

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 6TH JULY 2023 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: J Browne (Chair), D Denis, D Orrett, S Powell, G Robbins

IN Outside Spaces Officer: M Johnson

ATTENDANCE: Cllr: I Von Mensenkampff
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
Somerset Councillor: T Munt
3 Members of the public

Non-attendance: Cllr T Butt Philip

23/66/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllrs: S Eden, N Kennedy

23/67/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022
None received

23/68/OSE MINUTES OF THE CITY CENTRE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 1ST JUNE 2023

The minutes were presented and agreed and signed as a true record.

23/69/OSE MATTERS ARISING

Gratitude was expressed to Cllr D Orrett and the group of volunteer litter pickers for their recent work around the City

Following a meeting with M Johnson, updates from previous meetings are as follows

- i. Graffiti on the Dulcote bench has been removed.
- ii. Railings at the bowling club are expected to be welded w/c 10th July 2023
- iii. An independent, pop up refreshment supplier has expressed interest in serving drinks and snacks in Wells Recreation ground commencing Summer 2023
- iv. Following public consultation, a concrete table tennis facility has been requested and is estimated to cost 3-3.5k and further discussion will follow.
- v. The bowling club lease has been extended by 11 years, until 2035, at a peppercorn rent. A cost of living increase may be added in line with the terms of the lease.
- vi. "No mow May" pilot study will take place in 2024. Discussions are taking place with the Somerset Council about possible locations. M Johnson will work with Cllr D Denis on this initiative as well as the plan to rewild selected green spaces. There will be publicity to educate residents of the rationale behind the initiative.

23/70/OSE MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No members of the public wished to speak

23/71/OSE WELLS CHARTER FAIR

The Town Clerk reported that after significant research, the Charter Fair was initially held under the Charter of King John in 1201 which denotes the Fair must take place in the area between the Conduit, Cannons House (Town Hall) and Penniless Porch. In 1298 it was confirmed in an act of parliament and we are the oldest of only 9 Charter Fairs remaining in Somerset. In 1779 under George III it was looked at again, and then between 1871 – 1873 where it again went to Parliament as the 'Fair's Act'. It

gives Showmen a right to hold a fair in the Market Place for 8 days in a year. In 1334 the Bishop of Bath and Wells handed over the control of the Charter to the Burgesses (The Town Council). The Charter can only disappear if it is unused. The records show that many rides and stalls can be present but there needs to be a shoulder's width from property.

With regard to current day May Fairs, an event plan is provided by the organisers with a plan of rides and stalls, and closing and opening times. An access area is kept around the perimeter. Wells have met with the SAG (Safety advisory group) at Mendip when complaints were made previously.

Life-long members of the Showmen's Guild has informed the Council that each ride and stall is owned individually and that perhaps discussion needs to take place with those who own more environmentally friendly generators.

Wells City Council fund the First Aid provision and the clear up of the Market Place after the Fair has gone.

A lengthy discussion took place about potential for management of future events and ways of working alongside the Fair providers and Unitary Council to improve relationships. Cllr T Munt assured the meeting that Licensing Officers will be involved and that concerns about the environmental impact should be acknowledged.

The Town Clerk will meet with Fair Operators to attempt to move the issue forward.

23/72/OSE OUTSIDE SPACES

M Johnson reported that mowing has been completed after "No mow May" as well as hedge cutting around the City.

Cllr D Denis asked about clarification on herbicides and pesticides and asked about Wells City Council Policy. The Town Clerk confirmed that Wells City Council do not use herbicides and pesticides at all, but that other organisations may not follow this ethos.

A discussion took place that clarification might be useful as plants such as Japanese knotweed must be treated with herbicide. It was deemed that a statement would be helpful and included on the Wells City Council Website.

Cllr D Denis invited fellow Councillors to attend the scything event at Tor Hill lane and requested that the grass cuttings created at the event be taken away by the Outside Spaces team and composted. M Johnson agreed to this.

23/73/OSE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Cllr D Denis reported that there was a successful Environment Day on 1st July and that many people attended. A survey was completed and the outcome of that will be published. Cllr D Denis requested that any Councillors who wish to continue, resign or join the climate working group please to confirm their intentions.

23/74/OSE WELLS IN BLOOM COMPETITIONS

Cllr D Denis reported that the presentation of the Children's awards at the Bishop's Palace was a great success. Cllr T Pullin (Mayor) was present.

Cllrs: S Powell and J Browne thanked Cllr D Denis for her hard work.

23/75/OSE MEETING SCHEDULE

The future meeting schedule will be changed in order to assist progression of plans for the Bishop's Barn and Recreation Ground. The Outside Spaces and Estates committee will continue to meet monthly but every other month, the emphasis will be on the Bishop's Barn and recreation ground.

Cllr J Browne proposed that all discussions regarding the Bishop's Barn and Recreation Ground be discussed exclusively at these bi-monthly Committee meetings, in order to ensure cohesion between members of the public, Councillors and council employees. This would avoid duplication and would improve progress with proposed initiatives.

Four Councillors agreed the proposal with one abstention.

Cllr D Denis requested a review after 6 months.

Cllr D Denis reminded the meeting that the Climate emergency policy, which was voted on in 2019 requires progression and requested that Councillors consider how this can be facilitated.

The Town Clerk suggested that once the working group has been established, they will report progress to this meeting.

23/76/OSE PORTWAY ANNEXE

Cllr D Orrett reported that predicted income is up by 21% and will be in profit later in 2023. Charis is a government charity which brings £9000 per quarter to provide satellite hubs to refugees. Strode College are offering employment skills.

A request has been made by Wells Mosaic for a mosaic with a Tree of Life design to be placed on the front of the Portway Annexe. There may be implications regarding planning permission as the building has a Listed building status.

A brief discussion took place about suitability of the placement and alternative options. The mosaic will be available to view in August inside the Portway Annexe and further options will be discussed then.

Plans for a Community Fridge are underway. Funding is available and a group of volunteers are working on the project. A brief discussion took place regarding accessibility at the location, for volunteers as well as visitors to the fridge.

23/77/OSE RECREATION GROUND AND BISHOP'S BARN

Cllr S Powell explained that there had been a final meeting of the Recreation Ground and Bishop's Barn management group. Progression of the project will now be discussed at this meeting as per item 23/75/OSE. C Spencer-Jones from the management group explained to the meeting that English Heritage are interested in being involved (re Bishop's Barn) and there is potential to apply for grants. The English Heritage representative may visit in the Autumn for further discussions and negotiations with Wells City Council.

M Johnson reported that several successful events have taken place at the Barn with more booking enquiries coming through. M Johnson reassured the meeting that the sound system has a cut off to prevent excessive noise to neighbours.

23/78/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr G Robbins requested Wells City Council issue a statement regarding the Traffic lights issue on the website to clarify.

Cllr T Munt reported to the meeting that the essential works taking place in locations in Wells are replacing failing infrastructure and requested that any enquiries be directed to tessa.munt@somerset.gov.uk

The Town Clerk and M Johnson reported that Wells City Council are receiving complaints re: public waste collections as many bins around the city are overflowing with refuse and dog waste bags. Enquiries are continuing to establish from Idverde what their schedule is for emptying the bins. Wells City Council bins are becoming damaged as they are overflowing with waste.

Cllr T Munt said it would be brought up at a Monday meeting as an emergency agenda item.

Cllr T Munt reported that Suez who provide domestic waste recycling collections are planning strike action and negotiations are taking place. The strike schedule is published on the Somerset Council website

Cllr T Munt reported that she has been contacted by a resident regarding trees in the recreation ground. The Town Clerk informed Cllr T Munt that every tree in the recreation ground has a TPO attached to it.

23/79/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 7th September 2023

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: