



## **MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 16<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2015 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**

**Present:** Councillors R Claydon (Mayor), June Cordwell, N Clement, Clair Galbraith, K Collins, Chris Galbraith, M Zimmer (from 7:45), A Wilkinson, P Barton.  
**In Attendance:** Town Clerk Ms S Bailey. Public 19

**T.4683** **Apologies** received & accepted from Cllrs L Harris, P Smith, T Luker, & John Cordwell

**T.4684** **Public Forum** A number of residents attended and expressed concern if any action were to be contemplated about capturing the eagle owl which has lived in Westridge Woods for a few years. The press has recently published stories about it being a menace, however these are unfounded and if left alone the bird and public can co-exist in peace. There was a general agreement to refrain from publicity in order that the eagle owl be left undisturbed.

*It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell, seconded by Cllr K Collins and agreed by all to bring forward the item Symn Lane Play Area in order that Sgt Davey advise the Council of events, and that Standing Orders be suspended to allow him to speak.*

Sgt Davey addressed Councillors and explained about the anti-social behavior in/around the Symn Lane Play Area. A number of factors had led to recent improvements such as the removal of speed (skateboarding) humps on the school entrance road, the provision of a new skatepark nearby, and the sale, tidy up & new doors of the corner garage where youths had congregated. However drug transactions continued in the hours of darkness and that a trial closure of the area overnight would further help to fight this behavior. A list of 12 local residents to form a roster of opening /closing the gate has been supplied.

*After Sgt Davey had answered a few questions, it was proposed by Cllr Chris Galbraith, seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all to reinstate Standing Orders.*

**T.4685** **Symn Lane Play Area**

a) To consider Police request as to whether to lock the play area overnight and who would undertake the locking/ unlocking. The Clerk explained that our insurance company's previous advice on locking the play area overnight had been to refuse on the basis that the Council was still liable if youths climbed in and injured themselves. However advice had changed recently and the insurance company now advises that a risk assessment of all known factors is used in making the decision. It was proposed by Cllr A Wilkinson and seconded by Cllr June Cordwell that, given the advice of the Police, the play area is locked overnight for a trial period of 3 months and subject to a successful roster system, agreed 8 in favour.

*Sgt Davey left the meeting*

b) If locking is approved, then to consider amended signage. The Clerk produced a draft sign. After a few minor amendments it was proposed by Cllr K Collins, seconded by Cllr A Wilkinson, and agreed by all to agree this signage.

**T.4685** **Declarations of Interest** Cllr A Wilkinson -Chamber of Trade president

**T.4686** **Wotton Swimming Pool** Mr A George (Pool Chairman) updated Members on future plans for the Pool. A summary of the year's activities and written draft estimates were provided to Councillors on how the final £6,000 tranche of year's £28k Pool funding by the Council is needed for essential maintenance and repairs under the terms of the Service Level Agreement. Estimates are draft since high use is made of volunteers with essential skills in order to keep cost low. Various site developments are planned and research into implications of this is currently progressing. Questions were asked regarding

the timing of Pool meetings which coincide with Council twice monthly meetings and Mr George promised to avoid as many of these as possible.

**T.4687 Chairman's Announcements** The Chairman circulated a report detailing attendance at meetings regarding Chipping Surgery trees, staff interviews, Symn Lane play area, tree planting at Synwell Playing Fields, and the Tolsey Clock. The Chair also commented that a further term of Mayor (subject to May re-election) may be difficult due to personal circumstances. Cllr Claydon also commented on the need for improved levels of politeness between Councillors at meetings.

**T.4688 Minutes of the Council Meeting** Held on 16th February 2015 - to approve these Minutes. After two minor amendments, it was proposed by Cllr Chris Galbraith, seconded by Cllr June Cordwell and agreed by all to approve these Minutes. A representative of Under the Edge Arts pointed out the January Minutes in Correspondence were incorrect and that they had not applied for a grant from the Council – it should be Wotton-under-Edge Arts Association which had applied.

**T.4689 Committee Minutes** - to note the Minutes of Planning Committee 26th January 2015 and the Minutes of the Finance and Special Purposes Committee of 28th November 2014. Duly noted.

**T.4690 Accounts**

a) To approve earmarking to FY15/16 the following underspent funds from this financial year:

- (i) CCTV - £3700
- (ii) Town Hall Capital Expenditure - £2000
- (iii) Civic Centre Capital Fund - £2500
- (iv) Youth - £3000
- (v) Chipping Club Room - £4450
- (vi) Office Expenses - £1500 for website, see also 8c
- (vii) Grants - £1000 Highways Speed Reduction Scheme
- (viii) Grasscutting/Flowerbeds - £2000 towards Tolsey works plus £2000 for bed/border work
- (ix) Contingency - £13000

The above Earmarking of funds was proposed by Cllr Chris Galbraith and seconded by Cllr Clair Galbraith and agreed by all.

b) To consider request from Chamber of Trade to pay for the re-printing of the town leaflet to maximise fund usage minus VAT, and also a grant application. Cllr Wilkinson spoke briefly explaining about the needed reprint of the successful town leaflet/map and how it has encouraged visitors to the town.

*Cllr A Wilkinson left the room*

The Clerk advised the Council regarding the rules of VAT reclaim and the need to adhere to HMRC regulations. The Council wishes to support the venture and was pleased that it was involved in the initial production of the leaflet a year ago. However this is a straightforward reprint of the leaflet by the Chamber where the Council is not involved and the Council does not wish to fall foul of audit & accountability regulations. It was therefore proposed by Cllr June Cordwell, seconded by Cllr M Zimmer, and agreed all in favour to, instead, provide a grant to the Chamber of Trade from next financial year's grant budget towards the republication for the leaflet of £400.

- c) To consider quotations for updating the website and the extra earmarked funds it will require. The Clerk explained that 8 companies had been approached; 4 would not quote, and the other 4 were upwards of £2000 plus. A general requirement for the website's needs had been issued although not specific. It was requested that the Clerk produce a more detailed specification whereby the main 3 companies quoting could finesse their quotes with more detail and present their final offers.
- d) To consider quotation for watering of hanging baskets for Wotton in Bloom. It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell, seconded by Cllr M Zimmer, that the quotation is approved, which is with the same contractor for the same price as the previous year, all agreed. This contractor also operates our opens spaces contract and successfully tendered along with other companies last autumn.
- e) To note increase of O2 tariff by 1.1% in line with Retail Price Index (av. monthly payment £32.21). Noted
- f) To note increase of paper recycling collection charge by Smith's (Gloucester) Ltd. (Recycled waste is paid for by purchasing waste sacks and we still have a supply of these – cost £1.94/bag). Noted
- g) To approve continuation of membership renewal to GAPTC at a cost of £1311 (increased from last year's cost of £1175 backing paper explanation). It was proposed by Cllr Chris Galbraith and seconded by Cllr K Collins and agreed by all to approve this.
- h) To approve Swimming Pool invoice of £6000. It was proposed by Cllr Chris Galbraith, seconded by Cllr Clair Galbraith and agreed by all to approve this.
- i) To approve Clerk and Deputy Clerk attendance at GAPTC external audit seminar on 1st May 2015 at a cost of £15.00 each in Gloucester. Cllr P Smith had also indicated a desire to attend: it was proposed by Cllr K Collins seconded by Cllr A Wilkinson and agreed by all to approve 3 attendees.
- j) To note increase of cemetery waste collection costs from April 2015, an increase of 28p per lift (wheelie bin lifts are weekly & currently charged at £11 per lift). Noted.
- k) To consider report on Tolsey Clock by M Woolfrey, to approve £86 of repair expenditure and up to £75 for LED lighting for clock face. It was proposed by Cllr M Zimmer, seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all to approve these payments – the Mayor and the Clerk had inspected the clock from the scaffolding and outlined the deterioration in the rusting of the inside of clock face - Councillors will need to get involved in these repairs to the clock if more works that just mechanical repair are requested. Close inspection by Councillors is advised. The Clerk has advised the building owner of the listed status of the building and advised contacting the conservation officer at SDC if necessary. The Clock is not part of the listing but the cupola is. The Council's only responsibility is for the clock and no changes are proposed, merely like for like repair and inspection.
- l) Budget 2014/15. To note report of expenditure against budget. A report was provided and was noted as healthy and on schedule.
- m) To approve the accounts for payment – detailed accounts were provided and a few extra additions were explained. It was proposed by Cllr K Collins and seconded by Cllr June Cordwell to approve these payments, agreed by all.

#### **T.4691 Grants and Donations**

To consider resubmitted grant application (approved last month) from Wotton Arts Association for £150 towards the Arts Festival 2015, to be funded from the SDC In Our Towns initiative. The re-submission related to use of funds towards publicity and better satisfies usage criteria. It was proposed to approve the re-submission by Cllr P Barton, seconded by Cllr M Zimmer, agreed by all.

**T.4692 Trees at Chipping Surgery Development.** Following the report from a local tree surgeon, the Clerk had forwarded this report as requested to SDC Planning authority and also to the house developer for comments. Replies were received which reiterated previous stances. After much discussion relating to the significant works to the trees, the increased risk levels surrounding these trees, the actual need for the work as expressed by both of our commissioned reports, from the SDC Tree Officer and the developer's tree surgeon, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon seconded by Cllr N Clement to request that the developer returns to finish the work to the trees already commenced, that the trees are then left for a while to see how they respond and grow back at their new cut points, and that the working method statement is still requested from SDC, agreed by all.

**T.4693 Town Council Policies**

To approve the following policies as recommended by the Finance and Special Purposes Committee:

- a) Equal Opportunities Policy
- b) Training Policy and Training Register
- c) Disciplinary Procedure
- d) Grievance Procedure
- e) Dignity at Work, Bullying and Harassment Policy
- f) Health and Safety Policy
- g) 2014/2015 Town Council Action Plan
- h) Email/internet policy (not considered at Special Purposes)

All of the above policies were provided in backing papers to Councilors and revisited in turn with a few minor amendments. It was proposed by Cllr K Collins seconded by Cllr Clair Galbraith to approve all of the policies with agreed amendments, except for the Health & Safety Policy for which Cllr M Zimmer had highlighted new legislation shortly and would provide details this week to the Clerk, agreed by all. These policies are being introduced also as a basis for applying for the Local Councils Foundation Award which would be discussed next month.

**T.4694 Town Council Election** To note timetable for forthcoming elections – nominations close 9th April 2015. Dates noted. Clerk to investigate whether one person can hand deliver a few forms to SDC or just one form for each person.

**T.4695 Boundary Commission Proposals** -To consider response to proposals to split Wotton-under-Edge into two parish wards, one consisting of 12 councillors, the other of 1 councillor. A draft letter was provided and discussed in detail; amendments were suggested and agreed; Clerk to send letter shortly objecting to the proposed 1 ward change to Wotton Parish.

**T.4696 GAPTC Annual General Meeting** - To consider whether Council wishes to submit a resolution for debate at the AGM of GAPTC – meeting to be held on 18th July 2015. No resolutions are required. Date is noted.

**T.4697 Meeting Dates 2015/16** -To approve meeting dates for the year 2015/2016 Draft dates were circulated and minor amendments made. It was proposed by Cllr K Collins seconded by Cllr June Cordwell that the new agreed dates are approved and circulated to Members, voted all in favour.

**T.4698 Clerk's Report** A detailed report was provided by the Clerk showing how the administration, including the One Stop Shop and Buildings/Facilities, continue to be very

busy. A new person has been interviewed and appointed to the OSS for one morning a week to commence early April, with extra cover provision when required.

**T.4699 Correspondence** following was noted:

- a) To note email of thanks from the Head of the British School for permission to use facilities in the event of an emergency.
- b) To note letter of complaint regarding the glare from the roof of the new housing development at the Chipping Surgery and the consequent potential traffic hazard. This will be forwarded to Glos Highways and also to the Planning Authority
- c) To note verbal approach by falconer in response to the Eagle Owl in Wotton. He would be prepared to catch the owl upon receipt of an official written request. He made no recommendation that this should be done. This will not be pursued.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only:

CPRE Gloucestershire Views Spring 2015, Cotswold Lion Spring/Summer 2015

**T.4700 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended**

County Council – County Cllr Cordwell provided circulated written report

District Council – no report available

Footpaths Committee – not met

Special Purposes Committee – met and discussed policies as above

Youth Liaison Group /SOSYP –Cllr P Barton & Cllr Clair Galbraith attended a SOSYP meeting and confirmed that Dursley and Wotton have left the venture, leaving Cam & Berkeley undecided. Some funds would be returned August to us.

GMTF –Cllr June Cordwell attended a Chepstow presentation which highlighted how well Wotton is also doing in comparison

Town Regeneration Partnership - not met

Sports Foundation – Skatepark opening this week. Height barriers may be erected at the entrance to car area to avoid possible problems with road parking.

Swimming Pool – no report but discussed above

**T.4701 Town Affairs**

Cllr A Wilkinson – Chamber of Trade continues strong membership with about 120 members. The Renishaw new building eve event it swell subscribed. The new Wotton film should be available soon in the cinema at pre-showings.

Cllr N Clement – complained that Parklands has been re-tarmaced when Court Meadow & Court Orchard needed it most, and no explanations form Amey or Glos CC.

Cllr M Zimmer - also complained about Amey lack of communication and quality of work. County Cllr Vernon Smith can respond on this subject at the Annual Parish Assembly the following evening.

Cllr K Collins – complained about poor bus service communication from Glos CC and also buses not turning up and very late with no explanations.

*Meeting concluded at 9:45pm*

Signed ..... Date .....  
Chairman & Town Mayor