

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28TH JULY 2022 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas

**COUNCILLORS
PRESENT:**

Cllrs: L Agabani, J Browne, T Butt Philip, S Cursley (Mayor), D Denis, S Eden, G Folkard, D Orrett, S Powell, T Pullin, T Robbins, H Siggs, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE:

TC Assistant: C Woodland
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
Mace Bearer: Melanie Goody
4 members of the Public
Cllrs: T Munt (SCC), M Rigby (SCC), E Hobbs (SCC)

22/95/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr N Kennedy
NOT PRESENT, NO APOLOGIES RECEIVED
Cllr E Knott

22/96/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
No declarations received.

**22/97/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE
30TH JUNE 2022**
Cllr P Welch requested an amendment to the wording on Page 2 22/84/C. The amendment was approved. Minutes of the previous meeting were signed by the Mayor.

22/98/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Mayor.

Matilda from Sustainable Wells informed the meeting of the "Wilder verges" project which is hoped will encourage a more biodiverse city. Sustainable Wells has applied to MDC to manage a site at Tor Hill. There will be a consultation with residents and the document distributed at the meeting includes information to which Councillors can refer, should they be asked questions about the project.

Cllr Mike Rigby (Portfolio-holder for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation) informed the meeting that there are three items he would like to report:

- i. Working with SCC Cllr T Munt on a variety of issues around the city, such as collapsed drains, paving slabs, un-adopted roads.
- ii. Cllr M Rigby spoke to the meeting about the threat to the 173 bus service. The bus operators will soon provide a plan for how they expect future bus services to look. Somerset is at 70% of the level of usage pre Covid and Government funding will be set at present levels. Cllr M Rigby advised anyone concerned to contact First Bus and that there is a petition set up by Cllrs: T Munt and T Butt Phillip. SCC are starting a Marketing campaign to encourage people to start using the bus, especially with fuel costs increasing.
- iii. Connecting Devon and Somerset is a programme to bring superfast broadband into homes where commercial services haven't reached. It has had mixed success. One of the contracts has been cancelled and that will affect this area. Mitigating measures are being looked at to make up for the failure of the contract.

WCC Councillors expressed their concerns about the 173 bus and its necessity in an area that is already poorly served, and there is a Climate Emergency. A bus user group has been set up, and information about where the petition will be available will be shared.

Cllr T Butt Phillip asked Cllr M Rigby a timeline regarding the bus operator's review of services. It's anticipated that consultations from operators will come in two weeks' time and that any changes to services will take place in mid-October.

Cllr J Browne mentioned the poor state of the bus station. Cllr E Hobbs reported that he has conducted a review of shelters in the District and he has met with Mike Berry and work is in hand to clean the Bus Station.

22/99/C PRESENTATION FROM WELLS FOOD BANK

Representatives Sue Marland, Margaret Mitchell and Sarah Meachen shared information with the meeting and provided bank account figures.

- They are financially viable but that the food bank needs to expand and financial donations are always needed.
- There was a large increase in the people who are using the food bank and require an increase from 2 to three sessions per week.
- They have fed 546 people in July in the BA5 and surrounding area.
- The Foodbank has a very small group of volunteers - 15 to 20 per week who do a variety of tasks such as cleaning, organise parcels, restocking shelves and creating shopping lists.
- Supplies are sometimes unavailable and shopping around is required.
- Wells Community network are a big help in running the service and thanks were conveyed to them from the organisers of the Foodbank.

Cllr T Butt Philip asked if the Foodbank had found larger premises so that they can expand. Sue Marland replied the current premises are 1500 sq. ft. but 2500/3000 sq. ft. would be ideal, at ground level. A hybrid or pantry type scheme would be possible with more space and any suggestions for a bigger premise to operate from would be gratefully received.

Cllr S Cursley thanked Sue, Margaret and Sarah for their presentation and their hard work over the years and encouraged Councillors to visit the Foodbank.

22/100/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

(i) 29th July The Children's Band of the National Youth Brass Band, Wells Cathedral

(ii) 29th July Wells Art Contemporary, Wells Cathedral

(iii) 31st July Wells Tennis Club 125th Anniversary

(iv) 27th Aug Meet the Sikhs, Cathedral Green

(v) 29th Aug Wells Moat Boat Race

(vi) 18th Sept Commemoration of the Battle of Britain, St Peter & St Paul's Church, Shepton Mallet

Wells Moat Race - Cllr T Robbins asked that any interested parties to submit an entry, to get in touch with him if they want to take part in the Wells Moat Race.

22/101/C FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 14th July.

22/102/C PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 21st July.

Cllr D Denis informed the meeting that thanks were expressed to Sustainability Officer, Emma Jakins, for her work at Wells City Council and suggested that the occasion of the Annual Parish Meeting be fitting for a progress report on the Climate Emergency.

Cllr S Cursley (Mayor) approved this inclusion to the Annual Parish Council meeting.

22/103/C WELLS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

Cllr D Denis presented the Draft Neighbourhood Plan for approval. The plan has been examined by consultees and edited. The twelve-page summary consultation document will be delivered to all residents.

Cllr T Butt Philip asked with whom the consultation took place, as no information had been presented to the Council regarding their findings. Cllr D Denis is to check with Mr A l'Anson. Cllr D Denis proposed that Wells City Council adopt the Neighbourhood plan and take it to consultation with Wells residents within the months of September and October. Cllr D Orrett seconded the proposal and the majority were in favour.

22/104/C COUNCILLORS MONTHLY SURGERY

To receive an update from Cllrs J Browne and S Cursley (Mayor).
Cllr J Browne reported that the first surgery had been a success, they had helped a number of people with a variety of issues and signposted others to appropriate services.
Cllr S Powell thanked Cllr S Cursley and Cllr J Browne for hosting and suggested a third Cllr present to act in a 'meet and greet' capacity would be preferable.
Facebook Community groups as well as Wells Voice were suggested as platforms to promote the surgery in addition to WCC Facebook page and notice boards.

22/105/C NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM (NPT) NEWSLETTER

Cllr S Cursley (Mayor) will contact a representative of Wells Neighbourhood team to invite them to attend September's meeting.

22/106/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- (i) Citizens Advice - Cllr D Denis provided an update. A room has been allocated at Portway Annexe for Citizens Advice to install a pilot service aimed at helping people who don't have access to a telephone or computer. The Citizens Advice service report that they are responding to enquiries at pre Covid levels.
- (ii) WCC Bus Link Group report from Cllr D Denis. A meeting has been organised in the Town Hall for 8th August 2022 at 2pm for users of the 173 bus service and will give them an opportunity to air their concerns. Cllrs: D Denis, T Butt Phillip, H Siggs are liaising with people who want to be involved. Cllr T Butt Phillip suggested that Cllr S Cursley (Mayor) write to First Bus.
- (iii) Sustainable Wells report from Cllr D Denis. There has been an application to Mendip District Council to manage some areas of land for rewilding.
- (iv) Wells & Mendip Museum Trustee Report was presented by Cllr H Siggs. No questions were received.

22/107/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr T Munt (SCC) provided a written report.
Cllr T Ronan (MDC) submitted a report on 28th July 2022, which was distributed after the meeting.

22/108/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

- i. Cllr L Agabani reported that the Planning and Environment Committee has two vacancies and requested Councillors to join. Cllr T Butt Philip volunteered to fill one of the vacancies until April 2023.
- ii. Cllr L Agabani reported that the new Wells Tourism Website goes "Live" on 1st August 2022 and suggested that Councillors take a look at it and give their feedback.
- iii. Cllr D Denis made a suggestion of an informal meeting during August, as an opportunity to share visions and objectives for the Local Community Networks which will be created by the Unitary Somerset authority commencing in April 2023. There was an interest by several Councillors to attend the informal meeting and that date be identified and arranged.

22/109/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 22nd September 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.

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