

ANNUAL CITY MEETING 2014

Minutes of Wells Annual City Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd April 2014 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Wells Town Hall.

Present:

City Councillors: The Mayor Cllr T Butt Philip (Chairman), Deputy Mayor Cllr C Briton, Cllrs: D Anderson, N Kennedy, J Parkes, C Price, G Wilson
City and District Councillor: D Unwin
19 members of the public

In Attendance: Town Clerk: Mrs F White. 1 member of the press

1. Apologies:

Cllrs: Brandon, Davies, Gibson, Siggs

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 10th April 2013

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, approved and signed by the Mayor.

3. The Mayor's Annual Report (see attached)

4. Open Forum: an opportunity to discuss matters of interest to the community

The Mayor invited people to raise issues of concern and led an orderly and interesting session.

The following matters were raised:

i. Tourism

Mr MacKay spoke about the importance of tourism to the city's economy. He feels strongly that the tourist information centre is now in the wrong place and asked for the City Council to consider bringing it back into the Town Hall as a matter of urgency.

There followed a wide-ranging and detailed discussion; there was a brief visitation to the history of the TIC but, on the whole, those present were keen to look to the future and seek ways to maximise use of new technology and new methods of promoting the City and its attractions. There was awareness that reduced funding availability will necessitate change. The Chamber of Commerce has recently funded translation of some tourist literature for Italian visitors and is keen to see more united efforts to produce this type of material.

The Museum representative, Mr A Webb, has opened discussions with the City Council, asking for a complete review of the situation; the Council has welcomed this.

It was suggested the City Council could divert funding from other budgets into supporting a new service.

ii. The future of the Recreation Ground and Bishop's Barn

Mrs P Billington, Silver Street, spoke about the recently proposed changes:

- She asked why the City has no voting rights on the Board of Trustees
- She said that the proposed scheme is very flawed
- She said the Barn has been mixed up with the Recreation Ground and asked why the Rec. has been involved in the plans for the Barn
- She explained why the curfew was appropriate for 2010 and that nothing has changed to make it inappropriate now

- She spoke about the traffic implications for Silver Street – this is a lane, and has a narrow pavement for only part of its length. The lane is full of pedestrians during any major event in the city e.g. the Moat Boat Race.
- She referred to the promised consultation with residents and asked when that would happen – she is a resident and no one has come to speak to her about it.

There was a discussion of some of the proposals in the recent options appraisal. It seemed unclear whether more than one option was being considered and whether creation of car parking is under consideration.

City Councillors conveyed their support for the original purpose of the gift of the Recreation Ground, and that local residents should be listened to.

Mrs Billington added that the area is very safe, open and flat, particularly suitable for the vulnerable, the elderly, and the young – who use it.

iii. Housing Development

Mrs B Mickley expressed her concerns about the amount of housing development being permitted in and around the City.

Questions about the planning application process were answered by Councillors; some particular aspects of the planning system were discussed and explained.

The District Council has the decision-making powers but City Council tries to take an active role as a consultee in planning matters.

Mrs Mickley thanked the City Councillors for their efforts in this matter.

There being no further matters the Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.