

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL Held at the United Reformed Church Hall, Fore Street, Wellington TA21 8AG on Monday 5th December 2022 at 5.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors M Lithgow (Chair), K. Wheatley, A Govier, M McGuffie, M Barr, J Thorne, W Battishill, J Lloyd.

David Farrow (Town Clerk)
Alice Kendall (Deputy Clerk)
Annette Kirk (Assets & Events Officer)

Denise Todd – Planning Officer - Somerset West & Taunton District Council

One member of the press
One member of the public

384. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors N Powell-Brace, C Booth S. Booker, K Canham, C Govier and Z Barr.

385. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Thorne declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 4(f) case ref: 43/22/0083

Councillor A Govier declared a personal interest in agenda items 4(b) case ref: 43/22/0105, 4(c) case ref: 43/22/0060 and 5(b) case ref: 43/22/0124/T

Councillor J Lloyd queried whether Councillor K Wheatley was still a member of the Somerset West and Taunton Council's Planning Committee. Councillor K Wheatley confirmed he was.

Councillors M Lithgow and K Wheatley declared an interest as a member of Somerset West and Taunton Council's Planning Committee and therefore reserved the right to vote differently at SWT's Planning Committee meeting should different facts be placed before them.

Councillors J Lloyd, and A Govier declared an interest as substitute members for SWT's Planning Committee, reserving the right to vote differently if attending SWT's Planning Committee meeting should different facts be placed before them.

386. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No Public Participation

387. APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY TOWN COUNCIL:

a) Case Ref: 43/22/0103

Proposal: Erection of a two-storey extension to the side and a single storey extension to the rear of 9 Priory, Wellington

RESOLVED to Approve the application subject to the Planning Officer's report

b) Case Ref: 43/22/0105

Proposal: Erection of a two-storey extension to the side and single storey extension to the side and rear of 8 Lower Westford, Wellington

RESOLVED to Approve the application subject to the Planning Officer's report

c) Case Ref: 43/22/0060

Proposal: Erection of a part two storey and part single storey extension to the side and rear of 40 Howard Road, Wellington

RESOLVED to Approve the application subject to the Planning Officer's report with an added condition that the car parking area is not obstructed.

d) Case Ref: 43/22/0101

Proposal: Replacement of garage with the erection of a two-storey extension to the side and a single storey extension to the front and rear of 4 Hoyles Road, Wellington

RESOLVED to Approve the application subject to the Planning Officer's report

e) Case Ref: 43/22/0087

Proposal: Erection of a first-floor extension to the rear of 22 Holyoake Street, Wellington

RESOLVED to Approve the application subject to the Planning Officer's report

Councillor J Thorne left the room – Time 5.55pm

f) Case Ref: 43/22/0083

Proposal: Demolition of garage and erection of a two-storey extension to the side of 18 Owen Street, Wellington

RESOLVED to Approve the application subject to the Planning Officer's report.

Councillor J Thorne re-joined the meeting

g) Case Ref: 43/22/0099

Proposal: Erection of a single and two storey rear extension, a single storey side extension and a single storey front extension at 61 Oaken Ground, Rockwell Green, Wellington (resubmission of 43/22/0033)

RESOLVED to Approve the application subject to the Planning Officer's report

388. TO CONSIDER WHAT COMMENTS TO MAKE ON THE FOLLOWING APPLICATIONS THAT WILL BE DETERMINED BY SOMERSET WEST AND TAUNTON COUNCIL OR SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL:

a) Case Ref: 43/22/0119/LB

Proposal: Removal of asbestos and emergency fabric repairs with structural roof repairs at Tone Works, Wellington (retention of part works already undertaken)

RECOMMENDED approval. It was noted that the building was in fact in the parish of Langford Budville and that the reference number needed changing to reflect that

b) Case Ref: 43/22/0124/T

Proposal: Notification to carry out management works to one Lime tree within Wellington Conservation Area at St. John the Baptist Church, High Street, Wellington

RECOMMENDED approval.

389. SOMERSET WEST & TAUNTON DISTRICT COUNCIL - 2022 PLANNING DECISIONS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

Application Number	Proposal	Address	WTC Recommendation	SWT (Somerset West and Taunton) Decision
43/22/0090/NMA	Application for a Non-Material Amendment to application 43/19/0106 to alter the wording, and in doing so the triggers, of Condition No's 03, 04, 05, 06, 07 and 10 at Phase 3,	Land at Jurston Farm, Wellington		REFUSAL
43/22/0102/T	Application to carry out management works to one Oak tree included in Taunton Deane Borough (Wellington No.1) Tree Preservation Order 2011 on land to the east of	19 Nash Drive Wellington (TD1087)	APPROVED	APPROVAL
43/22/0106/T	Application to carry out management work to one Oak tree included in Taunton Deane Borough (Wellington No.3) Tree Preservation Order 1993 at	39 Sanford Rise, Wellington		APPROVAL
43/22/0070	Change of use and conversion of former public house/hotel into 4 No. flats with ground floor community space with associated parking/amenity space at	Kings Arms Hotel, High Street, Wellington	APPROVED	APPROVAL
43/22/0073	Replacement of conservatory with the erection of a part single and part two storey extension to the rear, erection of a first-floor side extension and a single storey front extension at	21 Sylvan Road, Wellington	APPROVED	APPROVAL

Wellington Town Council Planning Meeting 5th December 2022

43/22/0082	Erection of a single storey extension to the rear of	21 Popham Road, Wellington	APPROVED	APPROVAL
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The meeting ended at 6.25pm

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Councillor Mark Lithgow
Mayor

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 5 DECEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 5 DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Lithgow (Mayor)

Councillors M Barr, Z Barr, W Battishill, A Govier, R Henley, J Lloyd, M McGuffie, K Wheatley. J Thorne.

David Farrow (Town Clerk)

One member of the press was in attendance.

390. TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

391. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors C Booth, K Canham, S Booker, C. Govier, and N Powell-Brace.

392. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None in addition to the standing interests detailed at the end of these minutes.

393. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Town Council and Planning Meetings held on the 7 November 2022.

394. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No members of the public were present.

395. TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK ON THE RECENT LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE.

Sarah Povall was unable to attend the meeting. The Town Clerk will invite her to a future meeting.

396. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

Sergeant Dan Bishop has left his post and no report had been provided to the Council. It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should write to Sergeant Bishop on behalf of the Town Council to thank him for his work in the town and to wish him well for the future.

397. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

A list of the Mayor's engagements for the previous month had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Councillor Henley joined the meeting at this point.

398. SOMERSET COUNTY AND UNITARY COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE

Councillors welcomed the news that late night buses to and from Taunton were to be reintroduced and also that fares would be capped. It was noted that whilst the Somerset Council budget still had to be set it was hoped that there were sufficient funds available to set a budget for 2023/24 but that following years would be challenging. The Town Clerk reported that he had sought to open informal discussions with Somerset West Council staff about provision of services in Wellington but at this stage they would not be taking place. He hoped that they would in the future.

399. TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Clerks report had been circulated with the agenda and was noted. The Clerk informed the Council that the streetlights in Orchard Close and Cubbitts Place would be connected and lit in the week commencing the 9 January. Councillor A Govier asked the Clerk to check whether the new light in Bulford had been installed.

400. OFFICER'S MOBILE PHONES

The report circulated with the agenda was considered and the Council **RESOLVED** that four new model iPhone SE 2022s should be purchased at a cost of £375 each plus £15 each for the protection package.

401. ENVIRONMENT AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Committee meeting held 15 November had been circulated with the agenda.

The Council **RESOLVED** that

- (a) A grant of £4,500 from the Green Corridor budget line be given to Transition Town Wellington to contribute to the purchase of a storage container with all details of design and location to be agreed at a future committee meeting before installation.
- (b) The three new notice boards be purchased and installed as set out in the report and that an additional notice board should also be provided for Rockwell Green on the same basis as those in Priory and Tonedale. Funding to be drawn from the Green Corridor and Community Services & Priorities budget lines as detailed in the report.
- (c) The Tree Planting Strategy be adopted by the Town Council.

402. TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 November 2022 had been circulated with the agenda and Councillor Lloyd gave an update. The Town Clerk reported that he and the Assets and Events Officer had met with representatives of the Friends of Wellington Park regarding the Coronation Weekend, and they were happy that their Spring Fair should be used as a key part of the town's celebrations for that weekend alongside other events that the Town Council would organise for the day.

403. FINANCE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Committee meeting held 15 November were circulated with the agenda. The Council **RESOLVED**

- a) Service Level Agreement – Reminiscence Learning:
 - i) That the current Service Level Agreement be terminated by giving three months' notice in writing.
 - ii) That a new three-year agreement be drawn up to come into effect on 1st April 2023 with funding of £12,000 per year to include the Carers Support Group. (Updated agreement attached)
 - iii) That funding of £3,125 be paid to support the Carers Group for the five months to the end of the financial year.
- b) 2023 – 2024 Budget – that the budget be adopted with one change that the budget line for The Rifles event be reduced by £4,000 on the basis that the activity associated with that cost would not be taking place.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.50pm.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 5 DECEMBER 2022

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset County Council: Councillor Andrew Govier Councillor Marcus Barr Councillor Ross Henley	Members of Somerset West and Taunton Council: Councillor Janet Lloyd Councillor Andrew Govier Councillor Mark Lithgow Councillor Ross Henley Councillor Marcus Barr Councillor Chris Booth Councillor Keith Wheatley
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Councillor Mark Lithgow, Mayor

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 19 DECEMBER 2022

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2022 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Lithgow (Mayor)

Councillors M Barr, Z Barr, S Booker, C Booth, A Govier, J Lloyd, M McGuffie, N Powell Brace. J Thorne.

David Farrow (Town Clerk)

One member of the press and two members of the public were in attendance.

433. TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

434. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors K Canham, C. Govier, and K Wheatley

435. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None in addition to the standing interests detailed at the end of these minutes.

436. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or comments.

437. LEASE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR GREEN CORRIDOR LAND

The proposed Lease and a draft Management Plan for the Green Corridor Land had been circulated with the agenda. A revised draft Management Plan was tabled at the meeting, with minor amendments highlighted, along with a map of the Green Corridor Land. The Town Council **RESOLVED**

(i) that the proposed lease with Somerset West and Taunton Council for the Green Corridor Land be approved and that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor be authorised to sign it on the Councils behalf.

(ii) that the tabled Management Plan be approved for insertion in the Lease.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.13pm

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset County Council: Councillor Andrew Govier Councillor Marcus Barr Councillor Ross Henley	Members of Somerset West and Taunton Council: Councillor Janet Lloyd Councillor Andrew Govier Councillor Mark Lithgow Councillor Ross Henley Councillor Marcus Barr Councillor Chris Booth Councillor Keith Wheatley
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Councillor Mark Lithgow, Mayor

Initial

Report for the Wellington Town Council Meeting 9 January 2023

Delegated Planning Agreement 2023/24

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek the Town Councils views on whether or not it wishes to continue to enter into a Delegated Planning Agreement with Somerset Council for the financial year 2023/24.

2. Background

2.1 The Council has form some years now entered in to a Delegated Planning Agreement with Somerset West and Taunton Council that enable it to take decisions in relation to some planning applications without referral to the district council.

2.2 there are some conditions attached to the agreement one of which is that a Planning Officer must be present at the meeting to provide advice and guidance to the Town Council whilst it is considering an application. Under the current agreement the Town Council pays £150 per meeting.

2.3 We have been advised that the amount we currently pay is heavily subsidised and the true cost of an officer preparing for and attending a meeting is £378.31.

2.4 Given the financial situation of Somerset Council and the consideration that this is a model of delegation that could potentially be rolled out to other town and parish councils, we have been told that the only way we can continue to exercise delegated planning powers would be through an agreement that fully recovers the costs of Planning Officer support.

2.5 The actual cost of Planning Officer support has been broken down as follows:

Function	Time	Hourly Rate	Total
Admin of Liaising with PC Re Reports for each Meeting	20 mins a month	£50	£16.66
Admin of Sorting Officer Attendance	20 mins a month	£50	£16.66
Admin of Minutes, Sign Offs and Agendas etc	20 mins a month	£50	£16.66
Additional Admin of Issuing Decisions after Determination	30 mins a month	£50	£25.00
Additional Admin of Parish Overturns	20 mins a month	£70*	£23.33
Attendance of Officer at Meetings (Prep, travel, and officer attendance)	4 hours	£70*	£280
Total			£378.31

* work carried out by a higher graded officer

2.6 The Council has budgeted on the basis of £150 per meeting for 2023/4 so any increase in costs will need to be drawn down from general reserves.

2.7 The Town Council will need to balance the potential additional costs of retaining delegated planning powers against the loss of local decision making.

3. Consideration

3.1 The Town Council is asked to consider whether it wishes to agree to enter in to a delegated Planning Agreement with Somerset County for 2023/24 on a full cost recovery basis as set out in this paper.



REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK TO WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL TO THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL 9 JANUARY 2023

1. Introduction

This report covers 1 December 2022 – 6 January 2023.

2. Council Work Plan

This will update councillors on matters not covered elsewhere on the agenda. It should be noted that the Council office was closed and staff not working from the 23 December to the 3 January.

- The Town Clerk and Assets and Events Officer met with representatives of Wellington School and The Rifles Regiment on the 1 December to discuss in more detail arrangements for the parade on the 17 June 2023. The Rifles Working Group will now be meeting monthly from January to plan the event.
- Over the next month the Wellington Wheelers will be helping us carry out route audits for the cycling element of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- The Saturday Christmas street entertainment has been well received.

3. Social Media

After several hugely popular posts in November, our page visits and reach on Facebook and Instagram have dropped by 50% and 18.7% respectively, particularly after the Christmas Lights Switch On event. Our top five liked Facebook posts in the past 28 days are:

- The Town Crier's announcement of the Lights Switch On - 55 likes and reactions
- Presentation of Rebecca's Business Admin Certificate – 40 likes and reactions
- First Christmas Walkabout – 37 likes and reactions
- Post following the Christmas Lights Switch On – 26 likes and reactions
- A post reminding people to take our Christmas Lighting Survey

We can expect this lull in activity to continue into the new year as there won't be many events to promote but once we start Green Corridor consultation and advertising our various events, we anticipate that numbers will pick up again.

4. Longforth Road Toilet Block

Councillors will be aware that on the 23 December 2022 a car crashed in to the Longforth Road toilet block causing significant damage resulting in the block being closed. We have liaised with the police and Somerset West and Taunton Council who attended on the day and secured the site and contacted our insurers who advised that they would send out a structural engineer in the new year to assess the damage. Once we have that report we will know what the position is with the block. If available this will be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee in February along with recommendations about how to proceed.

5. Monthly Bank Reconciliation

Attached as Appendix.

6. Councillor Attendance

We have recently updated the details of councillors' attendance on the Councils website to show attendance through to the end of December. 'Possible' meetings are Council and Planning meetings along with any committee meetings that councillors are members of.

Councillor	TOTALS				
	POSSIBLE	PRESENT	APOLOGIES	ABSENT	%
M Barr	36	36	0	0	100%
Z Barr	23	12	11	0	52%
W Battishill	19	15	3	1	79%
S Booker	28	12	11	5	43%
C Booth	27	20	7	0	74%
K Canham	32	20	7	5	63%
A Govier	28	25	3	0	89%
C Govier	27	22	5	0	81%
R Henley	16	6	2	8	38%
M Lithgow	39	34	5	0	87%
J Lloyd	39	29	10	0	74%
M McGuffie	33	33	0	0	100%
N Powell-Brace	26	17	6	3	65%
J Thorne	28	24	4	0	86%
K Wheatley	24	20	3	1	83%

6. January Meetings/Events

Date	Time	Event	Location	Who Involved
5 or 6 January (tbc)	tbc	SLA Discussion with Wellington Counselling	Council Chamber	Town Clerk, Deputy RFO, Councillors M Barr, A Govier and M McGuffie
10 January	4.00pm	Wellington to Taunton Cycle Route Project Team	Virtual	Town Clerk and Councillor Lloyd
11 January	7.30pm	Green Corridor Advisory Board	Council Chamber	Councillors C Govier, M McGuffie, K Wheatley, Town Clerk and Assets and Events Officer
17 January	3.00pm	Finance, Environment and Open Spaces and Town Centre Committee meetings	URC Hall	Committee members
18 January	12.30	Wellington One Team	Virtual	Nominated Councillors

18 January	6.30pm	Rifles Working Group	Council Chamber	Group Members
20 January	12.00	Metro Board Wellington Railway Station Sub Meeting	URC Hall	Mayor, Councillor M Barr and Town Clerk
25 January	2.00pm	Community One Team Meeting	Virtual	Nominated Councillors
27 January	10.00	Wellington Place Plan Officers Working Group	Virtual	Town Clerk
1 February	12.30	Wellington One Team	Virtual	Nominated Councillors

Dave Farrow
Town Clerk
3 January 2023

Wellington Town Council

Agenda item 11 (appendix)

Prepared by: Alice Kendall - Deputy Clerk
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Date: 03/01/2023

Approved by: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Date: _____

A	Bank Reconciliation at 03/01/2023		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2022		768,429.95
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2022 - 03/01/2023		829,068.48
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2022 - 03/01/2023		1,597,498.43
			360,688.17
	Cash in Hand 03/01/2023 (per Cash Book)		1,236,810.26
B	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 03/01/2023	0.00	
	Nationwide 01343556 03/01/2023	201,572.93	
	Cambridge & Counties 15020773 03/01/2023	253,805.75	
	The Cambridge Building Society CI 03/01/2023	200,001.10	
	Lloyds Treasurers PC 87331468 03/01/2023	335.80	
	Lloyds Deposit Account 07788306 03/01/2023	414,603.36	
	Lloyds Current Account 2195145 03/01/2023	177,513.49	
			1,247,832.43
	Less unrepresented payments		11,022.17
			1,236,810.26
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
	Adjusted Bank Balance		1,236,810.26
	A = B Checks out OK		

MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE MEETING HELD AT UNTIED REFORMED CHURCH HALL ON MONDAY 12 DECEMBER 2022 AT 3.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Lithgow (Mayor),
Councillors M Barr, Z Barr, A Govier, M McGuffie and J Thorne
IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor C Govier
David Farrow (Town Clerk), Alice Kendall (Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO)
1 member of the press
2 members of the public

404 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Booker & Lloyd.

405 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Govier has a standing personal interest declaration relating to MTMIT, the Council's IT consultant, being a former customer of the company.

Councillor Thorne has a standing personal interest declaration relating to MTMIT, the Council's IT consultant, being a personal friend of the company owner.

406 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the Public present were grant applicants and were available to answer questions at the appropriate item.

407 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held 15 November 2022.

At this juncture, Councillor McGuffie arrived at the meeting.

408 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

(a) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 5 DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED to note and approve the bank reconciliation.

(b) TO NOTE AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR 5 NOVEMBER - 5 DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED to note and approve the expenditure as presented.

(c) TO NOTE AND APPROVE INCOME RECEIVED FOR 5 NOVEMBER - 5 DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED to note and approve the income received as presented.

(d) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AGAINST THE BUDGET FOR THE 2022-23 YEAR AS AT 5 DECEMBER 2022

RESOLVED to note and approve the budget report.

409 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Interim Internal Audit report was circulated with the agenda. Actions were detailed by Officers, and it was noted.

410 GRANTS

(a) Applications

- i. **The People's Plot (t/a eat:Festivals)** – the group applied for a £750 grant to fund various items required for the annual eat:Wellington festival (detailed breakdown provided in the application form). The Application form and supporting documents were circulated to Councillors by e-mail.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the applicant to answer questions.

RESOLVED to re-instate Standing Orders.

RESOLVED to grant £750.

- ii. **Wellington Cricket Club** – the club applied for a grant of £696.42 for the hire of the sports hall for their annual youth cricket training sessions. The Application form and supporting documents were circulated to Councillors by e-mail.

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the applicant to answer questions.

RESOLVED to re-instate Standing Orders.

RESOLVED to grant £696.42.

411 REVIEW OF SLAs

- (a) **Wellington Community Counselling CIC** – following and initial review meeting with the Managing Director, Town Clerk and Deputy RFO, a paper was circulated with the agenda. Councillor Govier declared a personal interest in this item as his wife volunteers for the organisation.

RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Barr, Govier and McGuffie to meet with the Managing Director and Council Officer's to discuss the details and value of a new SLA and report back to the next committee meeting.

412 2023 – 2024 PRECEPT

A paper containing various Precept calculation examples was prepared by the Deputy Clerk and circulated by e-mail in advance of the meeting. After some discussion, it was resolved to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Precept be set at £466,332 equating to a Band D average of £84.65 and being a 10% increase on the 2022 – 2023 Band D average.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.50 pm.

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Councillor Mark Lithgow
Mayor

1. Budget Setting

- 1.1. The draft budget to form the basis of setting the Precept was considered at the last Finance Committee meeting (November) and was subsequently accepted by the December meeting of the Full Council. Some final tweaks to figures have been made and the final copy is attached for information.
- 1.2. The draft budget figures were compiled by Officers based on known spending as well as estimated costs of any upcoming projects. The figures are also informed by the estimated position at the end of the current year. This is detailed below in point 2.
- 1.3. The year's expenditure is budgeted to be £623,264. This is offset by estimated income of £20,191.

2. Year End Positions

2.1. Bank Balances and Reserves

- 2.1.1. Based on estimated calculations, the Council's bank balances at the end of the current financial year as follows.

As at 31st March 2022	
Opening Bank Balance	£768,429.95
Minus	
Estimated Expense	£611,994.96
	£156,434.99
Add	
Estimated Income	£856,385.17
Est. Closing Bank Balance	£1,012,820.16

- 2.1.2. Of the £1.01m balance, £604,051 forms the Council's Earmarked Reserves leaving £408,769 in the General Fund/Reserve.
- 2.1.3. It is generally accepted that a Council of Wellington's size should hold a general reserve of 3 months expenditure.¹ 25% of the 23-24 budget is £155,816. The estimated General Fund figure above is 65% of the budgeted expenditure in 23-24.

2.2. Current (22-23) Budget

- 2.2.1. As explained in previous reports, it is likely that a number of budget lines in the current year will either be unspent or underspent. Due to this, a 'carried forward' system has been applied sparingly for 23-24. This should ease the pressure on any increase in Precept that may be required and can be viewed as a drawdown of the General Reserve.

¹ NALC JPAG (Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) Practitioners' Guide March 2022 Section 5.34

3. Tax Base

- 3.1. Somerset West & Taunton calculate and provide a 'Tax Base' every year. The Tax Base is the equivalent number of Band D properties (i.e. an average) in a parish or town etc. after adjustments.
- 3.2. An allowance is made for void properties, exemptions, disabled reductions, new properties and the collection rate, to give an adjusted tax base.
- 3.3. This year, SWT have provided an easy-to-use pro-forma which has been used to provide figures below. This will be available at the meeting to enter other options for the Precept.

3.4. Changes to Tax Base

- 3.4.1. The table below shows the change in Tax base for 22-23 and 23-24

2022/23	2023/24	Difference	Difference %
5,376.16	5,508.96	132.80	2.47%

4. Current Years Precept

- 4.1. The 2022-2023 Precept was set at £413,677 which equated to a Band D Equivalent of £76.95. This gave a 15% increase on the previous year.

5. Calculating the 23-24 Precept

- 5.1. The 'normal' way to calculate the Precept is 'Expenditure-Income=Precept'. The table below details this calculation based on the 23-24 Budget and the subsequent % change

	2022/23	2023/24	Difference	Difference %
Tax Base	5376.16	5508.96	132.80	2.47%
Precept	413,677	603,073	189,396	45.78%
Band D Precept	76.95	109.47	32.52	42.26%

- 5.2. Given the Council's level of reserve, it is able to calculate the Precept while being mindful of the % increase to Council Tax Payers. Presented below are several options and their impact on the Council's reserves. Details on the change per year for each band of property is also given.
- 5.3. The Committee should bear in mind the impact on Council funds that may come due to the implementation of the new Unitary Authority in April 2023. While Officers have been striving to obtain information on what services will be affected in the Town, the Authority have indicated that there will be no devolution of assets in the first year. It is expected that a framework for this will be implemented which should assist the Council in setting budgets for future years.

5.3.1. Option 1 – Precept Figure remains the same at £413,677. This would result in an estimated drawn down from the General Fund of £209,587 which would leave a fund balance of approximately 31% of expenditure.

		22/23	23/24	Increase/(decrease)	
				£	%
Tax Base		5376.16	5508.96	132.80	2.47%
Precept		413677	413677	0	0.00%
Band D amount		76.95	75.09	(1.85)	-2.41%

				£	£	£	%
A	6	/	9	51.30	50.06	(1.24)	-2.41%
B	7	/	9	59.85	58.40	(1.44)	-2.41%
C	8	/	9	68.40	66.75	(1.65)	-2.41%
D	9	/	9	76.95	75.09	(1.85)	-2.41%
E	11	/	9	94.05	91.78	(2.27)	-2.41%
F	13	/	9	111.15	108.47	(2.68)	-2.41%
G	15	/	9	128.24	125.15	(3.09)	-2.41%
H	18	/	9	153.89	150.18	(3.71)	-2.41%

5.3.2. Option 2 – 0% increase calculation based on 23-24 Tax Base. This would result in an estimated draw down from the General Fund of £199,368 which would leave a fund balance of approximately 33% of expenditure.

		22/23	23/24	Increase/(decrease)	
				£	%
Tax Base		5376.16	5508.96	132.80	2.47%
Precept		413677	423914	10,237	2.47%
Band D amount		76.95	76.95	0.00	0.00%

				£	£	£	%
A	6	/	9	51.30	51.30	0.00	0.00%
B	7	/	9	59.85	59.85	0.00	0.00%
C	8	/	9	68.40	68.40	0.00	0.00%
D	9	/	9	76.95	76.95	0.00	0.00%
E	11	/	9	94.05	94.05	0.00	0.00%
F	13	/	9	111.15	111.15	0.00	0.00%
G	15	/	9	128.24	128.25	0.01	0.00%
H	18	/	9	153.89	153.90	0.01	0.00%

5.3.3. Option 3 – 5% increase on Band D amount. This would result in an estimated draw down from the General Fund of £178,140 which would leave a fund balance of approximately 37% of expenditure.

		22/23	23/24	Increase/(decrease)	
				£	%
Tax Base		5376.16	5508.96	132.80	2.47%
Precept		413677	445124	31,447	7.60%
Band D amount		76.95	80.80	3.85	5.01%

				£	£	£	%
A	6	/	9	51.30	53.87	2.57	5.01%
B	7	/	9	59.85	62.84	3.00	5.01%
C	8	/	9	68.40	71.82	3.43	5.01%
D	9	/	9	76.95	80.80	3.85	5.01%
E	11	/	9	94.05	98.76	4.71	5.01%
F	13	/	9	111.15	116.71	5.57	5.01%
G	15	/	9	128.24	134.67	6.42	5.01%
H	18	/	9	153.89	161.60	7.71	5.01%

5.3.4. Option 4 – 10% increase on Band D amount. This would result in an estimated draw down from the General Fund of £156,930 which would leave a fund balance of approximately 40% of expenditure.

		22/23	23/24	Increase/(decrease)	
				£	%
Tax Base		5376.16	5508.96	132.80	2.47%
Precept		413677	466332	52,655	12.73%
Band D amount		76.95	84.65	7.70	10.01%

				£	£	£	%
A	6	/	9	51.30	56.43	5.14	10.01%
B	7	/	9	59.85	65.84	5.99	10.01%
C	8	/	9	68.40	75.24	6.85	10.01%
D	9	/	9	76.95	84.65	7.70	10.01%
E	11	/	9	94.05	103.46	9.41	10.01%
F	13	/	9	111.15	122.27	11.13	10.01%
G	15	/	9	128.24	141.08	12.84	10.01%
H	18	/	9	153.89	169.30	15.41	10.01%

6. Recommendations

6.1. It is the Officer's **recommendation** that option 4 be implemented. Although this will result in a 10% increase, it also draws down some of the general reserve while still leaving a balance that will allow the Council to be resilient in providing additional services down the line. Already included in the budget are the following items related to the Council's expansion

- Providing a Community Warden/Town Ranger (salary etc.)
- Refurbishment of Longforth Rd Toilets
- Additional office staff to implement projects and events

6.2. The estimated General Reserve balance after drawing down will be around £251,800 which equates to approx. 40% of annual expenditure. This level of reserve, although above the recommended 25%, will still allow the implementation of the following, if agreed, which form part of the Council's ambition for growth.

- Community Warden/Town Ranger set up costs (initial vehicle and equipment purchase etc.)
- Possible purchase of 28-30 Fore Street.

6.3. This increase is in line with current inflation, the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 11.1% in the 12 months to October 2022, up from 10.1% in September 2022².

² ONS (Office for National Statistics) October 2022 -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/october2022>

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON 12 DECEMBER 2022 AT 4.30pm

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

One member of the press was in attendance

413 Apologies

Apologies were received and noted from Councillors S Booker, K Canham and J Lloyd.

The Chair raised concerns that due to the postal strike papers had not arrived with Councillors in time for them to give proper consideration in advance of the meeting. He recognised that some were time critical and that others were relatively straightforward and proposed that items 7 and 9 on the agenda be deferred to allow further consideration. After some discussion it was **RESOLVED** that consideration of agenda items 7 and 9 would be deferred and that an additional meeting would be held on the 19 December 2022 to consider them.

414 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

415 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 October 2022.

416 Questions and Comments from Members of the Public

No members of the public were in attendance.

417 To Review the Town Council Health and Safety Policy

An amended version of the Town Council Health and Safety Policy was circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that the revised policy is adopted.

418 To Review the Town Councils Safeguarding Policy

A revised Town Council Safeguarding Policy was circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Town Council that the revised policy is adopted.

419 Proposal to Appoint a Community Warden/Ranger

Consideration of this item was deferred until the 19 December 2022.

420 Proposal to Establish a Town Council Award Scheme

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend adoption of the Scheme to the Town Council.

421 To Consider Whether the Town Council Should Seek a Review of its Boundaries.

Consideration of this item was deferred until the 19 December 2022.

422 Councillor Allowances

The paper circulated with the agenda was noted. It was **RESOLVED** that the 2023/24 allowance should be as set in the 2023/24 budget and that the Town Council should continue to press the new unitary authority, both individually and through the Somerset Association of Local Councils, to establish a Parish Remuneration Panel.

423 Town Council Winter Emergency Fund

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update on the allocation of funds. Since the decision to establish the budget had been made there was now a substantial body of support and funding available for groups and individuals. SPARK Somerset had been commissioned by Somerset County Council to provide advice and support in relation to setting up Warm Spaces including where to access funding to deliver them. wanting to establish warm spaces without needing the support of the Town Council. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would contact groups in the town to establish if they would be able to extend their provision with support from the Town Council. It was also agreed that the Town Clerk will contact schools and The One Team in the new year to remind them of the available funding.

424 Somerset Emergency Community Contact

The Committee noted the letter attached to the agenda from Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Unit and that the contact for the Town Council would be the Town Clerk.

425 Project Initiation Form

After some discussion the Committee **RESOLVED** not to recommend the adoption of the Project Initiation form as suggested. It noted that it was reasonable for staff to use it but not to expect councillors to.

426 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee **RESOLVED** to exclude members of the press and public for agenda item 14 in accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the paper supporting the Green Corridor Lease contained information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings which is classified as 'Exempt Information' as defined in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

427 Green Corridor Lease.

The Committee considered the Town Clerks Report and the Lease. After some discussion it was **RESOLVED** to accept the Town Clerks assessment of the legal advice received and to recommend to the Town Council that the lease be agreed as currently written to be signed by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on behalf of the Council.

.....
Councillor Mark Lithgow
Chairman

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON 19 DECEMBER 2022 AT 4.30pm

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

One member of the press and ne member of the public were in attendance

428 Apologies

Apologies were received and noted from Councillors K Canham and K Wheatley.

429 Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

430 Questions and Comments from Members of the Public

There were no questions or comments

431 Proposal to Appoint a Community Warden/Ranger

A proposal had been circulated with the agenda. After some discussion The Committee resolved to **RECOMMEND** to the Town Council

- (i) that it should seek to recruit a Community Warden for 22 hours per week on the basis set out in the proposal
- (ii) to 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.

432 To Consider Whether the Town Council Should Seek a Review of its Boundaries.

A paper from Councillor Thorne had been circulated for consideration.

After introducing the paper Councillor Thorne had to leave the meeting at 6.20. He re-joined the meeting at 6.25. After some discussion the Committee resolved not to recommend to the Town Council that it seeks a review of its boundaries at this time.

The meeting closed at 6.35pm

.....
Councillor Mark Lithgow
Chairman

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 Main 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
- 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 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 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, screwdrivers, 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