

WELLS CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ARCHIVES AND CIVIC ASSETS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER AT WELLS AT 6:00pm ON THURSDAY 27th JUNE 2013

PRESENT: Cllrs: D Unwin (Chairman); M Brandon; C Briton (Deputy Mayor);
T Butt Philip (The Mayor); T Robbins; H Siggs.

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk Mrs F White; Archivist Dr J Wood.
1 member of the public

13/10A ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Unwin was proposed, seconded and elected.

13/11A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Denison.

13/12A DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

13/13A MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Thursday 21st March 2013 were proposed, seconded, approved and signed.

Matters Arising

- i. 13/04A Cllr Price gave an up-date on the painting by Mr Fisher, owned by Rail Wells.
- ii. Cllr Unwin reported the Fontanellato twinning charters have been framed.

13/14A MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mrs Siddons said that she was very impressed by the reports and with all the work done by the Archivist, especially in view of her limited part-time hours.
(Cllr Briton arrived).

13/15A REPORT FROM THE ARCHIVIST (Attached)

- i. The Regional Officer from the National Archives has visited recently he was very impressed with our Archive collection, also with our archival arrangements, public access and student scheme.
- ii. There will be a National Archives nationwide event, launching on Saturday 16th November, called 'Explore your Archive'. The Archivist presented material and suggested how the historic City of Wells could be profiled by taking part. It was agreed that she will invite the Cathedral to partner with the City Archive in a 'Meet the Archivist' exhibition at the Town Hall. The Christmas Fair manager has been consulted and would welcome the additional attraction. A budget of £300 was approved to include project publicity and exhibition materials.
- iii. It was agreed that the next meeting will consider investment in items such as permanent display cases (possibly for the Court Room) so that interesting archives can become more publicly visible.
- iv. Heritage Open Day up-date
The Heritage Lottery Fund application was submitted on behalf of all the participating venues in Wells ('WELLSHoD') if successful it will fund a website and publicity material to promote historic Wells sites for the forthcoming years. This was the first place in the country to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding for the Heritage Open Days. The result will be known in about six weeks.
(If unsuccessful, shared funding from all the venues will be needed for publicity this year, as before; this was agreed).

Volunteers will be needed in the Town Hall on Sunday 15th September.

The Archivist was congratulated on coordinating the Heritage Open Day in the city.

- 13/16A ANNUAL REPORT** - Wells & Mendip Museum Archivist (attached)
The Reading Room is proving popular and is in regular use.
This report was received and the work of the Archivist was commended.
- 13/17A CIVIC REVIEW**
Arrangements were made to up-date the Civic Review. Committee members will be allocated sections to be returned to the October meeting for discussion.
Recommendation should be ready for Council by the end of the current civic year (April 2014).
- 13/18A ANY OTHER MATTERS OF REPORT**
- i. The Mayor reported some gift items received from twin towns, now on view in the Mayor's Parlour:
 - From Bad Dürkheim a picture and a stone obelisk
 - From Paray-le-Monial a guide book and a bronze disk
 - ii. The Mayor reported various items found stored in the Mayor's Parlour and sought the Archivist's assistance in cataloguing these
 - iii. Councillors who had taken up the invitation to visit the Museum reported how very impressed they had been with the lively modern display.
- 13/19A DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**
At the Chairman's request it was agreed to call an additional meeting during August; date and time to be issued.
Next scheduled meeting: **6pm Thursday 17th October 2013**

**For meeting of Archives Committee on 27th June 2013
Report from the Archivist**

'Explore Your Archive'

The Archivist will be participating in the 'Explore Your Archive' campaign, which is a national incentive designed to raise public awareness of archives and spearheaded by The National Archives. She considers it important that Wells City Archives features in the campaign. It will be an excellent way of raising the profile of the City Archives now that the Reading Room at the Museum is up and running, attracting new audiences, and deepening the understanding and support of current users. The campaign launches to the public on Saturday 16th November. A key aim is to increase understanding of the essential role of archives among the general public who might not choose to visit an archive personally.

Town Hall assets

The Archivist has finished compiling an up-to-date inventory of assets in the Town Hall. She is now making and recording an initial assessment of cleaning / restoration requirements, along with researching and collating further details on the individual assets. The next phase is to arrange for up to date valuations where necessary (with the silverware to be valued first) and for any urgent remedial works.

Visit by The National Archives

The Archivist invited Dr Matt Greenhall, the Engagement Manager (West) for the National Archives, to visit Wells City Archives this June. She showed him the collections both at the Museum and the Town Hall, and introduced him to the Town Clerk. The Archivist was able to obtain a lot of useful advice from him, including discussion of promoting the City Archives as a heritage asset which can be part of the tourist offer by Wells.

Supervision of students

The Archivist continued supervising the two students who were on placement from Bath Spa University. They finished their time with the City Council by researching and producing an exhibition on the history of the court in Wells, designed to tie in with the redevelopment of the Court Room. This is now on display in the Town Hall and has been featured in the *Wells Journal*.

Exhibitions

In addition to the students' exhibition, two further exhibitions have been prepared by the Archivist. One was to mark Gil Weatherhead's 30 years of service as Serjeant-at-Mace and the other was to mark the 30th anniversary of the twinning of Wells with Bad Durkheim. They were on display in April and May respectively. The new exhibition board in the vestibule is a great asset.

Heritage Open Day

Wells Town Hall will again be taking part in Heritage Open Day, this year on Sunday 15 September. The working committee who plan the event across Wells has submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for project funding for developing a walking trail of Wells called the 'Wellshod Heritage Trail'. ('Wellshod' comes from 'Wells' and 'HOD' – 'Heritage Open Days'.) The application has been submitted by the Old Deanery, with all the other venues which take part in Heritage Open Day listed as partners. The Archivist has taken a significant role in preparing and coordinating the application. This year three additional venues are being added.

Dr Julia Wood

20.6.2013