

## WELLS CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021 AT 6.00PM HELD AT THE BISHOP'S BARN

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: S Cursley (Vice-chair), O Hartley (Deputy Mayor),  
R Humphreys, N Kennedy, P Welch (Mayor and Chair)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk: S Luck  
Facility & Administration Officer: K Westwood  
WCC Cllr: J Rust  
SCC Cllr: T Munt  
WCC staff: S Glendinning  
26 members of the public (who were not all there for the whole meeting)

**21/11RGT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Cllr J Osman

**21/12RGT WELCOME BY THE CHAIR**  
The Chair welcomed everyone to the Bishop's Barn and invited questions from the public.

**21/13RGT MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
Paul Cannon from Wells Jazz Collective was very supportive of getting the barn back in use as a venue for local music. Has used it for this purpose previously.

Neil Johnson from The Theatre Festival has used the barn previously for shows. Is a great space for theatre and drama for young people. A three phase electricity supply was installed for their show but later removed by MDC. Neil requested this be costed into the improvements to be made and reinstalled.

Gill Kelly, local resident, expressed an interest in using the building for Art Groups and Art Exhibitions.

Martin Cooke reminisced on the barn holding concerts for the likes of Status Quo and suggested contact be made with Gordon Poole, Music Promoter, who has a huge amount of experience to share. The Chair stated that he had already met with Gordon.

Richard Hanks, local resident and Royal National Institute for Deaf People member, asked for a hearing loop system to be included in the improvements and stated the cost for this is not prohibitive.

Andrew Rowling, local resident, agreed the building was valuable to the City of Wells but had concerns over the soundproofing. If the building was to be used for social functions, such as weddings, this does have the potential to create unsocial noise and rowdy behaviour with guests spilling outside.

Chris Winter, Wells resident and Chair of Wells Civic Society, is very supportive of the project but has concerns that WCC have under estimated the level of work and expense needed to bring the barn up to date. There is also a major issue with parking at the site. The Chair stated that there were 6 parking spaces allocated in the car park in South Street and income would be received from

these. There are also some parking spaces in Silver Street on the side of the barn which could be cordoned off for barn usage only.

Chris Simons, local resident, expressed concern over WCC's capacity to cope with the project and questioned why WCC think they were best placed to take ownership and the renovations forward. The budget of £470k was low for a project of this scale.

SCC Cllr Munt felt very strongly that Wells should not lose the barn as an asset. WCC are right to take on this project on behalf of the Citizens of Wells.

The Town Clerk stated that staffing levels at WCC were currently being reviewed.

The budget of £470k would enable the barn to receive alterations to bring it back into use but extra funding would need to be sought for larger improvements. The Town Clerk has met with Russell Lillford, Somerset Buildings Preservation Trust chairman, a £3 million lottery bill was turned down and he has suggested WCC be more realistic on the immediate plans for improvement. The project is not just looking at the barn but also the Recreation Ground around it, including the play park and bandstand.

Cllr Hartley expressed his view that as a City we are growing which brings in more disposable income and if there is not enough on offer in Wells, culturally and socially, then residents go outside of the City. The Chair added that we need to have activities in Wells that encourage our young residents to remain here and not move to bigger places.

**21/14RGT    DATE OF NEXT MEETING:  
6:00 pm, Wednesday 7th July 2021, Wells Town Hall**

**Minutes signed by The Chair:** .....      **Date:** .....