

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 25TH MARCH 2021 AT 7.00PM

COUNCILLORS PRESENT (VIA ZOOM): Cllrs: L Agabani, S Briton, J Browne, S Cursley, O Hartley (Deputy Mayor), R Humphreys, A l'Anson, N Kennedy, J Osman, J Parker, P Welch (Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE (VIA ZOOM): Town Clerk/RFO: S Luck
WCC Staff: S Glendinning, A Westwood
SCO: Martin Cooke
MDC: Cllrs Rob Ayres, Lois Rogers, Tom Ronan
SCC: Cllr T Munt
PCSO: Donna President
9 members of public

21/44/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr J Rust

21/45/C DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 27th July 2012:
Councillors were asked whether they had any declarations of interest.

Cllr Cursley declared a Personal Interest to Item 21/48/C as a member of the Wells Rotary Club.

21/46/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2021 AND THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 4TH MARCH 2021
Minutes of the previous meetings were proposed, seconded, confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Mayor.

21/47/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Portway Annexe

Questions were raised concerning the Portway Annexe. Cllr Osman explained the Business Plan will shortly be made public minus some financials which are considered confidential for negotiation purposes. It was felt essential that the Portway Annexe Committee and the Community is involved in taking this project forward. A questionnaire has been drafted by Cllr Osman and will be distributed once the format is agreed by Council.

Wells Skate Park

An update was provided from the Wells Skatepark Community Group by Adrian & Bev Smith. After consultation, the group now proposes that the Skatepark remain on the existing site (rather than relocate to the Recreation Ground) and that WCC ask SCC to extend the current licence for a further 25 years. In the meantime, they will start design work and fundraising. The Town Clerk has been asked to investigate a Community Asset Transfer of the Skatepark to WCC from SCC, and to consider the site to be overseen by the Open Spaces Committee. All Councillors were in agreement with these Skatepark proposals. The Town Clerk would start work on the Community Asset Transfer and it would need to be officially included on next month's Full Council Agenda (22nd April 2021).

21/48/C PRESENTATIONS:

1. Wells Rotary Club – Community Garden

Wendy Ray and Alan Webb presented their report. It is proposed to design, create and maintain a Community Garden as a place of reflection, on the grass area in front of the Bishop's Barn. It would be a permanent place to remember loved ones passed or unwell. Wildlife and sensory aspects will be considered. They have money available to carry out the preliminary design.

Cllr Parker offered support as Chair of the Climate and Bio-Diversity Emergency Committee.

Cllr l'Anson recommended they liaise with Wells in Mosaic, which is planning a six-metre diameter, about the design.

2. PCSO Donna President – Community Officer

Donna introduced herself. She thanked the residents of Wells for their cooperation throughout the pandemic. Donna raised the following:

- They hope to restart their involvement with community events, once COVID restrictions permit.
- There is a rise in catalytic converters being stolen from vehicles. The public are urged to report anything suspicious
- Beggars are appearing back in the City – help/support is being provided by the Connect Centre
- They will be moving to new premises at the Fire Station on 15th April
- The Skatepark project should ensure CCTV cameras remain in place and it was requested the local police are kept updated/involved in the project

Cllr Kennedy raised an issue of regular parking on pavements in Durkheim Drive. Donna agreed to look into it.

21/49/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

1. 26th March – Giving speech at Wells Operatic Society's AGM on Zoom
2. 16th April - Opening Crandon Springs Care Home
3. 17th July – Starting the Classic and Historic Motor Club Rally at the Bath & West Showground. This is a fundraiser for the Mayor's Charity.

21/50/C MINUTES OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2021.

The Chair presented the minutes and asked for questions. None received.

21/51/C MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2021.

The Chair presented the minutes and asked for questions. None received.

21/52/C ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

To approve recommendations from Finance Committee:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Scheme of Delegation
- New Ethical Procurement Policy

Cllr Cursley presented the policies listed above. Minor changes had been made to the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation. The Ethical Procurement Policy is a new policy. The four policies were proposed, seconded and agreed.

21/53/C MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2021 and 18th March 2021.

The Chair presented the minutes from both meetings and asked for questions. None received.

21/54/C WELLS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REPORT

Cllr l'Anson presented his report. Cllr Osman requested that WCC have involvement with the questions asked in the proposed independent survey. This survey would not be taking place for a further year.

21/55/C COVID WORKING PARTY

1. To receive report – Cllr Briton presented her report
2. To consider future of working party –

Cllr Agabani proposed that the work continues. It was proposed, seconded and agreed. In May, after the local elections, it is hoped additional councillors will join the group. It was agreed there would be a 6-month review of this group.

21/56/C WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST

The Town Clerk provided an update. Stone King Solicitors have been appointed to deal with the transfer from MDC. The Charity Commission has given approval for WCC to be the sole trustee. The transfer is expected to take place at the end of June 2021.

21/57/C WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST COMMITTEE

1. To appoint members to the newly formed Wells Recreation Ground Trust Committee

It was proposed, seconded and agreed the following councillors would join the committee:

Cllrs: Hartley, Cursley, Welch, Briton, Humphreys, Osman, Kennedy, Parker

21/58/C PORTWAY ANNEXE

Item by Cllr Osman in relation to the Portway Annexe

To agree:

- A. Publication of the Portway Annexe Initial Business Plan by the Town Clerk
- B. Structure and composition of the Portway Annexe Committee
- C. A letter to residents of Portway and Portway Annexe updating them on the progress of our purchase of Portway Annexe and asking them to nominate themselves to serve on the Portway Annexe committee
- D. A letter/press release asking members of the public and community groups to nominate themselves to serve on the Portway Annexe Committee
- E. The Portway Annexe group to consider residents and community group applications and appoint new members to the Portway Annexe Group Committee

Cllr Osman presented the above.

Cllr Parker stated he would be interested in joining the group after his three Freedom of Information questions are answered. The Town Clerk replied they will be answered within the legal time frame.

Cllr Agabani feels the project should be more community led.

Cllr Briton recommended application and appointment of 2 residents and 2 community members to be discussed at the first Portway Annexe Committee meeting.

Cllr Osman explained the reasoning for some figures having been removed from the Business Plan which was to protect our negotiating position.

Cllr Osman proposed A-E above and for the following Councillors to form the Portway Annexe Committee:

Cllrs: Osman, Hartley, Briton, Agabani, Humphreys, (Parker – to join later)

It was proposed, seconded and agreed by 10 Councillors, 1 abstained

21/59/C AWARDS WORKING GROUP

Cllr Browne reported on a meeting held on 24th March.
The awards ceremony will take place on 23rd Oct 2021 at 7pm. A budget request has been submitted and agreed by the Finance Committee. Discussions are taking place over the manufacture of awards. Andy Vallis, editor of Wells Voice, has offered to sponsor an award at the event and to provide a paper nomination form within Wells Voice for the public to complete and submit. One of the awards will be the Wells Voice Award in recognition for the sponsorship. It is also hoped to have an online nomination facility through the Wells City Council website. All catering (cheese, chutney, cider, etc.) will be sourced locally. No local celebrity had yet been found to support the event. A further update to be provided at the next Full Council Meeting.

21/60/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

None Received

21/61/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Rob Ayres presented the MDC report already circulated.
– Work being carried out to reduce air pollution near schools
– 500 trees are going to be planted in the district to replace those lost through Ash disease. If anyone wishes to get involved they should email: neighbourhoodservices@mendip.gov.uk
– MDC will have a grant to help High Streets recover from the pandemic and Cllr Ayres suggested that WCC should follow this up as a matter of urgency.
– Business Support Week ran 15th-19th March to support local businesses grow and recover following the pandemic. Anyone needing help should contact: mendip.gov.uk/business grants
– MDC to adopt a minimum £9.50 per hour for its staff 25 years and over from 1/4/21

Cllr Tessa Munt presented the attached report.
A further month’s road closure for works to be completed in Chamberlain Street has been requested.

Cllr Browne asked Cllr Munt to make representations about the length of the work being carried out on Glastonbury Road. Residents are experiencing significant delays when entering/exiting the City from this direction.

21/62/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllrs Cursley and Agabani to take forward, as a matter of priority, the grant funding available from MDC to assist the High Street. WCC do not want to miss out on this available funding.

Cllr l’Anson stated that Christian Aid Week would take place in May. It was agreed the Town Hall would help with the return of leaflets.

21/63/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be at **7pm on Thursday 22nd April 2021**

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