

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES 4 MARCH 2024

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 4 MARCH 2024 AT 7.00PM

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

In attendance: David Farrow – Town Clerk
Ten members of the public
One member of the press

525 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed all those present.

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

No apologies were received.

527 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Lloyd declared a personal interest in agenda item 11(i) as the Chair of Sampford Arundel Parish Council.

Councillor M Barr declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as he cleaned the windows of some of those who had attended the meeting to speak under that agenda item.

528 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the additional Town Council meeting held on 21 February.

529 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public spoke to raise concerns about the poor quality of the road surface in Scott's Lane. Councillor R Henley said that he would raise this with the County Highways Team

Four members of the public spoke to raise concerns about the organisation of the Wellington Market held on the 24 February 2024. The Town Clerk said that officers were in discussions with the organisers and had also spoken to local traders. The matter would be being considered at the Town Centre Committee meeting on the 12 March 2024.

A member of the public spoke on behalf of Churches Together and invited councillors to join the Walk of Witness on Good Friday that would commence with a service at St Johns at 10.00am and would then process to The Baptist Church at 10.45am. He also reported that the first Whacky Wednesday of the Year would take place on the 3 April 2024.

At this juncture Councillor R Henley left the meeting.

530 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sergeant Jon O'Connor had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

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In response to a question Sergeant O'Connor said that the Home Office had changed the way in which some crimes had to be reported.

Councillor K Wheatley said that he had been pleased to attend the meeting with the Police and Crime Commissioner the previous Friday and it was good that he was impressed with the local team and realised how well the local police team and the Town Council worked together. He suggested that given the focus on fraud when the team next use the Pop-Up Shop they could have a focus on that.

Councillor Thorne raised concerns in relation to poor communication about ongoing cases which led to people drawing their own conclusion about what was or wasn't taking place. Sergeant O'Connor agreed that on occasions he thought that communications could be better but that it was often out of his control. He also said there was a balance to be struck between what could be said and the needs of a particular case.

531 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor advised that he had only attended one event in the last month which was to present awards to the Majorettes on the 22 February.

532 SOMERSET COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor C Govier reported back on the LCN meeting that took place on the 6 February. She felt that the LCN still had a long way to go to be effective and hoped that the proposed working groups around Highways and Community Transport would begin to move things on.

Councillor A Govier reported that the Government had agreed Somerset Councils request for c£76m of asset sales could be used for revenue purposes. This meant the Council could set a balanced budget for 24/5 but it was not clear how it could do so for 25/6.

The Town Clerk reported that he had received a letter in relation to the Highways Steward Scheme stating that it would now not be introduced until 2025/6. He was seeking meetings with Somerset Council staff to discuss how this model could work in Wellington.

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

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

The Town Clerk highlighted that the Temporary Banking Hub was ready to go he was just waiting for conformation from the provider that staff had been recruited to work in it. No opening date had been set but he hoped that it would be before the Lloyds branch closes.

He also reported that he and a number of other clerks of larger towns had arranged a meeting with the Chief Executive of Somerset Council and other senior officers on the 4 April to discuss how the recent devolution processes had gone and what lessons could be learned and to also start discussions about 2025/6 and what role town councils could play in delivering public services in the context of the ongoing financial challenges faced by Somerset Council.

534 FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting on 21 February had been circulated with the agenda and were noted.

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535 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 were circulated with the agenda and noted. It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) That should the Council be approached by parish councils to provide services, it should be receptive to such requests recognising that its priority had to be delivering services to Wellington.
- (ii) That Local Council Consulting be approached to refresh the staffing review undertaken in 2022 in the context of the forthcoming changes to the Town Councils roles and responsibilities. Also, that the role of Responsible Financial Officer be separated from the role of Town Clerk given the increasing size and scope of both roles.
- (iii) To approve the Risk Management Scheme.
- (iv) To adopt the Statement of Internal Control.
- (v) That no charges are made for tours of Toneworks but that donations would be welcomed.

536 BURCHILL'S HILL PUBLIC ENQUIRY

RESOLVED that the Town Council supported that the footpath between Millstream Gardens and Burchills Hill should be added to the Definitive Map and that the Town Clerk should write to the Planning Inspector Chairing the Inquiry to set out the Council's position.

537 COURTLAND ROAD

RESOLVED to support the proposal of introducing 'No entry' signage at the junction of Courtland Road and Beech Grove to prevent vehicles driving down Courtland Road from the Playing Field car park and support the school's informal one-way system. Councillor A Govier will liaise with the Highways Team at Somerset Council on this.

538 REVIEW OF COUNCIL INSURANCE

RESOLVED to accept the following recommendations:

- a) That the renewal from Zurich circulated with the agenda is accepted at a cost of £5,366.13,
- b) That Officers be given delegated authority to spend up to £1,000 for survey reports where required to establish appropriate cover (ref item 3c above). This to be funded from the Professional Services budget line, and
- c) Having noted and approved the renewal price above within the context of the budget of £6,000 (£633.87 remaining), and that the updates and additions in item 3 of the report will likely cause the budget line to become overspent; that Financial Regulation 4.2 is suspended (for the purposes of Insurance matters only) to allow delegated spending authority to Officers over that of the budget line to ensure the Council has the appropriate cover in place. Items of spending to be reported to the Finance Committee within the usual monthly reporting process.

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539 ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY BOARD

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February were noted.

540 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.

541 LONGFORTH FARM ALLOTMENT SITE – FENCING

RESOLVED that Abacus Construction be awarded the contract to install fencing at the Longforth Farm allotment site.

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