

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH MAY 2017 AT 7.00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE



PRESENT: Cllr A Kendall (Chairman), Cllrs R Claydon, T Luker, N Pinnegar and P Smith; Mr M Clarke (UTEA), Mrs T McLusky (Beaumont-le-Roger Society), Mr G Phillips (Wotton Arts Association), Mrs C Sweet (Community Dementia Link)
In Attendance: Deputy Clerk Mrs Y Milsom

860. Apologies - Apologies were received from Reverend R Axford, Mrs J Walshe and Cllr P Barton

861. Declarations of Interest – None

862. Public Forum – No members of the public present

863. Minutes of the Town Regeneration Partnership Meeting Held on 6th February 2017

Proposed by Cllr Claydon, seconded by Cllr Smith, that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February be approved as a correct record. Approved in favour with one abstention.

864. Community Action Plan

a) Theme 10 – Improve Traffic Management. Traffic Regulation Orders, which had been approved by Town Council and submitted to the County Council for processing, were circulated. A number of orders are being done together to minimise costs, which Town Council will be match-funding.

Mrs Sweet entered the meeting

Safety is the priority in the proposals but some loss of parking will result, the shortage of which remains a major challenge for the future. Some of the current road markings will also be re-painted. It was noted that the Renishaw factory entrance was crucial to traffic flow in Old Town; and that the traffic hump sign at the junction of the Chipping and Symn Lane is lacking an explanatory plate to demonstrate that the humps extend for a specific distance in both directions.

b) Neighbourhood Plan – there were no current plans to proceed. A Neighbourhood Plan must be community led and it is problematic to get people to come forward to assist with this lengthy process. A plan cannot be used to block development, it is very expensive and it is subject to a community referendum before it can be adopted, so could be rejected at the end. Given the available development land in Wotton it is unlikely that the extra CIL money gained from having a Plan would cover its costs. However, the area has been designated should the community wish to proceed in the future.

c) Progress update – Members agreed to run through and update the Community Action Plan.

Theme 1 – Actions 2, 3 and 5 needed to be progressed by the Chamber of Trade. It was agreed to consider the agenda item concerning the Farmers Market at this point. Poor customer numbers at the April market led to two of the traders indicating that they would not continue beyond May if this trend continued. If that happened the market would no longer be viable. However, the May market had been better attended so it was continuing for the present, albeit precariously.

Theme 2 – It was agreed to discuss the agenda item concerning the Footways Survey at this point. The Footways Survey had commenced and was continuing on a casual basis, with about one-third of footways checked so far. The Footpaths Survey was also progressing. It was noted that the dropped curb footway crossing St Marys Church car park on Parklands was in very poor condition. It was also noted that Virgin would shortly be digging up footways to install cabling and the quality of reinstatement would need to be monitored. Part 3 of this theme needed to be progressed by the Chamber of Trade.

Theme 3 – Part 2 – The One Stop Shop and Heritage Centre have amalgamated their lists of Bed & Breakfast accommodation in the town and there are some also advertised on Air B&B. Part 5 – The Walking Festival has exploited the location on the Cotswold Way. Part 6 – commercial publishers producing guide books of local walks often contact the Cotswold Conservation Board so suggest sending them the Town Council walk leaflets. It was also suggested that some of the Walking Festival routes could be shared and this would be discussed at the festival debrief meeting. Part 7 – good progress made with Arts Festival, Blues Festival and Walking Festival. Part 8 – Wotton poster is now displayed at Newark Park. Part 9 – the initiative to develop a new ‘Cotswold Severnside’ tourism area would progress this point.

Theme 4 – The car park planning application had been withdrawn whilst some issues are reviewed. The Town Clerk had written to the owners of the Wotton Building Supplies site to express an interest in purchasing the land with a view to providing additional parking.

Theme 5 – The Town Council had, with grant-funding, improved the area outside of Rope Walk toilets and had received positive feedback. Stroud District Council is intending to make improvements to the toilets building shortly. Old Town Toilets options are still under review. Part 3 – use of Parish Rooms’ facilities would need exploring if works commenced at Old Town Toilets. It was noted that a lack of toilet facilities can be a deterrent to visitors and some towns overcome this with a scheme whereby participating shops display a window sticker saying ‘use our facilities’. It was agreed to add to the ‘Actions Required’ to explore this option.

Theme 6 – Clearance work had been carried out at the cemetery to remove excess spoil that had been deposited at the boundary. This was now being fully monitored to ensure it is not repeated.

Theme 7 – Part 2 - The Blues Festival now has its own committee and is a registered charity. Part 1 – UTEA will convene a meeting of interested parties later this year to establish a strategy to identify any gaps/vulnerabilities. The Walking Festival had taken place over the weekend, partly funded by a grant of £850 from the Town Council. The Walking Festival AGM would take place on 29/6/2017. A Party in the Parc was being held this summer at the WCSF ground.

Theme 8 – The Town Council had sourced funding for additional sessions at the Youth Centre. A meeting shelter had been installed near to the skate park.

Theme 9 – Part 5 – It was agreed to bring forward the Dementia Friendly Town agenda item. A number of actions needed to be progressed in order to register with the Dementia Action Alliance as a Dementia Friendly Town. Tomorrow evening a Dementia Friends session was being held at the Civic Centre for the Town Council. Sessions have already been held for several other groups in the town. Other actions could be to encourage businesses to participate in the Keep Safe scheme, displaying a window sticker to show that the premises is a safe place for a vulnerable person to seek assistance. New projects, or businesses which are refurbishing, should consider available guidance as to what can be done to help those with dementia. Links with Penwood Lodge were planned to better integrate them into the community. Mrs Sweet would gather information material from other towns and share this at the next meeting to explore further ideas. Mrs McLusky has recently started a support group in the town which has been well-attended. Stroud District Council is keen for the entire Stroud district to become Dementia Friendly and communications to progress this were ongoing. It was noted that Wotton Swimming Pool has no disabled facilities and councillors would raise this with the Pool management. It was noted to amend ‘Village Agent’ to ‘Dementia Connections’. The Deputy Clerk would update all the Action Plan themes accordingly.

865. Future of Town Centres

Stroud District Council has requested input into a document on the Future of Town Centres, Stroud, Nailsworth, Stonehouse, Dursley and Wotton-under-Edge. A meeting has been arranged on 25th May 2017 between the Town Council and Principal Planner at SDC, David Lowin. The Deputy Clerk would ask if the meeting was open to members of this committee and the Chamber of Trade.

866. Walking Festival

The festival had been held over the weekend and had gone very well. The weather had been good and positive feedback and photographs were still being received. The final figures would be collated in due course. A review meeting will be held on 18/5/2017 and the AGM would be held on 29/6/2017. Members involved were looking forward to next year's festival.

867. Reports from Partners

a) Under-the-Edge Arts – A report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The Garden Art Trail had been a great success. Over 700 tickets were sold, raising over £5100. The Chipping Hall lease had been extended, allowing them to plan with more confidence. Their next big fund-raiser is Shakespeare at Swinhay on 8/7/2017. The monthly EdgeFest for 12-18 year olds has enjoyed full houses and good behaviour. The shortage of parking in the town remains a problem for their customers and it was hoped that the possible parking opportunity of the vacant Wotton Building Supplies site could be explored.

b) Arts Festival – The core events of Festival Number 47 had been successful and the Garden Art Trail had benefitted the numbers attending the Art Exhibition. It was encouraging to see the number of good young musicians in the town.

c) Town Hall Teas – Money raised for April totalled £1398. There are 4 slots left for 2018.

d) Heritage Centre – The Centre is busy with visitors and enquiries. The latest display is Law Makers and Law Breakers, put together by their Curator with assistance from a Duke of Edinburgh award student. They are still collecting boxes of negatives from the Dursley Gazette archives. Fund-raising is ongoing with £215 being raised at the latest Town Hall Tea; a raffle is also held once a month at the Swan Blues Night. They are selling Wotton Silver Band's CD, plus tickets for Picnic in the Park and Wotton's Secret Gardens Trail.

e) Beaumont-le-Roger Society – The twinning had been very successful. 46 people had travelled to France, including 10 adults and 3 children who were new to the exchange. There were also 3 new French families participating.

868. Any Other Brief Report

a) Linked-up Wotton – this was a new meeting to be held for an hour once a month aimed at bringing together volunteers from various groups for networking and speakers.

b) Mental Health Awareness Week – The Together Trust is visiting the Memory Group and Linked-up Wotton to talk about what they have to offer and to promote people's well-being.

869. Dates for Future Meetings

Meetings were arranged for the following dates: 14/8/2017; 13/11/2017; 5/2/2018; 14/5/2018.

The Chairman informed members that this would, regrettably, be his last meeting as he was resigning from the Council with effect from tomorrow due to changed work commitments. Members thanked him for his input and wished him well.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership meeting.

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership