

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 25TH APRIL 2024 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, J Browne, S Cursley, D Denis, S Eden, N Kennedy, D Orrett, S Powell, T Pullin (Mayor), G Robbins, T Robbins, H Siggs, T Butt Philip, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: S Luck
RFO: C Woodland
Mace Bearer: C Price
Somerset Cllr: T Munt (Wells)
Somerset Cllr E Hobbs (Mendip Hills)
11 members of the public

24/55/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
WCC Cllr: N Kennedy

24/56/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None declared

24/57/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 28TH MARCH 2024
Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor. Cllr S Powell asked in reference to 24/50/C that as WCC is funding 100% of the Youth club that the WCC website should state that it is working in partnership with the YMCA

24/58/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
No-one wished to speak.

24/59/C ACCESSIBLE WELLS
Theo Van Hensbergen presented his report and accessibility survey. He reported that 30-40% of the population is living with a disability. 1400 blue badge holders reside in Wells. Examples were given of shopkeepers not making reasonable adjustments to make premises accessible, street furniture and signs causing obstructions on pavements, wheelchair users having hands contaminated by dirty pavements caused by dog fouling, dropped kerbs being absent. A joined-up network without risks or obstacles is the campaign's aim. The entirety of Wells will eventually be surveyed. T Hensbergen dispelled myths that the campaign wished for cobbles or gullies to be removed. Emails were sent to Somerset Councillors and MP James Heapey, with no replies received.

Cllr D Denis reassured T Hensbergen that Planning and Environment Committee members request that dropped kerbs are conditioned in applications in line with the Neighbourhood Plan "Moving about" and "Parking & Signage".

Cllr E Hobbs suggested that T Hensbergen attends the Wells and Rural LCN meeting on 29th April 2024.

Cllr T Butt Philip asked that he have the report sent to him as he had not yet received it and offered a meeting to discuss it.

Cllr T Munt reported that a meeting had taken place with the Town Clerk. Somerset Highways are aware of the campaign and report. Cllr T Munt reassured that although progress is slow, that Somerset Council are interested in working together to a positive outcome.

A member of the public, Mr D Hodgson, confirmed that as a new wheelchair user since Easter and previously an experienced cyclist and driver, he has found access around Wells is very difficult and he has been shocked by how challenging it can be to move around.

24/60/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor invites all councillors and staff present to join her in the Mayor's Parlour after this meeting to mark the end of her mayoral term.

Mayor's Diary

- i 4th May 2024, Civic Opening of the Fair, Wells Market Place, 11am
- ii 4th May 2024, Fair Buffet Lunch, Wells Town Hall, 11:30am
- iii 6th May 2024, Sister Act, Wells Little Theatre, 6:30pm
- iv 7th May 2024, Yeovil Town Council Mayor Making, 7pm
- v 13th May 2024, Axbridge Town Council Mayor Making, 8pm
- vi 14th May 2024, Taunton Town Council Mayor Making, 6:30pm
- vii 18th May 2024, 650th Wells Mayor Making Ceremony, 5pm, Wells Town Hall

24/61/C REQUEST FROM MAYOR FOR SIX MONTHS LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SEPTEMBER 2024.

Cllr S Cursley proposed the request be granted, seconded by Cllr D Denis. Cllrs voted unanimously in favour.

Cllr H Siggs gave a vote of thanks and praised Cllr T Pullin (Mayor) for her hard work during her Mayoral year.

24/62/C OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr J Browne presented the minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2024

No questions received.

Cllr S Powell with reference to 24/26 asked that it be minuted that WCC had agreed to provide a pitch for the successful beverage tender to be free of charge for a limited period.

24/63/C STAFFING COMMITTEE

Cllr T Robbins presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2024

No questions received.

The Town Clerk reported that he had meetings with his line manager Councillors regarding additional help required for devolution of future services also there had been a request from two local councils to borrow members of WCC staff for the purpose of assisting with devolution projects and to share staff resources, this would depend on staff availability and time.

24/64/C FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Cllr S Cursley presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2024

No questions received.

24/65/C PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr D Denis presented the minutes of the meeting held on 18th April 2024

No questions received.

24/66/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr I Von Mensenkampff presented her report from the Mendip Health and Wellbeing report from Mendip Health and Wellbeing Meeting held on 7th April 2024 (attached, pages 4-5).

Cllr I von Mensenkampff would like to hear from WCC Councillors who are interested in getting involved with the potential for collaborating with other councils.

24/67/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr T Butt Philip presented his Somerset Councillors report (attached, page 6).

Cllr L Agabani requested an update on the closure of Union Street Toilets.

The Town Clerk answered that although the toilets are in a very poor condition with broken hand washing facilities and plumbing, that work is being scheduled and there are hopes that there will be a partial opening of these facilities soon, but that it is not possible to state a date at the moment.

A discussion took place between Councillors regarding the timescale and publicising of the re-opening.

24/68/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

None received.

24/69/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 18th May 2024, 5pm, Mayor making**

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note:

If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it will be proposed by the Mayor that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended.

Minutes signed by The Mayor: **Date:**

Report Somerset East Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 7.04.2024

We meet every 3 months to share news and projects concerning health and wellbeing in our area.

These are just some topics:

- Somerset Food Champion Network: Be healthy – be happy

They deliver training to in cooking and healthy eating (after school).

It is a 9-5 day training to enable volunteers to support interested people in achieving a healthy lifestyle – educating about food ingredients, how to cut vegetable in a safe way, ideas for recipes and more.

The training is provided by Somerset, contact healthierlifestyle@somerset.gov.uk

SALC provides funds local Councils can apply for Health and Wellbeing

Local Councils Health and wellbeing Program

<https://somerset-alc.org.uk/health-wellbeing/>

Fire and Rescue Service is part of the Local Resilience Forum. On a day to day basis they look out for vulnerable people who might need support in being safe.

Mendip Health Connection <https://healthconnectionsmendip.org/>

Caroline was talking about Talking Cafes (also for young people) who provide a valuable service to those in need of support. There are several cafes running with good responds.

Cafe Connection in Frome is a venue for people living with cancer to meet up with others in similar situations.

Mendip One Team commits to support unpaid carers. They should register themselves to get information and help

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/carers-in-somerset/>

Unpaid carers are entitled for example to holidays.

Cllr Isa von Mensenkampff

25.04.2024

Domestic Abuse awareness – update

Meeting with Michael Wallis – Somerset Officer for Domestic Abuse Awareness

- the drop in, held first Monday of every month is well frequented and will be ongoing
- the campaign run by Somerset on social media could be copied for Wells without adding much workload on CC staff
- we would like to work together with the different churches in Wells on this topic. If any of you has got good contacts, please let me know. The more organisation work together, the bigger is the momentum.

Somerset will provide training in Wells on how to recognise and deal with Domestic Abuse. This training could be for Council Staff, Councillors and interested public. Inviting surrounding Councils would be great, depending on the space we can provide for it.

My suggestion is two sessions, one during the day and one in the evening.

Please contact me with number of people you would attend and which time of a day is most suitable for you.

Cllr Isa von Mensenkampff

25.04.2024

Somerset Councillors' report to Wells City Council – April 2024

Council Finances

With the passage of the budget last year, the focus of the Council has remained on in-year savings and keeping the 2023/4 overspend down. Many departments and services are coming in significantly under budget, though the overall picture remains a (reducing) overspend.

Additionally, achieving the savings budgeted for 2024/5 has been and remains a priority. Somerset Council has received formal confirmation from central Government that the capitalisation direction has been confirmed – making the balancing of the 2024/5 budget possible.

Transformation

The programme for the whole-council transformation is coming together in the form of a new Improvement and Transformation Programme, to run over the coming 12 months and comprising five strands:

- Organisational Design
- Workforce Programme
- Innovation and Change Programme
- Partnerships, Devolution and Localities Programme
- Savings Delivery Plan

This programme will involve taking the changes and savings envisaged in the One Somerset business case and taking them further and faster than previously envisaged in order to react to the continuing pressure on the Council's budget.

Members may be aware that Somerset Council, as part of the workforce programme, is in the process of a voluntary redundancy programme – the outcomes of this, along with other initiatives around workforce reduction, will help shape the evolving structure of the Council.

It must be emphasised that the workforce programme is only one strand of the transformation – all five are vital to building a sustainable Somerset Council.

Miners' Arms Junction

Outside Wells, but of interest to local residents, work is due to start at the Miner's Arms Junction (the junction of the B3135 and the B3134 near Priddy). This is a notorious collision site, with 35 reported accidents over the past 20 years (11 of these were serious and three fatal). The work being undertaken to make this junction safer include realigning the junction and building a new section of road. Details of the proposals can be found at: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/find-small-improvement-schemes/>

Wells Library

Wells Library will be closed for one day on Tuesday, 21st May for essential staff training. Shepton Mallet and Glastonbury Libraries will also be closed on this day.

Theo Butt Philip and Tessa Munt
Somerset Councillors for Wells

25th April 2024