

WELLS CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ARCHIVES AND CIVIC ASSETS COMMITTEE HELD AT THE WELLS & MENDIP MUSEUM, WELLS, AT 6:00PM ON THURSDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT: Cllrs: C Briton (The Mayor); A Gibson (Chairman); C Price; H Siggs;

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: F White, Archivist: Dr J Wood; RFO S Luck

The City Archives at the Wells and Mendip Museum were open to view from 5.30pm, prior to the meeting. The Curator and the Archivist welcomed the committee and showed them the Archives and the storage arrangements.

15/01A APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: T Butt Philip; T Robbins; D Unwin; G Wilson (Deputy Mayor);

15/02A DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interest, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26th July 2012.

None declared

15/03A MINUTES OF THE MEETING held on Thursday 16th October 2014.

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, approved and signed.

Matters Arising

The Town Crier now has his new coat; the trousers did not need replacing.

15/04A MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Public speaking time is normally restricted to 15 minutes in total, at the discretion of the Chairman.

15/05A REPORT FROM THE ARCHIVIST

To receive the Archivist's report to the Committee: Noted.

The Archivist showed some of the conservation work that has been completed.

15/06A MULTIPLE COPIES OF POSTERS AND HANDBILLS within the City Archive

The National Archives are issuing guidance regarding the best way to share multiple copies of documents. For example, Wells City Archive has several spare copies of some First World War handbills. In professional archival terms it would be usual to keep three copies; any surplus to be offered to other collections (for example the County archive, then the Imperial War Museum). It was agreed that the City Archive will follow the national guidance.

15/07A CIVIC ROBES

To make arrangements for the suitable provision of civic robes and regalia for the Mayor and Council from May 2015:

The Chairman and Town Clerk have checked the council regalia; there are sufficient badges at present.

Information about purchase and cleaning of robes was presented. The cost of red or black robes is the same, colour makes no difference. Two of the red robes are beyond repair.

After due consideration it was proposed, seconded and agreed:

- i. To purchase two red robes of similar weight and material to the black robes in current use.

(Subject to Council's endorsement to provide four red robes for the four longest-serving councillors)

- ii. To accept the preferred quote for cleaning of robes.

- iii. To ask the Archivist whether arrangements can be made to store the retired red

robes in the Museum Archive; otherwise to seek suitable appropriate use for them.

15/08A ANY OTHER MATTERS OF REPORT

- i. Heritage Weekend 2015: the Town Hall will be open on Saturday 12th September hosting a variety of displays
- ii. It was suggested that contact be made with the 'Living Faces' project, history of the Mendip quarries
- iii. A pendulum clock has been donated by MDC, originally from Wells Rural District Council
- iv. A lady Councillor's hat has been donated to the Archives, from the times when members bought their hats from each other and they were passed on in this way
- v. The Archivist is researching for International Women's Day; the Mayoress will be leading events in the Town Hall on Sunday 8th March
- vi. There will be an exhibition during August about the history of Fire-fighting in Wells

The Chairman and the Archivist thanked the Museum for hosting the meeting this evening.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and thanked the staff and councillors for their support throughout the year.

15/09A DATE OF NEXT MEETING: to be scheduled following the annual Council meeting

Report from the Archivist

Conservation

The three twinning charters for which Mervyn Richens, Senior Conservator at Somerset Heritage Centre in Taunton, has made presentation boxes are now back in Wells. The Archivist will bring them to the Archives and Civic Assets Committee meeting for members to see.

The rolling programme of remounting the charters is continuing. The majority of the charters are held in place within their boxes by strings or threads which do not allow them to 'breathe' and are no longer considered a suitable method of securing them. The Conservator is replacing the unsuitable threads with polyester archive-quality film strips. The first tranche of charters (ten in all) are now back in the City Archives, having been remounted in their cases. Another twelve have been delivered to the Conservator.

Display case

The secure table display case with UV glass has arrived. It is presently in the downstairs vestibule of the Town Hall, opposite the lift. This will be used for displaying original archival documents.

Curatorial matters

The Archivist has arranged for the valuation of the historic furniture and the remainder of the civic assets in the Town Hall, next month. The latter category includes the chandeliers, clocks, porcelain, china, embroideries and tapestries.

Binding of Minutes

The City Council Minutes covering the years 1973-91 have now been bound; these are stored in the Town Hall.

Cityscape map of Wells

The Archivist has provided the basic text for this (comprising 4,000 words, which Cityscape will now edit and cut). The text includes sections on the history of Wells, the water of Wells, the Market Place, the Bishop's Palace and Bishop's Barn, the Cathedral, the Museum, Vicars' Close, St Cuthbert's Church and the Almshouses.

Retention and Disposal Policy

The Archivist has prepared Draft 2 of the Wells City Council Retention and Disposal Policy, working with the Town Clerk, the RFO and the Town Hall Manager.

Training

The Archivist will be attending two one-day courses run by the Archives and Records Association: 'Giving Value: Case for Support' in April and 'Practical OAIS Digital Preservation' in May.

Talks

On 21st November, the Archivist gave a talk on the City Archives to the Somerset Churches Trust, and one on 5th December to the Wells Natural History and Archaeological Society. On 24th February, she will be giving one to Avalon Rotary Club. She already has several bookings for talks in 2016.

Dr Julia Wood
27.01.2015