



WELLS CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL SUMMONS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL, WHICH MEMBERS ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND, WILL BE HELD IN WELLS TOWN HALL ON THURSDAY 26TH JANUARY 2023 AT 7.00PM

Please note this meeting will be recorded for the purpose of minute-taking.

Steve Luck
Town Clerk

Town Hall, Market Place
Wells,
BA5 2RB
01749 673091
e-mail: townclerk@wells.gov.uk

19th January 2023

AGENDA

Wells City Council has declared a climate emergency. Each agenda item must consider the impact on any policy and decision.

- 1 WELCOME TO CLLR G ROBBINS**
- 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
- 4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 22ND DECEMBER 2022**
To be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.
- 5 MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Mayor.
- 6 POLICE REPORT**

7 FIRST BUS PRESENTATION

By Mr Doug Claringbold and Mr Tom Hughes

- Issues facing bus services in and out of Wells
- Measures being taken to mitigate the impact of bus services affected

8 PRESENTATION BY SIOBHAN GOODWIN, BISHOP'S PALACE

Plans for developing community outreach programmes and strategic priorities.

9 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 8th March, 7pm, Wells Town Hall. More details to follow.

Civic Event

Legal Service, Wells Cathedral, Sunday 19th March, 3pm.

All councillors are invited to attend, more details to follow.

Mayor's Diary

- i. 28th Jan Mayor's Charity Quiz, Wells Town Hall
- ii. 2nd Feb Retirement of the Dean, Wells Cathedral
- iii. 10th Feb Les Miserables Performance, Wells Blue School
- iv. 16th Feb Ambassadors Meeting, Mayor's Parlour
- v. 17th Feb SCC Chair award, Taunton Rugby Club
- vi. 8th March, Annual Parish Meeting, 7pm, Well Town Hall **Cllrs to note**

10 PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on:

- i. 4th January 2023, under delegated authority (attached)
- ii. 19th January 2023 (to follow)

11 FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE (attached)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2023

- i. [Financial Regulations](#), as approved at the last Finance meeting, to be Adopted.
- ii. [Standing Orders](#), as approved at the last Finance meeting, to be Adopted.

12 STAFFING COMMITTEE (attached)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2023

13 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- i. Sustainable Wells update from Cllr D Denis (attached)
- ii. Wells and Mendip Museum report from Mrs J Rust (attached)
- iii. The Elim Connect Centre report from Cllr P Welch (attached)

14 REPORT FOLLOWING LAST COUNCILLORS SURGERY ON 16TH JANUARY

Councillors in attendance: Cllrs D Denis and P Welch (report attached)

- i. To agree letter to HSBC Bank

15 TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

To follow, if any received.

16 ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 23rd February 2023, 7pm**

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it will be proposed by the Mayor that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended.

Circulation List:

Town Clerk/RFO	Town Crier	Wells Chamber of Commerce
Town Clerk Assistant	WCC Internal Auditor	Wells Civic Society
Cemetery & Burial Officer	Wells Journal & Wells Voice	Wells Visitor Information
Outside Spaces Officer	Mendip District Council	The Bishop's Palace
Wells City Council members	District Councillors	Wells Cathedral
Serjeants-at-Mace	County Councillor	Wells Police Station
Mayor's Chaplain		

Sustainable Wells Update

The Repair Café and FreeCycle events were held 7/1 and 8/1 and despite the torrential rain they were attended by nearly 200 people over the 2 days with 47 items brought in for repair, though sadly not all fixable. The next dates will be 4/5 March. Both events are important in encouraging recycling and helping to reduce carbon waste and emissions.

The Sustainable Wells website offers 2 carbon footprint calculators [Carbon footprint calculator - Sustainable Wells](#) - . Well worth having a go and seeing if you can improve yours. I did mine 4 years ago and am pleased to say it has improved by taking note of where it was possible to change my behaviours (in the environmental sense!).

The Tor Hill Lane Nature Friendly Pilot Project is about to launch, dependent on the signing of the licence from Mendip District Council, and which will be passed over to Somerset Council on 1st April. The aim is to restrict the cutting of verges by Id Verde on a section of the footpath to once only, in July, with a light touch maintenance by the Sustainable Wells volunteers, to ensure the footpath is not overgrown.

There will be an annual survey of the wildlife to evidence the changes.

Sustainable Wells will encourage a community approach by recruiting volunteers become wardens to monitor the area and another group to litter pick, in collaboration with Cllr Orrett's group of volunteers. They hope to start these groups in March.

Cllr Denise Denis

18 January 2023

Wells and Mendip Museum Report

I'd like to share with the council some data from David Walker, the Honorary Curator, about the economic benefits which museums bring to an area:

'Work by South West Museums Development Partnership using our visitor figures and those of the whole of the South West demonstrates that:

In 2021/22, your museum had 26,002 visitors.

Wells and Mendip Museum Economic Impact of Visitors figures 2021/22:

Local Visitors: £158,227

Day Visitors: £402,761

Total Economic Impact of Visitors to the Local Economy: £560,988

Regional Median Total Economic Impact: £106,561

National Median Total Economic Impact: £179,961

For clarification the figure of 26,002 is the grand total of visitors to the museum - paying visitors to the galleries, those attending our events and activities, just visiting exhibitions at no charge, and those hiring our lecture hall and meeting room for events etc.

I think we can be justifiably pleased that our museum brought 561k into the local economy April 2021-March 2022 and underlines the importance of heritage to the local economy.'

Jenny Rust

WCC-nominated Trustee

THE ELIM CONNECT CENTRE REPORT from Cllr P Welch

Connect Community Church

The new leadership has now changed its name from the Elim Connect Centre to the Connect Community Church with a new logo.

However, it remains part of Elim, a world-wide Christian Church and their website says: "Our aim is to serve the social, physical, spiritual, mental and emotional needs of the community in an accessible way."

They have stopped the rental of rooms and intend to use them for other community purposes like bringing back the Youth Club that used to meet at the Connect Centre and setting up a Mother and Toddler Group.

The Elim Church agreed to pay for their Outreach service for this year – at a cost of £100,000 – after Mendip District Council withdrew their annual grant. Elim always said they could not afford to keep paying after this financial year.

The Outreach team have been seeking funding without success so far and are worried what will happen to the vulnerable people they support from 1st April.

The Elim Connect Centre's last quarterly report records that "Community Connect (known as the Outreach team) is a continuation of the work that has been done over the last 15 years for the community and is a rapidly evolving service whose focus now extends well beyond previous target domains of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness, though we continue to assist a plethora of people for whom these remain primary issues of concern.

"Since its inception in April 2022 the Community Connect Team has also been providing support to an ever-increasing number of local residents struggling with issues from navigating physical and mental health systems to optimising benefit eligibilities, from accessing crisis food resources to combatting social isolation, from identifying and accessing other specialist support services to personalised advocacy across diverse processes and settings.

"The team frequently transports individuals to key appointments that would otherwise prove unachievable and provides support at these to optimise outcomes. Our daily drop-ins provide a social lifeline to a burgeoning cohort for whom connection and community are fundamental to well-being."

In that quarter the team supported 134 individuals in total:

- **86** received intensive casework up to 12 weeks for the purpose of helping them manage their mental health, addictions, physical health, housing issues, finances and relationship issues including isolation and loneliness.
- **55** were signposted to a variety of agencies including, MDC, Adult Social Care, Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service, Second Step, the rough sleeping nursing service, counselling, CAB, YMCA, Housing Associations, GPs.
- **8** people who received extra tenancy support from us, who were coming out of homelessness and because of their multiple complex needs and lack of provision of care needed more support for a period of time.

Cllr Philip Welch
18th January 2023

Cllr Welch and Cllr Denis' Surgery Report

We were notified in advance by Reception, and by direct contact, that four individuals wanted to meet us. To ensure fair time to all four, we offered appointment times. This appeared to work well and it meant we were both present throughout.

1. The first resident's concerns were about the possible flooding of the Keward Brook which could impact on houses in Southover from lack of riverbank maintenance in sections of Keward Brook, notably upstream from the Palace Fields and along Silver Street. He had previously contacted City Councillors, officers from Mendip District Council, James Heapey MP, Tessa Munt (Somerset CC) and phoned the Environment Agency, but to date there has been no action taken.

We confirmed that the advice he received from Mendip to contact the Environment Agency was correct and advised him to write a letter to the Environment Agency stating his concerns, with locations identified on a map, and to copy the letter to Tessa Munt, James Heapey and ourselves. If this does not produce a result, we would then ask Wells City Council to write in support of his concerns to ask that the Environment Agency investigate and take appropriate action.

2. The second resident was Chris Winter, Chair of the Civic Society, who has been asked by the Civic Society to review the signage in Wells to develop a strategic solution to the following problems:

Posts without signs, several signs on a post, signs that are falling off or out of date, inconsistent sizes and shapes, and A boards obstructing pavements.

Tessa Munt joined the surgery by phone link (as she had been invited by Chris Winter to join us). Cllr Denis said Wells City Council had supported a review and update of signage in Wells 5 years ago and had contributed financially at that time. In her view after a brief walk around the city she could see there were two broken signs (one was the bus stop sign outside the HSBC) and the Information Centre Notice at Brown's Gate needs to be removed. However, her view was that most signage did the job it was meant to do adequately. Tessa Munt said that her view was that there could be improvements, particularly the exit from Waitrose car park onto Whiting Way.

It was agreed by Chris Winter that the previous survey of 2012 was out of date, and it would help Somerset Council to see a new survey. Tessa Munt advised Chris to send her findings to Mike Rigby, Portfolio Holder for Transport. If there is anything of urgency, then Chris should let him know ASAP.

3. St Cuthbert Out parish councillors Martin Cooke and Ian Humphrey attended the surgery to learn how Wells City Council was operating the new surgeries with a view to taking back good practice to their council.

We discussed the problems for newcomers to Wells, particularly on the new housing estates, with knowing which ward or parish they were in. Cllr Welch said that there had been an initiative in the past to encourage Wells estate agents to provide this along with other essential information. Cllr Welch agreed to suggest such an initiative to the estate agents and that it ought to cover both the St Cuthbert Out and Wells city areas. Cllr Denis said that Liverpool City Council make it a requirement of a landlord's licence to provide this information to new tenants.

We agreed that our two councils should collaborate more, and we look forward to more dialogue when the LCNs start to operate

4. A resident contacted Cllr Welch that afternoon to say she was very unhappy about HSBC's proposal to close their Wells branch and wanted to attend the surgery but was too ill so she was emailing her concerns, saying: "You will doubtless say that there is nothing that the local council can do to prevent the closure happening but I won't go down without a fight. I have written a strongly worded letter to HSBC HQ.

"I have tried to contact our MP's office but have not received a response as yet.

"There is such a strong case for keeping this branch open - the footfall is high, we are the smallest city in England with a Cathedral and a Bishop who will officiate in the forthcoming Coronation in May.

"We have two markets weekly plus other market functions which involve banking. Traders make great use of the branch and sometimes there are queues outside.

"I for one do not intend to do online banking, hacking is commonplace. I am speaking for others, some of whom are not even on the internet."

Cllr Welch replied saying: "I am sorry to hear you are unwell and unable to join us this evening.

“While it is true that a local council like ours has no control over a multinational bank like HSBC, as we residents can complain and express our feelings at the proposed withdrawal of this important service used by many local people.

“I am more than happy to ask the city council to write a letter of protest about the proposed closure to HSBC’s British HQ. And you can email a letter to the Wells Voice and the Wells Journal.”

16th January 2023