



## Wells City Council

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### Background

Upon the request of the committee the following has been compiled to answer the questions posed, this is an assumption of the data and clarification of the position within the Council.

### Trend Data

A detailed review of the period between April 2025-July 2025 has been conducted to ascertain the trend usage of the Town Hall and Portway Annexe.

The information contained below is a representation of the data to ensure a clear indication of high usage times and trends throughout the week. Daily data graphs have been provided for each resource in Appendix A.

Below is a breakdown of each resource including their peak times and suggested reviews of the space.

#### Town Hall - Council Chamber

The resource demonstrates consistent usage on Sunday mornings, with a noticeable decline in activity around 1:00 PM, which aligns with the typical closing time of the Town Hall unless additional events are scheduled. The Chamber maintains steady utilisation throughout the day, with a brief dip in engagement between 5:00 PM and 6:00 PM, followed by a short resurgence. Based on the data, Saturdays show the lowest consistent usage.

Peak Day: Sunday (due to the opening hours on this day). Otherwise this would be set to Thursday.

#### Town Hall - Gallery Bar

This resource shows that the bar is consistently used between 9am and 5pm, at low levels with only a maximum of seven incidents between the data date range. There is a sharp decline in usage a 5pm apart from on Saturdays. Consideration should be given to the opportunities of the space to allow for alternative set ups to increase the usage of the resource.

Peak Day: Friday

#### **Town Hall - Kitchen**

The resource experiences its highest usage on Saturdays, reaching up to seven bookings. However, this remains relatively low given the full capacity and potential of the space. Strategic consideration should be given to promoting the availability of the fully equipped commercial kitchen to local partners and community groups, with a focus on facilitating cooking experiences, culinary training, and food-related events. A recurring dip in usage is observed around 5pm, although overall activity remains comparatively higher on Fridays and Saturdays.

Peak Day: Saturday

#### **Town Hall - Main Hall**

The resource is highly utilised up until midday, with its peak being a Wednesday. There is lower consistent usage from midday with a similar dip in usage at 5pm with the exception of a Tuesday where there is a spike in usage from this time until 7pm. Marketing should be considered for afternoons although due to the nature of the room, it is more of a function space for private parties and wedding receptions which is a limitation. Large corporate functions such as team building, conference and training events would likely be more suitable for this time of day. This is restricted by the lack of onsite parking provision, it is also not currently utilised for the Council's own Committee meetings.

Peak Day: Wednesday

#### **Town Hall - Marshman**

The resource demonstrates its highest utilisation during morning hours, followed by a noticeable decline around midday. There is a modest resurgence in activity until approximately 4pm, after which usage becomes sporadic until closing. Wednesday consistently shows the highest and most stable usage. Notably, Tuesday is the only day where activity ceases entirely by 5pm.

Peak Day: Wednesday

#### **Town Hall - Mayors Parlour**

During the period of analysis, the resource was not utilised at all on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. This trend is likely attributable to the low demand for weddings and private functions typically scheduled at the beginning of the week. The highest level of usage occurs on Saturday, followed by Friday, reflecting the conventional preference for latter week weddings. It is important to note that the resource is also used by the Mayor for official duties. These engagements are not recorded under private functions, as they represent the resource's primary civic purpose. As such, any efforts to increase marketing or promote additional bookings must be carefully balanced to avoid disrupting mayoral responsibilities.

Peak Day: Saturday

#### **Town Hall - Parkes Room**

The resource demonstrates low consistent daily usage, with pronounced activity during the morning hours between 8am and 11:30am. A brief peak is observed on Friday between midday and 1pm, suggesting a potential scheduling preference for midday functions at the end of the week.

Usage remains low and steady from 11:30pm until 4pm, indicating limited engagement during the afternoon period. However, additional peaks are evident on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, which may reflect midweek classes and private events.

Peak Day: Tuesday

#### **Town Hall - Westwood**

The resource exhibits high morning utilisation on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, typically peaking between 8am and midday. A secondary surge in activity begins at 4pm, tapering off by 8pm, indicating a clear preference for early and late-day scheduling. The current usage is community re-occurring activities such as dance and exercise therefore these are structure to timetables suitable for the relevant age groups.

Peak Day: Saturday

#### **Town Hall - Vestibule**

Whilst we recognise this is a usable space the Council needs to understand the usage of the Town Hall as a whole prior to making any localised decisions on this space. Consideration should be given as how this can be used as an exhibition and marketing space.

#### **Town Hall Resource usage summary**

The most common peak day is Saturday.

#### **Portway Annexe - AV Studio**

The resource experiences minimal usage during the morning hours, with a noticeable increase beginning around midday. Mondays and Tuesday show a spike in activity occurring at 2pm, after which usage the resource remains in consistent use until the facility closes at 9pm. On Saturdays, however, attendance remains nominal throughout the day. This resource is in heavy demand after 6pm Mon-Fri and the Annexe receives more calls for usage than can be facilitated with its current offering.

Peak Day: Wednesday

#### **Portway Annexe - Signal Rand**

The resource is mainly utilised in the mornings with reduced usage identified between 2pm, spikes in usage on a Monday and Tuesday until 5/6pm. There is little to no usage after this time. This resource is normally utilised for baby groups, mending sessions and dance.

Peak Day: Tuesday

#### **Portway Annexe - Chamberlain Hall**

The resource is the largest offering at the Annexe and receives its highest usage in the mornings although after a dip occurs on most days until 4pm where this is a resurgence in use, this aligns with after school times and hosts dancing groups. Although some private events are taking place on a Saturday these are very minimal with the highest recorded requirement of twice in the data capture period. This space has the potential to host small indoor markets, art exhibitions, community buy and sell stalls and other events.

Peak Day: Tuesday

**Portway Annexe - Cursley**

This resource was booked on Fridays and beginning to capture the weekly Tuesday morning usage, the remaining time has minimal usage with no notable usage in the data capture period apart from a peak on Saturdays between midday and 2pm. This is located next to the AV studio and therefore may reflect the lack of bookings in the evenings. Consideration should be given to the utilisation of the room, due to its proximity to the existing music rooms and the community need outweighing the current resources provided, consideration that this room be reviewed for potential sound damping measures to allow for the broadening of the rooms scope of bookings to include music.

Peak Day: While Friday has been designated as the peak day this is misleading due to a lease agreement in place, Tuesday consistently performs as the true peak day.

**Portway Annexe - Dodd**

This resource is primarily used on a Tuesday, for arts and wellbeing classes. It is otherwise currently exhibiting low levels of usage throughout the day with mornings being where most activity is highlighted. The room has its own water supply and selection of cupboards utilised by community groups for their craft supplies. Consideration needs given to wider marketing of this space for further arts and crafts and other community groups such as the Women's Institute, Wells floral art club and other community lead groups.

Peak Day: Tuesday

**Portway Annexe - Small Music Room**

This resource is widely under utilised with only minimal usage, there is a brief peak between 11am and 1pm . Consideration for the ongoing use of the space needs to be reviewed, this could potentially be scoped as music equipment storage to allow for fuller equipment to be available to all users without cross booking interruptions. Alternatively if the external access is configured to the rehearsal room this would allow the small music room to be 'separated' from the through fare allowing the space to be booked independently.

Peak day: While Friday has been designated as the peak day this is misleading due to a lease agreement in place, Saturday holds the only real usage but this is limited.

Peak Day: Saturday

**Portway Annexe - Nightingale**

This resource is predominately utilised by the Wells Welcome Hub, to the limited set up in place many other potential customers choose to use another room rather than this to accommodate their set up needs. The room is utilised in the mornings with a lull at 1pm, this generally does not pick up again apart from a Wednesday. Consideration should be given to the potential change in furniture to allow this to cater for other potential users surrounding the Wells Welcome Hub requirements.

Peak Day: Tuesday

**Portway Annexe - Patch**

This resource is consistently utilised throughout Tuesday as office space and Wells Welcome hub usage for small English sessions. Other uses are for private consultancy and hot desking, although these are predominately morning or evening sessions. The resource sees no usage on a Saturdays.

Hot desk users currently benefit from this private space when available at the reduced hot desking rate.

Peak Day: Tuesday

### **Portway Annexe - Rehearsal**

This resource closely mirrors the usage patterns observed in the AV Studio, with demand steadily increasing throughout the day and peaking notably after 4pm on Wednesdays—significantly higher than any other time. However, due to the current configuration of the room, repurposing it into a multi-functional space to support broader daytime usage would present considerable challenges.

Peak Day: Wednesday

*All rooms are consistently in use on a Friday from 6pm due to the Wells City Band agreement, exclusive use of the premises with utilisation of the AV, Rehearsal, Chamberlain Hall and Patch rooms.*

### **Portway Annexe Resource usage summary**

The most common peak day is Tuesday.

### **Bishops Barn**

The bishop's barn has only been utilised three times within the period of April – July and therefore a trend analysis has not been conducted, this will be considered by the Trustees in December.

### **Finance Data - Informed by Appendix D.**

Appendix D is an analysis of charges invoiced, by customer, for the month of May. This month was chosen as the most recent that has not been affected by term time holidays, therefore a more thorough snapshot than others.

Actual hourly / session payments are compared to price list charges, with discrepancies shown in red.

Historically, customers at the Town Hall were given relief during reopening after COVID in the form of discounted rates. It was important at that time the focus was on encouraging the community to 'return to normal'. Price list amendments since then have not necessarily been applied to these longstanding customers.

Totals at the bottom suggest the amount we could look to recoup monthly should more customers be asked to pay according to the current price list structure.

## **Benchmarking**

The benchmarking analysis data shows that the Wells City Council current charges are below what other Town Halls are charging for room hire and also charge two rates Community rates and Corporate rates.

The majority of our bookings are community based small businesses/individuals therefore a Corporate rate has not been recommended. Those existing corporate booking will likely receive the new proposed hourly set up charge therefore increasing the yield taken on these bookings.

We are proposing that the Westwood room charges at the Town Hall be brought in line with the Chamberlain Hall at the Portway Annex this equates to a Net increase of £5 per hour and £10 per session. We will also uplift the session charges of £30 Net to £40 Net for the Cursley Room and Nightingale IT Suite to come in line with the Bignal-Rand Room and Dodd Room.

We are also proposing a price uplift of 5% Net across all rooms in the Town Hall and Portway Annexe.

Appendix B – Benchmarking analysis data

Appendix C – Price uplift proposal

Cemetery information will follow at a later meeting as it is considered a different function from the room charging.

## **Recommendations for Committee Consideration and agreement:**

### **Trend**

- In line with this report apply resource to review options relating to marketing and resource;
  - Actively market Sundays at the Town Hall for between September and October to establish need. If no need established look to advise current user on Sunday of termination and closure on this day. Realise staff savings and building savings from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026
  - Reach out to local community groups, Somerset Council, CCS, schools and other organisations which may have interest in providing training/cooking sessions to individuals, groups in a fully equipped commercial kitchen.
  - Review usage of the Cursley room in September and October 2025 to ascertain potential alternative usage, such as conversion to a music room to facilitate requests from the public for more music facilities.
  - Take necessary staff actions to reduce hours and close Saturdays, due to lack of utilisation from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.
  - Increase fees for Small Music room after completing benchmarking exercise in September with a view to apply changes from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.
  - Continue to pursue partnership conversations to ascertain their operational accommodation needs (if any) can be facilitated by Wells City Council, such as the registers.

**Benchmarking**

- Uplift charging for all resources by 5% (excl VAT) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026
- Price match the Westwood room charge in line with Chamberlain Hall due to size. Completing necessary engagement with current users and applying changes from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.
- Price match the session rate charge for Cursley and Nightingale rooms to align with Bignal Rand and Dodd with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026
- Implement set up charges within terms and conditions when a booking takes significant resource to facilitate aka 1 hour plus, this should be a set charge at £75 + VAT per hour in line with existing stage erection charges with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

**Finance**

- It is recognized the Council have a responsibility toward community enterprise and inclusivity, however income generation is forefront in the Council's mind.
- Auditors look at the income invoiced compared to price lists and comment on discrepancies
- The Council should reflect on the loss of longstanding customers when charges are increased, and the ability to fulfil the gaps should these customer's find other premises.
- Look to provide the majority of the 'community' bookings at the Portway as the community building and focus on a corporate strategy for the Town Hall.

**Final recommendation**

Estates committee are recommend to agree the above noted recommendations and forward their agreement to Finance Committee for their consideration. Noting also that the price changes will be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 to allow for relevant engagement with staff and customers, and the application of new user agreements for each client using either building.