

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2026 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: D Denis, J Edmonds, K Kinshaw, T Kolizeras, D Orrett (Chair),
S Powell, G Robbins

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
Outside Spaces Manager: Matt Johnson
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
19 members of the public

26/76/OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Cllr T Butt Philip

26/77/OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's
Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None received

26/78/OS MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Malcolm Burton spoke on the report regarding the 20mph speed limit. He stated that while the report was professional, and that Somerset has good guidelines regarding speed limits, that the 20mph speed limit across Wales was a failure and is now being revised to 30mph. He questioned the number of recorded accidents in proposed areas in Wells and how many accidents will be prevented.

The Town Clerk has offered to provide the accident data for these locations, especially in regard to Ash Lane and Kennion Road where the main concern is the number of near misses that occurred in these locations, especially within close proximity to the school.

Jane Truman asked the trustees of the recreation ground about the plan to divide the recreation ground into four distinct areas and the proposed pathways. She raised concerns that if this plan were to be implemented, there would be little green space left on the recreation ground.

Cllr D Orrett commented that there had recently been a meeting of the Wells Recreation Ground Trust Working Group (WRGT Working Group), and that the next public meeting would be held on 1st October 2026.

The Town Clerk restated that there is a public meeting of the trust on October 1st, 2026 which will include items such as feedback from the WRGT Working Group. The Town Clerk clarified that the purpose of the Working Group was to look at all options and bring them to the meeting on 1st October 2026, where these will then go to full public consultation.

Paul Truman requested that the trustee of the recreation ground share what the charity commissioners' reaction to the car park proposal was.

The Town Clerk clarified that at this time, the proposal was being discussed within the Working Group, and that any program of work would be supported by full consultation at the correct time. The map being referred to was created to depict the space, to support the Working Group's discussions. Currently there is no decision made as this is the decision of the WRGT. The charity

commission would also need to be consulted on decisions to seek their feedback.

Rosa Kell spoke on the green spaces, sharing that many people use the recreation ground to meet and spend time there and are against the hedge and wall coming down. She is against the car park being extended due to the road being narrow, overused and prone to accidents, and suggested the car parking spaces of shops nearby be used as public parking spaces rather than private parking.

Christine Costello stated that the recreation ground has nothing wrong with it. The trees in the area by the bandstand were used as a shaded area over the summer, the recreation ground is well used and loved. Accessibility in her opinion is perfect even if the bumpy paths need work. The wall being removed is a historic wall within a conservation area within the precincts of the Bishop's Palace.

June Hodgson stated that she'd heard Plane Trees are diseased and wondered what the truth was regarding this.

The Town Clerk clarified that the trees are surveyed regularly which are overseen by The Outside Spaces Officer. If actions are required they will be completed. Updates on trees are provided by the Outside Spaces Manager at the Outside Spaces committee meetings.

The Outside Spaces Manager asked for clarification as to which trees were being referred to. June Hodgson confirmed she was referring to the trees by the houses. He informed the meeting that contractors took out dead wood from these trees last summer.

Cllr D Denis recalled the report from before this work was done, stating that some of the top branches had a virus and the work that was completed will limit and control the spread of the disease.

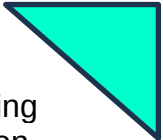
The Town Clerk clarified there had been no recent survey completed by the Council as they are completed on a rotational basis. The trees are surveyed in 3 to 4 years. The Town Clerk has requested more information on who completed the survey, and will be in contact with June.

Jo Brown agreed with Christine on her opinion on the recreation ground and asked why it wasn't valued as an open green space. She stated the improvements reduce green space and that the addition of furniture and equipment that will be often left unused will leave the green space looking ugly. She asked why the space isn't valued as it is, as it's a treasured asset of the people of Wells.

Liz Pedley and Liz O Sullivan (Campaigners for improvements at the Ash Lane and College Road's A39 junction)

They reported that they have not yet had a meeting with Cllr T Butt Philip and asked for this to be brought to his attention.

They've sent data over to The Town Clerk and met with Tessa Munt who supports their concerns and attended the LCN workers group. The government is promoting active travel but parents are choosing schools based on safe crossing points. They set up a speed camera for a week which wasn't particularly helpful. Police won't set up enforcement as average speeds were about 31mph. They are hopeful that the new Wells Speed-watch team will help in monitoring this junction. Many near misses have been witnessed, and in 2014 there was a fatality. A freedom of information request has been completed



to gain further information. Somerset are due to reline the area and adding signs, though can't provide an assessment report that led to that decision, leading to the feeling that not much difference will be made from this.

Liz O Sullivan has researched data regarding collisions and found a UK road collision map that features a cluster of accidents at the junction in question. The Town Clerk thanked them both for their data, and mentioned a future proposal of the purchase of our own speed indication devices.

Shirley Garner complained that the weeds around the city were offsetting the beauty of the planters, and asked the council if they object to the weeds being removed for ecological or financial reasons.

Cllr D Orrett stated that some weeds are kept as pollinating plants, and that weed removal does have to be volunteer led as we don't have the resources or pesticide policy.

The Town Clerk stated that Somerset Council are responsible and that Wells City Council do add additional values when possible and when resources allow. Shirley commented that in regards to some people preserving weeds for ecological reasons, she cannot find evidence that this is the case.

Christopher Hornridge asked about the progress for the improvement of Wi-Fi connectivity in Wells.

The Town Clerk confirmed that we have been reaching out to telecommunications companies regarding this, and that update is due to be provided to the next Full Council meeting.

26/79/OS APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Cllr J Edmonds was put forward for nomination by Cllr D Denis, seconded by Cllr D Orrett. The vote was unanimous.

26/80/OS MINUTES FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4th JUNE 2026

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

26/81/OS ACTIONS FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4th JUNE 2026

Date Raised	Description of Action
30.04.2026	Confirm the placement of the table tennis table within the recreation ground
30.04.2026	To provide details of pollinators within the 2027 planting of the city.
30.04.2026	Confirmation of the removal of the map board posts outside the Town Hall.
30.04.2026	Town Clerk to review the "red circles" marked on trees in the recreation ground.

The Town Clerk gave updates regarding the following actions:

- The table tennis table is in situ and in use.
- The pollinators details are on the agenda for this meeting.
- The map board post removal has been completed.

Additional actions:

Tinknells Roundabout Sponsorship – proposal is for discussion this evening.

Cllr T Butt Philip raised an suggestion regarding sponsorship for Somerset which is within the agenda for this meeting.



Cllr S Powell asked for information about the benches on the moat walk. The church commissioners have been approached regarding works and maintenance of that location. The City Council has submitted a bid.

Cllr S Powell also asked for tree guards for the trees on the Cathedral Green after tree came down. Work is in progress with work regarding the trees mentioned.

Publication of pollinators has been completed following a request from the previous meeting.

26/82/OS SASP PRESENTATION

Nobody was available to present and has been deferred to the next meeting.

26/83/OS REPORT FROM OUTSIDE SPACES MANAGER

The drought made it a challenging month. The trees on the Cathedral Green that came down due to the dry weather as the roots had become brittle and had lost support.

The Outside spaces team have been doing tidy up tasks around the band stand and tidying up hedges. The drought has significantly affected the timber in the playground.

The Town Clerk stated fingerposts are not our responsibility however they have been maintained by Wells City Council as these posts provide added value to the city.

Cllr D Denis asked if flowers for the bandstand barrier baskets could be single head flowers for pollinators?

The Outside Spaces Manager commented that the flowers are not guaranteed to flower for as long as she would like if the planting is rescheduled.

Cllr D Denis has asked to trial this at the bandstand.

The Town Clerk clarified that she had asked the Outside Spaces Manager to use leftover products already purchased within these baskets at the moment.

Cllr D Denis asked if the playground castle and the trees on the rec were an outside spaces decision or a WRGT decision.

The Town Clerk confirmed that any work in relation to the trees in the recreation ground were reported to the Wells Recreation Ground Trust, however the trust only meets twice a year so delegations allow the committee to make operational decisions.

26/84/OS TRAFFIC UPDATES & CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED TRAFFIC SCHEME

The Town Clerk reported that new locations were added to the report and inconsistencies highlighted. New locations added to the proposal are Kennion Rd, Ash lane and Welsford Avenue. The Committee were asked if they are comfortable to open this to consultation.

D Denis commented that Cllr T Butt Philip has asked for the consideration of additional points of a 20mph zone starting before reaching Budgens, Little Entry lane to be included, Beryl Lane, Lethbridge Road and Golding Close.

The Town Clerk commented that Somerset Highways recommend the scheme be broken into phases and other areas looked at afterwards.



Cllr S Powell commented that it seems quite messy and requires a lot of new signage, and asked why it can't be a blanket 20mph zone. The Town Clerk responded that Somerset isn't able to deliver a blanket 20mph zone, and that a phased approach is recommended as moving from a higher speed zone to lower required phasing and in some areas this couldn't be achieved.

A brief discussion took place about the effectiveness of small 20mph zones compared with blanket 20mph areas.

The Town Clerk asked if councillors were comfortable with Appendix F, the survey, which cover other amendments

Cllr S Powell asked for clarification on the new loading and disabled bay amendments and what the changes were.

The Town Clerk responded that the bays would be disabled and loading bays for 2 hours longer, lasting until 8pm. The purpose is to increase disabled parking spaces.

Cllr S Powell pointed out that with this, delivery drivers may not be able to get into loading bays to access shops due to the bays being used as disabled parking, and asked what can be done about this.

The Town Clerk responded that the increase won't impact that, but that it will stop others from parking in loading bays, though suggested doing a campaign to support this and could do a consultation on wider engagement and understanding of who bays were accessible to and when. Equally there is due to be consideration of changes by Somerset Council in due course on street provision.

Cllr S Powell commented that, in regards to the survey, it seems quite complicated, and asked if it was possible to simplify the survey.

The Town Clerk responded that the City Council needs to evidence every element of change, in order to be able to evidence to Somerset Council that the scheme is viable and accepted. Equally, if not accepted, which elements require further amendment based on public opinion.

Cllr S Powell asked a question regarding the 20mph survey and what the survey relates to?

The Town Clerk clarified that the survey has sections explaining the areas listed, and the online survey would be a lot clearer.

26/85/OS POLICE AND CRIME UPDATES

The Town Clerk reported that there was nothing of significant note. Sgt Simon Lancey and the Town Clerk continue to meet monthly and the statistics provided show no significant areas of concern. The Town Clerk advised that following community feedback, the City Council have asked for support for speeding vehicles through the city, and targeted action regarding cyclists riding against traffic and threatening pedestrian safety.

26/86/OS RECREATION GROUND TRUST (WRGT)

Cllr K Kinshaw reported a fruitful discussion had taken place within the Working Group, with a range of ideas raised. No decisions have been made as of yet and all decisions will go to the Outside Spaces Committee as well as to the next Trust (WRGT) meeting in October, as well as relevant public consultation being completed for specific projects at the appropriate time.

Cllr G Robbins would like to have talking benches installed in the recreation ground.

The Town Clerk clarified that the WRGT meeting 1st October 2026 will include all feedback and proposals raised and previous proposals. Assuming the trust agree to proceed then it will proceed to public consultation and then back to the WRGT.

Cllr S Powell stated that it was necessary to ensure a wide range of views were represented regarding the changes being made. Cllr K Kinshaw agreed with this.

26/87/OS OPERATIONAL LAND CLASSIFICATION

The Outside Spaces Officer explained that this document gives transparency regarding the work that takes place explaining the frequency of grass-cutting etc. From this document a master map will be created to improve transparency and provide specifics of what the team do and when.

The Town Clerk added that it allows the Outside Spaces Officer to plan and deliver the work and allows us to communicate with the public and manage expectations.

The Outside Spaces Officer added that this sets out our position. This year has been odd and work done was driven by the weather. An end of year performance review will allow budget management .

S Powell asked about the frequency of the grass-cutting at St Cuthbert's Churchyard

The Outside Spaces Officer advised that he would provide a specific answer in writing, but that if alterations to the scheme, or cutting schedule were viable, these could be worked into the plan for that space.

The Town Clerk clarified there were other churchyards maintained for the church so this would be acceptable.

Cllr D Denis added that mixed mowing takes place at St Cuthbert's Church and there are areas for wildflowers. Tor Hill Lane among other areas have an MOU (Memorandum of understanding) to take into consideration.

The Outside Spaces Officer stated that, considering devolution, this would be the framework for what to do with our assets.

Cllr D Orrett commented that people often view wildlife meadow areas as neglected areas, and asked how to manage this.

The Town Clerk suggested providing education information regarding these meadows in advance, which has been positively received in the past.

Cllr D Orrett invited proposals to adopt the Land classification document

Proposal made by Cllr D Denis

Seconded by Cllr G Robbins.

The vote was unanimous.

26/88/OS TREE POLICY & GREEN CORRIDORS

The Outside Spaces Officer presented the document created to firm up how WCC operate and for Councillors to consider the four options identified in the report. He described it as a tree policy that takes the scientific approach, looking at trees throughout their life cycle.

Cllr D Denis commented that it was a great report and asked that volunteer wardens to be used as takes place in Swindon.

Cllr S Powell stated that she's all for leaving dead trees, but to consider the trees in the recreation ground.

The Outside Spaces Officer responded that we need to be pragmatic in our approach to felling trees.

The Town Clerk added that delegated authority has to be with the Outside Spaces Officer or herself in an emergency.

Cllr T Kolizeras spoke about the importance of standing dead wood.

The Outside Spaces Officer spoke briefly:

Item 13B - Regarding green corridors, currently there are no formal organisations working together on this at the moment. We are one of the biggest asset holders so we need to encourage biodiversity, use Raptors for example to manage pigeons.

Item 13C - WEN is looking to survey/log ancient trees. The Outside Spaces Officer does not feel he is in a position to authorise it and is concerned that volunteers are registering ancient trees which may impact the planning committee.

Cllr D Denis mentioned that Wells City Council's main trees are not on ground where planning applications are likely and that trees are already TPO'd.

The Outside Spaces Officer agrees with the process, however the principle needs to be that councillors are happy with the process being followed.

The Town Clerk suggested that the volunteers collecting information return the information to the Council before it is officially logged.

The Outside Spaces Officer commented that the trees that are added to that register could add a weight to proposed plans in an area.

The Town Clerk added that there are pros and cons in each direction of this.

A brief discussion took place regarding the rationale and the process used when using volunteers to survey trees.

Cllr. D D Orrett invited a proposal to adopt the policy.

Cllrs were in agreement with all recommendations for items 13A, 13B and 13C, and Option 2 on page 9 of the volunteers' survey document:

Cllr K Kinshaw proposed to adopt the above policy with Option 2.

Seconded by Cllr G Robbins.

The vote was unanimous.

26/89/OS ROUNABOUT REDESIGN

The Outside Spaces Officer confirmed that the Tinknell roundabout re-design was being funded by Somerset Council with no financial risk to Wells City Council.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Cllr T Butt Philip referenced historical funding that was available. Somerset have confirmed that funds are available, however have not confirmed how much. They've asked for a Purchase Order associated with the works, and will then confirm if they can cover the costs. If Somerset cannot cover the costs, WCC will not proceed as funding is not available.

Cllr. S Powell proposed the Roundabout redesign.

Seconded by Cllr G Robbins.

The vote was unanimous.

26/90/OS KNAPP HILL PROJECT UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that the project is progressing well. Draft plans are underway, which will lead to a funding request being sent to Somerset River



Authority. Our role is to support the funding elements, acting as the bid holder. A potential of £20,000 which will provide the necessary drawings and topographical surveys to allow the scheme to move forwards. It will be up to the Golf Club to deliver and they are budgeting accordingly. Local supplier, Penny's, are keen to support the project for free. WCC have facilitated engagement and funding progress will be seen next year.

26/91/OS LEISURE AND PLAY STRATEGY

The Town Clerk reported that the strategy is progressing with a draft coming forward to future council meetings. All changes will go to consultation. Cllr T Butt Philip had requested looking into locations within 10 minutes of an open space or play provision of some type, which has been completed. Currently play areas are all less than a 10 minute walk away for those in the city. The allotments are more sparse comparatively. There will hopefully be an outline draft at the next meeting.

26/92/OS MARKETS UPDATE & CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk reported that she'd received a petition/feedback from Market traders regarding the Terms and Conditions offered by the Council. These are no different than they were previously under Somerset or Mendip council, though we are enforcing terms that have been laid out.

Cllr G Robbins added that under Somerset Council the enforcement of terms and conditions were comparatively lax.

The Town Clerk spoke of a discussion she had with Cllr D Orrett regarding verbal feedback. The Market moving forward will become a standing item on every Outside Spaces Agenda. The best way to proceed is to consult everyone who uses the space, however we can anticipate that the concerns will be related to holiday entitlement. The importance for Market Officers is to keep the market full, and allowing us to bring new traders in the market, which also applies to the monthly market.

Cllr L Agabani, who received the feedback/petition has acknowledged receipt and responded directly in support of officers and refuted incorrect claims made, but had not responded in general to the petition/feedback. The Town Clerk thanked Cllr L Agabani for that support. The trader who sent the petition claims to be representing 80% of traders however this has yet to be proven. The consultation will get a balanced view. The councillors were asked if they would be happy to consult.

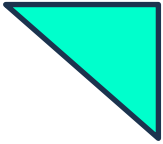
Cllr D Orrett asked for clarification on how stalls were managed during holiday periods of traders.

The Outside Spaces Manager clarified that traders need to set a criteria to retain their status as a regular trader as WCC need to maintain the business to business deal.

The Town Clerk added that WCC have supported stallholders who needed to take extended leave, ensuring their pitch will still be available when they return. There is guidance to ensure consistency for both us and traders. The Sunday markets were always required to be a different provision to the weekly markets.

Cllr K Kinshaw stated that she believes we should respond to the petition/feedback and suggested asking for what the expectation is regarding the number of days suitable as a holiday entitlement.

The Town Clerk responded that there is an expectation that consultation will lead to a variety of responses. There will be a response issued soon to the petition explaining the upcoming consultation.



Unanimous agreement to consultation.

26/93/OS COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

The Town Clerk confirmed we have a community preparedness template, which uses similar elements to the business continuity plan. We've taken the community emergency plan and applied the community elements from this, forming a plan for how Wells City Council will respond to issues within the community. The Town Clerk's new officer will create a process around education and support, which will lead to the creation of a comms plan around preparedness.

Cllr D Denis asked if there would be a working party set up to work on some of the issues within this. She also asked about weekend cover for this plan, and about the 24 hour contact for this plan being the Town Hall number.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, in regards to the Town Hall contact number, the phone lines are in the process of being updated to have a directory which will allow contact with this 24 hour phone line. The emergency out of hours rota that allows for 24/7 cover is not being applied as of yet.

Cllr D Denis raised the voluntary organisations asking to be included in the working party.

The Town Clerk reported that part of the community preparedness plan, there would be at least an annual test event that could be extended into a working group.

Cllrs voted unanimously to adopt the Community resilience Plan.

26/94/OS DEVOLUTION UPDATE

The Town Clerk stated that, while we await the completion of land transfers by Somerset legal team, we are managing areas of land whilst awaiting Title deed transfers. Following communication from Somerset Council, the Town Clerk reported that some areas are not as we thought, predominantly around waterways. The title deed for some areas of land are significant and include areas of hard standing and waterways. Somerset are not willing to split the deeds and incur the costs of that. This paper lists the multiple anomalies, including The Rugby Club and areas of land which are included in two current draft planning applications. Devolution has been temporarily suspended until these planning applications are decided. This timeline has no limit and it is recommended that this area is removed. The area including Charter Way and play area, can be proceeded with and perhaps more appropriate for Section 106 money.

- i. Tor Hill Lane. The whole area is significant to WCC. The Town Clerk recommends taking the Title deed for this area and the risk of the waterway because of this, though we would want at least 2 years support for waterway supportive maintenance.

Cllr S Powell asked if the path would be included.

The Town Clerk clarified that the area from Tor Street to the end of the playing field is not included, however the rest is as depicted in the adjoining plan. This gives WCC greater ability to affect change in this area, specifically regarding accessible travel. It's a significant area with an MOU already in place that will benefit the city. The flooding risk associated will potentially be reduced over time

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- ii. The Hawkers Lane play area, which is split into three title deeds. The first is the area from the culvert up to halfway into the ditch, which the Town Clerk recommends taking the risk of this area with a 2 year agreement for support. The second area has several properties which overhang into the area, The Town Clerk recommends taking the play area but not the risk from the properties, leaving the risk of this with Somerset. The third area is Drake Road which, similarly to above, is not worth the risk of taking the title deeds of the properties within this area.
 - iii. Osmond Drive, Jocelyn Drive, etc. There are no major issues in this area, however we should still have a 2 year agreement.
 - iv. Sealey Crescent and Churchill Road. There are concerns around parking provisions as much of this is used as informal parking, which we are in no position to enforce. The Town Clerk suggests continuing to manage the grass here under our current management agreement however to not take the title deed due to the parking concerns.
 - v. Churchill Road East., Durkheim Drive, Woodbury Avenue. The proposal is the same as listed above, with the same concerns.

The Town Clerk asked if councillors are comfortable with these proposals being raised at Full Council.

The Town Clerk stressed the point that market rights were provided to the city of Wells making these the rights of the city rather than the current custodian.

All councillors agreed to all recommendations as noted within the report and proposed to recommend to Full Council.

26/95/OS FORWARD PLAN

Topic	Month
Christmas Light Update	October 2026
Dog Fouling Policy and Publication	October 2026
Police and Crime Updates	Every Month
Traffic Updates	Every Month
Recreation Ground Trust (WRGT)	Every Month

The Town Clerk stated that there are some associations related to Christmas lighting that will be raised at the Finance meeting. Some surveys have been completed that have revealed a significant financial impact leading to us likely needing to do an interim solution this year rather than the traditional installations. The infrastructure is not as it should be, and the costs to repair this are significant. There will be proposals raised as to what we will be able to do in the interim.

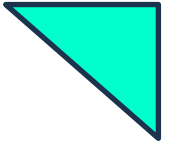
26/96/OS ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Nothing to report.

26/97/OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 5th November 2026 at 7pm, Wells Town Hall

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 Chair: **Date:**