

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 23RD MARCH 2023 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas

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

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

23/36/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllrs: N Kennedy, G Folkard, T Pullin

23/37/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022
None received.

23/38/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 23rd FEBRUARY 2022
Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

23/39/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
No members of the public wished to speak.

23/40/C POLICE REPORT
PCSO S White reported that in February 2023 there were 143 calls, with 57 crimes recorded. 18 thefts, 17 violence against the persons, 9 public order offences, 7 criminal damages. Police presence will be increased on Market days as there were two purse thefts. Work continues to manage speeding and organised begging. Police/public engagement activities are ongoing such as a recent visit to Little Wellies Nursery and spoke of stranger danger. St Cuthbert's Mini-Police attended the Wilfred Fuller training Centre. The group met with the police dogs, mounted section, drones and road safety unit and asked questions of officers about their roles and experiences.
Somerset East/ West Neighbourhood Policing came together for a team day. Each team presented a challenge they've faced and how those challenges have been combatted in order to inspire other teams. Wells team has proactively tackled the issue of E-scooters. Cllr S Powell asked about how buskers who breach the Buskers' Charter can be dealt with? PCSO S White will provide buskers with a copy of the MDC Buskers' Charter.
Cllr G Robbins asked if Wells had seen an increase in hate crime in relation to LGBTQ+ community. PCSO S White replied that there had been no reports. There is a Kaleidoscope group at the Blue School and Hate Crime champions in Avon and Somerset Police.

23/41/C WELLS DEMENTIA ACTION ALLIANCE PRESENTATION
Claire Chettoe gave an informative talk about how Dementia impacts individuals' behaviour, inhibitions, motor skills and perceptions of their surroundings and that sufferers of Dementia are more at risk of falls and trips. Wells Dementia Action Alliance work to break down the stigma and allay the fear that people have of the disease. Set up in May 2015 it comprises of a small group of Trustees working to make Wells a dementia friendly city. 100 awareness sessions have been delivered to 67 business/organisations in Wells. 1324 people have attended these sessions. The Wells Memory Café takes place every month at Wells Methodist Church Hall.

Information stands are at community events to raise awareness. An annual walk is planned to raise funds. This will take place on Sunday 26th March at 10am starting at the Moat. On 22nd May a Roadshow is taking place. Volunteers are always welcome to join the group. Cllrs S Powell and G Robbins expressed the benefits of the training provided for businesses.

23/42/C

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Diary

- i 23rd Mar, Symphony Orchestra, Wells Cathedral, Deputy Mayor & Mayoress attending.
- ii 24th Mar, U3A conference, Wells Town Hall
- iii 25th Mar, Oratorio Choir, Wells Cathedral
- iv 25th Mar, Portway Annexe Open Day
- v 27th Mar, Councillors invited to a tour at the Bishop's Palace
- vi 28th Mar, Visit to Wells City Archives with Annie Maw
- vii 29th Mar, AGM Abbeyfield, Abbeyfield House
- viii 31st Mar, AGM Wells Little Theatre
- ix 4th Apr, Somerset County Youth Concert Band, Cedars Hall
- x 13th Apr, Rachel Goodfellow running 45 marathons, Wells Cathedral
- xi 16th Apr, Bowl the first wood, Wells Bowling Club
- xii 17th Apr, Meeting with Bishop Michael Beasley
- xiii 20th Apr, Councillors invited to visit to Hinkley Point
- xiv 24th Apr, Spring Show 'Avenue Q', Wells Little Theatre

23/43/C

OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr L Agabani presented the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2023

- i Cllr D Denis asked about the repair of the streetlamp in item 23/17/OSE and was informed that the matter is still with SCC.
- ii Cllr H Siggs asked Cllr S Powell about progress of the meeting held on 17th March 2023 with English Heritage. It was reported that a positive meeting took place and that documentation has been requested from Wells City Council. The meeting agreed that the documents can be provided. Cllr S Powell also reported that setting a date for an Open day will be discussed at the next Open Spaces meeting and that there has been a suggestion that a "Friends of Bishop's Barn" group be set up. The Town Clerk confirmed that such groups are not Council led.

23/44/C

FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Cllr T Robbins presented the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2023.

Cllr D Denis requested further information on item 23/28/FCM regarding the VAT paid by Wells City Council. The Town Clerk explained which items have VAT added.

A brief discussion took place about the possibility of Wells City Council holding indoor markets at Wells Town Hall. Work is taking place by staff to set up a booking system. Portway Annexe - The Town Clerk confirmed that as the Portway Annexe hasn't yet operated commercially for a year that a balance sheet will be presented to the Finance Meeting by June 2023.

23/45/C

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr D Denis presented the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March.

Cllr D Denis reiterated the importance of reading the Consultation Statement in 23/24/PE.

A discussion took place about item 23/25/PE Reduction of speed limit on Kennion Road. Cllrs were supportive of the reduction and expressed a wish for 20mph limits throughout Wells. The Town Clerk reported that there were financial implications of City-wide changes to speed limits. Cllrs agreed to wait for the outcome of a Somerset County Council meeting scheduled for 5th April when 20mph zones will be discussed. Cllr S Cursley will attend a meeting being held at Wells Cathedral School.

23/46/C

WCC PLAN

Cllr D Denis proposed setting up a workshop comprising of three dates, to decide the future direction of the council. Cllr T Butt Philip expressed support. A discussion took place

regarding what the priorities should be, the venue and whether the workshop would self-manage or if Town Hall Staff would be involved. It was suggested that Cllr D Denis send some potential dates out to Councillors. Cllr T Robbins seconded the proposal and it was agreed.

23/47/C SUBMISSION OF WELLS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TO MDC AND THENCE SCC UNDER THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING (GENERAL) REGULATIONS 2012

- i Wells Neighbourhood Plan
- ii Wells Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement
- iii Wells Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement

Cllr T Butt Philip proposed that the Wells Neighbourhood Plan be submitted to Mendip District Council. Councillors voted unanimously for the proposal.

23/48/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr P Welch presented a report on the Outreach service that was previously provided by Elim Connect Church (attached). A brief discussion took place about the services provided and who will provide the service when unitary authority commences.

23/49/C REPORT FOLLOWING LAST COUNCILLORS SURGERY ON 13TH MARCH

Cllr G Robbins reported that 5 people attended and asked questions on the Bishop's Barn, street light's on Burcott Road being too bright, 15-minute cities, 5G, Enterprise prospects for young people and the cleanliness of public toilets

A discussion took place on the subject of 15-minute cities. The matter has become the subject of conspiracy theories and reassurance was given by Cllr G Robbins. Cllr T Butt Philip clarified that the principle of a 15-minute city is that communities have facilities within a 15-minute radius.

Cllr D Denis reported that new street lights on Burcott Road are LED. It is possible to apply for a shield to be added if i.e.; shining through a bedroom window.

A brief discussion took place about Youth Enterprise opportunities. MDC and Mendip Hub currently provide support. The Portway Annexe is available if someone wants to book a workspace desk.

23/50/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr T Butt Philip provided a report prior to the meeting (attached). A brief discussion took place regarding Local Community Networks (LCNs) and who will represent Wells City Council at the LCN. The first LCN meeting is not until June so this will be discussed at Wells City Council Meeting in May 2023.

23/51/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr I Von Mensenkampff reported that posters for the Campaign against Domestic Violence will be ready for distribution on 31st March 2023 and will be placed in areas where they will be seen by victims i.e.: Toilet doors, changing rooms. She has been asked to talk to Glastonbury Town Council about the campaign.

23/52/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 27th April 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.

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

REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The GP practices making up West Mendip Primary Care Network have issued the following statement:

As the Primary care network of West Mendip covering the 5 GP practices we are alarmed at the plan to withdraw funding for the Connect Outreach Support team. Over the years the GP practices have worked closely with the support workers and find their support absolutely essential in enabling the proper assessment of some of the most vulnerable patients in our PCN. The cessation of funding will not help the situation these vulnerable patients find themselves in. We would appeal to those involved to re consider the decision.

As clinical director and a GP in Wells I would be keen to meet with those involved to find out about the background to this decision and discuss our concerns going forward.

Yours sincerely
Mike Pearce
Clinical Director
West Mendip Primary Care Network

Glastonbury Health Centre

Dr Nick Matthews
Dr Anna Jackson

Wells Health Centre

Dr Helen Crawley
Dr Helen Clemence
Dr John Machling
Dr Sarah Trotter
Dr Kate Rush
Mrs Karen Polly

Glastonbury Surgery

Dr Richard Hughes
Dr Alastair Corfield
Dr Jane Hazlewood
Dr Karen Sylvester
Dr Amanda McCann
Dr Ian Craig
Dr Freya Jenkinson

Vine Surgery

Dr Robert Vriend
Dr James Nicholls
Dr Sarah Freeman
Sharon Morgan
Dr Simon Trotter
Dr Csaba Gogh
Dr Simon Lynes

Wells City Practice

Dr Mike Pearce
Dr Ruth Donlevy
Dr Nick Mottram
Dr Tim York
Dr Michaela Murray
Dr Tristan Martin

Report from Councillor Philip Welch, 16th March, 2023

County Councillors' report to Wells City Council – March 2023

Council finances

The council's overall projected overspend at the end of January (month 10) was £23.1m – a reduction of £1.2m compared to the previous month. This represents a 6% overspend on a £383.2m budget. Local Government finances remain extremely challenging. Whilst this is a move in the right direction, pressure on the budget remains high.

Local Government Reorganisation

This will be the last report from your Somerset County Councillors. The new unitary Somerset Council comes into existence on 1st April so next month's report will come from your Somerset Councillors.

Staffing

The appointment of "Tier 3" staff (Service Directors) is continuing, and should be completed this week. These positions are being filled by people from both County Council and District Council backgrounds. David Clark (Head of Law and Governance Services Mendip District Council), has been appointed as Service Director for Governance, Democratic and Legal Services and for the new Somerset Council. We hope to be able to give a full breakdown of these appointments next month.

LCNs

The first meeting of the new LCN will take place on in June, July or August. Initial dates for the first meetings of the 18 LCN have been scheduled, however we do not yet know which LCN will meet on each date. At present they will all take place at 7pm on a Monday, Wednesday or Thursday. It will be for each LCN to determine its own calendar of meetings beyond that.

Wells City Council will need to agree on its representative on the LCN in advance of the first meeting of our LCN, however the earliest that meeting could be is 8th June and the latest it could be as late as 9th August, so that decision doesn't necessarily need to be made before the City Council's AGM in May (and potentially could wait until the June or July meeting).

Planning

The members of the new Area East Planning Committee (from 1st April) were decided at the 1st March meeting of Somerset County Council. All Area Planning Committees will comprise 13 members – in this area this will be:

Chair: Cllr Nick Cottle – (Liberal Democrat, Glastonbury)

Vice Chair: Cllr Edric Hobbs – (Liberal Democrat, Mendip Hills)

Members:

- Cllr Adam Boyden – (Liberal Democrat, Frome North)
- Cllr Theo Butt Philip (Liberal Democrat, Wells)
- Cllr Martin Lovell (Liberal Democrat, Shepton Mallet)
- Cllr Tony Robbins (Liberal Democrat, Mendip Hills)
- Cllr Claire Sully (Liberal Democrat, Mendip South)
- Cllr Dawn Denton (Conservative, Frome North)
- Cllr Barry Clarke (Conservative, Mendip Central & East)
- Cllr Bente Height (Conservative, Shepton Mallet)
- Cllr Susannah Hart (Conservative, Glastonbury)
- Cllr Martin Dimery (Green, Frome West)
- Cllr Helen Kay (Green, Frome East)

The first meeting is currently scheduled expected to take place on Tuesday 2nd May at 4pm and meetings will generally be on the first Tuesday within “Area East” whilst Shape Mendip is the most likely venue for meetings, this location has not yet been finalised.

Community Engagement

The consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - the policy which sets out how an authority consults on planning matters, for the new council formally closed on 16th March. However, responses will be accepted up to 31st March and should now be emailed to:

localplanningpolicy@somerset.gov.uk

New specialist school for Wells

Somerset County Council has been successful in its bid for money from the Department for Education to set up a new 64-place school for 9-16 year old children with social, emotional and mental health needs and is located to be accessible to children from Wells, Cheddar, Shepton Mallet, Street, Glastonbury, Frome and the surrounding villages. The school is expected to open in three to four years. This school will be located on the edge of Wells (just outside the city boundary).

Buses

The Department for Transport has extended the Bus Recovery Grant and the current £2 local bus fare scheme. This is incredibly welcome news and makes the future of all bus more secure, at least in the short term. The 126 Wells-Axbridge continues to be supported by Somerset County Council and will continue to be supported by Somerset Council. Discussions between the authorities in Somerset and North Somerset continue and there appears to be progress with the idea of linking the 126 to an existing (rerouted) bus service in North Somerset to make it possible for people from Wells to travel beyond Axbridge to Weston-super-Mare and the communities in between.

Traffic lights

The Wells Signal Recovery Project is currently running on schedule with work on the Mountery Road and Burcott Road/Strawberry Way sites having been completed last year and Portway/Strawberry Way work almost complete.

Very loud overnight work at the Portway/Strawberry Way site during the week of 6th – 10th March caused a great deal of distress to neighbours, exacerbated by poor communication in the run up to the work being conducted. We are looking into what can be done about this, with a particular view to ensuring that the situation is not repeated.

Work will soon begin on the crossing at the south end of Strawberry Way (near Lidl), before moving to the Wookey Hole Rd/Portway junction and finally East Liberty.

Theo Butt Philip and Tessa Munt
County Councillors for Wells
23rd March 2023