

## **WELLS CITY COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD THURSDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2025 AT 7.00PM AT WELLS TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: L Agabani, D Denis (Chair), G Folkard, D Orrett, S Powell.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Town Clerk: H Wilkins  
Wells City Council Staff – C Hobbs  
Press member – A Vallis  
12 Members of the public

**20/31/PE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Cllrs: S Cursley, G Robbins (Vice-Chair), I Von Mensenkampff

**20/32/PE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllrs: L Agabani and S Powell declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 5.5

Cllr S Powell declared a non-pecuniary interest in 5.4

Cllrs: D Denis and S Powell declared a non-pecuniary interest in 5.10

Cllr G Folkard declared a non-pecuniary interest in 5.1 and 5.2

**20/33/PE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
20<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025**

The Minutes of meetings were approved and signed by Cllr D Denis (Chair)

**20/34/PE MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

J Heath spoke about the Charter Way development and had previously submitted concerns in writing. The point was raised that there is no provision for wheelchair users to be able to access or store their wheelchair at the property. J Heath reported that young wheelchair users are not been provided for and asked that Wells City Council note this issue within its response in line with the Neighbourhood Plan.

C Weston spoke about the Charter Way development and the loss of important amenity space for children playing for physical and mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, concerns were expressed about the loss of habitats. The ecological report stated that there will be no adverse effects however the species nearby are protected such as bats, starlings and hedgehogs. All endangered species are likely to be present. The plan to fell healthy mature trees have high amenity value for people and wildlife. In terms of the requirement to provide bio-diversity net gain the report admits that this is no possibility to provide this on site.

S Turner (Chair of the Strawberry Line East Society) spoke of his concerns that the application ignores the recommendations for the extension of the Strawberry. There is a huge potential for a car free access to Wells for wheelchair users, pedestrians and cyclists. If this proposal goes ahead the future of the Strawberry line will be lost forever. A five metre path on the northern boundary as an extension past the Leisure centre and a five metre path past Charter Way is necessary to continue the route.

T Hathway spoke of the necessity for the continuation of the Strawberry Line. The green strip on the northern boundary would be a suitable location for the continuation of the Strawberry line and the north east corner of the development is too narrow and not passable. There are five healthy trees on eastern border and the layout is too cramped. The third point that T Hathway made was that there is no storage for cycle storage or any heed made to active travel and is a car focussed development. T Hathway also spoke regarding item 5.8 at the Cheddar Valley Inn application. The Neighbourhood Plan has a project at that location to extend the Strawberry line. The application shows no indication of the crossing point. T Hathway asked that contact be made with Somerset Highways for clarity of the situation.

Cllr D Denis informed the meeting that Wells City Council had applied for TPO's to be issued for the trees at the Charter Way and that Somerset Highways have been contacted.

T Van Hensbergen spoke to the meeting that there is a great shortage in the UK for accommodation that are fully accessible to enable independent living. Central government leaves it to local authorities to decide a minimum number of M4(3B) compliant homes. T van Hensbergen made a suggestion that six units at the Charter Way development be built to meet this standard and perhaps that an audit of the housing stock be undertaken to establish need. T Van Hensbergen suggested that any levy submitted by the developer be ring fenced to provide level access routes from Charter Way to Wells City centre Wells City Council, Somerset Council and Accessible Wells have entered into a Memorandum of understanding and asked that decisions made are with this in mind.

A l'Anson (Planning group of Wells Civic Society) spoke in support of refusal of the application. The Strawberry Line extension and mentioned that although the right of way on the northern side of the site, there is no inclusion of an existing right of way on the eastern side of the site. Both should be protected in order to provide the extension of the Strawberry Line. As the latter lies around the site, this could be protected with the provision of Section 106 funding. A l'Anson spoke about the plans to include air source heat pumps at the development which are noisy and inefficient and hoped that a community ground source heat pump system be considered as an alternative. The design of the houses are disappointing options and provide no positive legacy. The Icon developments in Street and Lovedon Fields in Kings Worthy are examples of contemporary designs which could be used as a template which would enhance the profile of Stonewater Housing Association.

A l'Anson spoke of his approval of work taking place on traffic calming measures as mentioned in the Neighbourhood Plan.

C Charles (Planning group of Wells Civic Society) attended the meeting dated 20<sup>th</sup> March and quoted comments made by the applicant during their presentation that the future success of the Rugby Club was dependent on the development going ahead. This claim was refuted by C Charles who feels that success of the Rugby Club is dependent on support and strong membership. C Charles surmised that the fact that to secure the sight Stonebridge overpaid for the site and therefore needed to overdevelop the site. The neighbourhood plan referenced building 80 units when this application is for 106.

Cllr D Denis reminded all attending the meeting that the Somerset Planning Portal is still open should anyone wish to make comments.

S Turner spoke again with regard to item 5.6 Cheddar Valley Inn application and of his concerns that the proposal ignores the Wells development plan for a safe crossing at that location. The plan included a crossing and wide path around the Cheddar Valley Inn and there is no provision except a narrow path unsuitable for accessible travel and there is no potential for the Strawberry line extension to continue and with reference to the Rugby Club development at Haybridge that there are no plans for active transport links despite being next to the existing Strawberry Line Way.

## **20/35/PE PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION**

**1**

**2025/0547/FUL**

Demolition of existing clubhouse & floodlighting & the erection of 106 dwellings & associated vehicular & pedestrian access, parking areas, hard & soft landscaping & drainage infrastructure.

Wells Rugby Football Club Charter Way Wells Somerset BA5 2FB

### **Recommendation – Refusal**

#### **Material Considerations**

- i. (3) Full length first and 2nd floor windows without balconies will lead excess heating in summer without adequate airflow Opening windows recommended

- ii. (4) Density of housing not in line with the Neighbourhood Plan which references 80 units.
- iii. (6) TPO applications have been made on the trees which are proposed for being felled. The tulip tree is not considered an appropriate tree given its potential height of 120ft. Loss of hedge on northern border
- iv. (9) Cycleway and onwards links to neighbouring parishes are not given consideration. Traffic data based on 2011 is out of date and considered inaccurate
- v. (11) Impermeable areas of 83%. Recommend the 2 large central areas are permeable surfaces with planted areas to create islands of green spaces
- vi. (12) Community Ground source heat pump more cost effective. 10% consideration to ensure M4 (3B) compliance housing.

- 2** 2025/0435/HSE  
Demolition of existing dormers and construction of larger replacements. Partial demolition of the garage to increase boundary space with adjacent property.  
1 Reservoir Lane Wells Somerset BA5 2QZ  
**Recommendation – Refusal**  
Protected species information resulting from Ecological Statement requirements not received from Somerset
- 3** 2025/0239/FUL  
Change of use from the existing place of worship Class F1 to residential flats Class C3.  
The Hall West Street Wells Somerset BA5 2HN  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
Material consideration – Recommendation that there is increased storage for recycling bin storage
- 4** 2025/0436/FUL and 2025/0437/LBC  
Proposed internal alterations within the cottage, external alterations, including landscaping and changing the number of dwellings from two (Old Vicarage and Old Vicarage Cottage) to one (Old Vicarage with Annex). Reduction in parking.  
Old Vicarage Cottage St Thomas Street Wells Somerset BA5 2UZ  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
Material consideration (4) Appropriate design for listing status of the building.  
Conditioned that there is clarity on parking and the boundary
- 5** 2025/0422/HSE  
Erection of rear and side link extension to connect townhouse and coach house, amalgamating the buildings back into a single dwelling. Including the addition of 2 no. of flat roof dormers, and alterations to openings.  
Kingsley House 13 Chamberlain Street Wells Somerset BA5 2PE  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
Material consideration (3) Design appropriate
- 6** 2025/0347/FUL  
Conversion of public house (Sui Generis) to two residential dwellings (Use Class C3), with associated hard and soft landscaping and parking.  
Cheddar Valley Inn 22 Tucker Street Wells Somerset BA5 2DZ  
**Recommendation – Refusal**  
Material Considerations
  - i. (8) Associated crossing or Strawberry Line extension not referenced on Neighbourhood Plan
  - ii. (12) Viability of the business being sold as a going concern not proven. Lack of clarity as previous applications specifically mentioned that the pub would remain.

- 7            2025/0481/ADV and 2025/0485/LBC  
Erection of 1no. non-illuminated fascia sign & 1no. non-illuminated projecting sign.  
46 High Street Wells Somerset BA5 2SN  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
Material consideration (3) Design appropriate
- 8            2025/0614/FUL  
Two new residential parking spaces on the garden of the Presbytery and change of use  
from residential to "sui generis" use (drive).  
16 Chamberlain Street Wells Somerset BA5 2PF  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
TPO to be requested on trees at this location and recommendation for permeable surface
- 9            2025/0636/HSE  
Installation of PV panels to garage roof, glazed verandah and alterations to rooflights to  
studio of garage building, replace & enlarge rooflight on rear roof slope of house, and  
felling of ornamental tree.  
71C St Thomas Street Wells Somerset BA5 2UY  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
Material consideration (3) appropriate design (4) Environmental benefits
- 10           2025/0469/LBC  
Alteration to design of previously granted reinstatement of two chimneys (2023/2051/LBC).  
The Old Deanery Cathedral Green Wells Somerset BA5 2UG  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
Material consideration (4) Appropriate design for a listed building
- 11           2025/0470/LBC  
Removal of Kitchen Window at rear of property, replace with double glazed unit of the  
same style and of wooden construction.  
Flat B 44 High Street Wells Somerset BA5 2SN  
**Recommendation – Approval**  
Material consideration (3) appropriate design

**20/36/PE    TREES**

- 1            2025/0660/TCA - **Notification only**  
Ginko (T1) - reduce crown by approx 2m in height pruning wounds no greater than  
100mm.  
The Bishops Palace Market Place Wells Somerset BA5 2PD
- 2            2025/0500/TPO **Notification only**  
T1 (London Plane) - Fell to prevent further root damage to drains. TPO M330.  
4 Portway Wells Somerset BA5 2BD
- 3            2025/0692/TPO **Notification only**  
T230 - False Acacia - Reduction to sound pruning points by 3 meters.  
East House 11 Chamberlain Street Wells Somerset BA5 2PE

**20/37/PE    NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROPOSAL ON PROJECT 5**

The proposal was accepted and will go before Full Council for consideration

**20/38/PE    ST CUTHBERT OUT LETTER OF SUPPORT (see attached page 6/7)**

Wells City Council will produce details of how the application for a development in the St  
Cuthbert Out parish will impact the City of Wells and the services and amenity of Wells.

**20/39/PE DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES**

To delegate authority to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, to decide any urgent matters arising before the next meeting.

**20/40/PE ANY OTHER MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT**

No matters received

**20/41/PE DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm, Thursday TBC**

**Minutes Signed by the Chair ..... Date .....**



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Town Clerk

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Land at North of Wookey Road, also known as Elm Close

FAO Clerks to St Cuthbert Out Parish Council and Wookey Parish Council

I am writing on behalf of Wells City Council's (WCC) Planning and Environment Committee. WCC committee is aware of recent applications and supporting community consultation and would like to take this opportunity to raise our concerns, given its close proximity to the parish boundary of WCC and the impact of the erosion of the parish boundary line without the concomitant improvement in infrastructure within Wells to support the increased population needs of St Cuthberts Out Parish (SCOP).

WCC's primary concerns are as follows:

**Flood Risk** – There are known existing issues within the proximity of the proposed development site, which, if agreed will further exasperate the flooding and drainage issues. These extend into the parish of WCC and as such, we feel strongly that these should be addressed as part of the development. Specifically, the runoff from the proposed development into Haybridge. It would be helpful to understand the drainage expectations and main sewer capacity that the developers will be adding for both sewerage and water run off overflow, given that currently, water run off dispels into the mains sewer creating the back-flow issues currently experienced by other surrounding properties.

**Increased Traffic** – additional dwellings within this vicinity will add significant volume to traffic within the local area. Considerations should be given to the already congested access through the City, via Portway. Whilst the dwellings might sit outside of the parish of WCC, the likely traffic flow would detrimentally affect the City and navigation through and around it. It would be helpful to know the proposed traffic implications and mitigations to allow WCC to assess this further.

**Supporting infrastructure** – With the addition of 300 properties and the proposed design of dwellings it would suggest additional educational, health and employment needs, none of which are capacity to absolve this volume of development. WCC is keen to understand how the development will support this need through the contribution of additional facilities as part of the scheme, or through section 106 funding/conditions.

**Environmental Impact** – There appears to be little in the way of consideration associated with the design and build of the dwellings, with no consideration to environmentally friendly infrastructure (this also effects ongoing financial viability for owners), equally, the location of the build erodes the natural landscape, significantly reducing farming land and impacting the wider ecological habitat of the space, including the loss of hedgerow and trees.

WCC strongly objects to any further development which purports to suggest the additional housing will benefit from the proximity to the services and amenities of Wells. There has been no further increase in parking, schools, medical practices for the last 30 years whilst the additional housing in

SCOP to date has increased significantly. The Mendip Local Plan defined 3 sites for Housing within Wells to meets the Housing Needs of Wells, and with those developments WCC would expect accompanying levies of funding to support the increased population. The proposed development in Elm Close will not bring any funding to Wells infrastructure needs and it is for this reason WCC objects to the Planning Application.

Yours sincerely,

Haylee Wilkins  
**Town Clerk**  
**For Wells City Council**