that any Town Council contractors who have regular, direct and unsupervised contact with children have effective policies and procedures in place.
- Giving all the parties involved e.g. parents and the general public, information about what they can expect from the Council in relation to protecting and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensuring that there is a clear complaint procedure in place that can be used if there are any concerns.
- Sharing information about concerns with appropriate agencies that need to know and involving parents and/or carers as appropriate.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all Councillors and staff regardless of whether they have regular contact with children and vulnerable adults.

For the purposes of the policy, a member of staff covers employees including casuals, volunteers, work experience placements and trainees. This policy should also be read in conjunction with other policies in the Council Constitution including the Staff Handbook (particularly the Equality and Diversity, Complaints and Whistleblowing sections), the Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and the Information Policy.

3 Definitions

3.1 For the purposes of the policy, a child is anyone under the age of 18 years. A vulnerable adult is someone who by reason of mental or other disability, age or

illness is unable to take care of themselves or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. An adult for the purposes of this policy is anyone over 18 years of age.

4 Procedures

4.1 These procedures and the following good practice guidelines seek to ensure that all councillors, staff and volunteers have a clear understanding of their responsibilities when working with children and vulnerable adults. The aims of these procedures are to ensure that both Councillors and staff:

- Recognise the signs of abuse and what appropriate course of action should be taken in the circumstances
- Understand the potential risk to themselves and ensure that good practice is Always adhered to.
- Recognise signs of improper behaviour from other Councillors and or staff and report it to the Town Clerk/Monitoring Officer at the earliest opportunity.

5 Good Practice Guidelines

5.1 Everyone working in direct or indirect contact with young people and vulnerable adults must abide by the guidelines noted below. It is possible to reduce situations where abuse may occur and below are specific examples of the care which should be taken when working with children or vulnerable adults

5.2 Councillors and Staff must:

- Be identifiable e.g. wearing Town Council branded clothing or name badges
- Treat all children and people with dignity and respect
- Provide an example for good conduct that others can follow
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour e.g. bullying and report allegations/suspicions of abuse
- Ensure that, when possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children and young people, or at least be within sight or hearing of others
- Respect their right to personal privacy and encourage children and vulnerable adults to feel comfortable enough to point out attitudes or behaviours they do not like
- Remember that someone else might misinterpret certain actions, no matter how well intentioned
- Be aware that any physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult may be misinterpreted
- Recognise that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues with children or vulnerable people
- Always operate within Wellington Town Council's Code of Conduct, principles, guidance, policies and procedures

5.3 Councillors and Staff must not:

- Have inappropriate or unwarranted physical or verbal contact with children or vulnerable people
- Be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour or make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children or vulnerable adults
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise any abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual

- Rely on your good name or that of Wellington Town Council to protect you
- Believe 'it could never happen to me'
- Take a chance when common sense, policy or practice suggests another more prudent approach.

5.4 There may be exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to restrain a child or a vulnerable adult to prevent them from damaging themselves or others. Only the minimum reasonable force necessary may be used. All incidents of physical restraint must be recorded on an incident form and submitted to the Town Clerk, as well as informing the parents and/or carer as soon as possible.

6 Mains Forms of Abuse

- Physical Abuse** This may involve actions such as hitting, shaking and burning as well as the use of inappropriate restraint. Physical abuse, as well as being a deliberate act, can be caused by an omission or failure to act to protect. In the case of children, it includes the giving of alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison to them.
- Emotional Abuse** Emotional abuse is a persistent lack of love and affection. A child may be constantly verbally abused, threatened, ignored or taunted. Other forms of emotional abuse include excessive overprotection and unrealistic pressure to succeed. In addition it may include intimidation, humiliation, verbal abuse, harassment or discriminatory harassment to adults.
- Sexual Abuse** Involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities whether the child or vulnerable adult is aware of or consents to what is happening. It may also involve non-contact activities such as showing pornographic material, sexual innuendo or encouraging someone to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.
- Neglect Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.**
The persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs. These needs include adequate food and warm clothing and also medical care, social care and educational services. Neglect may include simply being left alone or excluded.

7 Recognising Abuse

7.1 This is not always easy to do, and it is not the responsibility of Councillors, Officers or staff to decide whether abuse has taken place, or if a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk. However Wellington Town Council does have a responsibility to act and report promptly if they have any concerns or suspicions. Indications that a child or person may be subject to abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruises, cuts and burns particularly if situated on parts of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- Injuries for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- Fear of parents or carers being approached about such injuries
- Flinching or cowering when touched or approached
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- Fear of being left with a specific person
- Changes in appearance - sudden loss of hair, dirtiness, weight loss etc.
- In children, a failure to grow and thrive and showing difficulties in making friends or socialising
- In adults, a loss of assets and possessions.

7.2 This list is by no means exhaustive, and it is important to remember that many children and people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

7.3 It is crucial that Councillors and staff realise that this is only a process of observation and that at no point should Councillors or staff actively seek out abuse or an abuser. The Town Council's responsibility is to ensure that any concern about the welfare of someone is reported and to never assume that others will do it.

8 Responding to Allegations and Suspicions of Abuse

8.1 It is vitally important the details of an allegation or an incident of abuse or mistreatment are carefully recorded. An accurate record should be made of:

- The date and time of the incident and/or disclosure
- The parties who were involved
- What was said and done by whom Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- The full name of the person reporting and to whom reported and where appropriate:
- Any action taken
- Details of action taken i.e. contact with Somerset County Council/Police – date, time and response

8.2 Responding to a child or vulnerable adult making an allegation of abuse against a Councillor, officer or contractor Councillors and staff will stay calm and listen carefully, allowing the child or person to continue at their own pace and reassure them that they have done the right thing in speaking out. It may be necessary to ask questions for clarification only and always asking questions that suggest a particular answer (i.e. leading questions) should be avoided. The record keeping advice should be followed and, at an early opportunity, it must be explained to the child or vulnerable adult that the information will need to be shared. Do not promise to keep secrets. These allegations should be recorded and reported to the Town Clerk at the earliest opportunity who will contact Social Services. If the Town Clerk is not available, the person recording the information should contact Social service or The Police. If the allegations are made in respect of the Town Clerk, then the report must be made to the Mayor.

8.3 Responding to suspicions that a Councillor or officer may be abusing a child or vulnerable adult or not following the code of good practice

Anyone that suspects a colleague may be abusing a child or a vulnerable adult should act on their suspicions immediately. These suspicions should be recorded and reported to the Town Clerk at the earliest opportunity who will contact Social Services. If the Town Clerk is not available, the person recording the information should contact Social service or The Police. If the suspicions are raised in respect of the Town Clerk then the report must be made to the Mayor. If the matter relates to poor practice the disciplinary/capability procedures may be followed, as detailed in the Staff Handbook.

8.4 If it relates to potential abuse, the matter must be referred to Social Services who may also involve the Police. The person concerned will be suspended pending the outcome of an internal investigation into the allegations. Wellington Town Council acknowledges that this is an extremely sensitive issue for staff and everyone working on its behalf. The Council will fully support and

protect anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child or a vulnerable adult.

9 Confidentiality

9.1 The legal principle that the welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount means that the consideration of confidentiality, which might apply to other situations within the Council, should not be allowed to override the right of the person to be protected from harm.

9.2 However, where possible every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for and by all concerned when an allegation is made and whilst it is being investigated.

The Council will seek to balance protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm whilst protecting its staff from the risk of unfounded allegations.

9.3 The Town Clerk will be responsible for dealing with all allegations and suspicions of abuse concerning a member of staff, in conjunction with any relevant authorities and agencies. The Monitoring Officer at Somerset West and Taunton Council/Somerset Council post April 2023 will be responsible for dealing with all allegations and suspicions of abuse concerning Councillors, in conjunction with any relevant authorities and agencies. The Town Clerk or Monitoring Officer will not decide if anyone has been abused – this is the task of Social Services, which has the legal responsibility.

10 Recruitment, Training and Monitoring

10.1 All successful applicants for posts involving contact with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to a basic DBS check and if necessary and justified an enhanced DBS check to ensure there are no irregularities in their background which may give cause for concern. This check will be carried out by Wellington Town Council prior to employment. Similarly staff, which regularly have direct and indirect contact with children or vulnerable adults, will have training to raise their awareness of protection issues at their induction and at regular intervals throughout their employment at Wellington Town Council.

11 Publicity and Young People – Guidance Notes

11.1 These guidelines should be followed if commissioning photographs of children (i.e. under 18 years of age) or if planning photography of children at events and using visual media for publicity purposes.

11.2 The guidelines apply to both professional photographers / camera personnel and Councillors or staff taking personal or informal photographs at Town Council events.

11.2.1 Child Protection Issues and Visual Media For the protection of children, it is essential that the event organiser obtains a written validation of consent from the subject(s) and their parent(s) or guardian(s) before any images are used. The request for consent should include an explanation of what the film or footage will contain and how the images will be used e.g. photographs / film may be used in publicity material such as the Annual Report, Annual Town Meeting, newsletters, press releases, brochures, video

footage, websites and other promotional media materials. Where Wellington Town Council has commissioned a photographer or camera person to attend a Town Council event, they will be requested to abide by the following requirements:

- Always wear identification
- Only take photographs or footage at the designated event or venue
- Ensure that they take the audience and purpose into proper consideration when publishing any photographic/film material i.e. focus on the activity, rather than full shots of children.

11.2.2 Appropriate Editorial Content

All photographs used in publicity materials must fulfil the following set of criteria to ensure the publication is produced to the highest standard, the content is appropriate and falls in line with equity issues. This includes choosing images which show all sections of society including representatives from black and ethnic communities, people with disabilities etc. Photographs must not be edited in any way from the originals, for example disproportionately re-sizing, changing colours, distorting the images or air brushing. Visual contents or captions cannot be used as means of identifying children. This includes names, addresses or any other unnecessary information, which could be used to trace the child. This information must also be withheld in all reproductions.

11.2.3 Copyright, Credits and Labelling. Any professional companies or organisations that provide photographs must be appropriately credited before using them. Images supplied should be cleared for copyright and with permission to print or re-produce.

Security of Images

11.2.4 All images, photographs and footage should be stored securely, with access to transparencies, film or hard prints restricted to appropriate staff. These arrangements will help to protect potentially any inappropriate use of the collection.

Report for Policy and Resources Committee December 2022

Proposal to Appoint a Town Ranger/Community Warden

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out a proposal to appoint Town Ranger/Community Warden for consideration by the Committee which, if approved will be presented to the January Town Council meeting.

2. Background

2.1 For a number of years the Town Council has commissioned a Community Warden function from Idverde for 22 hours a week. The intention was that this role would supplement activities undertaken in the town provided by Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) some of which are also delivered by Idverde.

2.2 In September Council officers were advised that Idverde were experiencing difficulties in delivering the 22 hours a week service and agreed to reduce the hours to 10 whilst it considered its options. At the beginning of November we were advised by Idverde that they would be ceasing to provide the Community Warden function with immediate effect. Since then we have had discussions with officers at SWT who will provide support if they are able to whilst we consider how we wish to proceed.

2.3 At the November Council meeting it was agreed that officers should do more work on a proposal that the Council should employ its own Community Warden and explore the option of also employing an apprentice role to work alongside it.

3. Considerations

3.1 Functions

3.1.1 Officers have considered what functions would be undertaken by a Community Warden/Town Ranger. In doing so it is important to be clear what functions SWT carry out either directly or through Idverde to avoid duplication and potential double funding of activities. SWT has confirmed the following:

- SWT is responsible for all dog waste bins and any park litter bins. All other litter bins are serviced by Idverde on their behalf.
- Idverde provide a Town Ranger for street sweeping / litter picking in the Town Centre.
- Idverde cover cleaning the Public Toilets in North Street Car Park and Wellington Park.
- Motorised road sweeping is by Idverde on SWT's behalf.
- Litter picking of parks is undertaken by SWT and streets are covered by Idverde on their behalf.
- Fly tipping is mainly cleared by Idverde for SWT but could be done by SWT depending on where it is.
- All parks are maintained by SWT with the exception of the Tonedale Play .Park which is the Town Council's responsibility.

3.1.2 On that basis the following functions could be carried out by a Town Council employed Community Warden/Town Ranger

- Defibrillator check/clean - weekly
- Litter picking in areas not undertaken by SWT.
- Event help – set up/take down, marshalling

- Inspect allotments / clearing / general cutting back etc.
- Tonedale Play Park checks – weekly play equipment checks, bin emptying, litter picking two times a week
- Check Green Corridor land including litter picking, path clearance
- Clean street furniture e.g. signs, benches
- Update notice boards
- Planting/watering of Town Council planters
- Liaise with office re footpath issues
- Check Town Council toilets – report cleaning issues to contractor and undertake basic maintenance/repairs. Larger scale issues are to be reported to the Assets & Events Officer
- Office General Maintenance e.g. internal decoration, putting office furniture together, fitting shelves, notice boards etc.

3.1.3 There is the potential for the role to grow as it becomes clearer what services will or will not be provided through the unitary council. However at this stage we do not believe that the activities outlined warrant a full time post, rather three days a week, nor employing a second person.

3.2 Equipment

3.2.3 Van – it is difficult to assess what size van would be required for this role initially. Based on the functions outlined above we do not think it is worth investing in a flatbed van at this time until it becomes clear that one is needed on a regular basis. On that basis we propose that a smaller van is purchased. We have looked at leasing but do not believe this is a proper use of public money as there would be no asset resulting from the payment. The cost of a new fast-charge electric Nissan Acenta model as used by Exeter City Council would be in the region of £33,000. Details are attached as an appendix to this paper (not yet!). We are exploring whether, if we chose this model, Wellington Nissan would be prepared to enter into a sponsorship deal if its name was on the van. Initially charging of the vehicle could be carried out in North Street Car Park and the van parked overnight behind the Town Council offices with the gate locked. The van would carry Wellington Town Council livery and, if an arrangement is agreed, the name of any sponsor.

3.2.4 Tools – again until the role evolves it is probably not worth investing in a large amount of expensive equipment, instead hiring specialist equipment if and when needed, until it becomes clear that purchasing it would be a better option. As a start we would suggest the following (this is not exhaustive, and we would need to react to specific issues as and when they arose):

- Strimmer
- Leaf blower
- General toolkit (hammer, screw-drivers, spanners etc)
- Litter pickers/hoops
- Shovel
- Brush
- Cones
- Warning Signs

3.2.5 Clothing/Safety Equipment – the postholder must be provided with branded uniform and Personal Protective Equipment provided. This can generally be purchased as a package. It is proposed that the following is provided:

- Boots
- Trousers
- Polo shirts
- Sweatshirt
- Rain jacket / fleece
- High Vis trousers, vest and padded jacket
- Gloves
- Eye protection
- Head protection
- Hearing protection
- First aid kits

3.3 Storage – the refurbishment of the Longforth Road toilet block provides an opportunity to develop storage space for the equipment outlined above and other equipment and materials owned by the Town Council. In the short term we are costing out installing a storage container behind the Town Council offices or hiring a storage unit at a site in Wellington.

3.4 Training – there will be a range for training required for the successful candidate to ensure they are able to carry out their duties safely including use of specific equipment, general health and safety, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) etc

3.5 IT equipment – the intention is that we will use a software package to log work requests and see how they are progressing. The postholder will therefore require a mobile phone and tablet that will enable them to communicate with the office whilst out in the field and record work undertaken or report issues requiring attention using the software package which will include mobile apps.

3.6 Line Management – the role would be line managed by the Assets and Events Officer with all requests for work being processed through that post.

4 Financial Considerations

4.1 Based on equivalent posts elsewhere the proposed salary scale for the post is points 13 – 17 (£24,948 - £26,845 full time equivalent). For a 22 hour a week post the starting salary would be £14,968 plus on costs. Provision has been made for these costs in the 2023/24 budget.

4.2 The Community Warden budget line of £17,140 for 2023/24 can be used to contribute towards operational/running costs for that year whilst we establish what the true costs are based on workload. We will then review the budget lines for 2024/25 in light of that experience

4.3 It is suggested that a budget of £50,000 is set aside to fund the set up costs of the function to be drawn down from reserves. The bulk of the cost will be accounted for through the purchasing of the van – the balance will in all likelihood be more than sufficient to cover the

costs of purchasing equipment etc as set out above, but it allows flexibility to react to situations across the year.

- 4.4 To enable the Council staff to move this forward at pace, if agreed, it is recommended that authority for authorising spend against the budget is delegated to the Town Clerk for items up to £3,000 and that for items over £3,000 authorisation is required from the Town Clerk, Mayor and two other members of the Policy and Resources Committee to be agreed at the meeting.
- 4.5 As part of ongoing budget planning we will build in funding each year to cover repairs/maintenance/running costs of a vehicle and tools/equipment.

5 Decisions Required

- (i) Does the Committee agree to recommend to the Town Council that it should seek to recruit a Community Warden/Town Ranger for 22 hours per week on the basis set out in this paper and if so, what is the preferred title – Community Warden or Town Ranger?
- (ii) If it does agree to make the above recommendation does it also agree to recommend that the Town Council should establish a budget line of £50,000 to be drawn from reserves to fund the set up costs for the function as set out in this paper and that authority for authorising spend against the budget is delegated to the Town Clerk for items up to £3,000 and that items over £3,000 can be approved by the Town Clerk, Mayor and two other councillors who are members of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Dave Farrow

Town Clerk

December 2022

REPORT FOR POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE DECEMBER 2022

Proposal to Introduce a Town Council Awards Scheme

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out a proposal for the implementation of a Town Council Awards Scheme for the community.

2. Proposal

2.1 That the Town Council hold an annual Town Awards organised by the Policy and Resources Committee with awards will be presented as part of the Annual Town Meeting.

2.2 There will be four main categories of awards: Civic Award, Youth Award, Community Award and Business Award. (See para 5 below)

2.3 The Council will invite nominations from the public to each of the four categories with nominations being made via the official application form.

2.4 Nominations must be received by the deadline set. Nominations received after this date will not be considered by the panel.

2.5 Nominations will be considered by a Nomination Panel (See para 4 below)

2.6 Current serving Wellington Town Councillors are exempt from nomination.

2.7 Organisations and Individuals are eligible for an award irrespective of where they are based/reside.

3. Award Categories

3.1 The Wellington Civic Award will be made to individuals who have worked to the benefit of the Wellington Community.

3.2 The Wellington Youth Award will be made to individuals aged 21 and under who have worked to the benefit of the Wellington Community.

3.3 The Wellington Business Award will be made to a business which has engaged with the community to the benefit of the Town.

3.4 The Wellington Community Award will be made to a community group or organisation which has brought a benefit to the Wellington Community.

3.5 The panel may make a number of commendations to those who do not receive an award.

3.6 The panel may make a "special award" on such grounds as it deems necessary.

4. Decision Panel

- 4.1 Nominations will be considered by the Decision Panel.
- 4.2 The Decision Panel will consist of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Town Clerk and Chairs of Council Committees.
- 4.3 The panel's decision is final and will not require approval of the Town Council.
- 4.4 The Panel may, in exceptional circumstances make awards to the same person, organisation or business in subsequent years should they continue to contribute or contribute in a different way to the Town.

5. Awards

- 5.1 All awards will comprise a plaque and framed certificate specifying the award and the person/organisation receiving it.
- 5.2 A commendation shall comprise a letter from the Mayor and an announcement at the Town Awards presentation.

6. Consideration

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to recommend this proposal to the Town Council.

Dave Farrow
Town Clerk
December 2022

REPORT FOR POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE DECEMBER 2022

Proposal for a review of the Wellington Town Council Boundary

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to consider a recommendation to request Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) to conduct a community governance review of the boundary of Wellington parish.

2. Background

- 2.1 SWT has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews in order to create a parish or to amend parish boundaries, and to implement the findings of any such reviews.
- 2.2 The Government recommends that principal councils (district, county, and unitary councils) should conduct such reviews regularly, and it suggests every 10 to 15 years as the sort of timeframe for doing so.
- 2.3 The parish boundary of Wellington was set when the last national reorganisation of local government was implemented in 1974 and the former Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) came into being.
- 2.4 SWT was created in 2019 by the merger of TDBC and West Somerset Council.
- 2.5 Neither TDBC nor SWT have previously reviewed the parish boundary of Wellington, so, in 48 years there has been no change.
- 2.6 However, in those 48 years the urban area of Wellington has grown exponentially, and in particular there have been significant commercial and industrial developments along the eastern boundary of the parish.
- 2.7 It may be a surprise for some to learn, for instance, that the Chelston Business Park, which is a major employment centre for residents of Wellington, is not located in Wellington parish, meaning the Town Council has no direct influence on issues which may arise there.
- 2.8 Similarly, the Household Waste Recycling Centre in Poole, which serves the Wellington community, is not within the Wellington parish.
- 2.9 Junction 26 of the M5 motorway, the J26-Chelston distributor road, and Chelston roundabout, which is a key transport corridor providing access and egress for Wellington commerce, similarly lie outside the parish boundary and therefore beyond the direct influence of the Town Council.
- 2.10 Committee members will be well aware that with the vesting of the new Somerset Council on 1st April, 2023, we are entering a period where there is

going to be significant change in the way the Town Council operates and the services and facilities it delivers for our community.

- 2.11 It is therefore an apposite moment for the Town Council to be looking at its boundaries and its sphere of influence.
- 2.12 SWT is required to consider a community governance review on receipt of a petition signed by 10 per cent of the registered electors of a parish, in the case of Wellington approximately 1,200 electors. Or, SWT itself can also decide to hold a review.
- 2.13 Principal councils are advised that parish boundaries should be strong, clearly defined, and long-lasting, such as by using features like rivers, roads, and railways, and should aim to engender community cohesion.
- 2.14 The holding of such a review requires extensive community engagement, and the Government estimates that the whole process should take about 12 months to complete.
- 2.15 Should SWT decide now to hold a community governance review of the boundary of Wellington parish, it is likely therefore that the process would fall to be completed by the new Somerset Council which is being vested on 1st April, 2023.
- 2.16 A community governance review now would be timely for the new Somerset Council because some time after vesting day, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) will begin a review of division boundaries for unitary councillors with the aim of reducing the number of councillors from 110 to something like 85 in time for the next local elections scheduled for May, 2027.
- 2.17 In reviewing unitary division boundaries, the LGBC will need to take account of existing parish boundaries, and therefore any potential changes to the Wellington parish boundary could be in place in time to aid the LGBC review.
- 2.18 Any physical changes to the Wellington parish boundary would not be implemented until the next parish elections scheduled for May, 2027.

3 Considerations

- 3.1 Committee members are therefore asked to consider recommending to the Town Council that it asks SWT to conduct a community governance review of the parish boundary of Wellington and
- 3.2 If the Town Council agrees with the recommendation, the Town Clerk be asked to write to our neighbouring parishes in the interests of good relations to keep them informed of our thinking.

John Thorne
Councillor

Report for Policy and Resources Committee December 2022

Review of Councillor Allowances

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out the current position in relation to a review of councillor allowances.

2 Background

- 2.1 When reviewing the budget for 2021/22 Councillors asked that the allowance paid to councillors be reviewed during the year.
- 2.2 In addition to that the Council's Internal Auditor has noted that in setting allowances the Council must take into account recommendations about the levels of allowance from the Parish Remuneration Panel, managed by the district council in our case at the moment, about the levels of allowance payable.
- 2.3 The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has published guidance on Parish Councillors' Allowances which is attached as Appendix A. Para 9 of the Guidance notes that Regulation 27 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 notes that 'a Parish Remuneration Panel may be established by the responsible authority.....' (my underlining). The key word is 'may'. There is no Parish Remuneration Panel in Somerset West and Taunton Council and no requirement for it to have one. One can be requested but does not have to be established.
- 2.4 The challenge is that whilst a parish council 'must' i.e. is legally required to, have regard to the findings of the Parish Remuneration Panel there is no requirement for their to be such a panel raising the question of how a parish council can set allowances if they are unable to meet their statutory obligations?
- 2.5 The Somerset Association of Local Council Clerks has raised this issue as part of the discussions around unitary status and is making it clear that there is an expectation that a Panel is established as part of the move to unitary status.
- 2.6 In looking at this issue we have also gathered information from other town councils in Somerset and elsewhere. What is apparent is that there is no consistency, with responses ranging from no allowances being paid to, in Dorset, allowances being paid on the basis of a percentage of district councillors allowances dependent on the size of the town or parish council.
- 2.7 What is also apparent is that in Somerset many councils are reviewing their position in relation to allowances in light of the move to unitary status but have recognised the challenge set out above in relation to the lack of a Parish Remuneration Panel. This includes larger town councils who have historically not paid any or very low, allowances. On that basis basing decisions on comparative information has no relevance as many will be changing their position next year.

2. Proposal

That other than an increase for next year to proposed by the Finance Committee and considered at the Council meeting on the 5 December no further action is taken in relation to Councillor Allowances until a Parish Remuneration Panel is established by the Somerset Council.

Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Unit

PP A2W
County Hall
TAUNTON
TA1 4DY

Telephone 07929 751612
Email daisy.walton@somerset.gov.uk
Web www.somerset.gov.uk



Please ask for
Daisy Walton

My reference
SECC 2

Date: 24/10/2022

Your reference
DW/SECC

Dear Parish Clerk/Chairman

Somerset Emergency Community Contacts

I am writing to all Parish Councils, Town Councils and Parish Meetings in Somerset to ask for your help to develop a database of Somerset Emergency Community Contacts (SECC), who can be used as a first point of contact when an emergency is happening in your area. We are also looking to check already registered SECC's to make sure they are up to date.

One of our main concerns from the flooding in 2013/2014 was that some of the affected communities were unsure who to contact within local government about the emergency. The Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Partnership was tasked to take action on this concern and would like to invite Parishes and Towns across Somerset to nominate up to 3 trusted people to act as these Contacts. The nominated Contacts must be able to speak with authority for your Council, community or geographical areas. The Contacts should be able to give current information about how an emergency is affecting your area and any problems arising where help may be needed.

The main role of the Somerset Emergency Community Contact is:-

- To be a first point of contact during emergencies
- To liaison with Parish/Town Councils
- Be able to liaise with local residents with identified roles, i.e. neighbourhood watch, flood wardens, village agents
- Be able to identify and pass information about vulnerable residents
- Identify severe and dangerous road conditions restricting transport
- Gathering, receiving and passing information from and to community
- To have good communications via access to phones, email and internet
- Be available to contact within the parish.

I have attached a link to our website where you can find out more information [2. Emergency Community Contacts – Somerset Prepared](#). Please also complete our SECC form here to nominate your SECC: [Somerset Emergency Community Contacts Registration Form – Somerset Prepared](#). If you already have registered SECC's please check names and contact details and use the same form as above to update.

This network of Contacts will be registered on a database in the Civil Contingencies Unit and will be made available for use by the County and District Councils, emergency services and public utilities. The information from Contacts will provide these agencies with a better understanding of the conditions being experienced on the ground during severe weather, flooding, power cuts and other emergencies. The emergency services may have to prioritise those in greatest need and could be delayed. By advance planning your Parish Council or Town can assist co-ordinated local response activities to alleviate problems in the short term and reduce the impact of an emergency on your community. The Contacts can be recorded in these Plans to help build your community resilience.

The Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Unit and other agencies are continuing to work with communities in Somerset to enhance their resilience and these Contacts will be one part of the work being carried out. The Civil Contingencies Unit has worked with the communities that flooded to help them produce emergency plans to become more resilient in the future. Our community resilience website is now available at www.somersetprepared.org.uk . This website has other information to prepare your community plans, etc.

If your Council/Meeting would like more information on this project or community resilience, please call myself on 07929 751612 or email above or Lesley Knight, Senior Civil Contingencies Officer (01823) 358067 or lesley.knight@somerset.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely



Daisy Walton
Civil Contingencies Officer



WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Project Initiation Form



Project Initiator			
Project Title			
Description			
Benefits			
Financial Implications (i.e., set up/up front and ongoing costs)			
Existing Council Budget?	Y / N	If Yes, Please Specify	
Other Implications (i.e., environmental etc.)			
Staffing resource required			
Risks and Issues			
For Office Use			
Name of Committee for discussion		Date of Meeting Presented	
Scheduled start date <i>(if passed by resolution)</i>			
Lead Officer			

Once completed, please return this form to the Town Clerk. An informal discussion is encouraged before a project is presented to a Committee. Please be sure to also include/attach any documents relevant to the project.

