

MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 19th MARCH 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 9pm), R Hale, J Turner, P Barton, A Wilkinson (until 8.55pm), M Short

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey, District Cllrs C Braun, 4 members of public

T.5474 Apologies for Absence Cllr L Farmer

T.5475 Declarations of Interest Cllrs N Pinnegar RBL personal, A Wilkinson Screwfix & Wotton in Bloom personal, J Turner Chamber of Trade personal.

T.5476 Public Forum

- The Treasurer of the Royal British Legion spoke of plans to commemorate the end of the First World War with services in Flanders and hoped that a representative from Wotton Town Council could accompany their standard bearer on this visit, remembering the sacrifices made by Wotton's families 100 years ago. He clarified their fundraising (although more is needed) and their difficult financial position.
- The Chamber of Trade president explained that he no longer wished the Town Council to cease their membership of the Chamber, since the conflict issues of developing a Constitution and applying for grants had now been resolved. The Council was thanked for its support and advice.
- Cllr A Wilkinson spoke, as a member of the public, in support of Wotton in Bloom's efforts to improve the town this summer by covering the increasing empty shops with more hanging baskets. Britain in Bloom would be entered for the first time and only half the cost of 15 extra baskets is being sought from the Council.

It was agreed to bring forward the following two items on the agenda

T.5477 Royal British Legion - To consider whether to send a Councillor representative to Flanders for the centenary celebrations of the end of the First World War and associated costs and to consider a related funding request from the Royal British Legion.

It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr J Turner and agreed by all to suspend Standing Orders in order to speak to Cllr N Pinnegar who had declared an interest and was removing himself from discussions and vote.

Cllr N Pinnegar confirmed upon being asked, that he would represent the Town Council and Wotton, if so desired, at the centenary celebrations in Flanders.

Cllr N Pinnegar left the room.

It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr C Young and agreed by all reinstate Standing Orders

After discussions regarding use of taxpayers funds and public perception, and which Power could be used to validate the decision (Clerk replied that the General Power of Competence is suitable, and that commensurate benefit to Wotton's inhabitants must be considered), it was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr P Barton, agreed by all, that a donation of £500 is made to the RBL, that Cllr N Pinnegar (an ex serving soldier) is chosen to represent Wotton and its inhabitants given the high number of sacrifices suffered by Wotton's population in the first World War, and that Cllr Pinnegar provides a report summary and photos of the event if possible.

Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the room.

T.5478 Chamber of Trade – To consider withdrawing Council membership as requested by the Chamber of Trade. The Chamber President Mr M Tucker had explained that it was previously thought that a conflict of interest existed when the Chamber planned to introduce a new Constitution and also when applying for a few

grants. This has since been clarified and sorted out, and no conflict of interest appears to exist in Town Council being Wotton Chamber of Trade member. It was thus agreed to withdraw this item from the agenda.

T.5479 To receive Police Report – none

T.5480 To approve the Minutes of the council meeting of 19th February 2018. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve the Minutes as presented, agreed 11 in favour, 1 abstention.

T.5481 Chairman's Announcements – no report; the Mayor and Clerk will attend the farewell ceremony of Japanese students at KLB School this week.

T.5482 Accounts

a) To approve renewal subscription to GAPTC at a cost of £1466. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar to approve renewal, agreed all in favour.

b) To consider renewing annual subscription to NABMA (market organisation) at a cost of £318. It was proposed by Cllr A Wilkinson and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar that this subscription is not renewed voted 10 in favour, 1 against, since the benefits from membership had not been quantifiable since Wotton no longer had a market.

c) To consider earmarking underspent funds. A document was prepared estimating underspend areas and likely recipients of earmarking. Comments proposed that the civic centre capital fund, election and legal expenses, renewing play equipment, and data protection funding requirements should be the main beneficiaries. The Clerk explained that the changes suggested by Cllr R Claydon could be incorporated into the earmarking document, and then presented again to Council after the financial year-end accounts preparation. Further changes to earmarked funds could then also take place; proposed by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr J Turner, agreed by all.

d) To consider quote of £480 to implement legally required updates to the website to comply with new General Data Protection Regulations. A document explained the changes to be made. After discussions that the NALC toolkit regarding GDPR included council specific privacy policies and consent forms, and that using these would be more appropriate than general ones, the Clerk was requested to ask if the quote provided would change, if the NALC documents were used, and bring the item back to the April agenda.

e) To approve payment of £6000 to Swimming Pool as per SLA, and also note that Council is considering with Wotton Pool what necessary documents need signing in accordance with being the a/c nominee for Sport England Grant without being the legal Project Client. It was proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar and seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve the £6000 payment agreed all in favour. A meeting is to be held this week to clarify how the Town Council could sign a grant agreement with Sport England, with the pool project as beneficiary, Wotton Pool Ltd as Project Client, and WTC as the funds receiver. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton, seconded by Cllr C Young and agreed by all to delegate this function to a Council officer, namely the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

f) To confirm approval for grant of £2000 to Synwell Playing Field. It was clarified that approval had already been given in the Minutes of August 2017 and thus extra approval was unnecessary. The Clerk confirmed that the order had now been placed by SPFC for fitness equipment in the play area and that installation was expected by end of March 2018; the invoice delayed the process.

g) Budget 2017/18. Report of expenditure against budget noted as healthy.

*It was agreed to bring forward the following item on the agenda
Cllr A Wilkinson left the room*

T.5483 Wotton in Bloom – To consider request for one-off donation of £630 for 15 additional hanging baskets due to entry into Britain in Bloom competition, from Regeneration Committee funds. After much discussion regarding the late decision to enter Britain in Bloom, the concern about lack of preparation for judging route issues and the volunteer resources needed to run such a successful event, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, agreed 6 in favour, 1 against, 3 abstentions, to donate £630 for 15 baskets in a ‘one-off’ gesture on the proviso that the organisation can demonstrate evidence that Britain in Bloom is entered. If the event is not entered then the donation must be repaid to the Town Council. The Town Council also is concerned that there should not be an overreliance on Town Council resources to aid entry to this event, since Wotton in Bloom plans are very late and allocation of Council resources needs to be planned in advance.

Cllr A Wilkinson returned to the room

T.5482 h) To approve the accounts for payment. An updated budget sheet was circulated. After clarifying a few issues such as many lighting purchases, Screwfix purchases, NABMA subscription removal, Pipeline Logistics works, and CCTV completion issues, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr T Luker to approved these net payments of £44,687 for Council and £562 for Trust, agreed 10 in favour, 1 abstention.

T.5484 Policies & Procedures

To approve annual Risk Assessment document and Assets List as at March 2018 – both for annual external audit purposes. After clarifying a few minor issues, it was proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar and seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve the asset register, agreed all in favour. Furthermore, it was also proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr R Claydon to approved the Risk Assessment document after a few questions, agreed all in favour

T.5485 Youth Work - To approve tender documents for youth sector work and to advertise/ commence selection process. To agree nomination of interview/assessment panel. The documentation pack was circulated prior to the meeting and had involved many hours of work in its preparation. It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve these documents, noting the timeline, which must be adhered to, agreed by all. Regarding the interview assessment panel, the Clerk advised Councillors to pay due regard to the Code of Conduct and to consider duly declaring an interest if there is likely to be a conflict, eg WTC representative members to the Wotton Youth Partnership also being on the new youth contract assessment panel (section 4.6 of the Code) would be precluded from voting at Council yet would be interviewing and proposing to Council who is the next youth provider having undertaken the interviews. Furthermore there is a financial relationship between the WYP and one

of the potential bidders, in addition to one of the Councillors being Chair of WYP in a personal capacity. The effect on any spouse should also be considered as to their also declaring any interests. Given the code breaches of some councillors in 2017, and the recent further complaints it is essential that Council considers its position regarding compliance and the public perception.

*Cllr A Wilkinson left the meeting 8.55pm
Cllr John Cordwell entered the meeting 9pm*

Council considered the Clerk's advice above, however is it concerned that by not including a number of members who are also representatives to the WYP, a great deal of youth knowledge would be unavailable to the assessment panel in order to enable it to make an informed recommendation to the Council when selecting the next youth services provider, thus potentially adversely affecting the community. With due consideration of the above, it was proposed by Cllr R Hale seconded by Cllr M Short, and agreed 9 in favour 2 abstentions, to select the interview panel of Cllrs R Claydon, T Luker, P Barton, P Smith and June Cordwell.

T.5486 Old Town Toilets – to receive update on alternative toilet use options (Cllr P Smith) and consider how this impacts future plans for these toilets. Also to receive update on builder quotes (Cllr T Luker). Cllr P Smith's investigation into an alternative provider nearby for public use of their toilet was refused. Cllr T Luker obtained a rough quote of £7400 to put a pitched roof on existing toilet block. The Clerk advised that planning permission would be required due to being in a conservation area and changing the external appearance, also building regulation approval needed and plans drawn up if this route is chosen. Furthermore Council needs to consider whether the single brick walls are actually strong enough to support a pitched roof or whether extra foundations under this 80 year plus building are needed, in addition to drainage/plumbing improvements which would necessitate excavating the concrete floor. Cllr T Luker is to consider plumbing issues and obtain advice.

T.5487 New Rd Allotments - to approve allotments hire of first plot near the entrance to Dementia Connections. It was proposed by Cllr J Turner and seconded by Cllr R Hale, agreed by all, to approve this Allotments Committee recommendation also using it as a positive public relations opportunity.

T.5488 Stroud District Tourism – to receive complaint regarding the omission of Wotton from a recent Stroud District Council promotional video; and from an SDC 'Discover Stroud District' map/leaflet. To consider Council issuing an official complaint to Stroud District Council with a request that funding be provided for the development of a similar leaflet/map for the Wotton/Dursley/Severn Vale area. After much discussion of SDC's lack of tourism effort in the Wotton area and the majority of SDC projects being 'Stroud centric', it was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr C Young that a complaint letter is sent, agreed by all.

T.5489 Road Safety Partnership – to receive and consider update from County Cllr John Cordwell on the continuance of road safety initiatives in this area. Cllr John Cordwell explained that the withdrawal of Police Crime Commissioner funding had reduced the viability of the County Council to operate the Road Safety Partnership and thus those experienced county officers would now be redeployed or made redundant. The police are now using their own officers to operate road safety initiatives.

T.5490 Stakeholder Workshop for Charfield – To appoint Council representative/s to attend this workshop held on Tuesday 10th April, 1.30pm-4.45pm. Cllr John Cordwell is attending in a County capacity; Cllrs June Cordwell, J Turner, P Smith requested attendance.

T.5491 Stroud District Council – Loss of Government Grant – To consider the impact of the loss of the grant from government to Stroud in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 and whether this Council wishes to make representations to local MP. The Clerk circulated a draft letter to MP Geoffrey Clifton Brown. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr C Young, agreed 10 in favour 1 against, to send the letter as presented, in addition to sending to the Press.

T.5492 Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2018-2023 – To consider if Council wishes to make any comment on the second draft of the management plan; comments to be submitted by 29/3/2018. Council wishes to make the comment that it supports the assertions contained in the consultation.

T.5493 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – to acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community; no suggestions.

T.5494 Clerk's Report a written detailed report supplied of main activities undertaken by the administration and facilities management. Many outstanding repair works built up over the past 18 months are now being tackled.

T.5495 Correspondence to note or request action:

a) To consider email detailing Baby Hub arrangements in Wotton and asking Council for ideas. Council discussed the points contained in the email however failed to understand what exactly is being requested and why. Clerk to arrange meeting to obtain more details.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only: none

Due to lateness (10pm) it was proposed by Cllr P Smith seconded by Cllr John Cordwell that the meeting continues, all in favour.

T.5496 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended

County Council – written report provided by Cllr John Cordwell. Tarmac has won the 2 year resurfacing contract worth £30m; the maintenance contract is to be decided in September. Funding for an extra public rights of Way officer is still being considered. A limited route of County CI footway inspection areas in Wotton was obtained (1167 metres, about 6 central streets only)

District Council – written report provided by district councillors. A new group is established to look at car parking charges in the district including Wotton. The bidder for Stroud Subscription Rooms will be chosen this week. Merrywalks shopping centre investment is taking place via a developer loan from SDC. Bids from developers are being considered for Dryleaze Court. SDC Property Services is considering how many houses could be built on the Mt Pleasant garage site, due to complexity of utilities under the site, before inviting developer interest. Some concern was expressed that SDC states it is suffering financially, and having to reduce staff by 20%, yet millions of investment is being poured into the Stroud area via Merrywalks and the canal restoration.

PROW & Amenities Committee – not met

Finance & Special Purposes Committee – met last week(4 hours) to discuss many policies, which will be on the April agenda for approval.

Allotments Committee – the recent New Rd gate and path improvements have been well received. The new notice board is now installed and together with the new water connection means that almost £7500 has been spent on this allotments for site improvements over the past few months, in addition to strimming/membraning of plots to make ready for new tenants to take over. Total vacancies over two sites are now 6 & half plots. The new tenancy £50 deposit scheme is now operational.

Wotton Youth Partnership – Cllr June Cordwell provided a written report. £700 has been awarded to WCSF for BMX tracks. The Heritage Project equipment is with the KLB Head of History so that interviews commence soon. The Mental Health Project is consulting with young people.

Town Regeneration Partnership – not met

WC Sports Foundation – none

Wotton Pool – meeting this week to discuss Sport England grant.

Heritage Centre – Cllr June Cordwell provided a written report. Current exhibition of old Wotton education is attracting much interest from former residents who have moved away. AdLib database continues to add digital records and the shop area will see more local stock purchased as this becomes financially important in order to sustain the HC's existence.

Walking Festival – Cllr N Pinnegar attended a meeting where the draft map was considered – an email will be circulated and comments are welcomed. £150 was donated by the Chamber of Trade towards the Festival, and a quiz will be held at Under the Edge Arts on 6th April.

T.5497 Town Affairs

Cllr C Young – received complaint about dogs being allowed to run loose around St Marys churchyard. Clerk to pass on to Revd Axford.

Cllr June Cordwell – complained that the OK Path route to KLB School needs cutting back as the excessive growth is forcing pupils to walk on the road edge and is dangerous. The field owner's details were handed to the Clerk and also county council officer correspondence showing lack of action.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 10.20pm

Signed:Dated: