



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL SUMMONS

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL,
WHICH MEMBERS ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND, WILL BE HELD IN
WELLS TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 22ND JUNE 2023 AT 7.00PM**

Please note this meeting will be recorded for the purpose of minute-taking.

Steve Luck
Town Clerk

Town Hall, Market Place
Wells,
BA5 2RB
01749 673091
e-mail: townclerk@wells.gov.uk

15th June 2023

AGENDA

Wells City Council has declared a climate emergency. Each agenda item must consider the impact on any policy and decision.

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
- 3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 25TH MAY 2023**
To be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.
- 4 MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Mayor.
- 5 POLICE REPORT**

6 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

- i. 25th Jun, 400th Anniversary of Axbridge Town Maces, Axbridge Town Hall
- ii. 29th Jun, Symphonic Finale, Wells Cathedral (Cllr Cursley attending)
- iii. 29th Jun, The Mayor's New Clothes Charity Launch, Wells Town Hall
- iv. 30th Jun, Speech Day, Wells Cathedral
- v. 1st Jul, Wells Environment Day, Portway Annexe
- vi. 1st Jul, Wells Ballet School Summer Dance Show, Wookey Hole
- vii. 2nd Jul, Romulus & Remus Twinning Festival
- viii. 2nd Jul, Annual Civic Service, Yeovil
- ix. 2nd Jul, Wells Theatre Festival Launch Party
- x. 3rd Jul, Wells Rotary, The Crown
- xi. 5th Jul, Wells in Bloom School Award Ceremony, Bishop's Palace
- xii. 16th Jul, Tortoise & Hare Run, Wells Football Club
- xiii. 25th Jul, Meet the residents, Abbeyfield House

7 OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2023 (attached)

8 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 15th June 2023 (to follow)

9 FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2023 (attached)

10 INTERNAL AUDIT (attached)

To receive the Internal Audit Report

11 EXTERNAL AUDIT (attached)

- i To approve and sign the Annual Governance statements for the year 2022-23
- ii To approve and sign the Annual Statements of Accounts for the year 2022-23

12 CLIMATE WORKING GROUP

To appoint new members

13 SLURRY BLIGHTING LIFE IN WELLS

To agree a letter be submitted to the Environment Agency - Cllr Denis

14 REPORT FOLLOWING LAST COUNCILLORS SURGERY ON 12TH JUNE

Councillors in attendance: Cllrs D Denis and P Welch

15 NEW ROTA FOR FUTURE COUNCILLOR ADVICE SURGERIES (attached by email)

To agree and complete the attached rota.

16 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Connect Centre - report received from Cllr P Welch (attached)

17 TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

To follow, if any received.

18 ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 27th July 2023, 7pm**

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it will be proposed by the Mayor that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended.

Circulation List:

Town Clerk/RFO	Somerset Councillors	Wells Journal & Wells Voice
Town Clerk Assistant	Serjeants-at-Mace	Wells Chamber of Commerce
Cemetery & Burial Officer	Mayor's Chaplain	The Bishop's Palace
Outside Spaces Officer	Town Crier	Wells Cathedral
Wells City Council members	Wells Civic Society	Avon & Somerset Police
	WCC Internal Auditor	



probusiness
accountants

Mr S Luck
Town Clerk and RFO to the City Council
Town Hall
Wells
Somerset
BA5 2RB

6 June 2023

Dear Mr Luck,

Internal Audit of Wells City Council for the year ended 31st March 2023

In accordance with your instructions and acting in accordance with relevant requirements and regulations, we have carried out an internal audit of the accounting systems of Wells City Council for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Our audit was based on the requirements of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return – Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR). The audit included examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the Financial Statements.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the Financial Statements have been properly prepared in accordance with current guidelines and the Council's system of internal controls is, overall, adequate and effective.

Recommendations to Council

In the course of our examination we have identified some matters which, while not affecting our audit opinion, we would like to draw to the Council's attention and to make the following recommendations,

Probusiness Ltd, Business Accountants and Advisers, St Lawrence Lodge, 37 Chamberlain Street, Wells, Somerset BA5 2PQ

T: 01749 677989 **F:** 01749 672651 **E:** mail@probusinessuk.com **W:** www.probusinessuk.com

Probusiness is a trading name of Probusiness Ltd Company Registration Number 2650341 VAT Number 639 5428 08

Fixed Asset Register

We note that there were no changes made to the fixed asset register although there were some purchases of new or replacement equipment. The fixed asset register currently only records property assets owned by the Council and does not include plant or equipment. In order that the Council can more effectively identify and manage the assets which it utilises to carry out its business we recommend that in future all purchases of equipment at a cost in excess of £500 should be recorded in the fixed asset register. In addition, the Council should consider carrying out a review of all equipment currently in use and adding it to the fixed asset register if its value is significant or if it is of particular importance to the Council's operations.

Funfair Donation

The Council received a donation of £25,000 from the operator of the funfair at the Charter Fair, the funds being designated for use to fund the cost of refreshments for Fair organisers over the next 10 years. The Minutes refer to these funds being ring-fenced but they have not been specifically identified as an Earmarked Reserve. The Council may wish to consider whether it is appropriate to do so.

Approved Contractors

We note that the Council has invited applications from Contractors to be placed on an Approved Contractors list in order to avoid difficulties with obtaining multiple quotations for services. We would like to remind the Council that if this procedure is adopted the Financial Regulations will need to be amended accordingly.

Recreation Ground Trust

During the year the Council received a transfer to its bank of £555,000 from Mendip District Council in respect of funds belonging to the Recreation Ground Trust. We understand that the formalities in respect of the transfer of control of the Trust to the Council have not yet been completed and therefore it appears that the Council are currently holding these funds as bare trustee on behalf of the Trust pending completion of these formalities. Whilst the funds are being held in a separate bank deposit account the Council has not yet been able to open a bank account in the name of the Trust. There does not appear to be any reference in the Minutes to the transfer of these funds or to the basis on which they are being held. As this is a very

significant sum of money we recommend that the matter be clarified by the Council and that any further movement of these funds or establishment of a new Trust bank account be appropriately recorded and approved by Council.

We are pleased to be able to complete the Internal Audit section of the Annual Return, and return it duly signed.

Yours sincerely,

Probusiness

Probusiness Ltd.



Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

WELLS CITY PARISH COUNCIL

WWW.WELLS.GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.			
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

24/05/2023

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

PROBUSINESS LTD

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Probusiness

Date

07/06/2023

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: if the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

WELLS CITY PARISH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance	
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £		
1. Balances brought forward	122,422	111,564	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.	
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	652,622	914,670	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.	
3. (+) Total other receipts	871,948	364,244	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.	
4. (-) Staff costs	541,571	766,029	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.	
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	6,070	38,695	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).	
6. (-) All other payments	987,787	491,766	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).	
7. (=) Balances carried forward	111,564	93,988	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).	
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	80,565	61,990	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.	
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	13,684,267	13,684,267	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.	
10. Total borrowings	675,000	653,121	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).	
For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

Outside Bodies report to Wells City Council from the Connect Centre

The profound value of the work done by the Connect Centre hit home when I went to one of their Community Lunches.

We were talking to a man in his mid-30s who said, unprompted, as he left: “Going to the Dairy House saved my life.”

If you are rough sleeping or homeless your life expectancy drops. It is very hard on the body and mind.

Not many people know about the Dairy House but it is a very special place near Stratton-on-the-Fosse. Quiet, peaceful and committed to ending rural homelessness.

“The underlying problems include isolation, debt, family breakdown, other traumas and substance abuse,” said Suzanne Addicott, Projects Manager for the Connect Centre, “which causes a revolving door of homelessness which we are trying to stop.”

The majority of people sleeping rough in what was Mendip are self-isolating, living outside of the built-up areas – and the rural Dairy House offers a supportive transition from that lifestyle.

Transforming Dairy House into a community house was spearheaded by Suzanne who had worked helping heroin addicts at a pioneering project in Hong Kong with St Stephen’s Society.

The Dairy House residents cook and eat together, and take part in structured activities including art, pottery, animal care, gardening and hedge-laying to help prepare them for life after they leave.

Also working well is the Connect Centre’s Housing First project which helps the homeless find somewhere to live, and they are delighted to have received new funding for it and the Dairy House through Somerset Council.

Meanwhile the centre is looking at setting up a Mother and Baby group as well as a Youth Club.

But what they need is more volunteers. “In particular drivers and helpers at our drop-ins listening to mentally people,” said Suzanne. If you are interested email her at suzanne.addicott@connect-centre.org.uk.

- The Community Lunches are held on Wednesdays from noon-2pm. There is no charge but donations are welcomed.

Councillor Philip Welch
8th June 2023