



## WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE,  
WHICH MEMBERS ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND,  
WILL BE HELD AT WELLS TOWN HALL  
ON THURSDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2025 AT 6:00PM**

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

Haylee Wilkins  
Town Clerk

26<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Town Hall  
Market Place  
Wells BA5 2RB  
01749 673091  
e-mail: townclerk@wells.gov.uk

Committee Members:

Cllrs: T Butt-Philip, D Denis, S Eden,  
D Orrett (Chair), S Powell, G Robbins

### **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 COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- 3 ACTIONS FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025**
- 4 MINUTES FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2025**  
To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting
- 5 MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Chair
- 6 UPDATE FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES OFFICER**  
Verbal update to be provided
- 7 TRAFFIC UPDATE AND PARISH PROPOSALS**  
Town Clerk to provide a verbal update

**8 ALLOTMENT REVIEW (report attached)**

Outside Spaces Officer to present report

**9 FORWARD PLAN**

Item	Proposed date for consideration
Devolution Update and land confirmation	June 2025
TTRO for Market Place - Update	July 2025
Events of Council Land	September 2025
Climate Strategy	September 2025
Recreation Ground Trust AGM feedback	September 2025

**10 ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT**

**11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025, 6pm in Wells Town Hall**

**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.



## Wells City Council

### ITEM 7

<b>Author</b>	Matt Johnson
<b>Presented By (if different)</b>	Matt Johnson
<b>Subject</b>	Allotments Review
<b>Date of report</b>	24.06.2025
<b>For consideration at</b>	Outside Spaces Committee
<b>Date of consideration</b>	03.07.2025

#### Current situation/Legislation

Wells City Council manages three allotment sites: **Burcott Road**, **Barnes Close**, and **The Bishop's Palace** allotments. These are governed by national allotment legislation, primarily the **Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908** and subsequent Acts up to 1950.

#### **Council Duties**

- **Statutory Duty to Provide:** Wells City Council has a legal obligation to provide a sufficient number of allotments if there is demand from local residents. If six or more registered voters in the parish formally request allotments, the Council must consider making land available.
- **Managing Demand:** If waiting lists for Burcott Road, Barnes Close, or The Bishop's Palace allotments indicate a shortage, the Council is expected to investigate options for expanding or improving provision.
- **Security of Tenure:** Burcott Road and Barnes Close are **statutory allotments**, they are protected by law. The Council cannot sell, repurpose, or build on the land without consultation and permission from the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- **Ending Tenancies:** The Council may end a tenancy with 12 months' notice, or with three months' notice in specific cases such as non-cultivation or breaches of the tenancy agreement.
- **Site Management:** As the managing authority, the Council is responsible for maintaining access, safety, and fair tenancy agreements across all three sites.

## **Current Capacities**

Currently the council has a total capacity of 62 plots that are available to allotment holders, they are let out on a lease that is fully compliant with the allotment legislation.

Specific allotment capacities detailed below:-

Barnes Close 10

Bishops Palace 32

Burcott Road 18

Turnover in allotment terms is quite low we are running at about 4-5 hand backs a year, these are predominantly in the Bishops Palace; Barnes Close and Burcott Road have a significantly lower return rate.

From a waiting list perspective we are currently running at 85 current applications, at our current return rate this would be cleared by approximately 2045.

## **Income/Costs**

Large plots are charged at £80

Small Plots are charged at £55

Total income for the last financial year £3745

Total Costs £1174 (This includes the provision of a new water trough in Burcott Road)

Costs are for direct purchase's only and do not include maintenance as such the allotments are trimmed and mown monthly throughout the summer months so will have approximately 8 cuts a year.

## **Conclusion**

The allotments are actually an easy to manage area of Open Spaces responsibility, we have minimal maintenance and in the main most tenants are responsible and look after their plots.

Given that allotments themselves, site conduct and use is governed by the allotments act they do not present a significant administration overhead.

Where we do have a concern is the provision of space given the length of waiting list that we are currently seeing. We have a responsibility as part of the act to consider looking for the provision of additional land to service the high volume of demand.

As an additional concern only two of our allotments are classed as statutory, Barnes Close we own the land, Burcott Road is being transferred as part of devolution.

The Bishops Palace site is currently leased by Wells City Council from the Bishops Palace, this lease may at some point end and as such would represent the loss of 32 plots which would represent over 50% of our current allotment provision.

The acquisition of land for allotments is actually a far simpler process, while the land currently in use is within the parish boundary we are allowed to source land outside of our parish boundary to provide an allotment provision.

We can purchase any land and due to the allotment legislation, it can be returned to agricultural status and used for allotments without having to go through planning. There is a valid exemption as part of the legislation that actively allows this.

However, that said if the council has neither the funds to acquire the land or no land is available that meets the requirements of or need, we are not duty bound to provide additional allotments. We do however, need to actively look for land to meet the demand and then make a decision regarding our ability to provide additional space.

### **Further Actions**

I would ask you to consider approving a project to research land availability to ensure that we are compliant with our obligations under the allotments act.

As part of this we will where possible look at the assets being returned as part of devolution and see if any of these may prove suitable or could reduce our costs.