

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6 NOVEMBER 2023

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM

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

In attendance: David Farrow – Town Clerk
Alice Kendall – Deputy Clerk and Deputy Responsible Financial Officer
Two members of the public
One member of the press
Four members of the public who had applied to be co-opted on to the Town Council (agenda item 8)

302 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

303 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Councillor Z Barr.

304 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

305 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Planning and Town Council meetings held on 2 October 2023.

306 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

One member of the public spoke thanking the Town Council for its fruit tree initiative and raising concerns regarding the care of trees in other public spaces in the town. The Town Clerk advised that the latter issue would be being considered at the next meeting of the Environment and Heritage Committee given other concerns that had been raised with him.

One member of the public spoke in support of the Town Council adopting the Armed Forces Covenant.

307 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sergeant Jon O'Connor had been circulated prior to the meeting. He was unable to attend the meeting as he was on duty.

308 CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR THE EAST WARD

The Council received presentations from members of the community who had expressed an interest in being Co-opted on to the Council. Having **RESOLVED** to conduct a secret ballot, Sean Pringle-Kosikowsky was elected to be Co-opted on to the Council for the remainder of this Council period.

The Mayor, Councillor Thorne and Councillor R Henly paid tribute to Wayne Battishill, whose resignation had led to the Co-option, and Nancy Powell-Brace who had resigned from the Council earlier that day, for their service whilst on the Council.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6 NOVEMBER 2023

309 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted. The Mayor said that on his recent visit to Torres Vedras the Council there had spoken of their wishes to strengthen the twinning arrangements with Wellington.

310 SOMERSET COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor C Govier reported on the most recent LCN meeting. She said that she felt that it would be better if the LCN started working in smaller working groups focussing on specific topics.

Councillor R Henly agreed with Councillor C Govier's assessment of the LCN.

Councillor A Govier reported that Somerset Councils budget issues were coming to a head. He noted that Mike Best, the Chairman of Somerset Council had attended the Dedication of the Field of Remembrance on Sunday 5th November.

Councillor Barr reported that he had undertaken casework across the ward.

Councillor J Thorne said that as he understood it Somerset Council's financial position was so challenging that it was likely that a Section 114 Notice would be issued in February and that it would be ceasing to provide, either fully or in part, many services it was currently delivering in the town, and the Town Council would have to decide whether it was prepared to step in to ensure those services continued to be delivered. The only way that could be done would be by increasing the Precept considerably.

The Town Clerk advised that from discussions he was having, and from his experience of working for the previous Somerset County Council, the only way Somerset Council can make the savings it needs to is by identifying those services it had to deliver by law and then doing the bare minimum to be legally compliant if that was all that it could afford to do. Activities with no legal basis would cease to be provided or be provided in a different way for example by being charged for. He agreed with Councillor Thorne's assessment that the only way the Town Council could pick up those services was by increasing the Precept.

311 TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

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

312 FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

313 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2023 had been circulated with the agenda. The Town Clerk explained that the proposals in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant on the agenda differed from the recommendation recorded in the minutes of the Committee meeting as he had clarified after the committee meeting that the Covenant could not be amended. He had discussed this with Councillor McGuffie, who had proposed the original amendment at the committee, and he had agreed that the two considerations should be separated out for the Council meeting. On that basis:

- (i) It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Armed Forces Covenant.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 6 NOVEMBER 2023

- (ii) Councillor J Thorne proposed an amendment to the tabled proposal which was not seconded. It was then **RESOLVED** to agree the wording ‘that in adopting the Covenant it looks forward to when war and preparing for war are things of the past and will support initiatives to achieve this, such as the United Nations disarmament commission.’
- (iii) It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor J Lloyd should be the Armed Forces Champion for the Council.
- (iv) It was **RESOLVED** that the Council should, in principle, fund the travel costs and, if needs be, overnight accommodation costs for the Mayor and Consort to attend the Council of the Year presentation event or any future event. On this occasion the Mayor is unable to attend and so the Deputy Mayor and her partner will attend to represent the Town Council on that basis.

314 SOMERSET ARMED FORCES COVENANT PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE 17 OCTOBER 2023

Councillor J Lloyd said that she would ask the Town Clerk to circulate the presentation that had been made at the conference with the minutes of the meeting.

315 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The findings of the Internal Audit Report were noted along with the actions to address them. The Town Clerk reported that a review of the Councils committee structure would be put on hold until the outcomes of discussions with Somerset Council about what services the Town Council may be responsible for were finished.

316 COMMUNITY WARDEN SET UP COSTS

The Council noted the costs of purchasing equipment and clothing for the Community Warden to date.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.50pm

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset Council:

Councillor Andrew Govier
Councillor Marcus Barr
Councillor Ross Henley

Mayor
Councillor Marcus Barr