

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

PRESENT: Councillor J Lloyd (Chair),
Councillors C Booth, J Cole, 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
Seven members of the public

366 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed those attending.

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

Apologies were received from Councillor S Fox.

368 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

369 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held 7 October 2024.

370 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public spoke in relation to agenda item 17 specific in relation to coopted councillors receiving a councillor's allowance which he considered was not legal.

371 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

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

372 LONGFORTH PHASE TWO AND WARDLEWORTH WAY DEVELOPMENTS

Chris Winter, West of England Developments provided an update on the two developments. Councillors raised concerns regarding the transport infrastructure issues that would be caused by the proposed Wardleworth Way development and the lack of a northern relief road. Mr Winter explained that the proposals were at an early stage of development and that he would feed back the Council's concerns to Somerset Council.

Further concerns were raised in relation to the apparent piecemeal approach to developments in the town resulting in infrastructure issues not being adequately addressed. It was agreed that the Town Clerk will set up a meeting for councillors with senior planning staff from Somerset Council to discuss this.

Clarification was also sought regarding access from the Wardleworth Way development to the railway station should it be built. Mr Winter said that he would clarify the situation.

373 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

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

374 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Chris Penk to the vacancies on the Policy and Finance and Environment Committees.

375 COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor Henley reported that the Boundary Commission had commenced a consultation process as an initial stage of the review of division boundaries for Somerset Council. He also reported that he was working with Councillor Cole and The Town Clerk on parking concerns on Torres Vedras Drive and had a site meeting with Somerset Council officers on the 6 November. There had been 79 responses to a request for information with 77 responses expressing concern about dangerous parking. Councillor Lloyd asked that when meeting Somerset Council officers Councillor Henley asks about the installation of a pedestrian crossing from Cades Farm to Lidl.

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

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

377 POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2024 were noted.

378 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 were noted.

379 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2024 were noted.

380 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2024 were noted.

381 DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES FROM SOMERSET COUNCIL

A report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was noted.

Councillors A Govier and R Henley left the meeting during the discussion on this item and prior to the resolutions being made.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the Heads of Terms provided by Somerset Council.
- (ii) To confirm that officers should proceed to finalise the transfer of open spaces and associated buildings set out in the appendix to the report and based on the information set out in para 2.4 of the report.
- (iii) Not to take responsibility for the maintenance of Rockwell Green Cemetery given the lack of income.
- (iv) To accept the transfer of the title for Wellington Park and The Recreation Ground understanding the structural issues with the Pavilion

382 COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

As part of the discussions Councillors considered the comments of the Internal Auditor set out on the report. Some councillors expressed concern that the Council was acting illegally in paying allowances to co-opted councillors and as a result individual councillors could be subject to surcharge.

After some discussion, it was proposed and duly seconded that the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel for the Basic Allowance of £775 should be payable to councillors in the 2025/6 financial year.

Councillor McGuffie proposed an amendment to change ‘councillors’ to ‘elected members’. The amendment was not seconded. Therefore, the original proposal moved to the vote and it was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel that the Basic Allowance of £775 should be payable to councillors in the 2025/6 financial year.

Councillor McGuffie requested that it be noted that Councillors McGuffie, Mercer and Pringle-Kosikowsky voted against the proposal

RESOLVED that an enhanced allowance of 50% (£387.50) be paid in addition to the basic allowance to the Chairman in 2025/6.

Councillor McGuffie requested that it be noted that he voted against the proposal.

RESOLVED that the allowance should be paid in one payment but that councillors should only receive it once they have signed a commitment to repay it proportionately should they step down during the year. New councillors would receive a proportion of the allowance based on when they take up the role during the year.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.55 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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