

## WELLS CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: T Butt Philip, D Denis, D Orrett, G Robbins, P Welch

**IN ATTENDANCE:** RFO: C Woodland  
Outside Spaces Officer: M Johnson  
The Mayor: Cllr J Browne  
SC Cllr and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt  
WCC Staff: S Glendinning  
2 Members of the public

**25/13/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Cllrs: S Eden, N Kennedy, S Powell

**25/14/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.

Cllr Denis advised she was a volunteer at the Bishop's Palace.

**25/15/OSE MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025**

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

**25/16/OSE MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Chris Horridge spoke on two issues.

- He questioned the Outside Spaces Officer on why paving stones and tarmac had been laid under the Valentine Coffee van, when the van could have been moved to a position where tarmac was already laid. It was explained that the ground under the van had begun to sink and the existing position needed to be maintained as this location was stated on the licence with Somerset Council.
- Letters and emails have been exchanged with S Luck, Town Clerk on trees that border his property. Mr Horridge gave a long explanation on the history of events, having involved a solicitor. He felt the matter had not been resolved. Cllr Denis suggested this would be better dealt with outside of the meeting, following the correct complaints process.

Lavinia Byrne spoke next:

- The access from South Street car park into the Recreation Ground has been shut off by a newly built wall. There was no public consultation, public are already stepping over it or are making another route around the wall. S Luck, Town clerk had been contacted and he had explained a member of public had fallen and broken her collar bone, so the work was carried out quickly for health and safety reasons. It was agreed for this to be discussed later in the meeting 25/20/OSE.

## **25/17/OSE    OUTSIDE SPACES**

The Outside Spaces Officer updated the committee on the following:

- Preparations are being made to get ready for summer
- Work has been carried out on the bank of the Shepton Mallet bypass
- A piece of equipment has been removed from the Skatepark due to rotting wood, the park is now looking quite depleted. The committee will need to decide whether any investment is needed before the new skatepark project is able to proceed. It was suggested, the park users need to be kept informed by placing notices in the park and on social media.
- A collection of branches from a tree had been made in the Tor Hill Lane area at the request of Cllr Denis. A contractor had cut the tree and not cleared up. The Outside Spaces Officer explained there had been a lot to clear but it had been completed.

Cllr Denis advised Wessex Water would be carrying out a project in Tor Hill Lane to improve sewage, the lane will be out of action for three weeks. Cllr Denis has asked sustainable wells to check that they will not be destroying all the wildlife friendly planting whilst the work is carried out.

Cllr Orrett raised an issue of safety for parents/guardians dropping off children to St Joseph & St Teresa's School in Lovers Walk. Visibility needs to be better from where you cross from Lovers Walk into the school entrance, which can possibly be achieved by cutting hedges back and widening the footpath access. The Outside Spaces Officer requested to meet with Cllr Orrett at the location to discuss the best way of resolving.

Cllr Denis asked for the Outside Spaces Team to remove weeds in gutters/gullies in Sadler Street, near the Ancient Gate. It is currently causing the area to flood. It was acknowledged that this is a Somerset Council responsibility as part of the Street Scene functions, however, WCC will determine if resource can be applied to support it.

## **25/18/OSE    PORTWAY ANNEXE**

Cllr Orrett provided an update.

The Community Shed are having to leave their current location so they had approached the Portway Annexe as a possible new location. WCC Facilities Officer, had looked at a number of locations within the Annexe to accommodate the needs, however upon review a suitable location cannot be provided at this time. Cllr Orrett referenced other locations within the city which the user may wish to explore.

## **25/19/OSE    WELLS IN BLOOM (WIB)**

Cllr Denis provided an update.

The WIB school competition letters will be distributed week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> Feb. The awards event is on 9<sup>th</sup> July in the Bishop's Palace.

## **25/20/OSE    RECREATION GROUND**

The Outside Spaces Officer provided an update:

- The new hard stand has been created for the Valentine Coffee van.
- The new wall has been created between South Street car park and the recreation ground as it was highlighted as a health and safety issue.
- There have been no breakages to park equipment over the winter months.
- Allowance has been made to paint the band stand in next year's budget.
- The table tennis table was scheduled to be installed in Spring.

Cllr Denis asked for a plan of tree maintenance and budget, once known for next year.

The Outside Spaces Officer has been approached by a member of public to plant a memorial tree in the recreation ground. Any tree planted will obviously require maintenance. Cllr Butt Philip stated that this needed to be included in a long-term plan for the area.

The subject of the wall having been built in the South Street car park blocking access into the recreation ground mentioned earlier in the meeting, 25/16/OSE, was discussed further. Cllr Butt Philip and Tessa Munt MP did not think it was WCC land. It was their suggestion that the matter should be discussed outside of the meeting and included on the March agenda.

**25/21/OSE BISHOP'S BARN**

Cllr Welch advised that the working group as referenced in Full City Council, would determine options for the future and further decision papers will be brought back to committee at the appropriate times.

Cllr G Robbins stated the current coffee provider had invested a huge amount of effort and time and was providing an excellent service on the days they are open in the park.

Cllr Butt Philip was of the opinion that a business case now needed to be formed, including timescales. Who is liable if the project makes a loss? He strongly felt no temporary parking should be allowed on the ground.

The land registry website still shows Somerset as owning the land. Cllr Butt Philip is looking into this.

Cllr Denis stated any building work being looked at needs to be handled by architects with expertise in this area.

The Chair thanked Cllr Welch for his work to date on this project.

**25/22/OSE CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

Cllr Denis provided an update.

There was no formal report at this meeting, a report would be provided for the March meeting.

**25/23/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT**

Cllr G Robbins attended the Pavement Access meeting earlier in the week. Drop kerbs were discussed and extending parking restrictions in the High Street. More information will follow.

**25/24/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Minutes signed by The Chair: .....

Date: .....