



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL SUMMONS

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL,
WHICH MEMBERS ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND, WILL BE HELD IN
WELLS TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 24TH APRIL 2025 AT 7.00PM**

Please note this meeting will be recorded for the purpose of minute-taking.

Haylee Wilkins
Town Clerk

Town Hall, Market Place
Wells BA5 2RB

01749 673091

e-mail: townclerk@wells.gov.uk

15th April 2025

AGENDA

Wells City Council has declared a climate emergency. Each agenda item must consider the impact on any policy and decision.

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
- 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 27TH MARCH 2025**
To be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.
- 4 MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Mayor.
- 5 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Key Dates:

Civic Opening of May Fair and Buffet Lunch, Saturday 3rd May, 11am

VE80 Commemoration Beacon Lighting, Cathedral Green, Thursday 8th May, 8pm

Mayor Making Ceremony, Saturday 10th May, 5pm

Mayor's Diary

- i. 23rd April Scout Hut Reopening Ceremony
- ii. 25th April Twinning Visit to Fontanellato, Italy
- iii. 29th April Visit to HMS Somerset
- iv. 30th April Assembly visit to Wells Cathedral Prep School with Mace Bearer and Town Crier
- v. 6th May Carousel, Wells Little Theatre

6 OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2025 (attached)

7 STAFFING COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2025 (to follow)

8 FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2025 (to follow)

9 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2025 (to follow)

10 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**11 TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS****12 COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Report and supporting appendices attached.

13 LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

Report attached.

14 CONSIDERATION OF SECTION 85, LOCAL GOVERNEMENT ACT 1972

Confidential report provided via email (members only).

15 ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT**16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 22nd May 2025, 7pm**

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence it will be proposed by the Chairman that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended, excluding the press and public, in order that confidential items can be discussed.

Circulation List

Town Clerk/RFO Town Clerk Assistant Cemetery & Burial Officer Outside Spaces Officer Wells City Council members	Somerset Councillors Serjeants-at-Mace Mayor's Chaplain Town Crier Wells Civic Society WCC Internal Auditor	Wells Journal & Wells Voice Wells Chamber of Commerce The Bishop's Palace Wells Cathedral Avon & Somerset Police
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Wells City Council

Author	Haylee Wilkins / Cllr L Agabani, Cllr H Siggs, Cllr G Folkard
Presented By (if different)	Cllr L Agabani, Cllr H Siggs, Cllr G Folkard
Subject	Committee Governance Review
Date of report	17 th April 2025
For consideration at	Full City Council
Date of consideration	24 th April 2025

Introduction

Earlier this year Full City Council formed a Working Group, made up of Cllr Agabani, Cllr Siggs and Cllr Folkard. The working group looked to review the structure of committees to ensure continued effectiveness. It also aimed to build in feedback from councilors and lead officers of good working practice and areas for improvement, as well as ensuring that the structure and processes delivered against the future needs of the Council.

This report looks to provide Council with the details of the process completed, and the outcomes determined, as well as recommendations associated with changes to the committee structure of the Council from May 2025.

The current structure of committees is as follows:

Full City Council				
Finance and Council Matters Committee	Staffing Committee	Outside Spaces and Estates Committee	Planning and Environment Committee	Portway Annexe Management Group
Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Bi Monthly

Each committee or management group has a nominated Chair and Vice Chair which are determined in the May meeting of Full City Council each year and rotated annually.

It is important to note that in addition to the committees of the council, to manage council business, there is also the City Council Annual Parish Meeting, for which the council reports its actions. This meeting is not included within this review. Equally, the Town Clerk Management Committee is not included in this review

as it is specifically referenced within the Standing Orders of the council, however clarity is offered to support understanding of its purpose, roles and responsibilities.

Review Process

The working group, supported by the Town Clerk, drafted a suite of questions, which can be seen in Appendix A. The questions were posed to all Chairs of Committees to determine how they felt about those meetings for which they were responsible. This was then extended to all councillors, lead officers and the Town Clerk to allow comments from all viewpoints to be considered within the review.

The questions were posed over a 6-week period from the end of February.

Councillor and Lead Officer Feedback

The emerging themes were:

1. The need for consistent and refreshed training and policy to support Councillors in effective meeting management and chairing.
2. A growing need for specific management of the council's estates, creating an Estates committee to sit outside of the current Open Spaces and Estates Committee.
3. Closer working between lead officer and chair, especially when compiling the agenda.
4. Clarity and training on procedure for submission of proposals for council.
5. Written reports from senior officer distributed with agendas for transparency of information.
6. Published monthly accounts require more clarity. Monthly publication of a forecast budget to support the cashbook would be preferable.
7. Improved communications between officers and members, and onwards to general public.
8. Civic duties and procedures need to be documented.
9. Layout of the room to be adjusted to ensure ease of access for the public and make the meetings more inviting.
10. Space for Councillors to convene outside of public meetings, when discussion may be required. Ideally at the Town Hall.

Town Clerk feedback

In addition to the feedback from Councillors and Lead officers the Town Clerk is keen to also apply some amendments to current process, in support of greater transparency of meetings to the public, and greater support offered to Councillors.

The proposed measures are:

- a. Terms of reference created for each committee with amended standing orders cross referencing changes. (Draft attached).
- b. Public speaking guidance documents, both within the meeting and published in advance to explain reasoning to the public and invite greater engagement.
- c. Making a motion guidance documents, as b above.
- d. Minute Taking guidance documents, as b above.
- e. Forward plans to be applied as a standing agenda item to assist in forthcoming agenda items and agenda planning and preparation.
- f. Reduced time spent on adoption of minutes of previous meetings, via Full City Council to allow focus on other agenda items of core business.
- g. Ensure wherever possible a covering paper (Annexed Template) is provided in support of agenda items where a decision is required, to be circulated in advance to allow for councillors to scrutinise and question ahead of a decision.

- h. Councilors encouraged to ask questions where needed, ahead of the meeting to allow informed debate and officers to be available to provide response.
- i. Add between meeting delegations to chairs for all committees to ensure between meeting vital decisions can be taken in consultation with the relevant Chair and Town Clerk. To be recorded to committee by the next meeting as a noted decision.
- j. Town Clerk or nominated Lead officer to provide written advice note of actions or movement between meetings (Annexed Template).
- k. Action list created for each committee to allow action resolution to be tracked by Chair and Town Clerk/Nominated lead officer. Review of previous actions to also be completed and delivered against.
- l. Guidance to Councilors as noted in (b) above.
- m. Training for the Chair and Vice Chair of committees in advance of taking the role

The Outcomes

Following these suggestions, and building in the areas of suggested improvement, the proposed structure of Committee from May 2025 is:

Full City Council					
Personnel & Staffing Committee	Planning Advisory Committee	Estates Committee (absorbing all assets and estates functions)	Outside Spaces (including transport)	Finance Committee	Civic and Archives Committee
Quarterly	Monthly	Bi Monthly	Monthly through devolution, then possible bi monthly	Monthly	Quarterly (timing to consider key events)

The rational for change is as follows:

Personnel & Staffing Committee – As the Council continues to develop, change and in some instances grow, there should be greater transparency regarding its staffing. It should be remembered that the Town Clerk is the head of paid service, and that the Clerk in line with the Councils Standing Orders and practices, will retain that responsibility, but will be required to evidence changes and associated need to the committee for scrutiny. Equally, policy and procedure development are a key area of work for WCC and this committee would be the appropriate place for oversight.

In addition, the chair of the proposed personnel and staffing committee would form one third of the Town Clerk Management committee, as an additional duty, for which, they would be responsible as detailed in section 19 of the Council's Standing Orders.

Any cost implications associated with matters of the committee, are required to be referred to the Finance committee for consideration and agreement.

It is advised that the Mayor not sit within this committee to ensure that they can retain their impartiality in any investigations, should they arise.

Planning & Advisory Committee - Recognising that as a consultee, we are advising Somerset Council of local impact and nuance, it was considered suitable to reference the committee in its advisory function. It was also felt that this would support understanding of the public, of the difference between the consultation and decision-making processes of the two tiers of local authority. It also accounts for other areas of work which may sit across more than one committee workstream, for example TPO application.

Due to the nature of the debate and statutory duties of this committee, the elected Chair will be required to undertake statutory training before assuming their position. Equally, all Councillors within the committee should complete basic planning training as a minimum to aid understanding of the statutory duties and responses.

Estates Committee – This is a new committee. From feedback and considering the Council's intention to manage its assets and estate more commercially, the creation of this committee allows for a dedicated view of this important area of work.

As part of the Council's estate, and as a key income generator for the council, it is expected that Markets would also be reported against at the Estates Committee, where the discussion is associated with changes or developments to the model.

Any cost implications associated with matters of the committee, are required to be referred to the Finance committee for consideration.

Outside Spaces – This committee will reform and include fleet management. Even the devolution agenda and the forthcoming growth in open spaces assets, this committee is essential to the day to day running of these services as well as the wider strategic vision of open space management for the future. Expected that climate impact and management would also sit within this committee.

Any cost implications associated with matters of the committee, are required to be referred to the Finance committee for consideration.

Finance Committee – The Council has a legal obligation to ensure transparency and consistency in its financial management. Historically, Finance and Council Matters committee (as previously referenced) has managed wider issues of policy and council operations. Given the growth in budget and the need for greater financial control, it is considered prudent to reform the finance committee to focus solely on financial matters of the council. Where there is policy decision which would have previously been reported to finance and council matters committee, this will now be reported to the relevant committee for consideration, before onward consideration of Full City Council.

All matters where there is financial consideration or decision, should be reported to finance committee with associated justification.

In addition, the chair of the proposed finance committee would form one third of the Town Clerk Management committee, as an additional duty, for which, they would be responsible as detailed in section 19 of the Council's standing orders.

Civic and Archives Committee – The Council holds significant value within the Civic history of Somerset and in doing so, should work to ensure its continued success. The creation of this new committee offers significant value, both to events, archives, historical practices and importance as well as the wider identity for the City Council and the City of Wells.

Any cost implications associated with matters of the committee, are required to be referred to the Finance committee for consideration.

Full City Council – There are no constitutional changes proposed to the running of Full City Council, however, as referenced above, the amendment of committees beneath this, will see greater emphasis of policy and other decision-making being taken at the full council meeting.

In addition, the Mayor as chair of Full City Council would form one third of the Town Clerk Management committee, as an additional duty, for which, they would be responsible as detailed in section 19 of the Councils standing orders. The Mayor will act as the lead Councillor for any Town Clerk matters.

Appointment of committees

Appointment to committees will be determined at the first full city council meeting following Mayor Making, within the month of May. It is important to note that this is not included within the Mayor Making ceremony but can be held within the meeting if Councillors so wish.

In advance of the meeting, the Town Clerk will invite all Councillors to express their interest in committees, and will look to apply practical recommendations to Councillors accordingly. This will include the number of committees each councillor is planning to represent to ensure fair allocation and representation.

As such, the expected timetable is as follows:

Decision of this report (assuming to proceed) – 24.04.2025

Expressions of interest to Town Clerk – 25.04.2025 to 09.05.2025

Meeting schedule confirmed by Town Clerk for 2025-26 and published – 25.04.2025 to 15.05.2025

Published meeting agenda – 15.05.2025

Appointment of Committee Chairs and committee members – 22.05.2025

Appendices

Appendix A - Synopsis of Committee Chair Feedback

Appendix B – Draft Report template

Appendix C – Draft Terms of Reference for each of the noted Committees

Appendix D – Public Speaking Guidance Document

Appendix E – Motion Guidance Document

Appendix F – Minute Taking Guidance Document

Appendix G – Draft Forward Plan Template

Appendix H – Draft Town Clerk/Lead Officer Update Report

Appendix I – Draft Action list

Appendix B – Draft Report template



Wells City Council

Author	<i>Officer name</i>	
Subject	<i>This heading should match the item listed within the agenda</i>	
Date of report	<i>Date of drafting</i>	
For consideration at	<i>Committee name</i>	
Date of consideration	<i>Date of the committee</i>	
Sign Off		
Chair of the Committee	<i>This should be signed off in advance of publication. Please consider this within your drafting timeline</i>	
Town Clerk	<i>This should be signed off in advance of publication. Please consider this within your drafting timeline</i>	
Have you considered the following within your decision	Financial Implications	<i>Mark as appropriate</i>
	Legal Implications	<i>Mark as appropriate</i>
	Climate Implications	<i>Mark as appropriate</i>
	Consultation & Community Engagement	<i>Mark as appropriate</i>
Introduction <i>Give a synopsis of background information to ensure that Cllrs are appraised of the decision being made.</i>		
Options for consideration: <i>Given options, with one always detailing the “do nothing” position. Reference the risks and opportunities for each, where possible adding a Risk and opportunities table.</i>		
Financial Implications: <i>Given relevant detail of the decision being sought and the options for consideration.</i>		

Committee is recommended to:

Reference a clear recommendation, and where possible seek a nomination and seconder for the decision

Nomination of decision:

Secunder of decision:

Appendices:

List as appropriate

Appendix C – Draft Terms of Reference for each of the noted Committees

Finance Committee – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Finance Committee is established to oversee the financial management of the Council, ensuring transparency, accountability, and sound financial planning in line with statutory requirements and council priorities.

2. Membership

The Committee shall consist of eight Councillors, appointed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council shall be ex-officio members unless otherwise agreed.

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and/or Parish Clerk will attend in an advisory, non-voting capacity.

3. Quorum

A minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for a meeting to be quorate.

4. Meetings

The Committee shall meet monthly, with delegations applied to the Chair for any urgent matters between meetings.

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and will be open to the public, unless sensitive matters are being discussed under confidential session.

5. Responsibilities

The Committee will:

1. Review and monitor income and expenditure against the agreed budget.
2. Prepare a draft budget and recommend the annual precept to Full Council.
3. Oversee bank reconciliations, financial reports, and audit trails.
4. Ensure that internal controls and financial risk assessments are in place and reviewed regularly.
5. Ensure policies related to financial management (e.g. reserves, grants, procurement) are in place and reviewed regularly.
6. Authorise expenditure and payments within delegated authority.
7. Review and recommend the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and liaise with internal/external auditors as required.
8. Consider and make recommendations on grant applications submitted to the council.
9. Monitor and review the council's insurance cover, investments, and contracts as needed.
10. Consider future financial planning and forecasting.

6. Delegated Authority

The Committee has delegated authority to approve spending within the approved budget limits, subject to the Council's Financial Regulations.

7. Reporting

Minutes of all Finance Committee meetings will be circulated to all Councillors and approved at the next committee meeting.

The Committee shall report to Full City Council on its work, bringing forward any decisions requiring council approval.

8. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of the committee after the Annual Parish Council Meeting and updated as required and will sit within the Councils Standing Orders.

Civic and Archives Committee – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Civic and Archives Committee is established to oversee the parish's civic functions, events, and ceremonial matters, and to ensure the preservation and management of council archives, heritage materials, and records of local historical interest.

2. Membership

The Committee shall consist of 6 Councillors, appointed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Chair of the Parish Council shall be an ex-officio member.

Non-Councillor members with relevant expertise may be co-opted in an advisory capacity, subject to Council approval.

The Clerk or delegated officer will attend in an administrative and advisory role.

3. Quorum

A minimum of 3 Councillors must be present for the meeting to be quorate.

4. Meetings

The Committee shall meet at least twice a year, with additional meetings scheduled as necessary to support civic events and archive-related responsibilities.

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and be open to the public, unless confidential matters are discussed.

5. Responsibilities

The Committee will:

Civic Duties:

1. Oversee civic events, such as Mayor Making, Remembrance Day, civic awards, Civic Service, community celebrations, and commemorations.
2. Advise on protocol and etiquette for civic occasions, including the role of the Chair or Mayor.

3. Oversee civic regalia and ceremonial items, ensuring their care, appropriate use, and secure storage.
4. Promote community pride and engagement through civic recognition, honours, and outreach.

Archives and Heritage:

1. Oversee the preservation, storage, and accessibility of parish council archives and historical records.
2. Oversee an archive register / inventory, ensuring materials are properly catalogued and protected.
3. Liaise with local heritage organisations, historical societies, and the county records office as needed.
4. Promote public access to appropriate historical materials and encourage educational use of the archives.
5. Ensure compliance with data protection and records management legislation.

6. Delegated Authority

The Committee has delegated authority to make decisions and recommendations within its remit and approved budget.

Decisions outside these limits must be referred to Full Council for consideration and approval.

7. Reporting

Minutes of the Committee's meetings shall be circulated to all Councillors and approved at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee shall report to Full City Council and make recommendations where required.

8. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary to reflect changes in council policy, legislation, or committee priorities.

Estates Committee – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Estates Committee is responsible for overseeing the management, maintenance, and development of all parish council-owned properties, land, and other assets. The Committee ensures that assets are used effectively, maintained to a high standard, and comply with relevant policies and regulations.

2. Membership

The Committee shall consist of 8 Councillors, appointed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Chair of the Parish Council and the Clerk are ex-officio members of the Committee.

The Parish Clerk or another delegated officer will attend in an administrative and advisory role.

3. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 3 Councillors being present at the meeting.

4. Meetings

The Committee will meet monthly.

Meetings will be held in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and will generally be open to the public, except where sensitive or confidential matters are being discussed.

5. Responsibilities

The Committee will:

Property and Estate Management:

1. Oversee the management and maintenance of all council-owned properties, land, and buildings, ensuring that they are kept in good repair and used appropriately.
2. Monitor leases, rental agreements, and tenancy arrangements for any council-owned land or property, ensuring compliance with legal and contractual obligations.
3. Develop and implement a property management strategy, including routine maintenance, health and safety, and improvement plans.
4. Recommend capital expenditure for improvements, repairs, and developments to council assets.

Asset Management:

1. Maintain an up-to-date asset register detailing all council assets, including buildings, land, vehicles, equipment, and furniture.
2. Ensure that assets are properly insured and that risks related to asset management are assessed and mitigated.
3. Review asset valuations periodically and recommend actions to optimise the value or utilisation of council assets.
4. Oversee the disposal or transfer of assets when no longer required, ensuring that the process is carried out in line with council policy and regulations.

Health, Safety, and Compliance:

1. Ensure that all council properties comply with health and safety legislation and that any necessary inspections or certifications (e.g., fire safety, electrical safety) are carried out regularly.
2. Review risk assessments for council assets and implement necessary actions to reduce risks.

Community and Environmental Considerations:

1. Support the sustainable use and development of council-owned properties and land, with consideration for environmental impact.
2. Encourage community engagement with council assets, including the use of public spaces, halls, and recreation grounds.
3. Develop and manage accessibility plans for all council properties, ensuring that they are accessible to all members of the public.

6. Delegated Authority

The Committee is delegated authority to make decisions and recommendations within the scope of the Council's budget, policies, and procedures.

The Committee may make recommendations for expenditure on repairs, maintenance, and improvements up to a set financial limit, beyond which full Council approval is required.

7. Reporting

Minutes of the Committee's meetings shall be circulated to all Councillors and approved at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee will provide regular updates and reports to Full City Council on key matters, including decisions, expenditures, and planned projects.

8. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in the scope of work, policies, or legislative requirements.

Planning Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Planning Advisory Committee is established to advise and support the Parish Council in its response to planning applications, proposals for development, and related matters that affect the parish as a consultee. The Committee provides recommendations to the Local Planning Authority (Somerset Council) on planning issues, ensuring that local concerns and the community's interests are represented.

2. Membership

The Committee shall consist of eight Councillors, appointed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Chair of the Parish Council and the Clerk are ex-officio members of the Committee.

Non-Councillor members with relevant expertise (e.g. planning, architecture, or environmental design) may be co-opted in an advisory capacity, subject to Council approval.

3. Quorum

A quorum for meetings shall consist of three Councillors being present.

4. Meetings

The Committee will meet monthly to review planning applications and related matters, with delegations assigned to the Chair for any urgent matters between meetings

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and will generally be open to the public, except when confidential or sensitive planning matters are being discussed.

The Committee may meet on an ad-hoc basis depending on the planning application deadlines and urgent matters.

5. Responsibilities

The Committee will:

Planning Applications:

1. Review and assess planning applications received by the Parish Council as a consultee and provide comments to the Local Planning Authority (Somerset Council), ensuring that local planning policies and community interests are considered.
2. Consider the impact of proposed developments on the local community, including aspects like traffic, environment, infrastructure, and the general quality of life for residents.
3. Consult with local stakeholders and the public on significant planning proposals that may have a broader impact on the parish.

Policy and Strategy:

1. Keep up to date with local and national planning policies, including the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan, to ensure that the Parish Council's responses align with wider planning strategies.
2. Make recommendations on planning matters that could affect future development in the parish, including supporting policies for sustainable development and community-focused planning.

Development Proposals:

1. Review larger development proposals or land use changes that could affect the parish and offer expert advice and recommendations to the full council.
2. Advise on community engagement strategies for large-scale developments, ensuring that residents are properly informed and consulted.

6. Delegated Authority

The Committee has delegated authority to review and provide recommendations on planning applications and matters within the scope of the Parish Council's planning policies.

The Committee may make recommendations to the Local Planning Authority (Somerset Council) regarding the formulation of planning policies or comments on strategic planning matters.

7. Reporting

The Committee will report to the Full City Council, providing comments and summaries of planning applications reviewed during each meeting.

Minutes of all Planning Advisory Committee meetings shall be circulated to all Councillors and presented for approval at the subsequent Committee meeting.

8. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect changes in planning legislation, local policies, or the scope of the Committee's responsibilities.

Outside Spaces Committee – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Outside Spaces Committee is responsible for overseeing the management, maintenance, and development of all public open spaces and grounds owned or managed by the Parish Council. The Committee ensures that these areas are maintained to a high standard, are accessible, and are developed in a way that benefits the community while promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship.

2. Membership

The Committee shall consist of Eight Councillors, appointed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Chair of the Parish Council and the Clerk are ex-officio members of the Committee.

The Clerk or other delegated officer will attend in an administrative and advisory role.

3. Quorum

A quorum for meetings shall consist of three Councillors being present.

4. Meetings

The Committee shall meet monthly, with additional meetings scheduled as necessary, particularly in preparation for seasonal changes or new projects such as Devolution.

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and will generally be open to the public, except where sensitive or confidential matters are being discussed.

5. Responsibilities

The Committee will:

Grounds Maintenance and Management:

1. Oversee the maintenance of public open spaces, recreation grounds, parks, playgrounds, and other council-owned land, ensuring that they are clean, safe, and well-maintained.
2. Ensure that all grounds meet health and safety standards, including the maintenance of equipment, signage, and pathways.
3. Oversee playground inspections and recommend necessary repairs or upgrades.
4. Monitor the environmental impact of grounds care activities, promoting sustainability, and introducing environmentally friendly practices, such as water conservation, use of eco-friendly products, and habitat preservation.

Development and Improvement of Open Spaces:

1. Work with Council Officers to plan and recommend improvements and upgrades to open spaces, such as landscaping projects, new seating areas, signage, and community gardens.
2. Work with Council Officers to explore opportunities for the development of new community spaces, including potential areas for parks, sports facilities, or recreational activities.
3. Ensure that open spaces are accessible and inclusive, with appropriate facilities for people with disabilities, families, and individuals with different needs.

Community Engagement:

1. Engage with local residents and community groups to understand their needs and preferences for open spaces and grounds. This may include surveys, public consultations, and feedback on proposed developments or changes.
2. Work with staff, volunteers, schools, and local groups to enhance the use and care of public spaces through initiatives like clean-up days, planting, or conservation efforts.
3. Promote the benefits of public spaces for health and well-being, encouraging public use through community events, outdoor activities, or educational programs.

Environmental and Sustainability Goals:

1. Ensure that all open space and grounds care activities align with environmental sustainability goals, including reducing carbon footprint, promoting biodiversity, and conserving natural resources in line with the Council's Strategic objectives.
2. Implement measures for wildlife conservation, such as planting pollinator-friendly species, creating wildlife habitats, and maintaining natural green corridors.
3. Promote recycling and waste reduction in all open spaces.

6. Delegated Authority

The Committee is delegated authority to make decisions and recommendations within the scope of the Council's budget, policies, and procedures.

The Committee may make recommendations for expenditure on repairs, maintenance, and improvements up to a set financial limit, beyond which full Council approval is required.

7. Reporting

Minutes of the Committee's meetings shall be circulated to all Councillors and presented for approval at the subsequent Committee meeting.

The Committee will provide regular reports to Full City Council, outlining maintenance activities, projects under consideration, and recommendations for improvements to public spaces.

8. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in the scope of the Committee's work, environmental regulations, or council priorities.

Staffing and Personnel Committee – Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Staffing and Personnel Committee is established to oversee the recruitment, management, development, and welfare of all staff employed by the Council. The Committee ensures that staffing matters are handled in accordance with best practice, council policies, and relevant employment legislation, in close consultation with the Town Clerk, who is the responsible officer for staffing and personnel.

2. Membership

The Committee shall consist of six Councillors, appointed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

The Chair of the Parish Council is an ex-officio member.

The Clerk and other senior staff may attend as required, but they are not members of the Committee and may not be present when matters concerning their own employment are being discussed.

The Committee may, at its discretion, seek external HR advice and support, especially on complex or legal matters. The Council has a solution in place through WorkNest to support this need.

3. Quorum

A quorum for meetings shall consist of 3 Councillors being present.

4. Meetings

The Committee shall meet quarterly, with additional meetings scheduled as necessary to address staffing matters that require attention.

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, and the business of the Committee will be held in private when discussing personnel matters.

Minutes of the Committee's meetings will be circulated to all Councillors but may be kept confidential when dealing with sensitive matters.

5. Responsibilities

The Committee will:

Recruitment and Staffing:

1. Oversee the recruitment process for all staff, ensuring that adverts are clear, the selection process is fair, and the most suitable candidates are appointed.
2. Ensure that fair and transparent recruitment practices are followed in line with council policies and relevant employment law.
3. Support recruitment with attendance at recruitment panels as required.

Staff Development and Welfare:

1. Ensure that appropriate training and development opportunities are provided to staff to enable them to carry out their duties effectively and to develop professionally.
2. Ensure that staff have access to appropriate support for their welfare, including mechanisms for addressing concerns, grievances, and workloads.
3. Ensure staff are aware of and follow the Council's equal opportunities and diversity policies.
4. Ensure the Council's policies are compliant with current employment law and best practice and are regularly updated.

6. Delegated Authority

The Committee has delegated authority to approve recruitment and selection processes, staff training, and development plans within the annual budget.

The Committee may approve salary scales within the budgetary constraints set by Full Council.

Any decisions relating to dismissals or disciplinary actions involving senior staff members (e.g., Clerk) must be referred to Full City Council.

7. Reporting

The Committee will report to Full Council, making recommendations on staffing issues, including recruitment, performance, policies, and remuneration.

The Committee will provide a summary of staffing matters discussed at meetings, ensuring that sensitive or personal details remain confidential where necessary.

8. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in staffing responsibilities, employment law, or council priorities.

Appendix D – Public Speaking Guidance Document

Parish Council Public Speaking Guidance

Wells City Council welcomes constructive contributions while keeping our meetings respectful, focused, and fair for everyone. This guidance outlines when and how public participation is applied within Council meetings. It should be read in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.

1. Purpose of Public Participation

Our parish council meetings are open to the public, and we welcome your input. Public participation allows residents to speak on items listed on the agenda and bring relevant matters to the Council's attention.

2. Speaking at a Meeting – How it Works

A designated Public Participation slot is included on the agenda.

This usually takes place near the beginning of the meeting, before formal discussion by the council. Each speaker is allocated up to 3 minutes. This helps ensure that everyone has a fair chance to speak. Speakers must address their comments to the Chair, not individual Councillors or other members of the public.

Should there be an item on the agenda that you wish to reference, you must do so within the public speaking item on the agenda, you will not be able to form part of the debate of Councillors, or comment in any way on the agenda item itself.

3. Role of Councillors During Public Participation

Councillors do not engage in debate during public participation. The Chair may offer clarification or refer matters to the appropriate body or future agenda if needed.

4. Courtesy and Respect

Please keep comments respectful and relevant. Interruptions, shouting, or personal remarks are not permitted.

The Chair may ask speakers to conclude if their time is up or their comments stray from the agenda.

5. Chair's Discretion

The Chair has the discretion to:

- Extend speaking time in exceptional cases.
- Conclude the public participation session if time is limited or if conduct becomes disruptive.
- Invite additional response from a speaker or allow additional reply.

Appendix E – Motion Guidance Document

Guidance for Submitting a Motion to Parish Council

Wells City Council is keen to encourage open participation and structured decision-making. This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the Councils Standing Orders.

1. Purpose of a Motion

A motion is a formal proposal submitted by a Councillor to request that the council take a specific action, make a decision, or consider a matter at a future meeting.

2. Who Can Submit a Motion

Any elected parish Councillor may submit a motion for inclusion on a council meeting agenda, in line with standing orders and governance rules.

3. Submitting a Motion

Motions must be submitted in writing to the Clerk.

Submissions should be made at least 7 clear days before the agenda is published to allow time for review and legal checks.

The motion should include:

- A clear and concise title
- A short summary of the issue
- The proposed action or resolution for the council to consider
- The name of the Councillor submitting it and a seconder for the proposal

4. Format of a Motion

Motions should be phrased in a way that leads to a clear yes/no decision or defined action. For example:

“That the council agrees to allocate up to £500 for new benches at the recreation ground, subject to quotes being obtained.

Proposed: Cllr XX

Seconded by: Cllr XX”

Avoid vague or overly broad wording. The Clerk can assist with wording if needed.

5. Clerk's Role

The Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the motion.

If clarification or rewording is needed to meet legal or procedural requirements, the Clerk may work with the proposer.

The motion will be included on the next appropriate agenda, subject to the Chair's approval and standing orders.

6. Consideration at the Meeting

Motions will be discussed under the relevant agenda item.

The proposer will be invited to introduce the motion briefly. The council will then debate, amend if needed, and vote on the motion.

The outcome (approved, amended, deferred, or rejected) will be recorded in the minutes.

7. Amendments and Withdrawal

Once submitted, a motion may only be withdrawn or amended with the consent of the meeting.

Amendments may be proposed during the meeting, subject to debate and agreement.

Appendix F – Minute Taking Guidance Document

Guidance for Minute Taking at Parish Council Meetings

Wells City Council is keen to support transparency, accountability, and a clear record of our work together. This guidance note is to support council policy and should be read in conjunction with the Councils Standing Orders.

1. Purpose of Minutes

Minutes provide an official written record of the decisions and actions agreed upon at parish council meetings. They are not a transcript but a summary of key points, discussions, and resolutions.

2. Style and Tone

Minutes should be clear, concise, and neutral in tone. Avoid unnecessary detail, personal opinions, or naming individuals unless essential (e.g. where a Councillor proposes a motion). Use plain English and avoid jargon where possible.

3. What to Include

- Date, time, and location of the meeting.
- List of attendees, including Councillors, Clerk, and any guests or members of the public who have spoken.
- Apologies for absence and who gave them.
- Declarations of interest from Councillors.
- Summary of each agenda item, including:
 - Key points of discussion (briefly)
 - Decisions made
 - Actions agreed (with who is responsible and the deadline, if applicable)
- Public Participation:
 - Summary of topics raised (no names unless permission is given)
 - Note whether any follow-up action was agreed

4. What to Leave Out

Personal or sensitive details, unless directly relevant to a decision. Verbatim comments or informal side discussions.

Personal opinions or attributions (e.g. “Cllr Smith was annoyed” → avoid; “Cllr Smith raised concerns about...” → acceptable).

5. Accuracy and Approval

Draft minutes should be prepared and circulated within 7 working days of the meeting if possible.

Councillors may suggest amendments before formal approval at the next meeting.

Once approved, minutes become the official record and should be signed by the Chair and published on the parish website or noticeboard.

6. Confidential Items (Part B / Closed Sessions)

Record that the meeting moved into confidential session and reference in the minutes the vote taken by Councillors to do so.

The Clerk (who is the only member of staff to remain in confidential session) will summarise the topic discussed (where appropriate) and any decisions made.

Details remain confidential in line with data protection and governance policies.

7. Responsibilities

A minute taker is assigned to the meeting by the Clerk, however in their absence, any member of staff can support the function.

The Chair and Clerk work together to ensure the minutes reflect the meeting accurately and professionally.

Appendix G – Draft Forward Plan Template

The forward plan would be a standing item at Full City Council. It will look to inform future meetings, and will be updated quarterly. It will include statutory deadlines (e.g. AGAR, budget/precept) and ensure that Full City Council is appraised of the wider committee considerations, in support of specific agenda items. At the end of each Full City Council meeting the list can be reviewed by Councillors accordingly.

An example plan can be seen below.

Meeting Date	Agenda Item / Topic	Lead Person / Group	Notes
6 May 2025	Annual Governance Review	Clerk / Chair	
6 May 2025	Election of Chair and Vice Chair	Full Council	Annual statutory item 3 June 2025
6 May 2025	Review standing orders, code of conduct, etc	Clerk / RFO	Must be submitted by deadline 1 July 2025
7 th June 2025	Approval of Annual Accounts	Finance Committee /Clerk / RFO	
1 st September 2025	Community Grants Scheme – Round 1	Finance Committee /Clerk / RFO	
01 st November 2025	Budget Setting – First Draft	Finance Committee /Clerk / RFO	
1 st December 2025	Precept Approval	Full Council	Must be submitted to Somerset Council by 12.01.2026

Appendix H – Draft Town Clerk/Lead Officer Update Report (note that this will not be issued in advance as it will take account of updates through to the date of the meeting.)



**Wells City
Council**

Author	<i>Officer name</i>
Committee Update	<i>Name of Committee</i>
Date of consideration	<i>Date of the committee</i>
Lead Office Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• .• .• .• .• .• .• .• .• . <p><i>Lead officer to provide update on actions from previous meeting and any changes within period</i></p>	

Appendix I – Draft Action list

It is proposed that each meeting will have an action table, and a standing item on each agenda will be to review actions from previously referenced meeting minutes. This ensures that actions are followed up and auditable. It is proposed that this item will come ahead of substantive business.

Date of meeting	Action Reference	Description	Owner	Notes



Wells City Council

Author	Haylee Wilkins
Presented By (if different)	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Consideration of leave of absence request
Date of report	17 th April 2025
For consideration at	Full City Council
Date of consideration	24 th April 2025

Introduction

The Town Clerk has received a leave of absence request for six months from Cllr I Von Mensenkampff, with immediate effect due to ill health. Council is required to consider this request under Sections 84 & 85, Local Government Act 1972

The act references:

Any councillor whose absence from meetings is likely to extend to six months or more

should request a leave of absence by writing to the monitoring Officer stating:

- the reasons for the absence
- the anticipated period of absence
- whether the councilor will be available to continue performing any Council functions during this period e.g. continuing to deal with ward matters by telephone or email
- what arrangements (if any) have been made to cover for the Councilor's absence e.g. a fellow or neighboring ward councillor representing the interests of their ward

Requests should be considered by Full City Council and should therefore be made in sufficient time wherever possible.

Each request for a leave of absence should be considered on its own merits having regard to:

- the reasons for the proposed absence, from future meetings, and the extent to which this is unavoidable;
- the duration of the proposed absence;
- the extent to which the member will be able to continue carrying out any functions of a councillor notwithstanding their absence from meetings;
- the suitability of any alternative arrangements that are proposed for ensuring that the interests of the ward are adequately represented

Once that leave of absence expires, the clock re-starts so far as s.85 is concerned and the councillor has a further six months in which to attend a meeting (or seek a further leave of absence)

Next Steps

The Town Clerk recommends to Full City Council to:

Agree a leave of absence from the date of today's meeting for 6 months and notify Cllr Von Mensenkampff accordingly.