

CITY OF WELLS

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2021

**Minutes of the remote Wells Annual Parish Meeting
held on Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 6.00pm via zoom**

City Councillors present (via zoom): Cllrs: P Welch (Mayor), O Hartley (Deputy Mayor), L Agabani, S Briton, J Browne, S Cursley, R Humphreys, A l'Anson, J Parker, J Rust

In attendance (via zoom): Town Clerk/RFO: S Luck
WCC Staff: S Bristow, A Westwood
Mace Bearer: C Price
SCC Cllr T Munt
SCO Cllr M Cooke
10 members of public

1 Apologies

Cllr N Kennedy

Not present at the meeting: Cllr J Osman

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2020

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, approved, and will be signed by the Mayor.

3 The Mayor's Annual Report (attached)

The Mayor presented his report and invited questions. No questions were received.

4 Chair of Committee Reports

i. Finance Committee (formerly Finance & General Purposes)

Chair, Cllr Cursley, presented the report (attached) and invited questions.

Ian Robinson asked what are the priorities regarding how the Bishop's Barn and Recreation Ground will be funded. He was advised that a working group has been set up which will be dealing with all aspects of the acquisitions.

Colin Price asked what the maintenance of the Bishop's Barn will cost the WCC per year? The Chair confirmed that WCC is in discussion with MDC to establish these costs.

Jenny Williams asked what the Bishop's Barn's future use might be? Possible usage included: Pop-up café, events, wedding venue.

Kirsty Harris called for the Bishop's Barn's future to be a public consultation.

The Mayor stated that the community support is substantial and well received.

ii. Planning Committee

Chair, Cllr l'Anson, presented the report (attached) and invited questions. No questions were received.

iii. **City Centre & Open Spaces Committee**

Chair, Cllr Agabani, presented the report (attached) and invited questions.

SCO Cllr Cook complimented the Open Spaces team on the planting of trees in the cemetery.

Colin Price asked will the Open Spaces team take over the maintenance of the Recreation Ground? This will be the case, confirmed the Town Clerk. Cllr Cooke offered support/advice from SCO on such maintenance.

Jenny Williams brought up the subject of the Market Place. She was advised by the council to refer to the MDC as WCC does not have control over the Market Place.

Celia Wride asked whether Wells In Bloom (WIB) will be reinstated after lockdown? Cllr Agabani said that although there is no Chair currently for WIB, as far as he is aware the council is not proposing to go in-house.

iv. **Climate & Biodiversity Emergency Committee**

Chair, Cllr Parker, presented the report (attached) and invited questions.

SCO Cllr Cooke said that he was pleased that Cllr Parker had joined the Environment Committee.

Tim Lewis asked what are the objectives/targets of the committee? After discussion, Cllr Parker said that they were clear but difficult to measure. The Town Clerk added that the Town Hall building management has taken many positive measures to improve on environmental issues such as installation of LED lighting and low usage/temperature control gas. There is an ongoing assessment.

Cllr Rust mentioned the Ethnical Procurement Policy which is being looked at closely.

Celia Wride asked (a) is Cllr Parker involved with the planting of trees at the cemetery? (b) Has recycling improved at the Town Hall?

(a) Cllr Parker answered yes, he is very much involved in the planting of trees at the cemetery.

(b) The Town Clerk said that paper is recycled. With other materials, for which the council do not have recycling bins, the staff choose to take them home to their own recycling facilities. He emphasised that all lighting is now changed to LED and lights are only switched on where and when essential.

Cllr l'Anson said that future housing energy-saving measures are being looked at under Neighbourhood Planning.

5 Purchase of Portway Annexe - A chance to give your views on the Council's proposed purchase

Kirsty Harris was in full support of WCC purchasing the Portway Annexe, saying it was an investment. She went on to say that WCC must adopt a creative strategy for this building.

Celia Wride said that WCC must be open and transparent about this proposal.

Ian Robinson seconded Celia's above comment and requested that the Business Plan be produced as soon as possible.

The Mayor said that a Business Plan will be made available shortly.

Cllr Agabani spoke about the committee that the WCC has set up for the Portway Annexe.

Discussion took place with regard to the Community Asset Transfer possibility; this has been looked into and SCC have confirmed this will not be considered for the Annexe.

Nicola Dodds, from the Portway Annexe Community Group, covered ideas/solutions for the future of the Annexe, including further education, enterprise and development.

Nigel Fraser thanked the WCC for the research and work put into the project. Nigel is particularly interested in the musical aspect and hopes it goes ahead.

Celia Wride wanted to ensure any declaration of interests are considered for the potential Portway Annexe committee members. The Mayor asked for a show of hands from those councillors present who have an interest in being on the committee. See below.

Councillors who have put their names forward for the Portway Annexe Committee are Cllrs S Briton, L Agabani, O Hartley, J Osman. The structure and members of the committee will be confirmed at the next Full Council.

6

Open Forum

An opportunity to discuss matters of interest to the community

Tim Lewis wanted to know how all the work that the council do will come together and what the big picture for Wells holds? Discussion took place and the Mayor summed up what the council is currently working towards. It was agreed amongst councillors that communication could be improved, however, they are volunteers doing their utmost to achieve the best for Wells.

Both Tim Lewis and Jenny Williams were encouraged by some people present to apply for the current WCC councillor vacancies.

Nicola Dodds reminded the council of Let's Do It Wells (part of the Wells Coronavirus Network). She asked if the council could get more involved in promoting this project and produce a document. The platform is paid for by funding and currently the licence is owned by the Bishop's Palace. One can sign up and post opportunities to volunteers.

Jenny Williams spoke about the preparing for the introduction of Unitary local government in Somerset and the shape it might take.

Cllr Cursley has attended a meeting with Dr Carlton Brown, Programme Director for the Unitary process at Somerset County Council, and a meeting with Chippenham's council to learn about the Unitary process which has taken place in their county, Wiltshire.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 7.23 pm.