

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 3 DECEMBER 2024 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Lloyd (Chair),
Councillors M Barr, C Booth, J Cole, S Fox, A Govier, C Gover, R Henley, M Lithgow, M McGuffie, C Penk, S Pringle-Kosikowsky, J Thorne and K Wheatley

IN ATTENDANCE: David Farrow (Town Clerk)
Alice Kendall (RFO/Deputy Clerk)
One member of the press
Four members of the public

426 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.

427 JANET REED

The Mayor lead tributes to former Town Councillor Janet Reed who passed away on 12 November 2024. A minute’s silence was held.

At this juncture Councillor K Wheatley joined the meeting.

428 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APROVE THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Councillor S Mercer.

429 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

430 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held 4 November 2024.

431 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A representative of Churches Together reminded Councillors that a meal will be held in the URC hall for those who will be along on Christmas day. He encouraged Councillors to pass details on to those who might benefit.

A representative of Transition Town Wellington gave information on their water guardian scheme. They asked if the Council might grant some funding to enable to group to put on some awareness events. The RFO will forward the grant application details to the representative.

432 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sgt O’Connor was circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. Councillor Fox thanked the Sgt for a swift response to a matter in Jurston Farm. The Mayor thanked the team for attending the Light Switch on Event and wished them all a Merry, and safe, Christmas.

433 REQUEST FOR SPEED CALMING MEASURES TO BE INTRODUCED ON WATERLOO ROAD

Correspondence from a parishioner was circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow a member of the public to speak.

RESOLVED to re-instate standing orders.

Councillors thanked the member of the public for submitting the request. It was agreed that there is a wider issue to be address across the Town and that a working group should be set up to discuss solutions via the Community Committee. In the first instance, the Town Clerk will contact Kate Brown at Somerset highways to arrange a site visit to ascertain if any solutions (signage, etc.) might be implemented quickly at Waterloo Road.

434 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor’s report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. She further reported that the Christmas Shop Window Competition is to be judged in the week following the meeting and thanked staff for their hard work at the Switch On event the previous weekend.

435 COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor A Govier reported that the consultation regarding staffing structure and redundancies is still ongoing and that an extension of time has been requested for works via the Levelling Up Fund at the Toneworks and Mills.

Councillor Henley reported he is chairing the Boundary Review Working Group who will be meeting several times before Christmas and that further consultations will be held in the spring. He further reported on a site visit to the Cades estate with the Clerk, Councillor Cole and Kate Brown from Somerset Highways to discuss the ongoing parking issues there. Some restrictions are being proposed in the first instance but he hopes that further measures can be implemented in the future.

Councillor Barr reported that he is concerned about an increase in Council Tax bills given the current strain on the cost of living. He thanked Councillor Govier for his efforts in having fallen trees attended to after the recent storms.

Councillor C Govier reported that the next LCN meeting will be held on 21 January 2025.

The Mayor reported that she had attended the recent Highways working group meeting where they discussed issues with gullies. She asked that officers check the Parish Online system for data.

436 TO RECEIVE THE CLERK’S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

The Clerk’s report had been circulated with the agenda and was noted. He gave particular thanks to the Facilities Manager and Project Assistant for their work in organising the Switch on Event.

437 POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes and recommendations of the meeting held on 11 November 2024 were noted.

RESOLVED that comments be submitted in relation to the Boundary Commission’s initial consultation on the new division boundaries for Somerset Council as per the draft circulated with the agenda.

438 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024 were noted.

439 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes and recommendations of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 were noted.

RESOLVED to fund the printing of a Wellington in Bloom book at a cost of £581.60 from the Promotion of Wellington Budget.

During this item, Councillors Barr and Henley left the meeting.

440 BUDGET 2025/6

The draft budget was considered at a special meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 18 November. The minutes were circulated with the agenda and were noted.

After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to set the 25/26 budget as amended with the income budget (excluding precept) being noted at £68,240 and the expenditure budget being noted at £1,459,132.50.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40 pm

STANDING DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of Somerset Council:

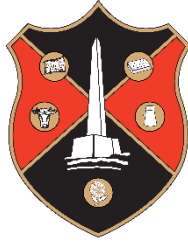
- Councillor Andrew Govier
- Councillor Marcus Barr
- Councillor Ross Henley

Director of the Somerset Association of Local Councils

- Councillor Janet Lloyd

Mayor

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REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK TO THE 6 JANUARY 2025 MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

1. Introduction

This report will update councillors on matters not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Other Matters

As the Council offices closed on the 24 December there has not been a full month of activities since the last meeting

- Working in partnership with the Woodland Trust tree planting has taken place in the Green Corridor and at locations around the town including IKB Primary School and Court Fields as part of the Woodland Creation and Tiny Forest schemes. Sadly the weather has intervened and we are not as far advanced as we hoped to be but planting will continue in the new year.
- Work is progressing on specifying what is required for the refurbishment of the Kings Arms and a report will be presented to the January Community Committee meeting setting out proposals and anticipated costs.
- Work is progressing on the transfer of open spaces from Somerset Council. Heads of Terms have been produced and agreed for all titles with the exception of the Community Centre which is slightly more complicated than the other transfers. Discussions are ongoing on remedial work required by Somerset Council prior to transfer and a Memorandum of Understanding is being drafted setting out what work needs to be completed before transfer or if that is not possible as soon as possible after that at no cost to the Town Council.
- The permanent Banking Hub is now open. Cash Access Uk has advised that it will commence decommissioning the former temporary hub in the new year and hope to be out of it by the end of January. We are lining up contractors to carry out work to develop the reception area and hope to be able to start this work alongside CAUK's decommissioning work.
- The Metro Board met on Friday 13 December. There were no further updates on the likelihood of the station proceeding. Both MPs are ensuring they maintain pressure on the Department for Transport emphasising the positive business cases for both stations. No further progress update is expected until later in the Spring. The next Metro Board meeting has been set for the 4 April 2025.
- The vacancies for the Open Spaces Team were advertised on the 13 December – closing date 10 January, interviews on either 13 or 14 January.

3. Communications and Social Media

In the period from 26 November to 17 December our social media channels have seen a great time in terms of views and content interaction. In this period on Facebook we have reached 32.6k profiles and have received 1.4k interactions (likes, shares comments) on our content. These are increases of 36.7% and 52.4% in comparison to the previous month. We recently surpassed 3.4k followers which is a very respectable number considering that Taunton Town Council, an authority with a substantially larger population, has 3.7k followers.

Out of 73 pieces of published content, our top 5 liked posts in this period were:

1. Announcing the winner of the Christmas Shop Window Competition – 112
2. Thank you to Dave Lacey and R W Gale for assisting in moving the monument planter – 83
3. Thank you from the WTC team after Christmas event – 36
4. Thank you to all businesses that entered Shop Window Competition – 35
5. Photos from the Christmas Market & Lights Switch On – 31

Our newsletter continues to perform well with 178 subscribers and an open rate of 83.6% on our December newsletter which is very good compared to our peers' average performance of 51%.

In 2025 we will continue to shape and grow our communication strategies and hope to make use of more channels of communication and reach more people.

4. December Meetings/Events

Date	Time	Event	Location	Who Involved
6 January	6.30pm	Planning Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
6 January	7.00pm	Full Council	URC Hall	All
8 January	10.30am	Town and Parish Clerks Briefing with Somerset Council	Virtual	Town Clerk
13 and 14 January	All day	Chamber unavailable – new carpet being fitted		
13 January	6.00pm	Policy and Finance Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
14 January	10.00am	Open Spaces Team Shortlisting	Offices	Town Clerk/Open Spaces Manager
15 January	6.00pm	Economic Development Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
16 January	10.00am	Devolution catch up with Somerset Council	Virtual	Officers

20 January	6.00pm	Community Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
21 January	6.00pm	LCN meeting	tbc	LCN reps
22 January	10.30am	Town and Parish Clerks Briefing with Somerset Council	Virtual	Town Clerk
22 January	6.00pm	Environment Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
23 and 24 January		Held for Open Spaces interviews		Town Clerk/Open Spaces Manager
23 January	6.30pm	Presidents Night – Wellington Pantomime	The Wellesley Theatre	Mayor
28 January	7.00pm	Green Corridor Advisory Board	Chamber	Board reps

Dave Farrow
Town Clerk
24 December 2024

**MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD AT UNTIED REFORMED CHURCH HALL ON MONDAY 09 DECEMBER 2024
AT 6.00PM**

PRESENT: Councillor M Lithgow (Chair),
Councillors J Cole, A Govier, J Lloyd, S Mercer, C Penk, and J Thorne.

IN ATTENDANCE: David Farrow – Town Clerk
Alice Kendall – RFO/Deputy Clerk

441 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillors C Govier and S Pringle-Kosikowsky.

442 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors A Govier and J Lloyd have a standing personal interest declaration relating to MTMIT, the Council’s IT consultant, being former customers of the company.

Councillor J Thorne has a standing personal interest declaration relating to MTMIT, the Council’s IT consultant, being a friend of the company owner.

443 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

444 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 18 November 2024.

445 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

(a) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 3 DECEMBER 2024

RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliation.

(b) TO NOTE AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR 5 NOVEMBER - 3 DECEMBER 2024

RESOLVED to note and approve the expenditure.

(c) TO NOTE AND APPROVE INCOME RECEIVED FOR 5 NOVEMBER - 3 DECEMBER 2024

RESOLVED to note and approve the income.

(d) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AGAINST THE BUDGET FOR THE 2024-25 YEAR AS AT 3 DECEMBER 2024 (attached)

RESOLVED to note and approve the budget report.

446 POTTER POUNDS

A brief paper was attached to the agenda and duly considered. After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to give Officers delegated authority to spend up to £1,100 from the Cost of Living reserve to top up what might be required for the scheme in 2024 if there is a shortfall in donations. Councillors would like to see the numbers expanded within this spend, if possible. The Town Clerk to liaise with the Connect Somerset Champion/One Team Co-Ordinator to discuss.

447 CORRESPONDENCE FROM HEALTH WATCH SOMERSET

Correspondence regarding the opening of an internet pharmacy at Westpark26 was considered and it was **RESOLVED** to support the application in principle provided there had been satisfactory consultation with the existing in person pharmacies in the town as well as NHS Somerset.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.40 pm

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