

**WELLS CITY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE ARCHIVES AND CIVIC ASSETS COMMITTEE HELD IN WELLS MUSEUM,**  
**AT 6:00PM, ON THURSDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: P Crummay, S Cursley, O Hartley (Chairman), J Rust,

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Admin Officer; K Westwood  
Archivist: Dr J Wood  
SCC Cllr T Munt

**20/01A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Cllr C Wride

**20/02A DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012. None received.

**20/03A MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019**  
Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, approved and signed.

**20/04A ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**  
Cllr Wride was proposed, seconded and elected.

**20/05A MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
Public speaking is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Chairman  
None present.

**20/06A REPORT FROM THE ARCHIVIST** (attached)  
The Archivist presented her report to the Committee.  
The Chairman Cllr Hartley congratulated the Archivist on the member's tours of the archives she had arranged at the museum.  
The Archivist thanked Cllr Cursley for his donation of photographs to the archives.  
The report was duly noted.

**20/07A "HERITAGE OPEN DAY" AND "WAKE UP WELLS COMMUNITY DAY"**  
Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September

The Archivist gave details on Heritage Open Day, the national theme this year was Hidden Nature and she was proposing to involve the Wells in Bloom Committee. Members of the committee expressed their concerns over the clash of dates this year with the Wake Up Wells event. This will result in the committee only being able to provide a stand of leaflets for Wake Up Wells, as our volunteers would be needed to man the event at the Town Hall. Cllrs Crummay and Hartley volunteered to help and it was hoped other Councillors would be available.

It was agreed to promote Heritage Open Day on our social media and websites.

**20/08A ANY OTHER MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT**  
Cllr Rust raised the Civic review, The Chairman explained the Town Clerk had scheduled this for the first meeting of the new Archives committee after May. He has requested all Councillors contact him with their suggestions before he starts the first draft.

**20/09A DATE OF NEXT MEETING t.b.a.**

## **Report from the Archivist**

### Tour of the City Archives at Wells Museum

All the new Councillors were invited to Wells & Mendip Museum on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019 so that the Archivist could introduce them to the City Archives. (The bulk of the Archives is stored at the Museum on long-term loan.) She was delighted that several Councillors took up this invitation.

### Environmental conditions in the Town Hall's Archives storage area

After the Archivist had returned to work in August, it was discovered that there was an outbreak of mould in one of the cells where the City's post-1975 archives are stored. A leaking gutter was discovered which had caused dampness to a wall, which in turn had given rise to the problem. Action was taken immediately, including repairing the gutter and purchasing a dehumidifier which has been installed in the cell concerned and which is dealing extremely effectively with the humidity problem. In addition, the air circulation unit in the main cells has been extended into the Archives storage area, and this too is bringing about improvement in the environmental conditions in which the records are stored. Regular readings of temperature and relative humidity are taken and we aim to comply with the parameters recommended by PD5454:2012, the national standard for the storage of archives.

### Assistant to the Archivist

Since 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019, Sarah Wride has been working as Assistant to the Archivist. The Archivist prepared a schedule of tasks for her in advance of her arrival and is delighted with the good progress she is making with them. She works two days a week, whereas the Archivist works only six hours a week, but they overlap in order to ensure efficient handovers.

### Retention and disposal

The Archivist has been focussing on appraising and weeding the unsorted collections of papers stored in the Archives at the Town Hall. Using the City Council's Retention and Disposal Policy, she has been taking decisions on which documents should be retained and which disposed of. The Assistant is then cleaning (if necessary), packaging and listing the documents which are being kept. She is also sorting some of the collections.

### Displays in the Town Hall

The Town Hall has boasted three lovely displays created by the Assistant. The first two appeared in the "Archivist's Choice" case in the vestibule; one featured alterations planned to The Crown and the Market Place in the 1980s, and the other focussed on the Bishop Bekynton Ceremony in which Councillors take part every January. The third display, in the arched case on the vestibule landing, showcased two of the children's robes owned by the Council and previously worn by the Boy or Girl Mayor and their Town Crier.

### Heritage Open Day

The Town Hall will once again be participating in this national event, opening all day on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The Archivist has organised this event for nine years, with many displays from the City Archives and by local history groups, and on some occasions films and even a playlet. We regularly have a great team of volunteers drawn from the Councillors and the local community. Let's hope that in 2020 we surpass our record attendance (in 2018) of 821 people!

The City Council also creates and produces each year the Wells Heritage Open Days flyer (which covers all the participating venues in the city), and organises its distribution. In 2020, the Assistant to the Archivist will be organising this, and will also be taking the lead on organising Heritage Open Day at the Town Hall.

### "Wake Up Wells Community Day"

The City Archives participated in the "Wake Up Wells" event in January 2019 and received great feedback. We have reserved a stall at the "Wake Up Wells Community Day" event on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Whether or not this can be staffed is as yet unknown, since the event clashes with our Heritage Open Day event, at which it's a case of all hands on deck.

Dr Julia Wood  
10.02.2020