

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH JANUARY 2025 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: T Butt Philip, D Denis, S Eden, D Orrett, S Powell, G Robbins, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: RFO: C Woodland
Outside Spaces Officer: M Johnson
2 Members of the public

25/01/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Cllrs: N Kennedy

25/02/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None given.

25/03/OSE MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2024

- 24/87/OSE - Correction – Cllr D Orrett was nominated as Chair of the Committee, and Cllr P Welch was nominated as Vice-Chair.
- The Resolution tracker is still with the Devolution Officer.
- The table tennis table for the recreation ground is ordered and will be installed when the ground firms up. Bats / balls will be available to rent from Valentine's Coffee Cart.
- There is provision for the weed removal device referred to in 24/92/OSE in the 2025-26 budget.
- Bus station planting (24/94/OSE) - The Open Spaces Officer will instruct staff to tidy the planters.
- Signage for the recreation ground (24/95/OSE) – still awaiting consolidation of Council branding that will occur with devolution.
- There has been no feedback received following MP T Munt's meeting with SC Head of Licensing (24/99/OSE).

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Cllr G Robbins also mentioned the success of the Christmas Eve Community Event and thanked other Cllrs for their support on the day.

25/04/OSE MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Mr D Briggs of the Swan Singers addressed the Council with reference to an email enquiry he had made regarding a comprehensive list of dates and times of events in Wells all in one place.
The RFO said she would liaise with Mr Briggs to make a list of contacts from other organisations in Wells to try and achieve this and incorporate into the Visit Wells website. It would also be taken as a topic for discussion to the next Visit Wells meeting.

25/05/OSE

OUTSIDE SPACES

The Open Spaces (OS) Officer gave their report.

- The team are tidying hedges and verges and generally improving accessibility of paths and other winter preparations.
- The OS Officer and OS Administrator were gathering quotes and making financial preparations for devolution along with the RFO.
- Cllr D Orrett enquired about the OS team's response to issues around the City and what is within their remit.
- Cllr D Denis mentioned a tree had been taken down without authorisation on the land managed by Sustainable Wells at Tor Hill Lane, the OS team will take away and reduce to chippings.
- Cllr S Powell asked who is responsible for emptying dog waste bins, it was confirmed this is undertaken by ID Verde.
- Cllr G Robbins observed the Council needs to improve its communication with the public, so that they are aware of all the work that is undertaken by both Cllrs and Staff. A discussion around this took place.

25/06/OSE

PORTWAY ANNEXE

Cllr D Orrett reported that a meeting of the Portway Annexe management group had taken place earlier that evening. The Facilities Officer had informed them that several maintenance issues had now been rectified and gave statistics on room usage. Discussion is underway to relocate the Men's / Community Shed to Portway Annexe. The suitability of the site for a community fridge was also discussed, as well as other locations.

25/07/OSE

WELLS IN BLOOM (WIB)

i. Re: WIB competitions, Cllr D Denis reported the schools' competition will be going ahead in 2025 with support from the Bishop's Palace who will host the Awards and display entries. The OS Officer confirmed the OS team would be able to transport the wheelbarrows, providing their pick up and drop off around the schools was well coordinated.

ii. Re: the WIB plant outs, the OS Officer reported that discussion has been taking place around plans for 2025 and would be reported back.

Cllr D Denis has been approached by a member of the public with a suggestion incorporating Bishop's dahlias from the Bishops Palace. The OS Officer will discuss with the Bishop's Palace Gardener.

25/08/OSE

RECREATION GROUND

The OS Officer reported some fencing had been replaced. MTL had done works to trees that had been identified as dead or diseased or dangerously encroaching on roofs. Those adjacent to Park Cottage did not meet these criteria.

Cllr S Powell enquired about the changes made to a pathway within the Bowling Club site that has increased its overall footprint. Discussion took place regarding the impact of this on the legal agreement between WCC and the Bowls Club, and the inclusion of the Committee in any decision making.

25/09/OSE

BISHOP'S BARN

Cllr P Welch reported that he has had further contact from the Bishop's Palace regarding some form of partnership with WCC around use of the Barn, they have worked on a basic outline of a plan. He suggested a Working Group made up of both parties would be beneficial in order to discuss what each would hope to gain from such a partnership. This will be taken to full Council.

25/10/OSE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Cllr D Denis reported from the meeting of the WEN working Group:

- They are reviewing Eco Week 2024 and making plans for 2025.
 - The Act to Adapt initiative was ongoing.
 - The flood group had been in talks with Wells Golf Course with regard to concerns at Tor Hill Lane.
 - There are plans to put forward a grant application with Somerset Rivers Authority.
 - The Community Emergency Plan was being updated via a working Group incorporating Cllrs, the Devolution Officer and members of WCN.
 - A newsletter had been distributed promoting Tor Hill Lane wilder verges.
 - The WEN website is being upgraded.
- (Also see attached).

25/11/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr D Denis voiced concerns of parents of pupils of St Joseph and St Theresa Junior School, and the safety of pedestrians from cars accessing via Lovers Walk. It was agreed the OS team would look at reducing the hedge along this stretch of Lover's Walk, therefore improving visibility and help alleviate the problem.

25/12/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 6th February 2025

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date:

Climate Change Working Group Report to Outside Spaces 9.1.2025

1. The November meeting of the CCWG Group was attended by only 2 councillors, S. Powell and D. Denis. A meeting will be set for February.
2. Wells Environment Network will meet on Wednesday 13/1/25 to review Ecoweek 2024, thank participants and plan for Ecoweek 2025.
3. Act to Adapt Consultation still in progress. Somerset Wildlife Trust is developing a project on wildflower planting with Cathedral.
4. Flood Group Tor Lane in November 2024 - looked at ways to “slow the flow” with SWT FWAG officer. Golf Club maybe able to install holding ponds and is seeking permissions and advice. Somerset Rivers Authority new grants available to parish councils to assist in scoping flood prevention. Cllr Denis requests that WCC leads on a grant application working with partners such as Golf Club, Cathedral School and other landowners e.g. Somerset Council.
5. Cllr S Powell and D Denis attended the Somerset Prepared Community Resilience Conference 6/11/25 and were encouraged to look at developing a Wells Communities Prepared Plan with WCC and local community organisations such as WCN. CCWG had set an aim 18 months ago to work on an emergency response plan and would like to propose to Full Council that WCC develop this as WCC and Community Emergency Response Plan.
6. Tor Hill Lane Wilder verges project sent out a newsletter in December, to local residents in Bekynton Ave, which gives a positive account of the project and contact numbers to the local residents. There has been tension with one local resident which resulted from the resident taking over some of the verge without consultation with Sustainable Wells, and in turn breaking the terms of the license with Somerset Council, if left unchecked. Sustainable Wells has worked to resolve the lack of understanding through the newsletter to all residents and direct communication with the resident.
7. Cllr Denis reported that the WCC Climate and Environment page has been updated and would welcome feedback.