



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 27TH FEBRUARY 2025 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

20th February 2025

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 30TH JANUARY 2025**
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 NOMINATION OF MAYOR-ELECT AND DEPUTY MAYOR-ELECT**
To make nominations in preparation for the next Mayoral year.
- 6 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - Annual Parish Meeting, Wednesday 5th March, 7pm
 - Legal Service, Wells Cathedral, Sunday 23rd March, 3pm
 - Civic Service, St Cuthbert's Church, Sunday 6th April, 3pm

Mayor's Diary

- i. 2nd Mar Axbridge Civic Service, Axbridge
- ii. 10th Mar Twinning AGM, Wells Town Hall
- iii. 13th Mar St Cuthbert's Junior School assembly with Town Crier and Mace Bearer
- iv. 15th Mar Mayor's Charity Quiz, 7pm in Wells Town Hall
- v. 18th Mar Abbeyfield AGM, Abbeyfield House
- vi. 20th Mar The Mayor's Concert, Cedars Hall
- vii. 22nd Mar Cathedral High Parts Tour, Wells Cathedral

7 OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2025 (attached)

8 STAFFING COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2025 (attached)

9 FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2025 (attached)

10 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2025 (to follow)

11 PENSIONS POLICY

To receive and adopt the Pensions Policy (as attached by email)

12 DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES UPDATE

To receive update (see attached, below)

13 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- i St Cuthbert Out Parish Council Mutual Interest Working Group -
To receive update (minutes of meeting Wednesday 29th January 2025, attached by email)

14 TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

15 ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 27th March 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.

Circulation List

Town Clerk/RFO Town Clerk Assistant Cemetery & Burial Officer Outside Spaces Officer Wells City Council members	Somerset Councillors Serjeants-at-Mace Mayor's Chaplain Town Crier Wells Civic Society WCC Internal Auditor	Wells Journal & Wells Voice Wells Chamber of Commerce The Bishop's Palace Wells Cathedral Avon & Somerset Police
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Item 12 DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES UPDATE

Author	Haylee Wilkins
Presented By (if different)	Haylee Wilkins
Subject	Devolution
Date of report	14.02.2025
For consideration at	Full City Council
Date of consideration	26.02.2025

Introduction

Following key decisions of Somerset Council (WC) during the week of 10th February 2025, I can now confirm that the package associated with the devolution of public services has been agreed with Wells City Council (WCC). This report provides members with a synopsis of the actions achieved since the last meeting update.

Markets

The key decision confirmed that the market provision with Wells on Wednesday and Saturdays will transfer to Wells City Council. Equally, the market charter and market rights, originally afforded to the citizens of the city, will also be returned once legal processes to do so, are completed.

A breakdown of the specific implications can be see below:

- WCC will take operational responsibility for Wells Wednesday and Saturday markets from 1st April 2025, with the first market being on Wednesday 2nd April 2025.
- SC will continue under the arrangements of their current contract with IDVerde, to set up and pack down market stalls and gazebos until 31st May 2025, when that contract ends.
- From 1st June 2025, all market kit, including stalls and gazebos will novate. WCC will then manage the set up and pack down of stalls from the first market on 4th June 2025.
- The market charter and market rights will be devolved in their entirety to Wells City Council and thus the citizens of the city, as originally intended. This is required to be transferred legally, and therefore may not be achievable for 1st April, however, an operational agreement will be created between both parties to manage the day-to-day impacts until such legal signature is achieved.
- For the operational management of the markets, until such time the charters transfer legally, Wells City Council will work within the regulations of the Food Act 1984 Part 3

It was previously reported to Council, that fees were expected to remain at the same rates applied by Somerset in 2024-25 in order to smooth the transition and maintain consistency for traders in year one. The only proposed amendment previously was the introduction of a “kipper rent” in the winter months of January and February 2026 to support fuller market provisions and new traders. It has been reported on 14th February, following engagement with traders and feedback, that the fees proposed were incorrect and not the fees currently applied to traders. Following investigation of Somerset Council, whilst new fees and charges were formally set for 2024-25, operationally, they were not applied at markets, with traders offered a continuation of 2023-24 fees. As such, WCC information to traders appeared to show an increase in real time. Somerset officers have confirmed this error and that there is no intention to apply increased fees ahead of transfer, thus, in smooth transition, Council are asked to consider agreeing fees in line with those currently applied by Somerset Council, for the first year of operating. It is important to note, that the financial information associated with the profit and loss accounts for the market, which formed part of WCC’s decision making process, remain unchanged, as they were known to be based on 2023-24 outturn figures, as the last full year. Thus, the expected levels of income and expenditure that have been reported to Council remain unchanged.

The proposed fees for consideration are (previously reported figures in brackets):

Christmas Market Pitch	£66.00 (£76.90)	Kipper rent Jan/Feb 26
Christmas Market Chalet	£154.00 (£179.42)	
Wednesday Pitch Fee – Stall (per 2.5m)	£33.00 (£38.45)	£16.00 (£19.20)
Wednesday Pitch Fee – Gazebo (3x3)	£33.00 (£38.45)	£16.00 (£19.20)
Saturday Pitch Fee – Stall (per 2.5m)	£33.00 (£38.45)	£16.00 (£19.20)
Saturday Pitch Fee – Gazebo (3x3)	£35.20 (£41.01)	£17.60 (£20.50)

Services

Key decision of Somerset Council is now signed off and published. The list of spaces being managed and their functions has been added to our website and press releases refer to this. There has been some miscommunication in BBC and Somerset press releases referencing street cleaning and some footpaths, these are not within the agreed package and I can only assume that the wrong information has been passed to the press office.

Operational readiness remains our priority, and the Open Spaces Officer is working through needed due diligence to ensure that the transition of these services is managed smoothly. Engagement with the current Somerset Council Supplier, IDVerde, has been arranged to manage the transfer of data, information and knowledge. Equally, HR engagement associated with TUPE is also in train.

Communications

Informal communications were completed with all market traders during the week of 3rd February. This was further supported by written communication on Friday 14th February once decisions were known. A copy has been circulated to all members. Unfortunately, this highlighted the issue of fees noted above, however further engagement has been completed to reduce any concerns. Following the outcome of this evening's meeting, further update will be provided to traders.

Additional engagement with traders will be arranged in the Spring/Summer to determine any concerns, once the new markets officer is in post and the transition of the function is completed.

Engagement with all residents of the city and surrounding area has been completed through publication in Wells Voice, planned for release from February 20th, with social media and website articles throughout February also and will continue within March to ensure understanding of the services WCC will be responsible for with a continued "drip feed" of information associated with how and when to access services.

Officer Recommendation:

It is recommended to Full City Council to:

1. Note the contents of this report.
2. Agree the market fees and charges as outlined for the period 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026.