

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 13TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, G Folkard, T Robbins, H Siggs, I Von Mensenkampff

IN ATTENDANCE: Incoming Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
WCC Cllrs: D Denis
SC Cllr and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
0 Members of Public

25/12/FCM APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllrs: J Browne (Mayor), S Cursley (Chair), T Pullin

25/13/FCM DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.

None were declared.

25/14/FCM MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16TH JANUARY 2025

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

25/15/FCM MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Cllr Denis asked about the budget allocation for youth work and whether there had been a request from the current provider for funding to continue and if not, can the committee consider this. The Incoming Town Clerk advised a request for funding had not been received to date, therefore funds have not been allocated. It was agreed for this to be followed up with the current provider.

Cllr Denis advised the cost of installing an interactive bus timetable was £2,000. It was agreed for the Incoming Town Clerk to look into this as a viable option for the bus station.

25/16/FCM FINANCE

C Woodland (RFO) presented the draft Finance reports for January 2025. All unnecessary expenditure has stopped and steps are being taken to recover outstanding debt. The RFO takes full ownership of the financial budget going forward.

The RFO then answered questions relating the Finance reports.

Cllr Folkard asked whether expenditure that had been deferred into next year had been budgeted for and what figure does this equate to. The RFO agreed to advise exact figures.

Cllr Siggs asked whether the unitary contingency of £50k, could be used to ease the accounts for this year. This was agreed by the committee for the RFO to action.

25/17/FCM RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk assessment had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Incoming Town Clerk explained where changes had been made.

Cllr Denis queried which four officers can cover duties as Proper Officer. The Incoming Town Clerk explained it was currently herself, Steve Luck (the Outgoing Town Clerk), Claire Woodland (RFO) and Matt Johnson, (Outside Spaces Officer). This would reduce once Steve Luck retires on 31st May.

The risk assessment was approved by the committee.

25/18/FCM INTERNAL AUDIT 2024-25

The RFO explained the External Auditor 2023-24 had requested the following evidence:

- we had considered the independence of the Internal Auditor.
- we have considered and agreed the audit program.
- that members were satisfied with the competence of the Internal Auditor
- we had agreed a letter of engagement.

As a result, the RFO has written to four internal auditors, including the current provider. Two have responded as being available and they were circulated to members. The RFO recommended to proceed with Parish and Town Auditing Services (PATAS) and members agreed.

25/19/FCM DEVOLUTION

The Incoming Clerk explained an update had been emailed to all members earlier in the week. The market will transfer to WCC from 1st April 2025. The operational impacts are being managed and the engagement with Somerset Officers over the transfer has been very positive. Some informal consultation has been taking place with traders which had been received very well.

25/20/FCM ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

The Incoming Town Clerk explained a meeting was in place tomorrow (14th February) to sign the lease on the Old Post Office building. If the lease is not signed, consideration will be taken to place the building back on the market.

25/21/FCM DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm, Thursday 13th March 2025

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private report.

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date: