

## WELLS CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022 AT 7.00PM

**COUNCILLORS  
PRESENT:**

Cllrs: A Bayley, J Browne, S Cursley, D Denis, R Humphreys, A l'Anson, S Johns, N Kennedy, T Leach, J Osman, S Powell, T Pullin, J Rust, P Welch (Mayor)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Town Clerk Assistant: C Woodland  
WCC Staff: C Hobbs  
Mace Bearer: C Price  
SCC Cllr T Munt  
MDC Cllr L Rogers  
No members of the Public

**22/31/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM MEMBERS**

Cllrs: L Agabani, T Robbins  
Town Clerk: S Luck

**22/32/C DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 27<sup>th</sup> July 2012.  
None received.

**22/33/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022**

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Mayor.

**22/34/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr C Price requested clarification regards parking in the Market Place. This is due to pay meters being in situ as well as 'no parking' signage giving mixed messages to members of the public.

**22/35/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A grant of just over £9k has been obtained for funding Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Wells. This will contribute towards costs for children's cookery workshops, cream teas, staging for a performance area and to pay for banners and promotional fliers.

Wells Community Network are hoping to provide a trishaw for Wells which would give rides around the city for people with mobility issues. That morning he had hosted a presentation about this project in the Town Hall and residents had been given trishaw rides in the Market Place.

**Mayor's Diary**

March

25<sup>th</sup> Mar Wells Blue School and Cathedral School joint concert – Mayor's Charity Event

26<sup>th</sup> Mar Wells Twinning Association Social, Seager Hall

28<sup>th</sup> Mar Reception for Wells Litter Pickers, Wells Town Hall

29<sup>th</sup> Mar Abbeyfield AGM, Wells Town Hall

April

2<sup>nd</sup> Apr Wells Cathedral Oratorio Society Concert, Wells Cathedral

10<sup>th</sup> Apr Mayor's Charity Quiz night, Wells Town Hall. Cllr Browne will liaise with other members to create a team.

18<sup>th</sup> Apr Start of season, City of Wells Bowling Club

Upcoming is a visit to Crandon Springs Care Home for the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of their opening

**22/36/C**

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Cllr Rust commented on the high cost of By-Elections to the public purse, due to 7 changes in Councillors over this current term. With the date for nominations being imminent for the next City Council elections, she asked that anyone standing is made fully aware of what is involved and can commit to the full 5-year period.

**22/37/C**

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Cllr l'Anson reported

- i. A new application for the new Lidl Store has been approved subject to three conditions: the addition of a crossing on Priory Road, changes to lighting and length of free parking on the location. There have been some concerns about the demolition of the Travis Perkins site causing debris contamination of nearby areas.
- ii. The Council recommended approval of a Statue by artist David Backhouse in the Camery Garden at Wells Cathedral.
- iii. Following complaints regarding the arrival of a glamping pod off Silver Street and the indication that more pods are planned, MDC have been contacted and they confirmed that they have a planning file open on the matter.

**22/38/C**

**MINUTES OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

Cllr Pullin announced that the next meeting for the Portway Annexe Management Group is 5.30pm on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

There has been no further progress with the Skate Park.

Cllr Denis expressed concerns that during busy weekends the bins in the city are overflowing and that weekend collection require a rethink. It was enquired whether Wells City Council had the staff capacity to contribute to the upkeep. Cllr Powell requested that the issue is raised with the MDC contractors responsible, Id Verde.

**22/39/C**

**UNITARY AND ACQUISITIONS**

Cllr Cursley (Deputy Mayor) reported:

- i. The application paperwork for the Bishop's Barn is still with the Charity Commission, but we are optimistic for progress soon.
- ii. Cllr Cursley attended a SCC zoom meeting regarding the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset with Mr S Luck (Town Clerk). It seems unlikely that any devolvement of services and assets back to the control of the City Council will happen before April 2023.

**22/40/C**

**WELLS & MENDIP MUSEUM - NOMINATION OF TRUSTEES**

To consider proposal from Wells & Mendip Museum

Cllr Rust, the current Trustee, reported that the Museum will become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, leading to two proposals to be put before members for consideration:

1. Are the new clauses under the reform acceptable to the Council? – Cllr l'Anson proposed in favour, seconded by Cllr Kennedy, and unanimously approved.
2. Is the Council happy to continue to nominate a Trustee? – Cllr l'Anson proposed in favour, seconded by Cllr Pullin and unanimously approved.

**22/41/C**

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REPORT**

Report to Council on the draft Wells Neighbourhood Plan, Regulation 14 of The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

Cllr l'Anson presented three documents:

1. The draft Neighbourhood Plan. To be considered for approval before going to consultation by an independent examiner, then to a public referendum which will be accessible online and through leaflets to households.
2. The Wells Design Guide Masterplan.
3. A draft consultation leaflet.

On the Neighbourhood Plan Page 72 there is a list of Local Green Spaces. Wells City Council recently received a letter from Mr S Tudway-Quilter owner of The Combe, expressing concerns about this private land being included in the list. Cllr Denis and Cllr Powell said they appreciated the concerns of Mr Tudway-Quilter and that The Combe should be removed from the list of Local Green Spaces. Cllr Osman had not had access to the letter but agreed in principle and expressed concerns about making a recommendation on the Neighbourhood Plan so close to the election of a new Council.

Cllr Powell proposed that land belonging to Mr Tudway-Quilter be withdrawn from the list of Local Green Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan, seconded by Cllr Kennedy. The proposal was carried with one abstention.

Cllr l'Anson proposed to accept these documents, minus the inclusion of The Combe, as a basis for the Consultation, providing the new Council in May will be in agreement. Seconded by Cllr Kennedy and unanimously approved.

Cllr Rust suggested that Cllr l'Anson be invited back to present this Neighbourhood Plan to the new Council after the May elections, and Cllr l'Anson expressed a willingness to remain as Chair of the steering group if required.

**22/42/C**

**REPORT ON TRAFFIC CALMING IN WELLS HIGH STREET**

Cllr l'Anson and Mr S Luck, the Town Clerk, attended a meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March with Matthew Prince from SCC to discuss a feasibility plan which will consider traffic calming at junctions on Portway and Tucker Street, and also High Street. Funding has been secured from SCC. The Wells Transport Plan would improve access within Wells to wheelchair users, pedestrians and cyclists.

Cllr Rust reminded Cllr l'Anson that the Planning Committee recommended that the plan focus on the High Street rather than include other locations.

Cllr Denis proposed that the feasibility study include all locations in the traffic calming plan, Cllr Kennedy seconded. Proposal was carried with 3 votes against.

**22/43/C**

**TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Rust gave a report that a very old, rare but broken Porcelain tea set circa 1770 had been unearthed in the Wells & Mendip Museum garden. It is in need of conserving and repair. A Crowdfunder has been set up and raised £3000 so far of the £7900 needed. A donation of £30 will include a year's membership to the Museum. A video on YouTube shows the conservation process and the Crowdfunder link is <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/china-comes-to-wells>

**TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Cllr L Rogers (Mendip District Council)

- MDC will be considering the revised planning application from Lidl next month. Cllr Rogers confirmed that she was not opposed to this nor the pedestrian crossing. She confirmed that the contractors dealing with the demolition of the Travis Perkins building have been contacted regarding complaints of debris from the site.
- Cllr Rogers reported that bins in the moat area of the City should be emptied 3 times a day, a contractual obligation of Id Verde, but she will contact them as it is not happening.
- The next stage of the Dulcote path is in hand and there is hope that the 76 miles of Somerset Circle will be completed.
- MDC are investigating establishing a 5 year permit for pedestrianisation of the Market Place. The reinstatement of disabled parking bays is under discussion. The points raised by C Price earlier about signage was acknowledged and will be looked into.
- MDC are keen to support Wells in regaining ownership of the Bishop's Barn. Cllr Rogers confirmed she will speak to the Charity Commission to speed up the transfer process.
- The Fosso Lounge were refused planning permission for a hotel above and are very likely to appeal the decision. MDC were collectively in favour of the plans.
- Cllr Rogers confirmed that she and SCC Cllr T Munt are collating a list of empty flats above shops in the High Street in a bid to bring them into use. Any information is welcome.
- Rats have become a problem in the city centre with rubbish from cafés, restaurants and businesses being a contributing factor as well as excess food put down for birds. MDC has an initiative to try to reduce food waste and people must be discouraged from feeding the birds. Wessex Water have been contacted about drains which require work under the High Street.
- Wells Community Network have been in touch with MDC regarding housing Ukrainian refugees. This will be done through Somerset County Council.
- The Food Bank is feeding 140 people a week, increasing from the equivalent of 9000 meals in 2019 to 80000 meals a year now. This is attributed to removal of some funds from Universal Credit and the economic upheaval of the pandemic. Pressure is being put on officials to increase support.
- The Rough Sleeping Project has a target to reduce rough sleeping by 2024. The Stepwise programme works to get people off the street and the Elim Connect Centre were provided with a grant to undertake this service. MDC are now taking this back in-house and the Elim Connect centre will lose this funding.

Cllr Pullin stated her opinion that Elim Connect Centre should still be providing this service. A cross party meeting has been arranged next week to discuss funding for maintaining the service.

Cllr T Munt (Somerset County Council)

- The Economic Community Infrastructure report is being discussed on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March.
- Senior leadership team briefings have taken place about Local Government Reorganisation which Mr S Luck (Town Clerk) has attended.
- There have been requests for the Police and Community Together meetings (PACT) to recommence and there are concerns by many of a lack of Police presence.
- Wessex Water are causing roadworks in connection with the drain problems.
- Covid reports show increasing numbers and the Blue School is heavily affected.
- Homes that are unfit for occupancy are causing concern.
- Electric trishaws from Weymouth were demonstrated in the Market Place, invited by the Wells Community Network who are looking at plans for their use in Wells, providing transport for care home residents in particular.

A discussion took place about the cost of £6k for purchasing a trishaw and the viability of someone taking it on as a commercial scheme for taking tourists around the city and locations for charging.

**22/45/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT**

Cllr Osman announced that he won't be standing in the upcoming elections and is looking forward to spending time with his family. He thanked Wells City Council members for giving him the opportunity to be Mayor.

Cllr Pullin expressed a wish to continue plans for a Baby Memorial Garden that were instigated by Cllr Osman.

Cllr Kennedy paid tribute to Cllr Osman and the Mayor thanked Cllr Osman for his many years' service as a City Councillor.

**22/46/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022, 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.

Please visit our Wells Neighbourhood Plan page at [www.wells.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan](http://www.wells.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan) to view documents.

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