

Wellington Town Council

Town Mayor
Cllr Usman Ahmed



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Minutes of the Full Council Meeting of **19th November 2024 starting at 7.00pm**

Present:

Cllr R. Snell – Deputy Mayor	Cllr L. Jinks	Cllr S. Williams	Cllr. P. Davis
Cllr. G. Davis	Cllr. G. Luter	Cllr. J. Latter	Cllr. J. McGinn
Cllr E. Holding	Cllr. J. Gorse	Cllr. L. Carter	Cllr. K. Tomlinson
Cllr. L. Woolley	Cllr. J. Pierce	Cllr. G. Cook	

In attendance. Rev. Ellie Cheetham-Wilkinson, Mr Lawrence Wood, Mr. David Stanniforth, Police Sergeant Rigby, two members of the public and Karen Roper – CEO/Town Clerk.

63/24 Welcome from the Deputy Mayor – In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Snell welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Rev. Ellie Cheetham-Wilkinson to lead prayers.

Rev. Cheetham – Wilkinson thanked all those involved in organisation of the very successful Remembrance service commenting on the excellent partnership between the church and the town council. She asked members to pray for peace, asking all to remember the suffering of innocent people especially the children in places where there is conflict.

The Deputy Mayor thanked her for prayers and she left the meeting.

64/24 Deputy Mayor welcomed the following speakers to the meeting.

a) The newly appointed Principal and CEO of Telford College, Mr. Lawrence Wood – Mr Wood introduced himself to members giving a resume of his career to date and his plans for the future of Telford college. Councillors made the following comments.

- Cllr Davis welcomed Mr Wood and thanked him for attending, he was especially encouraged that working with the community was given so much importance in his presentation.
- Cllr Williams highlighted issues of competition for students between Telford and Shrewsbury colleges and suggested working in partnership. Mr Wood said he would be interested in exploring what that might look like but he was also determined to offer excellent courses locally for local people so there would not be a need for anyone to travel.
- Cllr Carter thanked Mr Wood for attending, commenting this was the first time anyone from Telford College had reached out to the Town Council and he felt it was really refreshing. The Town Council would welcome a return visit from Mr Wood and would appreciate any opportunity to assist the college to help young people in their ambitions to get good jobs and enhance their future opportunities.

Members applauded and Mr Wood thanked them and left the meeting at 7.20pm

- b) Mr David Stanniforth - Wellington Cycle Delivery Scheme (WCDS)** – The Deputy Mayor invited Mr Stanniforth to address the meeting. The scheme had been running for 2 years and for one year using the bike funded by the Town Council. The bike had now covered 3,000 miles on 14,500 journeys and 12 volunteers had given 750 hours. Further volunteers will be sought in the spring. He then presented a trophy awarded to them by the BBC Make a Difference 2024 Green Category. Shrewsbury Town Council were now funding a similar service in their own town. Councillor Snell congratulated the Cycle Delivery Scheme on their fantastic achievement. He was really pleased that the Town Council investment in the bike had made a such a difference

There were no further questions. Members applauded and congratulated him, he left the meeting at 7.28pm

- c) Sgt. Rigby - Local policing in Wellington.** The Deputy Mayor invited Sgt, Rigby to address the meeting. Sgt. Rigby asked for a more regular item on the agenda and made the following comments.
- Telford College and the Police were working together
 - Officers were now visible at all Town Council events
 - He had reached out to local communities and the feedback is that Wellington is considered a great place to live
 - There are 14 different communities in Wellington and the Police are working hard to make contact and foster better understanding of cultures.
 - There was a new Safer Neighbourhood Team and posters were distributed to members.
 - Generally crime statistics indicate that crime levels are relatively low but there are additional ups and downs and one off incidents.
 - Anti-social behaviour was discussed at length and comparisons made to numbers of incidents reported last year were showing a reduction.
 - Current observations relating to licenced premises, impact of HMO's / groups within the town centre were reported to members.
 - A Community Protection Order was now in place to assist with the anti-social behaviour in the churchyard.
 - Numbers of house burglaries were down, but numbers of thefts from commercial properties had increased.
 - Shop lifting reports were relatively low, but Sgt Rigby felt this may possibly be because they were no longer being reported for various reasons. He explained that there were now professional shoplifters / gangs who were targeting shops.
 - There was discussion about the mis match of ward boundaries between the Borough and the Police and this makes reporting less accurate. He has asked that this matter be looked at again.
 - Parking issues were discussed.
 - He was pleased that there was a good working relationship with the CAT team structure. He thanked the Town Clerk for enabling an effective working partnership and Paul Fenn for the provision of CCTV systems which in some areas had reduced crime by almost 50%. He also thanked Councillor McClements for her work in setting up the youth club in Arleston which was well supported.

Members made the following comments

- Cllr Tomlinson said she was really pleased that Sgt Rigby had attended tonight and she welcomed the fact that that he wished to make it a regular attendance.
- Cllr Davis commented that Haygate and Park wards areas have their challenges and asked for an update on homelessness as an individual appears to be approaching young or older females. He also asked if the SNT had any plans to

re-jig the ward boundaries so it is clear who he should be contacting about ward matters. Cllr Davis reiterated he welcomed Sgt. Rigby's attendance and that it would be on a more regular basis but not if it was at the detriment of the T&W action group.

- Sgt Rigby said the homeless man has now been issued a community section notice and is now liable to arrest. He reported the boundary irregularities were under review.
- Cllr Carter said the working group should be reconvened to manage the homelessness situation. Sgt Rigby said members needed to know that numerous offers of help had been to the individual who had refused all assistance.
- Cllr Carter thanked Sgt Rigby and the policing team for all their help with the threat of riots in the summer and the recent flash flooding. In terms of town centre policing, he suggested to reinstate the focus group meetings that would pull the Police together with all the different agencies including the town council to tackle issues such as drug taking, anti-social behaviour and organised crime. He asked if it would be worthwhile to send out information to the public about the Police approach to these problems.
- Sgt Rigby said there was a robust approach to serious low-level crime and he wished to reassure members that the Police have the confidence to go in and deal with the issues that are present in all communities. There was also a structure for dealing with organised crime but unfortunately there were no easy solutions.
- Cllr Carter described to members the sensitive approach taken to deal with the homeless individual. Sgt Rigby said everything possible has been done for this person.
- Cllr Tomlinson said she was aware the homeless person had been offered help which had unfortunately been refused so it is a difficult situation for all agencies. As a ward member she commented she works closely with the Safer Neighbourhood Team who also attended her lunch club but there had been some concern recently about people who have been observed videoing vehicles.
- Sgt Rigby said the Police were reviewing their interaction with social media as there had been a lot of misinformation circulating on various platforms.

The Deputy Mayor sincerely thanked Sargeant Rigby for his attendance and members applauded him as he left at 7.56pm

65/24 Apologies – The Deputy Mayor called for apologies which were received and approved from Cllrs. Ahmed, de Launey, Barker, Jobe, Lowe and Day.

The following members voted in favour of accepting those apologies, Cllrs. L. Woolley, J. Pierce, J. Latter, G. Cook, S. Williams, P. Davis, G. Davis, G. Luter, J. McGinn, E. Holding, L. Carter, R. Snell, L. Jinks, J. Gorse and K. Tomlinson, there were no abstentions and no votes against.

66/24 Declarations of Interest – Cllrs Pierce and Latter declared an interest in item 7 on the agenda.

67/24 Receive and approve the minutes of the following meetings.

Full Council Meeting dated 8th October 2024 (appendix 1) – These were proposed by Cllr Davis as a true and accurate record, he was seconded by Cllr Gorse.

The following members voted to accept the minutes, Cllrs. L. Woolley, J. Pierce, J. Latter, G. Cook, S. Williams, P. Davis, G. Davis, G. Luter, J. McGinn, E. Holding, L. Carter, R. Snell, L. Jinks, J. Gorse and K. Tomlinson, there were no abstentions and no votes against.

68/24 Matters Arising – The Deputy Mayor warmly congratulated the Mayor on his recent marriage commenting, he must be the first Wellington Town Council Mayor to get married in post. He also thanked officers for the amazing organisation of Remembrance Sunday.

69/24 To receive the minutes of Wellington Town Council Committees and to consider the recommendations therein.

a) Policy and Resources Committee minutes of 05.11.24 (appendix 2) – Cllr. Carter presented the minutes page by page. There were no questions from members.

b) Planning Committee minutes of 02.10.24 and 23.10.24 (appendix 3 & 4) – Cllr McGinn presented the minutes page by page and there were no questions from members.

c) Members noted the date of the next Events and Communications Committee was yet to be identified. The Deputy Mayor asked members to support the Christmas Lights switch-on starting at 5pm on the 30th of November and confirmed they would be followed by local switch on events. Cllr Carter asked that this committee mark the 80th VE celebration and create the best commemoration day possible on 8th May 2025.

70/24 Motion presented to council by Cllr Lee Carter and seconded by Cllr Joan Gorse

This Council supports the principal of working together with Telford and Wrekin to engage with agencies to resolve the surface flooding encountered by residents and businesses in Wellington. And

Will establish with immediate effect an Emergency Flood Relief Grant Fund, the terms and conditions of which will be agreed by P&R and delegated authority to the Clerk'

Cllr Carter said P&R had received an in-depth presentation from Telford and Wrekin identifying the historic flood plain and the reasons why other areas were flooding. They had also undertaken an in-depth investigation of Wellingtons' water systems.

He praised the Telford and Wrekin team, the Police, Fire & Rescue and voluntary groups who all worked together to give assistance to the victims of flooding incidents in October. He felt the motion was self-explanatory and aims to help people who would have access to a government fund to provide up to £5k per household to install flooding defences. To enable access to the grant, householders need firstly to fund a survey costing £800.00 to identify the most appropriate flooding defences for their properties. Many are not applying for the grant because of this stipulation. The proposal will create a fund to assist those householders who are unable to fund the survey. The criteria for applications would be worked out between Telford and Wrekin and the Town Council. The P&R committee would delegate responsibility to the CEO/Town Clerk.

Cllr Jinks said she had been called out to help people who had raw sewerage in their homes and this was not a one-off event. She asked if a communication help-link could be made available for homeowners.

Cllr Tomlinson said she agreed with Cllr Jinks. Severn Trent do not seem to offer helplines for people to access. We need to be able to get this resolved and assist residents to obtain help.

There was further discussion about the responsibilities of Severn Trent Water and their apparent lack of engagement to find solutions for the problems. One suggestion was to take them to court with the aim of trying to press them to accept their obligations.

Cllr Luter said the seconder to the motion usually gives their view ahead of other members and we should be sticking to supporting this motion to provide a ring-fenced fund to enable residents to access grant funding.

Cllr Gorse rose to second the motion. She said it was heartbreaking for residents who were experiencing flooding in their homes and she was aware that many were struggling to find the upfront payment for the survey of £800.00. She fully supported the motion to assist those affected and in need.

Cllr Carter said this is something we, the Town Council, can do quickly to help. He commented that the small team at Telford and Wrekin are doing amazing work including erecting flood defences. He offered reassurance to members that Telford and Wrekin will not walk away from holding other agencies to account.

The Deputy Mayor asked members to vote on the motion, the following members voted in favour Cllrs. L. Woolley, G. Cook, S. Williams, P. Davis, G. Davis, G. Luter, J. McGinn, E. Holding, L. Carter, R. Snell, L. Jinks, J. Gorse and K. Tomlinson. Cllrs Pierce and Latter abstained and there were no votes against.

71/24 Community Action Team (CAT) – The September report was circulated – there were No comments from members.

72/24 To note Minutes of the Regeneration Partnership Meeting dated 17th October 2024.
The minutes for the meeting had been circulated – there were no comments from members.

73/24 Date of Next Full Council Meeting – was agreed as Tuesday 10th December 2024

Chairman10th December 2024