

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 14<sup>th</sup> MAY 2018 AT 7.00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**



**PRESENT:** Cllr A Wilkinson (Chairman), Cllr P Smith, Cllr P Barton, Cllr T Luker, Cllr R Claydon, Cllr C Young, Mrs J Tebb (Secret Gardens Trail), Mrs J Walshe (Heritage Centre), Ms S Hunt (Wotton in Bloom), Mr M Tucker (Chamber of Trade), Mr M Clarke (UTEA), Mr G Phillips (Wotton Arts Festival) Mr R Garlicki (Wotton Blues Festival); In Attendance: Information Officer Mrs J Wyatt

**901. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr N Pinnegar, Mrs C Sweet, Mrs T McLusky.

**902. Declarations of Interest/Dispensations – None**

**903. Public Forum – No public present**

**904. Minutes of the Town Regeneration Partnership Meeting Held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

Proposed by Cllr Claydon, seconded by Cllr Barton that the Minutes of the Town Regeneration Partnership meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018 be approved as a correct record. Agreed in favour with three abstentions.

**905. Community Action Plan**

**a) Culture Strategy** – Mr Clarke advised that work is still in progress to complete the Strategy.

**b) Dementia Friendly Town** – Plans are in place for Dementia Action Week, with an event to be held at the Star on 22<sup>nd</sup> May to which all are invited.

**c) Old Town Toilets** – Cllr Luker had received a quote for a new pitched roof but other quotes and advice were awaited before a decision on the future of the toilets could be made. Cllr Wilkinson advised that funding for the project may be available through the £200,000 Market Town Centres Initiative Fund although the Town Council would have to match any funding allocated. Cllr Claydon pointed out that the £200,000 covered five towns but that Wotton could apply for a portion of this. Cllr Smith's approach to a local organisation about public use of their toilets had been refused. Mrs Tebb advocated taking a longer term approach and replacing them with a new lower maintenance unisex toilet. Cllr Smith advised that recent quotes indicated the cost of providing a unisex toilet would be only marginally lower than replacing them with similar to the current WC provision. It was agreed that the Committee would reconsider the options and make a recommendation to Council once all quotes and other information were available.

**d) Community Action Plan** – Cllr Claydon advised that the current version of the Plan was now considerably out of date. Cllr Claydon will review the document and send comments to the Information Officer who will update it ready for review at the next meeting. Any updates from other members should also be submitted.

**906. Cotswold Edge and Severn Vale Tourism Network** – The meeting considered the requirement to take on the role of coordinating this initiative. Mr Clarke, Mrs Walshe, Mr Walshe and Mrs Tebb have already been involved in the project and it was agreed that they would continue in this role as a subgroup reporting back to Committee. It was further agreed that the Wotton profile originally produced by Mr Walshe should be reviewed. Updates should be sent to Mrs Walshe.

**907. Stroud District Council Tourism Map** – Displeasure was expressed about the responses received from Stroud District Council about the omission of Wotton from their tourist map of the District. Individual members of the Committee had attended various meetings with SDC prior to the production of the map and although assurances had been made this had not resulted in any positive promotion of Wotton in the publications produced. It was agreed that the Town Clerk should write to SDC again asking for their categorical assurance that Wotton will not be excluded from any future tourist publications and that the Tourism Officer should be asked to visit Wotton in order to highlight the many positive aspects of the town

from a tourism perspective. It was noted that a meeting is taking place with SDC and other parishes to discuss tourism in the area on 15<sup>th</sup> May.

**908. Stroud Market Towns Project** – Discussion took place about the need to agree potential projects for the £200,000 funding available through the Market Town Centres Initiative Fund in readiness for when further information is received about the criteria and timescale for bids. Projects need to be agreed and costed so that Town Council can consider any match funding required. Cllr Barton expressed concern about the deteriorating condition of the Ram Inn in view of the historical importance of the building and its potential as a tourist attraction in the town. Information about the deeds to the building could be sought through the Gloucestershire Archives or the Church Commissioners. Mrs Walshe suggested the replacement of map boards in the town could be considered as these are over ten years old, are faded, stained and need updating. The production of a new information leaflet for the town could also be considered. Cllr Wilkinson asked members to submit other ideas for potential projects to him. Information on the funding criteria needs to be sent out to Committee members as soon as it is received. Cllr Claydon reminded members of the need to be aware of the requirement for match funding from the Council.

**909. Wotton Market** – Cllr Wilkinson spoke about the need to consider additional parking requirements if the market was to be re-established and it was agreed that further discussion on the market project should be deferred until this had been resolved.

**910. Britain in Bloom** – Mrs Hunt advised that Wotton in Bloom had entered the Britain in Bloom competition. Judging takes place on 5<sup>th</sup> July. The route will be determined nearer the time depending on which area of the town looks best. Marks are given for the display of flowers as well as for environmental considerations in respect of both the group and the town in general. Cllr Braun is attending the judging to advise on environmental aspects. Various events are being held to support the initiative including a Big Clean Up event on 20<sup>th</sup> May to tidy up the town centre, a street collection on 9<sup>th</sup> June, a curry night and a shop window competition. Mrs Hunt advised that many of the street gutters are full of gravel from potholes and help is needed to clean them. It was noted that the GCC Highways cleaning vehicle is not suitable for this purpose and it was queried whether the Buildings Manager would be able to assist with this if the gravel was swept up and bagged. It was however agreed that this was an ongoing problem and that the Town Council should contact GCC Highways regarding a solution. It was also noted that the Recycling Centre at Horsley was closing for three weeks on 4<sup>th</sup> June and alternative facilities at Thornbury and Yate are not available to Gloucestershire residents.

**911. Cotswolds AONB Hare Trail** – Mrs Walshe advised that Renishaw has funded a hare, which will be located at the Heritage Centre until September when it will be auctioned for charity. The hare is being delivered on 15<sup>th</sup> May and the Buildings Manager is helping with the installation. Springer hares and leverets are also available and it is hoped that shops will take the opportunity to have these. Hares, springer hares and leverets will all form part of trail which will attract visitors to the town.

#### **912. Updates**

**a) Litter bins** – Mrs Tebb advised the meeting that volunteers have been organised to paint ten litter bins in the town centre. The Town Council is providing paint and materials. Work is planned to take place after the Secret Gardens Trail.

**b) Cotswolds Gateways Project** – Cllr Claydon advised the meeting that although the bid had been successful, a smaller sum of money had been awarded than anticipated. Further information about the next steps in the project was awaited but members of the PROW and Amenity Areas Committee expected that considerable work would be needed to implement the project.

**c) Clubs and Groups Fair** – It was noted that the April event had been a success and Committee recorded its thanks to members of staff who organised the event.

### **913. Reports from Partners**

- a) Blues Festival** – Mr Garlicki advised on progress towards this year’s Festival, with the venue and acts already booked, the website up and running and programmes in development. Festival dates are 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September.
- b) Beaumont-le-Roger Society** – Cllr Smith advised that a visiting group including 13 children is arriving on 18<sup>th</sup> May with a variety of events planned for the weekend. The group is thought to be the largest to visit Wotton.
- c) Wotton Secret Gardens Trail** – The Trail is taking place on 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> May with 19 gardens to view and refreshments available. Between 300 and 500 visitors are expected.
- d) Recreational Trust** – The Recreational Trust has awarded grants to five organisations: Wotton Blues Festival, Wotton Community Sports Foundation, Wotton Swimming Pool, W-u-E Bowls Club and Wotton Walking Festival. Other applications received did not meet the Trust’s criteria. New applications are invited for next year. Although the Trust has allocated £5000 to cover running costs, further income will need to be obtained at some point to cover future costs.
- e) Town Hall Teas** – This year’s programme of Town Hall Teas is going well with £2,223 raised by groups so far. Next year’s programme is already well subscribed with only 3 slots remaining.
- f) Heritage Centre** – The AGM is taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30 in the Civic Centre. The recent exhibition, Education in Wotton, was very popular and a new display, Wotton is the Word is now on show. The Centre is pleased to have provided an increasing number of work experience opportunities to KLB students. Membership structure is changing and will be voted on at the AGM. Funds are being sought for new computer systems. Town Hall Teas on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of every month are currently the only source of regular funding. A number of new volunteers are helping to increase the rate of data input and it is hoped to make information available online for family history research over the next two years. Mr and Mrs Walshe both attend the Cotswolds Tourist Information Managers meetings. The Centre is now acting as Box Office for the Dramatic Society.
- g) Wotton in Bloom** – Hanging baskets are to be installed in early June this year due to the late spring cold weather.
- h) Chamber of Trade** - Negotiations have taken place with the Wotton Auction House to secure a possible additional 23 car parking spaces for the town which would be available outside auction dates. £20,000 worth of grants had been allocated. Discussions are taking place with traders to encourage them to open on the Blues Festival weekend.
- i) Walking Festival** – A second successful Walking Festival had taken place attracting over 250 walkers and raising over £500 which will be used to fund next year’s event. It was noted that the Festival had attracted a number of visitors from outside the town. The Committee recorded its thanks to the Walking Festival Committee for organising an excellent event.
- j) UTEA** – The last year had been better than anticipated, resulting in a lower deficit that had been originally expected. The courtyard has been converted into a garden which will be opened by the Mayor of Wotton in May. The Committee recorded its thanks to Mr Clarke and his team for their work over the last few years.
- k) Coombe allotments** – It was noted that the site had now been sold and was safe from future development. The new owner is expected to use the site for an orchard along with a small number of allotments.
- l) Wotton Times and Gazette coverage** – Mr Clarke reported that the Gazette editor had visited Wotton following concerns about lack of coverage for Wotton. It was noted that coverage had improved as a result

of this and that the introduction of the Wotton Times was also likely to have had an effect. Mrs Walshe reminded the meeting of the need to keep sending information to the Gazette. A columnist is sought to produce information for a Wotton page in the Gazette.

**m) Wotton Arts Association** – A successful Festival had been held which featured a wide range of events over the week and was opened by the Association’s new patron Ali Vowles. There had been fewer entries for the photographic competition this year but those received were of a high quality and the winning entry will be published in the Wotton Calendar. The Association will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year in three years’ time and is hoping to recruit some new members to the committee.

**914. Any Other Brief Reports**

**a)** It was noted that a mountain biking festival was taking place this weekend, based at Kingswood Village Hall. Hundreds of cyclists are expected to pass through Wotton during the event.

**915. Next Meeting Dates** - The dates of future meetings are 9<sup>th</sup> July and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership Committee.

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership