

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 3 JULY 2023

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

PRESENT: Councillor M Barr (Mayor)

Councillors Z Barr, C Booth, K Canham, A Govier, C Govier, R Henley, M Lithgow, J Lloyd, M McGuffie, N Powell-Brace, J Thorne and K Wheatley.

David Farrow (Town Clerk)

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

104. TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

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

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors W Battishill and S Booker.

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared other than the standing declarations listed at the end of the minutes.

107. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Planning and Town Council minutes of the 5 June with the addition that Councillor Thorne should be listed as being present.

108. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

One member of the public spoke to thank the Town Council for organising the event to grant the Freedom of the Town to the Rifles Regiment.

109. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sergeant Jon O'Connor had been circulated prior to the meeting. Concern was raised by councillors that Sergeant O'Connor has referred in his report to a river jumping accident in Fox's Field as resulting from 'antisocial behaviour' linking it with fire lighting. The view was expressed that the jumping injury was not antisocial behaviour but young people enjoying themselves and it was an accidental injury.

The Mayor asked Sergeant O'Connor to look into the issue of poor parking on junctions.

110. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM THE HEADTEACHER OF COURT FIELDS SCHOOL

Mrs Polly Matthews, Head teacher, made a presentation to the Council updating it on the work of the school including the outcome of its recent Ofsted Inspection which had judged the school to be 'Good' on all measures.

Councillors congratulated Mrs Matthews on the progress the school has made under her leadership. Councillor A Govier said that he felt that the school was in the strongest position that it had been for many years.

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In response to questions Mrs Matthews confirmed that as a result of increasing numbers of pupils at the school, resulting from the growth of the town and also more parents choosing to send their children to the school, Somerset Council had agreed funding to provide additional accommodation.

111. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM PROMISEworks.

Christell Charles, Case Holder Taunton and West Somerset, made a presentation to the Council on the work of PROMISEworks and asked that councillors consider becoming mentors and/or promote becoming mentors to the community.

112. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor's report had been circulated with the agenda.

113. SOMERSET COUNCIL UPDATE

Councillor R Henley outlined the work he was leading as Chair of the Governance Review Panel and what he was doing in relation to the Lloyds Bank and Abbeyfield issues.

Councillor A Govier also referenced Abbeyfield and reminded councillors that the first Local Community Network meeting for the area was taking place later in the week. He said that as a member of the Scrutiny Committee for Adults and Health he continued to raise concerns regarding access to NHS dentistry.

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

The Town Clerk's report had been circulated with the agenda. He highlighted the outstanding success of the Rifles Freedom event and in particular paid tribute to the work of the Council's Assets and Events Officer. He also said that since writing the report, the sign on the door of Lloyds Bank had been changed to show the closure date as 29 March 2024 and not 13 September 2023. He said that the Council's Ivy House and Old Vicarage Woking group had held its first meeting with the Chief Executive of Abbeyfield to discuss how the Council could support the two properties in remaining open. A further meeting was planned for towards the end of July. A Non-Disclosure Agreement had been signed with Abbeyfield, so it was not possible to detail the discussions in an open meeting. He also referenced the unfortunate accident in Fox's Field and said that he had spoken to the father of the young person who was injured.

Councillor J Thorne proposed that a vote of thanks should be made to local historian Chris Penney whose original idea it was to grant the freedom and who had done a lot of work behind the scenes to make it a success. It was **RESOLVED** to record the Council's thanks to Chris Penney.

115. FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2023 had been circulated with the agenda and were noted as were the following decisions taken by the Committee under its delegated powers:

- (i) To award a £3,000 grant to the Rockwell Green War Memorial Institute towards fire safety works.
- (ii) To approve expenditure of £2,350 towards the cost of the Wellington Carnival using the £1,000 budget allocated for the Carnival for this year with the remainder to come from the Promotion of Wellington budget line. As per last year, invoices will be made out to the Council for direct payment.
- (iii) To award a £500 grant to Skintight Samba.

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116. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023 and relevant supporting papers relating to the recommendations had been circulated with the agenda and were noted. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations of the Committee as follows:

- (i) That no changes are made to the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- (ii) That an informal planning session should be convened to allow councillors to discuss priorities for the remainder of the Council period mapped against the Council's Vision and taking into consideration the findings of the recent Community Review.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) That the Council funds the rent of £10,000 and utility costs of £8,000 at The Kings Arms initially for a two-year period from April 2024 to support the development of the community hub.
- (v) That an Allotment Advisory Board is created to replace the Allotments Committee to have oversight of the Basins Allotments. It will report to the Environment and Heritage Committee.
- (vi) 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.
- (vii) 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.
- (viii) That it explores establishing a community transport service in the town to support those parts of the town without access to public transport.

The Council noted the following decisions taken under the Committee's delegated powers:

- (i) That the Committee will meet the second Tuesday of alternate months starting at 4.00pm.
- (ii) To authorise the Town Clerk to spend up to £500 as a contribution to Somerset Council's costs of installing ramps on the bridge between The Basins and Rockwell Green.
- (iii) To agree the following arrangements for a town wide Scarecrow Competition this summer:
 - a. 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.
 - b. The five winners would then be judged by a panel of councillors to select an overall winner for the town.
 - c. 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.

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- d. Judging will take place in the week leading up to the 28 August with the winner being announced on Monday bank holiday weekend with the winner being announced on Bank Holiday Monday 28 August.

117. LAND ADJACENT TO LONGFORTH ROAD TOILET BLOCK

A report had been circulated with the agenda. It was **RESOLVED** to seek to enter into a lease for the land adjacent to the Longforth Road toilet Block for two years at a cost of £4,000 per annum on the proviso that clarification is sought on whether Planning Permission would be required for a builders' compound and if so whether it was likely to be granted.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset Council:

- Councillor Andrew Govier
- Councillor Marcus Barr
- Councillor Ross Henley

Councillor Marcus Barr Mayor