

**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 17th JULY 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

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey, District Cllr Braun & 6 members of public

T.5320 Apologies for Absence accepted from Cllrs L Farmer, John Cordwell, A Wilkinson

T.5321 Declarations of Interest Personal & Pecuniary - Cllrs N Pinnegar Bear St Garage as employer, & Cllr J Turner Co Op as employer, Cllr June Cordwell (possibly)Glos CC APCOA involvement due to spouse county cllr.

T.5322 Public Forum Mr Tucker, as new Chamber of Trade president, referred to the recent Code of Conduct decision by the District Council Monitoring Officer. He thanked Cllrs June & John Cordwell for their hard work over the years and dedication to Wotton, however questioned their ability to continue in a town councillor role and encouraged resignations. He also questioned why there were so may traffic warden visits to Wotton lately and he worries that this is affecting trade.

T.5323 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th June 2017. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve these Minutes, agreed all in favour.

T.5324 Councillor Vacancies

- a) New Councillor for Wotton South ward, Cllr Jonathan Turner was welcomed and receipt of Declaration of Acceptance of Office noted. Cllr Turner was reminded to return this Register of Interests form to SDC within 30 days.
- b) Noted that an election to fill the remaining town councillor vacancy will be held on 26th July 2017.

T.5325 Chairman's Announcements – The Mayor highlighted that he was arranging a meeting with the Virgin Media representative very shortly to discuss the issues and complaints with their laying of cable and digging up paths and roads in Wotton. Also, one of the two defibrillator training sessions at Synwell Pavilion will take place this coming Saturday and all are welcome.

T.5326 Accounts

- a) To note YCS report and approve payment in accordance with Service Level Agreement. The quarterly YCS youth report was circulated in advance. Town Council is disappointed to see that no grant funding has been secured by YCS in almost 2 years of this current contract despite it being specified in the Service Level Agreement. Furthermore youth attendance levels at both sessions do not appear very high, particularly on Mondays, compared to the Door attendance on Friday sessions. It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr R Claydon and agreed by all to approve this payment.
- b) To approve quote for new CCTV camera and relocation of current camera. Quote details were circulated in advance and numerous working group meetings held to discuss the bottom of Long St new camera, replacement camera to Civic Centre reception, new HiKVision recorder and associated works for £1702 plus vat. The current software, originally developed by Redhand is no longer being fully

supported although any minor problems are being patched as they appear. Although the new recorder has a few camera compatibility issues (due to different manufacturer) it is the best available on the market currently and camera upgrades will be needed over the next few years to provide screen compatibility for viewing all cameras on one screen. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr C Young that this upgrade is authorised, subject to a soundproof box (due to its high noise level and location in a working office environment) being found for a cost of up to £400, agreed by all.

c) To approve Clerk and Deputy Clerk attendance at SLCC Branch Meeting and Stress Management Workshop on 9/11/17 at a total cost of £25 total; proposed to approve by Cllr P Barton seconded Cllr T Luker and agreed by all.

d) To approve gas/electricity supplier for Council and Trust buildings from 16/11/2017. A detailed spreadsheet comparison table was provided comparing quotes from a number of suppliers. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr C Young, and agreed by all, to switch to the 2 year contract from British Gas as offering the best value for all buildings.

e) To consider subscription to NABMA, who provide support and advice to entities who manage markets, at a cost of £159 up to 31/3/2018 (£318/annum thereafter). The Clerk attended a NABMA conference recently and explained the possible benefits of obtaining specific market advice for Wotton. The current farmers market is not well supported and facing closure, and this is an opportunity for all traders, Chamber of Trade, and the Regeneration Partnership to work together with ideas and advice from NABMA. It is stressed that the Regeneration Committee would need to move forward and progress on ideas and actively use this advice stream, as future membership would be more expensive. Proposed to approve 9 months temporary membership by Cllr J Turner, seconded by Cllr P Barton, agreed 8 in favour with 2 against.

f) Budget 2017/18. Report of expenditure against budget noted as healthy. Also noted that most of the current election cost estimate of £6500 would have to be taken from contingency or reserves.

g) Accounts for payment – circulated in advance with a few additions – proposed to pay these by Cllr June Cordwell seconded by Cllr C Young, agreed by all with 1 abstention.

T.5327 Stroud District Council S106 Agreements – to review priorities for S106 funding allocation.

It was agreed to bring forward this item and suspend Standing Orders to allow public to speak, proposed Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded Cllr R Claydon, agreed by all.

Two representatives from Bearlands Play Area spoke of their plans for renovating the small play area which has suffered from years of neglect and is the responsibility of SDC. They have attended many events, raised its profile, had meetings with SDC where 50% matched funding has been agreed up to maximum of £40k cost, and explained their plans and ideas for the site. They are now affiliated to the Recreational Trust which allows them to apply for grants under the charity umbrella and are working on a newsletter (circulated). District Cllr C Braun also spoke of committed funding from SDC which is a positive sign given other budget cutting pressures. Furthermore the Bearlands housing estate has been prioritised by SDC as spearheading the new housing and tidy up investment scheme shortly.

It was proposed by Cllr T Luker to return to Council session, seconded Cllr P Barton, agreed by all.

The Mayor spoke of the history of the site when the housing was originally built by SDC and their negligence in maintenance duties, which has produced the current situation (its provision was part of the planning agreement for building so many

houses). SDC has tried to offload the play area onto the Town Council in the past although this has been refused. After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr T Luker that the Bearlands Play area is a worthy cause and should be put on the S106 funding list, however that it should not surpass Synwell Playing Fields as the priority for funding, agreed 8 in favour with 1 abstention. The Clerk is to enquire whether Old Town toilets renovations can be funded from S106, and whether Synwell PF new boiler for the changing rooms/shower block is also eligible as part of open space/recreational use requirements. The Bearlands Play Area members were thanked for attending, and for explaining their plans, and for all their work so far.

T.5328 Car Parking Enforcement – to consider Glos CC assistance with APCOA for enforcement of Civic Centre car park. A document was circulated explaining the research undertaken with SDC, APCOA and Glos CC regarding possible enforcement avenues and likely costs and implications of such an undertaking. A meeting will be held with Mr Daniels of Glos CC on 10th August to ascertain further details of proceeding with this and whether parking charges should be introduced.

T.5329 Council Vehicle – To consider quotes for repairs/replacement van
It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow Mr N Pinnegar to speak about the van on behalf of the Garage, proposed Cllr T Luker, seconded Cllr June Cordwell, agreed by all.

Mr Pinnegar spoke of the repairs to the van undertaken recently to enable it to be operational, and answered questions about the considerable repairs needed and an MOT/service bringing the cost almost to £2000, but still without any guarantees that further repairs would not be needed since it is now 14 years old.

*It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell to return to Council session, seconded Cllr T Luker, agreed by all.
Cllr N Pinnegar left the room*

The Clerk circulated in advance a summary of possible alternative (almost new) vans available and costs. After discussion of the considerable repairs needed to keep the current van operational, and the council's need for this van and its size to undertake general council works, it was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr C Young and agreed by all to purchase the 1 yr old LWB Transit Connect for £13,400 plus vat from Bear St Ford Garage, with Clerk to arrange signage and hazard stripes etc, if it is still available.

*Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the room
Cllr J Turner left the room*

T.5330 Post Office Re-location – To discuss and respond to consultation. A consultation document was circulated explaining the proposal to put the post office counter into the Co Op shop a few doors away, with slightly longer opening times.

It was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to allow Mr J Turner return to the room to answer questions, proposed Cllr June Cordwell, seconded Cllr T Luker, agreed by all.

Mr Turner was asked questions about plans from a Co Op point of view in terms of layout & merchandising conflicts, however nothing has been decided or is known at this stage.

Cllr J Turner left the room

It was proposed by Cllr T Luker to return to Council session, seconded Cllr R Claydon, agreed by all.

After much discussion of the merits of retaining the service in Wotton and confirming that the current postmaster does not wish to continue, it was agreed that the Co Op venue would be a suitable alternative if:

- a) an enlarged store is also being considered, in order that the inside shopper space does not become more cramped, and that the merchandising range does not diminish (since this is the largest food shop in the town)
- b) that the Amazon parcel drop and collect facility is retained
- c) the premises remain easily accessible for disabled and elderly

d) that queuing space for post office services does not impinge upon shopping activities, eg maybe a large facility at the rear which would open onto the car park would be suitable.

T.5331 Consultation Re. Review of Dog Control Order in Stroud District – to consider responses. A consultation document with 4 proposals from SDC was discussed in detail. Regarding DC03 which deals with dogs entering land where dogs are excluded, Wotton Town Council wishes to add to the end sentence where exemptions are for assistance dogs, that dogs on 'suitable' leads on a Public Right of Way should also be an exemption (eg a footpath which runs across a playing field). Furthermore, in relation to DC04, this should be amended to include the need for dogs to be kept on leads in allotments as well as cemeteries. This Council is in agreement with the other proposals.

T.5332 Wotton Walking Festival – Council representative. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr T Luker that Cllr N Pinnegar be appointed as representative to the Walking Festival Group agreed all in favour.

T.5333 Council Sector Pay Award Negotiations – to consider and provide a view on what impact this would have on councils. A document explaining sector pay claims nationally was provided to Council, and GAPTC has asked for Council thoughts in Gloucestershire before submitting responses to NALC who then feed into national pay sector negotiations. A 5% claim had been submitted nationally, after 1% pay freezes since 2009, which has led to national pay falls in real terms of 21%. This is in addition to the local government sector losing 750,000 jobs nationally since 2010 as part of budget and service cuts. Although there was a general feeling that 'severe' austerity needed to end, Wotton Town Council had great trouble reaching a consensus on appropriate sector pay increases, with widely differing views. After one failed motion, and a failed extra amendment supporting 5%, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar that account needs to be taken of the current increases in inflation in establishing sector pay rates, and that bodies should also be mindful of the increasing pressure on remaining staff continuing in roles with higher workloads, agreed 7 in favour, 2 abstentions.

T.5334 Old Town Toilets – To discuss future of the building. The Clerk provide information outlining the difficulty maintaining an acceptable standard of cleanliness, and roof leaks now further threatening the paintwork. Cllr P Smith is awaiting contractor quotes in order that all options can be assessed by Council before any decisions made as to their future.

T.5335 Cycle/Walking Path Survey – to consider and approve the revised SDC local transport survey, and support questionnaire for research into feasibility and costs for a local cycling route towards Kingswood & Charfield (District Cllr Braun).

It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr T Luker to support the actual survey itself with revised wording on the introduction, which indicates that costs are likely to be substantial and that it could take a long time to complete, thus not unduly raising false expectations of an immediate delivery. Furthermore, it is agreed that this project, should it come to fruition, would not take precedence over the reopening of Charfield railway station, should funding become available. Agreed by all.

T.5336 Allotments

a) To agree to investigate costs of new Severn Trent water connection for £138 at New Rd. The Clerk provided an analysis of the situation of very low water pressure, the visit from Severn Trent and the pressure measurements indicating that there is possibly squashed pipe somewhere between the ST stop tap at Symn Lane and the middle of the allotment site (the whole pipe is apparently WTC responsibility). It was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded Cllr C Young to investigate new a connection cost, agreed by all.

b) To consider request from Cllr P Barton for children's allotments whereby plots are divided into much smaller entities to encourage interest in nature and wildlife at an early age. It is requested that this issue is discussed at the next allotments committee meeting with suggestions as to how it could work in practice with adult supervision, and responsibility.

T.5337 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – no current suggestions.

T.5338 Clerk's Report – a comprehensive report supplied covering June/July activities was noted with no questions.

Due to the lateness of the hour (10pm) it was proposed by Cllr P Smith, seconded Cllr P Barton, and agreed by all that the meeting continues.

T.5339 Correspondence to note or request action:

a) Noted email and letter from Gloucester Diocese confirming acceptance of two Town Council benches in St Mary's churchyard.

b) Noted email on behalf of the Chamber of Trade regarding potential use of the former Wotton Building Supplies site for parking. Clerk will follow up the sent letter.
Brochures/Newsletters for information only: Clerks and Councils Direct July 2017

T.5340 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended

County Council – County Cllr John Cordwell provided a written report.

District Council – Written report was circulated.

PROW & Amenities Committee – general footpaths surveys are being continued and are almost completed.

Finance & Special Purposes Committee – not met

Allotments Committee – next meeting in one week.

Wotton Youth Partnership – an informal meeting at the Star did not take place.

Town Regeneration Partnership – next meeting in August

WC Sports Foundation – no report, new representative needed.

Wotton Pool – next meeting in one week.

Heritage Centre – a new chairman is producing some new ideas.

T.5341 Town Affairs

Cllr C Young - asked about the foliage on left hand wall below War Memorial to Potters Pond – this is Glos County Council and they usually need chasing to attend.

Cllr June Cordwell – pleased to see that the overhanging branches from the funeral director's property at the top corner of The Chipping footpath were cut back very soon after complaining.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 10.15pm

Signed:Dated: