

**MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
AT UNITED REFORM CHURCH ON MONDAY 19 JANUARY 2026 AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Councillor C Govier-Wiggins (Chair)
Councillors J Cole, A Govier, J Lloyd, M Lithgow.

In attendance: Dave Farrow – CEO/Town Clerk
Wasif Choudhury – Democratic Services & Finance Officer
Laura Batcha – Community Development Officer
Peter Joint – Community Connect Champion
Rachel Parker – Strategic Manager (Head of Public Health Nursing, Somerset Council – For minute 409)
One member of the press

404 CHAIR TO WELCOME MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed members to the committee.

405 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Councillor C Penk.

406 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Govier-Wiggins declared a personal interest in item 8b (Minute 411) as she attends sessions run by Bright Beginnings in the Kings Arms Community Hub.

407 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public in attendance.

408 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held 17 November 2025.

409 BEST START IN LIFE FAMILY HUB

Rachel Parker Strategic Manager, Head of Public Health Nursing, Somerset Council provided context and an explanation of this programme.

The Kings Arms Community Hub in Wellington will be the first Family Hub in Somerset, and a key element of this programme is to bring together all the services related to childhood development.

It was confirmed that all aspects of development will be targeted and measured at end of reception/EYFS stage by assessing various development goals. It will be important that ensure that the provision is universal and available to all. For those parents and children that require more support, outreach programmes can be tailored to their needs.

It was confirmed that the we would seek to engage with parents of home-schooled children about the programme.

The Community Connect Champion noted the importance in linking this with programme with the Cradle to Career initiative.

Councillor A Govier noted that it is imperative that this programme starts delivery as soon as possible.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there will be an assessment period between now and April to determine exactly what resources and staffing requirements are needed to ensure successful delivery of this programme which will evolve and develop as we learn more.

Councillors asked to have sight of the draft programme in March 2026.

At this juncture, R Parker left the meeting.

410 COMMUNITY CONNECT CHAMPION UPDATE

Connect Somerset have secured a further 2 years funding (2 days per week) with effect from the next Financial Year. A Community Visioning Breakfast took place in December with over 50 attendees and the plan is to set breakfast dates for the whole year.

The Main Connect Somerset Priorities for 2026 are to set up and embed Best Start in Life Family Hub Network, link the Cradle to Career Model with this initiative and coordinate parenting support across the area.

The Community Connect Champion confirmed that he has retired from the One Team Role. The One Team in Wellington will continue on the same basis and for the time will be chaired by Kieran Taffe pending further recruitment. One Teams will be promoted via Best Start in life and Cradle to Career models as a means of support for vulnerable families.

The Kings Arms Community Hub was mentioned by Gideon Amos MP in Parliament.

The Wacky Wednesdays Steering Group are meeting on 21st January to plan dates for the year and organise the first event. A survey for what people want is being made and will link with the Community Development Strategy.

A Cradle to Career visioning breakfast took place on 25 November at Court Fields. A huge amount of information was gathered and was shared at a Steering Group meeting in early January.

An agenda is being prepared for the Cradle to Career launch event on 10 February and invitations to this event will be sent out. There will be a number of workshops available to all attendees. It is imperative that all initiatives work alongside of each other and that a coordinated approach is taken to link these up.

411 KINGS ARMS COMMUNITY HUB ROOM HIRE

It was **RESOLVED** to approve a year-long commitment for In The Mix, to ensure stability and continuity of youth provision in Wellington.

It was **AGREED** that Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service should be charged to continue to make use of the Kings Arms Community Hub.

It was **AGREED** to initially approve subsidised access to the Kings Arms Community Hub for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to be reviewed on a quarterly basis requiring evidence of need and outcomes on a rolling basis.

After much discussion, It was **AGREED** in principle to approve subsidised access to the Kings Arms Community Hub for the Bright Beginnings Volunteer Group. Council Officers are to review how to make this feasible given the organisation is not a legal entity. Councillors also asked that safeguarding arrangements for this group be reviewed.

It was **AGREED** that Wellington Women in Business CIC (WWIB) should be charged to continue to make use of the Kings Arms Community Hub.

412 WARM WELCOME

The Community Development Officer confirmed that Warm Welcome sessions are now being delivered at the following times:

- Mondays: 4pm–8pm – aligned with Thrive provision to test engagement with residents who are in work during the day.
- Wednesdays & Fridays: 11am–3pm – daytime provision supporting older residents, parents, carers, and those experiencing isolation.

There is a wide variety between the people that make use of this initiative ranging from residents seeking warmth, social connection, and low-pressure support, individuals signposted for cost-of-living advice, food support, and wellbeing services and repeat visitors, indicating the development of trusted relationships rather than one-off access.

This mix confirms the Hub is functioning not just as a warm space, but as a soft-entry point into wider support.

Volunteer capacity has increased, enabling more consistent cover and improved resilience. With more volunteers in place, the service can now be promoted more confidently and widely, ensuring demand can be met safely.

As capacity continues to stabilise, Warm Welcome is well-placed to transition from a winter response into a sustainable, community-led offer.

Councillors noted that local schools should be targeted for marketing as they will know which families will want to make use of this service.

413 IN THE MIX UPDATE

The Community Development Officer confirmed that the October half term programme marked a significant expansion of youth provision into Wellington, delivered in partnership with In The Mix Project and based at the Kings Arms Community Hub.

There were 44 unique young people engaged, with 30 from Wellington postcodes, demonstrating strong local reach with 83 hot meals provided, alongside snacks and food education, supporting both wellbeing and cost-of-living pressures.

The delivery achieved high satisfaction, with sessions rated 4–5 stars by young people and consistently positive parent feedback. The activities supported confidence, social connection, life skills, creativity, and emotional wellbeing, with strengths in inclusive practice and supporting young people with additional needs.

This programme demonstrated the value of town-centre, accessible provision in reducing transport barriers and establishing Wellington as a viable base for ongoing youth work.

It was confirmed that a detailed Christmas 2025 report is currently being produced by In the Mix which will be shared with Councillors in due course.

There being no further business the meeting closed at: 20:01.

Sign.....

Date.....