

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 6TH APRIL 2023 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani (Chair), D Denis, D Orrett, S Powell (Vice Chair), G Robbins

IN ATTENDANCE: Outside Spaces Officer: M Johnson

WCC Staff: C Hobbs

1 Member of the public

Non-attendance: N/A

23/33/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllrs: T Butt Philip, S Eden, N Kennedy

23/34/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26th July 2012.

None declared.

23/35/OSE MINUTES OF THE CITY CENTRE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 2ND MARCH 2023

The minutes were presented and agreed and signed as a true record.

Cllr S Powell requested an update on vermin control in item 23/17/OSE. M Johnson will contact the Blue School and ask the Outside Spaces Team to take a look.

Cllr S Powell 23/21/OSE requested an update on the cypress trees. M Johnson reported that he had contacted Planning regarding the TPO status.

23/36/OSE MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Nobody wished to speak.

23/37/OSE OUTSIDE SPACES

M Johnson reported that planting had begun at the cemetery and planting other public areas as well as cutting verges.

Wells in Bloom – Cllr D Denis reported that sustainable planting will take place and that some members of the public would like to be involved. Cllr D Denis will liaise with interested parties and M Johnson. The bus station location was suggested.

M Johnson reported that evening watering will be trialled this year, winter plants have been retained to add more greenery and save wastage. All compost used by Wells City Council is peat free compost

23/38/OSE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Cllr D Denis presented the data from the Climate Emergency Working Party Report (attached). A discussion took place about the rationale behind what makes people participate albeit negative or positive responses, the demographic of survey participants and the work involved in holding the survey. Wells residents appear to have a better carbon footprint than nationally. The remaining survey leaflets will be distributed at the Make Do/Can Do event at the Portway Annexe.

Plans are to involve younger generations in environmental issues. Blue School and the Cathedral School have already been working with the Environment Network. Children from the three Wells primary schools have been invited to enter a competition to create a poster for the Environment Network Open day. There will be 10 posters chosen from each school selected. Events such as this will hopefully then help target the children's parents to become engaged.

The discussion continued about the style of questioning in the survey and the necessity for all opinions to be listened to and the potential for the committee structure to be revisited.

23/39/OSE PORTWAY ANNEXE

It was requested that there be shared growing spaces. M Johnson reported that the Portway Annexe may not be suitable due to depth of soil, shade and uneven surfaces. Cllr D Orrett presented the report of the Portway Annexe Management Meeting held on 30th March 2023. (attached to the minutes)

A brief discussion took place about improvements that have been made to the outside areas and the necessity to re-let the parking spaces out as soon as possible.

23/40/OSE RECREATION GROUND and Bishop’s Barn

Cllr S Powell reported that there had been a well-attended meeting. There will be an Open Day on 20th May 2023 which is also Mayor Making Day. Suggested time from 11am - 3.30pm and help from Cllrs would be gratefully received. Clare Blackmore will give a talk on the history of the recreation ground.

A discussion took place about the potential location of the mosaic created by Wells Mosaic group, due to its dimensions, the options require discussion. Drainage and archaeology are issues to be considered.

Several bands have been booked to play in the bandstand throughout the summer. Booking will soon be possible via the website. The booking process and rental charges will be discussed.

23/41/OSE PROPERTIES

M Johnson reported that the old Post Office has been cleared of old counters and is ready for rental

23/42/OSE ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Requested assistance with the Climate Change open day on 1st July 2023. A cycling event is planned at the open day and some assistance from Councillors would be appreciated.

A brief discussion took place about tri-shaws and suitability of taking them into the recreation ground. It was deemed that it was too narrow an entrance for them to pass through.

23/43/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 4th May 2023

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private property report.

Minutes signed by The Chair:

Date:

Climate Emergency Working Group Report 6/4/23

The street survey took place in a very wet cold week of 13-17 March, and about 200 people stopped to answer the short questionnaire.

The responses were analysed by Cllr S Powell :

Agree that the planet is currently experiencing rapid climate change?	90.5 % yes	9.4% no	3.8 % not sure
		10.9%	
Agree that current rapid climate change is primarily caused by humans?	83.5% yes	no	7.1% not sure
Agree that climate change will significantly impact humanity's way of life in the next 100 years?	91.3 % yes	4.2% no	5.7% not sure
Agree that individuals can collectively reduce climate change impacts for future generations?	80.5% yes	9.5% no	9.9% not sure

In order to help others around the world and the future generations would you be willing to do the following?

Reduce car travel/use alternatives	83.5% yes	7.9% no	8.5% n/a
		14.7%	
Reduce how much you travel by aeroplane	68.5% yes	no	16.8% n/a
		16.1%	
Reduce meat consumption	78.7% yes	no	5.2 % n/a
Reduce heating in your home/wear warmer clothes	92% yes	5.2% no	2.9% n/a
Repair things rather than replace them/buy second hand	93.7% yes	5.2% no	1.1% n/a
Consider policies when voting in elections	77.6% yes	9.7% no	12.7% n/a

The Online survey has had about 66 respondents with similar outcomes:

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| 1. Agree that the planet is currently experiencing rapid climate change? | 80% |
| 2. Agree that current rapid climate change is primarily caused by humans? | 80% |
| 3. Agree that climate change will significantly impact humanity's way of life in the next 100 years? | 88% |
| 4. Agree that individuals can collectively reduce climate change impacts for future generations? | 74% |

In order to help others around the world and the future generations would you be willing to do the following?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Reduce car travel/use alternatives | 78% |
| 2. Reduce how much you travel by aeroplane | 60% |
| 3. Reduce meat consumption | 62% |
| 4. Reduce heating in your home/wear warmer clothes | 80% |
| 5. Repair things rather than replace them/buy second hand | 80% |
| 6. Consider policies when voting in elections | 84% |

The average ages and gender type were roughly as follows (we didn't record this on 1st day)

M 20-30	M 30-40	M 50-60m	M 60-70	M 70-80	F 40-50	F 50-60	F 60-70
6	5	9	5	6	9	12	25

The new leaflet has been printed- 1000 available.

The Working Party will continue to meet but needs to agree priorities for the year. There will be an opportunity to meet the public and handout the leaflets at the Wells Environment Network Day on 1st July in the Portway Annexe- We are looking for help from other councillors/staff as some of the working group are involved in organising the event and other activities.

Cllr Denise Denis 5.4.23

Notes of Portway Annexe Management Meeting held 30 March 2023

Apologies- S Eden

Present- Cllr D Orett(Chair), Cllr D Denis, Cllr I Von Mesenkampff, Steve Luck (Town Clerk), Alex Westwood (Portway Annexe Manager), Gerry Clarke (resident), Colin Brown (resident)

1. Portway Annexe Manager's Report

Alex Westwood went through the Portway Annexe Managers Report (attached) which shows a steady increase in room bookings, and noted that that the new imposition of VAT on all Council invoices may affect some groups decision to continue. Small Steps Dance/Theatre Group was represented at the meeting by April- D O invited April to speak. She said the increase may affect some of the disadvantaged youngsters' decision to continue. Alex said he was working to find solutions to help this group find a solution.

He said that Edgar Philips has been a positive presence in the building and has funded the conversion of the studio or his use.

Mendip Community Transport have been given 3 months' notice to find alternative parking and these spaces will be re-let to people on the waiting list.

The Open Day proved successful. Alex thanked councillors, volunteers and hiring organisations for their input. Several hirers have reported increased attendance or interest in their groups.

The Café is now not available for hiring- it is needed for refreshments by all users/hirers.

The music sessions have been restructured to bookings on an hourly basis which is popular and is being considered also for celebration/parties bookings.

The Music Centre has acquired a sound-treated table (used by David Attenborough at BBC Bristol!)

Focus On Photography Photos are on display in the corridors.

Next Staff Organised event will be "*Portway Monkey Market*" on 27 May

Defibrillator from Town Hall is not suitable as defunct. May have to wait until budget improves

Citizens Advice usage is steady. About 5 people a week use the room often with support and guidance from PA staff.

D O thanked Alex for his helpful report with charts and spreadsheets. I Von Mesenkampff and Gerry Clarke also thanked Alex for his positive input to the Portway Annexe and for his hard work.

2. Financial Report

SL drew attention to staffing costs- can be calculated in 2 ways as shown. The manager's time at the PA can be shown as 50% in accounts because it is also costed at the Town Hall for Communications and IT. He advised that the Town Hall services and other expenses are shared and the balance sheet bottom line for PA is benefiting from this.

Gas bill has reduced by half following insulation installation and boiler and thermostat modifications.

Rates are a result of negotiated discounts with Mendip DC.

Charis are negotiating a future rental agreement and SL thinks the case for a 50% increase on fees will be accepted due to increased usage.

He confirmed that Charis has 9 months still to run on current agreement.

DD asked if double/secondary glazing can be considered. SL said the priority is lagging pipes in the café and corridors to enable thermostats to be more effective. Future works will depend on budget.

C Simmonds asked if car parking will be VAT invoiced- SL confirmed it will.

DO asked if Alex can look at activity /childcare groups could hire in summer holidays when other groups maybe on holiday. Alex said will offer hirers opportunity to hire first before looking at outside hirers.

AOB

DO said Strode College has resumed contact to look at possible room hire- unfortunately the planned meeting today was cancelled due to illness.

SL outlined upcoming works to sanding and polishing the Chamberlain Hall flooring, lagging pipes and repairing external wood on window frames and broken window panes (due to the buckling of the metal frames).

Chris Simmonds asked when VAT start date is- SL said that as WCC has voluntarily registered for VAT it will start 1 April.

Chris Simmons asked if PA has a record of each hirer for insurance cover and Safeguarding Policies/DBS. DD said she thought a sight of each hirer's safeguarding policy is good practice and

cited the Cathedral's contract with hirers. SL said he will ask the Council's insurers if this is a requirement on their T&Cs.

CB asked about insurance cover for EP's kiln. SL confirmed that extra cover is in place.

CB Commented on the improvements to the grounds by recent work done by OS team. DO suggested a future possibility for a community garden. TBC.

GC reported continued bad driving and attitudes from Mendip Community Bus drivers and was pleased to note the contract will terminate soon.

DD informed all that the Portway Annexe will be open on 1 July for a day of Workshops and Presentations about Environment and what is being done in Wells to sustain biodiversity. It is hoped to run a Poster competition for Primary Schools in the area, to encourage younger visitors and their families to visit.

Mayor Stewart Cursley thanked everyone for their commitment and hard work in making the Portway Annexe an important community resource.

Thanks go to Denise Denis for taking and typing up these minutes as it was decided that a record of Portway Annexe management meetings is required.