

## WELLS CITY COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF WELLS CITY COUNCIL HELD VIA ZOOM ON THURSDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021 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, N Kennedy, J Parker, J Rust, P Welch (Mayor)

**IN ATTENDANCE (VIA ZOOM):** Town Clerk/RFO: S Luck  
WCC Staff: S Glendinning, A Westwood  
MDC: L Rogers  
SCC: Cllr T Munt  
PCs: D Pearson and D Williams  
Wells Voice: A Vallis  
5 members of public

**NOT PRESENT:** None

**21/01/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Cllrs J Linsdell, J Osman

**21/02/C DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 27<sup>th</sup> July 2012:  
Councillors were asked whether they had any declarations of interest. No declarations were received.

**21/03/C MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020**  
Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Mayor.

**21/04/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**  
Emma King spoke regarding the closure of St Andrew's Ward. Despite the consultation report where 54% did not wish closure, it is going ahead in March/April 2021. It's felt this is not a patient led decision, to move patients to Yeovil makes visiting from families & friends challenging. A petition is in place with currently 1,750 signatures. As a result of the COVID crisis it is envisaged that demand on mental health support will be vastly increased in the months/years ahead.  
Cllr Hartley thanked Emma for her efforts. It was agreed for Councillors to share and sign the petition if they so wish and WCC to write a letter to CCG to support the maintenance of the ward rather than to close.

4 members of the public were present to provide a presentation on the Wells Skate Park as reported in Agenda item 21/05/C

**21/05/C WELLS SKATE PARK PRESENTATION**  
Adrian and Bev Smith provided an overview of their report circulated to Council before the meeting. Two further members of the public were also present in support of the proposal.  
The current Wells Skate Park is in desperate need of being updated. Local residents have formed a group which is now a registered charity. The report has been collated using data from a local survey carried out with local residents.  
The aim is for the skate park to:

- Move to a different site within Wells City (the lease on the current site near Waitrose is due to expire). Two areas, the Recreation Ground/Bishop's Barn & the land opposite Morrison's were suggested.
- Be used by not only skate boarders but include other activities such as roller skating, bicycles, scooters. Maybe rock climbing, wall climbing & basketball.

- To become more of a hub for families to visit, perhaps providing other facilities such as a café or shop (selling appropriate skating gear, clothing).

There was unanimous support for this proposal from Councillors. Funding to start at grass roots, from local events before approaching local businesses/lottery funding. Cllr Briton suggested Kirstie Harris and Emma Lefevre could have useful experience for securing funding.

PCs D Pearson and D Williams support the project but are wary of antisocial behaviour and would require necessary precautions to be considered such as CCTV cameras. On selecting a new site, consideration should be given to the proximity of local housing to eliminate any noise disruption.

It was agreed for one or two Councillors to work with the group to provide support and guidance as trustees. Councillors should make contact with Adrian and Bev to get involved. The Group will report back to Council with a further update.

## **21/06/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr C Rees has handed in her resignation to the Town Clerk today due to a change in her location of work. The Mayor expressed his best wishes and thanks for all her hard work.

### **Mayor's Diary:**

- i. 10<sup>th</sup> January, Commemoration of Bishop Bekynton service at Wells Cathedral
- ii. 13<sup>th</sup> January, BBC Somerset interview about the Post Office counter being installed at the bus station ticket office
- iii. 14<sup>th</sup> January, Visit to the ticket office to thank Post Office staff and talk to customers
- iv. 20<sup>th</sup> January, Wells Almshouses trustee meeting
- v. 21<sup>st</sup> March, Legal Service in Wells Cathedral (to be confirmed)
- vi. 26<sup>th</sup> March, Giving speech at Wells Operatic Society's AGM on Zoom

The Mayor has collected the keys to the Bishop's Barn from MDC and they will be held at the Cemetery Office in order for Councillors or Staff to collect if access is required. This key arrangement will continue whilst the Town Hall remains closed due to COVID restrictions.

A transfer of the Recreation Ground and the Barn to WCC could take place in the summer. Approval by WCC would of course be necessary first.

## **21/07/C MINUTES OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021:  
The Chair of Staffing presented the minutes and invited questions. None were received.

## **21/08/C MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021:  
The Chair of Finance presented minutes and invited questions. None were received.

## **21/09/C PRECEPT FOR YEAR 2021-2022**

To approve a precept of £652,622 which includes £60,000 provision for possible purchase of Portway Annexe.  
It was agreed any small contribution from WCC for the proposed Skate Park can be found within the existing budget.  
The precept was proposed by Cllr Kennedy, seconded by Cllr Hartley and agreed.

## **21/10/C MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021:  
The Chair of Planning presented minutes and highlighted two applications – Churchill, 47 retirement apartments and Lidl store on existing Travis Perkins site. Questions were invited. None were received.

Cllr Kennedy asked who owned the Swan displayed outside the Police Station and what was planned for it. Town Clerk to write to the local Police and establish its next place of situ and ensure it remains in the City.

**21/11/C LGA MODEL COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT 2020**

The Town Clerk explained the code was currently being considered by the monitoring officer at MDC. A copy had been circulated to all Councillors for information only at this stage. Any amendments from MDC will be advised in due course.

**21/12/C AWARDS WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Browne has produced a document following a positive meeting held with the working party – Cllrs Crummay, Hartley, Humphreys & Osman.

Three reasons for the Awards 1) to celebrate the City, 2) to recognise achievements of people of Wells and 3) to raise the profile of the City of Wells.

Seven 'City of Wells Awards' are proposed – 1) Wells Citizens 2) Wells Business 3) Community Group 4) Young Person (Primary and Secondary) 5) Green Award 6) Mayor's Award and 7) WCC Special Award (outstanding contribution).

Winners to be presented with a Medal with the City of Wells logo for them to keep. Cllrs to present awards (maybe chosen if they have a particular interest) and Mayor's Award/WCC Special Award to be presented by The Mayor. Local famous person to be invited. Held at The Town Hall with refreshments. Lots of promotion on social media/local press.

Cllr Browne to present a Business Plan to next Finance Meeting including costs for Room Hire, Refreshments - Food/Drink and Medals and to circulate her written document to all Councillors.

Contact to be made with The Town Hall Manager, Kevin Westwood, to make a room booking asap. (Demand on rooms for weddings has greatly increased due to the number cancelled during 2020).

**21/13/C BUS 67**

To receive a report from the Mayor, Cllr Welch.

The Mayor presented his report and asked for questions. None received.

**21/14/C WELLS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REPORT**

Cllr l'Anson presented his report. It includes consultation on local listing buildings not on the statutory list and local green spaces. Further 'mini' consultations will be needed using local press to communicate. Questions were invited but none received.

**21/15/C COVID 19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Humphrey's presented her report and invited questions. None received.

Let's Do It Wells –

Cllr Briton proposed WCC signs up as a supportive organisation to Let's Do It Wells.

The Town Clerk is looking at the Terms & Conditions.

Cllr Humphreys seconded the motion and it was agreed.

**21/16/C WRITTEN REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS ON OUTSIDE BODIES.**

- Connect Centre report January 2021. Cllr Welch, The Mayor, presented his report. Steven & Gilly Fowler are retiring from the Centre on 28<sup>th</sup> March after 21 years. Cllr Briton proposed and it was agreed The Mayor to send a letter offering our thanks & good wishes on behalf of WCC.
- Outside Bodies – Cllrs Crummay and Briton to advise further once COVID restrictions are lifted.

**21/17/C WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DISTRICT OR COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Rogers, MDC presented her report.

Cllr Rogers also confirmed they would help and support the development of the new Skate Park. Cllr Rogers to report back on what funding MDC would be prepared to assign to this project.

Cllr l'Anson thanked Cllr Rogers for her written report and suggested all Cllrs attend the next Parish Forum zoom meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> Feb at 6pm. Town Clerk to re-circulate the email with full details.

Cllr Munt, SCC provided a verbal report as written report not received by everyone:

- May election arrangements
- Recycling & rubbish collection will start from 6am in the morning
- Vaccinations taking place in the Bath & West Showground
- 22 million miles saved in driving for County Council staff operating on Microsoft Teams so far.
- PACT meetings – can these be re-instated via zoom. Town Clerk to speak to Christina Borastero, Chairman of PACT.

Cllr l'Anson requested Cllr Munt's assistance to liaise with MDC for the proposed crossing on the Lidl Planning Application.

## **21/18C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT**

PCs D Pearson and D Williams gave a verbal report:

- 4 tickets have been issued to members of the public in Wells over the last few months for COVID rule breaches. Initially Police were engaging & encouraging but tickets were now being issued if in breach of COVID government policy.
- Domestic abuse has increased – no serious incidents.
- Anti-social behaviour has reduced.
- Car accidents due to recent icy weather has increased – Police are stressing the rule of essential journeys ONLY to protect the demand on the NHS.
- Bike theft has increased. A bike marking exercise has been carried out and there has been extra patrols at night and stop checks.
- The local Police have become aware of a social media campaign to encourage shops to open at the weekend. This has been strongly discouraged in line with current COVID government policy.

The Chair thanked PCs Pearson & Williams for their input and asked for a written report to be submitted ahead of the meeting in future.

Cllr Kennedy raised the sad passing of local man, Gerry Cottle. He brought a lot of people to the area with the success of the Wookey Hole Caves and on a personal note gave great support to Cllr Kennedy during his Mayoral year.

Cllr Hartley stated that if our bid for the Portway Annexe is successful we need to engage and bring everyone involved in the Community Group to use their knowledge and expertise.

## **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.

## **ACQUISITIONS WORKING PARTY REPORT**

The Town Clerk updated members on the report highlighting his conversations with SCC regarding the bid to purchase the Portway Annexe. The Council's initial offer has been refused.

Members discussed the value of the building and potential income and it was agreed that the Town Clerk would submit a further bid to SCC up to the value of WCC's independent valuation.

It was also agreed that the Town Clerk would work with other officers and the Community Group to get some kind of idea to the possible potential income and use of the building in the event the Council was successful with a future bid.

## **21/19C DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be at **7pm on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**