

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 8 JANUARY 2024

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 8 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Barr (Mayor)
Councillors Z Barr, J Cole, C Booth, A Govier, R Henley, J Lloyd, M McGuffie, S Pringle-Kosikowsky, J Thorne and K Wheatley.

In attendance: David Farrow – Town Clerk
Alice Kendall – Deputy Town Clerk
Five members of the public
One member of the press

406 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors C Govier and M Lithgow

408 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

409 TRIBUTES TO RICHARD HUGH FOX

Councillors and a member of the public paid tribute to Richard Fox, Freeman of Wellington who had died on the 26 December 2023.

Councillor A Govier also advised the council that Ruth Brown, the wife of former Town Clerk Tony Brown had died on the 5 January and councillors asked that their condolences be passed on to Tony Brown.

410 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Planning and Town Council meetings held on 4 December 2023.

411 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- (a) A member of the public raised concerns about the landscaping around the Lidl store noting that there were gaps in the newly planted hedging, that trees that had been planted were not surviving and that where the plans had shown that Oak trees would be planted London Plane trees had in fact been planted. She asked how the Planning Authority monitored compliance with planting plans. The Town Clerk said he would look into it.
- (b) A member of Transition Town Wellington informed the Council of the group’s new website. The Town Clerk will circulate details to councillors.
- (c) The Chairman of Sampford Arundel Parish Council advised the council that it has set aside a budget to purchase support from the Town Council in light of Somerset Council’s financial position. The Town Clerk said he would liaise with her in relation to what services could be provided.

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412 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sergeant Jon O'Connor had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that as in previous months there had been a fall in activity from the previous year.

The Town Clerk asked Sergeant O'Connor for his views on the possibility that Somerset Council were considering turning off CCTV cameras and closing the monitoring facility as part of its budget saving proposals. Sergeant O'Connor said that his team would not be able to do its job without CCTV coverage. He said that the towns cameras needed upgrading but what was in place now was essential for his team to be able to do its work.

413 CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR

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, Justin Cole was elected to be Co-opted on to the Council for the remainder of this Council period.

414 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE LEVELLING UP BID FUNDING FOR TONERWORKS AND TONEDALE MILL

Dr Joanne O'Hara, Heritage at Risk Manager with Somerset Council provided an update on the recent successful Levelling Up Bid for Toneworks and Tonedale Mill.

Dr O'Hara told the Council that she would be leaving Somerset Council in February and councillors thanked her for all that she had done for Wellington noting that through her work she had brought significant funding in to the town to protect its heritage sites and that the work she had done had not always been easy.

415 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted.

416 SOMERSET COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

The Town Clerk took councillors through the savings options being considered by Somerset Council that would impact on the town contained in a report being considered by its Executive Committee on the 15 January. These included:

- No longer locking/unlocking Wellington Park
- Closing all public toilets
- Ceasing to provide CCTV monitoring services
- Pausing play area replacement programme meaning c£10k of work may not be done in Wellington which was due to be done. There will be a maintenance budget for repairs but concern is that it will be insufficient and that damaged equipment may just be taken out of use rather than repaired
- Closure of Taunton Plant Nursery and reduced planting in parks
- Reduction in minor highways maintenance and devolution of services to town and parish councils

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

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

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418 FINANCE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting on 12 December had been circulated with the agenda and were noted. It was also noted that the funding that had been agreed for the Potters Pounds Scheme and The Foodbank funding had not been required.

419 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting on 12 December were noted and Councillor C Govier provided an update at the meeting. It was **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That an amount of £5,400 should be included in the Devolution Contingency Budget line for the 2024/5 budget to fund the provision of expert advice to the Town Council on heritage matters should the need arise.
- (ii) That the Town Council should take on responsibility for coordinating and managing the tours at Toneworks in 2024 recognising that they would continue to be led by members of the Somerset Council Heritage at Risk Team.
- (iii) That the Town Council should fund the future application costs for Wellington Park's Green Flag at a cost of £430pa and the town's Britain in Bloom entry at a cost of £300pa.
- (iv) That Worknest be appointed as the Council's HR advisory service on a three year basis at a cost of £2075pa.

420 EVENTS 2024 – ROAD CLOSURE APPLICATION

It was **RESOLVED** to submit a joint road closure application at a cost of £575.00 to Somerset Council for both Wellington Produce Market and Town Council events in 2024. Councillors M Lithgow and K Wheatley had met with the organisers of Wellington Produce Market on the 6 and 18 December 2023, Councillor K Wheatley provided an update.

At this juncture Councillors Z Barr and R Henley left the meeting.

421 WELLINGTON TO TAUNTON CYCLE ROUTE UPDATE

Councillor J Lloyd provided an update from the stakeholder meeting held on 5 December 2023. Councillor McGuffie asked that the item be placed on the Environment and Heritage Committee agenda for further consideration

422 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting. The reason for this is that the following item refers to matters which relate to an individual.

423 STAFFING MATTER

The contents of this minute are confidential.

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset Council:

Councillor Andrew Govier

Councillor Marcus Barr

Councillor Ross Henley

**Director of the Somerset Association of
Local Councils**

Councillor Janet Lloyd

Mayor

Councillor Marcus Barr