

# Annual Parish Assembly

Parishioners of Wotton-under-Edge are invited to  
the Civic Centre, Wotton-under-Edge  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2015, at 7pm

*Cllr Roger Claydon OBE*  
**Mayor of Wotton**

## Agenda

- 1) Welcome, Introductions & receive apologies for absence from Councillors
- 2) Adoption of Previous Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly of 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 & any Matters Arising from those Minutes
- 3) Welcome to Glos County Cllr Vernon Smith –Highways Responsibility Q&A (20 mins)
- 4) Brief Report from the Mayor Cllr Roger Claydon OBE (5 mins)
- 5) Brief Annual Police Report for 2014/15 (5 mins)
- 6) Brief reports from Town Council Committee Chairs (15mins total):
  - Planning (Cllr Chris Galbraith)
  - Footpaths (Cllr Chris Galbraith)
  - Allotments (Cllr Clair Galbraith)
  - Regeneration (Cllr June Cordwell)
- 7) Receive brief updates from Council supported organisations (20 mins in total):
  - Wotton Youth Club
  - Wotton Library
  - Wotton in Bloom
  - Wotton Swimming pool
  - Wotton Community Sports Foundation
  - Synwell Playing Fields Committee
  - Neighbourhood Warden
  - CAB
- 8) Brief report from Cllr Dr JE Cordwell on County Council matters (3 mins)
- 9) Brief report from a District Councillor on District Council matters (3 mins)
- 10) Any brief questions or comments from the Public on Town Affairs before  
Parishioners are invited to meet Councillors & staff and share a glass.....!

\*\*\*\*\* Wine, juice, nibbles \*\*\*\*\*



## Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly

**held at the Civic Centre, Wotton, Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 7pm**

*Booklets prepared and available on seats at the meeting with reports from the Mayor, various Committees, District & County Councillors, as well as Community Organisations. Reports also available on website*

### **11) Welcome, Introductions & apologies for absence from Councillors**

Cllr attendance; Cllrs R. Claydon, Chris Galbraith, Dr J Cordwell, P Smith, June Cordwell, Claire Galbraith, P Barton, N Clement, T Luker, K Collins. Apologies were accepted from Cllrs L Harris, M Zimmer and J Cartigny. 15 members of the public were in attendance. Town Council Staff of Y Milsom, D Hyam & M Schofield also attended. Clerked by Town Clerk, S Bailey. The Mayor welcomed parishioners to the Assembly. Following adverse comments about the organisation of last year's meeting, slightly different arrangements have been made this year, with a larger room and refreshments afterwards to allow parishioners to meet with Councillors.

### **12) Adoption of Previous Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2013 & any Matters Arising from those Minutes**

After representation by Mr G Kitchen who wished to change the wording regarding his comments from the previous year's meeting, it was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr Dr J Cordwell that, subject to the amendment, the Minutes were approved voted 16 in favour with 3 abstentions. Cllr P. Smith commented that the last page of the Minutes referred to the Local Plan with Stroud District Council (SDC) not having a five year land supply making it easier for developer planning applications to be passed. SDC now has its Local Plan going through the Secretary of State approval stage. However, in the meantime many sites in the district are vulnerable to housing development (17 major developer applications are currently taking advantage of this state of affairs district-wide).

### **13) Brief Report from the Mayor Cllr Roger Claydon OBE**

The Mayor advised that there had been many changes at the Town Council over the past 12 months with the retirement of its clerk of 22 years (Mrs G Sykes) and replacement with a new (also experienced) Clerk. Three new Councillors have also joined the council. The council is looking to update the Community Plan and will be setting up a working group to establish progress – assistance is requested from the public with this exercise. Another working group is looking at problems with car parking in the town and the possibility of allowing public parking at the Royal Oak during daytime hours is being investigated.

The council was criticised at this assembly last year for not providing any financial information. The Assembly booklet distributed on seats gives details of next financial year's budget and also council spending in the current year to date. Also at last year's meeting criticism concerned the lack of policies, and poor information on the website, in particular regarding Member's register of interests. These have all now been addressed with much more information available on the website. The website will also be improved further this year. In the current year financial support continues to be provided to Wotton Pool and the Youth Centre. Next year Synwell playing fields will also benefit from financial support. Beneficiaries of grants this year include, amongst others, Wotton in Bloom, Citizens Advice Bureau, the Wotton Sports Federation, and the library. The Precept will rise by 2% next financial year to £258,958, with a reduced Local Council Tax Support Grant of £18,237. This Precept will allow the Town Council to continue to provide community support where it is needed at local level.

### **14) Brief Annual Police Report for 2013/14**

PCSO Ben Rollins outlined the current policing priorities in the Wotton area which include reducing antisocial behaviour, safer driving via young driver education and speed watch initiatives. Recently there have also been some low level shop lifting issues (these are not youth related). A parishioner commented that when she was mugged, no images were found to support this on CCTV. The Mayor commented that funds have been allocated to upgrade the CCTV system this year.

### **15) Brief reports from Town Council Committee Chairs:**

#### **Planning (Cllr Chris Galbraith)**

In addition to the data available in the booklet which gives details of the number of planning applications dealt with by the town council this year, Cllr Chris Galbraith explained about the recent planning inspectorate decision regarding Potters Pond. Permission was given for the developer to widen the access road and pavement across

the common land at the development entrance, but some protection of the crayfish species, by altering the gabion specification, has been secured.

### **Footpaths (Cllr Chris Galbraith)**

The footpath report in the booklet explains about areas which have been improved by this committee over the past 12 months in conjunction with many local hardworking volunteers and the Cotswold Wardens. Furthermore, today a scout leader expressed an interest in using scout activity to undertake a comprehensive footpaths survey starting next week.

### **Allotments (Cllr Clair Galbraith)**

It has been a quiet year for this committee whilst the new administrative officer got to grips with computerising the allotment records and developing a new tenancy agreement along with an easy to understand 'do's and don'ts' list. Water consumption has been reasonable this season due to wet weather however it must be noted that the two sites no longer comply with new water regulations and that piping and water outlets will need to be upgraded. A parishioner questioned whether the agreement would provide more information on things which the town council should undertake to provide e.g top and mid path maintenance and why such a comprehensive agreement was needed. The reply was that this agreement was more in line with national guidelines and makes the allotments easier to administer.

### **Regeneration (Cllr J Cartigny)**

In addition to a report in the booklet, the Mayor thanked Cllr Cartigny in her absence for the hard work on this committee and explained that it was a partnership with various town organisations. The objective is largely to support and revitalise the town centre. The Mayor requested ideas from the public on how this objective might be achieved.

## **16) Receive brief updates from Council supported organisations**

### **• Wotton Youth Club**

Mr M Lovell highlighted how successful the Youth Centre now is with lots of attendance. The key points to note are that it is a safe space for youth to gather, provides an informal education, shows the value of teamwork, uses expression, and it engages with the community. Youngsters are developing their own skills along with self belief. There are two open sessions each week. 57 attendances are the record but usually 40 is normal. Meetings also involve debating with the district youth council and skilled youth workers attend.

### **• Wotton Library**

A report was provided by Wotton library in the booklet showing how successful attendance is. The library is fortunate to have a number of volunteers helping to increase opening hours, and sessions such as story time for youngsters remain popular.

### **• Wotton in Bloom**

Hanging baskets are going ahead again this year with support provided by the town council, hopefully the display will rival last year. A report on Bloom activities is in the booklet.

### **• Wotton Pool**

Mr A George commented on how the Pool was going from strength to strength with swimming attendances increasing this season management is trying to broaden the pool's appeal across all age ranges e.g ladies therapeutic sessions are popular and also party bookings and group hire is a growth area. The pool still provides swimming lessons for local schools and new lifeguard training is just about to start. The Service Level Agreement with the town council has just been renewed for another three years providing managerial stability and continuity. Solar panels have also been installed this year.

A resident enquired whether locals could obtain reduced entrance fees since their council tax was contributing towards the pool however the response was that entry prices are very low anyway, local schools receive subsidised rates and the Wotton pool is easy walking distance for most residents. Kingswood parish council contributes towards to pool. Maybe Charfield should also be approached for a contribution due to its locality. Other residents commented on how they enjoyed the pool and it is looking much better.

### **• Wotton Community Sports Foundation**

Mrs S Watt highlighted that since the pitches opened in September there has been good take up of bookings with about 2000 people per week using them. Teething problems were experienced at the beginning regarding lighting by the generators, however since February a solution is in place.. The next project for the group will be the Skatepark and funding is being sourced from various places. They have already successfully raised about half of the £80,000 needed. Quotes for the design are arriving this week and consultation will take place with the youth to make sure it is what they want. Reverend Tom Wharin is undertaking a sponsored cycle ride up mount Snowdon to raise funds for this.

- **Wotton Cinema**

Mrs J Walsh gave a brief update on the latest news regarding the Cinema's hand over to two new people next month. There will be a feature in the Gazette in a fortnight, however essentially the cinema will remain a Co-operative for one year whilst the new management settles in. After that the new managers can purchase the cinema running assets but the building and contents will still belong to the Trust. After many successful years, last year numbers were down 10% leading to an operating loss of £10,000 which was unsustainable going forward. The problem was largely in not being allowed to obtain the latest film releases and losing a lot of potential customers (particularly young people) who couldn't wait and visited other larger cinema chains. New attendees at the cinema may notice a slightly different way of operating e.g no chocolates and no fliers, however it will be possible to book seats online and in advance, and there will also be some new screen advertising, as well as latest releases being available sooner. Mrs Walshe and her husband were congratulated on the huge effort in restoring the Cinema and keeping it going so well for so long.

**17) Brief report from Cllr Dr JE Cordwell on County Council matters**

A report was available in the booklet for all to read in detail regarding County matters however County Cllr Cordwell highlighted the following. He is a lead Member of the Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee dealing also with fire planning and infrastructure. A new fire chief has just been appointed. A standstill county wide budget has just been set. The Javelin incinerator decision timetable has just been put back to September 2014. The possibility of converting Street lighting to LED's is being considered. The London Rd landslip will hopefully soon be addressed by County Highways now that two other major road landslips have been repaired. A new senior coroner has been appointed.

Questions arose about streetlamps in Old Town being unreliable when repaired and those repairs often taking a long time or not happening at all. This will be followed up. Further questions arose concerning potholes and the dreadful state of some existing roads in Wotton particularly Old Town, Bear St, Haw St and Court Orchard. The County method of assessing potholes and the repair response system was explained. The County spends £15m a year to keep roads in the current state, which is not enough. In 2000 £120m was spent and also 2000 fewer people are employed than 2 years ago at the County Council.

**Brief report from a District Councillor on District Council matters**

Cllr June Cordwell explained how SDC had moved from a cabinet system to a new Committee system. She heads Community services which covers community safety and parking. Matters covered over the year include the car parks at Potters Pond and the Chipping (leased from the Town Trust) and also the negotiations about the Full Moon site at Synwell. Stratford Park leisure centre has seen improvements over the year and new improvements to the gym facilities at Dursley Pool have been unveiled recently – this later will benefit residents in the southern part of the district including Wotton. The benefit of this investment will be a reduction in subsidies towards their running costs with payback within 10 years.

A resident from a neighbouring parish asked if SDC figures are available on their website regarding investment in leisure facilities and spending. The reply was that they may be although it is not certain, and they should enquire directly to SDC.

**18) Questions/Comments from the Public on Town Affairs before Parishioners were invited to meet all the Councillors and staff and over refreshments.**

Mr M Lovell thanked the Town Council for providing booklet information this year.

Mrs J Walshe thanked the Town Council for providing the new A Boards for Town Hall Teas – old ones were falling apart after many years usage and this weekly event is one of the main ways many organisations raise funds for community benefit.

Mrs J Walshe wished to speak later to the Council about the state of the Garden of Remembrance at the cemetery.

Mrs K Jackson asked the Council to help regarding security of the Potters Pond site – broken glass and damaged fencing has seen many youngsters entering the derelict buildings. The Police are aware but have been told not to enter. The Town Council has failed to elicit a response after complaints to Pegasus who are dealing with the Planning of the site. It may well be that since the site now has planning permission, complaints to SDC and Planning enforcement should be the next step.

At 8:30pm, parishioners were invited to meet the Councillors and staff over refreshments.

*Signed by the Mayor:* .....

*Dated:*                      *March 2015*



## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

It has been another busy year for the Town Council as we try to deal with the many issues of importance to our community. Aided by the good efforts of our new Town Clerk, the Council has followed through on a number of initiatives, including upgrading the town's CCTV system with financial support from the Police and Crime Commissioner; tidied up the garden of Remembrance; introduced various new policies to keep abreast of legislative changes; smartened up the Civic Centre car park; dealt with many problem trees and taken legal action at Potters Pond to stop proposed work in the brook along Marchesi Walk which would have been damaging to the wildlife there. In addition, we have continued to explore opportunities for providing additional car parking in the town. Unfortunately, it was not possible to secure additional public parking at the Royal Oak or Wotton Auction Rooms but, more recently, the Town Council has been made aware of a possible opportunity to establish a car park on open land behind the fire station. This initiative has been facilitated by the Chamber of Trade and Commerce and the Town Council's Planning Committee has had an initial briefing from the developer. As highlighted in "The Gazette" last month, the current proposal would provide some 100 parking spaces and 10 houses on the site. I would emphasise at this stage that no formal action has been taken and no planning application has yet been made. The Town Council would welcome views from residents on this scheme. In addition, we have been informed by Renishaw that the company intends to continue its operations in Old Town. Also, the Stokes bakery will be refurbished and the land behind, for which there is existing planning permission, developed. Therefore, these sites are not available as options for additional car parking or even a supermarket!



The Town Council's action plan for 2015 includes working with the Town Regeneration Committee on an update to the Community Plan. This will be based on the feedback received from the community questionnaire which was sent out to most households in the town before Christmas. We had around 270

completed questionnaires returned to us and would like to thank those who responded. This is a community initiative and we will be seeking volunteers to assist with the update activity. Also in our forward plan is an updated Town Council website to improve communication between the Town Council and residents; taking action to improve the cleanliness and tidiness of the town and bringing the Chipping Club Room under the management of the Town Trust. As well as safeguarding existing users of the clubroom, this action will provide additional space for youth activities. The Town Council is also considering applying for the Quality Council Status Foundation award. A summary of the Council's 2014 achievements and action plan for this year is attached.

The Town Council has continued its financial support for the Swimming Pool, Synwell Playing Fields, Wotton in Bloom, the Youth Centre, Library and Citizens Advice Bureau. Summary financial information, including budget plans and civic grants is attached for information. The precept for this year has been set at £264,373, an increase of 2.1%, partly needed to off-set a further reduction in the Local Council Tax Support Grant (now £13,872). Total planned expenditure for the next financial year is £310,095. We have included additional provision for improving the allotments and town tidying work. In the last year we said farewell to Councillor Jackie Cartigny who resigned from the Council in April 2014 having been a hard-working member for some 4 years. Jackie was replaced on the Council by Alex Wilkinson who was co-opted in July. Alex is also President of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

Council elections take place in May and so there may be a “new-look” Town Council next term! I would urge anyone who has skills and energy to bring to the table, to apply. The Town Clerk can provide advice and details of the nomination/election process.

This year’s Annual Parish Assembly has the same format as last year. Committee Chairmen will report at the Assembly and there will be an opportunity for all to meet with Councillors on a less formal basis at the end of the meeting. We hope that this will provide for a rewarding interchange of views and ideas and will do our best to answer questions that arise – but please be understanding if we are not able to respond directly at the meeting.

*ROGER CLAYDON, TOWN MAYOR & CHAIRMAN*

### **ACHIEVEMENTS 2014/2015**

- Installation of new networked computer system (as all PC’s were stand alone, old and unable to file share) along with replacement of old photocopier at cheaper rates
- Introduction of various new policies & procedures to keep abreast of legislative changes, including revamp of internal audit procedures to satisfy external auditor requirements
- Garden of Remembrance renovated & new oak war grave crosses installed
- Open spaces contract re-awarded for 3 years – to commence 2015
- Civic Centre Car park white-lined, signage introduced, trees cleared & smartened up
- Rolling 5 year maintenance programme established for trees managed around the Town
- Internet banking commenced to cut costs after bank’s new charging policies were introduced
- Assessment of utility costs & new contracts placed for gas, electric, & telephone to produce savings
- Introduction of staff appraisal system, assessment of training needs and furtherment of training for all staff and Councillors
- Potters Pond – legal action taken to protect the town’s interest from developers & the White Clawed Crayfish species
- 4 councillor co-options processed & associated admin/instruction during the year
- New 3-year Service Level Agreement entered into with Company to manage Wotton Swimming Pool
- Various other issues dealt with such as new allotments agreement & procedures, deep clean of civic centre carpets/floors, Town Hall boiler analysis & new contract, interior paintwork redone at Civic Centre, etc.
- CCTV upgraded around town with part grant from Police Crime Commissioner
- Community Questionnaire prepared and issued to each household in the Town and promoted at December Christmas Market

### **ACTION PLAN 2015/2016**

- Introduce new Town Council website
- Continue development of new policies & update existing ones to keep abreast of legislation
- Complete Chipping Club Room legal negotiations for Town Trust to take over facility
- Provide feedback to Annual Parish Assembly on Community Questionnaire (270 returned from residents) and commence updating of the Community Plan (previous 2005)
- Submit Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area to Stroud District Council
- Award new youth services contract in September 2015 - tender process to commence Spring
- Undertake Tolsey Clock repairs
- Analyse historical files and Register all Council/Trust land holdings via solicitor & Land Registry
- Continue rolling 5 year maintenance programme for trees managed around the Town
- Investigate possibilities for laying new underground pipes at the New Road Allotments
- Introduce Internet booking system for room hire for all venues



- Continue the overhaul of open spaces in the Town under the management of the Council eg more shrubs, perennials and bulbs in various borders to produce a longer more vibrant display, monitor the new grounds maintenance contract, clearance of St Marys churchyard, work in collaboration with various community groups for clearance & border management, more micro management of Holywell site
- Establish an agreement with adjacent landowners at Holywell regarding fencing and stream management
- Resolve the litter and weeds problems around town by working with relevant bodies and sourcing weed spraying facilities
- Sourcing permanent extra administrative cover for One Stop Shop - one day a week and holiday cover
- Progress Heritage Centre lease negotiations as requested by tenant
- Complete the CCTV upgrade around town & establish agreement with Police regarding access/copying of incident data
- Complete CILCA & ILCA qualifications for staff, and weedspraying certification for buildings manager
- Support new Councillor elections in May
- Begin discussions with Glos County library to ensure local service safeguarded into the future
- Install new youngster play equipment at Symn Lane with 'inclusive' theme, also ground surface improvements to entrance gate and around benches
- Establish lease agreement with SDC for Chipping Car Park and ensure that yellow lines/resident parking signage is carried out
- Apply for Quality Council Status Foundation award

### **One Stop Shop Statistics 2014**

Month	SDC	GCC	WTC	Other	CC/TH Booking	Photocopy /Fax	CAB	Sales	Gen Info	Wotton Info	Totals
Jan	21	27	20	1	40	25	13	5	50	41	243
Feb	12	30	25	3	17	25	15	1	44	57	229
March	30	22	60	7	36	20	5	6	30	47	263
April	24	12	46	5	27	28	3	3	31	31	210
May	20	25	28	3	20	10	4		30	17	157
June	25	24	31	4	30	30	6	2	43	41	236
July	31	30	11	8	30	11	4		40	45	210
Aug	18	22	20		15	51	3	2	20	50	201
Sept	33	23	15	4	33	11	8	2	36	53	218
Oct	20	25	17	4	46	17	2	1	83	35	250
Nov	18	21	18	3	35	21	8	3	85	42	254
Dec	6	10	80	2	26	13	1		40	18	196
<b>Totals 2014</b>	258	271	371	44	355	262	72	25	532	477	2667

## **WOTTON-UNDER EDGE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET**

<b>Accounts Heading</b>	<b>Budget 2014/2015</b>	<b>Budget 2015/2016</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
Rent, Lettings, Interest, Fees etc	£38,665	£31,850
Precept	£258,958	£264,373
Local Council Tax Support Grant	£18,237	£13,872
	<b>£315,860</b>	<b>£310,095</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Allotments	£1,700	£4,000
Town Regeneration	£6,300	£8,000
Civic Centre	£30,500	£32,800
Toilets	£7,200	£6,500
Youth Projects	£18,000	£16,000
Cemetery/Churchyard	£10,800	£10,800
Library	£2,718	£2,780
Neighbourhood Warden	£2,000	£2,000
Grants	£4,700	£4,700
Swimming Pool	£28,000	£28,000
Synwell Playing Field	£2,700	£2,700
CCTV	£10,000	£2,200
Wages	£27,500	£29,000
Chipping Clubroom	£5,000	£5,000
T.Hall Capital Expenditure	£4,000	£4,000
Footpaths & Holywell	£400	£1,700
	<b>£161,518</b>	<b>£160,180</b>
<b>Amenities and Other</b>	<b>£34,915</b>	<b>£39,115</b>
<b>Administration, Office Equipment,</b>		
<b>Salaries</b>	<b>£102,495</b>	<b>£101,600</b>
<b>Contingency</b>	<b>£18,000</b>	<b>£9,200</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£316,928</b>	<b>£310,095</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>£315,860</b>	<b>£310,095</b>

## **GRANT INFORMATION**

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>FY 2014/2015</b>	<b>FY2015/2016</b>
Synwell Playing Field	£2,700	£2,700
CAB	£2,920	£2,850
Cobalt	£50	
Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper	£50	
Royal British Legion	£50	
Young Driver Awareness Training	£400	
Tabernacle Grasscutting	£225	
Highways (Contribution to speed limit reduction)	£1,000	
Heritage Centre	-	£1,000
General (Unallocated)	-	£850
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7395</b>	<b>£7,400</b>



# **POLICING**

## Wotton under Edge Area

### Report - September 2014 to March 2015

The Wotton under Edge policing team is currently responsible for the area of Wotton under edge, Kingswood, North Nibley and each surrounding areas. The team are based from Dursley police station, however have facilities to function from the policing point within Wotton under Edge library. There has been an increase in the team members over the previous twelve months and the team now consists of Sergeant Davey, PC Charlene Sallis, PC Rich Fear, PCSO Ben Rollins and PCSO Charlotte King.

Over the previous twelve months, and in line with the police commissioner priorities, the team have increased the neighbourhood tasking through improved multi-agency approaches such as the interaction with those members of the community perceived to be vulnerable. To assist with this there has been strengthening between the local council wardens and further improved interaction between agencies such as village agents. In other cases such as burglaries or attempted burglaries within the area each victim has received a visit as a reassurance or further crime prevention advice if required. There have also been a number of home surveys conducted.

There will within the next six months be the introduction of mobile data to replace the traditional written pocket notebook. The team will have the capability to access the necessary forms on a Galaxy Tablet device as well as using this device as a pocket note book. These are being introduced across the constabulary in order to deliver a more efficient public service.

Every six months the neighbourhood team also chair a neighbourhood panel meeting at a local venue in which the public set the priorities for the coming months. As such the current priorities set by the public have remained the same for both six month periods.

They are set as follows:

#### **1. To reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour in and around Wotton under Edge.**

The incidents of general anti-social behaviour have decreased within the previous six months. This has been achieved through targeted patrols as well as knowledge and reports from the local community.

The breakdown is as follows –

Personal anti-social behaviour down by 65.22%

Nuisance anti-social behaviour down by 18.75%

Environmental anti-social behaviour no change.

Stroud District Council have also provided a mounted CCTV dome camera which records 24hrs. This can be operated within the local police stations and can be moved from location to location as necessary in order to assist in the reduction of anti-social behaviour.

#### **2. Addressing Community concerns of parking, speeding and anti-social use of motor vehicles and to promote the education of young drivers in safe driving**

The incidents involving traffic have also decreased within the previous six months.

The breakdown is as follows –

Highway disruption down by 29.73%

Road related offences down by 79.17%

Road related injury no change.

The residents of Kingswood continue to monitor the traffic via the community speed watch scheme. In addition the neighbourhood policing team have monitoring equipment including a post mounted M500 box which measures the volume and speed of traffic.

During the month of February the constabulary and neighbourhood team also took part in the multi-agency 'Drive for life' educational package at the local Katharine Lady Berkley's School. This was in order to help promote the safe use of a motor vehicle. The package was very well received amongst all involved. This is a package which will be again used in the future.

### **Youth engagement**

The neighbourhood team have also included a number of talks within the local schools. These have been on subjects such as internet safety, texting, drug awareness as well as stranger danger for the younger pupils.

In addition there has been regular engagement with the local youth centre.

Staff at Katharine Lady Berkley's School have also given permission for a local police information board to be placed within the location. A secure drop box has been included for the pupils which is only accessible by members of the team. This police information within the school is now fully operational and accessible.

### **Direct Neighbourhood Policing Contact Mobile**

The neighbourhood team can be contacted on the following non-emergency number.

**07703887575**

Alternatively to report an incident please dial 101. Incidents can also be generated by e-mailing [101@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:101@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk)

For all emergencies please dial 999.

Gloucester police also hold a very up to date Facebook account which includes incidents from across the county. The constabulary also have a Twitter account which the public can follow.

Information on other local neighbourhood teams can be found on the police website –

[www.gloucestershire.police.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk)

### **THE NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM**

Sgt Simon Davey 1754

PC Richard Fear 2272

PC Charlie Sallis 331

PCSO Benjamin Rollins 9105

PCSO Charlotte King 9261



# Planning Committee Report

To

## Annual Parish Assembly 2015

The Town Council was consulted by SDC on 105 planning applications and one Licensing Application and by St Mary's PCC on their alterations.

Town Council Recommendation	District Council Decision	Number
Support	Permitted/Consent	67
Support	Refused	0
Object	Permitted/Consent	11
Object	Refused/Withdrawn	15
Support	Awaiting Decision	9
Object	Awaiting Decision	3

### Significant Applications

- 1. Full Moon Public House.** The site is now being investigated for the provision of social housing by SDC, a new consultation is expected in the near future, the Community Interest Application having been rejected.
- 2. Potters Pond Development.** The Planning Inspector permitted the proposed access road widening works over the Common Land and agreed with our suggestion for larger stone in the gabions to improve the habitat for the protected White Clawed Crayfish. The Town Council is objecting, as Riparian Owner of Dyers Brook, to the developer's proposal to remove the discharge of the Edbrook into the stream next to the footbridge where one of the highest densities of crayfish was observed. The Town Council asked SDC to name the development 'Brittania Mews' after the historic mill that used to occupy the site.
- 3. Stable at Uphill Coombe.** The planning Inspector refused, at appeal, to allow animals to be kept in the stable. The Planning Enforcement Officer is investigating allegations that horses are still being stabled there despite the Inspectors decision.



*Chris Galbraith Chairman Planning Committee*

# Footpaths & Amenities Committee Report

To

## Annual Parish Assembly 2015

1. The membership of the Committee remains unchanged from the last Civic Year and thanks to Councillors and in particular to Co-opted Members for their participation. It was noted that our Parish footpaths were in a significantly better state than in many other areas.
2. The Town Council has formally added the Management of Holywell Leaze to this Committee Remit and The Management Plan has now been updated and adopted by Council. Budget provision has been made to repair the boundary wall supporting the Cotswold Way, and thanks, in anticipation, to the Cotswold Wardens for their help with these works and the planned provision of an outdoor “classroom” consisting of 2 semi – circular stone seating upstands.
3. The Footpaths Condition Survey is ongoing and the remaining paths have been re-allocated to members following The Wotton Scouts help last spring to progress the survey, for which, thanks!
4. The Committee agreed to support, in principle, the efforts of Mr J Dansie, a Cotswold Warden,



to establish a new in part Permissive Footpath between Hillesley and Wotton via Alderley and Kingswood. It is hoped that the new route will be both user and disabled friendly.

5. And finally, thanks to Yasmin, the Deputy Clerk, for keeping us “on the straight and narrow” (i.e Footpath).

*Chris Galbraith , Chairman Footpaths and Amenities Committee*



# ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE REPORT to Parish Assembly 2015

## Knapp Road

The Town Council in conjunction with the Knapp Road Allotments Association continues to work on improving the site. This year the boundary hedges have been tidied up after years of neglect. The budget for this coming year allows for a project to be undertaken to control the nettles on the roadside bank on a more permanent basis, using a membrane.

An allotment holder on the western boundary was surprised to find a large cavity had opened up at the end of his plot last summer. Investigations showed that it was subsidence adjacent to some old pipe work which had been part of an old water tank and pumping system. Some older residents may remember traces of it remaining in their childhood; most of it was demolished many years ago. The hole has now been filled in.

At the annual BBQ, the Allotment Association awarded its first Cecil Smith Memorial Prize, which this year was for the best box of vegetables. There was a pleasing number of entries with excellent produce.



## New Road



A preliminary survey has been carried out for the proposed upgraded water system. Reserves are being earmarked for the project which will be undertaken when funds allow.

We are very sorry that Martyn Kingscote has stepped down as site representative. He had been helping both his fellow allotment holders and the Town Council with advice and practical help over many years. He will be missed. We are now hoping another volunteer will come forward.

I would like to thank our remaining site representatives, Brian Elloway at New Road and Ian Jones and Colin Mitchell at Knapp Road, for their ongoing help and support. In addition, many thanks to Diana Hyam, our Administration Officer, for keeping everything running so smoothly.

Clair Galbraith: chairman of allotments committee

# Town Regeneration Partnership Annual Report March 2015



This year I am once again chairing the Partnership, which is made up of five Town Councillors and a number of members from organisations in the town, who organise a wide variety of events.

**Mediaeval Market:** Janet Walshe, on behalf of the Heritage Centre, is planning to hold a Mediaeval Market in the Chipping car park. This will be to celebrate

800 years since the signing of the Magna Carta and will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015. Insurance and road closure costs have been given as a grant from the Town Council. Any profit will go towards the Heritage Centre. The Town Trust has given its permission for the use of the Chipping car park.

**Christmas Event:** This was held on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December and was a great success. Organisers said that it was self-funding.

**Christmas Trees:** Once again the putting up of the trees and lighting was done by the Chamber of Trade, assisted by the Town Council Buildings Manger. The Chamber is considering using artificial trees next year. The Town Council paid £10 towards the cost of the traders' Christmas trees.

**The Budget 2015/16:** As we will be doing more activities next year we wanted to raise the Regeneration budget from £6,300 to £8,000. Included in this budget is £1,000 for updating of the website, £2,000 towards watering the hanging baskets and a subsidy towards the running of the Farmers Market.

**The Community Plan Questionnaire:** We commented and made suggestions which were included in the Community Plan questionnaire. The questionnaire was then distributed through the Wotton Directory, supported with an accompanying article. It was also available in the One Stop Shop. The Town Council had a stall at the Christmas Event where we gave out more questionnaires and explained what we were trying to do.

**Wotton's Weeds:** We asked the Town Council to consider employing someone during the summer months to carry out spraying **weeds** around the town, which last year were rampant. The buildings and amenities manager will be trained to carry out this work, as this is a licenced activity.

**Open Spaces:** The Town Council maintains the 'closed' churchyard of St. Mary's. Two large trees have been removed from a stone wall which was causing it to start collapsing into Manor Lane. Sections of the wall are now being repaired. A working party of volunteers organised by the Clerk will, in the spring, remove some brambles and damaging ivy from around graves. Beds and borders have been weeded, membraned, replanted and redesigned with planting plans (shrubs/perennials, bedding and bulbs) and are ready to go ahead with planting when the weather improves. The Chipping Clubroom planters have been replanted and will now be looked after by young Quakers for summer bedding. The Youth Club bed has been taken over by the Youth Club and a Remembrance tree for victims planted. The War Memorial planters have Bulbs/shrubs, perennials in them and are maintained by the Clerk. Hedge and tree cutting works have taken place at Knapp Road allotments and funds have been put aside for bank repair works in the next financial year. The Allotments entrance should look a lot better. The new contractor will also cut the hedges once a year in the autumn. Marchesi Walk and the cemetery at Wortley Road have had some tree works done. This is part of an ongoing 5 year maintenance plan. Marchesi Walk will have some clearance shortly at the stream edges.

The **In our Towns Grant of £1,000** has been received and with an extended time limit. The Arts Festival Committee applied for a grant.

**Farmers Market:** We received an upbeat report from the organiser of the Farmers Market, who is doing more advertising. Although the subsidy that we pay out for the market is rising, attendance is not. The Committee felt that this was a service to the community and should continue. There is a new website for the market

[www.wottonfarmersmarket.co.uk](http://www.wottonfarmersmarket.co.uk)

**Town Hall Teas** has this year raised £8,187 for charity and continue to be well subscribed

**The Heritage Centre** is actively applying for grants. The Wotton Calendar was sold out and raised money for their funds. They now have 565 followers on Facebook. The large screen and projector has been installed. The complete collection of old photographs has been computerised, so it now needs the public to identify people for the records.

**Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum:** I am a trustee on this body. Visiting other market towns makes me realise how fortunate we are to have so many organisations working for the town. Not many other market towns have facilities such as an arts centre, cinema and modern Civic Centre with its One Stop Shop. A number of towns have copied our CCTV system which is currently being upgraded.

**June Cordwell, Chair of Regeneration**



# Wotton Youth Liaison Group Annual Report 2014/15



There have been major changes to the Youth Liaison Group committee this year.

Mark Lovell retired as Chairman at the AGM. Mark worked tirelessly during his 5 year tenure. Mark oversaw the installation of equipment in the new Youth Centre. He was both Chairman and Treasurer, bidding for grants, and will be sorely missed.

The new Committee is chaired by Phil Sullivan MBE. Phil helped me to set up the group in 2001. He is recently retired from Stroud District Council as Manager of Community Services. We currently have no treasurer.

The 3 year contract with Young Gloucestershire expires in August. The Town Council has decided not to stay with SOSYP (the South of Stroud Youth Partnership) as the commissioning body and go it alone with youth provision in Wotton. The Youth Liaison Group bids for money and does not see any advantage in being with SOSYP.

Wotton has 3 youth providers who use the Youth Centre. The Youth Forum is funded by SDC (although Youth Liaison funded it until 2014). Tuesdays are run through SOSYP, by Young Gloucestershire and funded by the Town Council. Thursdays are run by Youth and Community and are funded by the Youth Liaison Group.

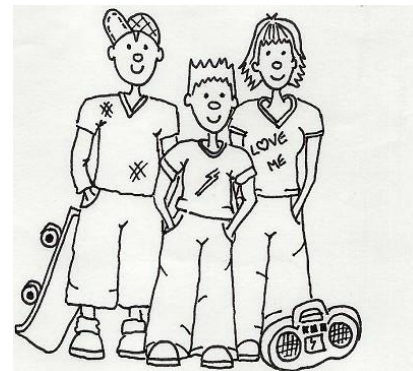
YLG recently were successful in a bid for £5,000 from the Activity Fund run by SDC. Youth and Community Services will now be providing activities which are time limited projects and training to increase skills, develop their awareness of their role, build an effective team, and hopefully lead to employment opportunities.



**Looking to the immediate future it is impossible to see Youth Liaison Group funding a Youth Centre session in its entirety.** When the Youth Centre opened, money from the Diamond Jubilee Fund and donations from the community flowed in. After equipping the Youth Centre these funds were spent on a second session for Thursday evenings - all those funds were spent in the first year of operation. This last year, we managed to raise £7,600 against £13,000 the previous year. The coffers are now bare. We were never set up as a fundraising committee, but to liaise with statutory bodies, because of violence and anti-social behaviour in the town. Youth Liaison Group continues to bid for money from various sources and is having a sponsored walk plus, a fundraising Curry Evening in the autumn. **The situation is very fragile.**

**June Cordwell**

**Editorial Note** The Youth Liaison Group is a dedicated group of volunteers who promote youth activity in this town and without this group, the Youth Centre would not be the vibrant popular centre it is now, and operating in such a useful, modernised and refurbished centre of town building. But new volunteers are desperately needed to carry on the good work and ensure the youth centre continues to thrive, when it also gains access into the adjacent Chipping Club Room building for some sessions - please contact [clerk@wotton-under-edge.com](mailto:clerk@wotton-under-edge.com) if you can be involved in any way.





## **Wotton under Edge Library - Ludgate Hill**

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>10.00 – 1.00    2.00 – 6.00</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>10.00 – 1.00    2.00 – 5.00</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>10.00 – 1.00    2.00 – 5.00</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>9.30. – 12.30</b>



Thanks to the continued contribution of monies from the Town Council and with the support of our volunteers the library continues to be open for 22 hours per week, providing access both on Saturdays and one evening until 6.00pm. This pattern is important to us in order to ensure that families and people who work during the day can make full use of their local library. The Library Support Volunteers are a highly committed group who turn up every week without fail and as a result we are assured of our opening hours.

During the summer, along with libraries up and down the country Wotton offered children the opportunity to participate in the Summer Reading Challenge. This annual event aims to keep children reading during the long summer break.

The children collect stickers and rewards by visiting the library at least 3 times and reading a minimum of 6 books. In Wotton 173 children joined in the challenge and the library held an event for them each week of the holidays. All of this was made possible by the enthusiasm of our young volunteers from Katherine Lady Berkeley School.

Our Baby Bounce & Rhyme sessions for babies up to 18 months, goes from strength to strength, but we are always ready to welcome new Mums and Dads! This is a weekly event and is a way of introducing babies to the wonders of the library through fun rhymes. It's also an opportunity for their carers to meet & chat afterwards.

Each month we run a Library Club for people who need help visiting the library. Using Community Transport which has a tail lift and which can accommodate people in wheelchairs we offer people the opportunity to visit the library to choose their own books and chat to club members over a cup of tea. You may have seen one of our long standing members who last year celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

As a service we aim to provide something for everyone so why not come along and see what there is for you.

## WOTTON IN BLOOM 2014 -OUR BEST YEAR YET!

I am delighted to be able to say that Wotton in Bloom 2014 was indeed our best year yet.

**\*Fundraising** – the fundraising went well from the beginning. Traders were quick to respond to our enquiries and most were eager to join in. This meant that we knew early in the year how many baskets and troughs we would be putting up, and how much extra funding we had to raise. Our major funders in 2014 were Wotton Town Council, Renishaw, Magnox and Alderley plc. Many thanks to them from the Wotton in Bloom team on behalf of the residents of Wotton.



\*Locally we received donations from many **local businesses** who do not have a presence on the main streets. Wotton is known for the large number of local **clubs and societies**, many of whom make a donation to Wotton in Bloom. Thanks to all who contributed and many who have done so more than once.

\*Several **individuals** contribute to Wotton in Bloom every year – our thanks to them for their continued support.

\*12 of the baskets were **sponsored** by local business or societies. These were put up outside our Charity Shops and filled in some of the gaps where shops are empty.



\*The Wotton in Bloom team have collecting boxes in several shops, have an annual street collection, and sell home-made pickles and preserves at the Charities fair.

As a direct result of this generosity in 2014 we put up 118 baskets and troughs in Church Street, Long Street, Market Street and High Street. – 17 more than in 2013. We hit our fundraising target of £10,000 and were able to replace all the old baskets.



And now to the flowers – well what can I say? I am told that people came from miles around to see the astonishing displays. Our thanks to Paul, Diane and all at Wotton Farm Shop: I don't know what they put in the compost – but it works!! And now to 2015 .....

*Sue Hunt – Chair*

*Wotton in Bloom 2014*



# WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE SWIMMING POOL

The Wotton Pool (Registered Charity) 2014 Season from April until September



*Ladies Therapeutic Swimming on Friday Mornings. One of several 'niche' sessions we are running*

I am very pleased to report that we have enjoyed a successful season, and again I am grateful for the support I have seen coming to the pool from dozens of kindly and generous people giving their time, money, effort and skills to help with the running and the development of the facility. We have also enjoyed the benefit of a core of dedicated and professional employees providing the operational support needed to run the pool day-to-day.

This season has been one of consolidation: We retained the majority of the management team (having reduced it by one as an economy/efficiency measure) and we retained the successful mix of sessions (public, lanes, parent and child, families, ladies therapeutic, adult general swim). We continued to offer school use and private bookings. On the training front we decided to make Tuesday and Thursday early evenings permanently available for swimming lessons and this steady schedule helped with managing demand and take-up.

The overall use of the pool was slightly lower than last season (about 10-15% lower numbers attended public sessions). I do not see this as cause for concern as our aim is to broaden the appeal of the pool as a facility for all rather than focus on getting more people through. We are probably at or around the optimum use of the pool in respect of its swimmer-handling capacity.

An important improvement on last year was getting the pool ready in advance of the swimming season and using it to train the cadre of lifeguards. This meant we had a full quota of freshly trained-and-tested supervisors to get the season going, and this group of lifeguards was largely available throughout the season.

In respect of the facilities, we have consistently invested time, money and effort over the past three years of winter breaks and this has vastly improved the facilities and usability of the site. These 'capital reserves' have now been spent so we limited our improvements to getting the sand

filter refurbished (with much expert assistance from specialist volunteers) and painting the fence and buildings. This latter activity was greatly facilitated by the use of a mobile elevated work platform, which improved access for, and safety of, this activity. I am very appreciative of these contributions.

In addition we employed a local cleaning firm to carry out a weekly thorough clean of the changing rooms and lavatories using 'industrial' equipment and materials. This has markedly reduced the comments received about cleanliness. We also ran the thermal solar panels throughout the summer and due to the interest of a number of enthusiasts we have unusually close monitoring of their performance. This confirmed a cost saving of about £140 and the saving of about 800kg of carbon dioxide emission. This was consistent with expectation.

With regard to our continued financial arrangements we were pleased to renew our service level agreement with the Town Council at the beginning of the season at the same level of funding. There is an implicit saving to the council here as we have absorbed the 10% inflation that occurred over the first 3 years (equivalent to £2,800). This new agreement runs for three years and this has given us the confidence to invest effort and time into planning a development of the accommodation on site. The plan is to improve the changing rooms and build a 'dry side' room to allow better accommodation for parents of swimmers and throughput of 'party' groups. It will also be used for training. An architect is generously offering assistance with this and once a scheme is developed we will be seeking government grants and other funds to finance it.

As with previous years we have arranged a public meeting to inform and consult the public of Wotton who pay through their council tax for us to run the facility.

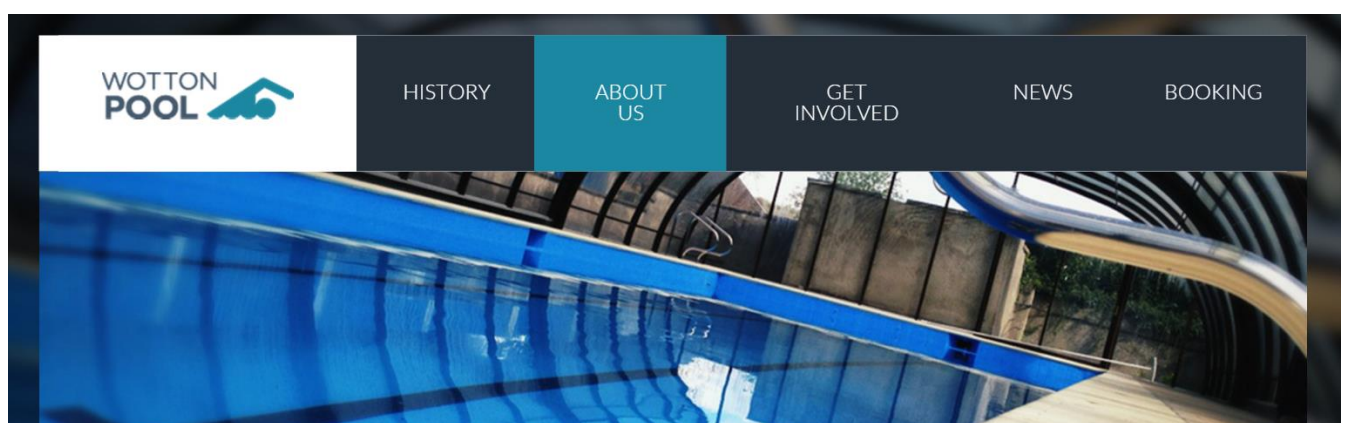
In addition we have defined some keynotes for the pool that we will use to guide us through its operation and development. These are:

- safe
- high quality
- indefinitely ongoing
- low maintenance
- community enterprise
- fun for all

Thanks everybody for your support this past season, and we look forward to running another entertaining season this summer.

Alan George  
(Chairman of Trustees)  
19/2/15

[www.wottonpool.co.uk](http://www.wottonpool.co.uk)



# WOTTON COMMUNITY SPORTS FOUNDATION

## Report to Wotton Town Council Annual Meeting March 2015

Looking back at the past 12 months since our last report, I'm extremely pleased with the progress we've made and the success that we've enjoyed.



Our site is fast becoming the sports hub that we'd envisaged – it gives me great pleasure to see our facilities so well used, particularly on weekends through the autumn / winter / spring season with matches being played on both pitches.

Thanks to the revenue we've raised, and some grants we obtained, we've been able to undertake some minor works that made the site more usable, particularly the installation of extra goals and a dividing curtain on the 3G, and not forgetting the bins. We've also benefited from the portaloos and refreshment van, which have been a fit-for-purpose solution to the provision of amenities on our site.

We've established a supply chain to support our site, having entered into a pitch maintenance contract, and engaged the services of local contractors for agricultural, electrical and construction support, plus further Quantity Surveying input. This is all backed up by the work of various volunteers who've given time to help keep the site in shape, for which my thanks, as ever.

I'm delighted that we've also completed the construction of the long-awaited skate park, having raised over £60k towards this facility in the past 9 months or so. The skatepark is already being well-used by riders and boarders from the local area and further afield, Wotton is becoming a go-to destination!. This goes to show that the phased approach to site development is a good strategy. The formal opening ceremony for the skatepark is on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March, and you are all welcome to attend.

We've also done some more ecological works on the site, with more tree planting achieved and further planting scheduled this spring, and will be progressing with a very generous offer to fund a fruit tree orchard on the site. I've been delighted to see such a variety of wildlife on the site, with birds, bees, butterflies, dragonflies, frogs and toads, deer, foxes and badgers all making an appearance at various times.

We've welcomed pupils from Kingswood Primary School onto our site as part of the "forest schools" programme – they have enjoyed several visits, investigating the ecology of the site, and also using it to view the Tour of Britain last summer as it came through Wotton.

Our next fundraising and development focus is on the path to provide safe access to the site for skatepark users; we are drawing up a lease with the owner of some adjacent land to allow access, and will be submitting a planning application within the next 2 months. Further medium-term developments include a jogging trail around the site and a BMX pump track. I look forward to celebrating our success on this!

From 1<sup>st</sup> March, jointly with Katharine Lady Berkeley's School, we've taken over the management of the sports centre via the newly-formed Sport Wotton Ltd company. This is a big responsibility, but I'm confident that we will provide a good service for the local community. It will allow us to market the entire site in a more effective manner, and to offer opportunities that reflect the requirements of local users. I would like to formally thank KLBS for their commitment to supporting community activities on their site by entering into this partnership with WCSF.

Again, I am very grateful for the continuing support from the Wotton Town Council and the multitude of other local groups and organisations that have provided much needed support.

I look forward to another fantastic year of sport in Wotton!

*Barnaby Beere - Chairman, Wotton Community Sports Foundation*



## **SYNWELL PLAYING FIELD**

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 301658

Synwell Playing Field is the only green public open space for sports and recreation in Wotton.

- It was bought and paid for by subscription from local people in 1932.
  - It is one of only two playing fields in the UK that is wholly owned and managed by local people.
- It is held in perpetual trust for the use and welfare of residents of Wotton-under-Edge, and in recognition of this became a Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Field in 2012.
- It is affiliated to the National Playing Fields Association and Gloucestershire Association of Playing Fields.

There are 3 Trustees for the 4 acre field, who vest responsibility and management to Synwell Playing Field Committee made up of local residents who meet regularly. There are broadly 5 areas of management that are considered at each meeting.

- Routine maintenance including grass cutting, field maintenance and work on surrounding fences, shrubs and trees.
- Health and safety of everything on the Field and all its users.
- One off exceptional maintenance of play equipment and the on-site changing rooms.
- Working together with our tenants: Synwell Social Club and Wotton Rovers Football Club.
- Fund raising for all the costs involved.
- 

In 2013/14 our tenants, Wotton Rovers Football Club, were unable to meet their contractual commitments to SPFC. Income from WRFC goes towards the costs of upkeep & maintenance of the pitch during the football season, but not extensive repairs to field at the end of the season. The Town Council were approached and in May 2014 a 3 year grant agreement was signed, for which we are very grateful.

WRFC have signed a rolling annual agreement; we are temporarily accepting a reduced annual payment; they have now cleared their arrears to this association and are paying their rent monthly. This, however, covers only their immediate use of changing room and pitch and makes no contribution to development of the resource.

During the summer months the Field and changing rooms can be hired for sports and other activities. We have advertised this in the Wotton Directory and on the Gloucester Playing Fields website. We are in the process of setting up a Facebook page both to advertise this facility and to let people know what is going on at the Field.

In 2014 the Field was hired for a number of events including:

- A fund raising day for the Jason Muir Trust.
- A fund raising event for the Meningitis Trust
- Synstock Music Festival in June was jointly organised by SPFC, the football club and Synwell Club.
- Baptist Church Playscheme games and barbecue.
- Wotton Childrens Centre Pirate Picnic and family fun event.
- Eastville Park Prison 'inmates v staff' football match.

Our care and maintenance of the Field and its environs extends to a commitment to the natural world. Recently a tree had to be felled because it was compromising power lines. It will be replaced with an oak in the spring.

Where we have to lose a tree due to disease or age we always replace it. In 2014 we planted a new mountain ash that was donated by Mike Savage, who served on the committee for many years. We are now looking to plant some saplings at the bottom of the Field in conjunction with Stroud Tree Workshop, to form a wildlife area. We are also

clearing out rubbish and some of the shrubs and bushes with hired help from the Community Playback Scheme. During the year 2015 considerable costs will be



incurred in replacing or refurbishing at least one item of play equipment together with repairs to the changing room. Whilst we are seeking grants to help meet these costs, they will place a major strain on our contingency funds.

Clearing up the field, litter picking and dealing with petty vandalism are all routine for the Committee members who work hard on a daily basis to keep the Field in good order. Local residents have historic emotional investment in the Field and are quick to let us know of any issues. However a committee of 9 people really isn't enough to manage such an extensive enterprise and we would welcome new members at our AGM on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March at the Clubhouse on Synwell Playing Field.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Neighbourhood Wardens**

Stroud District Council's Neighbourhood Warden Service continues to operate in Wotton Under Edge.

### **Your local Neighbourhood Warden is Peter Gleed.**

Once again our most complained about issue has been dog fouling. We have received information from residents in Synwell, Water Lane, Mount Pleasant, to name just a few. We have continued to spray down our 'Pick Up or Pay Up' stencils and do regular patrols with the Animal Welfare Officer from Stroud District Council. Any offenders found to be allowing their dog to foul will be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Assistance has been provided to residents who need help maintaining their gardens. Wardens are happy to help where a person is unable to complete the work themselves or where it is beneficial to the community as a whole. See our 'before' and 'after' pictures below.

We continue to support those residents that have a bulky waste item but are unable to get it out of their property. Fridges and freezers are now becoming a speciality. Remember, Stroud District Council will collect bulky waste items free of charge. Neighbourhood Wardens can assist with getting it out of the house.

Many older or vulnerable people have been visited across the area. We have provided support and sign posting to various partners and agencies as well as assisting directly with everyday tasks that some find difficult: understanding and signing forms, working out bills, changing batteries and bulbs are just some examples.



Contact us: Email: [peter.gleed@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:peter.gleed@stroud.gov.uk) Tel: 07834 419332





## Stroud and District Citizens Advice Bureau

### Wotton Outreach Report on 2014

Stroud District CAB is a local charity which helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice, and by influencing policymakers.

Face to face advice is available at our Wotton office on Tuesdays 10-1pm and from 6 other advice points in the district. These outreach sessions in Wotton are run by highly trained volunteer advisers with support from a paid supervisor who is always at the end of the phone in our Stroud office.

At other times, residents of Wotton can access telephone advice via our Freephone number which is 0808 800 0510. Lines are open on Monday to Friday from 10am – 4pm.

For people who work during the day, or find it easier to use email than the phone – for example people with a hearing impairment - we also provide advice by email from our website [www.stroudcab.org.uk](http://www.stroudcab.org.uk) so that people can contact us at a time that suits them and not just when we are open.

Detailed information on a very wide range of subjects is also available via our website for anyone who feels able to help themselves by using this information.

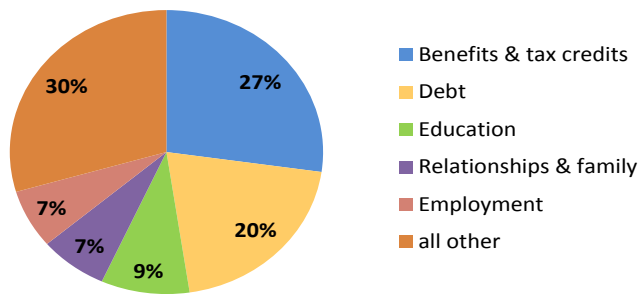
As well as the advice service we offer, we collect evidence of our clients' problems and use this to campaign for changes in national and local policies and services. All social policy work undertaken is rooted in the experiences of real people who are adversely affected by these policies; social policy is about campaigning to bring about changes to make the rules (and their implementation) fairer for all.



In 2014 we advised 225 clients in Wotton with 257 enquiries and helped them to resolve 569 issues with many people using the Bureau more than one time in the year. During the year, 25% of the people from Wotton who used our service were disabled or had long term health problems.

The top 5 most common issues that people came for advice about were Benefits, Debt, Education, Relationships and employment, with 27% of cases relating to benefits and tax credits and 20% relating to money or debt problems.

### Top 5 advice categories



Our advice helps clients to be better off. For example we help people to secure correct benefit and tax credit payments, restructure and write off debt, prevent homelessness and establish employment rights. We know that we gained over £6,870 for clients in Wotton last year by helping them claim benefits, and tax credits to which they were entitled

Our advice on employment can lead to a financial outcome, such as compensation; and/or a non-financial outcome, such as reinstatement, enforcement of terms and conditions, or an end to harassment at work.

Our money advice helps people regain control of their finances and identify legal remedies to their problems.

Our housing advice helps prevent homelessness and makes sure people understand their rights and responsibilities, eg how to get a repair done.

In many cases clients come to the service once, receive advice and are empowered to resolve their problems. Therefore a large proportion of the outcomes of our advice cannot be identified and recorded. We also know that national research carried out by Citizens Advice shows that 2 out of 3 people felt that their problem was resolved by the CAB and 78% said they couldn't do it without the help of the CAB – and this research was representative of all CABs including Stroud

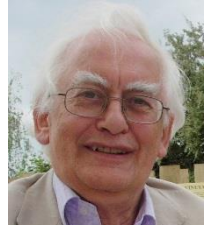


Through training and investment, our partnership with volunteers enables them to make a fantastic contribution to the service. In turn, through working in the Stroud & District CAB, volunteers benefit from gaining new skills and personal development, as well as better well-being and community engagement.

We are extremely grateful to Wotton Town Council for its support which enables us to continue to have a presence in the town.

# **Report on County Council Matters**

## **to Wotton-under Edge Annual Assembly 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015**



*John Cordwell*

***This of course can only be a very brief summary of what has been happening at the County Council.***

### **County Council Membership**

An Independent member of the council died a few months ago and the by-election was won by a Conservative.

It is still a minority Conservative administration with a political composition of:

24 Conservative; 14 Liberal Democrat; 9 Labour; 3 UKIP; 1 Green; 1 PAB; 1 Independent.

At approaching 34 years I am now the longest-serving county councillor in the history of the present Gloucestershire County Council, taking over that role from Basil Booth, who retired in May 2013. Basil's area included Ham & Stone and Alkington which I now represent. Sadly, he died last year.

### **My roles on the County Council**

In addition to the roles I detailed in last year's report, a Highways Contract Advisory Group has been set up, on which I am a lead member. Its current job is to have "oversight and input into setting the outcomes of the LED street lighting contract procurement." The contract will be awarded on 6<sup>th</sup> April.

### **County Budget 2015/16**

On 18<sup>th</sup> February the council agreed a budget for 2015/16 of £420.03M, a decrease in cash terms of £8.075M. However the council has suffered a £17.5M reduction in central government formula grant funding, offset by increases in the council tax base and surplus of £5.4M. Public Health funding to the council has increased by £3.1M but this is because of the transfer of responsibilities to the council for 0 to 5-year-olds.

The total to be precepted (council tax requirement) is £231.116M. For the fifth year running, council tax has been frozen at £1090.50 at Band D.

Such cuts limited the scope for amendments to be made to the budget. However, it took on board nearly the full slate of budget proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats which included:

- Last September, Liberal Democrats asked for the County Council to carry out a study to identify routes that cyclists found problematic, and used the results to successfully propose that £100k was put in the budget to do the advanced design work needed to allow schemes identified by the study to be delivered in the future.
- Around £100k is to be invested to provide free Wi-Fi in every county and community library.
- With concern over the state of trees near highways, each councillor is to be allocated £2500 next year that can be used on tree maintenance or tree planting. This is on top of the £20k annual "Highways Local" allocation to each councillor.
- and a further £100k – worth of proposals.

Most suggestions put forward by Labour were rejected as they had not calculated the cost of them! The exceptions were implementation of the living wage increase for staff at £36k and a useful

£100k to invest in maintaining rural bus services. The Green Party were successful in a £30k bid for a rural sustainable drainage pilot scheme in the Frome catchment area.

### **Active Together Grant**

Arising from last year's budget each county councillor was allocated a once-off £40k to be used to support the prioritisation and delivery of sport and physical activity within their electoral divisions. I have now recommended grants to six projects in my division from this fund, fully spending the £40k. This included the £19k needed to complete the £80k required for the skate park at New Road, which opened in February.

Another £100k was allocated jointly to the ten county councillors within the Stroud district area to fund healthy projects and healthy living campaigns in disadvantaged communities. We met last month to discuss how this should be spent, having previously agreed the priorities should be on stopping smoking and reducing obesity. Nine projects have been agreed in whole or in part. Some will include Wotton.

In addition an annual Children's Activity Fund of £5k per councillor was set up. Two projects were submitted and received funding. There is a small amount left and I am expecting a request for the use of that.

### **County Residual Waste Disposal Project – Javelin Park**

Early in 2013 the County Council's Cabinet, despite many objections, pressed ahead with its plans for waste disposal using an incinerator, to be located at Javelin Park, close to junction 12 of the M5. Against advice from its Environment Scrutiny Committee the council signed a contract with Urbaser-Balfour Beatty (UBB) before UBB's planning application was considered by the county's planning committee on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2013. It was unanimously refused by the 18 members of the planning committee, of which I was one.

The grounds for refusal were based on environmental considerations, essentially that the harm to the landscape outweighed the benefits, that it introduced a prominent building into a rural area overlooked by the AONB and the Cotswold Way, and that it would have an overbearing effect on nearby residential properties. The council was not able to object to the proposed technology.

UBB appealed against the decision and a public inquiry was held. The Secretary of State "recovered" the appeal, which meant that the planning inspector did not determine it himself but submitted a report with his recommendations to the Secretary of State. Originally Mr Pickles was supposed to announce his decision in May 2014. After several further missed deadlines, in January this year the Secretary of State announced he had decided to allow the appeal.

At an emergency meeting of the county council last month, called by the Labour group, a vote was taken to call on the county's cabinet to cancel the contract for this (really a censure against the Cabinet since it was known they would not agree). It was narrowly lost when UKIP joined the Conservatives in voting against it.

My group had initially tabled an amendment asking for an independent inquiry into the procurement process used (including the matter of the contract being signed before the Planning Committee had determined the application) and to establish the cancellation costs, reputed to be close to £100M, but it turned out the full information would not be revealed even in strictest confidence to councillors.

### **New Highways Contract**

Amey were awarded the contract, which started in April 2014. There have since been considerable concerns raised by county councillors and the public over work not being done when promised and over its quality. In addition some requests seem to get lost in the system – several of mine for dealing with light outages and potholes marked for repair which then fell off the computer due to human error. Renewing double yellow lining and white lining, particularly at junctions, is still outstanding. I raised this issue months

ago and was told there was a backlog of work at 29 sites which would be cleared in the next few weeks. I am still waiting and asking when it will happen.

A former county council officer has been brought out of retirement to help sort things out and I had a long discussion with him.

Some patching work has recently been done on the Bradley Road/Gloucester Street/Old Town route, leading to lengthy diversions, particularly with Old London Road still closed, and confusion over bus service rerouting (see below).

Once again £20k was allocated to each county councillor in 2014/15 to spend on highway issues within their divisions. I put forward a list many months ago, some of which are now instead being done from the general highways budget. I have just been advised, in common with other councillors, that none of my £20k-worth of schemes is currently programmed and they will now have to be rolled over into the next financial year: Amey has not been able to progress them. Unfortunately in this part of the county we were also missing our local highways manager for part of the year through illness, and shortly through taking another job. He is not expecting to see a programme of works under this scheme before he leaves.

### **Weeds**

Weed growth has also been an issue. Gloucestershire County Council's Cabinet took a decision in 2011 not to include weed spraying on a routine basis in the management of roads. There is an annual programme of noxious weed removal. Where weeds are causing a safety hazard or are damaging the highway Gloucestershire Highways can commission Amey to carry out weed removal. One well-known case in Wotton is where a buddleia in full flower was eventually removed, dislodging kerbstones in the process.

### **Landslip, Old London Road**

The road has been closed since November 2012 and has proved to be more of a problem than first supposed. It was not helped by the change in contract. Work is now at last under way, but this has raised further issues from local residents on whether the work goes far beyond what was required and whether it was subject to a competitive tender. I have raised these issues, twice, and am awaiting a reply.

### **Drive for Life**

In February I attended this full day of talks and practical demonstrations for Y12 and Y13 students at KLB School as Chair of the County Council's Stroud Area Road Safety Liaison Group. The event was well received by the students, a number of whom have already passed their driving test. All the emergency services attended together with the Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership. I hope that other schools and colleges in the county will have the same opportunity. A number of organisations helped to fund the event including Wotton Town Council.

### **Buses and Trains**

November saw the introduction of changes to bus services by First with some support from local councils. This has had mixed results:

**No. 82.** This is a very useful service running from Wotton to Charfield, Yate, Bristol Parkway, Cribbs Causeway and Southmead Hospital. I raised concern that it did not serve Kingswood (Wotton) and have been told the timetable was too tight for this to be done without the expense of an extra bus. The other issue with this service is that few people know about it.

**No 87.** This starts at Dursley and runs via Vale Hospital, Cam & Dursley station, through Stinchcombe, North Nibley, Wotton and Kingswood to Thornbury and Cribbs Causeway. This replaces the 311 service to Bristol via Thornbury. Whilst buses from Dursley may connect with rail services at Cam & Dursley

station this doesn't work from the Wotton direction. In addition there have been numerous complaints about this bus service failing to turn up, leaving passengers stranded and in some cases having to get a taxi home.

Failure of the bus company to arrange and advertise some diversions during the recent road works in Wotton has left people stranded who would normally change buses at Wotton's War Memorial. The fault may not lie entirely with them, since there is some doubt that Wessex was informed of the extent of the road works. South Gloucestershire Council have advised Gloucestershire that there was some confusion with all the diversions as there are three different routes for the 84/86, They have spoken to Wessex over this.

90% of bus services in Gloucestershire are run as commercially and the county has limited say in the changes the operators make, which can be done with just 6 weeks' notice.

In May I attended the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of my opening of Cam & Dursley station. I continue to press for Charfield to be included in any future plans for station reopening.

### **Registration Service**

There were concerns from the Town Council when the "on request" service was withdrawn from Wotton (and other places) in order to make the service cost neutral, despite the difficulties it would give to local people. An end-of-year set of statistics covering many services gives the cost of the registration service for 2013/14 as - £85.38 per event. This is said to be a transitory situation caused by the number of civil partnerships being registered. This has also led to a 2015/16 budget cut for the service of £30k.

### **Other issues**

Of course I have dealt with many other issues during the year, mostly involving individuals. Of more general interest are the following, which as it happens all have connections with the health service.

#### **- Lost Ambulances**

Following complaints of ambulances wrongly trying to access Dryleaze House via Merlin Haven and then having difficulty turning round I raised the issue with the South West Ambulance Trust. It is now being flagged up to ambulance drivers attending emergency calls there that this route cannot be used.

#### **- Culverhay Surgery**

I was contacted by the media about an unfavourable CQC report on the surgery. The surgery was inspected soon afterwards with a positive outcome and I understand that the CQC report was taken off their website.

#### **- Chipping Surgery**

It was brought to my attention that the four houses of "contemporary design" built on the site were in breach of a covenant between the County Council and the surgery. I alerted County Council lawyers who are now pursuing the matter.

**John Cordwell**

## District Council Report 2014/15

*District Councillor Paul Smith*

During the past civic year I continued as Vice Chairman of Environment Committee, whilst District Cllr June Cordwell continued to serve on the Community Service and Licensing Committee and Stroud Council Housing Forum. District Cllr Lesley Reeves was appointed to the Housing Committee.

The administration remains an alliance of Labour, Liberal Democrats, and Green Party Groups working together.

The overall SDC budget for 2015/16 has been set for 2015/16 at £40.9 Million which includes a £7 Million increase in the housing budget for new build. While Government funding has been cut by 12% this has been mainly offset by an increase in New Homes Bonus Allocation. For a fifth year the administration has frozen the Council Tax, meaning the total amount to be found from council tax payers is £7.744 Million and Band D council tax remains at £186.93.

I sit on an all-party working panel which is looking at the proposals of the Boundary Commission for the make-up of the district ward boundaries. Their draft proposals consists of keeping 51 Councillors within 12 single members (-3), six two member (-3), and Nine three member wards (+3) when compared with what we have now. The draft proposal for the Wotton Ward is that the parish of Stinchcombe is brought into the ward while a small part of the Wotton Parish goes into the Kingswood ward. From 2016 the district elections will be based on all out election every four years starting with the first election in 2016.

SDC is now well on its planned programme of building 150 Council Houses with the first ones completed just after Christmas 2014.

The new Local Plan continues to slowly move forward. At the beginning of the civic year the public inspector asked SDC to carry out further work to the housing numbers. The results of the work is that the housing numbers until 2031 have been increased from 10400 to 11200 with an area known as West of Stonehouse included within the Local Plan. The public inspection of the Local Plan was due to re-start in February 2015 but due to the public inspector falling ill it will not resume until May 2015. It is hoped that if there are no further delays the Local Plan will be adopted by April 2016.

The current Multi Service Contract (rubbish Collection) which is with Veolia is due to terminate on 30 June 2016. It has been agreed by Council that the new contract will be with Ubico Ltd which is a local authority owned company which SDC will become a shareholder. SDC are looking at sites for the new depot and will soon be placing an order for collection lorries. It is expected that the new contract will save £493,000 per year over going out to the private sector.



*We hope you have enjoyed reading these reports  
If you have any comments,  
or require further information, please contact:*

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