



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29th JANUARY 2026 AT 7.00PM

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

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Mayor), J Browne, T Butt Philip, D Denis (Deputy Mayor), J Edmonds, G Folkard, S Powell, H Siggs I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
Mace Bearer: C Price
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
Somerset Cllr for Wells and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt
Sgt Simon Lancey (Neighbourhood Team)
2 Members of the public

26/01/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: S Cursley, S Eden, T Kolizeras, D Orrett, G Robbins, T Robbins

26/02/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received

26/03/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 18th DECEMBER 2025

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

26/04/C ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 18th DECEMBER 2025

No actions.

26/05/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Sgt Simon Lancey introduced himself to the meeting. Sgt Lancey is responsible for an area which covers Wells, with three PC's, Darren Pearson, Dan Williams, Alice George. There are two PCSO's Mel Rowlands and Ben Newbury. There are two concerns currently that have seen an increase, shoplifting and rural crime. The Neighbourhood team are working with stakeholders to help them feel safe in their communities. Sgt Lancey will endeavour to attend Full Council meetings three or four times a year.

The Town Clerk reported that she is working closely with Sgt Lancey with regular meetings taking place. A paper is coming to Outside Spaces on a monthly basis as a standing item.

Nigel Clarke (Chief Marshall for the Wells Carnival Club) thanked Wells City Council for the grant used to purchase 20 body/dash cameras which were a big help in managing highway issues. The Carnival of 2025 suffered a reduced income by a third due to the wet weather. Nigel Clarke reported that Wells Carnival Club are leading a project with the County Carnival association to get Carnival submitted to the UNESCO UK Living Heritage list with a view to being included on the UNESCO World Living Heritage List afterwards.

Cllr S Powell reported that a few QR code posters were not removed following the Carnival. Nigel Clarke reported that there was a slight delay in the removal of the signs as the poor WIFI made it necessary to leave them up for a few days following the Carnival, but that there had also been a failing in having them collected up and he would address that.

Nigel Clarke reported as an aside that the Tourism Conference had mentioned that poor WIFI in Wells causes problems for events that take place. He mentioned that the lack of parking in Wells had also been discussed.

MP Tessa Munt asked what proportion of funds had been paid through the QR code system? Nigel Clark reported that out of just under £12000 taken in 2025, £18000 in 2024 which was a record sum. £300 was taken through the QR code scheme in 2025.



MP Tessa Munt suggested WCC move to Starlink to help improvement of WIFI in Wells. The Town Clerk summed up that WIFI was discussed at length at the Tourism Conference. The Mayor suggested that a good 4G would work adequately.

26/06/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

- i. 28th Jan Visit to Plymouth Synagogue, Somerset Interfaith Forum
- ii. 5th Feb Meeting with Headmaster of Wells Blue School
- iii. 8th Feb Welcome & Installation of the Right Rev Dr Fiona Gibson as Bishop of Taunton in Wells Cathedral
- iv. 11th Feb Wells Blue School Production 'The Forbidden Planet'

Free Prostate Cancer Testing event, Saturday 21st February, 10am – 4pm in Wells Town Hall. Prior booking is required <https://mypsatests.org.uk/events/>

The Deans Fire Walk for charity, SWEDA supporting people affected by eating disorders and body image, Friday 17th April, 6pm – 9pm, Wells Cathedral Green

The Mayor spoke of his great pleasure in visiting the Plymouth Synagogue. He reported that the Prostate Cancer day is now fully booked and gave encouragement to all to sign up the Fire Walk in aid of SWEDA.

26/07/C FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr G Folkard presented the minutes of the meeting held on 15th January 2026
No questions received

26/08/C PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Cllr S Powell presented the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2026 and gave a brief update.
No questions received

26/09/C ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Town Clerk presented the Annual Governance review, in order for Cllrs. to adopt policies approved by the Finance Committee

- i. Standing Orders
- ii. Financial Regulations
- iii. Scheme of Delegation

Cllr D Denise accepted the motion in principle, but requested an amendment to review the requirement to stand when speaking at Full Council meetings. Cllr D Denis explains that by standing, a person is taken away from the microphone positioned on the desk and that the speaker may not be able to stand.

Cllr D Denis would like a second amendment that the Standing Orders on a forward plan so that they are raised at the December meeting of each year ahead of formal consideration by Full Council in January.

The Town Clerk suggested that the appropriate committee to discuss this would be the Civic Committee and if a change was voted on it would then come back to Full Council.

The Mayor asked if Cllrs wanted to discuss the issue now or send it straight to Civic Committee.

Cllr H Siggs asked if more changes are to be made and reminded Cllrs that in line with the same standing orders, Cllrs should only stand once on an agenda item and say what they need to say at that point, that there was no right to additional reply.

The Town Clerk suggested that as Standing Orders are due for review of February 2028 that a mid-term review could take place in February 2026.

- i. The Mayor proposed that a vote be taken on the Standing Orders as they are with a review going to the Civic Committee in February 2026 for further refinement.

Vote - Councillors voted unanimously for the proposal.

ii. The Mayor proposed that a vote be taken to adopt the Financial Regulations
Vote - Councillors voted unanimously to adopt the Financial Regulations

iii. The Mayor proposed that a vote be taken to adopt the Scheme of Delegation
Vote - Councillors voted unanimously to adopt the Scheme of Delegation

26/10/C ANNUAL POLICY REVIEW

To adopt council policies approved by the Finance Committee

The Town Clerk explained that there had been small changes made to the below policies.
The Town Clerk spoke of the changes to wording and referenced comments made by Cllr S Powell who asked that the identity of Red Robes required clarification.

The Town Clerk will cross reference that at the Civic review as to who holds the Red Robes positions.

The Mayor suggested that the Protocol for Councillors and Staff come back in February as it's a complicated subject.

i Protocol for Councillors and Staff

Vote – No vote taken

ii Ethical Procurement Policy

Vote - Councillors voted unanimously to adopt the Ethical Procurement Policy

iii Councillor Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy

The Town Clerk reported that there were small typing errors and no significant changes
Cllr D Denis asked that clarification be made to explain which person would in the event of a complaint concerning the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk explained that it would be Senior Officer within WCC or an external party such as NALC or SALC, to be determined by the Management Committee in line with Standing Orders.

Vote - Councillors voted unanimously to adopt the Bullying and Harassment Policy

26/11/C MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR TOR HILL COMMUNITY GROUP AND TOR STREET GARDENS

The Town Clerk presented the Memorandum of Understanding. The Memorandum is about supporting the Outside Spaces functions and procedures and aiding involvement of community groups in local spaces.

Cllr H Siggs suggested that with reference to item 7 that it would be more reasonable to ask for a notice period?

The Town Clerk reassured that she did not foresee the lack of notice period as being problematic to the outside spaces function, however, a change would be requested accordingly to allow a 30 day notice period to be applied.

Cllr S Powell spoke of an amount of grass being left at the location but was informed that it had now been moved.

Vote - Councillors voted unanimously to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding for Tor Hill Community Group and Tor Street Gardens

26/12/C CIVIC REGALIA FOR TOWN CRIER

The Town Clerk proposed the options to refresh the uniform of the new Town Crier who takes up the role in May 2026.

Cllr D Denis asked for clarification that this will be costed through the Civic budget.

The options are of adjustment of the old uniform, a new summer uniform or new winter uniform, or combinations of any of the three options noted within the supporting report. All options require a new hat.

The Town Clerk advised on the remaining available budget.

Cllr I Von Mensenkampff proposed altering the old winter uniform as it is reasonable new and to purchase a new summer uniform.

A lengthy discussion took place about the possible options and colours. Option 1 was preferred by Cllr H Siggs who expressed the opinion that traditionally there has only been

one uniform and the Town Crier is only required to cover a few official events per year and questioned the necessity for change. Cllrs: T Butt Philip and P Welch concurred.

Cllr J Browne reported that the Councillors robes are very worn and therefore all robes are in need of repair and suggested that a review is needed, wider than that of the just the Town Crier.

The Mayor reported that the role of Town Crier had changed over the years and that it would be a loss if the Town Criers appointments were limited to 6 official engagements a year. The new Town Clerk chose the colors to reflect his military career and to own the role, but with careful consideration to those elements of tradition for the city and the wider role nationally of the crier.

Cllr D Denis also proposed that the existing uniform be adjusted and to obtain a new summer uniform.

The Mayor put forward the proposal made by Cllr H Siggs which was carried.

Vote: 8 for the proposal, 2 against the proposal

26/13/C SOMERSET DRAGON

The Town Clerk explained as part of Somerset Day the Somerset Dragon will start travel through the County during late March and April. Its journey starts at Thatcher's Brewery and will end at the new Shoe Museum in Street. Wells has secured that the Dragon will arrive on Saturday 11th April. The Town Clerk has worked closely with the Cathedral and the Dragon will be in front of the Cathedral on this date, with a themed market in support. All school children receive a free book about the history of the dragon.

26/14/C COMMUNITY DAY FEEDBACK

The Town Clerk reported that it was a busy day and very successful. WCC answered 46 enquiries. There were a queries regarding the Planning process, ten bookings were received for the Town Hall and Portway Annex as well as praise for Outside spaces, Wells in Bloom and the Christmas lights. The event will be added to the Calendar of events.

26/15/C CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW Q3

The Town Clerk presented the review as endorsed by the Finance Committee. The supporting report referenced that There is one new risk noted in this quarter referenced as WCC040 scored at 15. There are no increased risks within this quarter. The reduction towards tolerance of risks referenced as, WCC009, WCC014, WCC024, WCC025, WCC032, WCC033, WCC034, WCC037 & WCC038. The proposed closure of risks referenced as they are now within accepted tolerance and not requiring ongoing review or tracking. WCC010, WCC023, WCC026, WCC030, WCC035, & WCC039.

Cllr D Denis proposed that WCC039 be retained as an open risk as the issues managed will remain a risk due to Climate change. This was agreed to be retained.

26/16/C PRIORITIES AND PROJECT PLANNING

The Town Clerk informed Councillors that going forward on Full Council agendas there will be a standing item of a 1 sheet document that will inform the Council of all activities going on from an officer's perspective. We can track all projects and give you a synopsis of all projects and the stages that they are at. This will help WCC be more proactive and less reactive to situations.

26/17/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Reports from the LCN meeting have been circulated. Cllr D Denis explained that date of the next meeting will be clarified.

26/18/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr D Denis thanked Cllr T Butt Philip for the table of works completed during the previous month and for the clarification regarding the cost of repairing potholes.

Clr L Agabani asked for an explanation of the term in the “Key areas of concern” section of the report which reads “Removal of most recognitions of rurality, in allocating funding and treatment of Somerset in terms of the amount of business rates raised in Somerset that the Council is able to retain”

Clr T Butt Philip explained that the term is in the global government financial settlement and refers to two key sectors. The first is how they take into account that Somerset is a rural county, when it comes to adult social care and transporting children, carers across the county, grit roads. The second is that Somerset are a tariff authority from a business rates point of view. Councils don’t set the rates but collect them. A tariff authority means we pay in more than we get back.

26/19/C FORWARD PLAN

Full City Council Forward Plan	
Item	Proposed date for consideration
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

Clr T Butt Philip asked about the frequency of the review of the General Power of Competency. Has it been reviewed in this political cycle and is it due for review in May 2027? The Town Clerk confirmed that it had been reviewed and was next due in May 2027

26/20/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Clr I Von Mensenkampff asked about progress on the YMCA budget.

The Town Clerk reported that this was work in progress and were awaiting a budget paper from the YMCA representative.

The Town Clerk gave a brief report on the recent Tourism Conference held in the town Hall on 26th January 2026. A joint collaboration with the Civic Society, Cathedral, Bishop’s Palace, high street traders. There were several guest speakers and several Councillors were present. There will be another meeting soon to see how suggestions can be progressed forward.

Clr T Butt Philip asked for details regarding the two key areas that were highlighted at that conference.

Town Clerk reported that the lack of parking had been spoken about and that a park and ride scheme had been suggested. The reality of these needs considering when it comes to a review of parking provision.

Free WIFI had been requested to cover Wells to see if that is achievable. A report will be provided in due course.

26/21/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 26th February 2026, 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