

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

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

Written reports can be viewed on agendas: [Wells City Council](#) website

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Mayor), J Browne (Arrived 7.21pm), T Butt Philip, S Cursley, D Denis (Deputy Mayor), G Folkard, S Powell, T Robbins, P Welch

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

25/114/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: S Eden, J Edmonds, T Kolizeras, D Orrett, G Robbins, H Siggs,
I Von Mensenkampff

25/115/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

Cllr P Welch declared an interest in agenda item 13 as a board member of WCN.

25/116/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 26TH JUNE 2025

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

25/117/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

W Payne spoke to WCC about the threatened closure of beds at Glastonbury Community Hospital. W Payne asked that WCC contact the Somerset Unitary Authority to ask for accountability for the decision. W Payne spoke of her worries that although the closures are being announced as temporary that this may not be the case and that the facility is very necessary to serve the needs of the elderly population of Wells. On 21st August an Adult Health scrutiny meeting will take place and W Payne asked that WCC represent the people of Wells at that meeting.

B Mealing congratulated Cllr J Edmonds on the recent bi-election and gave feedback to WCC on kerbs, weeds, bus passes and the lack of knowledge that residents have of council responsibilities.

C Simons spoke of two issues. The first was in relation to traffic in the market place on market days. He questioned why Avon and Somerset Police are not involved at weekly markets and only at the Christmas market. The second point was that he felt it time for WCC to undertake a skills analysis of officers and councillors.

The Town Clerk responded that the Christmas market was in a different location so as a stand-alone event it required Police attendance. She also assured C Simons that an analysis of all staff and councillors was currently being undertaken.

25/118/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

- i. 6th Aug Hiroshima Commemoration, Bishop Palace Moat
- ii. 9th Aug Wells Railway Fraternity Exhibition, Wells Town Hall
- iii. 9th Aug. Glastonbury Mayor's Day, Glastonbury Town Hall
- iv. 25th Aug. Wells Moat Boat Race
- v. 2nd Sept. Darts Presentation Evening, The Venue

- vi. 6th Sept. Dinder Flower Show
- vii. 13th Sept. Bad Durkheim, Germany visit, John North Chair of Twinning attending
- viii. 13th Sept. A Modern Day Pilgrimage, Charity Event for Wells Alms-houses

The Mayor informed that he will be representing WCC at the funeral of K Fry (former Mayor) but that anyone wishing to attend is welcome, but to liaise with WCC Staff so that family can be informed.

Cllr P Welch clarified that the Modern Day Pilgrimage is not only raising money for the Almshouses. 25% goes to Wells Almshouses and 75% goes to elderly and vulnerable people in Wells and the Ukraine.

25/119/C OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE

Neither Chair nor Vice-chair were available to present the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2025.

25/120/C ESTATES COMMITTEE

Neither Chair nor Vice-chair were available to present the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2025.

25/121/C STAFFING AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Neither Chair nor Vice-chair were available to present the minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2025.

25/122/C FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr G Folkard presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2025
No questions received.

25/123/C PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cllr S Powell presented the minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2025
No questions received.

25/124/C AGREEMENT OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Town Clerk reported that following conversations with councillors that

- i. Cllr H Siggs will remain as representative of Somerset Association of Local Councillors (SALC)
- ii. Cllr D Orrett will remain representative of Wells Sports Club
- iii. Cllr H Siggs will remain as representative of the Wells Carnival Committee
- iv. Cllr P Welch will remain as representative of the Connect Centre
- v. Cllr P Welch represent Wells Community Network

Cllr D Denis asked if Wells Environmental Network be added to the list of Outside bodies along with the St Cuthbert Out and Wells City Council liaison group.

Cllr D Denis mentioned that she would like to step down as representative of Citizen's Advice but will take on Trustee of Wells Museum as it would fit in with her role as Chair of Civic and Archives Committee.

25/125/C BOUNDARIES COMMISSION REVIEW

Cllr T Butt Philip presented the report on the proposed amendments and impacts.
Cllr T Butt Philip reported that the boundary commission in their draft proposals want to implement single member divisions. He would like to submit two proposals with a preference to there being two member divisions and if that is not possible the second proposal will show a better plan to split the divisions. All boundary changes would have an impact on the City Council wards and this may be with Wells having two wards with 8 councillors.

Cllr S Powell proposed that the Town Clerk write a letter to demonstrate the wishes of Wells City Council.
All Councillors voted for the proposal.

25/126/C CSS SUB CONTRACT AGREEMENT

The Town Clerk explained the proposal briefly. The two year arrangement commenced on 1st July so retrospectively will be applied to that date once signed. It will see the recharge of funds that are supporting the hub, staffing and the delivery of support to displaced persons. CSS is taking over from CHARIS. CSS have been fundamental to helping provide services to displaced persons alongside WCN. Confidential appendices have been circulated to Councillors which sets out the draft proposal for the continuation of the arrangement.

Cllr D Denis thanked WCN for their help in delivering the contract in the last two years and for making a difference to displaced people and thank you to WCC for continuing to support them.

All Councillors voted in favour of delegated authority for the Town Clerk to sign the contract proposal agreement.

25/127/C COMMUNITY HOSPITAL CONSULTATION

The Mayor asked for suggestions as to what actions WCC should take to challenge the planned closures.

A discussion took place with a suggestion from Cllr D Denis for a letter from WCC and perhaps to organise a petition. The Town Clerk advised that a public consultation process was more appropriate than a petition. Cllr T Butt Philip stressed that the closure is not a decision made by Somerset Council but by NHS Foundation Trust. The Vice Chair of the Somerset Adult Health Scrutiny committee is present at the meeting on the 21st August and this is the correct way for Somerset to challenge the decision.

The Town Clerk explained that the proposal is that she write under delegated authority to the Trust to seek explanation of the proposal of amendments and rationale for change and expected impacts and mitigations, to allow council to form further decisions.

T Munt (MP) said that she had been briefed but that very little information has been made available. Closures of St Andrews Ward and changes at Priory Health Park all mean that people need to travel further for healthcare and how inappropriate that is for somewhere the size of Wells. T Munt (MP) reassured the meeting that she would be at the Somerset Adult health Scrutiny meeting.

Somerset Cllr C Sully reported that she had requested the emergency Adult Health Scrutiny meeting. There had been no rationale or business plan from the NHS Foundation trust for the closure. The NHS trust will be in attendance. It has been reported that this closure will be a trial but that no one knows the impact the closure will have on social care.

T Munt (MP) stressed that members of the public are more than welcome to attend all Somerset Council meetings in person or on line or speak at the meeting if they register in advance.

The Mayor will represent WCC at the meeting.

25/128/C CORPORATE PRIORITIES 2025 – 2028

To approve draft priorities and associated consultation.

The Town Clerk explained that all Councillors had been given the opportunity to give their feedback.

Cllr T Butt Philip asked for assurance that a thorough consultation be carried out.

The Town Clerk explained that an online survey will be created which will be published through the usual channels. The Wells Voice will carry an article and a paper survey will also be created. A similar process to recent public consultations carried out by WCC.

All Councillors voted to adopt the draft priorities and associated consultation

25/129/C BUSINESS CONTINUITY

To approve the Council's Business Continuity Plan. Confidential appendices circulated to Councillors only.

The Town Clerk explained the plan was to ensure out of hours emergencies were managed efficiently. At a later WCC meeting there will be a third document in the Business Continuity Planning which is a community reliance preparedness plan which will be a public facing document.

Cllr D Denis thanked the Town Clerk for the work on the plan.

All Councillors voted to adopt the Business Continuity Plan.

25/130/C AGENDA PREPARATION UPDATE

The Town Clerk explained the process for printing agendas for future meetings. As a cost cutting exercise there will be a coloured corner on white papers used for agenda rather than using coloured paper.

25/131/C REDUNDANCY POLICY ADOPTION

To note and adopt the policy

The Town Clerk reported that the Redundancy Policy had been presented to the Staffing committee and is coming before this meeting for ratification.

Cllr T Butt Philip requested that documents refer to "The Mayor" rather than as the "Chair of the council" and requested a minor amendment to the appeals process when it comes to compulsory redundancies.

The Mayor asked if Councillors would be happy to adopt the policy with a view that the suggested amendments be made.

All Councillors voted to adopt the Redundancy Policy.

25/132/C EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ADOPTION

To agree the amendments as noted

The amendments were noted.

25/133/C YOUTH COMMUNITY BID UPDATE

To receive update from Town Clerk

The Town Clerk presented a report. Through the Finance committee a request for £1500 had been awarded. The report highlights the outcome of the tender process. There are recommendations for requirements of access for children aged 8 to 14 who live in rural areas and the value of the provision and resources available for youth. The scheme we applied through for the £1500 initially suggested that stage 2 bid funds would be up to £30,000 per council but this has been altered to £10,000 per council. The proposal is to note the appendices and to debate whether to proceed to a stage 2 bid.

Cllr D Denis informed the meeting the stage 2 bid needs to take place promptly as the fund needs delivering within 6 months for the bid outcomes to be assessed. If applying for £10,000, WCC would need to work in consultation with outer parishes who have already delivered. As there aren't meetings in August, it was proposed that the Town Clerk work on the bid application under delegated authority using the YMCA proposals.

Cllr T Butt Phillip concurred with Cllr D Denis and seconded her proposal to delegate work to the Town Clerk. Cllr P Welch offered his assistance to the Town Clerk.

Cllr E Hobbs (Somerset Councillor for the Mendip Hills) asked how far the consultation would reach as he represents outlying locations such as Priddy and the Horringtons and other parishes, whose youth may feed into Wells for youth services.

The Town Clerk replied that she had been in dialogue with Clerks from surrounding parishes and would be happy to have a conversation with Cllr E Hobbs.

25/134/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES
No reports received.

25/135/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS
Cllr T Butt Phillip presented the report.

Cllr L Agabani noted that the report mentioned WCC look at 20mph speed limits in the city again. Cllr T Butt Phillip informed the meeting that this would have been mentioned as part of the local transport plan, but that speed limit changes are financed through the parishes themselves and that WCC had already agreed to change speed limits in areas of Wells.

The Town Clerk reassured the meeting that following an action raised at Outside Spaces committee that decisions made in the last two years by WCC will be moved forward and delivered. A report will be issued at the Outside Spaces meeting.

25/136/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

The Mayor informed the meeting of a fund that had been put in place to support the victims and families of the tragic school coach crash in Minehead on the 17th July 2025. There is a link on the report issued by Cllr T Butt Phillip should anyone wish to donate.

Cllr D Denis informed the meeting of a climate tool called LCAT, developed by Exeter University. A useful tool which councils can work through to establish climate carbon sustainability in relation to other councils. Frome are having a meeting, open to WCC on the 31st July to learn how LCAT works. The link will be shared so that other councillors can attend.

Cllr J Browne asked if there was anything that WCC could do to attract businesses to the High Street following the news that Poundland is closing.

Cllr P Welch expressed his concern that neither Chairs nor Vice-chairs were available to present minutes and perhaps better liaison should take place during holiday periods.

25/137/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 |

25/138/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 25th September 2025, 7pm**

PLEASE NOTE: Thursday 25th September 2025, 6pm, Bi Annual Parish Meeting

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:**