

Wellington Town Council

Town Mayor
Cllr Paul Davis



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FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in Civic Offices on Tuesday 9th January 2024 commencing at 7.00pm and livestreamed on Facebook.

Present:

Mayor Cllr. P. Davis	Cllr. G. Cook	Cllr. L. Jinks	Cllr. S. de Launey	Cllr. K. Tomlinson
Cllr. R. Snell	Cllr. G. Luter	Cllr. S. Day	Cllr. A. Lowe	Cllr. J. Latter
Cllr. L. Woolley	Cllr. J. Gorse	Cllr. M. Jobe	Cllr. J. Pierce	Cllr. U. Ahmed
Cllr. C. Barker	Cllr. L. Carter	Cllr. S. Williams	Cllr. E. Holding	Cllr J. McGinn

In attendance. Rev Tim Carter, one member of the public and Karen Roper, Town Clerk.

7.00pm Public Open Session

Welcome – The Mayor wished everyone a Happy New Year, welcomed everyone to the meeting and then asked Reverend Carter to lead prayers.

Rev. Carter led prayers asking everyone to pray for those suffering from the floods, for our schools, students and those struggling with debt, loneliness, ill health and vulnerability.

Cllr Davies thanked Rev. Carter and moved to the main agenda.

Full Council Agenda.

78/23 Mayor to call for apologies – Apologies had been received from Cllr. Hosken. The following members agreed accept the apologies. Voting in favour were Cllrs, Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Jinks, Day, Jobe, Williams, de Launey, Lowe, Pierce, Holding, Tomlinson, Latter, Ahmed and McGinn. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

79/23 To receive declarations of interest – None were declared.

80/23 Receive and approve the minutes of the Full Council held on 12th December 2023. Cllr Jinks proposed the minutes as a true and accurate record and was seconded by Cllr Cook. The following Councillors voted in favour Cllrs, Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Jinks, Day, Jobe, Williams, de Launey, Lowe, Pierce, Holding, Tomlinson, Latter, Ahmed and McGinn. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

Cllr Tomlinson requested clarification on the vote recorded at minute ref: 62/23, dated 14th November 2023, she had abstained from voting to accept the amendment to minute ref 57/23 at the meeting dated 10th October 2023, as she was not present.

81/23 Matters Arising from the above Minutes –

- PRH Hospital** – Cllr Barker asked if there had been a response to the letter sent in November, the Clerk confirmed that no response had been received.
- Events & Communications Committee** - Cllr Barker said the date of the next E&C

meeting had been moved back to 23rd January 2024, Cllr Lowe gave his apologies. The E&C Chairman would liaise with Cllr Lowe.

- c) **Minute Ref 75/23 Ladycroft** – Cllr Jinks confirmed Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers had been visiting and issuing parking tickets to those contravening the restrictions. She asked that the officers are thanked for their efforts.

82/23 To receive the minutes of Wellington Town Council Committees and to consider the recommendations therein.

- a) **Policy and Resources Committee minutes of 2nd January 2024**– Cllr Carter presented the minutes page by page and there were no questions from Members.
- b) **Planning Committee Meeting dated 13th December 2023**- Cllr Snell presented the minutes to members commenting on minute reference 113/23, relating to the Local Plan consultation date had been extended to 31st January 2024. The next meeting of the Planning Committee would be held on 24th January where a response on behalf of the council would be formulated.

83/23 To agree the Budget for 2024/25

Cllr Carter thanked Cllr de Launey, Cllr Gorse and the Clerk for pulling the budget together. The highlights were identified as improvement in grounds maintenance, environmental, grounds and cleansing activity. A greater emphasis on parking enforcement and tackling anti-social behaviour, continued support for local community initiatives, community facilities and continuing to provide for the significant cost increases being encountered by the Council.

To meet these priorities, it was deemed the current part time Locality Manager was now needed on a full-time basis to cover ongoing environmental projects. As this position is shared with T & W, WTC would see a 50% cost increase with Cllr Carter having secured a 50% contribution from Telford & Wrekin. P&R had also committed to undertaking a review to establish the short and medium plan for the WEST Team.

All wards across Wellington have received feedback from residents regarding parking outside schools and antisocial behaviour. Improvements regarding these issues would need enforcement action through the CAT model, so it has been proposed that officers are required to increase their time from 2 days to 5 days a week. This is again at a cost of 50% increase with the other 50% contribution coming from T & W.

WTC would maintain the budget for planting in the Bowring Park and continue to fund the current environmental projects across the parish with additional planting in Erccall ward. Support would continue for community groups like the Wellington (Telford) Brass Band and facilities such as the Arleston community centre and their initiatives. WTC would now target some grant funding to specific causes, projects and programmes including a programme to train 100 local residents in CPR.

The Regeneration budget would be maintained along with the provision of events with the expenditure to continue at current levels although it was agreed that P&R would establish the short and medium term plan for both.

There was an increase in staff costs due to the 4.5% national pay award.

Core contracts costs are also expected to increase for Christmas Lights, the Parade toilets and hanging baskets. The Parade toilets now cost the council net £15k per annum with very little income but WTC are committed to maintain this service.

The committee room is on track to generate £8 – 10k in room hire.

The Bowring café contract was signed before May 2023 and has a set income as predicted in the budget.

The P&R committee were mindful of cash reserves which had dwindled in recent years. Recommendation for cash reserves are laid down by Nalc and Salc who suggest 6 months of reserves but WTC aim to keep approx. 2 months due to the Town Council being perceived as a low risk need to call on reserves. This also means that there is little scope for use of one off balances to supplement the precept this year as has been done on previous occasions.

The total expenditure is forecast to increase by 8.63% which is mainly due to the improved proposed CAT services and the full time Locality Manager which accounts for 5.18%, without these costs the basic increase would be 3.45%.

Wellington will still be one of the lowest band D councils, even after the proposed increase, from £74.01 to £87.68 or just over 26p per week. It is recognised that these are tough times for our residents and the public sector is also suffering from inflation, we are actively trying to keep expenditure to as low as possible and an example of this is that Councillors allowances have not increased for that last 4 years.

Cllr Jinks thanked Cllr Carter for his presentation. She asked if the CAT model enforcement teams are increasing by 50% what % of the additional money generated by their increased activities will be returned to Wellington Town Council. Cllr Carter said it is impossible to say but any generated funds go back into the CAT model to benefit Wellington.

Cllr Lowe said the figures show reduced income at the Parade toilets and was there a reason for this. Cllr Carter said he was not aware of any specific reason for the decline in use of these facilities. Cllr Lowe also asked about the increased budget figure for the WEST vehicle and if the intentions were to source an electric vehicle. Cllr Carter explained the current vehicle was getting older needing more maintenance and petrol prices had increased. We did not have a specific date when the vehicle might need replacing but presently there was not a suitable electric model identified that could do the job. The intention was to look at expanding the West Team in the next 2-5 years.

There were no further questions, so the budget was proposed for acceptance by Cllr Cook and seconded by Cllr Ahmed, the following members voted in favour Cllrs, Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Day, Jobe, Williams, de Launey, Lowe, Pierce, Holding, Tomlinson, Latter, Ahmed and McGinn. There were no votes against and Cllr Jinks abstained.

84/23 To agree the Precept as £628,369 for 2024/25

The Precept was proposed by Cllr de Launey and 2nd by Cllr Snell the following members voted in favour Cllrs, Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Day, Jobe, Williams, de Launey, Lowe, Pierce, Holding, Tomlinson, Latter, Ahmed and McGinn. There were no votes against and Cllr Jinks abstained.

85/23 To receive a Report from the CAT Team.

The reports had been circulated, the Clerk said she had a meeting next week and invited members wished to raise any issues. Cllr Lowe said the cyclists dismount signs are now installed but additional signs were needed from the leisure centre car park at the top of the peace garden past Civic Offices through to Walker Street.

86/23 To receive the report from the conservation area working group meeting held on 29th November 2023.

Cllr Tomlinson presented the minutes and said the committee work very hard. She was pleased to see the money is still in the budget to support this working group.

87/23 To note the minutes of the Regeneration Board meeting dated 21.12.23

Cllr. de Launey asked if there were any questions from members and there were none.

88/23 The next meeting date was agreed as 13th February 2024.

Chairman.....13th February 2024

The meeting closed at 19.27