

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 3 APRIL 2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 3 APRIL 2023 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Lithgow (Mayor)

Councillors M Barr, Z Barr, S Booker, C Booth, K Canham, A Govier, C Govier, J Lloyd, R Henley (from 7.05pm), M McGuffie, N Powell-Brace. K Wheatley.

David Farrow (Town Clerk)

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

611. TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

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

No apologies were received.

613. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that standing declarations of interest relating to membership of Somerset West and Taunton Council were no longer required following the implementation of the new unitary Somerset Council and would be removed for future agendas and minutes

614. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Town Council and Planning Meetings held on 6 March 2023.

615. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Three members of the public spoke.

Two members of the public spoke to raise concerns in relation to the Wellington Place Plan.

One member of the public raised concerns in relation to the lack of a flagpole in the town centre and also asked that the Council consider marking the 650th anniversary of the UK/Portugal Treaty being the oldest treaty of its kind by inviting the Portuguese Ambassador to the town to plant a tree given our links with Torres Vedras.

616. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sergeant Kat Forrest had been circulated prior to the meeting and PCSO Steve Hill attended the meeting. The report was noted. In response to questions PCSO Hill confirmed that the phone calls received would include multiple calls from an individual relating to one incident.

617. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM AIRBAND COMMUNITY INTERNET LTD

Representatives from Airband were unable to attend the meeting so this item will be rescheduled to a future meeting.

At this juncture, it was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow discussion of the announcement by Lloyds Bank that it would be closing its Wellington Branch, the last bank in the town, the announcement having been made after the agenda for the meeting had been published.

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CLOSURE OF LLOYDS BANK BRANCH

Councillors expressed concern about the proposed closure in particular its impact on those who don't or can't use online banking facilities. Questions were also raised about the basis of the decision to close with data supporting the proposal seeming to relate to periods during lockdown and also when the bank itself had chosen to limit access to its facilities. Councillor Henley raised a concern about the lack of an impact assessment of the decision.

Councillors welcomed the announcement that a banking hub is to be established in the town but wanted to understand more about how it will work, where it will be sited and wants assurances that it will be established before the Lloyds branch closes

The Town Clerk advised that he had already made contact with the Delivery Director at Cash Access UK, which is the organisation funded by the major banks and building societies to secure access to cash for communities and is tasked with delivering banking hubs across the UK, and their property agent responsible for finding a suitable location for the hub. He has invited them to meet with councillors at the earliest opportunity to discuss plans for the hub in the town.

He reported that from those initial discussions they said need a minimum space of 850sqft for a hub.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk should continue to engage with Cash Access UK to deliver a banking hub in the town as quickly as possible and that the Town Council was fully supportive of the proposal.

RESOLVED to re-instate standing orders.

618. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

An email detailing the Mayor's engagements the previous month had been circulated prior to the meeting.

619. SOMERSET COUNTY AND UNITARY COUNCIL PROGRESS UPDATE

Councillor A Govier advised that all senior appointments had now been made but that for the rest of the staff and services it was very much business as usual now that the Unitary Council had come into existence. He remained concerned about next year's budget.

Councillor R Henley said how difficult it was for those staff going through the recruitment process for posts in the new Council. He also reported that a pre Local Community network meeting for the Wellington/Wiveliscombe area was to take place on 26 April at 7pm at Langford Budville Village Hall. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had received an email in relation to this late afternoon on the day of the meeting.

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

The Clerk's report had been circulated with the agenda and was noted.

621. FINANCE COMMITTEE

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The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2023 and relevant papers supporting its recommendations had been circulated with the agenda.

it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The balance of the Railway Station and Post Office Provision reserves be maintained to show the Council's commitment to these projects.
- (ii) The Neighbourhood Plan reserve be closed, and the remaining balance be put back into the general reserve.
- (iii) The Professional Services line be returned to a revenue budget.
- (iv) No more commitments are made to fund items from the CIL reserve until costs for the Longforth Road Toilets are known.

The decisions that the Committee had taken under its delegated powers were noted.

622. ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 March 2023 had been circulated with the agenda along with papers supporting recommendations.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- (i) Adopt the revised terms of reference for the Committee given its new role in having oversight of heritage matters in the town.
- (ii) Agree the outline terms for the underlease for the Community Farm Pilot Project as contained in the report circulated with the agenda.
- (iii) Agree that £5,000 be set aside from the Playing Pitch Strategy budget to enable a feasibility study to be carried out in relation to the potential provision of new junior sports pitches in the Green Corridor and that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to approve payment up to that amount once three quotes have been received.
- (iv) Accept the quote from Somerset West and Taunton Council/Somerset Council for grass cutting at Tonedale Play Area and emptying dog bins in the town with a view to reviewing the contract for 2024/25.

The decisions that the Committee had taken under its delegated powers were noted.

623. TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21 March 2023 had been circulated with the agenda.

The decisions that the Committee had taken under its delegated powers were noted.

Councillor M Barr advised that he had been approached by shop owners on South Street who had raised concerns about the impact of the Produce Market on their business when the street was closed. Other Councillors supported the comments, and it was agreed that shop owners should be surveyed about the impact of the Produce Market on their trade.

624. THE KINGS ARMS

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. It was **RESOLVED** that The Town Council take the lead in developing the Community Hub model of working for the ground floor of the Kings Arms, as set out in the supporting paper, working with representatives from the Community One Team, Churches Together and other interested local groups to include identifying the most appropriate organisational model for the long term management of the hub.

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625. TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC5

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude members of the press and public for agenda item 16 and 17 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. The basis of the request is that elements of the reports relate to existing commercial arrangements or contain commercially sensitive information.

626 LONGFORTH ROAD TOILET BLOCK

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Ravenslade Construction Consultancy to Project Manage the work on the Longforth Road toilet block.

627. MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

A paper had been circulated with the agenda. It was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) To enter into discussions with Bloor Homes in relation to the future management of public open spaces on the Longforth Farm development.
- (ii) That the Policy and Resources Committee should nominate two Councillors to work with officers in those discussions.
- (iii) That the Policy and Resources Committee will consider any proposals arising from the discussions with a view to final recommendations being considered by Full Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset County Council:

Councillor Andrew Govier
Councillor Marcus Barr
Councillor Ross Henley

Councillor Mark Lithgow, Mayor