Welshpool Town Council, The Vicarage Gardens, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DD
Tel: 01938 553142 Email: office@welshpooltowncouncil.gov.uk

DRAFT

Minutes of the Operations & Development Committee held on 14/10/2026 6:30pm in Council Chamber, Welshpool Town Hall.

PRESENT:

Cllr Chris Davies
Cllr David France
Cllr Estelle Bleivas
Cllr Kelly Meredith
Cllr Nick Howells
Cllr Phil Pritchard
Cllr Revd William Rowell

Apologies for absence:

Cllr Phil Owen

Absent:

Also in attendance:

Richard Williams - Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
Paul McGrath - Operations Manager
1 member(s) of the public / press

OD141026/1. WELCOME, CODE OF CONDUCT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Phil Owen.
Cllr David France joined the meeting.

OD141026/2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

None.

OD141026/3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

OD141026/4. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

OD141026/4.1 Previous Minutes

Cllr David France queried why his apologies had not been recorded - Town Clerk to check with officer who took last meeting and update.

RESOLVED
To approve, as amended, the minutes from the meeting of the Operations & Development Committee on 09/09/2026.

WTCM938 - Proposed by Cllr Estelle Bleivas, seconded by Cllr Chris Davies

OD141026/4.2 Matters Arising

The Town Clerk reported that the following was outstanding/needed updating:
- WTCM850 - oil replacement has not taken place due to some other advice received.
- WTCM484 - paint has not been provided as we do not have any.

OD141026/5. LAND, BUILDINGS & ASSETS

OD141026/5.1 General Update

Cllr Kelly Meredith joined the meeting.

The Chair welcomed the Operations Manager back following a period of absence. The Operations Manager thanked the Council, Town Clerk and Operations Team for their support.

The Operations Manager provided an update on the following:
- Town Hall: The Longest Yarn exhibition had taken place throughout the month, alongside a book sale, wedding reception, 18th birthday party and regular bookings. The hanging baskets had now been removed for the season, with positive comments received regarding their appearance.
- Maes y Dre: End of season works had been completed, with the pitches looking in good condition. The new scarifier had been delivered and was being put into use, alongside the Grillo machine and grass collector, to improve pitch maintenance.
- Grounds Maintenance: The new Grillo machine was already making a significant difference to the maintenance of areas including Burgess Lands, the Country Park and Maes y Dre. Works were also planned for Dol y Felin. Grass cutting continued across the Council's open spaces and playgrounds due to the continued growing conditions.
- Playgrounds: The bongo drum play panel had been repaired. Following vandalism to the gate at Maes y Dre, an inspection indicated that the gate could be reused, with only the fence post likely to require replacement.
- Public Toilets: Vandalism had occurred involving the removal of toilet roll holders, which had subsequently been replaced.
- Biodiversity: One Voice Wales Biodiversity Team had undertaken an inspection of the Council's outdoor areas in relation to biodiversity obligations, with positive initial feedback reported.
- Memorial Gardens: Hedge cutting and clearance of flower beds had commenced in preparation for Remembrance.
- Burgess Lands: The Council had written to adjoining residents seeking their views on trees growing close to their property boundaries, with responses awaited.

OD141026/5.2 Booking Performance - Q1 & Q2 2026

The Town Clerk summarised the report, highlighting that total recorded booking value for the first half of the financial year reached £10,951 - representing a 3.9% increase compared to the preceding six months - with Quarter 2 performance improving by 15.7% against Quarter 1.

The Town Clerk further noted that virtually all of this income arose from the Town Hall, driven by consistent regular utilisation of the Corn Exchange and larger functions in the Assembly Room, and invited the Committee to note the booking performance and agree to continued quarterly reporting.

OD141026/6. BUSINESS PLANNING & FINANCIAL MATTERS

OD141026/6.1 Interim Strategic Plan Action Plan

The Town Clerk summarised updates in the paper. No questions received.

OD141026/6.2 Budget and Committee Finance (Month 6)

The Town Clerk summarised the report. No questions received.

OD141026/6.3 Lead Councillors

Members considered the appointment of Lead Councillors to the areas identified in the report. During discussion, the Chair proposed the inclusion of additional areas. The Town Clerk advised that the identification of areas was governed by the Lead Councillor Scheme approved by Full Council and that the additional areas had not been included on the published agenda. Accordingly, no decisions were taken in respect of those additional areas.

Note: the Town Clerk was asked what provision prevented the Council from voting on matters not on the agenda, the relevant provisions are para 26(2D), Sch 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, the case of Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119 and Standing Orders 9(b) and 10(a).

RESOLVED
To elect the following lead councillors to the respective areas:
- Markets - Cllr Phil Pritchard & Cllr Nick Howells
- Allotments - Cllr William Rowell
- Community Fridge - Cllr William Rowell & Cllr David France
- Maes y Dre Alternative Premises - Cllr Phil Pritchard & Cllr Estelle Bleivas

WTCM939 - Proposed by Cllr Phil Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Nick Howells

OD141026/6.4 Draft 1 Budget 2027/28

The Town Clerk summarised the report, outlining the initial expenditure and income proposals for the 2027/28 financial year to help committees review service needs and identify any necessary amendments before Draft 2 is prepared. Specifically focusing on the areas within the Committee's remit, the Town Clerk detailed utility reprofiling for the Town Hall with updated electricity, gas, water, and maintenance figures alongside income adjustments like the expected end of the telecommunications mast lease.

Queries were received regarding Christmas Lights and potential sponsorship which the Town Clerk will take forward.

OD141026/7. SERVICES

OD141026/7.1 Markets

On behalf of the Events & Markets Manager, the Town Clerk summarised the report noting updates on the programme of upcoming events scheduled through the end of the year, including the 1940's Weekend, Halloween, Remembrance events, and the Winter Festival, where traders agreed to extend opening hours until 6:00pm.

A query was received regarding the fire escape routes in the Corn Exchange which was confirmed that due to only having 1 fire escape via the front of the building the capacity of the room is limited to only 65. A further query was received regarding the outdoor market and promotion. The Town Clerk will raise this with the Events & Markets Manager.

OD141026/7.2 The Hub - July & August 2026

On behalf of the Community Services Manager, the Town Clerk summarised the report noting that the Hub had welcomed 254 visitors during September and provided 149 meals. A recent donation of £100 per month from Jack's Tyres was celebrated and thanks given to Jack.

OD141026/7.3 Allotments

On behalf of the Community Services Manager, the Town Clerk provided an update that 53% of allotment plots had now been filled and that the budget for the year had been met, however due to legislation around allotments, it is proposed that a review of fees and charges take place as part of the 27/28 budget setting process and for any changes to go into effect in 28/29.

RECOMMENDED
To launch a review into allotment fees and charges as part of the 27/28 Budget Setting process.

WTCM940 - Proposed by Cllr Estelle Bleivas, seconded by Cllr Revd William Rowell

OD141026/7.4 Community Fridge

On behalf of the Community Services Manager, the Town Clerk provided an update that donations were still being recieved from Starbucks and Costa but that a recent meeting of volunteers had decided to not take up the offer from Newtown Food Surplus to go and collect food which has been collected from Welshpool supermarkets. The Fridge also has received a very generous donation from West Brom Building Society and a private donation. The volunteers are also looking into local shops again.

OD141026/8. PROJECTS & NEW DEVELOPMENTS

OD141026/8.1 Welshpool Town Centre Improvement

The Town Clerk reported that the Project Board had met to discuss awarding the contract for installations in line with the resolution from Full Council and that a decision had been made. Delivery of items is to start in October with Welsh Government permissions still outstanding.

OD141026/8.2 Changing Places

The Town Clerk gave an update and reported that the toilet is set for its official opening on the 28th October 2026 at 10:30am and that it had now been registered on the Changing Places website and is operational.

OD141026/8.3 Maes y Dre Alternative Premises

The Town Clerk reported that the planning application is still in consultation with Events & Planning Committee giving its support last week.

OD141026/9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA & DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Operations & Development Committee will be held on 11th November 2026 at 6:30pm.

OD141026/10. CONFIDENTIAL SESSION - EXCLUSION

Following the passing of the resolution, Cllr William Rowell left the meeting as he was attending virtually and was not alone.

RESOLVED
That members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

WTCM941 - Proposed by Cllr Phil Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Estelle Bleivas

OD141026/11. LEASES & LAND

OD141026/11.1 Welshpool Town Football Club [CONFIDENTIAL]

The Town Clerk summarised the report and answered queries.

RECOMMENDED
To approve a renewed licence to Welshpool Town Football Club for use of the football pitch at Maes y Dre Recreation Ground for the same terms with a new definition of playing season negotiated with the Club.

WTCM942 - Proposed by Cllr Phil Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Estelle Bleivas

OD141026/11.2 Welshpool Town Bowling Club [CONFIDENTIAL]

The Town Clerk summarised the report and answered queries.

RECOMMENDED
To agree that the option involving direct maintenance of the bowling greens by the Council's Operations Team is not pursued at this stage because the necessary staff capacity and specialist equipment are not available.

WTCM943 - Proposed by Cllr Phil Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Nick Howells

RECOMMENDED
To agree that the Council will not enter into any maintenance agreement and that rent should be set at 50% of the Welshpool Town Football Club fees per year.

WTCM944 - Proposed by Cllr Phil Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Chris Davies

OD141026/11.3 Ponthowell Gardens [CONFIDENTIAL]

The Town Clerk summarised the report and answered queries. Following discussion, a motion to defer consideration of the offer pending progress on other matters with Powys County Council was put to the vote. The vote was tied, with three votes in favour and three against. The Chair exercised their casting vote in favour of the motion, which was therefore carried.

RECOMMENDED
To defer consideration of the offer until other matters have been progressed with Powys County Council.

WTCM945 - Proposed by Cllr Phil Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Estelle Bleivas

The meeting finished at 20:13.

Signed: Dated:

Councillor (Chair)

Decision/Action Log

ID		Assigned
WTCM938	**RESOLUTION** **OD141026/4.1 Previous Minutes** To approve, as amended, the minutes from the meeting of the Operations & Development Committee on 09/09/2026.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM939	**RESOLUTION** **OD141026/6.3 Lead Councillors** To elect the following lead councillors to the respective areas: - Markets - Cllr Phil Pritchard & Cllr Nick Howells - Allotments - Cllr William Rowell - Community Fridge - Cllr William Rowell & Cllr David France - Maes y Dre Alternative Premises - Cllr Phil Pritchard & Cllr Estelle Bleivas	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM940	**RECOMMENDATION** **OD141026/7.3 Allotments** To launch a review into allotment fees and charges as part of the 27/28 Budget Setting process.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM941	**RESOLUTION** **OD141026/10 Confidential Session - Exclusion** That members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM942	**RECOMMENDATION** **OD141026/11.1 Welshpool Town Football Club** To approve a renewed licence to Welshpool Town Football Club for use of the football pitch at Maes y Dre Recreation Ground for the same terms with a new definition of playing season negotiated with the Club.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM943	**RECOMMENDATION** **OD141026/11.2 Welshpool Town Bowling Club** To agree that the option involving direct maintenance of the bowling greens by the Council's Operations Team is not pursued at this stage because the necessary staff capacity and specialist equipment are not available.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM944	**RECOMMENDATION** **OD141026/11.2 Welshpool Town Bowling Club** To agree that the Council will not enter into any maintenance agreement and that rent should be set at 50% of the Welshpool Town Football Club fees per year.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer
WTCM945	**RECOMMENDATION** **OD141026/11.3 Ponthowell Gardens** To defer consideration of the offer until other matters have been progressed with Powys County Council.	Town Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer