

# CITY OF WELLS

## CITY OF WELLS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2024

**Minutes of Wells Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Wells Town Hall.**

**ELECTORS** WCC Cllrs: T Butt Philip, D Denis, D Orrett, S Powell, T Pullin,  
**PRESENT:** S Cursley, J Browne (Mayor), L Agabani, S Eden

Members of the public: C Simons, H Wilkins (Town Clerk WCC),  
R Orrett, L Byrne, T Munt, J Reeves, B Nuttall (Mayors Consort), and  
one other

**1. Apologies** WCC Cllrs: P Welch, G Folkard

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

Minutes of last year's meeting were approved and signed by the Mayor.

**3. The Mayor's Annual Report (Attached)**

The Mayor presented her report and invited questions. No questions were received.

**4. Chair of Committee Reports**

**i. Finance and Council Matters Committee**

Chair, Cllr S Cursley presented the report (attached) and invited questions.

C Simons asked for clarity associated with the forthcoming market provision:  
In November the Devolution Officer, now Town Clerk, noted a figure of £233,600  
market income. Was this inclusive of VAT?

Are traders required to provide their own insurance and has the City Council  
prepared for this?

The Town Clerk provided clarity that the noted figures were inclusive of VAT as  
referenced to Mr Simons in writing following an earlier request for information.  
Yes, traders were required to provide proof of liability insurance and this formed  
part of the handover processes currently being explored between Somerset  
Council and Wells City Council.

C Simons asked for clarity over staffing and expenditure associated with markets  
as previously reported figures referenced £64k of expenses, yet he had  
determined that staffing costs would likely equate to a greater value.

The Town Clerk advised that recruitment was currently taking place for a part  
time Market Supervisor, and that set up and pack down costs were to be  
managed within the Open Spaces team, thus, the £64k remains the current  
expected expenditure.

**ii. Outside Spaces and Estates Committee**

Chair, Cllr D Orrett presented the report (attached) and thanked the Open  
Spaces team for their continued hard work and invited questions.

B. Nuttall asked if recent discussions associated with tree works within the  
recreation ground had progressed and what was the outcome.

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Town Clerk referenced that discussions with affected neighbours had taken place and that outcomes were due to be reported to the Outside Spaces Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 for consideration.

## iii. **Planning and Environment Committee**

Chair, Cllr D Denis presented the report for Planning (attached) and invited questions. No questions were received.

Chair, Cllr D Denis also presented the report for Climate Change (attached) and invited questions. No questions were received.

## iv. **Management Groups:**

### - **Portway Annexe**

Lead Cllr D Orrett presented the report and invited questions.

C Simons thanked Cllr Orrett for her work in achieving the budget breakdown provided, however, noted that the salary costs had still been extracted. He referenced an assumed salary figure of £51k, noting that the breakdown didn't include insurance or the debits associated with Charis income and thus, the figures were not fully transparent.

The Town Clerk referenced that work was underway with Finance and Council Matters Committee regarding transparency of such information in a managed way.

## **5. Open Forum: an opportunity to discuss matters of interest to the community**

J Reeves on behalf of St Cuthbert Out Parish Council (SCO) and the Royal British Legion, requested that WCC consider support of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day. The previous beacon ceremony in West Horrington in 2023-24 was successful and SCO are keen to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary and are seeking support.

Chair, Cllr J Browne (Mayor) confirmed that WCC are keen to support and invited J Reeves and the Town Clerk to meet with her to discuss options for consideration.

R Orrett thanked all councillors for giving up their personal time and making efforts to support council activities. He requested that consideration be given to council minutes offering greater transparency, specifically associated with budgets. This was noted.

C Simons requested that a table of matters arising or outstanding actions be applied to future agendas of council.

The Town Clerk advised that a review of committee structure and governance was underway and this consideration would be considered as part of this process.

C Simons requested to have an additional Parish meeting to ensure update, given the volume of change within the Council. Suggested a quarterly review.

The Chair, Cllr J Browne (Mayor) advised that this meeting is an Annual meeting, and that all members of the public are invited to all council meetings which are public.

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Cllr T Pullin suggested that given the exciting times for WCC, consideration be given to a further meeting in six months' time to determine progress would be considered.

Cllr T Butt Philip advised that constitutionally, whilst additional meetings can be held, there would be no voting powers associated with additional meetings. Thus the agenda should be carefully considered.

Cllr D Denis thanked members of the public for taking the time to raise their concerns and reiterated that WCC were listening to those issues raised.

Cllr T Munt expressed feelings for those not represented at the meeting due to work or family commitments and referenced that online consideration be made to meetings to allow greater attendance.

The Town Clerk referenced that this is already under consideration.

Cllr T Munt also referenced the value of communication and evidenced the weekly newsletter provided by St Cuthbert Out Parish Council as an example of good, engaging communication.

The Town Clerk referenced that consideration was already being given to this matter and it is hoped that updates will be provided to Council in due course.

Cllr T Pullin referenced that it may be worthwhile seeking questions in advance of all public meetings to ensure that WCC are able to provide answers.

The Town Clerk advised that this could be considered as part of the previously mentioned Committee review.

L Byrne suggested that there was a temptation to duplicate meetings and that it was a pleasure to have the Town Clerk present to be able to provide answers and engage with the public in this way. She requested that the actions be taken forward by the Town Clerk to the relevant meeting and answers given within these committees, rather than holding another Parish meeting which would simply duplicate that of other standing committees.

C Simons referenced that the council's website was clunky, and that review would aid the public.

The Chair, Cllr J Browne (Mayor) referenced that a review of the website had been completed in recent years, but another was planned to ensure the website remains fit for purpose and accessible.

C Simons asked if the Council issued a tender book.

The Town Clerk advised that this was being reviewed with a view to ensuring greater transparency in the near future.

**The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.55 pm.**

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