

CITY OF WELLS

CITY OF WELLS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2017

Minutes of Wells Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 15th March 2017 at 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Wells Town Hall.

Present:

City Councillors: The Mayor Cllr A Gibson (Chairman),
Cllrs: M Brandon, N Kennedy, C Price, G Wilson, C Wride
City and District Councillors: Cllr J North (Deputy Mayor), H Siggs,
City, District and County Councillor: J Osman
Town Clerk: Mrs F White
RFO: S Luck
4 members of the public

Refreshments were served at the start of the evening.

1. Apologies Cllrs: R Ayres, C Briton, C Cox, T Robbins, D Swain, D Unwin

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 27th April 2016

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

Matters Arising

6.4: Parking in Priory Road; problems are on-going.

Cllr Osman has spoken to SCC Highways recently, a consultation with residents and businesses will be issued in the near future.

3. The Mayor's Annual Report

The Mayor welcomed everyone and spoke about her year in office. She had attended 50 council meetings and about 100 other Mayoral engagements.

Well over £1,000 had been raised to date for the Mayor's charities - Wells Little Theatre and Wells Arthritis Care.

The Mayor attends committee meetings each week and chairs the full council meeting once a month. She also meets every Tuesday morning with the Town Clerk, RFO and Chair of Finance, to keep on top of council matters; she thanked them for all their hard work and thanked the administration team and the Town Hall Managers for their kindness and support throughout the year.

This year Wells City Council has:

- Secured a Lengthsman post (City Centre worker)
- Launched a new VisitWellsSomerset website for visitors and residents
- Progressed the tourism forum so that our tourist attractions are interacting with the council, businesses and the public
- Taken on an additional toilet block from MDC, at Princes Road car park
- The Mayor has worked hard with officers to make sure that the Post Office remains in the Market Square
- Worked alongside the Open Spaces team to produce yet another Christmas lighting display; we are already working on the display for 2017
- Worked closely with MDC and film location managers to improve relations with residents and businesses to lessen any disruption caused by filming. Fees obtained have been used to restore the Victorian bus shelter in the Market Place; the next project will be to install protective bollards around the historic lamp post in the centre of the Market Place, to protect it from being hit by lorries again.

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- Dog bins have been installed at various locations around the city, in response to requests from residents
- The City Council regularly maintains grass verges and hedges on behalf of SCC Highways as part of our City Centre maintenance program, run from Wells Cemetery
- Respond to local requests: recently the area between Strawberry Way and Westfield Rd was cleared, following reports of an unpleasant incident there
- We work with our local Police Officer, PC Darren Pearson, who regularly gives up his own time to attend and report to Council meetings.

4. Reports from Chairmen of City Council Committees.

Planning Committee Chairman Cllr Wride

The Planning Committee meets twice a month in order to comply with the statutory timetable for consultation purposes. There were a few applications which caused public interest; the mobile telephone mast at Bath Road outside of the Budgens store/Petrol station and the housing development of 203 houses on the old Thales site (in the St. Cuthbert Out area). The Committee welcomes members of the public to attend the meetings and to speak to put their views and to reassure you that they are listened to.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been disbanded; this followed the disappointment of the failure of the application to secure funding for a Housing Needs Survey. It was decided at full Council that the Neighbourhood Plan would move ahead under the auspices of the City Council in the hands of Councillor Robbins and Councillor Price. I have no information as to results to date. The Committee is also responsible for Street Trading Applications under the new rules recently introduced and so far has approved one.

Councillors have also been involved in trying to sort out Wells' parking problems and the Committee has been consulted on parking restrictions in various roads in Wells which are to be put in place in the near future.

I would like to thank the Committee for all their commitment and hard work and their support.

Wells in Bloom Chairman Cllr Brandon

Summer 2016 was a very good season; many compliments were received on the floral displays in the city. The open days at The Rib were particularly popular with overseas visitors.

Preparations are now in hand for the coming 2017 season. New volunteers are always welcome, no gardening experience is necessary! Wells in Bloom is grateful to the Open Spaces team who have taken on the heavy work and hang the baskets. The Chairman expressed thanks to the sponsors and the City Council for covering the costs of the program.

Archives and Civic Assets Committee Cllr Siggs

This committee is the guardian of the traditions and heritage of the City Council. Heritage Open Day was very successful with over 500 people visiting the Town Hall; Cllr Siggs thanked everyone who volunteered and helped on the day.

The committee has carried out a review of the condition of the council's pictures and has begun a five-year program of restoration.

The Civic Review is conducted once every four years; this provides guidance on the civic role of the Mayor and Councillors.

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There was a question and discussion around the historic address of 'Mr Mayor' and its use to female holders of the position.

City Centre & Open Spaces Committee

Included in the Mayor's report

Finance & General Purposes Committee

Due to unforeseen circumstances no report was available.

All council and committee meetings are open to the public, papers and monthly accounts are published on the website. Enquiries are always welcome.

The Finance Officer was present and available to answer any questions from the public; no questions were put.

5. Ward District and County Councillors

The Mayor invited the Ward Councillors to speak and asked if there were any questions for them.

Cllr Osman replied to a question about parking enforcement in Southover. He said that there is a duty rota covering Wells each day; he will request particular attention to Southover.

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

- i. Chris Winter, Chairman of Wells Civic Society, spoke about the shared efforts in the community and some proposals from the Civic Society for the future. She thanked the City Council for working together with the Civic Society.
- ii. Cllr Kennedy asked for people's views on the recent City of Culture bid. There was an enthusiastic discussion about the idea. Cllr Osman reported a successful meeting had been held by the proposers with SCC; Cabinet had agreed support, had issued a press release and a letter; there may be staff available to help.

There were no further matters.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 6.45pm.

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