

Mayor's Report to Wells City Council's AGM

9th March 2022

Local government has a reputation for being dull. But that has not been the case for Wells City Council in the last 12 months.

Here are bullet points for the key developments:

1. The City Council has bought the Portway Annexe for a community centre. Developers were happy to pay £750,000 but we paid £590,000. A wide range of local groups want to use the centre and Strode College wish to use it for adult learning five days a week.
2. Mendip District Council have agreed to return the Recreation Ground and Bishop's Barn to the city, which should happen next month. These assets were given to Wells by the Bishop of Bath and Wells in late Victorian times but transferred to the newly formed Mendip District Council in 1974.
3. Now a major consolidation of local government will see Mendip District Council disappear in March next year with its assets split between a new Unitary county council and smaller councils like ours. This will provide Wells with the opportunity to have more control over our own destiny. We have researched the possibilities and had many discussions with our county council and other similar councils elsewhere in England.
4. The Market Place is being transformed from a car park to a much more attractive continental-style city square. There has been almost universal approval for the bollards we have installed.
5. A dramatically improved city council website has been launched to better inform residents and visitors.
6. The Neighbourhood Plan, which will give Wells some control over developers is almost complete.
7. A part-time Sustainability Officer has joined us to lead the Green Agenda and secure grants for Wells.

More detailed information will follow in the reports from our three committee chairs. Then there will be an Open Forum for you to ask questions and take part in discussions.

May I thank my fellow councillors, the Town Clerk and the Town Hall staff for all their hard work in challenging times.

Also special appreciation to Julia Wood, the part-time City Archivist who is retiring at the end of April. Always smiling, always professional and a wealth of knowledge about Wells.

Councillor Philip Welch
Mayor of Wells
8th March 2022