

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs: T Butt Philip, S Cursley, G Folkard, T Kolizeras, D Orrett,
G Robbins, H Siggs (Chair), P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Projects and Facilities Officer: L Wassell
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
0 Members of the public

25/23/E APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
None

25/24/E DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None declared.

25/25/E ACTIONS FROM THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3RD JULY 2025
No actions were needed.

25/26/E MINUTES FROM THE ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3RD JULY 2025
The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

25/27/E MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
No public present.

25/28/E DATA ANALYSIS, BENCHMARKING AND FEES AND CHARGES REPORT
The Projects and Facilities Officer presented the reports which had been produced together with the Responsible Finance Office, Claire Woodland and the Town Hall Manager, Andy Allen.

After reviewing and discussing the information provided, the following actions were agreed:

1. Create and report to the next Estates Committee, a benchmark of costs including staffing and utilities, to inform minimum cost viability for each building.
2. In line with this report apply resource to review options relating to marketing and resource;
 - a. Actively market Sundays at the Town Hall for 2 months through a range of media/channels to grow the offering at the Town Hall on this day. Simultaneously, engage with current users of the space to discuss amendment of user agreement(s) and associated fees.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Review usage of the Cursley room to ascertain potential alternative usage, such as conversion to a music room to facilitate requests from the public for more music facilities.

3. Ensure all charging anomalies are resolved within a 2 year period (by September 2027) to ensure one suite of charging and a consistent mechanism of application to support future forecasting.
4. Complete a review of fees and charges no less than annually, and in line with the council's budget setting processes, with recommendations provided from Estates Committee to Finance Committee.
5. Terms of reference should be prepared and provided to the next Estates Committee to determine the difference between Commercial, Small Business and Community users of the Councils estate.
6. Uplift fees and charges for all room bookings (per hour and session prices) 5% (excl VAT) with effect from 1st January 2026, with the required engagement with users in advance of the change, and the completion of new user agreements for all.
7. In addition to the noted 5% increase in charges, increase the Town Hall - Main Hall charges to £30.00 (+vat) p/h or session rate of £120.00 (+vat) in order to bring in line with other local services.
8. Price match the Westwood room charge in line with Chamberlain Hall due to size. Completing necessary engagement with current users and applying changes from 1st January 2026, to eradicate internal charging anomaly.
9. Price match the session rate charge for Cursley and Nightingale rooms to align with Bignal Rand and Dodd with effect from 1st January 2026
10. Allocate resource to actively market, through a joined up approach, all council room provisions, availability and booking processes, rationalising booking processes accordingly to ensure they are user friendly.
11. Increase fees for Small Music room from 1st January 2026 to £8 per session from the current £6, which includes the noted 5%, but is higher inflation than other functions to bring into line. .
12. 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 1st January 2026.
13. Work strategically to manage resources based on community hub and commercial hub ethos, looking where possible, to move users sympathetically, where possible and ensure new bookings are scheduled for the correct location.

25/29/E

LANDLORD UPDATES

The Town Clerk updated on the following:

Cemetery Lodge – The current tenants are due to vacate shortly, exact date to be confirmed. The necessary statutory checks will be carried out, the committee will take a review of the premises and any associated costs in transferring to the new tenant will be brought to Finance. The Committee thanked the existing tenant for their cooperation and understanding with vacating the property early.

The Film Centre - The purchase will be completed week commencing 8th September with the new tenancy agreement shortly after.

Old Post Office – The new business has had their licence issues resolved and are due to open in late September.

The Crown – There are ongoing increased insurance liability which the Town Clerk is working with the tenant to resolve.

Cllr Welch asked whether any progress had been made on the proposal from the Bishop's Palace to work in partnership in managing the Bishop's Barn. The Town Clerk advised that this matter was tabled for discussion at the forthcoming meeting the Wells Recreation Ground Trust, and that as such, discussions should be contained to that forum to ensure the correct governance processes are maintained.

The Town Clerk advised a review of all rental properties needs to be undertaken in due course.

25/30/E CONTRACTORS AND PROCUREMENT UPDATE

A review has been taken of existing contractors, as previously suggested by committee, which has commenced and is ongoing. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

25/31/E COUNCILLOR WORKSHOP

The Town Clerk asked the committee if they would welcome closed session workshop to discuss future aspirations regarding the Councils estate. This was agreed by all the committee and will be arranged by the Clerk in due course.

25/32/E FORWARD PLAN

Estates Committee Forward Plan	
Item	Proposed date for consideration
Fees Charges Benchmarking (onward to Finance Committee)	Sept 2025
Building usage and Analysis – Bishop's Barn	Sept 2025
Planned Preventative Maintenance Programme and Condition Survey (excl. Chapel and Cemetery)	Oct 2025
Energy Performance Review - Utility Monitor	Oct 2025
Building usage and Analysis – Chapel and Cemetery	Oct 2025
Planned Preventative Maintenance Programme updated to include Chapel and Cemetery	Nov 2025*dependant of vacancy

25/33/E ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr Folkard thanked the officers for the work carried out to produce all the data analysis.

25/34/E DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 2nd October 2025, 7pm in Wells Town Hall

Minutes signed by The Chair: **Date:**