

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 3RD APRIL 2025 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: D Denis, S Eden, D Orrett (Chair), G Robbins, P Welch

INATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: H Wilkins
Outside Spaces Officer: M Johnson
SC Cllr and MP for Wells and Mendip Hills: T Munt
WCC Staff: S Glendinning
3 Members of the public

25/38/OSE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr: T Butt Philip, N Kennedy, S Powell

25/39/OSE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

None declared.

**25/40/OSE MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OUTSIDE SPACES & ESTATES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON 6TH MARCH 2025**

25/28/OSE Cllr Welch asked for an update on the visibility at Lovers Walk for parents/carers dropping off children at St Joseph & St Teresa's Primary School. The Town Clerk advised the Outside Spaces Team have completed the agreed remedial work, by reducing the hedge further and removing ivy from the wall to improve visibility. Cllr Butt Philip is in discussion with Somerset Council for additional safety improvements.

25/29/OSE The Outside Spaces Officer agreed to check whether the finger signpost had been corrected.

25/31/OSE The Town Clerk advised she had not yet had a response from the new Tree Officer at Somerset Council.

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

25/41/OSE MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Tanya Smith attended the meeting to request an additional dog waste bin or general waste bin along the Tor Lane path. Not all waste is being binned correctly as the bins are at the start of the route and dog walkers are frequently leaving dog waste along the route. Up-to-date signage is required along the area as the existing signs are from the days of Mendip District Council. Tanya was happy for signage to be secured to her garden fence. The Town Clerk explained it was the Parish Council responsibility to pay for the purchase of bins, emptying was supported by Somerset Council. Post devolution of services, this process will continue up until June 2026. The Town Clerk agreed to submit the request to the Finance Committee to look at the placement of another bin and to update the signage.

Chris Hornidge spoke at the meeting to give his view on the following:

- Table Tennis Table Location. He is concerned about the suggested siting of placing the table on the hard-standing location by the bandstand. He felt it would encourage youngsters to congregate in the area. This item was discussed by the committee later in the meeting under 25/43/OSE.
- The signage in the Recreation Ground is out of date and inconsistent. Some signs are still from Mendip District Council and the information on alcohol fines is stated as either £500 or £1,000, so misleading.
- Dogs on leads. The sign near the Bishop's Barns states no dogs allowed, whilst other signs state dogs are welcome on a lead. Signage should be updated and made consistent.

The Town Clerk agreed to review the signage issues and rules for dogs on leads and county wide Public Space Protection Orders and report back as part of future considerations of the recreation ground.

Lavinia Byrne raised the following:

- A clear vision is still required for the Recreation Ground. She also mentioned that the maintenance and upkeep at the park was fantastic.
- Lavinia remains of the opinion that the new wall in South Street car park should be removed to allow access back into the park. This was discussed later in the meeting 25/44/OSE.

25/42/OSE OUTSIDE SPACES

Matt Johnson provided an update:

- Wells City Council took over the managing of the market on Weds 2nd April and the transition from Somerset Council had gone very well. The Town Clerk expressed her thanks to the Outside Spaces Officer and Team. It was also confirmed that the new market manager, Sharon Edmunds, would start her position on 15th April.
- Cllr Denis asked for specific information on number of units, staff, lawn mowers, trucks. Will this information be available? The Town Clerk confirmed this information was being prepared.
- The cutting season has now started.
- A lot of positive feedback has been received on the display of flowers in the City.

Cllr Denis raised the following:

- a resident from Bath Road would like to undertake a consultation process to form a wildflower meadow, similar to Tor Woods in Kidderbank Park. Sustainable Wells have the information to support the consultation.
- At the top of the steps in St Thomas Street they have developed a flowering area for pollinating plants. A local resident in Millers Gardens wishes to develop a similar area on North Road/Millers Garden corner.

The Town Clerk agreed to review both of these suggestions together with a wider strategy on areas that can be managed differently.

25/43/OSE TABLE TENNIS TABLE LOCATION

Matt Johnson, Outside Spaces Officer had circulated his report on the recommended location for the table tennis table prior to the meeting. His recommendation was to site the table on the hard standing already in place near to the Barn.

Cllr Orrett informed the committee that Cllr Powell who was not able to attend the meeting, did not wish the table to be sited near the Barn.

Cllr Denis was also of the view that it should not be located near to the Barn as it would detract from the beauty of the building, be in the way for events such as the Food Festival, it would encourage youngsters to congregate for unwanted juvenile behaviour, it would be too far away from the playground for parents who may visit with children wishing to use both activities. Her preference was to locate the table near the playground with some ground reinforcement as it would be on grass. After a full discussion amongst those present, the following was proposed.

Cllr Denis proposed to position the table near to the playground. This was seconded by Cllr Welch. Three members voted in favour, two members voted against. Motion was carried.

A vote was also taken to delegate the Town Clerk to proceed, up to a value of £5,000 for any needed ground reinforcement within the chosen location. Three voted in agreement, two abstained. The motion was carried.

25/44/OSE WALL SAFETY REPORT

Matt Johnson, Outside Spaces Officer had circulated his Wall Safety Report prior to the meeting. The report recommendations were discussed.

It was proposed by Cllr Orrett to move the dog waste bin and that no further action was necessary. This was seconded by Cllr Eden and agreed unanimously by all members present.

25/45/OSE PORTWAY ANNEXE

Cllr Orrett provided an update. A Portway Annexe meeting had taken place prior to this meeting where enhancements to the garden had been discussed. Cllr Denis updated the meeting below.

Cllr Denis suggested a community group to work on a community garden to grow plants and vegetables, such as sweat peas, runner beans, herbs, pollenating plants, with the Outside Spaces Team involvement to bring the community together. This would be used as a test before rolling out to other areas within the City. The Outside Spaces Officer confirmed he was happy to support.

Cllr Denis proposed that the council approach the community with a view to maintaining a garden at the Portway Annexe. It was seconded by Cllr Orrett and approved by all members present.

25/46/OSE WELLS IN BLOOM

Cllr Denis provided an update.

The school competition has around 10 schools involved. The invitations to the awards evening on 9th July will be sent out after Easter.

Cllr Denis requested more varied planting in Sadler Street entrance, bottom of the High Street. The Outside Spaces Officer explained planting is ordered one year in advance. A report will be provided for the next meeting on planting and sponsorship. It was felt more can be achieved from the Wells in Bloom sponsorship scheme.

25/47/OSE

BISHOP'S BARN

Cllr Welch updated the meeting and explained the partnership between Wells City Council and the Bishop's Palace has not yet commenced. The Town Clerk explained the new committee structures will be formed at Full Council on 24th April, the strategic views for this partnership would then be created by the appropriate committee.

Cllr Welch asked what lettings had been taken for the Barn. The Outside Spaces Officer confirmed there were a couple of weddings and the Theatre Festival had booked again. Cllr Welch offered to advertise events within the Wells Community Network to raise the profile of the barn usage.

25/48/OSE

WELLS RECREATION GROUND BOWLS CLUB

The Town Clerk had circulated her report prior to the meeting concerning the extension of the bowls club space outside of the deeds and to take a review of the rental amount. The pepper corn rent started at £110 pa and had been increased to £123 pa. The Town Clerk recommends that she engages with the lease holder to create a relationship for future sustainability of the service with a view to altering the title plan and to conduct a rent review. This was agreed by the committee.

25/49/OSE

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Cllr Denis provided an update on the following:

- The Act to Adapt consultation ends in May and the launch of the plan will take place on Saturday 14th June in Wells Town Hall.
- Some funding has just been released for flood plain areas to which Wells is included.
- Ecoweek will take place from 11th – 20th October, notes from meeting attached.
- Wells City Council Emergency Plan will be available shortly.

25/50/OSE

ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Cllr Denis advised there was S106 monies sat with Somerset Council from the Churchill Apartments to be spent by 2029 and used by Wells City Council for playground equipment. The Town Clerk is aware of the S106 funding. A play strategy needs to be formed by the Outside Spaces Officer and the Town Clerk which will consider sources of income, including that of S106 monies.

SC Cllr and MP Tessa Munt stated that she had attended a meeting regarding the proposed development of housing at Elm Close. Although this sits in St Cuthbert Out, she had made it clear at the meeting Wells City Council should be included in the responses, as it does impact on the City of Wells. Cllr Denis, Chair of the Planning & Environment Committee, confirmed she was aware of the development and discussion had already taken place with the Town Clerk and Chair of St Cuthbert Out.

Cllr Munt also updated the committee on a meeting she had attended for Accessible Wells. There is an ongoing problem with delivery vehicles parking on pavements thereby ruining the paving slabs. Cllr G Robbins suggested contacting the shops whose delivery companies were causing the damage. The Town Clerk explained the new committee structure will include traffic related issues as the current structure does not take account of this.

Cllr Welch and Cllr Orrett thanked the Outside Spaces Team for the hard work being carried out.

25/51/OSE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To Be Confirmed

Minutes signed by The Chair: Date:

WEN Notes from 24/3/25

Apologies: C Johnson, G Witor, G Robins, E Lewis, S Nash, S Goodwin, S Crocker, C Charles

Present: D Denis, L Sorenson, M Milnes, D Orrett, G Braga, S Powell, J Mochrie, B McCartney, B Fletcher, S Whitby

Projects offered so far:

Bishops' Palace- James Cross will lead a garden tour on Tuesday 14 October and Siobhan will set up a nature activity trail to run during the week. Denise and Siobhan to liaise re publicity and bookings.

Vicars Close- TBA

WDWG- Victoria Hillman could offer a talk on 11/10- Attracting Wildlife to Your Garden. Fungus Foray in Stockhill Woods TBA.

Stewart Crocker- can offer a Talk/Debate- The impact of food choices on the health of the environment- What have our choices got to do with farming practices, health of our soils, landscapes, carbon, emissions, our health and food security.

Tor Hill Lane-will showcase on Saturday 11/10. Also, MM is working with B Lakin and Dr Alex Grundy to run Nature Walks during Ecoweek for mindfulness and identification of plants and animals and invertebrates.

Charlie Bighams-DD and MM to visit the Quarry 26/3 and meet Gavin Hares to discuss opportunities.

St Thomas Church-MM has contacted Judy Penhaligon (churchwarden) who is keen to work on projects and have Harvest Service 5/10. She hopes the church and congregation can develop environmental approach within the Church and the church yard and would then draw this all together at the service on 12/10.

St Cuthbert's Church- DD has contacted Antonia Gwyn (churchwarden) who has offered to develop ideas as the church is very keen to be involved. They will be celebrating Harvest and may set up an exhibition.

3 Wells City Junior Schools and Wells Blue School- DD has written to all and then made a follow up phone call. Hoping that this might provide some interest but not sure.

Cathedral School- BM will try and get information and involvement from all levels of the school. SP offered to liaise with the current Student Environment Captain and see what projects would work and be of interest to carry forward into next school year when a new Student Captain is appointed. Bob offered Cedar's Hall/Quilters Hall as venues available for events if WEN required.

Scouts- TBA

Somerset Wildlife Team Wilder- Can offer support in many ways in the summer months and lead up to the Autumn. GB will contact Pippa Rayner re Churchyards in rural parishes- and Wells. He offered to work with Cathedral School to be a catalyst in set up for a schools' event in Ecoweek.

Other ideas could be to develop a corridor with Council and communities and DD suggested the this needs a meeting with Outside Spaces officer and Town Clerk- DD to arrange.

Deborah Orrett- offered to do a high-profile litter pick and suggested the Mosaic Project could be presented on the Saturday as a completed and ready for a site centrally. She feels it strongly reflects the environment in the mosaic.

Sustainable Wells- Would like to set up a pop-up repair café manned by volunteers over 5/6 days. The location would need to be central. DD to ask Town Clerk if the Bus Station Information Kiosk would be suitable. Also, Fixy Bus would like to do the event again like last year.

Jamie Mochrie- would be happy to run another cycle maintenance workshop. Discussion on merits of holding a cycle rally and the need to ensure all risks and assessments and responsibilities. DD to check with Town Clerk.

Strawberry Line- No input yet, but everyone agreed this would be a very valuable addition to events of Ecoweek.

Westbury Community Tree Nursery- Buffy Fletcher offered to run a presentation/talk on growing the right trees in the right place- facts and tips and GB suggested this could link to the Somerset Tree Strategy.

Publicity- posters and banners are good from last year. We will need to redesign A4 posters for shops/ display boards and stands at events. DD advised we need a central tel.no for people to contact if not able to use wifi/internet. DD/MM to meet with C Lee.

Finance- Currently £569 .25 in Lloyds Community Account.

Future Dates

Monday 28 April 5pm. Parkes Room Town Hall

Wednesday 28 May 5pm. Parkes Room at Town Hall.