

# MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL

## ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 at 7pm in the Civic Centre



**Present:** Councillors P Smith (Mayor), R Claydon, John Cordwell, N Clement, K Collins, T Luker, A Wilkinson, P Smith, P Barton, A Kendall, N Pinnegar, L Farmer.

In Attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey & all council staff Members of the Public 22

- 1) **Welcome, Introductions & receive apologies** Apologies for absence received from Cllr June Cordwell. A two minute silence was held for the bombing victims today in Brussels.
- 2) **Adoption of Previous Minutes** of Annual Parish Assembly of 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 & any Matters Arising from those Minutes. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve the Minutes as presented, all in favour.
- 3) **Guest speaker; SDC Public Space Manager, Mr Carlos Novoth.** Mr Novoth was welcomed and introduced the new waste and recycling measures to be rolled out over the next 8 months across the district including in Wotton after much analysis & consultation. Emphasis is on trying to change behaviour and attitudes towards waste and redirect from landfill, which costs £104 per ton (36,000 tons went to landfill last year as opposed to 11,000 tons recycled). Not much fly tipping has been seen from the introduction of bulky waste charges last September; links to furniture recycling projects have been emphasized. The garden waste scheme operates currently but is not available to all yet. Veolia's contract will terminate in June and Ubico (a public consortium) will start in July, operating from a recently purchased Gossington depot. Mr Novoth showed a new small food waste receptacle/kitchen caddy and a larger grey 25L bin for outside which residents will receive in the autumn inside their wheelie bins. For those on difficult access roads who receive bags, these will now be beige instead of black. Collections will start November with alternate weeks for normal refuse and weekly for recyclables. Operators work on a 4 day week therefore bank holidays should have virtually no impact, although collection day itself may change. A question enquired about the Javelin Park Incinerator, however this is a County Council issue and the SDC officer could not answer, however stressed that SDC measures hoped to reduce products for the incinerator. Another question concerned hazards on narrow pavements from waste bags, however this is difficult for SDC to address and residents should be careful to place bags/receptacles where appropriate. Mr Novoth was thanks for his presentation. All information is on the SDC website.
- 4) **Brief Report from the Mayor:** Cllr Paul Smith.

The Mayor said that the Council had seen a busy year, thanked the staff for all their hard work, welcomed the new caretaker, and congratulated the Deputy Clerk on exam success. New councillors of Lucy Farmer, Nicholas Pinnegar and Alastair Kendall were welcomed. The new Town Council website is now live, with much praise received. The Chipping Club Room has been taken over by the Town Trust with a number of changes made such heating and safety improvements, and an interconnecting door to the youth centre in order to increase youth sessions. The youth services contract has been renegotiated for a further 3 years. The new Community Plan is being printed this week after much local consultation after being updated from 2005. The Tolsey Clock underwent extensive repairs late Spring 2015. The Town Council was awarded Foundation Status under the Local Council Award

Scheme – and the next level of Quality Status is being applied for this week. Extra financial and council support for the Heritage Centre will allow it to prosper going forward and will see it also become a visitor information centre welcoming tourists from the adjacent car park. The Town Council has been approached by a developer investigating land behind the fire station for a new town car park – with a small amount of housing, and the Town Council has given support in principle for the new car park and awaits the planning application in due course, in addition to public consultation events. The Precept for 2016/17 will be £270,746 a rise of 2.4% - the increase largely attributable to SDC withdrawing subsidy grants to all parish and town councils, however actual council tax bills will show a fall of 0.2% due to new housing numbers. More financial data is available in the accompanying annual parish booklet, also on the website. The Town Council continues to give financial support for other services such as Synwell Playing Fields, Citizens Advice Bureau, Wotton Swimming Pool, the Youth Centre and Wotton Library.

5) **Annual Police Report** for 2015/16. No member of Police present, however a report is in the written booklet provided.

6) Reports from Town Council Committee Chairs:

- **Planning:** Cllr Terry Luker. The report in the booklet shows Council activity in responding to planning applications.
- **Footpaths:** Cllr Paul Smith. In addition to the booklet report, the Council is continuing its rolling survey of all footpaths, 4 new Scotts Pines have been planted at the Clump by the Cotswold Wardens, who have also rebuilt walls at Holywell Leaze, and plan an outdoor classroom of stone. A walking festival in town is planned if enough volunteers become involved.
- **Allotments:** Cllr Paul Barton. New water regulations are being investigated regarding New Rd site with a seminar soon to consider options. Path safety and stabilization will also be considered. 6 plots are currently vacant out of 76 with a waiting list in operation. Cllr Barton spoke humorously of the virtues of fruit and vegetable gardening.
- **Regeneration Partnership:** Cllr Roger Claydon. A large portion of time was taken up producing the updated Community Plan (public members of the group were thanked for their input) and its priorities were explained as many initiatives aimed at increasing tourism. Over the year, St Mary's churchyard received clearance work by the Clerk and volunteers along with Cotswold Wardens, also with significant stone wall repairs. The Wotton in Bloom baskets were once again marvelous. The farmers market is suffering falls in numbers thus subsidy is increasing and improvement initiatives are being considered. The Town Hall teas raised over £9000 for good causes and Janet Walshe was thanked for its continued organization.

7) Receive brief updates from Council supported organisations

- **Wotton Youth Liaison Group** Katie Elliott. YLG was set up originally as a forum to network & exchange ideas for all youth provision in the town and is now going back to its roots to reconnect with all organisations. The Youth Centre is benefiting from its expansion recently with its new table tennis table, beanbags, pool table repaired, new wifi and enlarged space. A summer activity programme is being planned to connect up many organization in town and for youth activities in general over summer months. A new youth shelter location is being considered – possibly near the fire station or at the WCSF site. The Youth Centre will be open at the Clubs and Group Fair on 30<sup>th</sup> April at the Town Hall for all to visit and see the centre.

- **Wotton Library.** No attendee, however a written report provided in booklet.
- **Wotton in Bloom.** No attendee, however a written report provided in booklet.
- **Wotton Swimming Pool:** Alan George spoke of the continued success of the Pool due to a large group of dedicated volunteer helpers and its trained and paid lifeguards. The pool has seen a year of consolidation with attendee numbers slightly down. Improvements to areas such as changing rooms will be done in small stages rather than a massive knock down and rebuild, eg extending to the rear with a veranda. Grants will need to be applied for eg for a new heating system using solar energy which will reduce running costs.
- **Wotton Community Sports Foundation:** Barnaby Beere The site's sports facilities continue to be so well used that there are now fixture clashes it is so popular! The new skatepark opened last spring, and the new access path has now received planning permission with the funds of £95,000 needed almost raised. 5000 trees have been planted with a community orchard of 37 fruit trees. Future plans include a memory walk and a sensory garden in order to broaden appeal away from just being a sporting site. Two containers will replace the stone barn for storage. The partnership with KLB School to run the sport centre was a challenging operation but appears to be running smoothly and startup costs have been covered. Plans also involve 2 bmx tracks, changing rooms, a playground and a 5000k run jogging trail. A 'man shed' is planned – 'last of the summer wine' images portrayed space for older chaps with a place to potter....! Also more tree planting is planned with some black poplars to commemorate World War 1.

The Gazette was thanked for regular positive coverage, and the Town Council also for its continued financial and community support. An artist vision for the site was prepared and will be sent to the Town Council for display on the website.

- **Synwell Playing Fields Committee.** A new management committee has only just been elected and is still learning its role. A report on activities over the past year is in the booklet.
- **Wotton Heritage Centre.** Jeff Walshe outlined the establishment of the centre 22 years ago and its financial difficulties 2 years ago when legacies ran out. Grants have helped survival to a certain extent for capital items but are scarcer for running costs. Closure was likely until a financial and physical agreement was reached with the Town Council to safeguard its future, but still in collaboration with volunteers to run this important town facility. A new Visitor Information Centre will build on the services of the One Stop Shop and offer different opening hours, and aim to increase the use of social media. More volunteers are coming forward and one of the aims is to record current social history for generations in the future to have a record of 'today'.

**The Recreational Trust** – was set up in the 1970's as an umbrella organisation for town clubs and groups to obtain an official status to aid funding. With the cinema ownership transfer and a revitalized managing committee, a new Constitution is being adopted and some funding will be available for town groups and clubs – grant forms and parameters are being developed.

- 8) **County Council:** Cllr Dr JE Cordwell outlined various initiatives and activities from a county perspective over the past year. The budget increase was approved at +3.99% after public consultation, including 2% for health/social care. Increase to a Band D taxpayer is £43.51 p.a. An extra £2m will be spent on road maintenance. Each County Cllr will also have a budget of £30,000 to be spent their areas – ideas/request to him as soon as possible please. County Council meetings are now webcast and available to view online. Two magistrates courts are closing with the only one now in Cheltenham, a large distance from Wotton. A new LED streetlighting contract has been awarded. A new transport plan has

shortlisted Charfield railway station for re-opening but not until 2029! The problems on costings for the Javelin Park incinerator project were explained - contact him for more details. Devolution plans for the county are proceeding, although the costs involved in renegotiating the many & varied service contracts have not been factored in.

The booklet contains a more detailed county report, and an even more in depth report is available on the website or by contacting Dr JE Cordwell directly.

- 9) **District Council:** District Cllr Ken Tucker gave a brief update in addition to the written report. The Dryleaze Court social housing left hand side building will be demolished and replaced as it does not conform to modern standards and cannot easily be modified. Synwell residents have been supported regarding the Full Moon application to demolish and build houses on its site – a business plan by residents for the pub’s re-use is awaited over the 6 month delay period granted. District Councillor boundary changes now include Stinchcombe to this Warded area. Overall SDC budget rise agreed of +1.99%, above this level would trigger a referendum which would cost 0.3% of it. Cllr Tucker was thanked by the Synwell community for his efforts regarding the Full Moon application.

10) **Comments from the Public on Town Affairs.** Mr R Allway expressed displeasure at the possibility of land being built on behind the fire station. Although a car park is needed, the view of houses from the southern approach would forever spoil the image of the town. Miss R Macinnes requested that more shrubs be considered for planting along Marchesi Walk.

***The Assembly concluded at 8.35pm where Parishioners were invited to share refreshments with Councillors and staff***

Signed ..... Date .....

Chairman & Town Mayor