

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: C Woodland
Assistant Town Clerk: C Woodland
WCC Staff: C Hobbs
Mace Bearer: G Woodland
Somerset Cllr: T Munt
Somerset Cllr: E Hobbs
1 member of the public

23/171/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: J Browne, N Kennedy

23/172/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None declared.

23/173/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 26TH OCTOBER 2023

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

23/174/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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

23/175/C PRESENTATION FROM THE YMCA

Mark Willcox gave a presentation for a potential future Youth Club in Wells project. YMCA are commissioned by local Councils to deliver Youth Work on their behalf. There are trained youth workers who run the clubs. The ethos of the YMCA is that it hopes to develop skills that will last a lifetime and that young people will gain confidence, develop skills and become good citizens. YMCA hope to commence with one session per week in Wells. Youth workers are trusted people for young people to disclose their concerns to and the YMCA has links with Social services. YMCA work by using a curriculum and offers a safe place to have fun, gain confidence and take part in structured activities. YMCA are also linked to the Young Carers scheme.

Mark Willcox answered the following questions:-

- Q. How many young people attend Youth clubs? Approximately 120 are registered and an average of 25 to 30 attend weekly.
- Q. What is the average age and what age do young people drop out? Age 10 – 19 and the drop out is often age 17.
- Q. Why is it a term time service? Funding is the reason. There is a link to term times but other services are offered outside that with warm spaces schemes etc.
- Q. Why do you feel Wells needs a Youth service? Our links with Community champions with NHS connect and Councillors show that there isn't a provision.

- Q. Is the £15000 being requested for one session per week? Yes, but if funding came from elsewhere then there would be the potential to increase.
- Q. Could the YMCA building be used for the Youth club? The building in question is not big enough to offer a club, but is used as offices for Youth Housing services. The building that is being looked at for the Youth club is the Elim Connect Centre.
- Q. Where does the £15000 funding come from? The funding usually comes from the precept.
- Q. How do young people find out about the service? Social media, school, word of mouth or through youth workers. It's open access. Parents complete the referral form. A £1 charge is required.
- Q. If the Elim Connect centre is used, is it with a church involvement? No, it's simply renting the space.
- Q. What are the drug policies? Young people who get involved with drugs will be supported through social workers and will be signposted towards further services.
- Q. Can you quantify the success of Youth clubs? Numbers who attend, feedback from valuation sheets and changes in behaviour after a few weeks of attending

23/176/C POLICE REPORT

Police did not attend the meeting. A report was not provided

23/177/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Invitation from The Mayor to join her after the 21st December meeting for Christmas Refreshments

Mayor's Diary

- i. 27th Nov Cathedral Chorister Evensong and Christmas Carols, Wells Cathedral
- ii. 30th Nov Regiment's Biennial Awards Dinner, London
- iii. 6th Dec 'The Inn-spectors' Performance, Wells Cathedral Pre-Prep School
- iv. 6th Dec St John Ambulance Presentation Evening, Wells Town Hall
- v. 9th Dec Crib Festival, St Cuthbert's Church
- vi. 9th Dec Oratorio Society Handel's Messiah, Wells Cathedral
- vii. 10th Dec Advent Carol Service, Wells Cathedral
- viii. 11th Dec Somerset Music Christmas Celebration Concert, Wells Cathedral
- ix. 17th Dec Wells City Band Christmas Concert, Cedars Hall
- x. 19th Dec Carols by Candlelight, Wells Cathedral

23/178/C OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE, BISHOP'S BARN & RECREATION GROUND

Cllr S Powell presented the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2023
No questions received

23/179/C FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Cllr S Cursley presented the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2023
No questions received

23/180/C PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr D Denis presented the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2023
No questions received
Cllr D Denis reminded all Councillors that the Neighbourhood Plan will go to Referendum on the 25th January 2024.
Cllr H Siggs asked if the written copy of the presentation delivered by the Church Commissioners agents had been received. Cllr D Denis confirmed that we were still waiting.

23/181/C REPORT FOLLOWING LAST COUNCILLORS SURGERY ON 13TH NOVEMBER

Cllr D Orrett reported that no members of the public attended.

23/182/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

No reports received

23/183/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

Cllr T Butt Philip presented the report that had been provided 23rd November 2023 (attached, page 5).

Cllr D Denis asked about continuity for Somerset Council after the resignations of Cllrs T Munt and M Rigby from their executive positions at Somerset Council. Cllr T Butt Philip clarified that both Cllrs will remain as Somerset Cllrs, will continue in their positions until the end of 2023 and the leader of Somerset will be working to transfer responsibilities.

The Town Clerk reported that he had received the amended "Memorandum of understanding" which will include an agreement that Wells City Council may repair small defects in pavements that occur and that work undertaken will be covered by Somerset liability insurance.

A brief discussion spoke about the benefits of this work to local residents, but that the limitations to the work undertaken be explained to residents of Wells. The Town Clerk explained he will be happy to explain the situation to retailers. The insurance cover remains the responsibility of Somerset Council.

Cllr T Robbins proposed that the "Memorandum of Understanding" be signed at the earliest opportunity and returned. Cllr Welch seconded. The proposal was voted on unanimously.

Cllr D Denis asked about scheduling of the LCN meetings as they are currently on a Thursday evening and Wells City Council meetings are on Thursdays.

Cllr E Hobbs (Wells and Rural LCN Chair) reported that a vote at the recent LCN meeting, concluded that it is very difficult to schedule dates that work for all attendees

23/184/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Fergus Brown, a parking attendant reported that there are difficulties in the Market Place with issuing tickets due to conflicting Traffic regulation orders.

Cllr T Munt reported that there is work in progress to sort the situation and to provide some disabled provision in the Market place and that only businesses will have access.

Cllr H Siggs asked that the disabled space for the Changing Spaces, at the rear of the Town Hall be kept clear at all times.

Cllr T Robbins asked that following many recent events in the Town Hall and the Christmas Lights going on up, that the hard work of Wells City Staff be acknowledged.

Cllr L Agabani asked that he had been approached by a young person who had observed that the victims in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict were not acknowledged locally. Also, the Council do not acknowledge local and national tragedies.

Cllr S Powell suggested that a minute's silence led by the Mayor to acknowledge any events take place before every Full Council meeting. Members agreed this was a good idea.

23/185/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 21st December 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:**

Item: 23/183/C Somerset Councillors' report to Wells City Council – November 2023

Council Finances

Somerset Council's Executive declared a financial emergency on 8th November and is taking a series of actions to close this year's budget gap, produce a balanced budget for 2024/5 and create a sustainable Somerset Council for the years ahead. More detail on this will be available in the coming weeks and months.

Asset and Service Devolution

As promised, the Leader of the Council has written to all city, town and parish councils with a list of areas which Somerset Council may not be able to provide in the future to enable a discussion with city, town and parish council about which services they would be interested in taking on.

Additionally, the Council's "Asset and Service Devolution Framework" is due to come before the Executive in January – city, town and parish councils will be given an opportunity to comment on the draft framework in the coming weeks.

To help manage the process of asset and service devolution, the larger city, town and parish councils (including Wells) are to have dedicated points of contact with one of the Service Directors – in Wells' case this will be with Sarah Dowden (Service Director, Regulatory & Operational) supported by Jonathan Stevens (Head of Operations).

Local Community Networks

The Wells & Rural LCN took place on Thursday, 16th November. This meeting was due to take place in Godney, but owing to flooding, was moved to Wells Town Hall.

In addition to an update on Somerset Council's finances. The LCN received a presentation from the Volunteer Network.

A suggestion was made that future meetings should all take place in Wells, however this was not met with support and meetings will continue to rotate around the area. We have requested that in future not all meetings take place on Thursdays.

No members of Wells City Council (other than Cllr Butt Philip) attended, and we would encourage any Wells City Councillors who are interested in attending the next meeting which is currently scheduled for 1st February.

Traffic lights

The Wells signal recovery project has been completed.

Buses

Details of the tender for the 126 (Wells-Weston super Mare) are awaited, but we hope that the new service will commence in January, with the support of both Somerset Council and North Somerset Council.

Pavements

Somerset Council has responded positively to Wells City Council's request to take over pavement maintenance. We expect the Town Clerk will update the meeting on progress.

Executive changes

Cllrs Tessa Munt and Mike Rigby have announced their decisions to stand down as Executive Lead Member for Children, Families & Education, and Transport & Digital respectively at the end of 2023. An announcement about their replacements is expected later in the year.

**Theo Butt Philip and Tessa Munt
Somerset Councillors for Wells
23rd November 2023**