

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 23RD JULY 2020 AT 7.00PM

COUNCILLORS PRESENT (VIA ZOOM): Cllrs: L Agabani, S Briton, J Browne, P Crummay, S Cursley, R Humphreys, A l'Anson, N Kennedy, J Linsdell, J Osman (Mayor), J Parker, C Rees, J Rust, P Welch (Deputy Mayor), C Wride

IN ATTENDANCE (VIA ZOOM): Town Clerk/RFO: S Luck
WCC Staff: A Westwood
SCC Cllr T Munt
MDC Cllr R Ayres
SCO Cllrs M Cooke, J Reeves
3 members of the public

20/59C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr O Hartley

20/60C DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 27th July 2012:
Cllr Agabani declared a personal/Prejudicial interest in Agenda item 10 as he had a business in the Market Square.

20/61C MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 25TH JUNE 2020
Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Mayor.

20/62C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
SCO Cllrs Cooke and Reeves spoke about the proposed local government reorganisation. Cllr Reeves expressed concerns over the future of planning and what this will mean to the Mendip local plan. There had been no consultation with the Parish Councils and where does this leave Localism powers.

20/63C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
The Mayor has attended meetings with residents and traders.
He expressed his thanks to the Town Hall staff getting the building ready for reopening.

20/64C MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2020:
The Chairman presented the minutes and invited questions.

20/65C MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 2nd and 16th July 2020:
The Chairman presented the minutes and invited questions.

20/66C NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKING GROUP
Cllr l'Anson presented the report (attached), the plan was moving forward with the grant agreed, a housing needs survey can now be carried out and the group will be speaking to SCO. Cllr l'Anson reminded members it was a City Council Plan.
Cllr Wride asked how many Councillors were members of the working group.
These are Cllrs l'Anson, Crummay, Rust and Humphries.

20/67C LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION WORKING GROUP
Cllr Cursley as chairman of the group reported letters had been sent to SCC and MDC to ask for consultation and representation in any future reorganisation, we are waiting for replies.

Cllr Cursley also intended to speak to SCO Cllr Reeves about joint concerns.
Cllr Kennedy quoted extracts from the local SCC newsletter and expressed concerns about the number of services that will be devolved if a Unitary Council is set up.
Cllr Wride said it was important we worked with SCO parish council where necessary.

20/68C COVID 19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP

Members agreed due to the chairman's declared interest it would be better if Cllr Parker presented the report. (attached)

Cllr Parker highlighted the various ideas the working group had been discussing and consulting with MDC and SCC Highways.

One scheme to close Sadler Street for two weeks had been agreed subject to Full Council agreement but after the groups last meeting this has been delayed to allow for a much broader consultation due to so much opposition to the plan from traders. Members of the group are now arranging a period of consultation with traders and the general public.

Cllr Parker answered questions from members on the various schemes being considered including redirection of the buses, redirection of the traffic, extra road crossings and better signage at the top of Sadler Street.

Members expressed concerns staff had been subject to threats on the road closure proposal. The Town Clerk stated no staff will be manning the Sadler Street barrier as the council had a duty of care for the safety of its staff.

The working group will continue to meet and consult with MDC and SCC as well as the general public.

20/69C WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None received, as groups not meeting during Covid.

20/70C DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Cllr R Ayres gave a report on various projects at MDC -

Planning matters, free car parking which will be ending this month,

The future of the Wells Recreation Ground Trust and possible community involvement. His report will be sent to the Town Clerk so it can be attached to the minutes.

The Mayor and Councillors challenged Cllr Ayres about the future of the Recreation Ground Trust as the City Council were in advanced talks to take control of the Trust for the people of Wells and communications from MDC had stopped during Covid. The Mayor has sent an email asking for clarification.

20/71C COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr T Munt gave a report which will be circulated to members after the meeting and attached to these minutes.

She was asked when the Wells library will reopen and confirmed this will be on Monday 27th July.

20/72C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr Wride asked if the minutes to the car parking meeting held in Seager Hall last year could be circulated to members as this could help with the current consultation being planned. Cllr Welch agreed to circulate the minutes.

Cllr l'Anson reported on a Jazz event due to take place in the Market Square on Monday 31st August. Cllr l'Anson also said he hoped to speak to SCO parish regarding another proposed planning development and the effects on Wells infrastructure.

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, excluding the press and public.

20/73C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **7pm, Thursday 24th September 2020**