

## WELLS CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Cllrs: L Agabani, S Cursley (Mayor), D Denis, S Eden, G Folkard, N Kennedy, D Orrett, S Powell, T Pullin, T Robbins, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk: Steve Luck  
Town Clerk Assistant: C Woodland  
WCC Staff: C Hobbs  
Mace Bearer: M Goody  
8 members of the Public  
Press: A Vallis  
Cllrs: T Munt (SCC)  
Cllr E Hobbs (SCC)

**22/110/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs: T Butt Philip, H Siggs, J Browne

**NOT PRESENT, NO APOLOGIES RECEIVED**

Cllr: E Knott

**22/111/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

Cllr Robbins declared an interest in agenda item 11

**22/112/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 28th JULY 2022**

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor. Cllr D Denis announced that the Sustainable Wells rewinding consultation papers have gone out and a representative of First Bus has been asked to attend the next full Council meeting

**22/113/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

A presentation was made with gratitude to M Goody on her retirement after 9 years of duty as the Mayor's Mace Bearer. A presentation was made to Steve Luck (Town Clerk) for 25 years' service with Wells City Council.

**22/114/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mayor's Diary**

(i) 29<sup>th</sup> Oct, Wells Classic Motorcycle Club AGM, Deputy Mayor attending

(ii) 31<sup>st</sup> Oct, Arnold Wills, Choristers meeting in Town Hall

(iii) 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov, Founders Day Service and AGM, Alms-houses

(iv) 8<sup>th</sup> Nov, Wells Floral Art Club, Little Theatre

(v) 12<sup>th</sup> Nov, 80<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Bath and Wells, Wells Cathedral

(vi) 12<sup>th</sup> Nov, Antony Gormley celebration with Project Factory, Wells and Mendip Museum

(vii) 13<sup>th</sup> Nov, Remembrance Civic Sunday Service (*robing from 9.30am*) All Councillors were encouraged to attend

(viii) 18<sup>th</sup> Nov, Wells City Carnival

(ix) 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov, City of Wells Probus Club 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner, Wells Town Hall

**22/115/C REPORTS FROM NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE TEAM**

(Report attached)

PC: Darren Pearson and Dan Williams reported an increase in graffiti but 2 arrests made. There has been an increase in shoplifting in the Queen Street area.

Cllr I Messenkampf asked about the statistics regarding violent crime and how they are measured and where they occurred. PC D Pearson reported that although there had been incidents of violent crime, they were taken seriously, but not high level. PC D Williams reassured the meeting that Wells is a safe place to live.

Cllr E Hobbs (SCC) asked if a "Close Pass" team was operating in Avon and Somerset Police. PCs D Pearson and D Williams were not aware of the team but mentioned that evidence of poor driving if caught on body or dash cam was investigated. PCs D Pearson and D Williams expressed an interest in discussing this further with Cllr E Hobbs with the potential for holding a cycling safety awareness day to educate drivers who endanger cyclists.

Cllr T Robbins reported an increase in drug paraphernalia discarded in the Recreation Ground. PC D Pearson asked that any person with a concern to report it to the Police.

Cllr T Munt asked how the issue of untaxed/un MOT'd vehicles be dealt with. PC D Pearson asked that reports of vehicles be sent to the Neighbourhood team. PC D Pearson mentioned that all statistics of crime were able to be found on the attached report as well as contact details for all personnel.

A member of the public suggested a site be found for graffiti artists to showcase their work and remove the need for placing graffiti in unwanted areas.

#### **22/116/C CITIZENS ADVICE MENDIP PRESENTATION**

##### **Ian Byworth, Chief Executive Officer**

A report was presented to the meeting regarding the impact on the service as a result of the increase in cost of living and effects of Covid. They assist people with PIP payment applications and appeals, debt management advice and more (Report attached)

The Citizen's Advice Kiosk/Pod is now open at the Portway Annexe for people seeking assistance and has been well received. Citizen's Advice has expressed a wish to have an additional kiosk/pod within the Town Hall.

#### **22/117/C PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on:

(i) 18th August 2022

(ii) 15th September 2022, under delegated authority

(iii) 20th October

Cllr D Denis presented the minutes. Cllr I Messenkampf volunteered to fill one of the spaces on the Planning Committee meeting.

#### **22/118/C OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 and 6<sup>th</sup> October.

Cllr L Agabani reported the new Outside Spaces Team are now at their new location.

Councillors are invited to visit and liaise with M Johnson (OS Manager)

Cllr S Powell asked for an update on the progress of the tree survey work at the Cathedral allotments (22/54/OSE) The Town Clerk reported that the Surveyor will complete the work after surveying the trees at the Cemetery. M Johnson has met with a representative at the Bishop's Palace. Some of the trees are ancient apple trees and the work is complex.

Cllr D Orrett praised the Outside Spaces team for fast work removing graffiti near the Cathedral

#### **22/119/C FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and 13<sup>th</sup> October.

Cllr T Pullin presented the minutes and reported that grants were given to Local Radio, Wells Community Network, Wells Lions and the Drumming Club at the Portway Annexe.

Cllr P Welch requested information regarding the resignation of the Archivist and was informed that she had returned to a previous employer.

#### **22/120/C EXTERNAL AUDIT 2021-22**

To receive the External Auditor's Report.

Cllr T Pullin presented the audit and The Town Clerk confirmed that no matters had been brought forward.

**22/121/C**

**BRITANNIA INN**

Application for the Britannia Inn to be registered as an asset of community value.

Proposed by Cllr T Butt Philip.

The Town Clerk in the absence of Cllr T Butt Philip reported that a Community group were forming and Cllr T Butt Philip had approached Wells City Council with the possibility of the Britannia Inn being added to the Mendip Register as an Asset of Community value. A temporary measure of 6 months to delay a sale in order to give a community group time to act. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that he will meet with Cllr T Butt Philip and provide him with the documentation, but that the procedure is difficult with no guarantee of success. A brief discussion took place with a member of public and Cllr L Agabani regarding price, whether the building had already been sold and which Agent is dealing with the sale.

**22/122/C**

**COUNCILLORS MONTHLY SURGERY**

To receive an update from Cllrs T Pullin and S Eden.

Cllr S Eden said that two people had sought advice. One was a request for information should a busker be too loud and the complaint process. The member of the public was informed of the Buskers Charter and where to refer complaints to.

The second member of the public wished to have the red post boxes in Wells repainted prior to the Coronation was informed that post boxes are Post Office property.

Cllrs: P Welch and G Folkard volunteered for the next Surgery on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022

**22/123/C**

**CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS**

To receive draft diary.

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors that civic events are in the diary until May 2023 Mayor Making is 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and Remembrance Sunday is 13<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

**22/124/C**

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

(i) Twinning Association update – Cllr D Orrett (attached).

Cllr D Orrett explained that the Twinning Association meet every 6 months and that funding was always an issue of discussion. Wells' three twinned towns perhaps receive better funding and that the Mayor who planned a visit recently and was cancelled due to the Queen's death was funding the trip himself. With the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twinning in 2023 that a bid is likely to be made to Wells City Council.

**22/125/C**

**CLIMATE EMERGENCY MOTION 2019 BY WELLS CITY COUNCIL**

Report annually to the citizens of Wells to demonstrate progress in making Wells, carbon neutral by 2030. [Climate Emergency Motion.pdf](#)

Cllr Denise Denis would like to draw attention to the Council that this commitment has not been met over the last 3 years and would like a debate on the climate emergency motion.

The resignation of the Sustainability Officer means there is no one to review the processes in Council and to carry work forward. The Climate Emergency Committee was disbanded due to Council Committees reforming into 2 committees.

Full Council 2019 Motion to declare a Climate Emergency has not been fully met:

Clause 2- we have not undertaken any measurements of carbon emissions as a baseline - so will be unable to prove how and if Wells will be carbon neutral by 2030.

Clause 3 - has been met

Clause 6 - No reports to Full council on actions taken to address the emergency from 2019 until 2022

C Woodland (Town Clerk Assistant) was thanked for a comprehensive report presented to Planning Committee

Clause 7- There have been no annual reports to City of Wells residents on an annual basis to demonstrate progress in making the City of Wells carbon neutral by 2030

Cllr L Agabani clarified that each committee of Wells City Council take on environmental issues and congratulated the work that had been done and demonstrated in C Woodland's report.

A discussion took place about the re-employment of a Sustainability Officer if the budget allowed and the environmental implications for Wells.

Cllr D Denis asked for the formation of an Environmental Steering group/working parts and Cllrs: S Eden, G Folkard, I Messenkampf, S Powell volunteered to join Cllr D Denis.

**22/126/C LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORKS (LCN) CONSULTATION**

To receive sub group’s recommendation.

Cllr D Denis proposed that the recommendations are agreed -The meeting voted unanimously.

**22/127/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Cllr T Munt reported that the SCC budget is under pressure due to rising energy bills. Council services are being called on increasingly and there are difficulties in recruitment of Staff. There is a shortage of Social Housing. Unitary work is causing a large amount of work in aligning all the services in time for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

Somerset Climate Business Summit in September, where 60 businesses attended. They reported on the reductions in their carbon footprints and reduced costs involved in that. Public Health School Nursing team has been rated “Good” by Care Quality Commission (CQC) and commended on the safeguarding and high quality of care.

Cllr T Munt reported that nearly 1 in 4 children has a Special Educational Need (SEN) in Somerset and is a large workload for Social workers, psychologists.

Somerset recycling rates have increased to the highest rate to date and comparing well with the rest of the country. Plastic recycling has soared due to the success of the blue bag scheme.

Road work complaints have been noted. Tree work has been planned for Priory Road and Bishop’s Parkway as they are on the Carnival route.

Cllr T Munt explained that Wells City Council have a dispensation to delay their submission, regarding LCNs. It was also explained that at the start of the new administration of Somerset County Council, there were no plans or budget for LCNs and the wishes of Wells City Council be considered and budgeted for.

The Town Clerk expressed concerns about budgeting for Unitary when Wells City Council are yet to be informed which services might be allocated to them. Cllr T Munt’s advice was to budget for every eventuality. Somerset County Council will only fund Statutory services.

Cllr L Agabani asked if the figures for recycling include commercial waste and was told that they don’t and there is no likelihood of commercial waste being managed by SCC.

Cllr T Munt explained that environmental or arts projects require some money to be found first before money can be gained from public funding.

Cllr L Agabani asked about solar panels and trees. Cllr T Munt explained there needs to be consideration as to where panels are installed.

Cllr G Folkard asked whether there was the potential for a new school in Wells for children with special educational needs. Cllr T Munt responded that all locations with the population size of Wells require such a facility. There are 121 permanent exclusions and 7000 fixed term exclusions from school. These figures being concerning due to County lines criminals targeting vulnerable children who are not in school.

**22/128/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT**

None received

**22/129/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 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: .....