

# WELLS CITY COUNCIL

## WELLS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2013

Minutes of Wells Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 7:00pm in the Council Chamber, Wells Town Hall.

**PRESENT:** Chairman: M Brandon (The Mayor)

City Councillors: Butt Philip (Deputy Mayor), Anderson, Unwin, Briton, Price, Gibson, Wilson, Parkes.

City, District and County Councillor: Osman

8 members of the public. 1 member of the press.

In Attendance: Town Clerk F White. RFO S Luck.

Refreshments were available to everyone on arrival.

1. **APOLOGIES:** City Cllrs: Kennedy, Siggs, Davies, Robbins.
2. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012** were proposed, seconded approved and signed.
3. **THE MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave her report (Attached). Members of the public are always welcome at all meetings of the City Council and of its Committees, there is an item on every agenda giving the public an opportunity to speak.
4. **REPORTS FROM THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES CHAIRMEN**

The Chairmen gave their reports and answered questions from the public.

  - i. **City Centre Management Committee Cllr Price**

The Committee has 8 members; it meets with invited representatives from other groups in the city. It has a small budget, this year used mainly to extend the Christmas lights display to the lower end of the town.

The Committee oversees the Charter Fairs, works with Night on the Town, and is involved with special events such as the Olympic Torch and Jubilee last year. It helps to make small improvements to the city centre such as installing cycle racks. There was discussion about work with the Civic Society on appropriate signage; also about the relief road and traffic lights.
  - ii. **Wells in Bloom Committee Cllr Gibson**

The Chairman summarised a busy year, there had been the Open Gardens event for which she thanked the garden owners; the special coloured displays for the Olympics and Jubilee celebrations and the school baskets. She thanked the sponsors for their loyalty and generous support and thanked the Mayor and the team of volunteers; new helpers are always welcome!
  - iii. **Planning and Environment Committee Cllr Anderson**

This Committee considers any development within the city boundary, referred by the District Council to the City Council as a statutory consultee. The committee normally meets twice a month, in order to comply with the legal timeframe for responses. It is felt that the views submitted in responses do not always appear to be taken into consideration. The public are always welcome at the meetings and can make their views known.

There was a short exchange of comments regarding some closed industrial sites.
  - iv. **Archives and Civic Assets Committee Cllr Unwin**

The Committee meets 3-4 times a year and is responsible for the Civic Heritage of the City Council.

The transfer of the City Archives to suitable safe storage facility at the Museum has proved very successful and has increased access for the public. There have been Exhibitions at both the Museum and the Town Hall. Students from Bath Spa University are preparing an

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exhibition on the history of the Court Room and continue to sort the archive material remaining at the Town Hall.

The Archivist receives enquiries from the public and assists their research using the purpose-built facilities at the Museum, as well as at the Town Hall.

The Town Hall will be open to the public on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September as part of the National Heritage Open Days.

The Chairman thanked the Archivist, Dr Julia Wood, for all her work.

## **v. Cemetery and Open Spaces Committee Cllr Briton**

-At the Cemetery, the first green burials have now taken place. There have been changes to staffing with the increased responsibilities for other open spaces in the city. The public have commented that the cemetery is excellently well run and cared for. The successful bid to the Somerset County Council Community Enablement Fund has enabled the City Council to take on additional functions in the city.

-A new software system will mean easier management of the Allotments; the waiting list is still long. There have recently been some complaints about vandalism, the Police have been informed and the situation is being managed.

-The Bishops Barn and Recreation Ground Trust has been mentioned at the City Council meeting; the new Trust Board is welcomed. The City Council has written to request that representatives be invited to take part in a non-voting capacity.

-The Skate Park has received additional funding and will now be managed by the City Council.

-Mr Hudsmith said he had seen great improvements in the work done by Wells City Council in recent years. He was keen for Wells City Council to take responsibility for maintenance of the Moat Walk.

-The RFO was commended and was thanked for all his work with the Cemetery and Open Spaces.

-There was further discussion regarding the Bishops Barn and Recreation Ground Trust; a representative of a group described as "Friends of the Recreation Ground" wanted to know whether the City Council would consider taking on responsibility for the Trust if a viable future could be found for it. The Chairman said that transfer was not opposed in principle; the issue is rather one of finance due to potential maintenance costs. The City would need indications of support from residents if it were to take this course. He hoped the process can move forward in partnership.

## **vi. Staffing Committee Cllr Wilson**

All staff, including those at the Cemetery, are managed by the Town Clerk. The Committee's role is to have oversight of policy, ensure the council is appropriately staffed within budgeted funding levels, and that staff are appropriately remunerated.

A full staff structural review was carried out approximately 18 months ago and the Town Clerk has introduced a system of appraisals; this has been very efficient and effective.

## **5. MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

- i. Reports regarding flooding caused by blocked drains at the bus station and Ethel Street.
- ii. Comments regarding the hearing system.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.