

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2025 AT 7PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs: T Butt Philip, S Cursley, S Powell, T Robbins (Chair), H Siggs, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

Cllr T Robbins (Chair) left the meeting at 19:45, in the absence of the Vice Chair, Cllr Siggs chaired the rest of the meeting.

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Projects and Facilities Officer: L Wassell
Non-member Cllrs: D Denis (left the meeting at 20:10)
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
1 Member of Public

25/47/F APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Cllrs: G Folkard (Vice Chair)

25/48/F DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.

Cllr Robbins noted a personal interest in 25/59/F, however he did leave the meeting before the matter was discussed, as stated above.

25/49/F ACTIONS FROM THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2025.
The Town Clerk advised actions from the previous meeting will be covered later in the meeting.

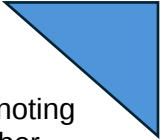
25/50/F MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2025
The minutes for the previous meeting were signed as a true record by the Chair.

25/51/F MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Cllr Denis raised a question on the draft budget, the RFO explained the forecast budget and predicted expenditure for 2026/27.

25/52/F INTERMEDIATE INTERNAL AUDIT OUTCOMES
The RFO gave an overview of the internal interim audit report recently received. One key recommendation is that the Council reserves should be set at £400,000. This is based on our level of turnover to ensure there is sufficient cashflow. The committee were asked to note this recommendation.

Cllrs discussed if this recommendation was required by a set date. The Town Clerk advised that the recommendation was not time sensitive, however, it is likely that the auditor will look in future years to the actions of the Council to resolve this known issue. Cllr Siggs suggested a three year timescale to put this into place. Cllr Butt Philip did not believe the committee should state a timescale at this stage.

Cllr Siggs made a proposal to set the reserves at a level recommended by the auditor within the next three years. This was seconded by Cllr T Robbins. A vote took place, six members were in agreement, one abstained.



The RFO requested that Finance take note of feedback from the External Auditor, noting that they have been unable to complete their report by the deadline of 30th September, due to the restatement of accounts through the Charitable Trust. The council is required to issue notice of this matter, which has been completed and there is nothing further for WCC to do, the auditor will be in contact with any requirements once they have assessed necessary documents. Documents can be viewed, however, through details on the website and noticeboards.

25/53/F FINANCE REPORTING AND VARIANCES FOR WELLS CITY COUNCIL

The RFO presented the September 2025 Financial report and answered questions.

25/54/F FINANCE REPORTING AND VARIANCES FOR WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST

The RFO presented the September 2025 Finance report and answered questions. Cllr Siggs asked for clarification on specific staff costs for asset. The RFO explained this will appear in next year's accounts.

25/55/F CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Town Clerk presented the corporate risk register and highlighted six priority risks:

- Financial stress at higher tiers (unitary) could reduce support services, grants or provoke emergency cost-saving mandates.
- Failure to hold sufficient reserves to meet the needs of the business (3 clear months banking functions/cashflow) in the absence of precept.
- Loss of external grant funding or income streams.
- Contracts and partnerships – poorly drafted contracts or failed contractor oversight can result in service failure, overruns or legal disputes.
- Under investment to the councils infrastructure and wider estate results in inability to deliver the PPM schedule.
- Lack of landlord inspections

Cllrs noted the risks accordingly and mitigations applied by the Clerk where possible. Cllr Butt Philip and Cllr Siggs challenged the Higher Tiers risk, to which the Town Clerk took an action to restructure it based on specific risk to WCC.

25/56/F 6 MONTH FORECAST REVIEW & FIRST DRAFT BUDGET 2026-27

The RFO presented the six month forecast review. The Town Clerk explained this document has been produced to sit alongside the RFO Financial report to provide greater clarity to councillors of forthcoming expenditure and risk. The RFO and Town Clerk answered questions from members.

It was requested for The Town Clerk to look at saving option proposals across all budget lines for 2025-26 base budget, of 5%, 10% and 15% along with relative narrative to explain the proposals. The Town Clerk was also requested to review:

Play park equipment expenditure.

City Maps and report back to the committee regarding future viability, given the noted reduction in income.

Tourist Information Centre function including staffing costs.

Implications of reducing assets.

Cemetery Management including conversations with St Cuthbert Out Parish Council.

All this will be presented to the November Finance meeting and as this will be a detailed proposal, the Town Clerk offered to circulate this in advance of the agenda being sent. This will allow the committee to digest the information and contact the Town Clerk and RFO with any questions or concerns in advance of November's meeting.

Cllr Siggs advised the First Draft Budget 2026 -27 should be carefully reviewed by all committee members and this will feature as the main topic of discussion at November's meeting. He also stressed the door was open for any members to contact the Town Clerk and RFO with any questions or concerns before next month's meeting.

25/57/F PUBLIC TOILET OPTIONS APPRAISAL

The Town Clerk presented the report. She asked the committee to note the content of the report and to delegate to the Estates Committee and the Town Clerk to review future options for the provision of public toilets.

The Town Clerk has been in contact with MP Cllr Munt to discuss the condition of the Union Street toilets which were transferred from Somerset Council.

25/58/F ESTATES COMMITTEE CONSIDERATIONS

The Projects and Facilities Officer presented the report. The recommendation to consider the financial implications of the Planned Preventative Maintenance schedule in line with budget setting for next financial year was agreed by all committee members.

It was advised new room hire charges with effect from January 2026 have been communicated to users and any inconsistencies have been rectified.

25/59/F CONTRACT TENDER FOR BUILDING MAINTENANCE

The Project and Facilities Officer presented the report. A tender has been sent to multiple local contractors. Out of the two who responded, one supplier was recommended. It was agreed by all members present to proceed to contract award based on the recommendation.

25/60/F FORWARD PLAN

Item	Proposed date for consideration
RFO Budget Report and Variances	Monthly
Second draft budget 2025-26	October
Final draft budget 2025-26	December

Cllr Siggs requested agenda items to be kept to a minimum for next meeting to allow for the budget to take priority. A workshop before the November meeting was suggested which was agreed, the Town Clerk will arrange. Again Cllr Siggs encouraged members to speak to the Town Clerk and RFO outside of the next meeting to raise questions or concerns.

25/61/F ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

None.

25/62/F DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm, Thursday 13th November 2025

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private report.

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date: