

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.00PM

COUNCILLORS PRESENT (VIA ZOOM): Cllrs: L Agabani, S Briton, J Browne, P Crummay, S Cursley, O Hartley (Deputy Mayor), R Humphreys, A l'Anson, J Linsdell, J Osman, J Parker, C Rees, J Rust, P Welch (Mayor)

IN ATTENDANCE (VIA ZOOM): Town Clerk/RFO: S Luck
WCC Staff: S Glendinning, A Westwood
SCC Cllr T Munt
Wells Voice Andy Vallis

NOT PRESENT: Cllr N Kennedy

20/117C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

20/118C DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 27th July 2012:
Councillors were asked whether they had any declarations of interest. No declarations were received.

**20/119C MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON
26TH NOVEMBER 2020**

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Mayor.

20/120C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Two members of the public were present, Chris Winter and Nicola Dodds, who presented their support for Community use of the Portway Annexe. They have been working closely with Cllr Osman and members of the Community.

20/121C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Mayor's Diary – Tues 22nd Dec. The Mayor will be delivering a reading at the carol service in Wells Cathedral.
2. Zoom meeting with James Heapey MP – A forum is to be set up to offer help to carers in our Community.
3. The Mayor has written to the Post Master at Budgens to thank them for their hard work whilst the post office has been closed in the City centre.

20/122C MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2020
The Chair of Finance presented minutes and invited questions. None were received.

20/123C ANNUAL BUDGET

To agree the draft annual budget for year 2021-22. This is the working budget not the precept, the precept was due to be presented by 17th Jan. An extension has been requested until the end Jan. This is to include any further changes that may be needed due to loss of rent as a result of Covid and inclusion of the Portway Annexe. The working budget was proposed, seconded and agreed, it was also agreed to delay the setting of the precept for 2021-22 until January 2021.

20/124C MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December and 10th December 2020 (held under delegated authority).
The Chair of Planning presented minutes and invited questions. None were received.

20/125C CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to change the name to Climate Emergency and Biodiversity Committee (CEBC).

20/126C PORTWAY ANNEXE

To be fully discussed in the confidential section at the end of the meeting. Cllr Osman thanked the Community Groups for their efforts of support. He has attended the MDC Asset of Community Value Committee to provide a detailed presentation – the application has since been agreed to list the building as an asset of community value. This allows WCC time to speak to SCC regarding the future of this building.

20/127C WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST

The Mayor provided an update. A meeting took place with MDC on 2nd Dec. They are happy to transfer the Bishop's Barn and Recreation Ground to WCC, once agreed by the Charity Commission. This could take place by July 2021 and they are committed to making this transfer a success. Cllr Ros Wyke, leader of MDC, believes this is the right thing to do. Cllr Briton thanked everyone for the progress that has been made in the last month.

20/128C FORMATION OF ACQUISITIONS WORKING GROUP

Cllr Cursley presented his report. Cllr Osman questioned whether this overlapped with the unitary working group and whether the working group should select their own chair. It was agreed this group was required to take forward the possible transfer of assets and services back to Wells from MDC. It was agreed the working group would consist of The Mayor, Town Clerk, Deputy Mayor and Chair of Finance and Cllrs Parker, Osman and Crummay.

20/129C CITY OF WELLS COMMUNITY AWARD

Cllr Browne advised a meeting to clarify aims had been postponed until after Christmas. Further update to be provided at the next Full Council meeting.

20/130C NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr l'Anson presented his report. He thanked everyone mentioned in the report for their support and invited questions. None were received.

20/131C COVID 19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP

Cllr Rust requested abbreviations in reports should not be used.

20/132C WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES.

No written reports provided. Cllr Linsdell asked when the Citizens Advice Bureau would return to The Town Hall. Work is continuing online, no return date yet known as still considered unsafe for the volunteers. Cllrs Briton and Crummay will provide an interim report on Outside Bodies in January 2021.

20/133C DIARY OF MEETINGS

The WCC calendar of meetings January-May 2021 was approved. (The Bishop Bekynton Service on 10th Jan is expected to be cancelled or numbers severely reduced).

20/134C WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Cllr Munt to forward a written report.

20/135C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

Cllr l'Anson reported on a Planning Application at Morrisons. Application is approved, subject to appeal, after the store is closed all illuminations should be turned off. Recommendation was to remove all East-facing signs.

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: If it is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence it will be proposed by the Mayor that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended, excluding the press and public to consider confidential negotiations and financial implications.

THE PORTWAY ANNEXE

The Future of the Portway Annexe was discussed by members including the Business plan presented by Cllr Osman and the independent valuation report from Killens.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed to,

1. The Town Clerk to write to Mendip District Council and trigger the full moratorium as a potential bidder for an asset on the Asset of Community Value register.
2. The Town Clerk to write formally to Somerset County Council to enter negotiations and make an offer subject to survey for the Portway Annexe.
3. Obtain quotes for a full structural survey and report costs back to the Acquisitions working group for consideration.

20/136C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be at **7pm on Thursday 28th January 2021**