

## WELLS CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: J Browne (Chair), T Butt Philip, D Denis, D Orrett, S Powell (Vice-chair), G Robbins

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk: S Luck  
WCC Staff: S Glendinning  
Somerset Councillor: T Munt  
5 members of the public attended

**Non-attendance:** None

**24/01/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Cllrs: S Eden, N Kennedy

**24/02/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
None received.

**24/03/OSE MINUTES OF THE CITY CENTRE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 (Recreation Ground & Bishop's Barn)**

Cllr Powell wished to alter 23/107/OSE CCTV wording to read 'no anti-social behaviour was visible to date'. This was agreed.  
The minutes were signed.

**24/04/OSE MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr Hornage asked why the public are asked to speak at the beginning of the meeting as this then prevents them from commenting on what is raised later.

Cllr Butt Philip advised council meetings were for making decisions, the public are invited to comment at the beginning of the meeting to allow their opinions to be taken into consideration. It is to the discretion of the Chair whether the public are allowed the opportunity to speak later in the meeting.

Mrs Ann Rowe stated she was disappointed with the play equipment available in the City for small children. As equipment has broken it has not been replaced. There is no provision for children with disabilities. Due to lack of funds available in this financial year, Wells City Council are only able to maintain the play park. The priority currently is maintaining the trees in the area that are unsafe.

Mrs Rowe also raised the issue of the cleanliness of the toilets in the Recreation Ground. It was explained the toilets are cleaned twice daily, morning and afternoon.

It was questioned what time the toilets to the side of the Town Hall are scheduled to close. The Town Clerk explained this depends on the usage of the Town Hall and staff available. We are unable to leave them open late into the evening due to previous episodes of anti-social behaviour. The Town clerk agreed to look at the signage and make the hours of opening clearer.

## **24/05/OSE RECREATION GROUND**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the following:

- i. Tree survey, planned works  
Following receipt of the first tree survey, a local arborist was instructed to carry out a high-level climb of the trees. Two trees were identified as being a concern that weren't picked up in the original survey, more information is being obtained. All dead wood considered a danger to the public was removed. Cosmetic work to remove overhanging branches had been requested, this had not been possible but they are now working on a two-metre exclusion zone. Planning permission now needs to be obtained as the trees hold a TPO. £10k has been put aside in next year's budget for work to be carried out, once permission is given.
- ii. Bowls club  
The Town Clerk has met with the club. They wish to create disabled access by moving a hedge. The Town Clerk had advised them to go ahead.
- iii. Refreshment stand tender  
A tender document has been circulated and no response has been received to date. The park area is close to the High Street where there is a lot of competition for food and drink, it is a difficult proposition to make viable. The committee will be kept updated on any progress made.
- iv. Sensory garden  
Cllr Denis has met with the Outside Spaces Officer to discuss the sensory garden. A further meeting will now be set up with the member of public, Sylvia Hanks, who originally raised the idea. The Town Clerk suggested Chamberlain Garden, Tor Street could also be considered for a reflective area.

## **24/06/OSE BISHOP'S BARN**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the following:

- i. Cleaning inside and removal of graffiti  
The walls and floor inside of the barn has been cleaned. The insurance company have carried out an inspection and have renewed the policy for a further 12 months. Two oak doors need to be repaired/made secure and wood in the barn requires fire retardant treatment. The lighting also needs improving. Specialist expert help is now required to look at making any improvements.
- ii. To agree initial listed building application for remedial work to doors etc.  
  
It was proposed, seconded and unanimously approved for the Town Clerk to proceed with obtaining quotes from at least three specialists in this field to repair/secure the oak doors, improve the lighting and carry out fire retardant treatment.  
  
Once the quotes are received they will go before Full Council before obtaining permission to go ahead from Somerset Council, English Heritage and Secretary of State as it is Grade 1 listed.

## **24/07/OSE CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

Cllr Denis advised the Annual Parish Meeting takes place in March where an update to Wells City residents on actions Wells City Council has taken to reduce carbon footprint is provided. The report attached is for this purpose. Cllr Denis asked for the

committee to accept and approve the report. This was agreed unanimously. A copy of the report was requested and agreed to be placed on the Wells City Council website.

It was confirmed the climate budget that has not been spent in 2023/24 will be carried forward to next year, 2024/25.

**24/08/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT**

Cllr Orrett raised the safety of crossing from Ash Lane into College Road where a cavity in the pavement has appeared. Cllr Butt Philip will look into what work Somerset Council have planned and confirm timings.

**24/09/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (Outside Spaces, Wells in Bloom, Portway Annexe)**

**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:** .....

**See minutes above 24/07/0SE**

**Climate Emergency Annual Report 2024**

**Climate Emergency Working Group 2023-2024**

Cllr Denise Denis, Cllr Sarah Powell, Cllr Deborah Orrett, Cllr Georgie Robbins, Cllr Gordon Folkard, Maddy Milnes and James Mochrie

**Climate Emergency Working Group Aims** (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timebound).

1. Develop, lead and/or enable, in conjunction with residents, local businesses, community organisations and Unitary Council Sustainability leads, a minimum of three agreed projects that have one or more of the following objectives:

(a) Promote a better understanding of energy loss and savings, leading to lower energy usage (b) Promote the use of green infrastructure and renewable technology to generate energy. (c) Promote and develop training and employment potential in both energy production and energy saving areas. (d) Encourage the use of low carbon alternatives to the private car. (e) Strengthen links to tackle energy poverty (f) Reduce waste, through minimising packaging for example, re-using, and recycling

2. Support the work of the Wells City Council (WCC) on projects that relate to the Council's resilience objectives.

3. Work with the WCC and allied partners/projects to ensure joined up thinking with local organisations.

5. Work with other similar post holders across Mendip and Somerset to share good practice.

6. Identify opportunities for relevant funding, grants and awards and support business and community organisations with accessing these funds

**Outcomes from Strategies for 2023- 2024**

1. Winning Hearts and Minds Campaign March- December 2023:

- Climate Emergency Wells City Council webpage regularly updated, and posts added to Facebook.
- 2 online and street surveys to find out where people are in their understanding and journey for climate emergency actions. 56 people took part. In the second survey 90.63% respondents were worried about climate change and 50% rated climate change 10/10 as a concern for National Government, Somerset, and Wells. (appendix A)
- Coordinated a community event- WEN Open Day on 1 July at Portway Annexe to showcase local organisations working to improve the environment, protect biodiversity and mitigate effects of climate change- attended by 60 people and young persons.
- Manned a stand on the Market- 4 October to engage with the public and promote online survey.

2. Improved Knowledge and Understanding within the Council

- 4 councillors- D Orrett, D Denis, S Powell and G Robbins attended Radical Adaption for Parish & Town Councillors: Creating Green and Resilient Communities (on Wednesdays 11th, 18th and 25th October) run by Centre for Alternative Technology.
- Cllr Denise Denis attended a certificated course- Zero Carbon Britain: Carbon Literacy Training for SALC on Tuesdays 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023- along with other councillors in Somerset. Pledged to offer a Carbon Literacy Seminar to Councillors and staff in 2024.
- Monthly Reports to Wells City Council Outside Spaces Committee.
- Part night lighting- the Climate Group brought a proposal to Full Council for consideration to offer to support any future Somerset-led initiative. This was turned down on grounds that further work is required to provide more information for a fuller debate.

### 3. Worked with Local Partners and Organisations:

- The Climate Working Party members attended 4 Wells Environment Network Meetings over the year to link up with other organisations to share knowledge and assist in organising the WEN showcase event in October 2024.
- Avalon Community Energy is developing partnerships with Citizens Advice/ parish councils/Wells City Council to enable a bid for funding to help residents who are in fuel poverty. The Climate Group have supported this initiative from Maddy Milnes for a presentation to Full Council.
- Supported Bus Partnership to apply for WCC Community Grant and Cllr DD reports regularly to Full Council.
- Supported Litter Picking Volunteers led by Cllr Orrett.
- Tor Hill Lane Pilot project supported by WCC through signage and insurance and Outside Spaces team.

4. Climate Budget: £5000 allocated 2023-2024. Current spend £587 on training, and survey leaflets. Reserves were allocated by CWPG to replace windows Town Hall for energy efficiency but remains unspent. The CWPG request that these reserves are carried forward for this purpose to 2024-2025.