

MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 15th JANUARY 2018 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE



Present: Cllrs P Smith (Chairman) T Luker, N Pinnegar, June Cordwell, R Claydon, C Young, John Cordwell (from 8.05pm), R Hale, J Turner, P Barton, L Farmer

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey, District Cllr G Butcher, 1 member of public

T.5439 **Apologies for Absence** accepted from Cllr A Wilkinson,

T.5440 **Declarations of Interest** none

T.5441 **Public Forum** – none

T.5442 **To receive Police Report** – no attendance by Police; a report was last received on 19th December. Await new report. Although it is appreciated that Police resources are thin, there are concerns that local policing is now more re-active than pro-active.

T.5443 **To approve the Minutes** of the council meeting held on 18th December. It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr C Young to approve the Minutes with one minor amendment, agreed 9 in favour, 1 abstention.

T.5444 **Chairman's Announcements** – Cllr P Smith highlighted the resignation of Mr N Clement as a town councillor and asked that a card be sent. Furthermore it appears that following the official display of notice, 10 signatures may already have been presented to the district council calling for another election to fill the vacancy, thus costing the Town Council (and ultimately Wotton's taxpayers) another £6500 in election administration costs.

T.5445 **Accounts**

a) To consider information and quotes for appointment of contractor to undertake Council's 5-yearly tree survey. Backing documents provided by the Clerk highlighted the process and difficulties faced with the provision of the electronic graphing information. District Cllr G Butcher and also Cllr J Turner both offered help with 'gml' map data if needed and were thanked. Electronic mapping will be needed if SDC's competitive schedule of rates are to be taken advantage of. However Cllr R Claydon offered to analyse some recent tree works undertaken by WTC and compare the actual pricing to ascertain if the scheduled rates are worth the extra cost of electronic data and mapping, versus the cheaper and more traditional tree survey reports. Report to February agenda.

b) Noted: increase 15p in cost of waste & recycling sacks from January 2018, an increase of approximately £22 (waste) and £5 (recycling) per annum for Town Council; and £7.50/annum for Town Trust.

c) Quarterly report received from Youth & Community Services; it is encouraging to note improved attendance figures. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve invoice payment of £3298.

d) To consider options for continuing the Mayoral quarterly reports in the Wotton Directory. Various options were provided in a backing document. It was proposed by Cllr C Young and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar to continue to provide reports to the electorate via this method of communication, and to continue with the half page format of 4 issues for £252, however to insist that the half page should be on the top half of the page and not the bottom and that the title of WTC should be larger and clearer in colour, agreed by all.

e) Budget 2017/18; report of expenditure against budget noted.

f) To approve the accounts for payment. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all, to approve the payment sheet as presented, with the extra items as clarified by the Clerk, for a net spend total of £16,985 for Town Council and £1,511 for Town Trust.

T.5446 Grants/Precept/Facilities Charges

a) To confirm facilities charges as discussed at informal budget meeting. A summary of the proposed charge increases and new rates was circulated to Councillors. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all approve these rates.

b) To confirm grants payable in FY18/19 as suggested at informal budget meeting. A summary of the grant applications and discussions hereto was circulated to Councillors. Although the BluesFest grant is not approved, Council wishes to support such events as outlined in the Community Plan and is happy to provide the Town Hall as a venue for this music event, waiving the normal fee, subject to a larger than usual deposit, no inconvenience to other bookings, and positive publicity for Wotton Town Council concerning this free venue provision. Regarding the Community Parc Event and the BMX track grants, although the grants are not approved, Council is pleased to support a bench and plaque from Wotton Town Council, up to the amount of £400, as long as positive publicity is received therefrom. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr L Farmer, to approve these grants, agreed by all.

c) To consider final version of draft budget and confirm precept for FY18/19. The circulated draft budget was updated to include £400 bench grant provision, local by-election cost provision of £6000, and new data protection legislation estimate of £1000, giving a Precept request for £294,075 which is a 5% rise over the previous year – although likely a 3.5% rise when accounting for district taxbase data. Budget and Precept approval was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr L Farmer and agreed by all.

T.5447 Old Town Toilets – to consider the future of the toilets due to continued poor state of equipment and building itself, cost of yearly maintenance, low usage, & high quotes received to rebuild the facility of around £80,000. Cllr P Smith is investigating usage of a local toilet facility before a decision is made regarding the future of these toilets. The Clerk is also asked to investigate a repair quotation for just the roof itself. It is noted that in Thornbury a system is in operation whereby a sticker indicates on a public venue whether toilets are available for public use. Clerk to investigate if there is a cost to Council of operating such a system.

T.5448 Proposed Waiting Restrictions/Traffic Regulation Orders in Wotton – to consider whether Council wishes to make additional comments on the proposals. Updated proposals were distributed to Councillors, although we are not party to any public comments received already by Glos County Council. After discussions of the need for improved traffic flows in Wotton and more safety, it was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr P Barton agreed 10 in favour with 1 abstention that Wotton Town Council is happy for these proposed Traffic Regulation Orders to proceed to formal consultation by Glos County Council.

T.5449 Buckingham Palace Garden Party – To consider making a nomination for attendance at Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 5th June 2018. Invitations are in recognition of past service as Chairman/Mayor. Nominees should not have previously attended a Garden Party. No suggestions forthcoming.

T.5450 Bench Outside 10 High Street – To consider new location for bench, which needs to be moved as soon as possible, following Council’s Nov 17 removal decision. After much discussion of the difficulty of narrow mediaeval pavements, it was agreed to approach the Fish & Chip shop owner and also the Stokes hairdresser to see if either would mind a bench being placed outside their premises.

T.5451 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – to acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community; no suggestions.

T.5452 Clerk’s Report a written report supplied of main activities undertaken.

T.5453 Correspondence to note or request action:

a) Noted Parish and Town Council Tax base for the Financial Year 2018/19. Noted. Brochures/Newsletters for information only: none

T.5454 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended

County Council – written report provided by Cllr John Cordwell. Old Town road surface will be short term patch repaired, since there is no funding for a complete resurface. Disabled bay shortly to be re-lined outside the former post office.

District Council – written report provided by district councillors. More information was requested concerning the proposed Market Town Centres Initiative Fund. The SDC Planning website is still experiencing severe problems and its fitness for purpose is questioned given its importance.

PROW & Amenities Committee – not met

Finance & Special Purposes Committee – not met

Allotments Committee – a quarterly newsletter will commence February to keep allotmenters up to date with website/email/noticeboard distribution. Plot vacancies are 8 & half over both sites. A 5 year priority list of works needed was compiled.

Wotton Youth Partnership – Cllr June Cordwell supplied a written report following her first meeting as chairperson of WYP and with 14 interested people present.

Town Regeneration Partnership – next meeting 5th February

WC Sports Foundation – Cllr R Hale attended AGM; new chairman is Mr M Easton taken over from Mr B Beere. Accounts are positive due largely to Party in the Parc, however, large bills are coming up and value for money is being assessed, regarding pitches and KLB agreement. BMX track is proceeding through Planning process. The Man Shed meeting was in the Falcon and will progress to a container on site where things are made/repared etc.

Wotton Pool –AGM attended by Cllr C Young, refurbishment works progressing in an excellent and well organised fashion and grants secured totalling £36,000 approximately. Small presentation to be made to February Town Council meeting.

Heritage Centre – written report provide by Cllr June Cordwell.

Dementia/Mrs C Sweet -meeting with Mrs C Sweet/Mayor/Deputy Mayor/Town Clerk to discuss ways of promoting Dementia Friendly town status – advised to proceed via Regeneration Committee and ideas given.

T.5455 Town Affairs

Cllr John Cordwell – No.201 bus (which Mike’s Travel had continued to run commercially following the removal of Council subsidy) is now withdrawn. Route is still possible via no.60 bus, but not from Synwell, only the centre of Wotton.

Cllr T Luker – commented on Old Town bus stop guttering needing repair – this is already on the buildings manger list.

Cllr P Barton – pleased to see Mount Pleasant issue of parking on grass verges being addressed by SDC. However it is not clear if the Full Moon development will be called Reynolds Close as agreed by STC or Tap Room Mews as requested by the developer. Cllrs P Smith and R Claydon were thanked for doing so much locking/unlocking/moving chairs & tables due to caretaker's sudden departure.

It was proposed by Cllr C Young and seconded by Cllr John Cordwell and agreed by all to enter Closed Session to deal with the following items under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to staffing matters of a sensitive nature.

T5456 Staffing matters

a. To ratify payment in lieu of holiday for Information Officer at year-end due to staff cover needed. Proposed by Cllr R Hale seconded by Cllr L Farmer to approve payment, agreed by all.

b. To consider contribution towards mobile phone use for Clerk. After answering a few questions regarding mobile and ipad usage for council activities *the Clerk left the room.* Proposed by Cllr P Barton, seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve monthly payment of £20 towards Council usage, agreed by all. *The Clerk returned to the room.*

c. To give a brief update to Council on Buildings Manager absence/phased return to work. The Clerk outlined basic details of illness over the past 6 months, the impact upon Council, and the systems being put into place for a phased return to work, and the professional advice received by the Council regarding the situation. The Council wishes the Building Manager well in his phased return throughout the next 6 weeks.

d. To update Council on caretaker vacancy and ratify new appointment. Four candidates were interviewed last Friday by the Clerk, Mayor and Deputy Mayor. All applicants were of a high standard. Council is pleased to appoint Mr W Smith who will commence duties from 22nd January; proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr P Smith to ratify appointment, agreed by all. The role is for a 2 year fixed term contract with a probation period of 6 months, and the hours and pay have been increased in order tackle the backlog of council facility work and also continue to improve beds, borders, open spaces, weeds, litter etc, around the town. The need for the expanded caretaking role with these increased hours will be reviewed at the end of that period.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.15pm

Meeting of WOTTON TOWN TRUST

1. **To consider letter of request from Wotton Youth Partnership** to convert the music room at the Youth Centre into a counselling room using Mental Health and Well-being grant funding; and to make additional necessary office changes, also using the grant funding of £1600. The request to improve building facilities was discussed in detail. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr R Hale and agreed 10 in favour 1 abstention, to agree to this funding being used to improve youth centre facilities subject to receiving specific details about what the changes would be exactly, how exactly each space is proposed to be changed, who would be carrying out the works and the qualifications of the contractor. Also, notification of when work would commence would be needed.

Signed: Dated: