

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 6TH MARCH 2025 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: T Butt Philip, D Denis, S Eden, D Orrett (Chair), S Powell, P Welch

INATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
RFO: C Woodland
SC Cllr and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
3 Members of the public

25/25/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr: N Kennedy, G Robbins

Outside Spaces Officer: M Johnson

25/26/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

None declared.

25/27/OSE MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6TH FEBRUARY 2025

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

25/28/OSE MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Sallyanne Shallcross addressed the committee and explained the problems parents/carers are having whilst dropping/collecting children at St Joseph & St Teresa's Primary School.

Visibility from Lovers Walk when crossing the road into the school entrance is very poor. Visibility is obscured by a hedge and a wall. The Outside Spaces Team have already reduced the height of the hedge which has improved visibility.

The Town Clerk and Cllr Butt Philip had visited the site and agreed that the asset belonged to Somerset Council (SC), but that the ongoing management agreement between Wells City Council (WCC) and SC meant that WCC can support in remedial actions. It was agreed that the hedge will be reduced further by WCC as soon as possible. Cllr Butt Philip explained making alterations to the wall, installing railings, mirrors, moving the position of the crossing were something that he would explore with Somerset Council. He also acknowledges that whilst a Traffic Regulation Order may be the preference of the users of the space, this would be a longer-term change.

Lavinia Byrne asked for an update on the access from South Street car park into the Recreation Ground which had been shut off by a newly built wall. The wall is now felt to be a hazard as it is being used as a step to jump over, it has also made it difficult for deliveries to residents in the area. The Town Clerk advised that this was an item on the agenda 25/30/OSE.

25/29/OSE

OUTSIDE SPACES

The Town Clerk provided an update on behalf of the Outside Spaces Officer who was absent.

Preparations continue to be made ahead of the summer months, including thinning of brambles at Wells Bypass.

Planning is taking place ahead of devolution of services.

Cllr Denis asked for some brambles to be left as they are very important for wildlife.

Cllr Denis referenced that WCC didn't support "No Mow May" in 2024-25 and asked if this is something the Outside Spaces Officer or Town Clerk were willing to review as part of a wider strategy of management for open spaces. The Town Clerk agreed to look into this with the Outside Spaces Officer and report back to future committees.

Cllr Powell asked for the Outside Spaces Team to clear weeds in the High Street and Broad Street. The Town Clerk agreed to follow this up.

Cllr Denis asked for the finger signpost near Waitrose and Chamberlain Street to be looked at, as it wasn't pointing in the correct direction. This was agreed as part of the ongoing maintenance agreement with SC.

Cllr Powell asked when and where the table tennis table would be installed. The Town Clerk explained the ground needs to firm up after all the wet weather and a written update will be provided to the committee on the positioning of the table.

25/30/OSE

RECREATION GROUND WALL

The Town Clerk explained clarification had been sought; due to the length and width of the new wall, planning permission was not required.

The recreation ground space is now registered to Wells City Council.

A report from the Outside Spaces Officer had been circulated prior to the meeting where three options were offered for consideration.

Cllr Denis pointed out Option 2 & 3 required the cost of building the wall to be included in the total cost. The Town Clerk agreed.

Cllr Butt Philip still is unclear on who owns the wall. Somerset Council own the car park, so discussion should have taken place between WCC and SC. The Town Clerk agreed this should have taken place out of courtesy and that mechanisms were now in place to resolve this moving forward. Equally the Town Clerk has discussed the matter with relevant Somerset Council Teams retrospectively.

A discussion took place where Option 1 was preferred by most present.

A vote was taken, proposed by Cllr Powell, seconded by Cllr Butt Philip to proceed with Option 1 based on practicalities of the space and cost, which recommended leaving the wall in place as is.

The committee requested that in addition to this option, the Outside Spaces Officer provide a further paper to the next meeting to support any enhancements that be considered to make the area safer and consider new locations for the dog waste bin.

Four voted in favour of Option 1, one voted against, one abstained.

25/31/OSE

RECREATION GROUND TREE UPDATE

The Outside Officer had produced a report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Town Clerk explained she had met with Mr Horridge, local resident, to discuss the trees in the Recreation Ground. It was agreed for WCC to engage with the new tree officer for an independent view. Further updates will then be provided.

Cllr Powell asked for the tree surveys to be re-published on the Wells City Council website. The Town Clerk agreed to look into.

25/32/OSE PORTWAY ANNEXE

Cllr Orrett explained there was no update for this meeting as she had provided a summary of activity to date at the Annual Parish Meeting.

25/33/OSE WELLS IN BLOOM

Cllr Denis had taken some photographs of the bus station planters which will be circulated. The bulbs planted last year are beginning to show again so replanting has not been necessary. Cllr Denis requested the planters are managed by adding other plants such as lavender, rosemary. Sustainable signs were created last year which could now be included in the planters. Town Clerk agreed to take this forward and look at planting schemes across all WIB areas for the future. .

The Wells in Bloom children's competition will take place in July. Support is required from WCC with printing invitations etc.

Cllr Powell asked when the WIB sponsorship and the tree policy will be reviewed. The Town Clerk explained both were being considered.

Cllr Orrett complemented the winter planting around the City.

Cllr Denis asked for the planting to be boosted at Easter to ensure the City looks welcoming for visitors.

25/34/OSE BISHOP'S BARN

Cllr Welch explained a working party has been formed to build a partnership between WCC and the Bishop's Palace. The Town Clerk has now written to the working group to outline WCC's position. It will be discussed further at the next Finance & Council Matters Committee meeting on 13th March.

Cllr Welch asked what plans were in place for the Barn usage. The Town Clerk explained additional bookings are being considered. Cllr Butt Philip pointed out we are not the owners of the Barn, but the trustees. A better understanding of what this means needs to be obtained. This was agreed.

Cllr Denis asked for the gutters on the Barn to be cleared as they are full of leaves.

25/35/OSE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

- i. Climate Emergency Working party meeting notes
Cllr Denis presented her report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.
- ii. Proposal from Cllr Denis. Seconder Cllr D Orrett
Wells City Council will develop an Environment Strategy with Aims and Objectives based on the need to ensure resilience to predicted climate changes, and will work with volunteer groups and other organisations, such as Somerset Wildlife Trust, to introduce wildlife friendly, sustainable measures in the newly adopted green spaces, as well as the existing areas such as the Recreation Ground and Portway Annexe.

Adopting a more sustainable approach to managing our green spaces will improve biodiversity through Wells green spaces and gardens to meet the aims

and objectives set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.
The Town Clerk stated she saw this as a positive move forward and she was willing to support.

A vote was taken and all those present voted in favour of the proposal.

25/36/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr Powell stated that the boundary extension at the Bowling Club should have been brought to the committee. An amendment will be made to the lease when it next expires. This was agreed.

25/37/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 3rd April 2025

Minutes signed by The Chair: **Date:**