

## WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON 20 JUNE 2023 AT 4.00pm

**Present:** Councillors M Barr, K Canham, C Govier, A Govier, M Lithgow, J Lloyd, M McGuffie, J Thorne and K Wheatley.

One member of the press was in attendance.

#### **80. To Elect a Chair for the Coming Year**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor C Govier as Chair of the Committee for the coming year.

#### **81. To Receive Apologies for Absence and to Approve the Reasons Given**

No apologies had been received

#### **82. To Receive Any Declarations of Interest**

Councillor J Thorne declared a personal interest in agenda item 13 as he knows people employed by Abbeyfield working at Ivy House.

#### **83. Minutes**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 April 2023.

#### **84. Questions and Comments from Members of the Public**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

#### **85. Terms of Reference**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Full Council that no changes were required to the Committee's Terms of Reference with the exception that the organisation chart needed to be updated.

#### **86. To Agree Dates for Committee Meetings for the Coming Year**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that it would meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of alternate months, starting at 4.00pm with the next meeting to be held on the 8 August 2023.

#### **87. Town Council Forward Plan**

After some discussion the Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that an informal planning session should be convened to allow councillors to discuss priorities for the remainder of the Council mapped against the Council's vision and taking into consideration the findings of the recent Community Review.

#### **88. Longforth Farm Toilet Block – Project Plan**

Copies of the Project Plan and Risk Register had been circulated with the agenda and were noted. The Town Clerk reported that officers were meeting monthly with Ravenslade to monitor progress and that this would be a standing item on future Policy and Resources Committee agendas.

Concern was raised regarding the target completion date of January 2025 and the Town Clerk stated that it was still the very early days of the project and it was hoped that it would be possible to bring that date back but at this time that is what was expected.

#### **89. Basins – Rockwell Green Footpath**

The Town Clerk explained that he had been in discussions with a member of the Somerset Council Footpaths Team in relation to making the footpath between The Basins and Rockwell Green more accessible by changing the gate arrangements at either end and by installing ramps on the wooden bridge.

He had been hoping to be able to present a proposal for the gate arrangements but had not received the information required. Somerset Council had however agreed to install a ramp at and replace the sides of the wooden bridge. Somerset Council had asked for a financial contribution towards the work and the Committee **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to agree up to £500 as a contribution.

#### **90. Public Open Spaces on New Developments**

After some discussion the Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that in principle the Town Council should seek to take on responsibility for the management of any public open spaces on new developments in the town.

#### **91. The Kings Arms**

A paper had been circulated with the agenda providing an update on the project. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the Council funds the premises costs of annual rent of £10,000 and utility costs of £8,000 initially for a two year period from April 2024.

#### **92. Future of Allotments Committee**

A paper had been circulated with the agenda and Councillor J Lloyd introduced the item to the Committee. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Full Council that an Allotment Advisory Board is created, on the basis set out in the report, to replace the Allotments Committee to have oversight of the Basins Allotments. It would report to the Environment and Heritage Committee.

#### **93. Ivy House and The Old Vicarage**

The Committee **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To recommend to Full Council that a Working Group be established consisting of Councillors J Lloyd, A Govier and J Thorne to work with the Town Clerk to undertake the Council's due diligence work in relation to the possibility of the Town Council taking on the ownership and management of Ivy House and The Old Vicarage with a view to making a recommendation to the Full Council at an appropriate time and
- (ii) That to facilitate that work the Town Clerk should sign the Non-Disclosure Agreement with Abbeyfield on behalf of the Town Council.

#### **94. Subsidised Public Transport**

Councillor McGuffie's proposal had been detailed on the agenda.

After some discussion the Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that it should explore with stakeholders any options to reduce the cost of buses to Taunton for

residents and increase their use. This will provide environmental and social benefits and the Council's ambition would be for free off-peak travel at least one day a week.

**95. Community Transport**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that it explores establishing a community transport service in the town to support those parts of the town without access to public transport.

**96. Scarecrow Competition**

Following the decision of the Full Council to agree a town wide Scarecrow Competition to committee **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The competition will be based around the five wards of the town with a winner in each ward being selected by the local Councillors for that ward.
- (ii) The five winners would then be judged by a panel of Councillors to select an overall winner for the town.
- (iii) Each ward winner will receive a prize of a £25 voucher from a local shop with the overall winner being given an extra £25 voucher.
- (iv) Judging will take place over the August Bank Holiday weekend with scarecrows being put out for display from the 21 August 2023.

**97. Mayors/Council Charity Fund**

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would work with the Mayor to provide a more detailed proposal.

**98. Banking Hub Update**

The Town Clerk reported that he was in regular contact with Cash Access UK in relation to establishing a hub in the town. To date it had not yet identified any suitable premises.

He also reported that he had written to the Chief Executive of Lloyds Bank seeking reassurances that the branch would not be closing on the 13 September, as posted on the branch door, as it had given a commitment at the time the closure was announced to remain open until a hub was established or until the 29 March 2024 whichever was the earlier. Given that Cash Access UK say that it takes at least a year to establish a hub the hub will not be in place by the 13 September.

He reported that he had received a response from Lloyds reaffirming the commitment set out above. He had replied asking that the sign on the branch door stating that the branch will be closing on the 13 September 2023 be removed as it was not accurate.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.30pm

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**Councillor Catherine Govier**  
**Chairman**