

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 4 AUGUST 2025 AT 7.00 PM

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

IN ATTENDANCE: David Farrow – CEO/Town Clerk
Alice Kendall – Democratic Services & Finance Manager
Wasif Choudhury – Democratic Services & Finance Officer
Sergeant Jon O'Connor, Wellington Community Policing Team (for minute 153)
Gideon Amos MP – Liberal Democrat MP for Taunton & Wellington (for minute 154)
Syed Shah – Public Relations Officer at Somerset Council (for minute 151)
Sally Mann – Fuse Performance Ltd. (Wellington Garden of Light Hosts for minute 162)
One member of the press
43 members of the public

148. WELCOME BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed those attending and informed that some agenda items will be moved given the number of people in attendance. And, that item 15 (Community Hospital Beds) would be expanded to cover health provision in the Town generally.

149. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Councillor S Pringle-Kosikowsky.

Councillor C Govier-Wiggins is still on approved maternity leave.

150. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors R Henley, J Lloyd and J Thorne declared a personal interest in agenda item 15 (Community Hospital Beds/Health Provision) as they are either current patients at Luson Surgery or Wellington Medical Centre.

At this juncture, it was **RESOLVED** to move agenda item 7 forward.

151. JUNCTION 26 AND LINK ROAD WORKS

A progress report was received by Syed Shah, Public Relations Officer at Somerset Council.

It was confirmed that the works are on schedule and will be completed by the allotted time.

At this juncture, it was **RESOLVED** to move agenda item 5 forward.

152. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend standing order 3f to allow for more than a total 15 minutes for Public Participation.

Seven members of the public spoke in relation to the closure of Luson Surgery.

One member of the public spoke in relation public drinking in the town and the need for a PSPO (Public Spaces Protection Order).

At this juncture, it was **RESOLVED** to move agenda item 6 forward.

153. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

Sgt O'Connor presented his report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting, which was noted.

154. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes the minutes of the Full Council Meeting on 7 July 2025.

Councillor J Thorne wanted minute 121 clarified to confirm that a councillor 'could' request a planning application be included on the next Council meeting agenda if requested by a member of the public not that they 'would'. This was noted.

At this juncture, it was **RESOLVED** to move agenda item 15 forward.

155. COMMUNITY HOSPITAL BEDS CONSULTATION

It was **agreed** to increase the scope of this agenda item to include the recent announcement of the closure of Luson Surgery .

Gideon Amos MP spoke on the closure of Luson Surgery. He reported that he will speak with NHS Somerset and the Health Minister to ensure there are enough GP's based in Wellington to appropriately serve the community. He also supported calls from both Councillors and members of the public to re-open the pharmacy located next to Wellington Medical Centre.

The Chief Executive reported on the conversations he had had with NHS Somerset in relation to the closure of Luson Surgery; detailing that the decision was a complex one and that NHS Somerset was providing support to both Luson Surgery and The Wellington Medical Centre to help them manage the change. He said that NHS Somerset would be reviewing provisions in the town, including pharmacy and GP provision and how the Community Hospital could be best utilised. A stakeholder group to support that work has been set up and the Chief Executive has ensured that the Town Council be included in its meetings.

After considerable discussion, it was **agreed** that:

- (i) That an urgent meeting should be sought with Somerset NHS Trust and Wellington Medical Centre representatives to discuss this situation and how it is being managed
- (ii) The Equality Impact Assessment relating to the closure of Luson Surgery must be published to ensure that vulnerable patients are being properly supported.
- (iii) The Chief Executive should contact Orange to discuss how the Town Council can assist in raising an appeal against the decision to refuse permission to re-open the pharmacy at Wellington Medical Centre.
- (iv) Following concerns raised around capacity at Wellington Medical Centre, the matter of staffing be raised including possible TUPE implications.
- (v) The Chief Executive report back to future meetings, including the Policy & Finance Committee, with updates on all matters raised under this item, including the public engagement on the closure of the Community Hospital beds.

156. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

157. SOMERSET COUNCIL / LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor R Henley confirmed that he was voted to be chair of the Wellington/Wiveliscombe LCN for the forthcoming year and outlined the good work that the LCN was doing. He advised that Licensing application meetings are now taking place online which could have far reaching impacts as there is now a public consultation taking place on the impact of planning applications taking place online as well. Councillor R Henley also confirmed that there is only one week remaining to challenge the Boundary Commission draft proposals.

Councillor A Govier the Council was still facing severe financial difficulties and that he was disappointed to see the loss of experienced Officers from County Hall.

Councillor J Lloyd advised that the LCN Highways Working Group had been told that there will be no public consultation regarding the introduction of Sunday car parking charges across Somerset.

158. TO RECEIVE THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Chief Executive's report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

During this item, Councillor R Henley left the meeting.

159. POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2025 were noted.

RESOLVED

(i) Local Council Award Scheme

- (i) That an application for Gold accreditation be made to the Local Council Award Scheme.

(ii) License for work on WTC land

- (i) To issue a licence to Wellington AFC to allow it to install new pitch surround fencing and replace the hard standing running the length of the Clubhouse/Dressing Rooms at The Playing Field using the Somerset Council template as a basis.
- (ii) That future requests for licences for work are processed by The Chief Executive or other Officers in his absence.

160. PITCH HIRE FEES

A paper had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the original recommendation from Policy & Finance be disregarded and that the charges for 25/26 be set at the same rate as 24/25 **ex VAT**.
- (ii) That delegated authority is given to Officers to set the terms and conditions for hire including items relating to booking procedures, cancellations, facility misuse and

health and safety. The Council members of the Playing Pitch Working Group will review the final copy (Councillors A Govier and J Lloyd).

- (iii) That Officers conduct a broader review covering all aspects relating to pitch hire in readiness to review the fees in 12 months for the 26/27 season.

161. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025 were noted.

RESOLVED

(i) Kings Arms Community Hub

- (i) That officers can overspend the budget if necessary for the sole purpose of covering essential costs such as utility bills and service charges.
- (ii) The 12-month warranty/service contract cost of £4,800 for IT should be sourced from the revenue budget line, rather than the set-up costs, noting that this would cause an additional overspend. The need for this service to be reviewed when setting next year's budget.

162. WELLINGTON GARDEN OF LIGHT EVENT

The minutes of the Events working group meeting held on 28 July were noted.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend the standing orders to allow Sally Mann to speak on the progress of this event.

Sally Mann provided an update on the progress of the organisation and setting up of the event. Progress is about 70% complete with the start of the marketing phase and consultation phase. Arts Council funding has also been released.

It was **RESOLVED** to reinstate standing orders.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve ticket charges being a donation, with a suggested donation of £2.00 for adults and £1.00 for children.
- (ii) To amend the wording from "Pay What you Choose" to "Pay What You Can."
- (iii) To approve the release of 75% (£6,000) of the 'Night Walk' Event budget of £8,000 and 25% funds on completion of the event.

163. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The following planning applications were considered:

(a) Case Ref: 43/25/0026

Proposal: Demolition and replacement of 3 No. commercial buildings subdivided into 7 No. units at Coxs Yard, Taunton Road, Wellington (Lead Councillor comments attached)

RESOLVED to recommend that this application be refused. Concerns were raised over the proposal being for high intensity commercial activity on a site now surrounded by residential properties and the associated impact of traffic movement. It was noted that a requested road crossing at nearby St Johns School was recently declined as it was too close to a corner (adjacent to the proposal site) which reduced visibility. Councillors therefore questioned the safety of the access onto the site, including the issue that traffic will have to cross the cycle lane. However, if Somerset Council are minded to approving the application, the Town

Council request that an agreement for funding to provide the abovementioned crossing be negotiated.

164. TO CONSIDER EXCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude members of the press and public under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

Reason taken from the legislation - Information is commercially sensitive.

165. LAND AT LONGFORTH ROAD

A paper to consider lease arrangements for land at Longforth Road was circulated with the agenda and noted.

After consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to offer £2,000 per year on a 12-month extension, if this is refused then all negotiations would halt, and the Council would no longer seek to extend the lease for this land.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:20.

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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