

WELLS CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE CITY & TOURISM FORUM MEETING HELD IN THE EAST ROOM,
WELLS TOWN HALL, WEDNESDAY 1ST JULY 2015 AT 6.00 PM.

PRESENT: Cllrs: A Gibson (Deputy Mayor); C Cox; T Robbins; G Wilson (Mayor)
Dr P Richards, Wells Cathedral
Mr A Webb, Wells Museum/Visitor Information
Mr P Welch, Vice-Chair, Wells Civic Society
Mr M Johns, Chair, Wells Chamber of Commerce

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: F White
RFO: S Luck, 3 members of the public, 1 member of the press

15/01CT ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Gibson was proposed, seconded, elected and took the Chair.

15/02CT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs D Baker; R MacKenzie; J Osman.
Ms R Martin, The Bishops Palace, Ms C Winter, Chair, Wells Civic Society,
Mr M Tobin, The Swan Hotel/Visit Somerset

15/03CT DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received. See 15/05CT

15/04CT MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mr Ian Pirie, a resident of Wells, presented plans for a Wells Brocante Fair for 2016. The idea was welcomed and the Forum gave its support to this proposal.

15/05CT VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

The Chairman summarised the purpose of the Forum, welcomed the co-opted members and invited each person to give their views.

(Mr Webb declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest as a Trustee of Wells Museum)

Comments from the public present at the meeting were also welcomed.

Mr Webb had circulated a paper summarising the thoughts arising from some previous discussions and research; this was found to be very helpful and he was thanked for all the hard work he had done.

It was generally agreed that the service is in need of up-grading and that help is required. There are some short-term projects that could be delivered to improve the immediate situation but it is important to ensure that a sound long-term strategic approach is established.

There followed a wide-ranging discussion encompassing:

- i. Options for the future -
 - A new information service at the Town Hall, either in the former TIC room or in the vestibule opposite the new Reception desk.
 - A new single point service elsewhere
 - New multi-point services at, for example, the Museum, Town Hall, Cathedral, Library, Bus Station, cinema. These would be primarily electronic touch screens linking to relevant websites, together with leaflets stands; and / or staffed at various times.
- ii. How these services could best be managed, who by and where based.
- iii. How these services could best be funded.

Appointment of Director to Mendip Tourism Ltd

The Town Clerk reported financial information obtained from the Chairman of the Directors of Mendip Tourism Ltd. There is grant funding available on a one-off basis for innovative projects; she advised that an application be made as soon as possible.

Mr Webb reported that there is a limited amount of Wells' funding from last year still in hand.

Wells is invited to send a representative to become a Director of Mendip Tourism Ltd on behalf of the city; this is not a Council or TIC nomination and the Forum has been asked to appoint someone. After some discussion it was agreed that the Cathedral administration would best fill this role at present. Dr Richards suggested Lindsey Mann, Marketing and Communications Officer, it was agreed that she would be an appropriate person; he was thanked for taking this responsibility.

Next Agenda

In conclusion of a very lengthy debate, the Chairman summarised the following matters to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting:

- i. long-term strategy – first we need to identify what it is that visitors want, (and what potential visitors might want)
- ii. Website – to identify what is required, what type of information is to be on the website
 - Who will provide the website (set-up). What will this cost
 - Who will provide on-going maintenance of the website
- iii. Touchscreens – options and costs
- iv. Locations:
 - What the Town Hall can offer
 - Any other suitable premises available in the town

Those present will try to return with all possible information to address these factors at the next meeting.

15/06CT FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- i. Chamber of Commerce: planning a Christmas shopping event Thursday 3rd December 2015 (provisional) currently awaiting responses from traders
- ii. Cathedral, Bishops Palace and Market Place – major filming taking place during the week 13th-17th July
- iii. Cathedral Green – Dalek Day 15th August
- iv. Moat Boat Race – 31st August

15/07CT REPORTS FROM OTHER GROUPS

- i. Civic Society – plans for a large mosaic map of the city to be sited outside the entrance to the Bishops Palace, on Palace Green between the Bishops Eye and the drawbridge.
- ii. Civic Society –placing blue site-identification plaques in the city. The next one will be for Edgar Wright, at the Blue School. Also a program of awards to local businesses.

15/08CT ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

No further matters.

15/09CT DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING: 6pm Wednesday 29th July 2015