

MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 21ST AUGUST 2017 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE



Present: Cllrs P Smith (Chairman) T Luker, P Barton, N Pinnegar, June Cordwell, R Claydon, N Clement, C Young, J Turner, L Farmer, John Cordwell, A Wilkinson, R Hale

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey, District Cllr G Butcher & 4 public members

T.5342 Apologies for Absence all present

T.5343 Declarations of Interest Cllrs N Pinnegar (employer on payment schedule), Cllrs John & June Cordwell (dispensation request item & car park enforcement by Glos CC item), C Young (as rep to Pool on payment schedule).

T.5344 Public Forum no comments

T.5345 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2017. It was proposed by Cllr L Farmer and seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve these Minutes, agreed 11 in favour, 2 abstentions.

T.5346 Chairman's Announcements – The Mayor has been obtaining quotes for Old Town toilets rebuild options, new water pipe connection options at New Rd allotments, and liaised with SITM regarding new hard drive replacement disk, and Virgin Media on cable works on various roads in Wotton.

T.5347 New Councillor - New Councillor for Wotton, Cllr Richard Hale, was welcomed and receipt of Declaration of Acceptance of Office noted.

T.5348 Accounts

- a) To approve payment of grant of £2000 to Synwell Playing Field. Their accounts had been requested for the financial year ending December 2016 and also the period up to July 2017. Some information was forthcoming although there were inconsistencies and gaps in information despite many requests. However, it was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed 11 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention to approve the payment of £2000 towards the installation of new fitness equipment.
- b) To approve purchase and installation of replacement hard drive for office systems after current unit failure, cost of £65 plus VAT & £85 installation fee. Due to urgent nature of these works after a failed backup unit, this work had already been completed, proposed to approve by Cllr June Cordwell seconded by Cllr C Young and agreed by all.
- c) Budget 2017/18. To note report of expenditure against budget. After a few minor questions, it was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell and seconded by Cllr L Farmer to note this budget report, 12 in favour 1 abstention.
- d) To approve the accounts for payment. One extra payment was added to the accounts presented; after a few questions, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon seconded by Cllr L Farmer to approve this payment schedule, agreed 12 in favour 1 abstention.

T.5349 Car Parking Enforcement – to update Council on Glos CC assistance via APCOA for enforcement of Civic Centre car park rules. The Mayor thanked the 6 councillors for attendance at the explanatory meeting with the Glos CC Parking Manger, and gave a summary of the implications of introducing parking

measures. Since more facts had come to light after the agenda was produced with a 'to note' heading, it was agreed to defer this matter to the September agenda for a decision, after digesting the extra information.

T.5350 Councillor Representatives

- a) It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr C Young, and agreed 12 in favour 1 abstention, to appoint representatives to the following organisations:
- (i) Wotton Community Sports Foundation – Cllr R Hale
 - (ii) Chamber of Trade – Cllr J Turner
- b) It was proposed by Cllr P Barton, seconded by Cllr T Luker, agreed by all, to confirm Cllr C Young as a member of the Regeneration Partnership committee.

T.5351 Councillor Dispensations

To consider request for dispensation to speak and vote from Cllrs John and June Cordwell in respect of matters relating to Cllr John Cordwell's position as Gloucestershire County Councillor for Wotton. Guidance on granting dispensations was provided to all members by the Clerk in advance (NALC guidance note LTN80 and District Monitoring Officer advice). A detailed discussion was held on the subject of whether the application is for a pecuniary or personal dispensation, with differing views held. An email complaint from a member of the public was received regarding a possible granting of this dispensation due to conflict of interest with County Council revenue items; this was refuted by Cllr John Cordwell in a prepared response stating that he is not consulted on the sale of County Council land or property. Indeed most councillors would be unaware these were taking place. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr R Claydon that Cllrs John and June Cordwell are granted a dispensation for Disclosable Pecuniary Interests until April 2020 (the end of Town Councillors' current term) in relation to matters involving Cllr John Cordwell's position as a County Councillor, since it is considered to be in the interests of persons living in the authority area, agreed 8 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention. The Council did not consider that it was possible to grant a dispensation for matters of a personal nature.

T.5352 Stroud District Council's Draft Heritage Strategy Consultation -

To consider responses ahead of deadline of 15th September 2017. This 45 page document was emailed to councillors in advance requesting input and involvement in this research as a supplementary planning advice document concerning heritage assets. After discussion of the document -which failed to mention Wotton's heritage at all and seemed to have odd priorities such as preserving existing ancient buildings yet encouraging new designs – it was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr T Luker and agreed by all, to support the document in principle, yet comment that resources are inadequate to serve justice upon this issue. Stroud District Council is faced with budget cutbacks, and production & research into this consultation is a huge drain on existing resources, which could be better utilised elsewhere. Furthermore, there is not the capacity in the communities to support such in-depth consultations.

T.5353 Wotton Market – to appoint Councillors to a working group, including volunteers from the Town Regeneration Partnership, to investigate market possibilities & set first meeting date. Cllrs R Hale and A Wilkinson agreed to join the group. The first meeting is to be arranged shortly by Cllr A Wilkinson. The clerk stressed the need for this group to be quickly proactive to take advantage of the

new 6 months' membership of NABMA and the advice received last month on establishment of a new market.

T.5354 Allotments – To consider introducing a deposit system for allotment plots. A document was circulated to councillors explaining the need to improve the very poor state in which plots were being returned to Council at the end of tenancies. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr L Farmer to introduce a new charge of £50 returnable deposit for new allotment tenancies, and update regulations appropriately. There are 6 vacant plots and improving/strimming/adding membrane to them at the start rather than giving a year's free rent for overgrown plots, will encourage more take-up of free plots.

T.5355 Policing in Wotton – to consider requesting formal details of the level of police coverage in Wotton and to agree to voice concerns to the police and MP about lack of coverage. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr June Cordwell, and agreed unanimously, to write to the Chief Constable, the Police Crime Commissioner and the local MP to complain about the lack of community policing which has fallen to its lowest levels ever seen. There is no local coverage unless in an emergency, with fewer PC's and PCSO's impossibly covering an ever wider area. The local police staff themselves have suffered much illness recently, and the people in the roles appear to change with no notification, thus no community rapport is established. It is unclear who now covers this area. The Town Council would welcome the Police to talk to the Council on the problems they are facing regarding local coverage.

T.5356 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – it was agreed to send a card to Ms K Dover and her helpers for organising such successful children's summer activity mornings at the Baptist Church recently.

T.5357 Clerk's Report – a comprehensive report covering July/August activities was supplied with the Clerk highlighting in addition, the procurement of allotment new water connection quotes, the success of Wotton being accepted as a Gateway Walking Town project, and the Special Purposes Committee meeting being arranged for the end of September whereby staff illness and implications will be discussed.

T.5358 Correspondence to note or request action:

a) Letter regarding New Rd allotments requesting permission to create new private access-way onto allotments; complaining of weeds on bank; and requesting sight of Council's public liability cover. The letter and staff actions were discussed; it was considered prudent to forward this to September Council's agenda whereby it could be discussed in detail and a decision made.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only: Countryside Voice Summer 2017

T.5359 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended

County Council – County Cllr John Cordwell provided a written report and highlighted that bus 626 had been re-contracted to the same specification by South Glos Council, that the Severn Trent works in Haw St had been brought forward to avoid coinciding with the Blues Fest, and that his allocation of local highways funding was open to suggestions although funding demands were already higher than total allowed. Road patching works for Old Town and Shepherds Leaze would cost £7,000 and £15,000 respectively.

District Council – Written report was circulated and the main points highlighted again by District Cllr Butcher. It was frustrating to note that SDC had put the Fountain Crescent garage site on the open market for sale with no WTC consultation, despite promises that two years ago they were not considering selling it.

PROW & Amenities Committee – not met

Finance & Special Purposes Committee – to meet end of September

Allotments Committee – 6 plots are vacant, strimming and applying membrane on plots was discussed, along with a new deposit scheme.

Wotton Youth Partnership – meeting did not take place again due to chairperson's late apology.

Town Regeneration Partnership – Cllr A Wilkinson is the new chair and welcomes new member Mr M Tucker (Chamber of Trade) and Cllr C Young from next month. He is hoping to tackle regeneration of the town starting with analysis for a market.

WC Sports Foundation – no report. New rep. just appointed.

Wotton Pool – Cllr C Young attended a meeting in July and was impressed by the enthusiasm and forward thinking of the Trustees. Pool needs repainting over winter, new lifeguards are constantly needed due to high turnover of young people, recent triathlon was well sponsored at £3,700, a submarine will be tested in the Pool by a company, overall swim numbers are slightly down due to opening 7 days later, but the planning application is approved for solar panels which will be fitted next Spring.

Heritage Centre – written report supplied & read out by Cllr June Cordwell covering: unneeded cabinet raised £140 at auction, local fundraising and grants of £1300 last month, 2018 calendar to be printed shortly, exterior refurbishment works are well received, a Wotton colouring book is being developed, and a non-user survey is being formulated as part of the museum's re-accreditation process.

CAB – Cllr C Young attended a meeting in July where their finances appeared to show a healthy balance, and advisors are being trained to a higher standard after wrong advice was given resulting in adverse action.

Heritage Project – Cllrs Luker & Barton attended a recording session organised by Mr J Walshe and involving a young person in line with project grant stipulations.

Virgin Media – the fortnightly meetings organised by Cllr P Smith are going well and many problems with installation of new infrastructure into the roads and verges are being solved as they arise by joint working.

T.5360 Town Affairs

Cllr John Cordwell – Two complainants from Wortley about an accident and requesting 30mph speeds have been told that the road does not satisfy national guidelines for this speed and the incident reported to the highways manager, the police and the road safety partnership.

Cllr T Luker – Town Hall Teas A Board was left at Rope Walk after Sunday's event

Cllr June Cordwell – various items which she would report to One Stop Shop

This completed the business of the Town Council at 8.45pm

Signed:Dated: