



Welshpool Town Council, The Vicarage Gardens, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DD
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DRAFT

Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee held on 15/07/2026 2:00pm in Council Chamber, Welshpool Town Hall.

PRESENT:

Councillor Carol Robinson
Councillor Jackson Quarrell
Councillor Morag Bailey
Councillor Nick Howells (Chair)
Councillor Phil Pritchard
Councillor Revd William Rowell

Apologies for absence:

Absent:

Also in attendance:

Richard Williams - Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Paul McGrath - Operations Manager
Wendy Lewis - Community Services Manager

HS150726/1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Mayor opened the meeting and asked for nominations for Chair of the Health and Safety Committee for the 2026-2027 municipal year. One nomination was received, proposed and seconded for Cllr Nick Howells who accepted.

RESOLVED

To elect Cllr Nick Howells as Chair of the Health & Safety Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

WTCM798 - Proposed by Cllr Revd William Rowell, seconded by Cllr Morag Bailey

HS150726/2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

One nomination was received, proposed and seconded for Cllr Jackson Quarrell to be Vice Chair of the Health and Safety Committee for the 2026-2027 municipal year.

RESOLVED

To elect Cllr Jackson Quarrell as Vice Chair of the Health & Safety Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.

WTCM799 - Proposed by Cllr Nick Howells, seconded by Cllr Jackson Quarrell

HS150726/3. WELCOME, CODE OF CONDUCT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

HS150726/4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

HS150726/5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

HS150726/6. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Cllr Phil Pritchard and Cllr Carol Robinson joined the meeting.

The Town Clerk introduced the report and members went through the summary of the recommendations provided by WorkNest. A lot of the recommendations in relation to signage have been completed and the quotations for remedial electrical works have been accepted by the Operations & Development Committee. In relation to the stage curtains, it was accepted to tolerate the risk caused by their lack of fire-retardant nature. Changes to battery charging had taken place and a new CO2 extinguisher in place. Formal fire safety procedures for traders and hirers are being put in place and fire drill recording for the WIC improved.

The quality and suitability of the current evacuation chairs was discussed. Members noted that none of the Fire Risk Assessments had identified the evacuation chairs themselves as defective or requiring immediate withdrawal from service. The identified deficiencies related principally to the management arrangements surrounding their use, including operator availability, training, maintenance and documented evacuation procedures.

Cllr Howells raised his concerns over the use of refuge areas and again these were not rated as an issue by the FRA, and previous FRAs carried out does not identify these as a deficiency. The FRA carried out by Agile Fire Safety in July 2025 does rate these as non-identified due to the lack of appropriate signage which the Town Clerk confirmed was purchased yesterday.

RECOMMENDED

To note the findings of the Worknest Fire Risk Assessment Audit

To approve the Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan which is attached; and

To authorise officers to implement recommendations that can be accommodated within existing budgets, or items requiring significant capital expenditure be brought back to Operations & Development Committee with costed options.

WTCM800 - Proposed by Cllr Morag Bailey, seconded by Cllr Revd William Rowell

HS150726/7. TOWN HALL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Members noted that none of the Fire Risk Assessments had identified any defect in the Council's existing evacuation chairs requiring their immediate withdrawal from service. The recommendations related principally to the Council's evacuation procedures, operator availability, training and maintenance arrangements.

The Committee considered that the purchase of two Evac+Chair 300H evacuation chairs would nevertheless represent a significant improvement to the Council's emergency evacuation arrangements through their modern design and ability to be operated by a single trained person, thereby improving operational resilience.

The Town Clerk confirmed he would use his delegated powers to order them as soon as possible.

RESOLVED

To note that the Town Clerk will use his delegated powers to accept the quotation from Evac+Chair.

HS150726/8. OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

The Operations Manager referred to his email of 14 July 2026 and reiterated his concerns regarding the Council's arrangements for the evacuation of persons requiring assistance from the first floor during out-of-hours hires. He expressed the view that the existing evacuation chairs were not suitable for the Council's operational arrangements, as, in his opinion, their use in an emergency would require a significant number of trained persons to be available, which could not be guaranteed during self-managed hires where Council staff were not routinely present.

The Committee considered the concerns raised alongside the findings of the Council's Fire Risk Assessments, the advice received from WorkNest, the temporary risk assessment prepared by the Town Clerk and the Council's existing emergency arrangements. Members noted that the Fire Risk Assessments had identified recommendations relating to evacuation procedures, operator availability, training and maintenance but had not recommended that the existing evacuation chairs be withdrawn from operational service. Members further noted that all four members of the Operations Team had received evacuation chair training and that replacement Evac+Chair 300H units had been approved to further improve the Council's emergency evacuation capability.

Having considered the professional concerns raised, together with the Fire Risk Assessments, WorkNest advice and the temporary risk assessment, the Committee was satisfied that, pending implementation of the additional control measures identified, the existing arrangements could continue on an interim basis whilst replacement evacuation chairs were procured and further advice was obtained from the competent fire risk assessor.

Members agreed that the Town Hall's evacuation arrangements should remain under review and be reported back to a future meeting following receipt of further professional advice.

HS150726/9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in February 2027 however due to the concerns raised it was thought better to hold another meeting when more information was known e.g. in September.

The meeting finished at 15:05.

Signed:

Dated:

Councillor Nick Howells (Chair)

Decision/Action Log

ID		Assigned
WTCM798	RESOLUTION HS150726/1 Election of Chair To elect Cllr Nick Howells as Chair of the Health & Safety Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM799	RESOLUTION HS150726/2 Election of Vice Chair To elect Cllr Jackson Quarrell as Vice Chair of the Health & Safety Committee for the municipal year 2026/2027.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

ID		Assigned
WTCM800	RECOMMENDATION HS150726/6 Fire Risk Assessment To note the findings of the Worknest Fire Risk Assessment Audit To approve the Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan which is attached; and To authorise officers to implement recommendations that can be accommodated within existing budgets, or items requiring significant capital expenditure be brought back to Operations & Development Committee with costed options.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM801	RESOLUTION HS150726/7 Town Hall Emergency Procedures To note that the Town Clerk will use his delegated powers to accept the quotation from Evac+Chair.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer