

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WELLS TOWN HALL, ON THURSDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT 7.00PM

- PRESENT:** Cllrs: D Anderson (Vice Chairman); M Brandon; C Briton (the Mayor);
T Butt Philip; J North; C Price; T Robbins (Chairman);
G Wilson (Deputy Mayor)
- IN ATTENDANCE** Town Clerk F White; RFO: S Luck
Cllr N Kennedy
1 member of the press. 6 members of the public.
- 15/09F** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
None received
- 15/10F** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26th July 2012:
Cllr North declared a personal interest in the Bishops Palace Trust due to the current close working association with the Bishops Barn Trust, of which he is a Board member. 15/14Fi.
Cllr North declared a personal interest as a member in any matters relating to Mendip District Council. 15/18Fi. iii.
- 15/11F** **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15TH JANUARY 2015** Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, approved and signed.
- 15/12F** **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
i. Mr Cooke spoke about recording of meetings.
ii. Other members of the public were present to speak about specific matters on the agenda; they were invited to speak as each item arose.
- 15/13F** **FINANCIAL REPORT** To receive financial reports for January 2015:
The bank statements and accounts had been checked prior to the meeting. The accounts for January 2015 were proposed, seconded and approved.
- 15/14F** **COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**
Representatives were present from each group to speak about their application and answer questions.
To consider applications from:
i. The Palace Trust; new play area: £500 (LGMP Act 1976 s.19)
The committee commended the project in principle.
After careful consideration it was proposed, seconded and agreed that the application as it stands be rejected; welcome to return with a revised application to address the access issue of cost to local school children.

ii. Wells U3A 'Making Music' Group: £300 (LGA 1972 s. 145)
Proposed, seconded and approved.

The committee commended the work being done by this group.

iii. Wells City Band; music stands: £150 (LGA 1972 s. 145)
Proposed, seconded and approved.

The committee thanked the City Band for all that it does in promoting the City and supporting the community; the Band is considered to be very worthy of grant funding.

15/15F

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

To consider the draft Neighbourhood Plan:

Mr l'Anson, member of the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, was welcomed to speak and answer questions.

The Chairman made clear that the role of this committee was to consider any financial implications of the Plan, not to discuss its contents.

- i. Assurance has been given that the cost of production of the plan is covered.
- ii. The Chairman has discussed the future implications of the plan with the Town Clerk, RFO and Vice-Chairman of the Steering Group; it is clear there is nothing of substance to be considered at present, the council budget has already been set, the plan is still under development, no funds have been requested. Councillors supported these points in the ensuing discussion, in addition the policies in the plan are of a general nature, any projects will be identified in the future and implemented by choice at that time.
- iii. In conclusion, the Chairman asked the committee to note that the Neighbourhood Plan does require officer time and involvement. The Town Clerk and RFO are working hard to ensure that various procedural hurdles are overcome, so that the Plan can be as robust as possible in preparation for the testing process ahead.

In answer to questions about the process, Cllr Butt Philip explained that the current stage is a six week public and statutory consultation, concurrent with St Cuthbert Out Parish Council. The plan will then return to City Council for adoption; following this it will go before Mendip District Council, then to an Independent Planning Inspector, and then to local Referendum. If it passes all these stages it will become adopted planning guidance.

In answer to a question about political sensitivity the Town Clerk advised that there was no evident reason at present why the Neighbourhood Plan process should not continue.

15/16F

ANNUAL REVIEWS

To consider:

- i. Draft Standing Orders (NALC new model)
- ii. Draft revised Committee Delegation Scheme

Members were asked to consider the drafts and contact the Town Clerk with any comments, in good time for the next meeting.

15/17F

RECEPTION SERVICES

To review the transfer of the Reception services:

Members received and approved the Town Clerk's report. The new location has received general approval; the service to the public is much enhanced; all arrangements are working well. It was suggested that a sign asking all visitors to call at reception would be a good addition.

15/18F

MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

- i. MDC Corporate Services Consultation:
Agreed that this is a significant matter, to be put on the agenda for the next City Council meeting
- ii. The RFO reported the annual insurance review has been completed.
- iii. The City Council has received an offer to tender for the Moat Walk maintenance contract from the Church Commissioners; the committee agreed to proceed.

15/19F

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 7pm Thursday 12th March 2015