

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2021 AT 7.00PM

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, A Bayley, J Browne, D Denis, A l'Anson, R Humphreys, S Johns, T Leach, J Osman, T Pullin, T Robbins, J Rust, P Welch (Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk/RFO: S Luck
Town Clerk Assistant, C Woodland
Open Spaces Officer, M Culliford
WCC Staff: C Hobbs, A Westwood
Mace Bearer, Colin Price
Cllr L Waters (Mendip District Councillor)
Cllr T Munt (Somerset County Council)

21/173/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM MEMBERS
Cllrs S Cursley, S Powell, N Kennedy

21/174/C DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 27th July 2012.
None received.

21/175/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 21ST OCTOBER 2021
Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Mayor.

Cllr J Rust queried 21/171/C Cllr T Robbins being sole Representative for Wells Carnival as Cllr R Humphreys had also been named. This was clarified by both Councillors agreeing to represent Wells City Council.

21/176/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
None present.

21/177/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- i. 10th Dec West Side Story Production for the Mayor's Charity at Wells Film Centre
- ii. The Mayor requested Councillors to help with preparations for Head's Up Lunch

Mayor's Diary

- i. 21st Nov Marie Curie & Macmillan Service of Remembrance, Wells Cathedral
- ii. 23rd Nov Brittaines Charity's Annual Meeting, Chubb Bulleid
- iii. 24th Nov Christmas Lights Switch On, Crandon Springs Retirement Home
- iv. 30th Nov St Andrew's Day Festal Eucharist, Wells Cathedral
- v. 1st Dec St John Ambulance Presentation Evening & Carol Service, St Cuthbert's Church
- vi. 4th Dec City of Wells Awards, Wells Town Hall
- vii. 5th Dec Cathedral School Advent Carol Festival, Wells Cathedral
- viii. 8th Dec WI Carol Festival, Wells Cathedral
- ix. 8th Chair of meeting to plan for the Queens Jubilee celebrations

21/178/C MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2021:
Cllr Robbins, presented the minutes and invited questions. None received.

21/179/C MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2021 and 11th November 2021:

Chair of Planning, Cllr l'Anson, presented the minutes and invited questions. None received.

21/180/C OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

Lead Cllr Agabani presented the minutes and invited questions. None received.

Cllr Rust queried a typo on 21/07OSE

The Mayor thanked the Outside Spaces team for their hard work with the installation of the Christmas Lights in the City.

21/181/C UNITARY & ACQUISITIONS

- i. To receive the latest presentation from the Town Clerk
- ii. To consider public information programme

The Town Clerk requested any input from Councillors into the final draft Unitary document before final presentation to Full Council on the 9th December 2021. The document will be presented to the Finance committee the week before and the final budget along with the precept request to Full Council in December. Mendip will require confirmation of the precept by 13th January 2022.

Discussion continues with the other Mendip Towns and members will be kept updated.

Meetings will be arranged for January with the new Unitary Executive and this will be followed by a public consultation. Date of parish elections will tie in with Unitary elections. Wells City Council will have the date for Elections by the 8th December 2021.

Cllr Rust commented that some citizens of Wells need particular consideration during the negotiations for Unitary, as financially some sections of the community are less fortunate than others due to changes in payments from Universal Credits and with the effects of Covid 19.

Cllr Agabani asked if the Unitary proposal can be amended or additional items added once submitted. The Town Clerk responded that the initial proposal needed to be submitted in January and it could be altered throughout the negotiation period.

Cllr Denis requested if the outcome of the discussions will come back to Council before decisions are made. The Town Clerk reassured that Wells City Council will be informed regularly.

The Mayor has contacted Unitary Councils in Cornwall who took on Unitary Council in 2009 and awaits a response. Buckinghamshire also took on a Unitary Council and research is taking place as to the effects that Unitary has had, as there are similarities between Buckinghamshire and Somerset. Discussions are ongoing with Chair of St Cuthbert Out who have arranged a meeting with MP James Heapey. A suggestion was made that MP James Heapey be contacted by Wells City Council

21/182/C CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY BILL (CEE BILL)

To consider support following presentation at last meeting

Cllr l'Anson informed the meeting he supported this motion and that he had contacted MP James Heapey to request support for this Bill, several weeks ago but has to date not received a response.

Cllr Rust confirmed her support of the Bill as a Council rather than as individual members of Wells City Council.

Cllr Denis proposed a motion to support the Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill as an organisation through the formal process and urge our MP to support the Bill.
Seconded Cllr Rust. Motion carried.

21/183/C MOTION TO WELLS CITY COUNCIL - BABY LOSS MEMORIAL GARDEN

To receive proposal from Cllr Osman

Cllr Osman proposed the creation of a Baby Loss Memorial Garden. Not as a burial ground but as a place for reflection and to commemorate loved ones. The idea is just a consultation to find a suitable location and the type of memorials that would be preferred. Community funding will be sought for the project.

Cllr Rust commented that she hoped that cost wouldn't preclude anyone from being able to have a memorial. With that in mind, would something like a scented garden be appropriate?

A discussion took place with comments from Cllrs Pullin, Bayley, Agabani and Browne that using an already established garden be used, and that sensitivity be used regarding its location as not all people want to be reminded constantly should it be located at the cemetery. A suggestion that the memorial garden be a place for reflection and positivity and visions for the future. Cllr Robbins offered to assist Cllr Osman in the project.

Seconded Cllr Browne. Motion carried.

21/184/C WELLS AWARDS

Update on Awards evening programme:

Cllr Browne thanked Town Hall Staff for administrating the Awards. The preparation for the event has gone well so far. The event is Ticket only but numbers are limited. If tickets are returned, then they will be reallocated.

Cllr Osman thanked Cllr Browne for her hard work in organising the awards.

21/185/C OUTSIDE BODIES

To consider future representation on outside bodies:

PACT - Vacancy filled by Cllr Pullin

SALC - Cllr I'Anson remains as Representative

Mendip CCCT – Cllr Osman remains as Representative

Health and Wellbeing Board – Vacancy filled by Cllr Bayley

Chamber of Commerce – Cllr Agabani remains as Representative

Twinning Association – The Mayor remains as Representative and Cllr Browne volunteered

Sports Club – Vacancy filled by Cllrs Johns and Leach

Recreation Committee – Cllr Osman remains as Representative

CAB – Vacancy filled by Denise Denis

Carnival – Vacancy filled by Cllrs Robins and Humphreys

Connect Youth Centre – Cllr Bayley replaced The Mayor as Representative

Sustainable Wells – Vacancy filled by Cllr Browne

Somerset Bus Partnership – Vacancy filled by Cllrs Bayley and Rust

TRUSTEES

Alms-houses – Three positions. The Mayor remains as a Trustee, Cllr Robbins filled a vacancy. The remaining trustee vacancy is filled by a Cllr who was unable to attend the meeting and awaits confirmation.

Museum – Cllr Rust remains as Trustee

Credit Union – Vacancy filled by Cllr Denis

The Town Clerk suggested that all the above organisations be provided with up to date contact details by their Representative or Trustee.

21/186/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Rust made the meeting aware of her report on Wells Museum, published in The Leveller.

21/187/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

MDC report already circulated to councillors.

The Town Clerk requested that Wells City Council be provided with contact details of Officers at Mendip District Council.

Cllr Waters asked to be copied in when the next request is made.

Cllr Waters requested on behalf of Cllr Rogers that Wells City Council provide proactive support regarding the Skate park, by contacting MP James Heapey for his support with the "Levelling up fund" and for his influence in negotiating the lease.

Cllr Agabani agreed to email Cllr Rogers and confirmed that the Skate Park is now under the remit of Wells City Council. Open spaces will be discussing it on 6th December with proposed developer and requested that Cllr Rogers attend and write to MP J Heapey too. MP James Heapey has been written to twice, as has the Skate Park Charity.

Cllr Osman confirmed that there had no response from MP J Heapey.

Cllr Munt confirmed that after submission to Somerset County Council, the Economic and Community Infrastructure Report has been submitted to Wells City Council and the Covid dashboard. This report highlight the impact that Covid 19 have had on services such as Highways, Registrations.

Cllr Munt confirmed that there are many questions being asked about the finances connected with becoming Unitary and warned that predicted savings may be made by cuts in services. Cllr Munt reported that she is having discussions with Head of property at County Council regarding the length of a lease for the Skate Park and has proposed a 99 year lease.

Cllr l'Anson thanked Cllr Munt's involvement in the application for Historic England application that was referred to in the report.

21/188/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

i. Request from Cllr Rust that each committee report includes climate and sustainability consideration

Cllr Rust urged that Wells City Council address the list of actions laid out in the Council's Climate Emergency Committee and report progress to the relevant Council meeting.

21/189/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 9th December 2021, 7pm

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.

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