

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON ON MONDAY 6 JANUARY 2025 AT 7.00 PM

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

IN ATTENDANCE: David Farrow (Town Clerk)
Alice Kendall (RFO/Deputy Clerk)
One member of the press
Ten members of the public
Somerset Councillor Sarah Wakefield for agenda item 11 (Bus Service)

455 TO OFFER WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting, welcomed those attending and wished all a Happy New Year

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

No apologies had been received.

457 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S Pringle-Kosikowsky declared a personal interest in the item relating to buses as a regular user of the service.

Councillor M Lithgow and J Thorne declared a personal interest relating to the mention of the Community Centre in the Clerk's report being members of the committee.

458 MINUTES

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

459 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICING TEAM

The report from Sgt O'Connor was circulated prior to the meeting and was noted. Councillors reported that they had noticed a welcome increase in the number of both overt and covert foot patrols. Councillor Thorne asked if a similar operation to target shoplifting in Taunton will be carried out in Wellington. Sgt O'Connor confirmed that this will be taking place. In response to a question from Councillor Wheatley about the increase in the number of reported Violence Against the Person cases Sgt O'Connor advised that this category covered a wide range of issues include online abuse. He confirmed there had been no increase in actual violent offences

460 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Five members of the public spoke in relation to the bus service and shared their testimonials as to the lack of service.

461 FIRST BUS SERVICE PROVISION

Councillor Wheatley thanked those members of the public for attending and went on to give an introduction as to why he brought the matter to the meeting. He further shared information received when bringing the matter to the attention of Councillor Watkins (Lead Member for Transport at Somerset Council). Councillors shared frustration both with the service from First Bus and the response from Councillor Watkins. After some discussion, it was agreed that a meeting should be requested with a representative from First Bus with a group of

Councillors. The matter has been placed on the Policy & Finance meeting for further discussion.

462 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE MAYOR

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

463 COUNCIL/LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK (LCN) UPDATE

Councillors A Govier, C Govier and R Henley gave very brief updates as due to the Christmas break, there was not much to report on. Councillor R Henley has been chairing the group which has been reviewing the options for submission in relation to the division boundary review. It was reported that the current submission gives three Councillors for Wellington with some divisions also covering other rural areas.

464 TO RECEIVE THE CLERK'S REPORT ON RECENT COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

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

465 POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The draft minutes and recommendations of the meeting held on 9 December 2024 were noted.

466 PRECEPT 2025/6

A report from the RFO was circulated in advance of the meeting. After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to set the level of reserves for 25/26 as set out in item 3.3 within that report.

Further **RESOLVED** to set the Precept at £1,234,120 noting the Band D equivalent at £211.88.

467 TO CONSIDER EXCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public from the meeting, 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 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

468 IVY HOUSE AND THE OLD VICARAGE

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the Council had a Non-Disclosure Agreement with Abbeyfield and updated councillors on the latest position. Abbeyfield had provided the S119 reports relating to the valuations of the properties, but these had raised a number of questions on which he was seeking clarification from Abbeyfield.

Councillors expressed concern that the residents at Ivy House had been refused permission to redecorate their communal lounge at their expense and been advised that to do so could constitute criminal damage and result in them being in breach of their tenancy agreement.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.40 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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