

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24TH APRIL 2025 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Deputy Mayor), J Browne (Mayor), T Butt Philip, S Cursley, D Denis, S Eden, G Folkard, N Kennedy, D Orrett, S Powell, G Robbins, H Siggs

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Mace Bearer: C Price
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
MP for Wells and Mendip Hills/ Somerset Cllr for Wells: T Munt
18 members of the public

25/55/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllrs: N Kennedy, T Pullin, T Robbins, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

25/56/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None declared

25/57/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 27th MARCH 2025
Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

25/58/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
M Shoebridge appealed to the meeting to support the residents of Torr Street and St Andrews Street in achieving the residents parking bays. It was explained to the meeting that many residents, some of whom are disabled or are elderly are anxious to leave home as they may struggle to return and park close to home with heavy shopping. M Shoebridge has contacted Bill Revens, Leader of Somerset Council to appeal for his support and asked that Wells City Councillors lobby Somerset Highways department to assist in progressing the work.
Cllr D Denis urged all Councillors to write in support of the residents.
Cllr T Butt Philip reported that as of today, white lines had been painted which hopefully is an indication that implementation of the scheme is imminent, but that he couldn't justify the delay nor give a timeline for completion.

D Rowler asked for an update of plans for the Bishop's Barn.
The Town Clerk responded that at Full Council meeting of May 22nd that there will be a full update of the future of the Bishop's Barn.

Four young representatives of a potential Youth Council spoke of their wishes to get involved in setting up a youth council in order that young people are represented and become engaged with politics. There is a need for young people to be able to raise issues that affect them and bridge the gap between young people and the current levels of government.

MP for Wells and Mendip Hills expressed support for the Youth Council.
Cllr G Robbins was supportive for the potential of the Youth Council and asked that she could be involved.

25/59/C

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Key Dates:

Civic Opening of May Fair and Buffet Lunch, Saturday 3rd May, 11am

VE80 Commemoration Beacon Lighting, Cathedral Green, Thursday 8th May, 8pm

Mayor Making Ceremony, Saturday 10th May, 5pm

Mayor's Diary

i. 23rd April Scout Hut Reopening Ceremony

ii. 25th April Twinning Visit to Fontanellato, Italy

iii. 29th April Visit to HMS Somerset

iv. 30th April Assembly visit to Wells Cathedral Prep School with Mace Bearer and Town Crier

v. 6th May Carousel, Wells Little Theatre

The Mayor visited the Scout Hut on 23rd April and presented a cheque for £30000 to the Scout Group which is 74% of the total needed to complete the essential refurbishments.

25/60/C

OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr D Orrett presented the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2025

Cllr H Siggs asked for costing information of the repositioning of the Table Tennis Table

The Town Clerk said that responsibility had been deferred to her to find a solution costing less than £5000 and quotes had been requested.

25/61/C

STAFFING COMMITTEE

S Eden presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2025

No questions received

25/62/C

FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Cllr S Cursley presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2025

No questions received

25/63/C

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr D Denis presented the minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2025

Cllr D Denis reported that a small working group had looked at traffic calming measures in Wells and that the report will be carried forward to the next meeting for consideration.

Cllr D Denis spoke of the letter sent by Wells City Council in support of St Cuthbert Out Parish Council's objections to future housing development applications on the outskirts of Wells as the infrastructure of Wells cannot sustain the increased numbers of residents.

25/64/C

TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None received

25/65/C

TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr T Butt Philip had not provided a report but asked the meeting if there were any general questions for him.

Cllr S Powell asked about the likelihood of night time parking charges being introduced.

Cllr T Butt Philip replied that night time parking charges were not being introduced.

25/66/C

COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Cllr L Agabani introduced the report. The review has been worked on by three Wells City Councillors and that the restructure is the first phase and there are more changes to come.

Cllr T Butt Philip asked for consistency in referring to Mayor or Chair and expressed caution when setting up too many committees but was reassured knowing this would be reviewed if proven to be problematic.

Cllr D Denis asked if Staffing would be minuted by a member of Staff.
The Town Clerk replied that she would take notes at Staffing committee rather than a member of Staff.

Cllr D Denis asked for the timescale for the appointment of new committee members.
The Town Clerk replied that Councillors will be asked to express interest in meetings they wish to attend and appointments to committees will take place at the next Full Council Meeting of 22nd May 2025.

Cllrs G Folkard said that it was recognised that some meetings may not need to meet on a monthly basis so the schedule should not be too onerous.

H Siggs spoke of the need for consistency and how the schedule fits in with the strategic plan. With two years of the council to run, action is needed rather than having too long a timeline.

Cllr D Orrett spoke of her approval that more formal training is offered in all committees but particular for planning

Cllr S Powell asked for the information about how the training would be delivered.
The Town Clerk informed the meeting that training would be some online training and training as it is delivered currently.

The Town Clerk reminded the meeting that there will be a paper at the next meeting pertaining to the Bishop's barn.

The Mayor proposed to adopt the suggested committee structure as of 8th May 2025 with implementation commencing 22nd May 2025
All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

25/67/C LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr I Von Mensenkampff had requested a 6 month absence of leave due to ill health.
All Councillors voted in favour of the request.

Cllr T Butt Philip mentioned that Cllr I Von Mensenkampff was free to return sooner than 6 months should she wish to.

25/68/C CONSIDERATION OF SECTION 85, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Section 85 will proceed.

25/69/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr G Robbins reported that Brian Clarke, inspiration of the Accessible Wells group had sadly passed away recently. His hard work was praised and will continue by the group.

Cllr L Agabani expressed concerns for the works taking place in Queen Street and how these works negatively impact the businesses in the area. He urged MP T Munt to ensure that works in the future do not take place at holiday periods.

MP T Munt reported that she has written and asked for advance notice but unfortunately emergency works can't be scheduled. She suggested reviewing the issue with the Town Clerk in order to support residents and businesses.

Cllr G Robbins spoke of the upcoming closure of St John Street and should the Queen Street closure overrun there may be problems with traffic flow.

Cllr H Siggs praised the Mayor for her successful year and for her hard work during her mayoral year. The Mayor received a round of applause from Councillors and members of the public in attendance.

25/70/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 22nd May 2025, 7pm

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.

Minutes signed by The Mayor: **Date:**