

**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, MONDAY
16TH JULY 2018 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**



Present: Cllrs R Claydon (Chairman) T Luker, N Pinnegar, June Cordwell, John Cordwell, J Turner, P Barton, M Short (from 7.30pm), A Wilkinson, L Farmer, C Young, R Hale

In attendance: Deputy Clerk Mrs Y Milsom, District Cllrs G Butcher, C Braun, 12 members of public

T.5568 Apologies for Absence – Cllr P Smith – holiday. M Short – delayed, arrived later. Agreed all in favour to accept apologies.

T.5569 Declarations of Interest or Dispensations – Cllr R Hale, personal interest in respect of item appointing a Council representative to speak at the Stroud District Council Development Control Committee on 24th July 2018 regarding S.17/2307/FUL – Proposed car park Symn Lane, Wotton-under-Edge. Members considered this declaration to be unnecessary as no points relating to the planning application were being considered.

T.5570 To receive Police Report – none received.

T.5571 Public Forum

Seven members of the public spoke regarding Stroud District Council's proposals to introduce car parking charges. The Chairman urged them to also respond with their views directly to Stroud District Council's consultation. Matters raised included:

- Lack of clarity with regard to costs in Stroud District Council's (SDC) documents.
- SDC CEO mentions a report saying that parking charges have no effect on businesses – where is this report?
- Most businesses in the town are working on very fine margins and parking charges, as outlined, are likely to have a very detrimental effect.
- Major problems would be caused by parents dropping off/collecting their children from Bluecoat School.
- The proposals would cause more on-street parking at a time when double yellow lines were being extended.
- Suggest alternative options are fully examined, such as 2 hours free parking, parking discs, free parking outside of certain times, increasing precept costs to maintain free parking.
- A petition started by Fifi's Fancy Furniture had 580 online signatures, plus 315 on paper, a total of 895 opposing the parking charge proposals.
- The impact on local residents with no off-street parking, who are on tight budgets and who will be required to pay significant sums for parking.
- Chamber of Trade members are not in favour of the proposals and believe the charges will damage trade. Examples in other towns following the introduction of parking charges have shown a significant trade downturn.
- The Chipping car park belongs to the Town Trust and the Trust was urged to take back management of the car park from SDC. Mr Tucker, President of the Chamber of Trade, has much experience of managing car parks and would be willing to advise the Town Trust/Town Council if they decided to do this.

- Many of the town's organisations are run by volunteers, who may not wish to pay for parking whilst carrying out their duties, thus affecting the town's volunteer pool and ethos. Free hours parking would be useful but 2 hours is not enough to cover the volunteers' duty times.
- Visitors have trouble finding parking due to poor turnover of spaces and so go elsewhere. Charges may help increase space availability.
- People will go to nearby towns in South Gloucestershire, which all have free parking
- There is no clarity of options for residents with no off-street parking. Proposals will increase on-street parking which will have a negative effect on the quality of life for local people.
- It appears that some decisions on this have already been made prior to the consultation process.

T.5572 Car Parking Charges – To decide the Town Council's response to Stroud District Council's consultation on the introduction of parking charges in the town. A draft paper had been compiled by Cllr Claydon, incorporating comments from councillors and members of the public. Cllr Claydon was thanked for his hard work in producing this report. Discussions included: lack of clarity about the current costs associated with running Wotton car parks. 2011 figures show a cost for all SDC-run car parks across the District of £412,000, with an income of £551,000. Extension of double yellow lines was supported by the Town Council to increase traffic flow and for safety reasons, but these measures were agreed before SDC parking charges proposals were presented. The Chipping car park is leased to SDC for a peppercorn rent, although they also maintain the area and operate traffic wardens there. Suggestions from Councillors included: that there should be no charges at all due to the potential adverse effects on traders; that charges were likely to be implemented but that 2 hours free parking could lead to improved spaces turnover without penalising local shoppers who use the car parks briefly.

Cllr M Short entered the meeting

From study of a paper entitled "Renaissance Market Towns Programme – Car Parking Research", 2 hours free parking was deemed an adequate amount of time for local people to do their shopping. It was considered that visitors/tourists to the town, who might spend longer than this, were usually willing to pay a small amount for parking. It was important that the effect of the introduction of parking charges was properly analysed to understand the correlation between footfall and charging, not just an assessment of vacant car park spaces, and this had been stressed in the Town Council's draft response, as had the negative impact on night workers and low income residents. Proposed by Cllr John Cordwell to support the Town Council's consultation response document as presented, seconded by Cllr Farmer, agreed 8 in favour, 4 abstentions. Copies of the approved document were distributed to members of the public.

8 members of the public left the meeting. The meeting moved from the Coombe Suite to continue in the Committee Room

T.5573 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

County – County Cllr John Cordwell provided a written report covering the County Council meeting on 27/6/2018; street-lighting proposals for the OK footpath; the effect of GDPR on PROW Definitive Map Modification Orders; Javelin Park Incinerator update; Registration services to be merged with library services, which may result in the re-introduction of the service in Wotton. He also highlighted that there were 3 bidders for the Term Maintenance contract, with bids to be submitted by the end of July, contract to start 1/4/2019.

District – a comprehensive written report was supplied. The campaign against single use plastic was highlighted. Cllrs Braun and Butcher were asked questions about several items, including:

- Uncertainty about whether the introduction of parking charges would be made by committee or whole Council. This had not yet been confirmed.
- New bin stores at Bearlands, which were considered unsightly. These had been provided as part of the estate's improvements but the result was not quite as envisioned. The matter will be picked up with the housing team.
- Cllr Braun was asked to chase the previous enquiry as to whether SDC land at Gloucester Street/Bradley Street could be made available for parking.
- Fixed Penalty Notices – Stroud District Councillors are recommending that the current scheme of delegation is extended to authorise the appointment of any employee of a Town or Parish Council to serve FPN for dog fouling offences. District Councillors were asked to check if SDC would continue to implement FPNs if there were no willing volunteers among Town Council staff.

T.5574 **To approve the Minutes** of the council meeting of 18th June 2018. It was proposed by Cllr C Young and seconded by Cllr June Cordwell to approve the Minutes as presented, agreed all in favour.

T.5575 **Chairman's Announcements** – None

T.5576 **Accounts**

- a) To re-confirm approval for Direct Debit payments for utility bills and business rates for all Town Council and Town Trust amenities/buildings in order to comply with strict payment due dates. Proposed by Cllr John Cordwell, seconded by Cllr Young, agreed all in favour.
- b) To re-confirm approval to use online banking for Town Council and Town Trust payments. Proposed by Cllr Young, seconded by Cllr Farmer, agreed all in favour.
- c) To approve quote for works to hedge and tree, Symn Lane play area. Proposed by Cllr Barton, seconded by Cllr Farmer to approve Tree Management to carry out the works at a cost of £386.40. Agreed all in favour.
- d) To consider contractor quotes for repair works to War Memorial island and approve works. Town Council already has a supply of paving slabs for these works. Proposed by Cllr Farmer, seconded by Cllr John Cordwell, to approve the quotation of £2680 from AJF Roofing and Building. Agreed all in favour.
- e) To approve renewal of Town Council insurance at a cost of £5732.25; and Town Trust insurance at a cost of £3095.58 (both part of long-term agreement with insurer until 2020). Proposed by Cllr Farmer, seconded by Cllr Luker to approve the renewals. Agreed all in favour.
- f) To ratify payment of £50/day for watering of flowerbeds due to ongoing hot/dry conditions. After some discussion regarding the ideal times for watering and acknowledging that the contractor would be including these duties as part of his circuit for the Wotton in Bloom displays, it was proposed by Cllr Barton, seconded by Cllr Farmer, to approve payment for watering. Agreed 9 in favour with 3 abstentions.
- g) Budget 2018/19. Report of expenditure against budget noted. Currently there is a slight underspend but not unexpected at this early stage in the financial year.
- h) Accounts for payment. Cllr Wilkinson declared an interest regarding the Screwfix payment. The additional payments were read out. Proposed by Cllr John Cordwell, seconded by Cllr Luker and agreed in favour to approve payments totalling £27175 for Town Council and £3846 for Town Trust.

T.5577 Wotton Defibrillator Awareness Group

To decide if Council wishes to support/appoint a representative to this group. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor had a meeting with the co-ordinator of this new group and a member of the Lions Club. The Lions are fundraising with the aim of fundraising for at least 3, and possibly 5, additional defibrillators, to ensure good coverage for the whole town. They would like to donate the funding to the Town Council to support the defibrillator awareness project and are also keen to raise funds for ongoing maintenance of the devices. The first meeting of the group is this evening, after which they will formulate a full proposal to be presented to Council at the August meeting. Proposed by Cllr Claydon, seconded by Cllr John Cordwell, to appoint Cllr Farmer as Town Council representative to the group, but to await proposal details before considering details further. Agreed all in favour.

T.5578 Cemetery Geophysical Survey – to receive, discuss and interpret the results of the survey. The Deputy Clerk had transposed the results of the survey onto a plan of the cemetery, which highlighted the areas too shallow for single/double depth graves. The area highlighted as having an anomalous layer indicates that the rock strata is uncertain and test pits would be needed to establish whether these could be used for double depth graves. Cllr Farmer would arrange to visit the Town Council office to assist the Deputy Clerk with confirming the positions of areas suitable for double graves. The Deputy Clerk would provide an estimate of the remaining viability for grave-space provision at the cemetery.

T.5579 Proposed Car Park Symn Lane Wotton Under Edge - S.17/2307/FUL –

To note that this application will go to SDC Development Control committee on 24th July 2018; and to decide who will attend on behalf of the Council, the views expressed to be those of the Town Council. Cllr Smith had indicated he was willing to represent the Council but this suggestion was not supported by the majority of Councillors. Proposed by Cllr Barton that Cllr Young should represent the Council, seconded by Cllr John Cordwell and agreed 10 in favour and 2 against. The Deputy Clerk would confirm to SDC that Cllr Young would attend as the Town Council representative.

T.5580 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – to acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. Suggestions were:
Wotton in Bloom for the tremendous work done by their band of volunteers in preparing the town for the Britain in Bloom competition;
The four judges of the allotments competition who spent two very hot afternoons assessing the competition entries.

T.5581 Clerk's Report written report provided and noted.

T.5582 Correspondence to note or request action:

- a) An article in i-news of a Royal Mail study rating Wotton as second in England out of the Best UK market towns in offering residents a good work/life balance, based mostly on low crime levels and good schools, was noted.
- b) Changes to the Neighbourhood Warden coverage, which will take effect from 16th July 2018, were noted. It was also noted that no report had been received for some time.
- c) An email regarding the proposed introduction of parking charges by Stroud District Council was noted.
- d) An email requesting the installation of electric vehicle charging points in the town and of the government funding available for this was noted. No action would be

taken on this until the outcome of the SDC car parking charges consultation was known as provision of electric vehicle charging points is part of their proposals.

- e) An email complaining of overgrowth, fly-tipping and floral displays in the town had been received. Council representatives would pass on the comments regarding the floral displays to Wotton in Bloom. Cllrs Barton and Luker would identify untidy areas in the town for consideration at a future meeting. The fly-tipping issue would be investigated. The Deputy Clerk would get quotes to clear vegetation from the stream banks at Marchesi Walk and Dyers Brook, noting that care must be taken due to the crayfish present in the stream. It was stressed that the email comments should not detract from the very impressive work of the Wotton in Bloom volunteers and the many positive comments received.
- f) A report was received and noted from YCS on the Youth Centre Mental Health and Well-being Project. It was noted that regular reports are received on this matter at the Youth Partnership meetings and it is clear that a lot of time and effort has gone into this project.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only: Clerks and Councils Direct July 2018

T.5583 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended

PROW meets tomorrow

ALLOTMENTS MEETING – results of the Best Allotments competition were announced. Urgent work is needed to the steps by the middle gate at the Knapp Road site, where the step infill has deteriorated, creating a trip hazard. Infilling is required to make safe, along with a handrail. The Buildings Manager would be asked to look at this.

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – The Heritage Project is going well; they donated £700 to the WCSF BMX track; lighting on the OK footpath is being investigated following a request from the young people; the Sensory Garden project is temporarily on hold. The Partnership is hoping to increase public awareness of what they do.

TOWN REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP – They would like an item on the next agenda to establish exactly what is required for Old Town Toilets. There have been many unproductive discussions regarding the future of the toilets and it was stressed that factual information was required before this could be progressed. To engage an architect a specification was needed; proper costings were needed for both new build and refurbishment options. Until these facts were in place no decisions could be made. The specification for new and refurbished alternatives should be agreed at the next meeting.

WCSF – Cllr Hale will forward the Minutes when they are available.

COUNTESS OF WARWICK CHARITY – Cllr Claydon had attended a meeting when donations to two needy people were discussed.

T.5584 Town Affairs

- a) Single Use Plastics Initiative - Cllr Short will provide information for discussion at a future meeting.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 8.50pm

Signed:Dated: