

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH FEBRUARY 2016 AT 7.30PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE

PRESENT: Cllr R Claydon (Chairman), Cllr P Barton, Mr M Clarke (CALGS and Under-the-Edge Arts), Cllr June Cordwell (until 8pm), Cllr A Kendall, Cllr T Luker, Mrs T McLusky (Beaumont-le-Roger Society), Mr G Phillips (Wotton Arts Association), Cllr P Smith, Mrs J Walshe (Town Hall Teas and Heritage Centre), Reverend T Wharin (Baptist Church), Cllr A Wilkinson

In Attendance: Deputy Clerk Mrs Y Milsom

797. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Canon R Axford, Cllr K Collins, Mrs J Tebb

798. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 2nd November 2015

Proposed by Cllr Cordwell, seconded by Mrs Walshe to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2015. Agreed in favour.

799. Community Plan

The Community Plan Working Group had met in November, December and January and were now on draft 6 of the Plan update. Mr Clarke was thanked for his contribution. The next meeting was arranged for 24th February at 7pm in the Civic Centre. The aim was to complete the plan before the end of this Financial Year in order to claim the grant allocated by Stroud District Council. Cllr Claydon would send the latest draft out to members of this committee for their comments, with the hope of finalising the document at the February meeting.

800. Farmers Market

Cllr Claydon and the Deputy Clerk had met with Mr S Carpenter, who organises the Farmers Market, to discuss the drop in the number of stalls and the idea of changing to a more general market. The idea raised concerns about the possible detrimental effect on the quality of produce sold; of possibly taking business from shops in the town; and that, because of the number of buyers attending the market, it would not be profitable for the stall-holders if there were additional stalls selling the same produce. Mr Carpenter was happy to continue looking for stalls which would complement the regular stalls. He mentioned that the customers who attended were very loyal and supportive of the market.

Cllr A Kendall entered the meeting

It was suggested that a different day for the market could be tried in order to avoid the competition presented by the much larger Stroud market, but Mr Carpenter had said that the stalls attending Wotton Farmers Market were committed to other local markets on other days. Members considered that competition was healthy and that people were more likely to be attracted to the market if it offered a lot of choice. They also suggested more advertising was required, with suggestions that sign boards were put up opposite the Co-op and also in Church Street and the Chipping car park. It was also suggested that it should be advertised more in the Gazette, the Wotton Directory and, in particular, online. Members understood the quality concerns but were supportive of a fresh approach and of a change to a more general market. The opinion was that more choice would bring in more people to the town as well as the market, which would be beneficial to the town shops. It was noted that Mike Smylie was planning to run a food fair on 18th June 2016 in the town and it was suggested that this could link in with the Farmers Market. Changes to the Farmers Market would be included on the agenda for the

Chamber of Trade AGM. It was agreed all in favour to pursue the idea of expanding to a more general market. Cllr Claydon and the Deputy Clerk would meet again with Mr Carpenter to discuss this.

801. Walking Festival

The Walking Festival Working Group had met in November and January. At the November meeting the Chairman of the Dursley Walking Festival, and his wife, had attended and given a lot of helpful advice. At the January meeting it was acknowledged that more volunteers were needed if the Festival was to go ahead and with this in mind the next meeting, to be held on 23rd February, is being more widely advertised. A proper committee would be needed, separate from the Town Council but with Council support. The initial idea is for a 3-day festival in Spring 2017 offering 9 different walks which, if successful, could be expanded in future years. It was noted that the Gardens and Sculpture Trail will take place on 27-29th May 2017 and so these dates should be avoided.

Cllr J Cordwell left meeting

802. Christmas Shop Windows Competition

Following on from the suggestion made by this committee, the Town Council held a Christmas Shop Windows competition. This had been appreciated by the traders and the results were as follows: First – Clarences (£100), second - Longfield (£50), third - Daisy M Vintage (£25). Shields were being sourced to present to the winners and the Deputy Clerk would check on progress with this. The Town Council and Regeneration Partnership were thanked for organising this.

803. Signage to Wotton from Newark Park

The Chairman had investigated Highways signs from Newark Park. It was noted that the exit signs from the Park direct traffic onto a road from which Wotton is clearly signposted. He suggested that additional signage would be superfluous but that it might be worth considering adding a brown historic market town to the existing sign. An application to Highways would be needed for this and there was a cost involved. Members also discussed signage within Newark Park and agreed that a prominent sign at or near the ticket office would be most helpful. It was suggested that this should include pictorial evidence of how close the town was and also the post code for parking. Newark Park was currently closed but it was agreed that Mr Phillips would investigate the possibility when it re-opens. It was further agreed to apply for the addition of a tourism symbol to the current Highways sign.

804. Club and Group Fair

It was noted that a Clubs and Groups Fair was being held at the Town Hall on 30th April 2016 from 10am-2pm. The Fair would showcase the variety of organisations within the town and will hopefully attract new members to the participating groups.

805. Reports from Partners

a) St Mary's Church – Church members were organising a 'Woolly Sheep Trail' over the Easter holidays. The 'sheep' will be hidden in various locations around the town for participants to find. Also, the launch of the fund-raising appeal to pay for the re-ordering of the church, to make it more usable as a community venue, was to take place on 14th March 2016. An update from Canon Axford was requested as to the progress of the planning application.

b) Baptist Church – Next year the Baptist Church will be celebrating 300 years of non-conforming. They have received planning permission for a new atrium to join the existing church building and

cottage, which is to be called 'The Link'. This will provide new facilities. It is hoped that the building works will be completed between August and October 2016.

c) Chamber of Trade – A Curry Evening is being held on 16th February at the India Palace. On 23rd February they will hold their AGM and are inviting members to submit topics to be discussed. The revamp of the Wotton information website is proceeding and advertisers are being gathered to be included on the reprint of the Wotton leaflet. The new car park proposal for land behind the Fire Station is looking promising and it is hoped that it can soon be progressed.

d) CALGS – Members will be holding a party at Coombe Allotments on Good Friday, 25th March 2016 from 4pm, the final day before eviction. Canon Axford has agreed to attend when the church services are finished. All are welcome.

e) UTEA – At the AGM in December Martin Clarke and Norman Dadd were voted as co-Chairmen. In January they held a very successful ceilidh at the Town Hall, which they intend to repeat next year on Burns night. A varied programme of events was planned for the coming year, including: Valentine fund-raiser, 13th February; Flower Power multimedia exhibition and silent auction, 12-13th March; 18 hour arts marathon on Easter Saturday to mark the spring solstice; Blues Festival 25-26 September; Wotton's Got Talent, 26 November; Aftershop Show by The Model Folk following on from Wotton late night shopping on 3rd December; AGM and Christmas concert on 9th December and Christmas show by Festivus on 10th December. The Open Gardens and Sculpture Trail has been deferred until 27-29 May 2017. However, this year there will be a Secret Gardens Trail on 30th May 2016, being organised by Wotton Gardening Club and WCSF. A grant from the Town Council towards this is much appreciated. Thanks also to Mr B Walker for the lease of a promotional shop window for the Arts Centre on Church Street. UTEA is pleased to be participating in the update of the Community Plan.

f) Town Hall Teas – The season starts this year on Easter Sunday. All but one of the slots have been taken, the remaining one being for Easter Monday.

g) Father Christmas Grotto – In the absence of a Christmas event in the town in December 2015, a Father Christmas Grotto had been set up on TSB premises. The Chamber of Trade assisted with gifts for the children. It was visited by 55 children, which was excellent especially given it was not part of a special event. Thanks to the Chamber of Trade and TSB for their assistance.

h) Heritage Centre – Following representations by the Historical Society to the Town Council over the past year a partnership between the two has been initiated. This will provide the Heritage Centre with financial assistance to protect Wotton's historical records, photographs and artefacts. In turn, a Town Information Centre will be run by volunteers from the Heritage Centre. They will open for 6 days per week, including Saturdays and Sundays, and work closely with the Town Council and One Stop Shop to promote Wotton and the surrounding area. The Historical Society and Museum will continue as normal. The Museum and its contents had been facing an uncertain future due to lack of funds but was now more secure thanks to the Town Council's financial assistance. Work in progress includes: re-arrangement of the front interior of the Heritage Centre, which will include a continual display of Wotton's history; new signage to the front of the Centre; recruitment of additional volunteers; grant applications for capital expenditure; ongoing fund-raising, the first of which is a Valentine's cakes and teas event in the Town Hall on 13th February.

i) Arts Festival – This year’s Festival would take place from 22nd April – 1st May. The St George’s Day celebrations would take place on 23rd April. Regarding the latter event, it was noted that Stroud District Council has made the application form for the road closure much longer and more complicated and have also more than doubled the fee, from £40 last year to £85 this year. It was agreed to ask the Stroud District Councillors about the reasons for such a dramatic increase. There was to be more packed into the Arts Festival period than ever before, including the Dursley Male Voice Choir, a Recorder orchestra, Heritage walk, Dustbin films, Bristol Ensemble, Bath Choir, a talk on Chedworth and more.

j) Beaumont-le-Roger Society – 47 people attended their AGM. The French contingent are arriving on 13th May at around midnight and leaving on Monday at 10am. It is difficult for some of the French people to get time off work to allow a longer stay. Two Wotton families with younger children have now joined the Society, which is very pleasing.

806. Any Other Reports

a) Under-the-Edge Arts were gathering ideas to brighten up the locked yard at the end of the Chipping Hall facing the Rope Walk. They are aware of the listed building status of the Hall. Suggestions welcome.

b) The new Memory Café held fortnightly on Tuesdays in the Chipping Clubroom is very good. The organisers also hold a Memory Café in Charfield on alternate Wednesdays.

c) The Town Clerk has put forward a proposal for the revamp of the area in front of Rope Walk toilets. It has been added to the list of projects for S106 funding in the town and further funding is also being sought.

d) A food festival is being organised by Mike Smylie, to be held at the British School on 18th June 2016.

807. Dates for Future Meetings

The next meeting was scheduled for 13th June 2016.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership