

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 18th DECEMBER 2025 AT 6.00PM

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

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Mayor), J Browne, S Cursley, D Denis (Deputy Mayor), S Eden, J Edmonds, G Folkard, D Orrett, S Powell, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Mace Bearer: C Price
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
Avon & Somerset Police Neighbourhood Inspector Rachel Clark
6 members of the public

25/204/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: T Butt Philip, T Kolizeras, G Robbins, T Robbins, H Siggs

25/205/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received

25/206/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 27TH NOVEMBER 2025

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor, subject to the amendment requested by Cllr G Folkard to the Finance Minutes.

25/207/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Mayor announced that as the Police and Crime Commissioner had not yet arrived that the agenda item be moved to the end of the meeting.

The Mayor asked that any members of the public who wish to speak about a subject not relating to the Police and Crime Commissioner, please do so at this point.

No one opted to speak.

25/208/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Diary

- i Bishop Bekynton Service, Sunday 11th January, 3pm Wells Cathedral
- ii Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 11th March, 7pm Wells Town Hall
- iii Legal Service, Sunday 22nd March, 3pm Wells Cathedral

Mayor's Diary

- i 20th Dec Christmas with The Rifles, Taunton Minster
- ii 21st Dec Carols by Candlelight, Wells Cathedral
- iii 22nd Dec Annual Carol Service, St Cuthbert's Church

The Mayor thanked all Wells City Council Staff for their hard work in making the Christmas Market on the 6th December a huge success.

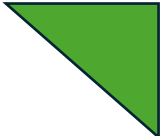
The Mayor also thanked the staff for their hard work in getting the Christmas lights in place.

25/209/C PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cllr S Powell presented the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2025.
No questions received

25/210/C OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr D Orrett presented the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2025



Cllr D Denis with reference to 25/77/OS Information of tree planting on Tor Hill in connection with the Act to Adapt Part 1 Improving green spaces initiative. There are discussions to plant hedging as a solution to adding green spaces to Wells.

25/211/C ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr S Eden presented the minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2025
No questions received.

25/212/C FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr G Folkard presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2025 subject to the changes aforementioned by the Town Clerk
No questions received

25/213/C DRAFT BUDGET 2026-2027

C Woodland (RFO) presented the proposed budget for consideration and sign off. Following the Finance Committee meeting, the increase agreed will be 1.98% which equates to 6 pence per week.

No questions were received.

Cllr G Folkard stated that the reserves of £100000 have been accomplished.

Cllr D Denis asked if the reserves were ring-fenced or would be available for projects.

The Town Clerk assured that they are very much ring fenced but should the Council feel it necessary that it could be utilized.

Councillors voted unanimously to accept the proposed budget

25/214/C MOTION TO COUNCIL

Cllr Denis - Propose to work in partnership with the Somerset Rivers Authority, surrounding residents and any required third parties to support resolution and risk of flooding within Tor Hill Lane, with WCC acting as the lead and taking responsibility for any required bids for funding and project delivery.

Cllr I Von Mensenkampff asked if the school should carry some of the cost of repair.

Cllr D Denis assured her that the school have in the past contribute, as have other third parties, but that the following year the repairs have already failed.

The Mayor asked if Wells City Council has the capacity to support match funding.

Cllr D Denis said that she had discussed bid writing work with the Town Clerk, being carried out by Wells City Council and there was potentially the capacity for this to happen, but that match funding would come from partners.

Councillors voted unanimously to support the proposal

25/215/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- Wells City Council (WCC) – SCOP Mutual Interest Group minutes of meeting held 26 November 2025

Cllr D Denis presented the above minutes and asked if Wells City Council members wanted to continue with the SCOP Mutual Interest Group.

The Mayor suggested that when the committee changes were made in May that decisions to continue were made at that point.

The Town Clerk suggested that herself and the Clerk of SCOP include discussions made by SCOP Mutual Interest Group working group as agenda items.

- LCN Active Travel Notes (attached by email) - Minutes to follow


Cllr D Denis reported that the LCN active travel also pertains to the work required on Torr Hill Lane.

25/216/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

No reports received

25/217/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

- Cllr P Welch spoke of his hopes that there were hopes that The Wells Voice return soon.
- Cllr G Folkard asked for an update on the purchase of Wells Cinema?



The Town Clerk informed the meeting that there was an agreement in principle and the tenancy agreement is being negotiated. A signed tenancy agreement should be in place by 24th December 2025, but there had been a slight delay due to a covenant issue

- Cllr I Von Mensenkampff asked for an update on the YMCA

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that she had met with the YMCA lead and the balance sheet is forthcoming and will go through Finance meeting first.

- The Mayor informed the meeting that the Mayoral Chain had been renovated and had been made so the chain could be removed and worn on less formal occasions.

25/218/C The Mayor announced that there was a delay in the arrival of PCC and that Full Council take a break of 30 mins.

25/219/C POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER Q&A, CLARE MOODY

Insp. Rachel Clark introduced herself and explained her role and a brief explanation of Neighbourhood Policing in the area. The team cover Wells, Street and Glastonbury. There are three Police Officers and two PCSOs who are passionate about engagement and improving engagement with local people. The Police Hub is in Shepton Mallet and work goes on 24/7. A neighbourhood report will be provided at City Council meetings going forward and if shift patterns allow, a member of the team will attend.

Clare Moody explained that the role of the PCC is to set strategic direction. Five priorities are:

1. Strengthening neighbourhood policing
2. Reducing violent crime
3. Crime prevention
4. Victim support
5. Standards in policing

The role of the PCC is strategic and governance and not day to day operational policing.

Question

Cllr I Von Mensenkampff asked how do you ensure your policies are transferred to operational?

Answer

The PCC works closely with Chief Constable through monthly scrutiny board meetings and in less formal routes through meetings with neighbourhood officers.

Question

How can Wells' youth be better protected and is the increase in rough sleepers in Wells linked to increased drug suppliers hanging around?

Answer

C Moody - Education of young people is important. Working with local authorities regarding rough sleepers for rehabilitation and drug and alcohol, safer street initiatives. Regarding County Lines, keeping young people safe, this is a serious issue and there are commissioned services available to help.

Insp. R Clark added that Wells Blue School have an engagement day organised. With regard to rough sleepers, Insp. R Clark believes that it is a perception rather than a genuine increase as the neighbourhood team are only aware of two rough sleepers in Wells and that there is no link in Wells between Rough sleepers and drug supply. Insp. R Clark explained how to contact the local team quickly. WCC will publish the details of how to contact the Neighbourhood Team.

Question

Not discussed as the 20mph speed limits within Wells are under review.

Answer

C Moody asked that community speed watch be included in those discussions.



Question

Would you support the private sector taking over a proportion of the policing commitments and support a complete overhaul of the paperwork side of policing to speed it up including the farcical reporting website?

Answer

C Moody responded private sector help should be used with very great care. Public funded policing is available in this country which is a good thing which makes it a fair service. There has been a change in the last ten years is the change of the funding profile. Today's figures from the Home Office have just been received. Last year 43% of funding came from precept funding. The national average is 245 officers for 100,000 population, but in Avon and Somerset the numbers are 189 officers per 100,000 population. Insp. R Clark said that she would support retailers in setting up a shop-watch scheme. On the subject of collaborative working the PACT meetings no longer take place. We are in the process of getting a stakeholder meeting off the ground and we have met with the Town Clerk about this progressing.

The Town Clerk confirmed that meetings have commenced with local police and that as there are established relationships that this will be built on.

C Moody said that 70 additional officers have been funded which has given experienced officer to neighbourhoods to target theft and anti-social behaviour as well as retail theft. Reporting is essential so investigations are data led.

Cllr J Browne commented that she thought there was already shop watch. The Mayor reported that there is a retailers WhatsApp group in place which offers support but that it is not the most appropriate scheme and that shop-watch would be more appropriate.

Question

L Byrne spoke of her enjoyment when she was a WCC Councillor visiting Portishead Police HQ. L Byrne spoke also of bad behaviour by some owners of dogs which are walked on the high street and whether other High Streets suffer similarly?

Answer

The Town Clerk spoke that this is probably more an issue for Somerset as an enforcement perspective rather than a Police issue.

Question

The Manager of Boots asked for frequency of Neighbourhood Police presence in Wells as there are many times when there are times when it seems there is a lack of police presence. The Mayor re-iterated that there seem to be occasions when a 999 call has taken place but there has been a lack of response.

Answer

Insp. R Clark assured the meeting that neighbourhood policing is very present but not able to be 24/7 and that perhaps the issue is about perception. Insp. R Clark can provide figures of shift patterns for reassurance.

Question

The Town Clerk asked how statistically we can be better at sharing information.


Answer

WCC replied that it depends which category within the spectrum of offences it falls. A national strategy action plan has been published today which contains some very positive strategies around feeling safe. Avon and Somerset Police were leaders in changing the policing response to rape and serious sexual offences. Started here with Project Bright-lights. 1 in 5 reported crimes have a domestic abuse connection. We are now seeing age rates dropping of offenders. There is a policing role in this with the backdrop of misogyny.

Question

With regard to shoplifting. You mentioned prevention and victims. The perception amongst retailers is that prevention is not happening but neither is a police response.

Answer



Insp. R Clark spoke of the increase in Neighbourhood Police numbers in Wells after PC Alice George joined them from another area.

Question

Cllr I Von Mensenkampff asked when a sexual offence is reported that it is a female officer that attends.

Answer

Insp. R Clark asked that there is a specialist unit who deal with sexual offences and are highly trained, dedicated and sensitive, but when a 999 call is made then speed is the issue.

25/220/C

FORWARD PLAN

Full City Council Forward Plan	
Item	Proposed date for consideration
Civic regalia for Town Crier	January 2026
Memorandum of Understanding sign off for 2026-27	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

25/221/C

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 29th January 2026**

Minutes signed by The Mayor.....Date