

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 7 OCTOBER 2024 AT 7.00 PM

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

IN ATTENDANCE: David Farrow (Town Clerk)
One member of the press
Two members of the public

299 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors M Barr and S Pringle-Kosikowsky.

301 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

302 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held 2 September 2024.

303 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public spoke to thank the Town Council for its work in the Green Corridor and other open spaces and to ask when a bridge was going to be constructed over the weir enabling access from The Basins through to Fox’s Field.

The Town Clerk said that this would be a matter for the Green Corridor Advisory Board and Environment Committee to consider and noted that initial enquiries had indicated that a bridge across the weir would be extremely costly so there had to be a degree of realism about what was achievable.

304 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sgt O’Connor was circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

Concerns about anti-social behaviour were discussed and Sgt O’Connor said that it was important that any issues were formally reported to allow his team to take appropriate action.

305 SPONSOR FOR WELLINGTON AFC

RESOLVED to agree to allow the football club to use the name of a sponsor in the name for the ground namely The Carly Press Ground at Wellington Playing Field.

306 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor’s report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. The Mayor reported that she was attending the Britain in Bloom Awards event in Bath on the 8 October with the Open Spaces Manager.

307 SOMERSET COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor Henley reported on his attendance at the re-opening of Wellington Library and noted to the investment in Wellington Sports Centre.

Councillor A Govier reported that he had attended the recent LCN meeting and asked that Public Health forms a focus of the LCN work and raised concerns about the lack of information from County Highways on when drains/gulleys had last been cleared and jetted,

308 ALLOTMENT COMPETITION WINNERS

The Mayor announced the following winners:

- Best Cultivated Christine Cappell - Plot 16
- Best Managed Michele Beacon - Plot 12
- Best Eco-Friendly Mary Bradford - Plot 25 & 26
- Best Newcomer William Judd - Plot 84
- Highly Commended Newcomers - Monika Csuzdi – Plot 56 and Kirsty Veen - Plot 5

309 REPORT ON IMMENSTADT TWINNING VISIT

Councillor S Mercer reported on his recent visit to Immenstadt.

310 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 reported that he had attended a Metro Board meeting on the 4 October in relation to the railway station chaired by Gideon Amos MP and attended by Network Rail and GWR. He reported that it had been a positive meeting with all parties confident that the business case was very strong and more advanced than many other projects. The expectation is that there will be an announcement in the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement around the amount of funding available for new stations and that The Department for Transport will then decide which projects to take forward.

311 POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2024 were circulated with the agenda and were noted. **RESOLVED** to adopt the revised Financial Regulations as recommended by the Committee.

312 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2024 were noted.

313 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2024 were noted. The Town Clerk noted that the Committee had made a recommendation in relation to the creation of a Community Development Worker post but that this would be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2025/6.

314 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were noted. The Town Clerk noted that the Committee had made a recommendation in relation to making the post of Part Time Climate Change Project Officer permanent but that this would be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2025/6.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to officers to spend up to £2,200 on contracting repairs to the Weavers Reach Play Area

315 SURVEY OF LINDEN DRIVE BRIDGE

The issues arising from the survey and the accompanying report were discussed and noted. It was also noted that the current position of the Council was to purchase the Crown Estate

Land. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would seek further advice and report back to the Council.

316 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 agenda items 19 and 20 contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Councillor Henley left the meeting at 8.15pm

317 INTERIM TOILET CLEANING ARRANGEMENTS

RESOLVED to contract Domestic Bliss to clean the North Street Car Park and Wellington Park until the 31 March 2025, toilets to start as soon as possible, whilst a tender for toilet cleaning is prepared and advertised.

RESOLVED to delegate to officers' authority to purchase toilet roll, hand soap and other sundries as required (seeking best value in line with financial regulations) with costs to be met from the Unitary Devolution Toilets budget line.

Councillor A Govier left the meeting at 8.35pm

318 CROWN ESTATE LAND

The report circulated with the agenda was noted. **RESOLVED** that areas of the title that appear to have been subsumed into neighbouring properties land should be further investigated and that the broad principle should be that no change in title would be required although if a change of ownership was requested by the neighbouring land owner there should be no cost to the Council.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45 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 WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL TO THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL 4 NOVEMBER 2024

1. Introduction

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

2. Other Matters

As all Committees have met this month details of much of our ongoing work is contained in the minutes of those meetings. On other matters:

- The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have advised that the National Joint Council (NJC) has now agreed the pay rates for the current year (24-25). An increase of £1,290 is applied to all scales up to scale 42. Scale 43 and above are increased by a flat rate of 2.5%. These new rates are effective from 1 April 2024 and will be processed appropriately.
- The Local Government Boundary Commission has published a consultation on division boundaries for Somerset Council with a proposal to reduce the number of councillors from 110 to 96 for the next elections in 2027. The consultation is to feed in to considerations about where boundaries should be drawn and closes on the 20 January 2025. The Commission will publish draft recommendations in June 2025 followed by a further period of consultation with a final recommendation to be published in December 2025. This will be considered at the next meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee and particularly whether the Town Council wishes to submit a formal response to this initial consultation.
- Cash Access UK advise that work on the permanent site for the hub is progressing well and remains on track for opening before the end of the calendar year. We are still awaiting final detail on the communication event they had proposed to hold on the 2 November.
- The work on the Kings Arms is progressing with a proposed handover date at the end of March 2025. This means we need to start planning the fit out to create the community hub. To that end I have appointed Helen Acreman initially for two days a week for six months to project manage this work. Helen previously worked for Somerset Council and has extensive experience of managing both large and small building projects in schools and other public buildings and before that worked for a company refurbishing pubs. The post will be funded through the vacant 0.6 Project Officer post which has been budgeted for this year. As the project progresses we will review the number of days required.
- On 6 November Cllrs Henley and Cole and I will be meeting with Kate Brown from Somerset Traffic management to discuss introducing parking restrictions on Torres Vedras Drive as that road and some other roads on the development have recently been adopted by Somerset Council. Local residents have been raising concerns about dangerous parking on that road for some time.

3. Communications and Social Media

In the period from 30th September to 29th October Wellington Town Council has reached 34.9k profiles. Though this is a 21.8% drop from the previous period, we expect more reach and engagement over the next month with Remembrance and Christmas events taking place.

Our top five liked posts during this time are as follows:

1. Announcement that the route through the Green Corridor will be made accessible – 158 reactions – 14 shares – 25.8k reach
2. Winter bedding plants in at the park and bulbs delivered to depot – 36 reactions – 1 share – 985 reach
3. Route through Green Corridor now accessible – 34 reactions – 3 shares – 1.1k reach
4. Wellington Library reopening – 34 reactions – 1 share – 1.1k reach
5. Community Warden round up (including Crosslands, Lancer Court) – 33 reactions – 1 share – 3.3k reach

We have a detailed communications plan for our upcoming events and will be livestreaming this year's Remembrance service on our Facebook page to allow people who have mobility issues or are housebound to participate in the event. Our newsletter is up to 172 subscribers and the next edition will be going out on Friday 8th November.

4. November Meetings/Events

Date	Time	Event	Location	Who Involved
4 November	6.00pm*	Planning Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
4 November	7.00pm	Full Council	URC Hall	All
6 November	12.00pm	Cades Farm Site Visit re traffic management	Cades Farm	Cllrs Cole, Henley and Town Clerk
10 November	2.30pm	Remembrance Sunday Pared and Service	Wellington Park	All
11 November	10.45am	Armistice Day Event	Town Centre	All
11 November	6.00pm	Policy and Finance Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
13 November	All day	Somerset Town and Parish Council Conference	Bridgwater	Mayor Town Clerk
13 November	6.00pm	Economic Development Committee	URC Hall	Committee members
18 November	6.00pm	Additional Policy and Finance Committee Meeting re 2025/6 budget	URC Hall	All
21 November	10.00am	Meeting with Somerset Council officers re devolution	Virtual	Staff
22 November	2.00pm	Meeting with Head teacher of Wellington School	Wellington School	Mayor Town Clerk
25 November	Very early	Christmas Tree delivery and installation	Town Centre Rockwell Green Tonedale	Open Spaces Manager Facilities Manager
27 November	10.30am	Town and Parish Clerks briefing	Virtual	Town Clerk

30 November	All day	Christmas Market and Lioght Switch on	Town Centre	All
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5. Annual Leave

Project Assistant – 15 and 18 November

Dave Farrow

Town Clerk

29 October 2024

MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT UNTIED REFORMED CHURCH HALL ON MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2024 AT 6.00PM

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors C Penk and K Wheatley
Alice Kendall – RFO/Deputy Clerk
Seven members of the public
One member of the press

319 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillors C Govier.

320 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.

Councillor J Thorne further declared a personal interest in a payment listed to the Community Centre as he is a member of the Committee. Councillor Lithgow also declared the same interest.

Councillor S Mercer declared a personal interest relating to the grant application from Wellesley Park School as his granddaughter is a pupil.

321 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

All those present were representatives of organisations, the Chairman explained that he would suspend Standing Orders at the appropriate point in the agenda to allow them to answer questions.

322 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 9 September 2024.

323 ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

(a) TO NOTE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 8 OCTOBER 2024

RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliation.

(b) TO NOTE AND APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR 3 SEPTEMBER - 8 OCTOBER 2024

RESOLVED to note and approve the expenditure.

(c) TO NOTE AND APPROVE INCOME RECEIVED FOR 3 SEPTEMBER - 8 OCTOBER 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 8 OCTOBER 2024 (attached)

RESOLVED to note and approve the budget report.

324 CREATION OF STANDING ORDER

RESOLVED to approve the creation of a new standing order instruction at the bank for the monthly rent, service and insurance charge of the Open Spaces Depot (£1,429).

325 GRANTS

The Committee considered applications as submitted for Q3. A summary and the application documents were circulated prior to the meeting.

- (a) BLACK* Artists on the Move** – request for £3,000 toward the delivery of two Black History Month day workshops at each of the Wellington Primary Schools (8 days in total)

RESOLVED to not award the grant. It was felt that, at present, the proposal was not detailed enough.

- (b) Grand Western Greenway** – request for £3,500 toward an engineering assessment and route definition.

RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow a representative to give information and answer questions.

RESOLVED to re-instate standing orders.

It was noted that, at present, the costing for commissioning the report is a banded figure of £6-8,000. Taking this into account, it was **RESOLVED** to fund 50% of the cost up to £4,000 from the Cycle Path Contributions budget. To confirm the final amount the organisation is asked to submit the final invoice to release the funds.

- (c) Wellington Rugby Football Club** – request for £2,000 toward their annual firework display.

It was proposed and seconded to award a grant of £2,000. After some discussion the original proposal was withdrawn, and it was **RESOLVED** to underwrite the event up to £2,000 upon the Club providing evidence that there is a deficit after the event.

- (d) The People's Plot, t/a eat:Festivals** – request for £750 toward the annual eat:Wellington Event.

RESOLVED to suspend standing order to allow a representative to give information and answer questions.

RESOLVED to re-instate standing orders.

RESOLVED to not award the grant. It was felt that given the Council's support in previous years, the event should now be self-sustaining via the trading fees charged by the organisation.

- (e) **Life Education Wessex** – request for £290 toward delivery of the 'Helping Children Make Healthy Choices' workshop at Rockwell Green Primary School in 2024.

RESOLVED to award a grant of £290.

- (f) **Wellesley Park Primary School** – request for £1,085 for a morning food/breakfast scheme.

RESOLVED to award a grant of £1,085 from the Cost of Living Fund reserve.

- (g) **Community Council Somerset** – request for £1,150 toward cost of the Wellington Together event.

RESOLVED to suspend standing order to allow a representative to give information and answer questions.

RESOLVED to re-instate standing orders.

RESOLVED to award a grant of £1,150.

- (h) **Accelerate Active** – request for £2,858 toward the provision of Blaze Pods, Climb Wall Indoor Pannels and Safety Mirrors.

RESOLVED to suspend standing order to allow a representative to give information and answer questions.

RESOLVED to re-instate standing orders.

It was proposed to award a grant, there was no seconder. It was **RESOLVED** to not award the grant.

326 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT

The Interim Internal Audit report was circulated in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED to note to the report.

327 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

The Deputy Clerk reported that notes from the Town Clerk would be circulated by e-mail after the meeting. She gave a brief report that not much progress had been made on some issues given the continuing lack of information from Somerset Council, but that some things had been taken into the Town Council's control already e.g. toilet cleaning which was signed off at the October Full Council meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40 pm

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MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL ON WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER 2024 AT 6.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Booth (Chair),
Councillors M Lithgow, J Lloyd, M. McGuffie, S Mercer, J. Thorne, K. Wheatley.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor C Penk
David Farrow – Town Clerk
Annette Kirk - Facilities Officer
One member of the press

328 APOLOGIES

Charlotte Beatty was unable to attend for agenda item 5.

329 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

330 MINUTES

Councillor K Wheatley updated the committee on the work Somerset Parking Team are doing at North Street Car Park. We need to go back to them regarding the painted pedestrian walkway at the entrance to North Street. We have emailed Somerset Parking Team about the signage in all the car parks. They have replied to say they are inspecting all signage within the car parks county wide but were unable to provide any timescales for this project.

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Economic Development Committee meeting held on 11th September 2024.

331 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation.

332 WELLINGTON INDEPENDENT MARKET

This will be carried forward to the next committee meeting on 13th November 2024.

333 EVENT WORKING GROUP

- i. **RESOLVED** to note the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2024.
- ii. **RESOLVED** to approve the following event budgets for 2025/2026 on block:
 - a. 80th anniversary of VE Day on Thursday 8th May 2025 in Welling Park – Budget £4250.00
 - b. Remembrance Sunday & Armistice Day – Sunday 9th November and Tuesday 11th November 2025 – Budget £1,000.00
 - c. Christmas Market & Lights Switch On – Saturday 29th November 2025 – Budget £7,500.00
 - d. 80th anniversary of VJ Day on Friday 15th August 2025 – Budget £4250.00

334 SOUTH STREET

Councillor C Booth spoke to the committee about the overall street scene. To include improvements to the pavements, extra hanging basket poles and to reduce the number of on-street parking bays to ease congestion.

After some discussion the committee felt we needed to look at the town centre as a whole, as there are uneven pavements town wide and to concentrate more on the safety aspects of the town e.g. pedestrian crossing outside St. John's Church, flooding and blocked drains. To find out what business grants are available e.g. shop window grants.

Councillor C Booth felt a holistic view should be taken going forward.

335 HERITAGE MATTERS

The Town Clerk advised that he was trying to arrange a meeting with Lara Bell, Somerset Council in relation to Tonedale Mill and Toneworks. He also understood that Ben Fox had met with Gideon Amos to brief him on the situation at the Mill and to seek his support. He also reported that the Facilities Manager and he had recently met with a consultant to discuss what support they could provide in promoting Wellington and would bring a proposal to a future meeting.

336 DELEGATED BUDGETS

RESOLVED to note the spend against delegated budgets within the current financial year.

337 BUDGET 2025/6

The committee reviewed each cost centre and budget line.

RECOMMENDATION to Policy and Finance Committee to approve the new cost centres.

RESOLVED

- i. Events Cost Centre: To remove Somerset Day budget line.
- ii. Events Cost Centre: Night Walk – to continue working with Fuse Performance Ltd on the event costs and detail on the theme and report back to the committee.
- iii. Christmas Cost Centre: Additional Lights and Install budget line to include the costs to buy and install lights in Cornhill Lights.
- iv. Economic Cost Centre: To use the Promotion of Wellington and Heritage Lines to contribute to the costs of employing a consultant to develop proposals for the Conservation Area and the promotion of Wellington

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

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Councillor C Booth

**MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL ON MONDAY 21 OCTOBER 2024 AT 6.00PM**

PRESENT: Councillor C. Govier (Chair),
Councillors C Booth, J Cole, M Lithgow, J Lloyd and M McGuffie

IN ATTENDANCE: David Farrow – Town Clerk
Peter Joint – Community Connect Champion
One member of the press

338 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

339 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

340 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

341 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on the 16 September 2024.

342 COMMUNITY CONNECT CHAMPION UPDATE

Peter Joint gave an update on the work he is currently involved with. A copy of the notes he referred to is attached to the minutes.

Following a discussion about the role and funding of Parent Family Support Advisers (PFSAs) and the potential role for the Council to support that work the Committee asked the Town Clerk to meet with the head teacher managing PFSA funding in Wellington to explore options and develop proposals.

343 WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE PROMOTION

Councillor McGuffie asked that consideration be given to setting aside funding to allow officers to promote action that needed to be taken to ensure people who were eligible knew what they needed to do to access this benefit. After some discussion it was agreed that the Town Clerk and Community Connect Champion would raise the matter at the next One Team meeting to establish what was already being done and to consider if more needed doing.

344 BUDGET REPORT

The budget report for 2024/5 was circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted.

The committee reviewed the proposed budget lines for 2025/6 and made the following recommendations:

- (i) That the budget line for the Pop-Up Shop Overheads should be reduced to £2,000.
- (ii) That the budget lines for Community Safety (58), Community Services and Priorities (60) and Health and Wellbeing (61) should be combined to create a Community Development and Support budget line along with the Youth Services and Cost of Living Fund reserves to give the new Community Development Officer role funding to

work with and deliver projects in 2025/6 whilst establishing what the future budget requirement will be for 2026/7 and beyond.

- (iii) That the budget lines for Emergency Planning (65), CCTV (176), and Bus Shelters (177) and those relating to the Pop-Up Shop and Public Toilets would be better placed with the Economic Development Committee leaving this Committee to focus on community matters.

345 WORK PLAN 2024/5 UPDATES

The Committee Work Plan had been circulated in advance of the meeting with updates since the previous meeting and was noted. The Town Clerk was asked to prioritise the activities and to consider whether responsibility for work on 28-30 Fore Street should sit with the Policy and Finance Committee. The Town Clerk highlighted the appointment of Helen Acreman to project manage the fit out of the Kings Arms Community Space

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

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Councillor C Govier - Chair

**MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2024 AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Councillor M McGuffie (Chairman)
Councillors C Booth, C Govier, M Lithgow and S Pringle-
Kosikowsky and K Wheatley

In attendance: David Farrow (Town Clerk)
Darren Hill (Open Spaces Manager)
Stephen Tate (Climate Change Project Officer)
Steve Saunders – Footpath Volunteer Coordinator
One member of the press
One member of the public

Prior to the meeting starting the Mayor presented Britain in Bloom certificates to voluntary groups from around the town.

346 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed those present.

347 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

348 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

349 MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on the 18 September 2024.

350 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or comments.

351 FOOTPATH UPDATE

Steve Saunders provided an update on the footpath volunteers' work which was noted, and the Committee thanked Steve for his and the volunteers' work.

352 GREEN CORRIDOR ADVISORY BOARD

The notes of the meeting held on the 24 September were noted.

RESOLVED

- (i) To accept the recommendation of the Board not to proceed with the development of junior sports pitches in 12 Acre Field in light of the findings of the Feasibility Study.
- (ii) That the Playing Pitch Strategy for the town should be revisited and updated in 2025/6 in the context of a wider strategy for sport development in the town.

353 DELEGATED BUDGETS

The report on spend in 2024/5 to date had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

354 OPEN SPACES MANAGER UPDATE

The Open Spaces Manager Update Report had been circulated with the agenda and was noted. **RESOLVED**

- (i) To accept the quote from MJ Fletcher to replace the boards on the pedestrian bridge at Weavers Reach with non-slip composite decking timber at a cost of £7,260 plus VAT to come from the Green Corridor Budget
- (ii) That Riverside Plant Nursery be contracted to transport planters from Somerset Council’s Depot to locations around the town at a cost of £390 plus VAT and that funding of £720 plus VAT be approved for the purchase of topsoil and plants for the planter making a total cost of £1,110 plus VAT to be met from the Environmental Improvements Budget.
- (iii) Quotes had not been received for flailing work so this was deferred until the next meeting.
- (iv) To contract Justin Perry-Jones to undertake clearance work in Great Oak Field in preparation for tree planting as part of the Woodland Creation project at a cost of £150 plus VAT to be met from the Green Corridor Budget.

355 BUDGET 2025/6

A report from the Responsible Financial Officer had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted. **RESOLVED** to recommend:

- (i) That a budget for new street lights be reinstated - the Town Clerk to propose a figure based on previous installations
- (ii) That the Basins Allotments Advisory Board be asked to review charges for the Basins allotments
- (iii) That all other cost centres be included in the budget
- (iv) That, at the end of the current financial year, the balance of the Environmental Improvements reserve (current balance c£34k) be closed with the funds being transferred back into the general fund. This process means the suggested £30k budget for the same line in the main 25/26 budget is offset by funds already held.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.00pm.

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Councillor M McGuffie
Chairman

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
4 November 2024
Devolution of Assets from Somerset Council.

1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the Council in relation to assets that it is proposed are transferred to Wellington Town Council from Somerset Council on 1 April 2025.

2. Background

2.1. The background relating to the reasons why Somerset Council is seeking to transfer ownership of assets and thereby responsibility for their maintenance to town and parish councils has been document in previous reports.

2.2. In January 2024, the Town Council resolved that it was 'prepared to take on the ownership and responsibility for management of these facilities/green spaces to enable planning and budgeting to take place during 2024/5 in preparation for 2025/6.'

2.3. Since then, Town Council staff have been engaging with Somerset Council staff to confirm the detail of that and to address any issues arising.

2.4. The details of those open spaces and buildings that will be transferred to the Town Council on 1 April are attached to this paper along with the proposed Heads of Terms from Somerset Council. There are a number of points to note:

- (i) Somerset Council has committed to resolving any health and safety issues that we have raised associated with the open spaces either by the 31 March 2025 or as soon as possible after that at no cost to the Town Council.
- (ii) The ownership of the Lodge in Wellington Park will not be transferred to the Town Council as there is a Somerset Council tenant in occupation. When that tenancy ends Somerset Council will transfer the ownership of the Lodge to the Town Council. In the meantime, the Town Council will have rights of access to the flag pole and to maintain the front garden of the Lodge given the Heritage status of the park.
- (iii) The Beech Grove Car park, which currently is within the title for the Playing Field, will not be transferred to the Town Council. Officers asked that this be removed as there are significant structural issues in one corner caused by badgers, it needs resurfacing and relining but there is no income associated with it. It would therefore be a significant liability for the Town Council. Somerset Council retaining responsibility for it is also consistent with its position that it wishes to retain responsibility for car parks in the town.
- (iv) Responsibility for maintaining Housing Revenue Account (HRA) open spaces will not be transferring. We had expressed an interest in taking these on subject to receiving income from service charges on HRA

properties that is currently received by Somerset Council services maintaining the open spaces. This has not proved possible to resolve in the timescales we are working to but we understand a review will be taking place next year of how HRA services are provided. We have said that we wish to be involved in those discussions and that as a point of principle we want to be responsible for all open spaces in the town so there is a consistent quality of service for all our residents.

2.5. There are two matters where the Council needs to decide how it wishes to proceed.

2.5.1. Rockwell Green Cemetery.

There are a number of issues to resolve before we can consider taking ownership of the cemetery, not least of which would be the liabilities around the footpaths and walls which require repair and replacement as well as the specialist equipment and training of staff required to fully manage it. We have indicated that as an interim arrangement we would be willing to take on the responsibility for maintaining the grounds of the cemetery in anticipation that there would be some income arising from that. We have now been advised that there will be no income, so a decision is needed as to whether the Council wishes to take on responsibility for the maintenance of the grounds of the cemetery without the ownership and with no income. The Open Spaces Manager's view is that by taking responsibility to maintain the open spaces at the Cemetery we can guarantee a better, more responsive, level of service which can be absorbed within the work of the proposed Open Spaces Team. The associated costs and time of grass cutting and bin emptying have already been included within the budgeting reports presented to Council for the provision of the new Open Spaces team in general.

2.5.2. The Pavilion, The Recreation Ground

The Recreation Ground Pavilion is part of the title containing the Park and The Recreation Ground. We commissioned a condition survey of the building, along with all other buildings being considered for transfer, and this identified some potentially significant issues. This is an extract from the survey:

Wellington Recreation Ground Pavilion has a roof in poor condition particularly to the recreation ground facing slope which is beyond repair and requires re-covering, along with the flat roof over the clock where the lead has been stolen; There are also rotting battens near the clock and other broken tiles requiring replacement; Most of the rainwater goods are defective and require replacement along with repairs to damaged eaves joinery; The drains are blocked and they require CCTV inspection, unblocking and probable repairs; There appears to be subsidence in the right hand third of the building, potentially caused by failed drains, with a substantial crack on the rear wall, requiring engineer designed strengthening; The building is damp internally lacks ventilation and lighting in the WC area, requiring additional installations.

The Survey report suggest indicative costs of c£24,000 to address the points identified. It also suggests commissioning a structural surveyor to assess the

building in more detail which we have done but as yet, the survey has not been carried out.

Somerset Council has indicated that it will undertake 'some basic remedial work' but no more. We are waiting for detail on what that means. It has also indicated that it will not be able to remove the Pavilion from the title nor commit to undertaking repairs beyond the 'basic remedial' work post transfer.

Should the Council accept the transfer there would be no need to undertake immediate work on the Pavilion but it would need to be taken out of commission.

Should the Council not want to accept the transfer of the Pavilion, the Recreation Ground would have to remain in the ownership of Somerset Council.

3. Considerations

The Council is asked:

- (i) To consider approving sign off of The Heads of Terms
- (ii) To confirm that officers should proceed to finalise the transfer of open spaces and associated buildings set out in the appendix to this report and based on the information set out in para 2.4 above.
- (iii) To consider whether it wishes to take responsibility for the maintenance of the Rockwell Green Cemetery on the basis set out in para 2.5.1 of this report.
- (iv) To consider whether to accept the transfer of the title for Wellington Park and The Recreation Ground given the structural issues with the Pavilion.

Dave Farrow
Town Clerk
November 2024

Appendix



STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT

HEADS OF TERMS – PROPOSED DEVOLUTION of PUBLIC ASSETS

FULL PROPERTY ADDRESSES: See Attached Schedule

PARTIES

Vendor: Somerset Council, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

Purchaser: Wellington Town Council,

28 Fore Street, Wellington, TA21 8AQ

Contact: Dave Farrow phone: 01823 662855, 07983 697740

EMAIL: dave@wellingtontowncouncil.co.uk

Vendor's Solicitor: Legal Services, Somerset Council, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

Purchaser's Solicitor: *tbc*

TERMS

Property: A number of Public Open Spaces and ancillary buildings as detailed in the schedule attached.

LR Titles: Various, see schedule.

Price: £1 if demanded. The consideration for the disposals is continued Public benefit.

VAT: Not applicable.

Deposit: n/a.

Insurance: Purchaser's responsibility from exchange of contracts.

Estate Charge: Not applicable.

Restrictions: Each asset transferred will have a covenant attached to the freehold title which restricts use to the specific use for public benefit which exists at the time of the transfer. This will be protected by a chain of indemnities (not a legal charge).

Fees: Each party will meet their own costs in this matter. This is a transfer between Public Bodies for Public benefit, therefore Somerset Council will not offer full CPSEs and does not expect the same level of detailed solicitor interrogation which would be appropriate for a commercial transaction.

Other Terms:

1. All freehold transfers will contain a right of Pre-emption in favour of Somerset Council in the event that the use ceases or the asset is intended to be sold or disposed to a third party.
2. Where the asset is part of a wider or strategic landholding, or Somerset Council has a restricted or leasehold title, the Vendor reserves the right to transfer the asset on a leasehold or other basis. Specific details will be flagged on the asset schedule.
3. All assets are transferred in their present condition and Somerset Council will not carry out any works prior to transfer. We recommend the receiving body undertakes its own investigations and assurance in this respect.

Conditionality

- Subject to Contract
- Subject to s123 LGA notice procedure

UPRN/Civica/File Ref: various

Date: 24/10/2024

SCHEDULE

Reference	Asset		Address	Postcode	LR Title	Specifics
BLDG020029	Rockwell Green (closed) PCs		Wellington Cemetery, Hilly Head, Rockwell Green	TA21 9BS	Lease only	Lease on standard SC format (25 years with mutual break option on 24 months notice)
SITE002220	Wellington Park, inc. PCs, excl. Lodge		Courtland Road, Wellington	TA21 8ND	ST287682	Transfer includes right to tend garden of Lodge if necessary and to access the flagpole and right of Pre Emption if Lodge becomes vacant. Reservation of right for Lodge to drain into shared septic tank and for pedestrian access over Park.
SITE002202	Wellington Recreation Ground inc Pavilion		Courtland Road, Wellington	TA21 8NF	ST287682	
SITE002203	Wellington Playing Field inc Pavilion, excl car park		Courtland Road, Wellington	TA21 8NE	ST257194	Transfer includes right of access across SC retained land including car park. Subject to existing leases

						to WAFC, WCC and WLTC.
BLDG020024	North Street PCs		North Street Car Park, Wellington	TA21 8LZ	ST257194	
SITE002182/01 /02,03,04, 05	Wellington Basins inc. "Ski Slope", Skate Park, Petanque Court, Community Pathway and BMX Track		Corams Lane, Wellington	TA21 8LL	ST267827	Subject to Licence to Wellington Petanque Club
SITE010077	Burrough Way Open Space and Play Area		Burrough Way, Wellington	TA21 9PR	ST254529	
SITE010078	Ropewalk Play Area		Rope Walk, Wellington	TA21 9RD	ST254529	
SITE010079	Swains Lane Nature Reserve		Swains Lane, Wellington	TA21 9AY	ST254529	
SITE002201	Dobree Park, inc play area		Dobree Park, Rockwell Green, Wellington	TA21 9RS	ST220527	
SITE010024	Longacre Open Space (Community Garden)		Greenway Road, Rockwell Green, Wellington	TA21 9DE	ST220527	
SITE010024	Foxmoor miscellaneous Open Spaces and Footpaths		Dobree Park, Lower Foxmoor, Rockwell Green, Wellington	TA21 9DE	ST220527	
SITE010025	Warren Street Play Area		Warren Street, Rockwell	TA21 9RY	ST220527	

			Green, Wellington			
SITE002473	Andrew Allan and Gillards Close Play Area and Open Space	Land at Marquis Meadow	Andrew Allan Road, Wellington	TA21 9DX	ST207707	
SITE010009	Barrington Way Open Spaces and Play Area	Bagley Road Public Open Space	Barrington Road, Wellington	TA21 9BA	ST327750	
part of SITE002220	Beechgrove Open Space/Path		Beechgrove (adj Park), Wellington	TA21 8NG	unregistered	
SITE002472	Champford Mews Open Space		Champford Lane, Wellington	TA21 8JW	ST194154	
SITE010007	Walkers Gate Open Space and Play Area		Walkers Gate, Wellington	TA21 8DJ	ST194154	
<i>n/a</i>	<i>Chestnut Close Play Area</i>		<i>Chestnut Close, Wellington</i>	<i>TA21 8ET</i>	<i>not owned</i>	<i>No title to devolve</i>
<i>n/a</i>	<i>Corner Close Play Area</i>		<i>Corner Close, Wellington</i>	<i>TA21 8QF</i>	<i>not owned</i>	<i>No title to devolve</i>
Reference	Asset		Address	Postcode	LR Title	Specifics
SITE002469	Hoyles Road Open Space	Hoyles Farm	Hoyles Road, Wellington	TA21 9AH	ST287476 and part ST32805	
SITE002471	Oakfield Park Open Space	Oak Priors	Oakfield Park, Wellington	TA21 8EY	ST32805	
SITE002464	Jurston Lane Open Spaces and Play Area	Oakhurst Estate	Jurston Lane	TA21 8DW	ST243258 ST231416	
<i>Tbc</i>	Sylvan Road and Laburnham Road Open Space		Sylvan Road, Wellington	TA21 8EH	ST37359	

SITE002200	The Paddocks Open Space and Play Area	Birch Road	The Paddocks, Wellington	TA21 8EZ	ST49669	
SITE002470	Wardleworth Open Space		Wardleworth Way, Wellington	TA21 0BB	ST58379	
SITE010010	Westford Grange Play Area		Westford Grange, Wellington	TA21 0EP	ST312875	
SITE002486	Wellington Community Centre		White Hart Lane, Wellington	TA21 8HN	unregistered	Trustees confirm consent to transfer of Legal Title
SITE002465	Monmouth Gardens		North Street	TA21 8LX	ST326421	

COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to enable the Council to decide at what level to set the Councillor's & Chairman's Allowance for 2025-26. These figures are required to inform the budget setting process which will begin with a first draft being reviewed at a special meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee on 18 November 2024.
- 1.2 Being a matter reserved for Full Council as set out the Scheme of Delegation, this paper is presented the meeting to be held on 4th November.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England Regulations 2003)¹ Section 25 gives the Town Council the power to pay an allowance to its Members. This section states that, in relation to setting the level of such allowances, the Council must have regard to the recommendations which have been made by a Parish Remuneration Panel. The Regulations make provision for an additional or enhanced amount to be paid to its Chairman only.
- 2.2 In accordance with the abovementioned regulations, Somerset Council formed an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for Somerset Council in January 2024. The recommendations from the Panel are attached as Appendix 1. A summary of their recommendations is set out below:
 - The Town Council's basic allowance be set as 5% of the basic allowance paid to all Somerset Councillors (£15,500 in 24-25) = £775.
 - If the Council wishes to pay an enhanced allowance to its Chairman, that it be no more than twice the basic allowance.

3. Previous Council Decisions of Relevance

- 3.1 The Council has previously made the following resolutions in relation to Councillors' Allowances:
 - 3.1.1 November 2022 – That, for 23-24, the basic allowance be increased from £280 to £350, and the Mayor's allowance be increased from £500 to £550.50 (noting there was no IRP at this time)
 - 3.1.2 January 2024 – having reviewed the IRP recommendations, that the basic allowance remains at £350 and the Mayor's allowance remains at an additional £550.50 for 24-25.
 - 3.1.3 July 2024 – having noted wording in the regulations and previous comments from the Internal Auditor, that the basic allowance be paid to those who have been co-opted.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2003/1021/contents/made>

NB – comments from the Internal Auditor since this decision was made are as follows: *The Council to note that payment of allowances to non-elected members would be a breach of law and will result in a Negative Response on both the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Internal Audit Report.*

The Council should formally consider the implications of the resolution of 1st July and the implications for the Council if it were to act on the resolution.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 Having reviewed the information above and the recommendations of the IRP, the Council must make resolution on the following items in order to inform the relevant lines for the 25-26 budget:
- To set the amount of basic allowance payable to Councillors in the 25-26 financial year.
 - To set, if it wishes to, an enhanced allowance for the Chairman/Mayor's allowance for the 25-26 financial year.

As part of these resolutions, the Council should formally note the comments of the Internal Auditor as reproduced above.

5. Officer's recommendations

- 5.1 It is the recommendation of the RFO, that if the Council is minded to increase the allowances, that a Policy be drafted setting terms of such payments. E.g. quarterly or half yearly payments in arrears and/or an agreement to be signed for pro-rata payments or return of payments if a Member should join or leave the Council part way through the Council year. Review of this may be delegated to the Policy & Finance Committee with a recommendation being made back to Full Council for adoption of a final draft.

Alice Kendall
RFO & Deputy Clerk
October 2024

SOMERSET COUNCIL**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SOMERSET COUNCIL'S PARISH, TOWN AND CITY INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL****JANUARY 2024**

1 - This report has been prepared for Wellington Town Council by the Somerset Council's Parish, Town and City Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) comprising four individuals drawn from the community, all of whom have significant previous experience in the work of local authorities. For ease, when "parish council" is referred to in this report, it shall mean "parish, town and city councils".

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) (the Regulations) provide all parish, town and city councils with the discretion to introduce allowances schemes whereby a parish basic allowance and travelling and subsistence allowances can be paid to their elected members whether or not that election was contested. Travelling and subsistence allowances, but not a parish basic allowance, can be paid to co-opted members of those councils.

The setting of the levels of the allowances is open to parish councils to determine after first considering the recommendations of the Parish Remuneration Panel. This is in line with the Government's view that the allowances system provides for clear and transparent local accountability as parish councils, like other local authorities, will be both accountable and answerable to their local communities in terms of the allowance payments made to their members.

The Panel meets Somerset Council's obligations under Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

The current membership of the Panel is as follows:

David Lamb – Panel Chair

Owner of a number of businesses in the Bridgwater area employing around 300 employees. Previously served as the Chair of the Sedgemoor District Council Independent Remuneration Panel.

Bryony Houlden – Panel Member

Chief Executive of South West Councils which is a membership organisation of all 29 local authorities in the South West (from April 2023). Currently sits on a number of other Independent Remuneration Panels, including Devon County, Cornwall, Plymouth, Torbay, Bristol and Bath & North East Somerset Council's, previously a member of the Joint Somerset Independent Remuneration Panel.

Mel Hillman – Panel Member

Former Corporate Services Manager at Yeovil Hospital before retiring. Also worked as a School Clerk on a local school Board of Governors in Somerset and Dorset.

Dr Paull Robathan – Panel Member

Deputy Lead Governor of the Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and a former District Councillor. Also worked for Government agency conducting independent peer reviews.

2 - The Panel is established to make recommendations on the scheme of allowances for parish, town and city councils for which Somerset Council is the establishing authority. The Panel has been appointed under Regulation 27 of the Regulations which states that an independent parish remuneration panel may be established by a responsible authority, which in this case is Somerset Council.

3 - When convened, the parish remuneration panel will produce a report making recommendations including:

- the amount of basic allowance payable to elected members.
- the amount of the chair's allowance payable (if different to the basic allowance).
- the amount of travel and subsistence allowance payable.

4 - The Regulations provides that Wellington Town Council may pay an allowance for each year (basic allowance) to (a) its chair only; or (b) to each of its members, and the amount of that allowance payable to its chair may differ from that payable to each other member of Wellington Town Council.

5 - If Wellington Town Council proposes to pay a basic allowance, whether to its chair only or to each of its members, it must have regard in setting the level or levels of such allowances, to the recommendations which have been made in respect of it by the independent remuneration panel.

6 – Wellington Town Council can choose to pay travel and subsistence allowances. The regulations allows payment of travel and subsistence allowances (Regulation 26).

7 - Regulation 29 requires that the Panel must express any recommendation for a basic allowance for town councils as a monetary sum and as a percentage of the Somerset Council's basic allowance. This is shown in paragraph 13 below.

Summary of the Panel's Review

8 - The Panel recognises the differences in both size and scale of activity of individual parish councils. This presents the Panel with some difficulty in recommending a scheme of allowances that will apply to all councils.

9 - Somerset Council has provided the Panel with benchmarking information from Chippenham Town Council, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Parish and Town Councils and also a countywide scheme developed by Dorset Council.

10 - The Panel recognises that it may be an historic issue that most parish councils in Somerset do not operate a scheme of allowances for their councillors.

11 - The Panel recognises that the size of a council’s electorate is a significant indicator of the complexity of the role of its members. Therefore, as part of the review, councils with similar sized electorates were grouped together in ‘Levels’. However, the Panel also concluded that it might be possible to accommodate special circumstances pertaining to a council by characterising it at a different level. The Panel categorised parish councils as follows. The number of authorities at each level is also indicated.

	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Characterisation</u>
Level 1	Up to 2,499 (246)	Small, mainly rural parishes
Level 2	2,500-4,999 (14)	Large rural parishes small towns
Level 3	5,000-9,999 (11)	Small market towns
Level 4	10,000-19,999 (x4)	Larger market towns/local centres
Level 5	20,000-35,000 (2)	Significant towns
Level 6	35,001 and above (2)	Major population centres

12 - The Panel wishes to highlight that Wellington Town Council would need to consider this proposed framework scheme prior to agreeing to adopt their own Scheme of Allowances and it would be responsible for the payment of allowances to their councillors.

Recommendations

13 - The Panel therefore **recommends** that the basic allowance available to members of parish councils should be a percentage of Somerset Council basic allowance.

Somerset Council’s basic allowance for 2023/2024 is £15,500. Therefore, the proposal for Wellington Town Council is as follows:

		Percentage of Basic Allowance paid to Somerset Council Councillors	2023/24 Basic allowance available per City/Town/Parish Councillor
Level 4	10,000 – 19,999	5%	£775

The Panel **recommends** that under any scheme adopted, the basic allowance available to Wellington Town councillors may increase in line with an adjustment to the Somerset Council basic allowance in the same financial year.

14 - The Panel **recommends** that if Wellington Town council pays an enhanced basic allowance to its chair, then such chair’s basic allowance shall not exceed twice that basic allowance payable to other members of the town council. Each council is legally responsible to determine the basic and chair’s allowances under any scheme adopted by it. The Panel recognises that an authority may take into account factors in addition to electorate size. The Panel are of the view that such factors as budget size, number and complexity of operations and breadth of commercial activity are relevant.

15 – Wellington Town Council is in the best position to make a judgement, based on individual circumstances, whether it is appropriate to pay:

- all or part of the basic allowance to reflect any incidental costs and time commitment.
- a basic allowance to all members or just the chair; or
- a higher amount to the chair if all members are entitled to receive an allowance, subject to this not exceeding twice the maximum basic allowance set out above.

16 - Where any scheme for the payment of vehicular travel allowances exceeds the allowances specified by HM Revenue and Customs Mileage Allowance Payments (**MAPs**) the excess is a taxable benefit to the claimant.

MAPs are currently:

1. Car – 45p per mile up to 10,000 and 25p per mile thereafter;
2. Passenger payments – up to 5p per mile per passenger (up to a maximum of four) to be claimed only for passengers who would otherwise be eligible for a travel allowance.
3. Motorcycle – 24p per mile; and
4. Bicycle – 20p per mile.

The Panel **recommends** that:

1. vehicular travel allowances be equal to MAPs;
2. travel by public transport (including rail and bus) - reimbursement of the standard fare or actual fare paid; and
3. parking fees – actual amount paid.

The Panel **recommends** that any subsistence allowances should be based on reimbursement of receipted expenditure within the maximum limits as set out in the Somerset Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances as set out below.

- Breakfast allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence before 11 am) – up to a maximum of £9.01;
- Lunch allowance (more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence, including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2 pm) – up to a maximum of £12.40;
- Tea allowance (more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence, including the period 3 pm to 6 pm) – up to a maximum of £4.82;
- Evening meal allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence, ending after 7 pm) – up to a maximum of £15.36.
- Overnight absence (i.e. hotel accommodation) - maximum £ 144.45 or £162.91 (within London)

These payments only apply to duties undertaken outside of Somerset. Subsistence cannot be claimed for duties undertaken in Somerset.

17 - The Panel **recommends** that Wellington Town Council agrees a list of approved duties for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances, similar to that set out in the Somerset Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances, and this be kept under regular review by Wellington Town Council. The Panel wishes to emphasise that it does not suggest that it is necessary or appropriate for Wellington Town Council to pay allowances. It will determine its

own scheme (if any) having had regard to the recommendations made in this report.

18 - The Panel **recommends** that if Wellington Town Council adopts a scheme of allowances, the commencement of such scheme should be payable from the commencement of the next financial year.

19 – The Panel wishes to emphasise that it does not suggest that it is appropriate for all parish councils to pay allowances. The Panel’s recommended guideline is a maximum figure within which each council can determine its own scheme if this is felt justified.

20 - A draft Wellington Town Council Scheme of Allowances is shown in Appendix 1 for the Town Council to consider should it adopt a Scheme of Allowances.

APPENDIX 1 – WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL DRAFT SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES (DECEMBER 2023)

The Panel **recommends** the maximum basic allowance payable to members of Parish, Town and City Councils be as follows calculated on a basic allowance for 2023/24 of £15,500 as set out in Somerset Council’s Scheme of Members’ Allowances:

	<u>Electorate</u> (The number of councils that fall within each grouping is shown in brackets)	Percentage of Basic Allowance paid to Somerset Council Councillors	2023/24 Basic allowance available per City/Town/Parish Councillor
Level 4	10,000 – 19,999	5%	£775

The Panel **recommends** that if a council pays an enhanced basic allowance to its chair, then such chair’s basic allowance shall not exceed twice that basic allowance payable to other members.

In view of the number and the differences in both size and scale of activity, the Panel **recommends** that, each city, town or parish council should determine the basic and chair’s allowances, subject to the maximum set out above. Each council is in the best position to make a judgement, based on individual circumstances, whether it is appropriate to pay:

- (i) all or part of the basic allowance to reflect any incidental costs and time commitment;
- (ii) a basic allowance to all members or just the chair; or
- (iii) a higher amount to the chair if all members are entitled to receive an allowance, subject to this not exceeding twice the maximum basic allowance set out above.

Where any scheme for the payment of vehicular travel allowances exceeds the allowances specified by HM Revenue and Customs Mileage Allowance Payments (MAPs), the excess is a taxable benefit to the claimant. The Panel further notes that to introduce taxable benefits into the travel allowances scheme would be a disproportionate bureaucratic burden on the council.

MAPs are currently:

- i) Car – 45p per mile up to 10,000 and 25p per mile thereafter;
- ii) Passenger payments – up to 5p per mile per passenger (up to a maximum of four) to be claimed only for passengers who would otherwise be eligible for travelling allowance;
- iii) Motorcycle – 24p per mile; and
- iv) Bicycle – 20p per mile.

The Panel **recommends** that:

- i) vehicular travel allowances be equal to MAPs;
- ii) travel by public transport (including rail and bus) reimbursement of the standard fare or actual fare paid; and
- iii) parking fees – actual amount paid.

The Panel **recommends** that any subsistence allowances should be based on reimbursement of receipted expenditure within the maximum limits as set out in Somerset Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances, as set out below.

- Breakfast allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence before 11 am) - up to a maximum of £9.01;
- Lunch allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence, including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2 pm) – up to a maximum of £12.40;
- Tea allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence including the period 3 pm to 6 pm) – up to a maximum of £4.82;
- Evening meal allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence, ending after 7 pm) – up to a maximum of £15.36.
- Overnight absence (i.e. hotel accommodation) - maximum £ 144.45 or £162.91 (within London)

These payments only apply to duties undertaken outside of Somerset. Subsistence cannot be claimed for duties undertaken in Somerset.

List of Approved Duties

Wellington Town Council is to define with reference to Somerset Council Scheme of Members' Allowances 2024/25.