

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 1ST JUNE 2015 AT 7.30PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE

PRESENT: Cllr R Claydon (Chairman), Cllr P Smith (Mayor), Cllr N Clement, Cllr K Collins, Cllr T Luker (Deputy Mayor), Mr M Clarke (CALGS and Under-the-Edge Arts), Mrs T McLusky (Beaumont-le-Roger Society), Mr G Phillips (Wotton Arts Association), Mrs P Smith (Fairtrade Town Association), Mrs J Walshe (Town Hall Teas, Heritage Centre, Cinema)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Y Milsom (Deputy Clerk)

769. Election of Chairman

Cllr R Claydon was nominated by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Luker, to be Chairman of this committee. There were no further nominations. Cllr R Claydon was duly elected Chairman, agreed all in favour.

770. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Canon R Axford, Cllr P Barton, Cllr June Cordwell, Ms S Hunt, Reverend T Wharin

771. Welcome to New Members

The Chairman welcomed new member Mr Martin Clarke, who will be representing Under-the-Edge Arts and the Coombe Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Society. Members were invited to introduce themselves. Mr Clarke needed to leave shortly before 8pm and so was invited at this stage to report on the organisations he represents.

a) Coombe Allotments – Previous reports had been made to the Town Council. To follow on, the site is shown on a map dated 1763, which would make them the oldest allotments site in the country, although this needed further substantiation. CALGS is collaborating with the Knapp Road Allotments Association and it is intended to establish the importance, both social and ecological, of allotments as part of the Community Plan process.

b) Mr Clarke has recently taken over as Chair of Fundraising at Under-the-Edge Arts, and funding applications are already being submitted to raise the considerable sums required.

Mr Clarke volunteered assistance with both the Community Plan and the Walking Festival.

772. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9th February 2015

Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Mrs Walshe, that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th February be approved and signed as a correct record. Agreed all in favour.

Mr G Phillips entered the meeting

773. Community Plan

a) Cllr Claydon made a Power-point presentation to members on the analysis of the questionnaire results. Some 3500 questionnaires had been distributed and 270 had been returned. Around 170 contained additional comments. He explained the various analysis methods used and how the results from each method were compared to check the sensitivity of the results. He had also produced a report and the Clerk was asked to distribute this to all members. Results showed that community support for the Swimming Pool, Library, Citizens Advice Bureau and Synwell Playing Field remained strong. Other key issues were road maintenance, traffic flow, the condition of footpaths and pavements, parking, tourism, bus services, the re-opening of Charfield Station and the need for a varied selection of shops. The issue which attracted the most comments was the condition of

roads followed by the need for more parking in the town. Although tourism scored fairly highly in the questionnaire there were a number of comments stating that, because Wotton was not as attractive as some other more traditional Cotswold locations, investment in tourism would be a waste of money. There had been over 80 responses from people willing to be involved in progressing the Community Plan and they would be contacted in due course.

Mr Clarke left the meeting

It was noted that the grass on the Chipping Green had not been properly cut as the mower had broken down. The Clerk was asked to investigate.

b) A grant of £500 from Stroud District Council towards the update of the Community Plan had been agreed provided that the plan was completed within the current Financial Year.

c) Cllr Claydon gave a short presentation on the next steps needed to progress the Community Plan. A working group had been formed comprising Cllrs R Claydon, P Smith, P Barton, N Clement and T Luker. Non-council members would be most welcome. Before proceeding further, advice was being sought from Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, who had offered to come and talk. A list of potential dates had been circulated. The Clerk was asked to include Mr Clarke in the arrangements. It was stressed that members of the community needed to be actively involved in the formation of the plan for it to be successful; also, that it is very difficult to get outside funding for a project without the backing of a community plan. The Working Group had suggested that a streamlined approach was needed and this corresponded with advice from GRCC. Improving footfall was considered by the Working Group to be a priority. The people who had expressed an interest in being involved in the project would be contacted shortly, following the talk from GRCC, and a public meeting would be arranged. It was noted that a new group had formed in the town called Wotton Shopkeepers. So far they had held just one meeting which had raised a number of topics.

d) Input towards the Community Plan was requested from partners. Responses were:

- (i) Heritage Centre – a report would be forwarded following a meeting tomorrow.
- (ii) Cinema and Recreational Trust – a report had been prepared and would be passed to the Clerk.
- (iii) Arts Association – No specific strategy. Plans for next year's Arts Festival had already commenced and the various events attracted people from the town and well beyond.
- (iv) It was noted that people who pass through the town do not actually get to see the town centre shops etc. It was suggested that a sign could be placed at the top of the High Street or on the Civic Centre building pointing to the shops/town centre.
- (v) Beaumont-le-Roger – have tried to get local schools involved with very limited success. However, the French visitors are always very enthusiastic about the town. It was suggested that more publicity could be given to the French visits, and also to the Japanese students visits.
- (vi) It was suggested that website links with other local towns/villages/attractions could be advantageous to all involved.
- (vii) It was noted that the Chamber of Trade had made a video of the town and had produced new leaflets, which had been widely distributed.
- (viii) After visiting a number of Tourist Information Points, gathering information for the Heritage Centre, the consensus was that towns could no longer be promoted through the shops, but needed instead to promote their leisure facilities.

774. Walking Festival

A suggestion had been made to the last meeting of the Footpaths Committee that a Walking Festival could be organised in the town, possibly for next spring. Other towns had found that such festivals, offering short circular walks, brought visitors to the town, many of whom would also visit the local shops. The Town Council had produced some walk leaflets some years ago but these would need

updating and improving if a festival was to go ahead. It was suggested that the walks produced by the Heritage Centre should be looked at as they might prove suitable. It was pointed out that other events were often organised along the Cotswold Way and it would be advisable to investigate this to avoid clashes; also, to contact Pam and Graham Smith if a festival was to go ahead as they were responsible for signage on a section of the Cotswold Way. It was noted that David Baird and John White already organised circular walks around the town, often ending at the Town Hall Teas. Mrs Walshe would contact them and ask them to get in touch with the Clerk. It had been suggested that a working group could be formed with members from both the Footpaths and Regeneration committees. It was decided to talk to Mr Baird and Mr White in the first instance.

775. Mediaeval Market

The Market, celebrating the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta, was to take place on 14th June 2015. Arrangements were in place, including around 30 stalls, refreshments, various entertainment, stocks and alcohol at the Star Inn. The Heritage Centre would be open, with a Magna Carta display. The local streets and Chipping car park were being leafleted to notify people that the car park would be closed for a period on that day. Risk assessments had been carried out, first aid cover arranged, volunteers had offered to clear up afterwards. It was suggested that Stroud District Council should be contacted to clean the area after the event. The event would raise much-needed funds for the Heritage Centre.

776. Wotton Cinema

The Cinema business has now been transferred from Community ownership to a new company run exclusively by Gareth Negus and Sam Osborn. Their first year was spent working for the old business and they successfully increased trade during that time. As independent operators they now employ part-time staff and are working to bring more live theatre/concerts to Wotton as well as the latest films. As a result of the transfer of business a sum of money would, later this year, be transferred to the Recreational Trust for investment in the community. The Recreational Trust will be making it known to the public when the funds are available for applications to be made. Terms and Conditions will apply and these have yet to be finalised. The sum involved will be £15,000 initially with an additional £5000 next April (2016).

777. Reports from Partners

a) The Town Hall Teas are fully booked this year, and the only slots available for 2016 are the bank holiday Mondays. Thanks were given to the Town Council for producing the list of teas for the Town Hall notice board and to the Town Trust for allowing the Town Hall to be used rent-free. The teas bring visitors into the town, many of whom say that they return during the week to sightsee and shop.

b) The Heritage Centre – Volunteers have continued to work hard on fundraising and improvements and several grants towards capital equipment have been received, enabling the purchase of new cabinets, touch-screen computer, i-pad, widescreen and projector. The current display is Cotswold Collotype, to be followed by Magna Carta and then World War 2. Facebook interaction continues to be a success; and groups of young people from army cadets, schools, scouts have all visited the centre. They have also enjoyed hosting young people on work experience. Fundraising for running costs continues to be the biggest difficulty. Several businesses in the town have given support; the volunteers host Town Hall Teas 6 times each season; plus there are a number of other initiatives, including the sale of knitted hedgehogs, the Mediaeval Market as detailed above and a 1940s night organised for October.

c) Fairtrade Town – Two businesses in the town had received awards at the Fairtrade Foundation South-west Awards. The Ark had received two silver awards and Fish-out-of-Water had received a gold award. The Ark, run by volunteers, is celebrating its 20th anniversary during the week 15th –

20th June and will be open from 9am-5pm for that week. Special events will include a Continental breakfast; birthday cake; and kids' day with cupcakes and crafts.

d) Beaumont-le-Roger Society – They enjoyed a very successful trip to France, with 49 people travelling, including 6 children.

e) It was noted that the Wotton Arts and Crafts Trail takes place from 6th to 7th June.

778. Dates for Future Meetings

Meetings were arranged for 14th September 2015 and 2nd November 2015

The Chairman thanked members for attending.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership.

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership.