

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 26TH JUNE 2025 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas and online

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Mayor), J Browne, T Butt Philip, S Cursley, D Denis (Deputy Mayor), T Kolizeras, D Orrett, S Powell, H Siggs, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Mace Bearer: G Woodland
MP for Wells and Mendip Hills/Somerset Cllr for Wells: T Munt
Rosa Kell, Wells Bus Users group
2 other members of the public

25/88/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: S Eden, G Folkard, G Robbins, T Robbins, I Von Mensenkampff

25/89/C As a mark of respect the Mayor led the Council in a moments reflection on the passing of Kate Fry Mayor of Wells 1993-94 and Anne Mitchell Mayoress of Wells 1975-76. Cllr Siggs led the tributes.
On behalf of the Council the Mayor conveyed best wishes to the Dean of Wells Cathedral who has been unwell.
The Mayor also welcomed the Outside Spaces and Market Operatives who had joined the council under TUPE transfer.

25/90/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None Declared

25/91/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 22ND MAY 2025

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

25/92/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No one wished to speak

25/93/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

- i. 20th June Sounds Joyful, Wells Cathedral
- ii. 21st June William Turner Open Garden, Wells Cathedral
- iii. 22nd June Refugee Awareness Day, Evening song, Wells Cathedral
- iv. 23rd June Prep School Production, Wells Cathedral School
- v. 3rd July Symphony Concert, Wells Cathedral School
- vi. 4th July Speech Day, Wells Cathedral School
- vii. 6th July Romulus & Remus Italian Festival, Palace Fields
- viii. 9th July Wells in Bloom Awards, Bishop's Palace

The Mayor commented the Refugee Awareness Day was particularly impactful and he would be pursuing further involvement.

25/94/C PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cllr Powell presented the minutes of the following:

- i. Revised minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2025
- ii. Minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2025

Cllr Powell mentioned 25/05/P – planning application 2025/0852/FUL: a letter was written regarding s106 funds to assist the continuation of the Strawberry Line via a crossing.

iii. Minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2025

Cllr Powell remarked re:25/20/P – the letter agreed to be drafted would refer to the importance of s106 money for active travel in particular. Cllr Denis added that given the uneven nature of the land any development would also need to take into account ramps alongside steps.

25/95/C OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Orrett presented the minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2025

No comments received. Cllr Orrett remarked that the committee was in favour of the inclusion of an agenda item on traffic updates and parish proposals as a standing item.

25/96/C ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr Siggs presented the minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2025

No comments received. Cllr Siggs remarked the tour of the Town Hall after the meeting was particularly insightful, and useful in terms of awareness of how the Council handles its estate.

25/97/C STAFFING & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Cllr Browne presented the minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2025.

No comments received

25/98/C FINANCE COMMITTEE

In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2025 were presented.

Cllr Powell asked on the progress of the public consultation process for the PWLB loan (25/12/F). The Clerk advised that this was due for update within agenda item 25/102/C

25/99/C INTERNAL AUDIT

The RFO presented the Internal Auditor's report prior to being sent to the External Auditor.

25/100/C EXTERNAL AUDIT

- i. The RFO presented the External Audit and asked for Cllrs to approve the Annual Governance statements for the year 2024-25 No questions were received. Cllr Agabani proposed that the Annual Governance statements for the year 2023-24 be approved and signed. Seconded by Cllr Butt Philip. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.
- ii. The RFO asked for Cllrs to approve the Annual Statements of Accounts for the year 2024-25 No questions were received. Cllr Agabani proposed that the Annual Statements of Accounts for the year 2023-24 be approved and signed. Seconded by Cllr T Butt Philip. All Councillors voted in favour of the proposal.

The Mayor Cllr Agabani signed the External Audit.

25/101/C APPROVAL OF COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

The Town Clerk presented the Council Standing Orders and asked Cllrs to approve them. No questions were received. Cllr Agabani proposed the Council Standing Orders be approved and signed. Seconded by Cllr H Siggs.

The Council voted unanimously in favour of accepting the Standing Orders.

25/102/C RESOLUTION TO BORROW VIA PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD

The Town Clerk presented the resolution to borrow and asked Cllrs to approve the resolution statement:

Minutes and Online Announcement:

RESOLUTION TO BORROW

To determine, at the Wells City Parish Council meeting of Thursday 27th March 2025, it was resolved to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing and Communities and Local Government to apply for borrowing approval for a loan of £150,000 over the borrowing term of 25 years to purchase the premises on Princes Road in Wells occupied by Wells Film Centre. The annual loan repayments will come to around £13,000. **It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments.**

Cllr Agabani proposed the Council Standing Orders be approved and signed. Seconded by Cllr Siggs.

All were in favour of resolving to seek approval from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for the application for a PWLB loan.

25/103/C CALENDAR OF MEETINGS & ENGAGEMENTS

The Town Clerk presented the revised Calendar.

All were in favour.

25/104/C DRAFT CORPORATE PRIORITIES 2025-2027

The Town Clerk presented the Draft document.

Cllr Denis remarked the Climate Change and Asset Stewardship section needs to be more substantial and include support of outside bodies.

Cllr Butt Philip remarked the draft showed potential but more work needs to be done internally before any public consultation. He gave the example there was currently no reference to Youth provision, culture and leisure.

Cllr Siggs remarked the draft should be included on each committee agenda so all members could have input.

Cllr Powell asked if it would have an effect on the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Denis confirmed the Neighbourhood Plan is a legal statutory document pertaining to future planning and therefore separate.

25/105/C DRAFT CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN FOR WELLS

Cllr Denis presented the Climate Adaptation Plan referring to it as a vision and if adopted the Council will receive £1000.

Discussion centred on:

The responsibility of WCC / liability of the Plan.

The financial implications of the plan. Cllr Denis was reminded all spending would need to go through the Finance Committee and there was currently no budget allocated to it.

Constraints of Staff time in relation to carrying out any plans.

The role of other organisations within the plan and whether Somerset Council would have any involvement.

Cllr Denis proposed the motion that the Plan be adopted at this meeting rather than just noted as the agenda stated, and that it be renamed Act to Adapt . Cllr Butt Philip seconded and all found in favour. Cllr Denis confirmed that this was not a statutory document and should be subject to review.

25/106/C DRAFT CORPORATE RISK POLICY AND SUPPORTING RISK REGISTER

Cllr Agabani proposed the Corporate Risk Policy and associated register. Seconded by Cllr P Welsh. All were in favour of adopting the risk policy and risk register.

25/107/C WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW

The Town Clerk presented the overview document.

Cllr T Butt Philip enquired as to the Trust's charitable status and if it was still registered with the Charities Commission. The Town Clerk admitted that there had been some ambiguity in the past but that the Shadow Trust had been removed and the Recreation Ground Trust was registered.

Cllr Denis asked about the impact on the Bowling Club, the Town Clerk confirmed that the Bowls Club agreement was longstanding since Mendip District Council and thus was unchanged

It was agreed that the next step will be an AGM for the Trust to which all Cllrs will be invited, during which the future aspirations of the WRGT would be discussed.

25/108/C MOTION FROM CLLR WELCH

Cllr Welch proposed that Wells City Council take a stall as part of Wells Community day on January 17th 2026 as a way of engaging with the public.

The stall will cost £20 and it was hoped Cllrs will be available to take turns throughout the day. Cllr Browne seconded the proposal and all were in favour.

25/109/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES.

Cllr Denis gave the report from the Wells Bus Users Group. They had been working hard on a proposal for a circular bus route around Wells and the area. The bus station is in a dire state of repair.

Cllr Siggs said he was strongly in support of reinvigorating the bus station area.

Cllr Munt MP also agreed calling it a dreadful gateway to the City and had been in contact with Sunita Mills at Somerset Council.

Rosa Kell of the Bus Users Group said that they need to work with First Bus to make improvements. Redevelopment of the whole area could accommodate drivers and buses could be electrified.

Cllr Agabani suggested the Town Clerk could write to First Bus on behalf of the Council and Cllr Munt MP also said a written letter to her could also help lobby the Transport Department of the Government.

Cllr D Orrett asked about improving the aesthetics of the area through litter picking and planting, the Town Clerk confirmed this would be on the next Open Spaces agenda.

Cllr Denis second report referred to the AGM of the LCN which was held last week.

A priority was to encourage more parishes to participate. They would also be inviting the Somerset Crime Commissioner to attend a future meeting. The importance of group bids was also acknowledged, and the LCN sub groups for flooding, highways and active travel.

25/110/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

No written report had been received but Cllr Butt Philip highlighted the recent report on boundaries and that response had to be received by the Local Government Boundary Commission by 11th August.

25/111/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr Kolizeras referred back to the discussion regarding the bus station, were there any facts / statistics available to further any lobbying. The Town Clerk confirmed that she had also been in discussion with Sunita Mills at Somerset Council.

25/112/C

FORWARD PLAN

Full City Council Forward Plan	
Item	Proposed date for consideration
Youth Provision Planning Update	July 2025
Outside Body and Committees	July 2025
Skatepark Project Governance	September 2025
Corporate Risk Register	October 2025
Devolution mid-year review	October 2025
Police and Crime Commissioner, Crime and CCTV overview	October 2025
Annual Budget	January 2026
Corporate Risk Register	February 2026
Annual Governance Review (Inc Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation)	February 2026
Youth Council Proposals	February 2026
Calendar of Meetings and Engagements	March 2026
Preparation for internal audit (Appropriation and Asset List)	March 2026
General Power of Competency	Every political cycle

25/113/C

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 24th July 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: