



MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 7:00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE

Present: Cllrs P Smith (Chairman and Mayor), P Barton, N Clement, R Claydon, K Collins, June Cordwell, John Cordwell, A Kendall, N Pinnegar, A Wilkinson, M Zimmer
In Attendance: Deputy Clerk Mrs Y Milsom. 6 members of the public

T.4804 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs T Luker and L Farmer. The Chairman welcomed back Cllr June Cordwell to her first meeting of full Council since her operation.

T.4805 Public Forum No matters raised.

T.4806 Declarations of Interest

Cllr John Cordwell – Item 7(j) Accounts for Payment – Member of the Management Committee of South-West Councils.

Cllr P Smith – Item 7(j) Accounts for Payment – Wotton DIY employee

Cllr A Wilkinson – Item 7(b) – Christmas Tree Grants – President of Chamber of Trade

T.4807 Swimming Pool

Mr A George was welcomed to the meeting and invited to talk about future plans for Wotton Pool. He explained plans to create an amenity space and how the objective had been to provide an area for parties/training/shelter without further burdening the volunteers and without incurring huge expense. Grants were explored, an architect designed a building taking into account criteria required to qualify for a Sports England grant, much of which seemed excessive to their needs. It was estimated that the costs would amount to around £150,000. This idea was considered unsatisfactory and therefore discarded. Refurbishment of the current building had then been explored. It is a pre-fabricated building and some of the framework needs to be replaced. They would like to put a roofed verandah facing south over the Kingswood valley, which would provide shelter for waiting parents etc. They would also like to replace the current roof, which is asbestos, with a pre-insulated roof and to add solar heating panels, which should help out considerably with the expense of heating the pool. It is a large roof area and ideally placed to take advantage of the sun for most of the day. The renovation option has many advantages – it is cheaper, easier to find grants, and can be managed piece-wise by volunteers. No grants have been applied for at this point but a number of possibilities have been explored. Before the idea was progressed further they wished to know the views of the Town Council, as owner of the pool.

Members considered this to be a sensible approach and wished them well with the project. Mr George thanked members and then left the meeting.

Proposed from the Chair, agreed all in favour, to bring forward item 8 on the agenda, regarding the Heritage Centre.

T.4808 Heritage Centre

Mr J Walshe was invited to discuss with members the future of the Heritage Centre. He explained that some of the income received previously was unlikely to be repeated which may give a misleading impression. He spoke of the huge collection of photographs and thousands of additional artefacts stored at the library, all part of Wotton's history. They have worked hard and successfully to improve visitor numbers. A Councillor expressed concern that, should a sum of £6000 be provided by Town Council to cover basic running costs such as utilities, rent and insurance then there would be no incentive to manage the Centre efficiently. Mr Walshe proposed that the opposite was in fact true. Because they were having to pay the basic bills there was insufficient funding to cover other essentials.

For example, the entire income of a Town Hall Tea would be needed to replace a broken window; new de-humidifiers were necessary as theirs had broken and low humidity levels were essential for maintaining artefacts and for retaining their museum accreditation. It was not sustainable to do this and pay all of the other bills. Fund-raising would continue with Town Hall Teas, calendar sales and special events and could be used to properly manage the artefacts in their care. As part of the deal they would also provide a Tourist Information Centre and had already lined up a team of enthusiastic volunteers to progress this. The aim is to improve the facility for the town and increase visitors and the Town Council's investment would help towards this goal. It was noted that, on visits to Nailsworth and Chepstow organised through Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum, those town's respective Tourist Information Centres were funded totally by their town councils and that it was considered an investment to bring money into the local area. However, the success of this was very difficult to quantify.

Cllr P Barton exited the meeting

Some of the Heritage Centre grant applications had been unsuccessful because the long-term viability of the organisation needed to be demonstrated and, without Council funding, this could not be achieved. After some discussion it was proposed from the Chair, seconded by Cllr Zimmer, that this should be taken forward to the budget meeting on the understanding that this was not, as yet, a firm commitment for the whole amount, which would depend on other budget demands. Agreed in favour with one abstention.

Cllr P Barton re-entered the meeting

T.4809 Minutes of the Meeting 17th August 2015

Proposed by Cllr Collins, seconded by Cllr Zimmer that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th August 2015 be approved as a correct record. Agreed in favour with one abstention.

T.4810 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman had, with the Town Clerk, attended a meeting at Police Headquarters with the Police & Crime Commissioner. So far, Police senior management numbers had been reduced whilst retaining other staffing levels. However, from next year there would be more job cuts as funding was further reduced. The Chairman and Town Clerk had also attended several meetings with the company producing the new website. It was hoped that a link would be available to all Councillors to view very soon.

T.4811 Accounts

- a) Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Claydon to approve quotation from Playdale for £195 to provide play equipment inspection training for three staff. Agreed all in favour.
- b) Christmas tree grants. *Cllr Wilkinson left the room for this item.* Proposed by Cllr Barton, seconded by Cllr Kendall, agreed all in favour, to approve the £10 Christmas tree grants as in previous years. *Cllr Wilkinson then re-entered the meeting.*
- c) It was agreed to defer items 7c, 7d and 7g concerning contractual matters until the end of the meeting when they would be discussed in closed session.
- d) Maroons – Proposed by Cllr Zimmer, seconded by Cllr Wilkinson, to approve the purchase of Maroons for Remembrance Day at a cost of £85.20. Agreed in favour with one abstention.
- e) SLCC Membership – Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Claydon to approve membership renewal of SLCC for the Deputy Clerk at a cost of £167. Agreed all in favour.
- f) Dyers Brook Clearance – A letter of complaint had been received concerning overgrowth on Town Council land at Dyers Brook. Cllr June Cordwell had also received a similar complaint. Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Zimmer, to approve D Howse quotation for £450 for clearance of bank overgrowth, subject to clarification that this will not adversely affect the crayfish. Agreed all in favour.

g) Budget 2015/16. Expenditure against budget was noted.

h) Accounts for Payment – Additional invoices were explained, including Npower invoice for Chipping Clubroom electricity up to changeover of contract to British Gas in June, an amount of £534.00. This had been queried and considerably reduced from the original invoice of over £900. It was explained that the bill reflected out-of-contract rates upon initial takeover of the building until a new contract was established; and that recent electricity bills passed to us by the former Trustees of the Chipping Clubroom had been very high due to the installation of night storage heaters. It was suggested that the gas heating in the Youth Centre might be extended into the Chipping Clubroom if the boiler had the capacity for this. Proposed by Cllr Claydon, seconded by Cllr Barton to approve the accounts for payment. Agreed in favour with 3 abstentions.

T.4812 Dog Waste Bins

Notification had been received from Stroud District Council concerning changes to their protocol for providing/emptying dog waste bins. New dog waste bins would only be provided in exceptional circumstances; litter bins could now be used for bagged dog waste, so specific bins were no longer necessary; organisations wishing to provide additional dog waste bins would be required to cover both purchase and emptying costs. Additionally, SDC were requesting a voluntary contribution towards the emptying of current dog waste bins owned by parish/town councils. Wotton-under-Edge Town Council owns two such bins, one at Marchesi Walk, one on Symn Lane near to the Bluecoat School, with an emptying cost of £148.72 per annum. Proposed by Cllr Wilkinson, seconded by Cllr Zimmer, not to make a contribution. Agreed all in favour.

T.4813 CCTV

a) A quotation of £2675 had been received to provide a wide-angle lens camera on the corner of Long Street/Church Street following a number of recent incidents below the current CCTV coverage. The Town Clerk had suggested that two cameras facing in different directions would give clearer footage. Members were asked to consider whether this should be a budget consideration for the Financial Year 2016/17. The quote was questioned as another quote for £1350 had also been received. It was understood that there had been problems downloading data from the current system, which should be resolved before any additional cameras were added. It was also suggested that the effectiveness of the current cameras should be assessed before investing in extras.

Cllr June Cordwell left the meeting

Further, that delayed police response to investigate CCTV footage reduced its effectiveness. It was agreed that re-deployment of current less used cameras should be considered, although it was also thought illogical not to have full coverage of the main street. It was resolved to take this to the budget meeting but with more clarification.

b) A quotation had been received for £500 from CCTV provider plus £240 from Website design company, to add webcam footage of Long Street to the new website. This was considered expensive, of little benefit and that a flavour of Wotton could be achieved by a series of revolving pictures. Proposed by Cllr Claydon, seconded by Cllr Kendall not to add the webcam. Passed with 5 in favour, 1 against, 4 abstentions.

T.4814 Informal Budget Meeting - A provisional date of 24th November 2015 was made for the informal budget meeting, subject to the Town Clerk's availability.

T.4815 Watercourse Clearance, Edge of Knapp Field

A letter had been received from Stroud District Council confirming this Town Council's obligations to maintain the watercourse between Knapp Field and Fountain Crescent on

the Knapp Field side of the bank. The watercourse was extremely overgrown which could lead to flooding if not cleared. An estimate of approximately £150 had been received to carry out clearance. Proposed from the Chair, seconded by Cllr Pinnegar, to approve this work. Agreed all in favour.

T.4816 Old Town Toilets

A costs analysis of the toilets from 2010 to present was considered. Volunteers had recently painted the outside of the toilets but the interior was not at all pleasant. Little money had been spent on improvements as, in the past, a number of potential schemes to replace the building had been proposed, none of which had come to fruition. Discussions ensued, with some members keen to retain the toilets as a town amenity, with particular view to users of buses and walkers of the Cotswold Way; and others who wished to know if the extent of usage merited the expenditure.

Cllr June Cordwell re-entered the meeting

Stroud District Council had used a usage monitoring system on Rope Walk toilets and it was proposed by Cllr Claydon, seconded by Cllr Pinnegar, to investigate whether this could be used to monitor Old Town Toilets. Agreed with 4 in favour, 3 against, 4 abstentions.

T.4817 New Good Deeds Section

The Town Clerk wished to introduce this as a new regular section of the Agenda/Minutes, to acknowledge the volunteers who work hard for the benefit of the town. The Town Clerk requested to be informed of any such good deeds for future inclusion in this section. The Clerk was asked to send a formal letter of thanks to all those organisations mentioned below.

- a) Photographs were circulated of works to the exterior of the Old Town Toilets, carried out over a weekend by volunteers from the Lions and the Chamber of Trade. The Lions had provided the paint. It was suggested that acknowledgement should be included on the website
- b) The Fire Station had spent a day washing cars and raised £606 towards the Wotton Community Sports Foundation footpath.
- c) A group of volunteers, organised and led by the Town Clerk, had carried out clearance work in St Mary's churchyard. Cllr John Cordwell was concerned that ivy on the graves and monuments should be cut and left to die off before removal so as not to damage the stone. The Clerk confirmed that she had read instructions to the volunteers to that effect.
- d) St Mary's Church Fete had donated one-third of the money raised, a sum of £910, to the Youth of the town.

T.4818 Clerk's Report - The Clerk's Report was noted.

T.4819 Correspondence

- a) A letter complaining about the weeds on the pavement adjacent to St Mary's Churchyard on Coombe Road and Manor Lane was noted. The Clerk confirmed that Gloucestershire Highways had included it in their work schedule as it was considered a hazard to pedestrians.

T. 4820 Reports from Councillors

- a) County Council – A written report from Cllr John Cordwell had been received and circulated in advance, detailing the Gloucestershire Rail Study; Consultation on Public Transport/Community Transport/Concessionary Fares; Parklands resurfacing.
- b) District Council – A written report from Cllr June Cordwell had been received in advance detailing SDC involvement in Devolution for Gloucestershire; the future of SDC garage stock; Tree Management policy; purchase of land for development at Fountain Crescent.

Discussions ensued with regard to the garages. Several Councillors maintained that SDC had reneged on a promise to properly advertise the garages to encourage occupation, a promise exacted due to intense opposition to the initial proposals to demolish the garages. The situation with the Full Moon site, listed as a Community Asset, suggested that different departments at the District Council were working against each other. It was requested that a letter should be sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment protesting at the way this had been handled by SDC, and that it contravened the Localism Act.

c) Finance and Special Purposes Committee– Items discussed included the Zurich Insurance seminar attended by the Town Clerk, which confirmed that the Town Council meets statutory requirements with regard to play area inspections; that manual handling training was needed for all staff and a suitable training DVD was sufficient for this purpose; and the duties of the Caretaker, with whom the Town Clerk, the Mayor and Cllr Claydon were meeting tomorrow.

Cllr Wilkinson left the meeting

d) Allotments – A new association of allotment-holders at New Road was being formed. Quotes for new water regulations compliance works were being explored.

e) Youth Liaison Group – The emphasis was on applying for grants from the High Sheriff and Stroud District Council for a Youth Café and video/recording equipment. A curry evening was being held on 9th October to raise funds.

f) Wotton Community Sports Foundation - £70,000 had been raised towards the £90,000 needed to provide the new path to the skatepark. A BMX track, organised by a different committee, was also going ahead.

g) Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum – An article of 1000 words about the town is required for the magazine Cotswold Style. It was proposed that Cllrs Barton and Luker would work on this. A lot of changes to the GMTF committee are taking place. Cllr June Cordwell announced that she was standing down from representing the Council on the Forum and asked that appointment of a new representative be included on the October meeting agenda.

h) Wotton In Bloom – The baskets were likely to be taken down on either 8th or 9th October and volunteers were needed to help the Buildings Manager with this as the baskets are too large and heavy to be safely manoeuvred single-handedly. Confirmation of the date would be emailed when known.

i) Town Regeneration Partnership – Following advice from GRCC with regard to updating the Community Plan, it was decided to focus on several key topics which are in this Council's remit, including parking, appearance of the town and tourism. A brief update of the plan would be carried out by the Working Group with assistance from several other volunteers. A review of the Farmers Market had shown a decline in the number of stallholders and the idea of expanding the market's remit to that of a general market was being explored. The budget was in keeping with previous years and may include allowance for tidying around the town. It had been suggested that a car park review should be undertaken to give an independent view which could be used to support parking initiatives. The last survey, undertaken by SDC, was considered to be unrepresentative due to inclement weather. Clerk to check if previous surveys held in office.

j) Youth Centre – Cllrs Barton and Claydon, & Town Clerk, met with Youth & Community Services representatives to sign Service Level Agreement for the new youth work contract and to discuss operational matters. There were still some administrative difficulties with the production of reports and response to queries. It was noted that the final report from YCS for the previous youth work contract had been received. Cllr June Cordwell asked for copies of the YCS reports to be sent to her for forwarding on to the YLG Chairman.

k) Police Community Panel Meeting – The priorities remain unchanged, with speeding identified as a particular issue. Anti-social behaviour in the town had decreased, which was thought attributable to the overnight locking of Symn Lane Play area, and it was

suggested that the volunteers carrying out this task should be asked to continue. It was requested that these volunteers are acknowledged under the Good Deeds section on the Council agenda.

T.4821 Town Affairs - No matters were raised.

*It was proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr John Cordwell, to enter closed session under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to discuss the following contracts, agreed by all. The Public left the room.
Cllr June Cordwell left the meeting*

T.4822 Chipping Clubroom Emergency Lighting

Three quotations had been received. Members questioned whether the quotations were all providing the same specification. Cllr Zimmer explained the difference between maintained and non-maintained lighting and offered to provide a specification for what was required. It was agreed to defer this to the next meeting to get quotations in accordance with the specification provided by Cllr Zimmer.

T.4823 Town Hall Boiler

British Gas will no longer provide same level service contract as previously due to poor condition of boiler. Three quotations were considered to replace the boiler. Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Collins, to accept the quotation from Glevum for a Vaillant boiler and installation at cost of £5520 ex VAT subject to following conditions being met:

- (i) A two-zone system so that hot water circulating in upstairs pipework can be turned off;
- (ii) A magnetic filter;
- (iii) A power flush to the system.

Agreed all in favour.

T. 4824 Utilities Contracts

After some discussion about other possible providers, it was agreed to move the contracts for gas and electricity for Town Council and Town Trust properties to NPower and to enter into a 2 year contract.

Cllr June Cordwell re-entered the meeting

Proposed from the Chair, seconded by Cllr Claydon and agreed in favour, one abstention.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.40pm

Signed: Dated:

Chairman of Wotton-under-Edge Town Council