

# WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL



**DRAFT** Minutes of the **FINANCE & SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** of 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017 at 1pm in the Committee Room at the Civic Centre.

Present: Cllrs P Smith (Chair), T Luker, R Claydon, John Cordwell, June Cordwell  
Town Clerk: Ms S Bailey

1. **Apologies for Absence** none
2. **Declarations of Interest** The Chairman reminded Councillors of the need to consider public perception and the reputation of the Council when declaring any interests. Cllrs June & John Cordwell declared a personal interest in items relating to the SDC Monitoring Officer's report and recommendations, and the Code of Conduct discussions. The Dispensation already granted to them relating to County Council matters of a DPI nature is noted.  
*The items relating to Code of Conduct and Monitoring Officer discussions were thus delayed until the end of the meeting after Cllrs Cordwell had left the meeting.*
3. **Approval of Minutes of Finance & Special Purposes Committee** of January 2017; it was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr R Claydon and agreed all in favour to approve these Minutes.
4. **Renewal of various Policies /Procedures & previous review date.**

a) Health & Safety Policy - May 15

After a brief review of the policy, it was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell and seconded by Cllr R Claydon and agreed by all to approve the policy until May 2018, whereupon any Building Manager's feedback could be incorporated following earlier NEBOSH training.

b) Standing Orders (sect 1-debates) - Feb 17

After much discussion of the need to condense the length of town council meetings, and the appropriate way to demonstrate this in council's regulations, it was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell and seconded by Cllr R Claydon that the rules of debate in the current Standing Orders appear fit for purpose, and that town council monthly meetings will continue to trial the 'questions/clarification and then comments method' of motions, before a proposal is made and a decision reached. Feedback will be monitored. Agreed all in favour.

c) Action Plan 17/18 - yearly

The reason for the delayed clubs/groups fair was explained (lack of staff due to various illness periods), and that a Spring event is likely when Mrs J Walshe has also offered assistance. An extra item was added to the list of 2017/18 objectives, namely the idea of formulating a Forward Plan which looks at Wotton over a 10 year period to assess how it needs to change and adapt to challenges of modern society. The recent Community Plan is an excellent starting point to build on. This document which would attempt to provide leadership to the community over the longer term and guide Wotton in its aspiration to become a successful, vibrant Cotswold market town of the future. This Action Plan approval was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell seconded by Cllr June Cordwell and agreed by all.

All plans/policies above will go to next Council meeting for final approval. Cllr June Cordwell requested that the next Special Purposes Committee agenda considers the Remit of Committees policy and the councillor numbers for committees.

*It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded Cllr John Cordwell, agreed by all, to enter closed session due to confidential nature of staffing matters, under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.*

**5. Staffing Matters:**

a. To report on Buildings Manager absence. Update provided by the Clerk on the situation and how the council has reallocated some tasks and is monitoring/assessing the work cover requirements on a weekly basis. The Buildings Manager continues to receive treatment and is officially assessed as medically unfit for work. Councillors requested that a card is sent to him, signed by everyone, giving best wishes for his recuperation.

b. To note that caretaker duties of locking/unlocking Old Town toilets have been transferred to the external cleaning contract due to employment legislation. Noted

*It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded Cllr R Claydon, agreed by all, to return to council session  
Cllrs John & June Cordwell left the meeting at 2.10pm*

**6. To note report from SDC Monitoring Officer regarding Code of Conduct breaches for 2 town councillors & consider suggestions in the report for improving Town Council procedures.** This item did NOT discuss the actual decisions made but addressed the MO suggestions in her report. Discussions centred on how the Council could improve its image in the town and deal more successfully with similar situations in the future. The recommendations to suggest to full council from this meeting are:

- a) Change the Code of Conduct to bring it more in line with SDC policy, and to remove any ambiguity in its interpretation.
- b) Provide conflict management training which all councillors are required to attend.
- c) Stress to all councillors that:
  - I. Code of Conduct MUST be adhered to
  - II. Media Policy MUST be adhered regarding the press or appearing on camera.

Mr Kitchen's response was discussed very briefly and the Clerk will compose a response which will be forwarded to next the Council meeting.

**7. Renewal of various Policies/Procedures & previous review date**

**Code of Conduct - Dec 16**

The document was circulated in advance amongst committee members and responses gathered and discussed in order to update areas to clarify any ambiguity. The previous document was based on the SDC model. SDC have also updated their document since their previous model and this keeps the Code in line with SDC's own policy. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr P Smith and agreed by all to approve the above recommendations for change, to be forwarded to October Council for final approval.

Meeting finished at 3.15pm

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