



**Meeting**  
**Tuesday 2nd July 2024**  
**6pm, Old Mill Board Room**

### **Minutes**

**Present:** Ian Ames-White, Louis Agabani, Andy Vallis, Rod Major, Lewis Dyer, Tom Wood, Mike Tucker, Sue Bartucca, Chris Borrison

**Guests:** Paul Taylor from Strode College

1. **Apologies:** Jonathan Orchard, Howard J Burnett (if any one has any metrology (weights & measures) issues Howard may be able to assist.)
2. The minutes of the last two meetings were approved.
3. **Treasurer's report**  
Balance in the account stands at £8,505 - which includes £5,721 grant money and £190 Loyalty League Money (this figure will reduce to £162 with Wells Voice advertising).  
Recent outgoings were: £144 website, £200 Wells Theatre Festival and Georgie Robbins received her £250 small business grant.
4. **Chair's report**  
We have received an email from Paddy O'Hagan announcing that Wells Art Contemporary (WAC) is launching this year's exhibition on Friday 2nd August in the Cathedral. Complimentary tickets to the private view are available to Chamber members. Chamber members also have the opportunity to sponsor one of the installations/pieces of artwork - £200 to sponsor. It was decided to ask Paddy for 12 tickets for member's for the private view. The Chamber will not take up the sponsorship opportunity but will let its members know via the minutes of the opportunity open to them.

The new Dean (Reverend Canon Toby Wright) is keen to meet both Wells businesses and the Chamber - Louis would like to ask him to host one of our

meetings in September or October (it would be a morning meeting at the Bishop's Palace or the Cathedral cafes).

In January SOUP are having a meeting in the Cathedral hosted by the Bishop - Louis proposed that the Chamber should sponsor that event to the tune of £350. This suggestion was approved by the Committee.

Louis then proposed that we invite whoever will be the new MP along to our next meeting.

### **Council update**

Louis summarised an update from the City Council regarding the devolution from Somerset. Currently Somerset Council is in negotiation with Wells City Council about which services the City Council will take over from them to save Somerset money which is needed to plough into social care - services include grass cutting, toilets, 6 playgrounds, emptying bins and tree maintenance (which includes an annual report and survey). The City Council has already taken over the toilet block in the main car park and emergency repairs to pavements. The City Council are looking to take over all these services plus the associated insurances, in return for the management of a car park (with the attached revenue) and the market rights (£270,000 a year market turnover) indefinitely as it is an income generator.

This does mean that the Wells City Council precept will increase - but Somerset could simply close the playgrounds, for example, if the City Council does not take them over.

Rod Major suggested that each one of the services that the City Council take on could be sponsored. Mike Tucker and Rod have offered to help with sponsorship.

The City Council is currently putting together budgets for next year - but some small parishes will not have enough money to spend on taking over such services. There will be a public meeting to discuss the issues when there is clarity on how it will work.

### **5. Membership update**

Tom Woods, Membership Secretary, has tidied up Membership Mojo which he now needs to go through with Louis. Tom suggested that it would make more sense for all payments to go through membership Mojo rather than via standalone standing orders. Louis was happy for Tom to reorganise the system

so it works more logically and efficiently. Tom is currently working through all the emails received requesting to join the Chamber.

We need to produce a membership leaflet which explains the benefits and how to join the Chamber.

Tom will work on the membership system and then present his conclusions to the Chamber.

## 6. Any Other Business

**Paul Taylor from Strode College** talked about T levels (16 to 18). They are in their fourth year (started in September 2020) and are a replacement for BTECs as funding is being removed. The first year is exam based and the second year they work on a specialism which includes 45 days work experience (a day off a week). Paul is struggling to find placements in business administration and accounting, cybersecurity, digital website creation etc. He asked if there were any Chamber members who could offer such places to his students. (Mike Tucker offered to take someone, Tom Woods took someone in the past and would look at taking someone again.)

If someone were to offer a placement, there would be government funding to help with buying equipment such as a laptop if needed. Paul has 20 digital students currently looking for work. Paul would also like to create a trade show for the local area with the business students.

Louis will put the information onto the retailers Whatsapp group.  
Paul Taylor' contact email is [ptaylor@strode-college.ac.uk](mailto:ptaylor@strode-college.ac.uk)

**Tom Wood** then pitched for cash for his son's football team strip in return for the Chamber logo on the kit - Bellrose Football Team, who were Wells City - the team will be playing at the Blue School. Looking for £250 to sponsor the kit. £200 proposed by Louis, seconded by Mike - kit will cost £600. Andy will publicise in Wells Voice.

## 7. Dates of next meetings

August - no meeting

September's meeting guest will either be the new MP or the Dean - to be confirmed.