

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 23rd OCTOBER 2025 AT 7.00PM

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

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Mayor), J Browne, S Cursley, S Eden, J Edmonds, G Folkard, T Kolizeras, I Von Mensenkampff, S Powell, T Robbins, H Siggs, P Welch

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

25/167/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: T Butt Philip, D Denis (Deputy Mayor), D Orrett, G Robbins
Cllr J Browne informed the Mayor that she required to leave the meeting early.
The Mayor informed the meeting that the Estates Committee agenda item had been omitted, but would be discussed.

25/168/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

25/169/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2025

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

Action: Delegation of Councillors to committees: The Town Clerk reported that all committees vacancies had been filled and have been published on the Wells City Council website.

25/170/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sheila Addis spoke about Wells bus services and the Bus Station. Sheila had recently missed train connections due to a bus not arriving on schedule. Sheila would like to know who is responsible. She reported that timetables are out of date and are displaying 2021/2022 times. Sheila bemoaned the poor state of the bus station and said that she had tidied it up herself at times with MP T Munt.

MP T Munt reported that this is a long standing issue and it is difficult to compel First Bus to improve the situation.

Cllr H Siggs spoke of children not being able to get to college/school and perhaps WCC should invite First Bus to come and represent themselves.

Cllr E Hobbs (Somerset Council Mendip Hills) spoke of cleaning the Wells bus shelters on a voluntary basis and that in his experience, timetables are usually the responsibility of local Councils to update. The Town Clerk corrected him that this is not the case in Wells and that timetable updates are the responsibility of First Bus.

Monty Boyce spoke of his objection to Wales and West Utilities locating a portacabin on Wookey Hole Road. The structure is very large and an eyesore. It is on the edge of an area of outstanding natural beauty. The intentions were for it to be replaced with a smaller structure. Monty asked that a local Councillor and planners visit the site with him so that he can demonstrate the issue.

Cllrs: S Powell and T Robbins will meet to discuss the matter.

Chris Simons spoke and said that after attending the last Finance meeting he would like an explanation of the following: The budget of 2025/2026 included a budget increase of

30 to 36% precept increase in Wells making it one of the highest in Somerset. Given the decision to freeze all non-essential spending and recruit 6 months into the financial year it appears that the budget was flawed/based on unrealistic assumptions. Can Councillors explain why the 30-36% increase was deemed necessary so soon into the financial year to impose emergency financial measures.

The external auditor qualified last year's accounts a serious matter. What specific issues were raised and is there a clear plan of action to address the issues raised. Can the council give assurance that responsible reserves policy to ensure there are sufficient reserves in place. There was talk of building up £400,000 of reserves over three years, which is in excess of 5% of the annual budget. Chris Simons asked for justification of their actions to rectify the potential serious governance and accounting problems?

The Town Clerk assured Chris Simons that the Chair of Finance will provide a response.

25/171/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Council Diary

- Sunday 9th November, Remembrance Service and Parade, St Cuthbert's Church 9:45am
- Tuesday 11th November, Remembrance Day, Conduit in Market Place 10:55am
- Saturday 15th November, 7:15pm, Wells Twinning Dinner with Paray-le-Monial, France. All Councillors, Civic Staff and partners invited.
- Thursday 18th December, 7:45pm in Parkes Room, Wells Town Hall. All Councillors, Civic Staff and WCC staff invited to a Christmas Celebration & Civic Awards Evening. (This will follow the scheduled Full Council Meeting). Partners are also invited.

Mayor's Diary

25th Oct 'Traume und Trost' concert, Wells Cathedral

- i. 25th Oct Wells Classic Motorcycle Club presentation evening, Town Crier attending
- ii. 6th Nov Without Borders official opening, Taunton
- iii. 12th Nov Wells Civic Society AGM, Wells & Mendip Museum
- iv. 14th Nov Wells Carnival
- v. 15th Nov SS Joseph & Teresa's Annual Bazaar, Wells Town Hall
- vi. 15th Nov Wells Twinning Dinner with Paray-le-Monial, France
- vii. 25th Nov 'Unveil the Date Brick' at Adam Lock Lodge

25/172/C PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cllr S Powell presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2025
No questions received

25/173/C OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr S Powell presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2025
No questions received

25/174/C STAFFING AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Cllr S Eden presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2025
No questions received

25/175/C FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr T Robbins presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th October 2025
No questions received

25/176/C ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr H Siggs presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2025
No questions received

25/177/C GENERAL POWER OF COMPETANCE

The Town Clerk informed Full Council that the General Power of Competence, only requires adoption by Council when relevant. The Town Clerk mentioned that her completion of the SILCA qualification, deems it appropriate to restate the General Power of Competence. The paper provides suitable background with the process and provides

background and reiterates the pledge, recognizing that two thirds of the members are elected members and not co-opted. The Town Clerk asked if Cllrs were happy with the recommendation, that she was seeking a vote.

Cllrs voted unanimously to adopt the General Power of Competence

25/178/C MENOPAUSE POLICY

The Town Clerk explained that although the policy is not a statutory policy, adopting the policy is best practice. The policy has been reviewed by Work-Nest the Wells City Council's Human resources support. The Town Clerk asked that Full Council consider and adopt the draft policy.

Cllrs: S Eden spoke on behalf of the Staffing committee in support of the policy, as did Cllr P Welch

Cllrs voted unanimously to adopt the Menopause policy

25/179/C PROPOSED 20MPH ZONE

The Town Clerk presented the report which sets out the potential changes, which have been recommended by the Accessible Wells group and Somerset Council colleagues. The first is a proposal for an extension to the 20mph zone, the second proposal is for amendments to loading bays and blue badge parking zones in the High Street, Cathedral Green end of St Andrews St, which will gain a greater number of blue badge spaces which will be grouped together, Tucker Street, where waiting time limits for parking will be shortened and yellow lines added to the area. The intention of tonight is not to seek views for the individual proposals but to seek views of Full Council before incurring costs of £500. The sum of £25000 has been suggested as a cost for the work required.

Cllr S Eden said that a lot of work had been put into this with Accessible Wells and Somerset Council Highways and the £500 is required to proceed with the design of the plans for the 20mph zone.

Cllr T Robbins asked if the cost of £500 is required to go before the Finance Committee. The Town Clerk reassured him that the sum of £500 is within her spend limit of the Town Clerk, so that's not required, however she wanted clarity from Full council before proceeding.

Cllr S Powell expressed her concerns for the delivery drivers should loading bays be reduced as that would have an impact on businesses. Cllr S Powell requested information whether the £25000 cost would cover all works needed?

The Town Clerk reported that a consultation had taken place through Accessible Wells but that the businesses will also be consulted. The cost will be more clear once the design is in place.

Cllr H Siggs spoke of his observations of 20mph zones which have been implemented in Wells as well as elsewhere and he spoke of his concerns of their effectiveness at slowing traffic and how the speed limit will be enforced. Cllr H Siggs requested clarification on the parking orders in the Market Place and spoke of the speed indicator which used to be in place. He stated that the highest speeds recorded were at the top of Portway (near the cemetery). This needs to be submitted with our consideration. Cllr H Siggs also told of his concerns for areas such as Wookey Hole Rd and Ash Lane/College Rd area with regard to safe crossings for school children. If changes are to be made, he requested a holistic approach and use historical data.

The Town Clerk replied to Cllr Siggs' question that it would be Avon and Somerset who enforce speed limits on 20mph zones. Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner will be attending the December meeting and can answer any questions. The other point regarding the Market Place is independent to this scheme. The Market Place's signage will be changed in two weeks. The speed awareness devices Wells City Council used previously are too old to be recalibrated but the Town Clerk has made an application to seek funding for new speed awareness devices.

Cllr T Robbins spoke of his concerns for South Street on Sundays as the street becomes very congested and in his opinion emergency vehicles would not be able to pass.

The Mayor questioned that the cost of design is quite low at £500 is it more a question of Somerset rubber stamping Wells City Council's proposals rather than design a scheme.

MP T Munt reassured that due to there being years of input regarding the proposals and these will be used to design the scheme.

The Town Clerk echoed MP T Munt comments and stressed that it should not be underestimated how much hard work had already taken place and that Officers at Somerset Highways were fully aware of all the issue involved.

The Mayor asked that we commit £500 to proceed with the design of the plans for the 20mph zone.

Cllrs voted unanimously to commit £500 to proceed with the design of the plans for the 20mph zone.

25/180/C ACT TO ADAPT PLAN PROJECTS PROPOSALS

The Town Clerk presented the proposal on behalf of Cllr Denis and explained that there is a £1000 ring-fenced sum available to spend on one of three Act to adapt projects.

Cllr S Powell proposed that the funds be committed to the recreation ground as it is a more central location and reaches all schools.

The Town Clerk read the three options for clarification:

- i. Working in partnership with the community or voluntary organisation to create grass/ dry bed planting schemes in the recreation ground to look at increasing variety of planting and biodiversity and include educational links via QR that can be applied to aid understanding and knowledge of bio diversity within that space.
- ii. Working in Partnership with St Cuthbert's Junior school to create an education based project in the St Andrew's stream area near Sheldon Drive looking at education/information boards and QR codes to further educational purposes.
- iii. Looking at tree planting on Torr Hill below Strawberry Woods on the area of land WCC recently acquired through devolution. The cemetery to look at add educational links and increase the planting. The Town Clerk mentioned that the latter would need consideration when considering committing further costs.

Cllr T Robbins seconded the proposal proposed by Cllr S Powell.

All Councillors voted unanimously for the proposal of the first option of the recreation ground planting.

25/181/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Mayor reported that Cllr D Denis had worked hard to make the Act to adapt a big success.

Cllr P Welch reported that the Wells Voice may cease after the December issue, as Andy Vallis the editor will retire. The Voice group newspapers are a franchise and there appears like no one is as yet prepared to continue it. P Welch expressed his hopes that someone would be able to take it on.

Cllr H Siggs spoke of his importance of the Wells Voice and thanked Andy Vallis for his hard work and dedication.

Cllr P Welch spoke of the roadwork diversions in place currently. He drew attention to a new sign that had recently been erected with more dates added to the work schedule.

MP T Munt reported that she had made enquiries the morning of today's meeting via email to Somerset Highways.

The Town Clerk assured Full Council that she had also made enquiries on the matter and that the Carnival Committee had been informed in case it had relevance to them.

25/182/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

No reports received.

25/183/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

The Mayor Announced that he had made Apple Juice which he was selling to raise funds for the new Skate Park. Anyone wishing to purchase some, the cost is £4 a bottle.

For further details email reception@wells.gov.uk

25/184/C

FORWARD PLAN

Full City Council Forward Plan	
Item	Proposed date for consideration
Corporate Priorities Adoption	November 2025
Devolution mid-year review	November 2025
Draft Budget Adoption	December 2025
Police and Crime Commissioner, Crime and CCTV overview	December 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

25/185/C

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 27th November 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