

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2022 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: J Browne, S Cursley (Deputy Mayor & Chair), S Johns, N Kennedy, T Robbins, J Rust, P Welch (Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk/RFO, S Luck
WCC Cllr, S Powell
Town Clerk Assistant, C Woodland
Wells City Archivist, Dr J Wood
WCC Staff, S Glendinning
SCC Cllr T Munt
0 members of the public

No attendance: Cllr J Osman

22/13FCM APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS
None

22/14FCM DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26th July 2012.

22/15FCM MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13TH JANUARY 2022:
The minutes had already been presented at Full Council and an amendment was agreed to 22/05FCM relating to the Mayor's annual allowance.
The updated minutes of the previous meeting were approved for signing by the Chair.

22/16FCM MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC
No public in attendance.

22/17FCM FINANCE
The Town Clerk presented the Finance Reports for January 2022.
The bank statements were checked prior to the meeting by Cllr Robbins.

Cllr Rust asked for an update on the tenancy for the Old Post Office in the Market Place. The Town Clerk explained it was in the hands of the Solicitor.

22/18FCM ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEWS
To finalise the review under Standing Order 5:
i. Standing Orders.
ii. Financial Regulations
iii. Committees' terms of reference 'Scheme of Delegation'

The 'Scheme of Delegation' now includes guidance for the new management group at the Portway Annexe. There were no further changes requested. It was proposed, seconded and approved to present these three documents to Full Council on 24th February for sign off.

The Town Clerk handed out a paper on pre-election guidelines to all councillors. It will also be provided to councillors who were not at the Finance meeting. Cllr Rust agreed to email the Town Clerk with her comments on the document.

22/19FCM UNITARY & ACQUISITIONS

Update from the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is looking at which assets could be returned to WCC from SCC. To date, there is no further news from MDC on their transfer of assets to WCC and how much these will cost.

The Town Clerk is due to attend a unitary conference by zoom on the evening of Thursday 17th February.

The Town Clerk has received a document showing the proposed structure of the new Somerset Council which he will share with the committee.

22/20FCM PLATINUM JUBILEE GRANT APPLICATION

The Mayor is chairing a group, made up of a lot of local community organisations, to organise the celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee. The Rotary Club are taking the lead as they are able to provide insurance for the event. A grant of £1,000 has been requested to cover the cost of hiring equipment temporary toilets etc.

It was proposed, seconded and approved to provide £1,000 from the grant budget. Cllr Johns abstained from voting. All other members voted in favour.

22/21FCM ARCHIVES & CIVIC ASSETS

Report and presentation from Dr J Wood, Wells City Archivist.

Dr Wood confirmed she was going to retire on 30th April. She expressed her thanks to those who have supported her over the 12 years she has worked for WCC. It is rare for a small city to care for its own archives and the citizens of Wells are fortunate to have it kept locally, she expressed her wish that long may this continue.

Dr Wood provided a very interesting presentation on three of her favourite treasures from the archives:

- The first ever Royal Charter granted to the City of Wells, 800 years old
- The 'Great Seal' of Henry VIII, dated 1542
- Signed royal letter from Charles I, dated 18th July 1644, linking Wells to the English Civil War

The Mayor and The Chair and everyone present thanked Dr Wood for her hard work and service over the years and wished her a very happy retirement.

22/22FCM STAFFING

Update from Lead Councillor T Robbins.

As mentioned above the Wells City Archivist, Dr J Wood will retire 30th April, Lead Councillor will be meeting the Town Clerk to discuss vacancies for Archivist and Outside Spaces employee.

When WCC staff have tested positive for Covid, they have been able to cover for each other and normal service has continued.

22/23FCM ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

The Town Clerk confirmed MDC have now agreed the transfer of the Wells Recreation Ground Trust to WCC. This is now subject to Charity Commission agreement.

MDC have had contact with the shadow trust (set up when MDC were going to give the asset back to the community). They have no legal status.

The Town Clerk is expecting them to make contact with WCC and he will keep the committee informed.

Cllr Robbins asked for an update on the CCTV in the City. The Town Clerk explained it is an MDC contract set up between Wells and four other towns. The contract is coming to the end and the two other towns may not wish to continue and if they pull out all equipment should be removed. Discussion on this is continuing to taking place and the Town Clerk will advise further.

Cllr Robbins stressed the issue of graffiti in the City will not be helped without CCTV in place, he had also received a phone call from a member of the public concerned about the level of graffiti. The Town Clerk explained, WCC continue to work with MDC to clean up, although we are not permitted to remove from private properties. It was felt that the local police are needed to put a stop to this, but it was expressed that it wasn't always easy to make contact. SCC Cllr Munt recommended contacting the Police & Crime Panel chaired by a Mendip councillor in Street who hold the Police & Crime Commissioner to account. It was agreed for Cllr Munt to provide contact details for the Town Clerk.

22/24FCM DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 10th March 2022, 7pm

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:**