



MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 17th AUGUST 2015 AT 7:00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE

Present: Cllrs P Smith, R Claydon, N Clement, M Zimmer, P Barton, John Cordwell, T Luker, N Pinnegar, K Collins

In Attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey. Public 8

T.4788 Apologies for Absence received and accepted from Cllrs June Cordwell, L Farmer, A Wilkinson, A Kendall

T.4789 Public Forum Mrs J Tebb complained of general litter and weeds around town and provided photographic evidence. She understood that Glos CC and SDC are no longer doing what they used to do but asked if the Town Council could employ someone extra in summer months to tackle these issues. Council responded that it would consider the issue ahead of the budget at the end of the year. She also asked that the Town Council considers what it will do with Old Town toilets as they continue to be an eyesore. The Lions have volunteered to repaint the external walls shortly but a Town Council initiative is needed on more substantial works.

T.4790 Declarations of Interest none

T.4791 Coombe Allotments – To consider request from CALGS for Town Council to consider finding new allotment site for displaced allotment holders.

It was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell seconded by Cllr R Claydon to suspend Standing Orders to allow CALGS representatives to speak, agreed by all.

The Chair of CALGS Mr N Dadd gave a brief background to the site eviction notices to vacate by 26th March 2016 and the situation of current allotmenters needing replacement plots within reasonable distance. The site owner has until 29th August to appeal the Community Asset Status recently applied by SDC. The owner has refused to meet CALGS to discuss site purchase so far. CALGS have indicated to SDC their intention to bid for the site. The allotment site is run informally with no official measurement or dedication of plots – although plots are in demand and more needed. Mr M Clarke explained the process of a Cumbrian allotment site going through compulsory purchase currently in a similar situation and they are happy to advise on using this route if necessary. CALGS may need to contact other landowners in the immediate area to identify other suitable allotment sites – although none are obvious at the moment.

It was proposed by Cllr P Smith seconded by Cllr T Luker to reinstate Standing Orders & re-enter Committee, agreed by all.

The Clerk advised that in law the Council has a duty to consider allotment provision if 6 or more parishioners request – this Council already provides 77 allotments and the waiting list is just a couple at the moment although this fluctuates. Therefore its legal duty is done – however WTC agreed to support CALGS in their allotment fight at a previous meeting and there is no harm in helping to secure provision of further allotments if more are requested, and if the Town Council does not have to bear huge costs. Cost are likely to be a district valuation fee of about £500, legal costs of land transaction and the purchase price itself. After much discussion, it was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, and agreed by all, to write to the site owner / land agent around 29th August to request a meeting to explore the possibility of acquiring the site for allotments, subject to the receipt from CALGS of a letter indicating that they would bear the costs of such a transaction, and also that if the owner refused to sell the site to the Town Council then the situation of a compulsory purchase order would be explored by this Town Council, agreed unanimously. If the negotiation to purchase the site is successful, the completion must be contingent upon a counterparty ownership contract between CALGS and WTC. The

exploratory meeting would be attended by the Councillors of the Special Purposes Committee, along with the Town Clerk.

T.4792 Giant Slide, Long St/High St – To welcome Mr Paul Clarke to talk about proposals for a 2016 Long St road closure to hold a giant slide event in aid of British School PTA and to give Council's views on the proposal. A comprehensive 18 page document was produced outlining plans for the day and various procedures for which Mr Clarke was thanked. Support from the Tesco store has been given and also the Round Table. The CoOp manager is new in role and yet to respond, likewise the Wotton Chamber of Trade. Questions concerned whether the 1000 riders/sliders was mathematically possible, the hiring of extra toilet facilities, stallholders cleaning up afterwards, and public insurance requirement of the slide. More planning is yet to be done but the School PTA needs to garner support of external partners/agencies before committing extra resources to many detailed issues. It was proposed by Cllr M Zimmer and seconded by Cllr T Luker and agreed all in favour to support the British School PTA in this venture.

T.4793 Chairman's Announcements The Mayor has attended new website meetings with the Clerk and Front Room - a draft should be available for Councillors to view very soon.

T.4794 Minutes of the Council Meeting Held on 15th June 2015 - to approve these Minutes. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed 7 in favour 2 abstentions to approve these Minutes as presented.

T.4795 Accounts

- a) To note completion of Councillor quarterly internal audit for the period April to June 2015. Undertaken by Cllrs M Zimmer and P Barton. No anomalies were found and everything was in order. Cllr M Zimmer asked that there be a referencing back system to the new health & safety questionnaires completed by contractors.
- b) Budget 2015/16. To note report of expenditure against budget-accepted as healthy.
- c) To approve the accounts for payment. Extra invoices just arrived were highlighted and these have been emailed out also in final payment document. Cllr R Claydon asked if CCTV invoice was correct with quotation – Clerk checked already. One camera bracket is still work outstanding, also rain on new curved lens needs attention. It was proposed by Cllr K Collins and seconded by Cllr R Claydon to approve these payments, agreed by all.

T.4796 Banking

- a) To consider letter advising of closure of Barclays Branch in Wotton. Councillors are very sad to see the loss of yet another bank in the town although not surprised after the cut in opening hours a little while ago. An email sent from the Hereford retail department of Barclays has asked for our views on how it affects customers and the public in Wotton and how to ease the transition. Clerk instructed to reply that pensioners and those without internet or travel capabilities will be most affected. We request that a) closure is delayed until January so that Christmas is less affected, b)the cashpoint remains in situ or consider tying up with CoOp opposite who have permission for siting a cashpoint yet have not done so, c)concerns remain over whether the Post Office will remain in Wotton and this cannot be considered by Barclays as a substitute for some of the service.
- b) To approve addition of new Councillors to Town Council and Town Trust banking mandates and removal of those who are no longer Councillors. Forms and instructions will be distributed to new members. The Clerk advised that another Town Council election is scheduled for May 2016 and that given the difficult process of changing signatories with a

bank, and the fact that the branch is also closing, that we use the existing signatories on the list for the next 8 months. Furthermore Council agreed that by the time of the next election, we can seriously consider whether we wish to remain with Barclays Bank (whom we switched to only 2 & half years ago) given that they are closing their Wotton branch, they have introduced banking charges, they have withdrawn their business manager, and they are unresponsive to many requests and queries. The level of service has dropped significantly.

T.4797 External Audit for Financial Year 2014/15 - To note response of External Auditor as to requirements with regard to internal risk assessments. Clerk circulated response from external auditor which is rather woolly in explaining what extra is actually required. It seems that we comply with all the analysis of possible risks yet do not have one document which pulls everything together – although it can be argued that the Financial Regulations and the list of individual Policies and Procedures actually do that. After much discussion of our internal controls and assessments – it was considered by Council that the advisory comment from the external auditor is noted, however we consider that we satisfy the regulatory requirements in respect of operating a sound financial system.

T.4798 Armed Forces Community Covenant – To agree to pledge support to the Armed Forces Community in this area and to participate in the Community Covenant signing to be held by Gloucestershire County Council for this purpose. After discussion of the benefits of higher authorities in giving preference to armed forces personnel in civilian life, and questioning what benefits could a parish/town offer over and above these, it was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar to pledge support, agreed by all.

T.4799 Old Town Toilets

a) To consider how to proceed with the locking of the toilets in 2016 following advice that this service is likely to be discontinued by Veolia. It is asked if the same staff lock/unlock at weekends that do the cleaning of the toilets. Council asked that the whole issue of the costs of the toilet facilities are re-examined at the next Council meeting, in order to feed into the budget process.

b) To note that the services provided by Veolia will be taken over by Ubico next July. Services provided to the Town Council should continue under the new company, but costs and arrangements need to be made nearer the time with SDC. We will contact Ubico in March 2016 to ascertain new costs.

T.4800 Clerk's Report A detailed report provided by the Clerk. It was requested by a Councillor that the Buildings Manger spends some time collecting litter around town and removing weeds. Clerk replied that there are too many other items on the jobs list at present and that these would suffer if the Buildings Manager had to abandon other work projects to do this. Council to consider employment of an extra summer person for litter collection/ weeding on September agenda to feed into budget process. Or maybe this could be carried out by the caretaking role.

T.4801 Correspondence following was noted or action requested:

a) To note information from GRCC on the Government's proposals to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants. District Councillor (Cllr Reeves?) input needed to understand rural implications, for example how many Housing Association tenants there are in Wotton and its likely effect in Wotton. Council in

general agrees that this Bill to go through Government would seriously affect rural areas and the Clerk is asked to write to the MP with Council's concerns.

- b) To note SDC consultation on their Licensing Policy. No comments offered.
- c) To note invitation to attend Army Reservist Employer Engagement Evening on 8th October 2015. Agreed that the Mayor & Deputy to respond and attend.
- d) To note letter requesting that the chain fence surrounding the Stony Chipping be painted white to improve visibility at night, following a pedestrian request. Letter read to Council highlighting this as an unlit area, however Council disagrees as the area is well lit by a streetlamp and an adjacent pizza shop, and also the chain link fence has been there for 25 years with no incidents. It is not considered a safety hazard and painting the chains is unnecessary.
- e) To note invitation to a Burton Sweet Charity Seminar on 30th September 2015.
- f) To consider letter from Great Western Air Ambulance to host/site a clothes recycling facility for fundraising. The fire station and Royal Oak host other recycling facilities – Clerk to consider the use of a corner of car park as long as no parking spaces are lost. Synwell Green is also a possibility.
- g) Signage, Bradley Street/Gloucester Street – To consider a resident letter requesting higher impact 'No Lorries' sign at the junction of Bradley Street and Gloucester St. A number of Councillors had investigated this issue and the sign is considered to be standard Highway signage. Also lorries deliberately ignore the sign sometimes, and additionally an alternative route is needed when streets are blocked.
- h) Request from SDC to consider the developer calling new Haw St development road 'Pack Horse Lane'. A 1763 map of the town shows this route being called Pack Horse Lane, although then longer in length. The Council has no objection to this.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only: Countryside Voice Summer 2015 & Young Glos Annual report

T.4802 Reports from Councillors on meetings attended

County Council – County Cllr Cordwell provided a written report in advance. The OK Path hedge will be cut back at the beginning of September.

District Council – written report kindly provided by District Cllr K Tucker. In addition, Cllr Tucker spoke at the Development Control Committee against the Full Moon application, and the residents were delighted with the result that the decision is deferred to allow the community a chance to buy the site. No one spoke from the Town Council despite being in attendance.

Footpaths Committee - not met.

GMTF – no report

Special Purposes Committee - meeting this week.

Allotments – not met. A Committee at New Rd is to be formed, and hedge/fence reinforcement and deeper water piping considered. Theft of produce continues to be a problem and the police have been alerted.

Youth Liaison Group – no report. A meeting with YCS to discuss new contract issues has been requested but no response received.

SOSYP – not met. Cllr Barton to apply for SDC new funding stream for music /recording project which was not previously delivered by SOSYP

Town Regeneration – not met

Sports Foundation - no report.

Swimming Pool – a meeting takes place this evening.... Cllr K Collins has been promised the future plans they are discussing by email.

Chamber of Trade – agreed to wait to see WTC new website before identifying how to upgrade Chamber's website regarding tourism

T.4803 Town Affairs

Cllr K Collins – thanked Cllr K Tucker for help in Full Moon application representation. Attended the Planning training along with Cllrs T Luker, P Barton and N Pinnegar and although it was interesting, it went on for too long and was too concerned with the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Planning.

Cllr N Clement – also thanked Cllr K Tucker and was impressed with the SDC webcast facility

Cllr P Barton – reiterated the request for stop/halt sign at War Memorial. Cllr John Cordwell replied that Andrew Middlecote from Glos Highways still looking into it.

Cllr M Zimmer – parking at Potters Pond is still an issue although improved a little lately with contractors parking on actual site more. Andrew Middlecote has said a Traffic Regulation Order would be needed for double yellow lines on road and will look at it.

Cllr T Luker – pleased to see OK path hedge being cut September by Glos CC. Still concerned that a box junction needed at top of High St. Still being considered by Andrew Middlecote.

Cllr P Smith – high wire cabling across Old Town (opposite old British Legion) was nearly pulled down by a large lorry as it is sagging over the road – the lorry had to reverse up to turn around and huge traffic jams were caused. Clerk to report to Glos CC.

Meeting concluded at 9.05pm

Signed Date

Chairman & Town Mayor