



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 12TH MARCH 2026 AT 7PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs: T Butt Philip, S Cursley, S Powell, H Siggs

IN ATTENDANCE: The Mayor: Cllr L Agabani
Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
5 Members of Public

The Mayor chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr G Folkard (Vice-Chair) and a minutes silence was taken to remember the late Cllr Tony Robbins who was formally Chair of this committee.

26/16/F APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr: G Folkard (Vice Chair), I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

26/17/F DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.

Cllr Powell declared a personal interest in 26/21/F Strawberry Line Path grant application form.

26/18/F MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY 2026

The minutes for the previous meeting were signed as a true record by the Mayor.

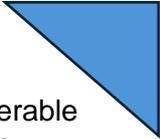
26/19/F ACTIONS FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY 2026

There were no actions to discuss.

26/20/F MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A representative from the following Community groups gave a short presentation in support of their grant application form and answered questions from the committee members:

- Bishops Palace - applying for a wheelchair accessible bench at a cost of £380.
- Citizens Advice – applying for funds to train a cohort of volunteers to assist with the completion of PIP disability benefit forms for residents in Wells. £500 is requested.
- Orchard Vale Trust – An adult learning disability charity based in Wookey. Looking for funding to help purchase sports activity equipment. 21 residents who access the facility are from Wells. £500 is requested.
- Wells City Carnival Committee – due to a very wet Nov 2025 carnival, the funds raised was down on the previous year. They requested £500 to train two steward volunteers whose qualification will last for 5 years.

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- Youth Adventure Trust – A charity that uses outdoor adventure to help vulnerable children (11 – 16 years old) build resilience, develop confidence and skills to handle life challenges. They have linked their help to pupils at the Wells Blue School. £480 is requested to cover 11 days of help for 4 individuals.

There were no representatives from the Strawberry Line Path and Wells Theatre Festival at the meeting.

26/21/F TO CONSIDER COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Council's budget includes £1,500 for Community Grants, not sufficient to support all requests. The committee members discussed and considered each grant application taking into consideration a recommendation report provided by the RFO. Cllr Powell stated that the current grant funding process requires review and it was agreed for the officers to consider a revised policy.

Cllr Butt Philip proposed the following:

1. Bishops Palace - £190 to be approved
2. Citizens Advice Somerset - £500 to be approved
3. Orchard Vale Trust - £330 to be approved. It was recommended that they also approach St Cuthbert Out and Wookey Parish Council for support.
4. Strawberry Line Path – no grant money to be provided and look at other ways to support this initiative.
5. Wells City Carnival Committee – no grant money to be provided and look at other ways to support the carnival.
6. Wells Theatre Festival – no grant money to be provided
7. Youth Adventure Trust - £480 to be approved

A proposal was taken to support as above, three members approved the proposal and one member voted against.

All members of the public left the meeting.

Cllr Siggs stated again that the grants process requires reviewing. Certain community groups request funding regularly, whereas others don't ask at all. A better link should be forged with St Cuthbert Out and Wookey Parish Council. Cllr Powell did not feel community groups should be asked to attend and provide a presentation, the application submitted should suffice. The officers will review and make recommendations prior to the next grant funding in September 2026.

26/22/F FINANCE REPORTING AND VARIANCES FOR WELLS CITY COUNCIL

The RFO presented her February 2026 monthly financial report and answered questions.

Cllr Butt Philip asked where the public works loan balance is shown. The RFO agreed to provide this information in future accompanying reports for transparency.

Cllr Powell asked why the TIC income was low, it was explained due to staffing issues there were a number of days where the centre was closed and it is also the quietest time of year for visitors. The staffing issue has now been resolved.



Cllr Butt Philip asked for the breakdown of costs for bi election, and what could be expected for May 2027. The Town Clerk agreed to obtain costs from recent bi-elections from Somerset Council and provide feedback to the committee via email.

Cllr Cursley stated the salary budget was the largest. The RFO explained this was running below budget due to significant work undertaken to rationalise staffing and hold vacancies. Cllr Cursley also asked for clarity on the minuting of the councillor reconciliation of accounts. It was agreed for this to be included as a standing item each month to confirm completed. .

Cllr Butt Philip asked for salary/PAYE/NI to be included as one figure. Also to include an overall figure on staffing costs for the whole of WCC and also split into the different cost centres. The RFO resolved to complete this work in preparation for the April 27 cash book.

Cllr Siggs questioned the amount for photocopying and growth. The Town Clerk explained a new arrangement was being sourced and being implemented shortly, offering operational saving and efficiency.

It was agreed for the heading 'advertising' to be changed to 'advertising, marketing and recruitment' as it was felt to be misleading.

The RFO had also circulated a report providing information on the actions from the January meeting.

- Cllr Butt Philip again queried the figures for the electricity usage in the Recreation Ground as they appear high. The RFO agreed to provide a breakdown, which had been completed. This evidenced that there was expenditure for the previous year included in the 2025-26 budget line, resulting in an inaccurate total balance.
- WCC have reached month 12 and due to prudent expenditure and as a result of a slower process of asset transfer from Somerset Council, WCC end the year with surplus within/unused budget lines which could be transferred into the Councils general reserves, up to an approximate forecasted amount of £195,000. The committee were asked to consider earmarking some of the unused funds and allocate them for specific use in 2026/27 alongside the budget amounts. After discussion, a vote was taken to transfer all surplus funds to general reserves. Three members voted for and two against, the proposal was carried.

The accounts and expenses for the previous month (January 2026) were approved by Cllr G Folkard.

26/23/F FINANCE REPORTING AND VARIANCES FOR WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST

The RFO presented her February 2026 report and answered questions.

Cllr Butt Philip questioned why the total current assets were less than £500,000. The RFO explained a transfer of funds will be made by the end of the financial year and would see the total capital value be returned to £525,000 with the additional value of interest also transferred.

Cllr Butt Philip also questioned the income from the café. A percentage of the café profits are paid to WCC. The RFO agreed to provide a review of the income figures.

The accounts and expenses for the previous month (January 2026) were approved by Cllr G Folkard.



26/24/F INTERNAL AUDIT 2025/26

Confirm the appointment of the Internal Auditor, Parish and Town Auditing Services (PATAS), considering:

- the independence of the Internal Auditor
- the audit program has been considered and agreed
- we are satisfied with the competence of the Internal Auditor

All members were in agreement to appoint the internal auditor listed above, PATAS, as was used last year.

26/25/F FORWARD PLAN

Item	Proposed date for consideration
RFO Budget Report and Variances	Monthly
Corporate Risk Register Q4	April 2026

26/26/F ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

There were no matters to discuss.

26/27/F DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm, Thursday 9th April 2026

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:**