

## WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 4 SEPTEMBER 2023

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Barr (Mayor)  
Councillors C Booth, K Canham, A Govier, R Henley, M Lithgow, M McGuffie, N Powell-Brace, J Thorne and K Wheatley.

**In attendance:** David Farrow – Town Clerk  
Police Sergeant Jon O'Connor  
One member of the press

#### **209 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

#### **210 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Z Barr, S Booker, C Govier and J Lloyd.

#### **211 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor M Barr declared a prejudicial interest in item 13.  
Councillor N Powell- Brace declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 (ii).

#### **212 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Planning and Town Council meetings held 7 August 2023.

#### **213 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No members of the public were in attendance.

#### **214 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM**

The report from Sergeant Jon O'Connor had been circulated prior to the meeting. He highlighted the issue in relation to the Wellesley Hospital patient who had absconded whilst on a visit to the town centre.

At this juncture it was **RESOLVED** to bring agenda item 13 forward to allow Sergeant O'Connor to be present for the discussion.

At this juncture Councillor M Barr left the meeting and Councillor M Lithgow took over the Chair.

#### **215 WELLESLEY HOSPITAL SECURITY INCIDENT.**

The letter from the Town Clerk to Wellesley Hospital asking a number of questions had been circulated with the agenda. The response from the Hospital Director which was marked Strictly Private and Confidential had been circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting.

Councillors expressed concern that the letter did not answer the questions raised and could not understand why it was marked as it was. Councillor Thorne raised concerns regarding the security arrangements regarding the visit to the town and also the category of patient being treated at the hospital.

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It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should:

- (i) Write to the Hospital Director expressing concern regarding the response and inviting him to a closed meeting with councillors to discuss the Council's concerns;
- (ii) Write to the Care Quality Commission to raise the Council's concerns and asking them to investigate the hospital and
- (iii) Write to the Ministry of Justice to raise the Council's concerns and ask them to investigate the hospital.

At this juncture Councillor M Barr rejoined the meeting and took back the Chair.

### **216 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor's reported that August had been a quiet month for engagements so there was nothing to report.

### **217 SOMERSET COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE**

Councillor A Govier reported that the next LCN meeting was scheduled for October 12 at 7pm – venue to be confirmed. He also reported that councillors had had a briefing on schools with Reinforced autoclave aerated concrete. (RAAC) and was pleased to report that no schools in Wellington were affected.

Councillor R Henley said that as Chair of the LCN he had met with the vice chair and the intention was that the LCN meeting would have a specific focus possibly on highways issues. He also reported on a piece of work he was involved with looking at the impact of the requirement to have voted ID on recent elections.

### **218 TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES**

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

### **219 FINANCE COMMITTEE**

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2023 had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Committee that the unspent balance of the Cost of Living Fund (£30,200) be moved to an earmarked reserve for further use as required.

### **220 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

The draft Minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2023 and relevant supporting papers relating to the recommendations below had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

Councillor N Powell-Brace raised a concern that the Civility and Respect Pledge had not been brought to the Full Council for consideration and that she didn't think it appropriate that a Committee could make a decision that affected the whole Council. Councillor McGuffie suggested it be brought to the September meeting. After further comments, Councillor Powell-Brace left the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED:**

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- (i) That the Town Council should consider how to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its formation in April 2024 and that the Town Centre Committee should have oversight of the arrangements.
- (ii) That the Draft Dignity at Work Policy should be adopted by the Council.
- (iii) That the Draft Councillor-Officer Protocol should be adopted by the Council.
- (iv) That the reasonable costs of travel for one Council representative to attend the twinning visit for the 26 – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 should be met by the Council. It was noted that the Mayor should represent the Council. If the Mayor was unavailable, then the Deputy Mayor should attend and if they are unavailable then a volunteer should be sought from other Council members.
- (v) That the principle set out in the previous resolution should be applied to any future invitation for Civic visits from twinning towns.
- (vi) That the Town Council takes on responsibility for the costs of running and maintaining the clocks on the old Town Hall from Somerset Council. The annual costs are estimated at £250pa for an annual service and £200pa for electricity costs.

### 221 EXTRAORDINARY TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on the 23 August 2023 had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

### 222 DEVELOPMENT OF JUNIOR SPORTS PITCHES

A supporting paper had been circulated with the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) That the priority for the development of junior sports pitches in the town should focus on the Longforth Farm site given the funding and project management support being offered by Somerset Council and the risk of losing the site and the funding if this project is not followed through.
- (ii) That the £50,000 allocated by the Town Council to support the relocation of the senior football club should be used to support the development of junior sports pitches on the Longforth Farm site.
- (iii) That in relation to ensuring that the Green Corridor site identified for sports pitches is not lost, any agreement with the Community Farm in relation to its expansion will specify that land previously identified for sports pitches on which they are working or proposing to work will need to be given back for sports pitch/leisure use as and when possibilities arise.

### 223 WELLINGTON COMMUNITY FOOD

#### (a) Request for Variation to Underlease.

After some discussion it was **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Underlease with Wellington Community Food be varied to allow for a second growing area as set out in Appendix B to the report.
- (ii) That the trial period be extended until September 2025 and that the trial period should remain rent free.
- (iii) That should the project continue beyond September 2025 an appropriate commercial rent will be charged for the use of the land by Wellington Community Food to be set by the Town Council at the time.

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(iv) That all other terms of the lease remain unchanged.

**(b) Application for Countryside Stewardship Grant**

It was **RESOLVED** to support Wellington Community Food in its application for grants from the Country Stewardship Fund to support hedge planting, educational provision and environmental management.

**224 SITE FOR NEW BENCH**

It was **RESOLVED** that a new bench should be installed on the existing concrete base on the mound on the Playing Field.

At this juncture Councillor R Henley left the meeting.

**225 STORAGE FOR COMMUNITY WARDEN**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve ongoing hire of a 20ft x 8ft container at Wellington Self Storage and to budget up to £200 to purchase shelving where required.

**226 TO CONSIDER RESOLVING TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting as agenda items 19 and 20 referred to matters which were commercially sensitive and confidential.

**227 TOWN COUNCIL ACCOMODATION**

The confidential minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 15 August 2023 and the supporting paper had been circulated with the agenda. After some discussion it was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations of the Committee with the addition that a small working group of councillors be established to work alongside officers on preparing a proposal for the full Council to consider.

**228 TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE FRONT PART OF THE LONGFORTH ROAD TOILET BLOCK**

After some discussion it was agreed that further information was required before a decision could be made. The Town Clerk will liaise with the Councils Project Manager with Ravenslade and report back. It was agreed that if needs be an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council should be convened to reach a decision.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm.

**STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Members of Somerset Council:**  
Councillor Andrew Govier  
Councillor Marcus Barr  
Councillor Ross Henley

Mayor  
Councillor Marcus Barr .....