

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 6th FEBRUARY 2017 AT 7.00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE



PRESENT: Cllr R Claydon (Chairman), Cllr P Barton, Mr M Clarke (UTEA), Cllr T Luker, Mrs T McLusky (Beaumont-le-Roger Society), Mr G Phillips (Arts Association), Cllr N Pinnegar, Mr D Thomas (Chamber of Trade), Mrs J Walshe (Heritage Centre, Town Hall Teas) In Attendance: Deputy Clerk Mrs Y Milsom
1 Member of the Public

847. Election of Chairman

Cllr A Kendall was unwell so it was necessary to elect a Chairman for this meeting. Proposed by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all that Cllr R Claydon should Chair the meeting.

848. Apologies - received from: Canon R Axford, Cllr A Kendall, Cllr P Smith, Mrs C Sweet, Mrs J Tebb, Mr J Walshe, Reverend T Wharin

849. Declarations of Interest – None

850. Public Forum

Mr Wade Bennett was welcomed to the meeting. He commented on the condition of footways; poor signage to car parks; poor line marking of parking spaces in car parks and streets; the difficulties facing High Streets across the UK due to new shopping trends; and that it was good that people cared about the town.

851. Minutes of the Town Regeneration Partnership Meeting Dated 7th November 2016

Proposed by Cllr P Barton and agreed in favour with 2 abstentions, to approve the Minutes of the Meeting dated 7th November 2016.

852. Community Action Plan

a) Bed & Breakfast Accommodation – update on regulation requirements as requested previously. Premises serving food to the public need to be inspected by Stroud District Council to ensure food safety standards compliance. Other essentials are fire risk assessments, gas safety certificate, insurance and registration with HMRC. There is no additional requirement to register with the B&B accreditation scheme for the Stroud area, the cost of which was considered to be a deterrent to some potential B&B businesses.

b) Action 6 – The Footpaths Committee is working on new surveys of Public Rights of Way and Footways within the parish. Town Regeneration members were asked to assist by checking the footways close to their homes - surveys to be returned to the Deputy Clerk. Designation of local green space has to be made as part of a Local or Neighbourhood Plan - this legislation is currently being debated in Parliament so the item would be deferred pending the outcome. Otherwise the actions in Theme 6 are progressing well.

Action 7 – Good progress had been made in this part of the Action Plan. The successful Blues Festival was now being organised by a charitable organisation set up for this purpose. A strategy to promote arts, entertainments and festivals was still to be established but it was encouraging to note closer co-operation between UTEA and the Arts Association. Other festivals taking place this year are as follows:

- (i) Walking Festival on 5th-7th May 2017. The Town Council and Chamber of Trade have given grants towards leaflets and insurance. Further funding may be available from Wotton Recreational Trust.
- (ii) Two garden trails events - Wotton Art Gardens on 30/4/17 – 1/5/17, organised by UTEA and forming part of the Arts Festival itinerary; and the Secret Gardens Trail on 28/5/17.
- (iii) The Christmas event scheduled for 2/12/17. It was noted that the organiser needed volunteers to help clear up after the event.

c) Actions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 9 had been reviewed by this committee. Discussions ensued over which actions to review at the next meeting, as follows:

Action 5 – Improve Public Toilets – The area in front of Rope Walk toilets had been improved by the Town Council with grant funding. A meeting is being organised with Stroud District Council to discuss improvements

to the toilets building. Limited improvements had been made to Old Town Toilets. Members suggested that the toilets should be retained and improved, ideas as follows: change to a pitched, tiled roof; proper refurbishment to the interior; investigation of plumbing problems/smells. Replacement with a modern toilet facility was not recommended because of Conservation Area restrictions.

Action 8 – Expand youth facilities and activities – this was being pursued by the Wotton Youth Partnership.

Action 4 - Provide more parking in the town at no extra cost to residents. A Stroud District Council planning decision on the application for a car park off Symn Lane was awaited. Further discussion on the parking action should await the outcome of that decision. Members felt that, without a solution to the parking problem, some regeneration objectives would be difficult to achieve.

Action 10 – Improve traffic management. The Town Council is pursuing a list of Traffic Regulation Orders with Gloucestershire County Council. It was agreed to look at this Action at the next meeting and members were asked to forward suggestions in advance of the meeting for comparison with the Town Council's list.

853. Directional Signposts

A review of the town centre blue directional fingerposts had been requested. The 'Police Station' text on the sign at the Long Street/Rope Walk junction would be painted out. The blue signs at the bottom of Long Street would be cleaned. Any other observations should be reported to the Deputy Clerk.

854. Budget for Financial Year 2017/18

The Town Regeneration Partnership Budget would be £5000 for the 2017/18 Financial Year. Breakdown as follows:

Farmers Market	£900
Glos Market Towns Forum	£250
Flower Baskets	£250
Christmas Trees	£200
Christmas Tree Grants	£450
Christmas Shop Window Comp.	£260
Wotton in Bloom	£2000
Total	£4310

855. Walking Festival Cllr Claydon would take the points raised earlier in this meeting to the Walking Festival meeting later this week.

856. Clubs & Groups Fair

Due to staff shortages it was necessary to postpone the Clubs and Groups Fair until the Autumn. It was suggested that the Fair be deferred until Spring 2018 and Mrs Walshe offered to assist with organisation if this was agreed. This would be referred to Council.

857. Reports from Partners

a) Under the Edge Arts – A letter from UTEA was noted concerning parking difficulties in the town and the consequent detrimental effect on Arts Centre business/revenue. Other reported items included the success of their Christmas tree; a forthcoming meeting with Stroud District Heritage Officer to discuss building improvements ideas; talks with the Town Trust to extend the lease.

b) Wotton Arts Association – St George's Day celebrations would take place on 22nd April 2017. The Arts Festival is scheduled for 24th April to 3rd May and includes: Art Exhibition; Band concert; Stuart Singers Concert at St Mary's; Wotton Art Gardens held over two days; Vintage Valuations; Turning the Tables; Schools Music Evening; Historical evening; Bristol Ensemble; Band on the Hill; Festival Service; Photographic competition/exhibition at Under-the-Edge Arts. Mr Phillips would progress the 'Wotton' poster for Newark Park when it re-opens.

c) Beaumont-le-Roger Society – 2017 will be their 30th anniversary and exchange. 49 people are travelling to France and there is growing interest from KLB School, with two pupils participating.

d) Chamber of Trade – Members were disappointed with the Town Council decision to object to the car park/housing planning application south of Symn Lane Fire Station. They hoped that Stroud District Council would approve the application.

e) Heritage Centre – Report included: production and distribution of a new flyer; a ‘Friends’ initiative; fund-raising and grant awards and how monies will be spent; success of new ‘Trades and Traders’ exhibition; Powerpoint presentations to local groups on the history of the Heritage Centre; KLB student assisting with next exhibition to achieve Duke of Edinburgh Award; volunteer training; attendance at grant opportunities meeting; doubling of visitor figures for 2016 to almost 6000 due to longer opening hours enabled by the provision of over 6500 volunteer man-hours.

f) Promoting Tourism Activities – Heritage Centre members attended a Cotswold Town Information Centre Managers meeting. Topics discussed included uploading events to the Cotswold.com website; Town Guides; Cotswold Roadshow (promotional activities); National Express; Cotswold Visitor Guide 2018; T-Stats (website for recording visitors). Heritage Centre members also attended a meeting of the Dursley/Wotton Area Tourism Network meeting. Included was a presentation concerning the future of Dursley and Cam Station and how further transport integration might work. Topics discussed included the Draft Tourism Strategy; circulation of an Information Template; a brand name; a funding letter to parishes; and the release of a Stroud District Council promotional film for the area. Various sub-groups were created to look in detail at different tourism aspects and the full committee would meet again in 3 months’ time.

g) Town Hall Teas - All slots are booked for 2017, including Bank Holiday Mondays. During the Blues Festival weekend the Tea would be held at the Chipping Clubroom. The Buildings Manager had been asked to refurbish the A-boards used to promote the Teas.

h) Baptist Church – Wotton Baptist Church was celebrating its 300th anniversary this year with a number of events (31/3/17-5/4/17) plus the official opening of their new Link building. Churches Together were organising a series of Lent Lectures. Above details were circulated to members.

858. Any Other Brief Reports

a) Concerns were raised over the proposed changes to the interior of St Mary’s Church. It was asserted that this was a matter for personal judgement and not for this Committee.

b) The hanging baskets scheme was considered to be a major attraction for visitors to the town.

c) Thanks were expressed to the organisers of the Blues Festival for their impressive event.

859. Dates for Future Meetings

The next meeting was scheduled for 8th May 2017.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership Committee

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership