

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 9th JUNE 2022 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Chair), T Butt Philip, D Denis, S Eden, N Kennedy, D Orrett, S Powell

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk/RFO, S Luck
Outside Spaces Officer, M Culliford
WCC Cllrs: S Cursley (Mayor) and H Siggs
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
SCC Cllr: T Munt
1 Member of the public

Non-attendance: Cllr E Knott

22/31/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
None

22/32/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26th July 2012.
None received

22/33/OSE MINUTES OF THE CITY CENTRE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 7TH APRIL 2022
The minutes had already been presented to Full Council on 28th April and were agreed and signed as a true record.

22/25/OSE Cllr Denis raised the issue of bins in the market place. The Outside Spaces Officer explained this does still currently sit with MDC. Cllr Orrett explained she had also written to MDC Cllr L Rogers about the bin situation, but to date had no response.

22/34/OSE MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC
No comments made.

22/35/OSE OUTSIDE SPACES
i Skateboard park - Lead Cllr L Agabani gave an update on the progress of the Skateboard park.
A Full Planning Application is now to be submitted. The skate park charity has a target of £350k to raise, £65k has been raised so far. This project was halted during the election but is now back up and running. Cllr Denis was concerned about the protection of the trees on the existing site, Cllr Agabani confirmed the trees would be protected through any building work.
It was agreed for Cllr Agabani to invite the skate park charity group to attend the next committee meeting.

ii The Outside Spaces Officer gave an update on the following:

a. Wells in Bloom plant out – this has been completed by the Open Spaces Team, including the new planters in the market place. Cllr Denis has been approached by previous volunteers wanting to get involved. It was agreed for her to liaise with The Outside Spaces Officer with involving volunteers in 'dead heading' plants during the summer.

b. Cemetery boundary wall – Currently repairs are being carried out by a contractor to the north facing wall.
Any new Councillors are welcome to arrange a visit to the cemetery.

c. New premises and vehicle – New premises have now been sorted at £13,500pa, under a five-year lease. Some improvements now need to be made before staff can be moved across. This allows for the Open Spaces Team to expand.

The new Open Spaces Development Officer, Matthew Johnson, is starting Monday 13th June.

d. Temporary staff – Two members of staff have been unable to work due to health reasons. It is envisaged one staff member will be back soon, one temporary staff member has been recruited. Cllr Orrett asked whether litter picker volunteers could help with weeding in the City, it was agreed for her to follow this up with The Outside Spaces Officer.

iii Wells in Bloom competition update from Cllr Denis – a report had been circulated prior to the meeting. For the first time a school's award ceremony will take place on 30th June, 4:30pm at the Bishop's Palace. This is early to allow for those pupils leaving primary school to take part. There are 10 tickets available for Councillors, please contact Cllr Denis if you wish to attend.

They have a new judging team in place for the gardens and allotments. These awards will take place in the Town Hall in October. More details to follow.

iv Reports of Graffiti from Cllr Denis – Cllr Denis had again circulated a report prior to the meeting. The amount of graffiti in the City remains an issue. The Wells Neighbourhood Police are now part of the Response Police Team, which has to be their priority, but they remain committed to help where they can.

v Mendip Ecological Areas – Cllr Denis made reference to her report previously circulated. This project had been put on hold during the election. Cllr Denis is now arranging a meeting with MDC, to decide the way forward. It is understood that MDC have taken part in 'No Mow May' and she has written to Cllr Ronan to clarify. It was agreed copies of correspondence to be shared with Cllr Agabani and the Town Clerk.

22/36/OSE PORTWAY ANNEXE

The Town Clerk gave an update.

The building is now open and bookings are being taken. Strode college have made bookings and the music centre is proving popular. A Portway Annexe management group now needs to be formed at the next Full Council Meeting on 30th June. It is currently being staffed by Alex Westwood, Communications Manager, and in his absence town hall staff are covering. Additional staff will need to be recruited as demand for the building increases. 16 out of the 20 car park spaces have now been purchased and following the recent leaflet drop by Councillors the remaining spaces should shortly be sold.

Cllr Agabani explained together with WCN they are looking to set up a HUB at the Portway Annexe for Ukrainian refugees, offering English lessons, employment/medical advice etc. This would be one of four HUBS planned for the Somerset area. There is believed to be 45 Ukrainian families in Wells. Funding would be available to assist.

Cllr Denis asked whether the available parking at the site was a problem with potential users. The Town Clerk confirmed no issues to date, parking is also available nearby in Waitrose.

22/37/OSE BISHOP'S BARN

- i. The Town Clerk gave an update on the progress of acquiring the Wells Recreation Ground Trust

The consultation period has completed and the transfer date is planned for 29th July. Cllr Powell stressed that the committee should be aware that this is a huge project to take on, a lot of work and funding will be required. A new management group will need to be set up at the next Full City Council meeting on 30th June.

22/38/OSE PROPERTIES

The Town Clerk confirmed the Old Post Office, in the market place, remained in the hands of the Solicitors. The Committee will be kept informed of progress.

22/39/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

The Town Clerk asked for his thanks to be recorded for the Outside Spaces Team who have continued to go above and beyond despite staff shortages in recent weeks.

Cllr Agabani advised the current Post Office situated in the Pet Shop, Queen Street would close on 30th June. A temporary pop up post office will open in the previous site at the bus station from 1st July. A permanent position in the High Street is still being considered.

22/40/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 7th July

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private property report.

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date: