

WELLS CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT WELLS TOWN HALL ON
THURSDAY 8TH JULY 2010 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT: Cllrs: J North (Chairman) D Anderson (Vice-Chairman);
T Robbins (The Mayor); C Borastero; M Brandon; C Price.

IN ATTENDANCE: S Luck (RFO) F White (Town Clerk)
I Burt (Chairman, Wells Tourism Ltd.)
4 members of the public (incl. Cllr Parkes)
1 member of the press

10/62F In view of known public concern, the Chairman first called for declarations of interests from Councillors regarding item 11.; he then invited the public to speak. All members declared a Personal Interest as members of the City Council, landlord of the Tourist Information Centre. Cllr. North declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest as a recent TIC Board member.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public spoke on the following matters:

- i. A question was asked regarding the cost of the new Friendship agreement: the signing visit was funded from an external grant, there was no cost to the City Council.
- ii. The need for the Council to promote the city by supporting the TIC and by objecting to Mendip District Council changes to car parking regulations: Attention was directed to item 11. on the agenda regarding tourism and to actions already in hand regarding car parking - Cllr Unwin is co-ordinating responses to MDC.
- iii. Concern at the closure of Thales and of the TIC - the City Council was urged to get to grips with the problem and support tourism as the only remaining industry. Attention was directed to item 11. on the agenda.

Mr I Burt, Chairman of Wells Tourism Ltd. was invited to assist the Committee with its discussion at item 11. later in the meeting.

The Chairman thanked all members of the public for attending and for their contributions.

10/61F APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: S Robertson (Deputy Mayor); H Siggs.
Mr P Male (Internal Auditor to the Council).

10/62F DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Item 11. As above.
- ii. Item 10.ii. Cllrs: Anderson, Borastero and Price declared Personal and Prejudicial interests as members of Wells Action.
- iii. Item 13. Cllr Brandon declared a Personal Interest as Mendip District Councillor.

10/63F MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th June 2010

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

10/64F PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

Cllr Borastero presented the minutes and reported from the Personnel Sub-Committee. The recommended adoption of the new model contract was proposed and approved.

10/65F STANDING ORDERS

The Standing Orders Working Group reported the Town Clerk has attended an SLCC Training session, details of the new model S.O.s will be examined by the group and should be ready for adoption in September; SALC and SLCC legal advice to Councils is that the model should be adopted with minimal alteration.

10/66F FINANCIAL REPORT

The accounts for June 2010 had been scrutinised; were proposed seconded and approved.

Cllr Brandon commented on the increase in income from Town Hall lettings; congratulations were sent to the Town Hall Manager on the results of his work.

10/67F REPORT FROM THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER

Report from the RFO was noted; a unified receipt system has been introduced in all the Council's offices.

The Mayor and staff are working with the British Legion to resolve the outstanding difficulties with war memorial plaques.

Work to the roof slates at the Cemetery will be needed before the winter.

10/68F AUDIT UP-DATE

The External Audit of the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2010 is almost complete; the basic audit has been finished with no additional requests from the auditor. Items selected for intermediate audit were procedural questions; these are being answered by the Town Clerk; the external Audit report for the previous year was brought to members' attention.

10/69F TO CONSIDER NECESSITY FOR WORKING GROUPS

A guidance note from the Town Clerk had been circulated. Cllr Parkes was invited to contribute to the discussion, as a valued member of a previous working group. After discussion it was agreed that working groups would be set up as required; two are already in place: one for Standing Orders and one to review the Committee Delegation Scheme. It was agreed a further group would soon be needed for the future of the empty Magistrates Court room. (Before the end of the meeting a Working Group was set up to investigate the possibility of information provision from the Town Hall re: closure of Wells TIC)

10/70F TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- I. Wells 5th/7th Scout Group, support to attend 22nd World Scout Jamboree: grant refused with regret; application does not meet

the criteria.

II. Wells Action – Bandstand Concerts 2010 request £500.

Cllrs Brandon, Borastero, Price (and Parkes as member of public) spoke about the application and then left the room.

The grant was proposed and approved; the group to be asked to submit application earlier in the season in future.

Councillors returned to the room.

10/71F TO CONSIDER FUTURE PROVISION OF A TOURIST INFORMATION SERVICE WITHIN THE TOWN HALL

Cllr North left the room; Cllr Anderson (Vice-Chairman) took the Chair. Mr Burt, Chairman of Wells Tourism Ltd, was invited to speak outlining what the service does; there was a constructive exchange of questions and answers. Mr Burt offered to provide a copy of "Guidelines for Tourist Information Providers in England"; it was agreed that a Working Group be formed: Cllrs Brandon, Borastero and Price, to work with the Town Clerk to investigate the possibility of information provision from the Town Hall; with Mr Burt available for advice. Cllr North returned and took the Chair.

10/72F CLOSURE OF MAGISTRATES COURT up-date

The Town Clerk reported the solicitor has approved the draft lease termination agreement from HMMC to be dated 30th July 2010. Payment of back-dated rent increase; together with rent to 30th July have been received. A new used is on schedule to occupy the side offices from October 2010; approval was given for decoration and refurbishment works, as per quote received.

10/73F CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL FOR WELLS

A letter was received from Mendip District Council Conservation Officer; it was agreed to invite him to speak at the September meeting.

10/74F ANY OTHER MATTERS OF REPORT

- i. Cllr Borastero reported an inspection of the Cemetery showed all to be in excellent order there.
- ii. Cllr Price reported information regarding hearing loops will be available for the next meeting.
- iii. A proposal for development of the City Council's website will be available at the next meeting.
- iv. Councillors were asked to review the Community Use Agreement for Wells Blue Sports centre, presented for signing.
- v. A date was set for an additional meeting of the Committee on Thursday 5th August at 7pm, for urgent business only.

10/75F DATE OF NEXT MEETING

DATE FOR ADDITIONAL MEETING:

7pm Thursday 5th August – urgent business only.

To note that the date of the next full meeting will be: Thursday 16th September 2010 at 7.00pm.