

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE WELLS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28TH MARCH 2024 AT 7.00PM

Written reports can be viewed on the Agendas

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, S Cursley, D Denis, N Kennedy, D Orrett, S Powell, T Pullin (Mayor), G Robbins, H Siggs, I Von Mensenkampff, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: S Luck
Mace Bearer: G Woodland
Somerset Cllr: T Munt (Wells)
Somerset Cllr E Hobbs (Mendip Hills)
5 members of the public

24/37/C APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

WCC Cllrs: J Browne, T Butt Philip, S Eden, G Folkard, T Robbins

24/38/C DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.

Cllr G Robbins declared an interest in the Item 7 on the Agenda, Wells Food Festival.

24/39/C MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 22ND FEBRUARY 2024

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor. Cllr D Denis reported that the Wells City Council Instagram account is now up and running and invited any Councillor or member of staff to upload information and photographs.

Cllr P Welch requested an amendment to the wording on Page 3 item 24/31/C, line 2 and should read "Cllr P Welch had visited Elim Connect Centre and a member of staff, Peter Naylor, had been identified as a potential contact for the Youth work."

24/40/C MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

A presentation of an engraved tankard was made to former Councillor, Adrian l'Anson, as a token of gratitude for his tireless work since 2014 creating the Wells Neighbourhood Plan. Adrian spoke about the importance of the plan and thanked those whose work had contributed to the plan. Adrian thanked his wife Mary for her patience over the years.

Rob Bevan from Protec thanked Wells City Council for the work on repairing pavements. He then spoke of his and other business owners' frustration at crime levels and what he considers is a lack of Police presence. 220 businesses are members of the WhatsApp group in Wells who contact each other when criminal activity takes place. Rob spoke of his frustration that crime figures are not made public and that he had concerns should Wells lose CCTV coverage.

Cllr T Munt stressed that Avon and Somerset Police are the only organisation to deal with crime safely rather than a vigilante group. Cllr T Munt mentioned CCTV cuts and suggested that the Avon and Somerset Police contribution of £10000 is too low and that candidates of upcoming Police and Crime Commissioner position be contacted for their views.

Cllr L Agabani spoke about Neighbourhood watch as it might work in a High Street situation.

24/41/C POLICE REPORT

No Police report was submitted. A brief discussion took place about a future attendance of the Police at Wells City Council meeting. Cllr D Denis suggested that Police should attend Full Council Meeting at least quarterly.

Cllr P Welch reported that he had raised the subject at the Wells and rural LCN meeting and will do so again.

Cllr E Hobbs (Chair of Wells and Rural LCN) explained that the next LCN is on 30th April 2024 in Godney and that a senior Police representative has been invited to attend.

24/42/C PRESENTATION BY SOMERSET BEEKEEPERS ON ASIAN HORNET THREATS

Linda Thorne (Central Branch Somerset Beekeepers) spoke of the concerns for the Bee population with regard to Asian Hornets. Leaflets were distributed for Councillors to see. A brief history of Asian Hornets in the UK was provided and how to identify them and the importance of reporting sightings to the relevant authority. There is an app which can be downloaded to assist with identification eradication. For more information visit <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species>

It was suggested that the presentation be taken to the Unitary Council Full Council Meeting in April so that Councillors can filter information to their Parish/Town Councils. Information was also given of the Wells and Rural LCN and Shepton Mallet and Rural LCN.

24/43/C PRESENTATION BY WELLS FOOD FESTIVAL

John Abbott, Festival Director, and Lorna Gray reported that the Festival was in its twelfth year with approximately 200 stalls. 16000 visitors (local and from further afield) arriving via coach and car. It costs £40000 to hold the Food Festival with local entertainment, showcasing of locally made food, workshops, tastings and a great day out for visitors and stallholders generally. The event brings tourist trade to Wells. Advertising, parking, WIFI and sponsorship are challenges. The Food festival is planned for 13th October 2024 and is held on the 2nd Sunday in October.

Councillors were asked for their views on the potential closure of the High Street (Sadler Street) for the event.

Cllr S Powell spoke of her concern regarding this causing traffic problems in the area and suggested that signs and extra parking be provided to manage traffic.

A discussion took place about the inclusion of sufficient numbers of marshals and signs to direct cars easily to parking locations. The discussion also highlighted that the area around the moat has been extremely busy at previous Food festivals and that crowd control or one-way system and marshals may be needed for safety reasons.

John Abbot asked for involvement from Councillors regarding the vision for future Food Festivals.

24/44/C MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday 4th May 2024, May Charter Fair Buffet Lunch, 12pm, Wells Town Hall. All Councillors invited, more details to follow.

Mayor's Diary

- i 14th April - Bowl the First Wood, Wells Bowling Club
- ii 23rd April – St George's Day celebration, St Cuthbert's C of E Infant Academy
- iii 4th May - May Fair
- iv 18th May - Mayor making

24/45/C OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE

Cllr S Powell presented the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024
No questions received.

Cllr D Denis drew attention to Environment week. Concentrating on Food, Farming and flooding and suggested that fellow Councillors get involved.

19.55 Cllr G Robbins left the meeting by prior arrangement.

24/46/C FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE

Cllr S Cursley presented the minutes of the meeting held on 14th March 2024.

Cllr P Welch requested an amendment to the wording on Page 3 Item 24/32/FCM, Line 2 should read "Those in Frome, Coleford, Shepton Mallet, Glastonbury and Street are all run by the YMCA. "

24/47/C PROJECTS ARISING FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CCTV PROVISION

The Town Clerk spoke about a request for £39000 per annum over 3 years for provision of CCTV. The Town Clerk reported that more detailed information had been requested such as type of cameras, renewal schedule and camera sites etc. before a financial commitment would be made.

A discussion took place about the necessity of the service in the light of recent concerns of rising crime and the potential financial commitment.

Cllr L Agabani suggested that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to gather further information and take any actions necessary. Cllr H Siggs proposed that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority. Cllr P Welch seconded. All Councillors voted in favour.

24/48/C PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr D Denis presented the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2024.

No questions were received.

Cllr D Denis asked that with reference to the minutes of Full Council Meeting 24/30/C that it is proposed that up to three Councillors join the Task and Finish Group to assist with working on particular projects. Cllrs Siggs, Agabani and Pullin volunteered to join the Task and Finish Group. Councillors absent at this meeting will be asked for their involvement.

24/49/C CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS

Councillors approved the updated calendar.

24/50/C PROPOSAL ON YOUTH PROJECT FROM CLLR H SIGGS

Cllr H Siggs proposed that this Council commit to using up to £15000 per year to support a youth project within the City. Seconded by Cllr L Agabani. All Councillors voted to support the proposal.

Cllr H Siggs proposed that in the short term (one year) the YMCA offer is accepted.

A discussion took place about the suitability of the YMCA as experienced Youth providers and that youth in Wells are very much in need of a service in Wells. Cllr D Denis asked that quarterly reports be provided in order to be able to plan future provision and target needs.

Cllr P Welch seconded the proposal. All Councillors voted in favour.

Mark Wilcox was available to talk to Councillors about YMCA Youth provision.

24/51/C TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS/TRUSTEES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

No reports received.

24/52/C TO RECEIVE ANY WRITTEN REPORTS FROM SOMERSET COUNCILLORS

No reports received.

24/53/C ANY OTHER URGENT MATTERS OF REPORT

None received.

24/54/C DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Wells City Council will be **Thursday 25th April 2024, 7pm**

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.

Minutes signed by The Mayor:

Date: