

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 14th November 2023 commencing at 7.00pm and livestreamed on Facebook.

Present:

Mayor Cllr. P. Davis	Cllr. G. Cook	Cllr L. Jinks
Cllr. R. Snell	Cllr. G. Luter	Cllr. S. Day
Cllr. L. Woolley	Cllr. J. Gorse	Cllr. M. Jobe
Cllr. C. Barker	Cllr. L. Carter	Cllr. S. Williams
Cllr. J. Pierce	Cllr. A. Lowe	

In attendance. Rev Tim Carter, Sally Themans and Karen Roper.

7.00pm Public Open Session

Welcome – The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and then asked Reverend Carter to lead prayers. Reverend Carter thanked the Councillors and Staff for their support over the Remembrance weekend. Councillors thanked him for his hard work in making the event so successful he then led prayers.

Following prayers, the Mayor thanked Rev. Carter and welcomed Sally Themans from Love Wellington asking her to present to the meeting.

Love Wellington – The Clerk had previously circulated the presentation electronically; hard copies were tabled and the slide show was uploaded ready for Sally to address the meeting. Her presentation covered the work of Regeneration Partnership stating it was unique as there appears to be nothing like it elsewhere. It enables the tiers of government to work together with independent members for the good of the town. She reported on the success of the Borough council teams in winning Government funding from the Towns and Levelling Up Funds. These funds have allowed the recent purchase of the Market and to help the Orbit to develop the upper floors and secure their freehold. She outlined the improvements that have been made in shop fronts and the startup business grants provided by the Borough Councils' Pride in your High Street programme. She reminded members that the town council itself had borrowed £500,000 to contribute to the regeneration of Wellington. Public sector money was stimulating private investment as shop vacancies had fallen from 15% in 2018 to 9% in 2023. The work of Love Wellington had started in 2019 and aimed to build positivity by creating a social media platform, 'This is Our Wellington' magazine, press releases, and TV and radio interviews all reporting good news stories from Wellington. For the business community a what's app group is well used and regular business meetings are held. Love Wellington organise and deliver events to drive footfall into the town such as the recent Pumpkin trail and there are many others. To sum up, Sally explained that Love Wellington are an independent body committed working with the Borough council, the Town council and the business sector to develop a drip, drip, drip approach creating positivity about Wellington and making people feel good about their hometown.

Cllr Carter thanked Sally for her presentation and reminded members this had all happened because former elected members, naming Cllrs. Burns and Morris-Jones were very passionate about the regeneration of Wellington and had put in place the foundations. Together the team has done and are doing fantastic job, there are many unsung heroes including volunteers who make significant contributions.

He particularly thanked, Paola Armstrong, explaining she was directly employed by Wellington Town Council but part of her time is spent supporting Love Wellington. He said Love Wellington's role is a really important element in helping to turn around negativity and get people thinking and talking positively about the town.

He thanked the Borough Council team for making such a significant and positive difference to Wellington. He highlighted some of the great projects that had been delivered, the £150k that went into the Orbit, £600k that went into the CCTV system, the maintenance and Grounds Cleansing contract and the £4m to regenerate High Streets across the Borough. The many unsung heroes in the offices that process grant applications, making sure due diligence is done, and the people who support the businesses. He thanked the T&W team who worked hard to secure the investment used to purchase the market. He reminded members that Telford and Wrekin had previously developed the food quarter and stage area which had become a great success. All these projects had really helped to bring down the shop vacancy numbers. But the real heroes are those who have invested their own effort, time and money to start businesses on our high street and there are some fantastic examples that Love Wellington can shine a light on. He reported that the acquisition of the market was now complete, adding that in some ways the purchase was the easy part and running the business would be a further challenge. There was a meeting with the traders this week to look at the Market's future development. All those things combined have made a significant difference creating a feel-good factor. Cllr Carter thanked Sally again for her presentation and for all her work in helping to make this a success story.

The Mayor thanked Sally for her presentation– there were no questions from members so she left the meeting with Rev. Carter at 7.30pm

Full Council Agenda.

60/23 Mayor to call for apologies – Apologies had been received from Cllrs. Tomlinson, de Launey, Ahmed, Holding, McGinn, Latter and Hosken. The following members agreed to note and accept the apologies, Cllrs, Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Pierce, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Lowe, Jinks, Jobe, Williams and Day. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

61/23 To receive declarations of interest – None were declared.

62/23 Receive and approve the minutes of the Full Council held on 10th October 2023
The Clerk said she had received a request for the minute reference 57/23 to be changed by removing the words '*urged the proposals to proceed*' and '*fighting*' and the insertion of '*having to fight.*' The final paragraph needed the addition of '*is aware of the view of the Town Council*' for completion. Accepting these amendments, Cllr Lowe proposed the minutes of 10th October 2023 as a true and accurate record and was seconded by Cllr Gorse. Cllrs, Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Pierce, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Lowe, Jinks, Jobe, Williams and Day. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

63/23 Matters Arising from the above Minutes –

Motion re: PRH Hospital - The emailed communication to Mark Pritchard M.P. had been circulated to members and was written using the unamended minutes which had already been uploaded on to the website. Cllr Barker asked that these are taken down and that only confirmed minutes are uploaded in future. He suggested we wait for the response from the M.P. to rectify the original communication. Cllr Lowe proposed that the Clerk send two letters to the M.P. one to his local office and one to Parliament

clarifying the situation and asking for a response. Members agreed with his suggestion.

64/23 To receive the minutes of Wellington Town Council Committees and to consider the recommendations therein.

- a) Policy and Resources Committee minutes and Grants Panel minutes of 07.11.23** – Cllr Carter presented the minutes and reported that following the problems experienced with Barclays Bank, members had decided to move the current account to the Unity Bank. He reaffirmed the Market was now owned by Telford and Wrekin Council.
- b) Planning Committee minutes for the meeting held on 11.10.23 & 01.11.23** – Cllr Snell presented the minutes of both meetings. He commented on the Local Plan Review and confirmed the Planning Committee would be making a response and the closing date for the consultation is 12th January 2024. The Mayor said that individuals could also send a response.
- c) Events and Communication Committee dated 25.10.23** – Cllr Barker presented the minutes. He reported that E&C members were trying to get the business and

direction of the committee onto a strategic footing, forward looking and still keeping everything under review. They are developing a fixed pattern whereby they differentiate what events must be done and the strategic things that they may or may not like to do. This is obviously reliant on financial considerations and within the context of the overall direction that the Council is trying to take. There were no comments from members.

65/23 To receive reports from the Community Action Team - The reports had been circulated with the agenda. The Mayor explained the function of the CAT team, to the public, there were no comments from members.

66/23 Regeneration Partnership Board – Cllr Carter presented the minutes of the meeting held on 19th October 2023. There were no comments from members.

67/23 Motion proposed by Cllr Lowe; *‘That Wellington Town Council re-instates our Climate Emergency Working Group with cross-party membership to reflect the Council balance, namely, 5 Labour, 1 LibDem and 1 Conservative, to meet initially in January 2024, to elect a Chair to discuss priorities for this electoral term’.*

Cllr Lowe explained to members who were elected in May that there had previously been a working group, active for the past 3-4 years with cross party participation and was successful in achieving plastic free status. In May it was decided not to reinstate this committee due to the amount of officer time being taken. However, the Climate Emergency has not gone away and therefore in his view it is not appropriate that we do not have activity in Wellington which reflects we are being proactive in addressing the climate change agenda. He therefore asked to place the motion on the agenda but he did not have a seconder.

Things had moved on from when he asked for the motion to be on the agenda and he had been approached by people who were already very active in the climate change agenda in Wellington. They are keen and would like to be involved in how we take climate change forward. Therefore, he would like to propose an amendment.

Cllr Carter also proposed an amendment to the original motion.

The Mayor asked Cllr Carter to present his amendment to the motion:

Cllr Carter said that no one would disagree with the importance of the climate emergency and the decision not to reinstate the committee was not because we did not believe in the climate emergency threat we just wanted to understand the best way of dealing with it. It was his opinion that we should not be trying to reinstate a committee that has no allocated funding or staff resources. Instead, we should be aligning

ourselves with Telford and Wrekin who already have a committee that engages almost every organisation in the Borough that are keen and passionate about dealing with this climate emergency and making sure the whole Borough does as much as it can, he would therefore like to propose the following amendment.

That Wellington Town Council reconfirms its commitment to the climate emergency by appointing two Climate Emergency Champions to engage with the work of Telford and Wrekin Council and that they report back to this council every six months on actions and emerging priorities. Those two champions we would like to propose are Cllr Woolley and Cllr Pierce with new Champions to be nominated in line with the usual AGM process in May each year.

The Mayor then invited Cllr Lowe to propose his amendment to the original motion.

"Cllr Lowe called for a community led but Council supported climate group be established with up to 3 Cllr representatives, building on the excellent work already happening locally, run by Climate Action Hub in the Belmont Hall, to allow Wellington to become the eco centre of Telford"

Cllr Lowe gave examples of the activities the Climate Action.

Cllr Barker asked the Mayor if he could make a point of information relevant at this point in time. The Mayor agreed, so he quoted from Standing Orders Ref 1(h) page 4 which states 'A councillor may move an amendment to his own motion if agreed by the meeting.'

The Clerk confirmed that no vote had been taken.

The Mayor called for members to confirm if they would allow Cllr Lowe to propose his amendment.

The following members voted in favour, Cllr Lowe and Cllr Jinks.
The following members voted against Cllrs Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Pierce, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Day, Jobe and Williams

The Mayor called on members to vote on the amendment forwarded by Cllr Carter

Cllr Lowe asked for Cllr Carters' amendment to be repeated.

Cllr Carter re read his amendment and was seconded by Cllr Gorse:

'That Wellington Town Council reconfirms its commitment to the climate emergency by appointing two Climate Emergency Champions to engage with the work of Telford and Wrekin Council and that they report back to this council every six months on actions and emerging priorities. Those two champions we would like to propose are Cllr Woolley and Cllr Pierce with new Champions to be nominated in line with the usual AGM process in May each year.'

The Mayor called on members to vote on the amendment forwarded by Cllr Carter

The following members voted in favour, Cllrs Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Pierce, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Day, Lowe, Jobe and Williams There were no votes against and Cllr Jinks abstained.

Cllr Carter's amendment was carried.

68/23 Funding Request from the Twinning Association – Cllr Carter said the Full Council would be comfortable to make the resolution rather than refer it back to the Policy and Resources Committee. Members were asked to agree to provide the sum of £1000 within the budget for the twinning Association for 2024/25.

The Mayor proposed the sum of £1,000 is included in the 2024/25 budget for the Twinning

Association he was seconded by Cllr Carter. The following members voted in favour Cllrs, Davis, Snell, Woolley, Barker, Pierce, Cook, Luter, Gorse, Carter, Jobe, Lowe, Williams, Jinks and Day voting in favour there were no abstentions and no votes against.

The Mayor proposed to suspend Standing Orders to allow the Chairman of the Association to address the meeting.

Laurence Moses thanked members and explained that the money would be used towards the expenses associated with Twinning visits. A further member of the Twinning Association said the Sally's presentation was really interesting and what came across was that we need to love our town and being a member of the Twinning Association had helped her to do that.

The Mayor reinstated Standing Orders.

69/23 The next meeting date was agreed as 12th December 2023.

Chairman.....Date.....