

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 1st SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Chair), T Butt Philip, D Denis, N Kennedy, D Orrett, S Powell

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk/RFO, S Luck
Outside Spaces Officer, M Johnson
WCC Cllrs: P Welch
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
Wells Voice, Andy Vallis
2 Members of the public

Non-attendance: Cllr E Knott

22/41/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr S Eden

22/42/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26th July 2012.

Cllr T Butt Philip is a member of Somerset County Council.

22/43/OSE MINUTES OF THE CITY CENTRE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH JUNE 2022

The minutes had already been presented to Full Council and were agreed and signed as a true record.

Cllr Powell raised an issue with hanging baskets in Priest Row. A resident has purchased their own baskets but has made a request to WCC for them to be watered. This has been declined as we are unable to include private homes on the watering circuit due to limited time and resource within the Outside Spaces Team. WCC only water the baskets purchased by the WIB scheme.

Discussion took place on whether the WIB scheme should be increased to include additional streets close to the city centre to enhance its appearance for visitors. It was agreed for Matt Johnson, Outside Spaces Officer to look at the increase in costs involved and report back to this Committee.

Cllr Denis explained using volunteers for 'dead heading' WIB plants had not happened this year, but will be considered for next year.

The WIB Presentation Evening is due to take place on Friday 14th October, 6pm in Wells Town Hall, all members of this Committee are invited to attend.

22/44/OSE MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Cllr Welch advised Edgar Philips, Artist in Residence at the Bishop's Palace was moving into the Portway Annexe. He will have a studio and amongst other things hold sessions for residents who are mentally physically disabled. This gives an opportunity for his artwork to be displayed at the Annexe.

22/45/OSE OUTSIDE SPACES

- i. Skateboard park - Lead Cllr L Agabani and Bev Smith (skateboard project) gave an update on the progress of the Skateboard park. Three sites are being considered: 1) The existing site between Waitrose and The Blue School, 2) The Recreation Ground (now owned by WCC), 3) Next to the Wells Leisure Centre (land belongs to MDC).

Bev confirmed £65k had been raised so far through community fundraising. The target is to raise £350/400k, over 18 months.

The committee were all in agreement to allow the Town Clerk and Outside Spaces Officer to proceed with reviewing the three different proposed sites.

- ii. Matt Johnson, The Outside Spaces Officer gave a presentation. Matt has been looking at assets that may transfer to WCC as part of unitary in order to understand what costs would be involved. Matt to provide a copy of his presentation to the committee.

The Outside Spaces Team are in the process of moving to their new premises.

- iii. To support the SCC Ecological Emergency Policy 2022. This initiative was supported. Cllr Denis wishes the Outside Spaces Team to consider not always using machinery when maintaining certain hedges and verges.

'No Mow May' is likely to be in force this year. It must be communicated so local residents are made aware.

The committee were invited to attend a Wells Environment Network meeting at Wells Town Hall on Monday 5th Sept, 7pm chaired by Simon Nash, former Chair of Somerset Wildlife.

Cllr Orrett had received a few objections on suggesting weed removal in Sadler and Broad Street. Once a working party was formed and the work carried out, feedback was positive.

22/46/OSE PORTWAY ANNEXE

- i. The Town Clerk gave an update.
The bookings are rising, £400 taken in June, increasing in subsequent months and looking to increase to £1,900 for September.
As previously mentioned by Cllr Welch, Edgar Philips will be using the building as his studio and paying rent for the usage.
Citizens Advice Mendip no longer provide an instant face to face meeting, they will be installing a kiosk for people to visit and make contact. This facility will provide a private area to make a call and should a face to face meeting be subsequently required, space at both the Portway Annexe and Wells Town Hall will be available. No charge will be made as this is supporting a valuable service to the community.
- ii. To support the agreement to create a Ukrainian Support Centre.
Karen Deverell explained SCC are funding a number of 'Welcome Hubs'. In Mendip they will be situated in Frome and Wells. Activities are already being held at the Portway Annexe such as English lessons, conversation cafés.
Funds are available to provide this service and cover the cost of employing someone for a year on a temporary basis.
The committee were all in agreement to carry on supporting this 'Welcome Hub' at the Portway Annexe.

22/47/OSE BISHOP'S BARN

- i. To receive an update on the transfer from the Town Clerk
The Bishop's Barn transferred to WCC on 5th August. MDC have now transferred the funds of £555k. ID Verde will continue on a 2-year contract to cut grass/empty bins. WCC staff are now cleaning the toilets which will need some improvements to be made.
- ii. To discuss the appointment of additional public members to the management group
A management group needs to be formed made up of 4 councillors and

community representatives. This will be discussed further at the next management committee meeting on Thursday 29th September, 7pm, Wells Town Hall.

- iii. To receive an update from the Outside Spaces Officer on initial works plan on the Recreation Ground
High impact improvements are being made such as tree tidying, graffiti removing. Cllr Powell requested the management group meet with Matt Johnson in the recreation ground before their meeting on the 29th.
Cllr Butt Philip asked for guidance on Trees and TPO rules in the recreation ground, Matt Johnson agreed to report back.
- iv. To discuss initial works and upgrades to play equipment
WCC are looking to install an accessible roundabout making the play park more inclusive.

22/48/OSE PROPERTIES

- i. To note the completion of the Town Hall electrical survey.
The full electrical survey has identified a few improvements: a new fuse board was fitted, improved emergency lighting is required, the disabled lift to the first floor has a fault. These are being overseen by Kevin Westwood, Facility & Administration Officer.
- ii. To update the transfer of equipment to the new Outside Spaces unit.
This will be completed within the next 3/4 weeks. Councillors are welcome to contact Matt Johnson and arrange a visit the new premises.
- iii. The Old Post Office premises in the Market Place is now back with WCC and will be re-let after 28 days.

22/49/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr Powell wished to note how impressive the WIB hanging baskets are in the City. A big thank you to everyone involved.

Cllr Agabani welcomed Matt Johnson, Open Spaces Officer to the Committee and wished him luck in his new role at WCC.

22/50/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 6th October

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private property report.

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date: