

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 14TH AUGUST 2017 AT 7.00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE



PRESENT: Cllr A Wilkinson (Chairman), Cllr P Smith, Cllr P Barton, Cllr N Pinnegar, Cllr T Luker, Cllr R Claydon, Mr M Clarke (UTEA & CALGS), Mrs J Walshe (Heritage Centre & Town Hall Teas), Reverend R Axford, Mrs J Tebb (Wotton in Bloom & Secret Gardens Trail), Mrs C Sweet (Community Dementia Link), Mr M Tucker (Chamber of Trade)

In Attendance: Stroud District Councillor Braun, Cllr June Cordwell, Deputy Clerk Mrs Yasmin Milsom

870. Election of Chairman

Cllr P Smith took the Chair for this item. Proposed from the Chair, seconded by Cllr Claydon, that Cllr Wilkinson be elected as Chairman. There were no further nominations and Cllr Wilkinson was duly elected, all in favour. Cllr Wilkinson took the Chair and expressed his enthusiasm for town regeneration initiatives.

871. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs T McLusky, Mr G Phillips, Mr J Walshe and Cllr C Young

872. Welcome & Co-option

The committee welcomed the new President of the Chamber of Trade, Mr Martin Tucker. Proposed from the Chair, seconded by Mrs Walshe, to co-opt Mr Tucker to this committee. Agreed all in favour and Mr Tucker then joined the meeting.

873. Declarations of Interest – None

874. Public Forum – Stroud District Councillor Braun was present and would comment on items 7 and 9 on the agenda when those items were discussed.

875. Minutes of the Town Regeneration Partnership Meeting Held on 8th May 2017

Proposed by Cllr Barton, seconded by Cllr Smith that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th May 2017 be approved as a correct record. Agreed all in favour.

876. Stroud Market Towns Projects Fund

Cllr Braun informed members of match-funding of £24000 set aside by Stroud District Council for projects in market towns. Stroud District Council had confirmed that this funding will, in part, relate to recommendations arising from the Future of Town Centres Study and that the criteria for applications had not been finalised. The funding would cover all of the market towns in the Stroud District. It was not known at this stage if organisations other than the Council could apply but, if so, information would be posted on the Town Council website and social media, plus the Chamber of Trade website if appropriate. Once the criteria were known, potential projects could be discussed and recommendations considered by the Town Council.

877. Wotton Market

a) It was noted with regret that the Farmers Market had closed as there were too few stalls remaining for it to be viable.

Cllr June Cordwell entered the meeting

b) NABMA – The Town Council had joined The National Association of British Market Authorities at a discounted rate for the year up to 31st March 2018. This organisation can provide advice regarding the setting up and running of a market. Their Chief Executive had advised a number of ‘groundwork’

measures that were needed in the first instance to establish a clear idea of potential. Once this is completed they will be happy to visit the town and give further advice. The Chamber of Trade had received a very positive response from traders to the idea of a market. It was noted that the lack of outside space within the town could be an impediment and that a market in the Town Hall would be limited for space and therefore not large enough to be effective. It was agreed to set up a Working Group, to include Mr Tucker and Mrs Tebb, to look at options and carry out the suggested groundwork. It was further agreed to include an item on the August Town Council agenda to decide Councillor membership of the group. It was suggested that, when the criteria for the Stroud Market Towns Project Fund were known, the Working Group could also look at project possibilities for this.

878. Cotswold Gateways Project

The Cotswold Conservation Board (CCB) was applying for grant funding of £90000 to develop new, quality, well-marked routes for walking and cycling across the Cotswolds to encourage, particularly, out of season tourism. The routes would be designed to run through participating towns so that visitors could access facilities and refreshments, thus benefitting businesses. They plan to develop 11 gateway sites in towns and villages plus 4 new rural gateways. Wotton is being considered for inclusion in the project. A meeting had been held with Richard Watson of the CCB and a list of information was being compiled, which included letters of support from walking and cycling groups and the Chamber of Trade. The timeline was very short for gathering the information and groups had been most helpful and were thanked for their quick responses. Several members pledged further letters of support, which would be passed to the Deputy Clerk shortly. The information needed to be submitted to the CCB by Friday 18th August, when the gateway sites would be agreed.

879. Wotton Colouring Book

Cllr June Cordwell introduced an idea for a colouring book for both adults and children featuring various Wotton landmarks. Colouring was currently very popular and the Heritage Centre would be willing to sell a Wotton colouring book. Some places also produced postcards to be coloured before sending. It was suggested that businesses might be willing to sponsor such a book and local artists might be willing to contribute artwork. Cllr Cordwell and Mrs Walshe would investigate further.

Cllr June Cordwell left the meeting

880. Street Cleaning and Britain in Bloom

Wotton in Bloom were hoping to enter Britain in Bloom next year and request that the Town Council increases its 2018/19 budget allowance for town cleaning/tidying to aid this effort. A group of volunteers would maintain the flower borders but the streets also need to be weeded/swept clean, in particular the gutters and edges where the buildings meet pavements. They suggest that Wotton is not as clean as other local towns. It was acknowledged that County and District Councils are responsible for highway/street cleaning but budgetary cuts have seen a significant decrease in this effort. Discussions ensued suggesting that sweeping and weeding should be carried out weekly; and the need for a person with a wheelbarrow to go around the town, weeding, sweeping and trimming back overgrowth. It was noted that the Town Council did not currently have the resources to assist due to staff long-term illness; also staff could not tackle cleaning road-edge gutters due to training/safety issues. Wotton in Bloom were asked for precise details of requirements, including locations, man-hours and frequency, to be forwarded to Council by the end of October, so that costs could be estimated and considered at the Budget meeting alongside the other budgetary demands.

881. Signposts

It had been suggested that further visitor signposting was needed at the Chipping car park. Currently there was a finger post on the Chipping Green directing down the car park towards shops/toilets but

a further post was needed next to the Arts Centre to direct visitors down Rope Walk. There was already a signpost next to the Arts Centre displaying a Town Council notice of CCTV coverage. Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Barton and agreed all in favour to recommend to Council to purchase a finger sign to attach to this post. The Deputy Clerk would investigate costs and bring to a future Town Council meeting for decision.

882. Dementia Friendly Town

The Community Plan included an aspiration for Wotton to be an inclusive and dementia friendly town. Background information was provided along with details of progress to date. It was noted that there was a lot of information on the Alzheimers Society website on how to make businesses/people/the environment dementia friendly and Mrs Sweet would send a link to the Deputy Clerk for circulation to members. It was suggested that businesses would perhaps be better served by a simplified A4 information sheet, which could be sent out via the Chamber of Trade. It was noted that, in Nailsworth, a questionnaire was being issued via GPs to those diagnosed with dementia and the responses would inform a best practise strategy. Stroud District Council's Health and Well-being Development Co-ordinator was looking into extending this scheme to other GP practices in the area, including Wotton.

883. Reports from Partners

a) Heritage Centre – The display at present is Lawmakers and Lawbreakers and is proving popular with visitors. The next display will be Wotton Burials. They had received several grants towards storage boxes and a document display system. A number of fund-raising initiatives had raised over £1000 in July, plus £100 was donated towards their hanging baskets from Thornbury Garden Club. Ongoing work includes the digitalisation of photographs; expanding their IT system; redevelopment of the Research Room; producing the Wotton calendar which includes photographs from the Arts Festival competition and is sponsored by local businesses; promoting local events and selling tickets. The new Friends of Wotton-under-Edge Heritage Centre scheme is going well and visitor footfall is good. They would like to thank the Town Council for the maintenance work to the outside of the building, which is a big improvement; and the volunteers who maintain the small garden.

b) Town Hall Teas – These had now been running for 23 years and, for the first time, one of the teas had to be cancelled due to a late cancellation by the group booked to run it. The last Town Hall Tea had been attended by a group of 24 Italian visitors and raised over £400. The Teas groups have expressed their thanks to the Town Council for allowing free use of the Town Hall.

c) Recreational Trust – The background to the Trust was explained. A number of local groups are affiliated to the Trust which gives them charitable status. These had formerly included the cinema, which had regularly put money into the Trust. Some of this funding had already benefitted local groups and further grant applications, for match-funding up to £1000, were invited.

d) Under-the-Edge Arts –The Autumn schedule is about to be published, which will include Arts therapy sessions. Plans are underway for the Spring into Summer event scheduled for 24/3/2018. Next year's Walking Festival will include an Arts walk. A questionnaire will be distributed shortly to inform development of an arts strategy as detailed in the Community Action Plan. They have ongoing difficulties with a shortage of storage space; and are facing competition from other local arts centres, particularly the Goods Shed at Tetbury. They wish to thank the Town Trust for the ongoing work to replace the damaged fleur-de-lys on the top of the building.

e) Walking Festival – This first festival had been very successful and plans for next year’s festival, provisionally scheduled for 11th-13th May, had started. There have been some changes to committee members. The next meeting would take place on 14/9/2017.

f) Churches Together – The Holiday at Home was shortly being held at the United Church over two days, providing food and entertainment for 28-30 people. An election hustings held at the Baptist Church had been well-attended. An open meeting with Gloucestershire Action for Refugees & Asylum Seekers would be held at the Baptist Church at 7pm on 7/10/17. The Christmas services would include the Living Crib at St Mary’s church. The Faculty to grant planning permission to open up the interior space of the church was still awaited. Fund-raising for this was progressing.

g) Community Action Plan – it was requested to include this on the agenda for the next meeting. The Deputy Clerk would send the updated Action Plan to all members in the meantime.

h) It was noted that the waste bins in the town looked scruffy. It was suggested that, if the Council provided the paint, volunteers could repaint them. This would be referred to Town Council.

i) Wotton in Bloom – The hanging baskets were, once again, excellent and they have received a lot of positive comments. A couple of the troughs on the Old Town raised pavement had overturned but they had hopefully resolved this problem.

j) Chamber of Trade – The Chamber was back in action after a spell of ‘hibernation’. The new president was Mr Martin Tucker, whose current undertaking was to visit the numerous businesses.

884. Any Other Brief Reports

a) Streamside Walk – The stream between the end of Marchesi Walk and Holywell has become choked with vegetation and needs some clearance work. It was suggested that the Cotswold Wardens may be able to assist.

b) It was noted that Renishaw had done a superb job in renovating the old Stoke’s Bakery building in High Street.

c) A Wotton Trail is included in Dursley’s Tyndale Arts week. Details would be forwarded to the Deputy Clerk.

d) Mr and Mrs Walshe were still attending the Dursley-led tourist area meetings.

e) It was noted that the Wotton poster at Newark Park had been removed due to National Trust rules.

885. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting would be held on 13th November 2017.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership Committee

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership