

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 02 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor J Lloyd (Chair),
Councillors M Barr, C Booth, J Cole, S Fox, A Govier, R Henley (from 238), M Lithgow, M McGuffie, S Mercer, C Penk (from 240), S Pringle-Kosikowsky and J Thorne

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

236 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed Councillor S Fox to her first full meeting of The Council.

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

Apologies were received from Councillors C Govier and K Wheatley.

238 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Mercer declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 (Open Spaces Arrangements) as his property abuts one of the areas the Council will be taking responsibility of.

239 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held 27 August 2024.

240 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public reminded Councillors that Howard Road Fun Day will take place on 14 September, to which they are welcome to attend.

At this juncture, Councillor Henley arrived at the meeting.

241 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sgt O'Connor was circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. As Sgt O'Connor had given apologies, the Mayor asked that any questions be directed to the Clerk who will pass them on.

242 CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR

RESOLVED to co-opt Christopher Penk as a Councillor. He signed the declaration of office and joined the meeting.

243 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

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

244 SOMERSET COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillor M Barr reported that he had mostly been dealing with casework.

Councillor A Govier reported that August is usually a quieter month at the Unitary Council. The Chief Financial Officer has reported that, at present, it is hoped that a Section 114 notice is not required due to the sale of assets.

Councillor Henley reported on the proposed review by the Boundary Commission to determine the number of Councillors for Somerset from the 2027 elections. It is expected that the number of Councillors will reduce. He gave a further update on expected presentations from the One Team and SALC at the next LCN meeting. He was pleased that the pool at the leisure centre has re-opened with final works due to complete soon and that the library was due to re-open following its refurbishment in the next month. He has asked for statistics on numbers of people impacted by the new voter ID rules at the General Election.

The Town Clerk reported that a document has been published via the LCN for Enhanced Highway Maintenance which has been awaited for some time. It will be taken to Policy & Finance for review and to link in with the budget setting process.

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

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

246 POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2024 were circulated with the agenda and were noted.

247 RAILWAY STATION

In light of the Government’s announcement that the station project may not proceed, Councillors discussed possible ways forward and considered the Council’s position on the matter. The Clerk reported that a Metro Board meeting is scheduled for 4 October.

After some discussion; it was **RESOLVED** to write to Somerset Council requesting a meeting with the lead Planning Officer and the Developer to discuss the implications on the planning process and land provision.

It was further **RESOLVED** to write the Rail Minister to strongly re-affirm the need for a station in the town given the business case that has already been established. Also, to invite the Minister to visit Wellington to discuss the project.

248 STREET TRADING LICENCE – FOR COMMENT

RESOLVED to support the application from Farmhouse Pies and Pasties Ltd.

249 BANKING HUB

Councillors considered a request from Cash Access UK that their rental agreement for the ground floor of 30 Fore Street be extended by a further 6 months. **RESOLVED** to approve the request.

250 55 NORTH STREET

Councillors noted that it was the intention of Somerset Council to sell the above-mentioned property at auction. **RESOLVED** to take no action.

At this juncture, Councillor R Henley left the meeting.

251 23/24 AUDIT

RESOLVED to note and approve the External Audit Report (AGAR Section 3) for 23/24

252 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF OPEN SPACES FROM APRIL 2025

A report was circulated with the agenda. After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations as set out within the paper and reproduced below:

1. That the management of Open Spaces in Wellington is delivered through a mix of in house and contracted out provision.
2. Workforce
 - 2.1. The Clerk be given delegated authority to recruit a team consisting of 3 FTE (1x Team Leader and 2x Operatives). With an expected start date of mid-Feb/early-March 2025. The cost to the end of the current financial year to be drawn from the existing salaries budget.
 - 2.2. The Clerk be given delegated authority to incur set up expenditure as appropriate for training, IT and clothing and PPE as detailed in the summary table. Cost to be drawn from the Open Spaces Development Reserve.
 - 2.3. A total allowance of 4 FTE (1x Team Leader and 3x Operatives) be budgeted for in 25/26 (approx. £170,000). Having noted the points raised in items 3.1.1 to 3.1.3 above.
3. Depot
 - 3.1. That the Council enter into a lease agreement for the rental of the industrial unit as detailed in Appendix 5 (and summary table) for five years with a three-year break clause with a commencement date of 1st November, having noted the approximate costings as detailed in Appendix 6 (and summary table). Costs to the end of the current financial year to be drawn from the Open Spaces Development Reserve.
 - 3.2. The Clerk be given delegated authority to make the appropriate spend against the set-up budget as detailed in Appendix 6. Costs to be drawn from the Open Spaces Development Reserve.
4. Vehicles & Machinery
 - 4.1. The Clerk be given delegated authority to spend up to £51,500 on three vehicles as set out in Appendix 4 plus set-up items up to £7,750. Costs to be drawn from the Open Spaces Development Reserve.
 - 4.2. That the Council take up a lease agreement for two large mowing machines as detailed in Appendix 4 from 1st January 2025, the annual cost being added to the 25/26 budget and the cost for the remainder of 24/25 being taken from the Open Spaces Development Reserve.
 - 4.3. The Clerk be given delegated authority to purchase (excluding two leased mowers as above) all other trailers, machinery and equipment as detailed in Appendix 4. Costs to be drawn from the Open Spaces Development Reserve.
5. Other
 - 5.1. The Clerk be given delegated authority to incur any expenditure required for insurance purposes.
 - 5.2. The Clerk be given delegated authority to incur any expenditure from a contingency amount of £5,000 be allocated within the Open Spaces Development Reserve.

It was **NOTED** that all delegated expenditure to be incurred will be in line with Financial Regulations and will be reported to the Policy & Finance committee on a monthly basis. A table of expenditure from the Open Spaces Development Reserve detailed in the paper and reproduced below was also noted.

Reserve amount	£	135,000.00
Machinery Purch	£	79,770.00
3 Months Mower Lease	£	3,000.00
Depot Set Up	£	7,250.00
5 Month Depot Costs	£	14,355.00
People Cost (-salaries)	£	10,500.00
Possible Insurance	£	2,500.00
Contingency	£	5,000.00
	£	122,375.00
Balance	£	12,625.00

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

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm

Mayor

.....