

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30TH JUNE 2022 AT 7.00PM

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, J Browne, T Butt Philip, S Cursley (Mayor), D Denis, S Eden, G Folkard, N Kennedy, D Orrett, S Powell, T Robbins, H Siggs, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: S Luck
TC Assistant C Woodland
WCC Staff C Hobbs
Mace Bearer C Price
2 members of the Public

22/76/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

Cllr T Pullin

NON APOLOGIES

Cllr E Knott

22/77/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.

**22/78/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE
12TH MAY 2022**

Cllr S Powell asked for an update regarding contact from MDC in connection with the Outreach Programme at Elim. The Town Clerk reported that he had received no response but that he would follow it up again

Minutes of the previous meeting were signed by the Mayor.

22/79/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Mayor.

Stuart Crocker, Chair Wells Food Network spoke about the Somerset Food Trail. Stuart thanked Wells City Council for the £500 grant that has contributed to the £35k total cost of organising the Food Trail. The aim of the Somerset Food Trail is to encourage the growth, demand and use of sustainably produced food. The meeting was also informed of the Nifty and Thrifty event planned for the 16th July 2022 which is run in collaboration with Sustainable Wells. Stuart acknowledged the hard work that WCC Sustainability Officer has contributed to the event and he expressed his regret that she was leaving the employment of WCC.

Cllr P Welch offered his assistance with publicity for the event.

22/80/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

i 1st July - Speech Day, Wells Cathedral School

ii 3rd July - Mayor Making, Wells Town Hall

iii 8th July - Wells Rotary Dinner, 75th Anniversary, Wells Golf Club

iv 15th July - WOWFest Opening Ceremony, Cedars Hall

v 17th July - Wells Classic Motorcycle Club, Wells Football Club

22/81/C

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that there was an additional outstanding vacancy on the Planning Committee as Cllr I Von Mensenkampff requested she be removed from the Planning & Environment Committee.

- i. Members of the **Finance & Council Matters Committee**, Cllrs: J Browne, S Cursley, G Folkard, T Pullin (Chair), T Robbins, H Siggs, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch - proposed by Cllr T Robbins and seconded by Cllr H Siggs. Members present voted in favour.
- ii. Members of the **Outside Spaces & Estates Committee**, Cllrs: L Agabani (Chair), T Butt Philip, D Denis, S Eden, N Kennedy, E Knott, D Orrett, S Powell - proposed by Cllr S Eden and seconded by Cllr L Agabani. Members present voted in favour.

The Town Clerk requested that two members considered stepping forward for the Planning & Environment Committee, otherwise two vacancies will be carried forward. No members stepped forward.

- iii. Members of the **Planning & Environment Committee**, Cllrs: D Denis (Chair), D Orrett, L Agabani, S Eden, S Powell, N Kennedy - proposed by Cllr T Robbins, seconded by Cllr H Siggs. Members present voted in favour. Two vacancies remain on the committee.

22/82/C

MANAGEMENT GROUPS

- i Cllrs: I Von Mensenkampff, S Eden, D Orrett, D Denis were voted to sit on the Portway Annexe Management Group
- ii Cllrs: S Powell, T Butt Philip, P Welch, L Agabani were voted to sit on the Wells Recreation Trust Management Group

22/83/C

OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the informal meeting held on 9th June were presented.

Cllr S Powell requested information 22/37/OSE about when residents were to be invited to sit on the Recreation Ground Trust. The Town Clerk assured that that would happen at the first meeting after transfer to Wells City Council.

22/84/C

FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

The minutes of the informal meeting held on 16th June were presented.

- i. Cllr D Denis requested information about Risk Assessments for volunteers such as the Wells in Bloom. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that all volunteers have a separate Risk assessment.
- ii. Cllr D Denis requested clarification on one detail in the Annual governance statement. The Town Clerk assured her that he would cover that in item 12 on the Agenda.
- iii. Cllr S Powell requested clarification of a £25000 donation to Wells City Council. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that he had no knowledge that this was being given by Mr R Green. Cllr D Denis expressed a concern that any money given should not prejudice any discussions on future Charter Fairs. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the donation was given by Mr R Green, an Organiser of the Charter Fair and a member of the Showman's Guild and for many years had involvement in the Charter Fairs with his family. Mr R Green has funded refreshments at the Swan for Organisers of the Charter Fair.

22/85/C

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr D Denis gave an update regarding the progress report on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and that there had been some changes. It will come to the next Full Council meeting and then after approval will go out to the public for an 8-week Consultation. Cllr D Denis respectfully requested that all Councillors read it and also to please assist with distribution when necessary.

Cllr H Siggs requested that it be available in a hard copy and was assured that it would be.

22/86/C

INTERNAL AUDIT

The Town Clerk presented the Internal Audit report for approval. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that there was a small “tick box” error on excise of public rights section of the audit. The error has now been remedied for this year. The date of submission error occurred due to the timings of Council meetings, but that all accounts are available for public scrutiny. The Internal audit was proposed by Cllr T Robbins, seconded by Cllr N Kennedy and passed unanimously by all members

22/87/C

EXTERNAL AUDIT

i To approve and sign the Annual Governance statements for the year 2021-22
ii To approve and sign the Annual Statement of Accounts for the year 2021-22
Cllr G Folkard requested clarification of the increase in borrowing figures in the region of £600K in the accounts for reasons of transparency. The Town Clerk responded that this was due to the purchase of the Portway Annexe for £590K plus costs and the Public Works loan of £630K covered everything. The Annual Governance Statement was proposed, seconded and approved. The Annual Statement of Accounts was Proposed, seconded and approved.

22/88/C

CIVIC REVIEW

To agree to the temporary suspension of the ruling on ‘continuous service’ and the wearing of red robes and replace with the ‘longest overall service’, subject to the agreed Civic Review. Temporary approval was sought due to the lack of black robes. A discussion took place about the temporary suspension. Cllr T Robbins proposed the temporary suspension, Cllr D Denis seconded. The vote was unanimously carried. Cllr L Agabani asked if Standing Orders are to be reviewed. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that Standing Orders will be reviewed by the Finance Committee. The Civic Review is due and will be conducted by the Finance and Council Matters Committee.

22/89/C

COUNCILLORS MONTHLY SURGERY

To propose that Wells City Councillors set up a monthly open surgery attended on a rota basis by at least two councillors to meet the public from 6.00pm till 7.00pm at WCC, ten days before any full council meeting starting on Monday 18th of July. A discussion took place about there being a rota and that it be shared around and that ideally, there should be a representation from not just one political group and that the surgery requires good publicity. All Councillors expressed a wish to be involved. Proposed by Cllr S Powell, seconded by Cllr J Browne and voted unanimously to proceed

22/90/C

WELLS CHARTER FAIR

To propose to set up a task and finish group to consider and review the Annual Wells Charter Fair which takes place in Wells Market Place on the first Saturday in May. A discussion took place about the appropriate time to hold a meeting as there is a meeting planned by the Charter Fair organisers in September 2022 and would it be better to wait. There were suggestions that it might be best to have our opinions clear before September as to how we want to proceed or whether we want to make changes to how the Charter Fair has previously taken place. Proposed by Cllr S Powell, Cllr D Denis seconded. Majority voted for the review. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that a Wash up Meeting about the Charter Fair will take place in the near future. Cllrs: P Welch, H Siggs, N Kennedy T Robbins volunteered to be in the group with S Powell as Lead

22/91/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- i To receive the Bus Link Officer’s report from Cllr D Denis
Cllr D Denis reported that 3rd to 11th September is Bus week and encouraged all Councillors to support the initiative by travelling on a bus. Services have been lost and many people struggle to get to appointments, work or college. Mendip Markets are letting Wells City Council have a stall on the 7th September and requested support from Councillors.
A discussion took place about the poor condition of the Bus station and the lack of money available from MDC to continue any improvements there. Bus shelter repair is planned, but there is a need for more available timetables to people who haven’t access to the internet and the provision of digital information at the Bus Station was suggested as being useful to Bus users.
- ii WCC Bus Link Group is to be set up by Cllr D Denise to which Councillors will be invited to join, with a view to meeting shortly.
- iii To receive the Sustainable Wells report from Cllr D Denis
Cllr D Denis reported that Tor Lane verges were prevented from being cut and that she has negotiated for them to be cut at a later date. There are two sites adopted for a pilot study. Cllr D Denis expressed regret at the resignation of Wells City Council Sustainability Officer as she felt that her contribution to Sustainable Wells had been “Outstanding”.

22/92/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr T Butt Philip apologised for the lack of a Somerset County Council report and confirmed that SCC were working on a format for future meetings.
The Town Clerk informed Cllr T Butt Philip that he had written to the Somerset Unitary team asking for a date for a meeting but, so far, had no response. Cllr T Butt Philip assured those present that he would try to resolve the issue.
The Town Clerk reported that he had received a late report from MDC, which he had circulated to members.

22/93/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr P Welch requested that Full Council receive a report from the Police with monthly figures and crime trends in Wells.
A discussion took place whether a written report would be acceptable or attendance by a Police Officer or PCSO.
The Town Clerk was asked to write to the Inspector at Shepton Mallet to request a monthly report be sent for Full Council meetings.

22/94/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be Thursday 28th July 2022, 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.

Minutes signed by The Mayor: **Date:**