

Annual Parish Assembly

Parishioners of Wotton-under-Edge are invited to
the Civic Centre, Wotton-under-Edge
Tuesday 22nd March, 2016, at 7pm

Cllr Paul Smith
Mayor of Wotton

Come and learn about Stroud's new waste & recycling system – this will affect all households in the district

Agenda

- 1) Welcome, Introductions & receive absence apologies from Councillors
- 2) Adoption of Previous Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly of 17th March 2015 & any Matters Arising from those Minutes
- 3) Welcome to SDC Officer Carlos Novoth–Waste & Recycling Changes Q&A (20 mins)
- 4) Brief Report from the Mayor Cllr Paul Smith (5 mins)
- 5) Brief Annual Police Report for 2015/16 (5 mins)
- 6) Brief reports from Town Council Committee Chairs (15mins total):
 - Planning (Cllr T Luker)
 - Footpaths (Cllr P Smith)
 - Allotments (Cllr P Barton)
 - Regeneration (Cllr R Claydon)
- 7) Receive brief updates from Council supported organisations (20 mins in total):
 - Wotton Youth Centre/Youth Liaison Group
 - Wotton Library
 - Wotton in Bloom
 - Wotton Swimming pool
 - Wotton Community Sports Foundation
 - Synwell Playing Fields Committee
 - Wotton Heritage Centre
- 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.....!



MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY



Held on Tuesday 17th March, 2015, at 7pm in the Civic Centre

Present: Councillors R Claydon (Mayor), June Cordwell, John Cordwell, N Clement, Clair Galbraith, K Collins, Chris Galbraith, M Zimmer, T Luker, A Wilkinson, P Smith, P Barton. In Attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey & council staff Members of the Public 31

- 1) **Welcome, Introductions & receive apologies** for absence from Councillors. Apology received from Cllr L Harris.
- 2) **Adoption of Previous Minutes** of Annual Parish Assembly of 18th March 2014 & any Matters Arising from those Minutes. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr K Collins to approve the Minutes as presented, all in favour.
- 3) **Guest speaker; Glos County Cllr Vernon Smith** –Highways Responsibility. Cllr Smith was welcomed and after an introduction, a question and answer session commenced regarding various highways issues in and around Wotton including:

Potholes - £17million has so far been spent this year on resurfacing roads using 3 full time crews throughout the county (will be 7 next year). The resurfacing backlog was originally £96m, & will reduce to £80m by August. The pothole backlog will never disappear as the works cover a third of the network and would take 10 years at the current rate. 79,000 tons of tarmac has been laid so far this FY. Using higher specification asphalt does make repairs last longer but is more expensive. Old Town was cited as a poor example of repairs needing constant repatching.

Rushmire Hill – has already been resurfaced three times inadequately – being repaired at contractor expense if not up to standard.

Yellow & white lines – fading all across the town & need repainting. Cllr Cordwell advised to put into schedule - which has been done but such a large backlog....

Parklands resurfacing – very poor standard of repairs. Agreed & inspected today – site meeting with contractor soon & new specification to decide. Blamed incorrect specification being given for original works.

Old London Rd repairs – appalling length of closure & specification seen as overkill for retaining wall which is also out of keeping with rural lane. Works backlog blamed & change of Highways contractor half way through, thus engineering drawings needed to be re done. Agreement that gabions would have looked better & done the same job.

Court Meadow – constant delays in scheduled resurfacing; the team (after finishing Parklands later than expected) had to go to another job. The road is in an appalling state & safety being compromised. Cllr V Smith promised to chase if later contacted.

Highways contact – area manager is leaving and new one yet to be appointed – poor communications have been an issue and efforts needed to sort them out.

Large vehicles through Wotton – difficult to stop as roads open to all

Verges – leaving uncut better for wildlife but looks messier. GCC policy now to regularly cut only the areas needing visibility, and others once a year. District Councils are working on wildlife seed planting plans for verges.

4) **Brief Report from the Mayor** Cllr Roger Claydon OBE.

The Mayor spoke largely about the results of the community questionnaire and thus only mentioned briefly the report which is in the booklet provided.

Once again, it has been busy year for the Town Council aided by the good efforts of the new Town Clerk, the Council has, among other things;

- upgraded the town's CCTV system with financial support from the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- tidied up the garden of Remembrance;
- taken action at Potters Pond to prevent work which would have been damaging to the wildlife in Dyers Brook,
- continued to explore opportunities for providing additional parking in the town, including the possibility of establishing a car park on open land behind the Fire Station. This initiative, facilitated by the Chamber of Trade, is still at an early stage and no planning application has yet been made. Public views are welcomed on this. We have been informed by Renishaw that the company intends to continue its operations in Old Town and develop the Stokes Bakery site, thus these locations are not available for supermarkets, parking or anything else.

The Town Council's action plan for 2015 includes:

- working with the Town Regeneration Committee on an update to the 2005 Community Plan
- updating Town Council website to improve communication between the Town Council and residents; and
- bringing the Chipping Club Room under the management of the Town Trust.

The Town Council has continued its financial support for the:

- Swimming Pool,
- Synwell Playing Field,
- Wotton in Bloom,
- Youth Centre,
- Library,
- Citizens Advice Bureau.

Summary financial information, including budget plans and civic grants is included in the booklet. The Precept for the coming year has been set at £264,373 with total planned expenditure of £310,095.

In the past year farewell was said to Cllr Jackie Cartigny who was replaced on the Council by Alex Wilkinson who is also President of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce. Council elections take place in May and so there may well be a "new-look" Town Council next term! All who have skills, time and energy were urged to apply.

Feedback is now available on the charts around the room, for the Community Questionnaire, where residents were asked to indicate their opinion on 58 issues by expressing a priority. Some 3000 questionnaires were distributed with the "Wotton Directory" & 270 questionnaires returned and analysed; an initial report is also available on seats. Determining a priority order from the results obtained has not been straightforward and several methods were tried, including weighted scores, totals by Priority and percentage scores. Using weighted scoring, the highest priorities included the

swimming pool, library, shops, local employment opportunities, condition of footpaths & pavements, traffic management and roads, the bus service and Charfield Railway Station. At the bottom, the lowest priorities included introduction of parking charges and the need for more private housing development. Around 170 of the questionnaires contained additional comments, many of which were about the poor state of the Town's roads. A significant number of people also commented on the need for more parking, pavement maintenance, traffic problems in the town, dog fouling, Charfield Railway Station and support for the Swimming Pool.

Putting the results of the questionnaire scores and comments together the following seem to be the issues of most concern to the community:

- The need for proper road maintenance to deal with potholes, road condition and road marking;
- The poor condition of footpaths, pavements and verges;
- Traffic Problems in the Town and problems caused by parked cars restricting traffic – although, based on the questionnaire returns, the enforcement of parking restrictions would not be welcome.....
- The need for more parking in the town - although there is clearly no appetite to pay for such a facility either through increasing the precept or introducing parking charges;
- Initiatives to encourage Tourism – although there were several comments about not wanting to waste money on such activities. There was a negative response to the suggestion that a coach park should be provided;
- A desire for the Town Council to continue its support for the Library, Swimming Pool, Synwell Playing Field, Citizens Advice Bureau and Youth services;
- Other high priority items include: re-opening Charfield railway station, the need for better bus services, shops, local employment opportunities, improved police presence, littering, dog fouling, improved public toilets, and affordable housing;
- In the questionnaire response, the need for a new supermarket was identified as a low priority but the comments received showed an equal number for and against

The results from the consultation exercise will be taken forward by the Town Council and the Regeneration Partnership, with a view to updating the town's Community Plan. Volunteers from the community are asked for help in doing this.

- 5) **Annual Police Report** for 2014/15. No member of Police present, however a report is in the written booklet provided.
- 6) Reports from Town Council Committee Chairs:
 - **Planning** (Cllr Chris Galbraith). The report in the booklet shows Council activity in responding to planning applications and particularly regarding Potters Pond developments, and contributing towards the draft new Stroud Local Plan which is yet to be decided. Wotton's infrastructure continues to be under threat also from proposed housing developments of neighbouring Charfield and Kingswood. The booklet report mentions the Full Moon housing however this should actually read affordable housing possibility at Fountain Crescent instead.
 - **Footpaths** (Cllr Chris Galbraith). In addition to the booklet report, the Council has managed to avert proposed weirs in the stream at Marchesi Walk. The protected white clawed crayfish have been moved

upstream for safety during developer activities. The stream needs some clearance and this will be undertaken soon.

- **Allotments** (Cllr Clair Galbraith). The Knapp Rd site has seen boundary improvements regarding trees & hedging – funds have been put aside for works to the bank thus improving the top access footpath. The large hole which appeared under an allotment and was related to previous water pump housing has been infilled. The New Rd site needs a deeper water pipe system to be installed due to legislation changes and funds are being earmarked for this large project. A replacement site representative is also needed. The waiting list is about 5 or 6 at the moment for an allotment.

- **Regeneration** (Cllr June Cordwell). Along with 5 Councillors, a cross section of organisations contribute ideas & initiatives to promote the Town. Funding has been put towards Christmas trees, the farmers market, town map/leaflet, etc. This year will see Magna Carta celebrations, improved weed spraying capabilities after a staff member is trained, and hopefully an improved flowerbed/borders display. The open spaces contract involving hedges, grass cutting & flowerbeds has been awarded to a new provider.

7) Receive brief updates from Council supported organisations

- **Wotton Youth Club.** The Youth Liaison Group was set up originally as a forum to network & exchange ideas for all youth provision in the town. It also evolved & developed fundraising as a means to provide extra sessions at the new Youth Centre after County funding was totally withdrawn. Grants are available for capital projects but harder to find for working capital session provision such as funding a youth worker. It is thus important that new members come forward to offer skills any way they can so that provision for youth in the town continues and that initiatives such as curry evenings for fundraising are supported.
- **Wotton Library.** No attendee, however a written report provided in booklet.
- **Wotton in Bloom.** Mrs S Hunt sent attendance apologies, as unwell. In addition to report in booklet it was noted that the baskets looked stunning around town last year and the group was congratulated. Fundraising to start soon for this year's baskets.
- **Wotton Swimming Pool** Mr George spoke of the continued success of the Pool due to a large group of dedicated volunteers helpers, and how it continues to be well supported locally through swim attendance – more details are in the report provided. The Committee is trying to broaden its appeal & vary the types of swim session offered. The pool costs an extra 25p per household in local tax to run and the recent questionnaire confirmed support.
- **Wotton Community Sports Foundation.** The site's sports facilities continue to be well used with over 3000 users in January – the site is run as a joint venture facility with KLB School. Mr Beere also spoke of the successful new skatepark for which over £84,000 was raised, with £64k of this in the previous 9 months as momentum gathered pace. An opening ceremony will take place next weekend. 4000 trees have now also been planted on the site. Negotiations have now started, to provide a safe access path rather than along the busy road, and agreements with the adjacent landowner will soon be in place to provide a safe access footpath for which about £90,000 needs to be raised; a planning application should appear soon. Various initiatives include selling a 'foot' of footpath as well as grant applications.
- **Synwell Playing Fields** Committee. Apologies for no representative, report available in booklet.
- **Neighbourhood Warden.** Mr Gleed from Stroud District Council attended but left meeting earlier – report provided in booklet.

- **Citizens Advice Bureau.** No CAB attendee, however the Town Council representative spoke of the continued valuable service which is provided every Tuesday morning in Wotton for local residents - full report provided in booklet.
- 8) **County Council** matters - report from Cllr Dr JE Cordwell on. Role this year at County Council roles similar to last year although now part of Highways Advisory Group, involving much criticism of new Amey highways contract. This coming year will see a new streetlighting contract and plans to change to LEDs. County budget is standstill but with cuts in real terms thus some deterioration in service provision expected, apart from libraries which will now have free wifi installed. We await to see if the £40,000 Active Together grant from public health funding will continue. £19k of this went towards the skatepark with the rest split 5 ways. The Javelin Park incinerator project has been handled strangely in that the contract was placed before the planning application was determined, affecting the cost implications. Regarding road markings, white lining issues are being chased for Wotton, along with poor communications regarding bus services and the lack of timetable information particularly when road closures occurred recently. Although Old London road opened recently, there are questions over the design work specification for the new retaining wall. The KLB Drive For Life event involving educating 6th form students many of whom had just passed their driving test, was very successful showing what can be achieved with partnership working. A question asked why weren't street lights dimmed or switched off to save energy – the reply was this was done some time ago but if individual lights that had been adjusted in this way were causing local concern the County was willing to reverse the change. Also, the change to LEDs would greatly reduce the energy and maintenance costs. Turning off depends very much on location since guidelines state situations where turning off is not possible, eg busy junctions.

The booklet contains a more detailed county report.

- 9) **District Council** -report from Cllr P Smith who is currently vice chair of the Environmental Committee. (Cllr June Cordwell is on the licensing & housing committees, whilst Cllr Reeves is on housing). Although Council taxes have been frozen again, the 2015/16 SDC budget includes extra £7m for new build housing. The Boundary Commission has consulted on changes to proposed electoral warding and both SDC and WTC have responded that that proposal of 1 Town Councillor as part of a group of properties near Kingswood is not viable due to small number of voters. The new draft Stroud Local Plan was held up temporarily due to extra housing numbers work required, and then illness of inspector. April 2015 should hopefully see the Plan adopted. Veolia's district wide multiservice contract will end soon. with Ubico (a council consortium) to take over the service. A forecast saving of £493,000 would arise if contract kept for 25 years. A question on frequency of waste collections asked whether service would be lost – hopefully not. An SDC report is provided in the Annual Parish Assembly booklet.

- 10) ***No further comments from the Public on Town Affairs, thus Assembly concluded at 8.45pm where Parishioners were invited to share refreshments with Councillors and staff***

Signed Date

Chairman & Town Mayor



MAYOR'S REPORT

As your new Mayor and Chairman of the Town Council I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to the 2016 Annual Parish Assembly and hope you will all take part in the annual assembly tonight.

To start with I would like to thank the Clerk and staff who have worked hard during the year, not only because of the busy year we have had, but also for their advice in keeping us all on the straight and narrow in accordance with statutory and other requirements. At this point I would like to congratulate our Deputy Clerk Yasmin Milsom for passing her exams to become a qualified Clerk. We also welcome a new member of staff to the Council, our new caretaker Andy Cook.

Next I would like to thank our Councillors who freely give their time to attend sometimes lengthy meetings and for their time given to various projects that have been carried out over the year. In the last year we have said farewell to Cllrs Chris and Clair Galbraith, Lin Harris and Mike Zimmer and welcomed Cllrs Lucy Farmer, Alastair Kendall, Nicholas Pinnegar and Chris Young.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the Chairs of Committees and their Committee members, together with working groups, which in many cases are made up of not just Councillors but also co-opted residents, who not only attend meetings, but do a great deal of work outside of the committee.

The Town Council continues to provide significant financial support to the swimming pool in accordance to the community's expression in the 2010 Parish Referendum. Significant financial support is also provided to run the Youth Centre, with a new contract for three years starting from September 2015. It is hoped shortly to start a third evening for the Youth Centre with a grant from the Police Crime Commissioner's Fund.

I trust that residents have noticed that the work to the Tolsey Clock has now been completed. The work involved the complete rebuild of the workings as well as refurbishing the external surfaces, for which we must thank Mr Woolfrey for the time he freely gave.



The Town Council now has a new website, which people will find has a fresh look as well as Facebook and Twitter accounts. Please use the site to get your updates to events and news items of what is going on in the Town, as well as checking the facility hire pages.

In the autumn the Town Council was awarded the LCAS Foundation Level Award Certificate, being the first Council in Gloucestershire to be awarded this level under the new Quality Status Scheme, demonstrating that the council meets the minimum requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. The Town Council is now applying for the middle level Quality Award with the possibility at some stage of applying for the top award of Quality Gold Award.

The Town Council has continued to investigate increased car parking within the town. The Town Council has been made aware of a possible opportunity to establish a car park on land behind the fire station. A proposal by a developer to provide a car park for 96 cars and two coach spaces, together with ten houses, has been discussed with the Town Council's Planning Committee, which we agreed to support in principle. Prior to an actual planning application the developer has arranged for public consultation on 18th March 3pm to 8pm at the Civic Centre.

The Heritage Centre is to have additional support for its operations as its income does not support its running costs. Without the additional support from the Town Council it is likely that it would have to close within the next 12 months or so. In return the Heritage Centre will open for longer hours and will provide a Visitor Information Centre.

A number of you may know, from the press, that a group of allotment holders in Coombe have been evicted from some land that appears to have been used for possibly the past two centuries. The group has requested help from the Town Council, which we are giving. At present confidential legal negotiations are continuing.

A small working group has been working with the Town Regeneration Committee, on the update to the Community Plan. This has been based on the feedback received from the community questionnaire which was sent out just over twelve months ago to households. The final draft of the Community Plan is almost completed and it is planned to publish it by the end of March.

For your information a summary of the Council's 2015/2016 achievements and an action plan for 2016/17 is attached. Brief financial information, including budget plans and civic grants is also attached. The Precept for the year 2016/17 has been set at £270,746, an increase of 2.4% mainly due to Stroud District Council withholding the Local Council Tax Support Grant, which in Wotton's case would have been approximately £12,000.

The Annual Parish Assembly is important as a means of exchanging views with residents. 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. We will do our best to answer questions that arise but please be understanding if we are not able to respond directly on the night.

Cllr Paul Smith, TOWN MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN

TOWN COUNCIL ACHIEVEMENTS FY 2015/16

- Introduced new Town Council website
- Continued development of new policies & updated existing ones to keep abreast of legislation.
- Completed Chipping Club Room legal negotiations for Town Trust to take over the facility. Improvements to the facility such as better heating system, rear clearance to make seating area, emergency lighting & fire safety, and better kitchen facilities.
- Grant secured from Police Crime Commissioner and works completed to double youth centre usable space via new access door to Chipping Club Room, also improved facilities and providing Friday Wi-Fi café for youths, and more elderly facilities e.g. table tennis, cooking.
- Provided feedback to Annual Parish Assembly on Community Questionnaire (270 returned from residents) and commenced updating of the Community Plan (previous 2005).
- Submitted Neighbourhood Plan Designated Area to Stroud District Council.
- Awarded new 3 year youth services contract to YCS from Sept 2015 after new tender process.
- Undertook extensive repairs to the historic Tolsey Clock.
- Continued rolling 5 year maintenance programme for trees managed around the Town.
- Revamped procedures for facility hire including booking system viewability on new website for all council hire venues.
- Continued the overhaul of open spaces in the Town under the management of the Council e.g. more shrubs, perennials and bulbs in various borders to produce a longer more vibrant display. Monitored new service contract for grass cutting, borders and hedge management. Undertook clearance of St Mary's churchyard, working in collaboration with various community groups for clearance & border management, including Cotswolds Wardens for Holywell site and the Clump, also Dyers Brook Road stream side bank overhaul & clearance, Marchesi Walk streamside & bank clearance, and Knapp Rd field below allotments hedging & drainage ditch/channel between Fountain Crescent cleared. Hedging/tree works completed at Knapp Rd allotments along roadside.
- Introduced a solution to worsening weed and litter problem around town, via changed caretaker role and new staff member introduction.
- Sourced new permanent extra administrative cover for One Stop Shop - one day a week and holiday cover.
- Negotiations with Heritage Centre due to their worsened financial situation, resulting in a financial aid package agreement and improved tourism venue to commence April 2016 onwards.
- Completed the CCTV upgrade around town & improved working with Police regarding access/copying of incident data.
- New boiler installed in Town Hall to increase reliability for users & lower costs.

- Staff completed CILCA & ILCA qualifications, and weed spraying certification for buildings manager. Clerk continued professional development training, along with various councillor's training.
- Supported new Councillor elections in May 2015 and also one councillor co-option processed & associated admin/instruction.
- Installed new play equipment at Symn Lane with 'inclusive' theme, also ground surface improvements to entrance gate, around benches & high use areas. New community noticeboard installed at play area entrance with spring bulbs.
- Finalised lease agreement with SDC for Chipping Car Park and ensured that yellow lines/resident parking signage carried out.
- Applied for & awarded Local Council Award Scheme Foundation Status.
- Safety improvements to rear Civic Centre staircase main fire emergency exit, also emergency evacuation chair procured and cascade training carried out for core staff.
- Finalised the agreement with adjacent landowners at Holywell regarding fencing and stream management.



ACTION PLAN FY 2016/17 (outside of routine matters)

- Tackle updates to new Town Council website as an improved communication tool.
- Apply for Local Council Award Scheme 'Quality' Status award after 'Foundation' last year.
- Support new Councillor elections in May 2016, continue to promote councillor training, and also staff various training needs as identified in appraisal process.
- Analyse historical files and register all Council/Trust land holdings via solicitor & Land Registry.
- Make improvements to New Rd allotments via new underground piping and path stabilisation. Also commence risk assessments of all allotments.
- Work closely with Heritage Centre regarding commencement of financial aid package and the improved promotion of Wotton as a tourism venue.
- Complete final few works at Youth Centre and Chipping Club Room to increase usability of space for youths and elderly, and monitor Friday eve sessions.
- Continue plant border management around the town with emphasis on perennials, shrubs and bulbs, augmented by some summer bedding. Work with more volunteers.
- Working with Cotswold Wardens for Holywell Leaze Wall repairs
- Work with community groups to promote Wotton for Walkers, Walking Festival
- Work with partners to make sure a Christmas market event takes place in December 2016.
- Produce an update of the Community Plan (last one 2005) identifying priorities for the town.
- Rope Walk open space improvements; formalise plan, apply for grants, involve more partners.
- Work with Synwell Playing fields Committee to ensure the management of the town's playing fields, social venue and open spaces continues – intervene if failure likely or requested.
- Continued introduction/revision of appropriate policies and procedures as appropriate e.g.



Business Continuity Plan, in line with legislation.

- Apply for a block of Traffic Regulation Orders around Wotton for cost effective improvements.
- Work with the Recreational Trust to improve its governance and objectives.
- Consider replacement Council van due to age and more costly repairs.
- Review, revamp & refresh of Wotton Farmers Market.

WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET

Accounts Heading	Budget 2015/16	Budget 2016/2017
INCOME		
Rent, Lettings, Interest, Fees etc	£31,850	£29,700
Precept	£264,373	(2.4% increase) £270,746
Local Council Tax Support Grant	£13,872	£0
	£310,095	£300,446
EXPENDITURE		
Allotments	£4,000	£3,500
Town Regeneration	£8,000	£5,000
Civic Centre	£32,800	£28,500
Toilets	£6,500	£6,630
Youth Projects	£16,000	£16,320
Cemetery/Churchyard	£10,800	£13,000
Library	£2,780	£2,836
Neighbourhood Warden	£2,000	£0
Grants	£4,700	£1,300
Swimming Pool	£28,000	£28,000
Synwell Playing Field	£2,700	£2,700
Heritage Centre	£0	£3,400
CCTV	£2,200	£2,000
Wages	£29,000	£36,000
Chipping Clubroom	£5,000	£0
Town Hall Capital Expenditure	£4,000	£4,000
Footpaths & Holywell	£1,700	£1,000
	£160,180	£154,186
Amenities and Other	£39,115	£31,060
Administration, Office Equipment, Salaries	£101,600	£110,200
Contingency	£9,200	£5,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£310,095	£300,446
TOTAL INCOME	£310,095	£300,446

GRANTS AND SUPPORT TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Recipient	FY 2015/2016	FY 2016/2017
Synwell Playing Field	£2,700	£2,700
CAB (<i>Plus free use of premises/photocopier</i>)	£178	£200
County Air Ambulance	£150	£150
Chamber of Trade leaflet distribution	£400	£400
Insight Gloucestershire	£100	£0
Tabernacle Burial Ground Grasscutting	£195	£225
Heritage Centre	£1,000	£3,400
Wotton in Bloom	£1,650	£2,000
Swimming Pool	£28,000	£28,000
Library (<i>and exterior maintenance</i>)	£2,700	£2,836
Wotton Traders (<i>Xmas trees & Shop Window Competition</i>)	£605	£625
Blues Festival (<i>via SDC In Our Towns</i>)	£300	£0
Open Gardens Event (<i>via SDC In Our Towns</i>)	£300	£0
Wotton Community Sports Foundation (<i>safe path – from reserves</i>)	£0	£5,000
Victim Support/Glos Chest Fund/Cobalt	£0	£155
TOTAL	£38,278	£45,691
Town Council Support to W-U-E Town Trust	FY 2015/2016	FY 2016/2017
Public Works Loan (<i>Repairs to Arts Centre Floor</i>)	£4,015	£3,920
Town Hall Boiler (<i>from earmarked funds – 2016/17 to rebuild maint. funds</i>)	£5,520	£2,000
Chipping Clubroom (<i>Building & heating works/legal fees</i>)	£8,136	£0
Town Hall Rebuild Permanent Endowment (<i>Charity Comm. Requirement</i>)	£2,000	£2,000
Support for Loss of Rent (<i>Youth Centre, Chipping Car Park</i>)	£4,700	£4,700
Heritage Centre Maintenance (<i>From reserves</i>)	£0	£6,000
TOTAL	£24,371	£18,620

One Stop Shop Statistics 2015

Month	SDC	GCC	WTC	Other	CC/TH Booking	Photocopy /Fax	CAB	Sales	Gen Info	Wotton Info	Totals
Jan	15	21	68	5	27	21	9	4	45	30	245
Feb	13	46	20	3	28	21	4	1	45	30	211
March	12	20	53	6	30	12	2	1	31	23	190
April	23	13	50	9	26	14	1	1	42	21	200
May	24	13	42	4	36	12	2	1	51	23	208
June	18	14	22	6	32	3	2		30	34	161
July	23	12	20	3	19	10	2	3	26	36	154
Aug	17	19	20	6	16	12	1	1	42	36	170
Sept	16	27	14	8	38	10	4		38	48	203
Oct	24	25	21	4	34	14	7	4	71	43	247
Nov	22	37	28	5	28	17	5	13	75	41	271
Dec	9	10	10	2	5	2	1	8	23	11	81
Totals 2015	216	257	368	61	319	148	40	37	519	376	2,341
Totals 2014	258	271	371	44	355	262	72	25	532	477	2,667

POLICE REPORT 2015/16 – PCSO Ben Rollins

The Wotton-under-Edge Policing Team is responsible for the area of Wotton-Under-Edge, Kingswood, North Nibley and surrounding areas. The team is based from Dursley Police Station; although PCSO ROLLINS has a laptop computer that enables him to function from the policing point within Wotton-under-Edge library.

There has been a decrease in the team members over the previous twelve months and the team now consists of PC Matt FIRTH, PCSO Benjamin ROLLINS and PCSO Charlotte KING. PS Simon DAVEY has overall responsibility for neighbourhood policing within the Dursley area.



Over the previous twelve months, and in line with the Police Commissioner priorities, the team has improved multi-agency approaches such as interaction with those members of the community perceived to be vulnerable.

The team is able to provide Crime Prevention Surveys to all residents in the area at no cost – and items such as UV marking pens, light timers, smoke alarms and other safety equipment are available also at no cost to more vulnerable members of the community.

At the end of 2015 the constabulary implemented mobile working, with all officers receiving Samsung Note 4 devices. Although in its early days, the devices have proven to be valuable in assisting officers to complete checks and view and update incidents while out and about. As time moves on, more functionality will be added to the devices to enable more to be done on them without having to return to the station.

Every six months the neighbourhood team also chairs a neighbourhood panel meeting at a local venue at 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.

PC Firth has been taking every opportunity to carry out foot patrol with the local PCSO's in the Town Centre, around play areas and along Rope Walk, both during daylight hours and in the evening in a bid to reduce any issues of anti-social behaviour.

A pilot exercise of locking the gates to the Symn Lane play park in the evenings has proved a success. A willing band of volunteers have been locking the gate each evening in a bid to deter groups from congregating in the area and causing ASB and damage. There has been a marked reduction in ASB related incidents reported in this location. As a result this has been made a full time arrangement with the backing of the Town Council and the volunteers.

Recently upgraded CCTV is also proving to be an asset to the community – Long Street is now fully covered as is the area around the toilets at Rope Walk and the front of the Youth Centre in the Chipping Car Park. This we hope will be a good deterrent to persons who would otherwise be engaging in ASB or criminal activity.

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.

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

Vehicles are being stop-checked by officers, uncovering cases of no insurance, dealt with by Traffic Offence Reports and vehicle seizures, anti-social use of motor vehicles and vehicle defects.

Officers of the Special Constabulary have been taking the lead on this priority. They have been running a countywide operation called “Wheeled Respect” that aims to target motoring offences, and deal with them by way of education where appropriate. They have been active in the Wotton under Edge area –out and about in their speed camera and ANPR equipped van.

An increased police presence and robust action in the KLB school area has also led to a reduction in complaints of antisocial driving here. One driver has been reported for careless driving; this has sent a message out to others that it will not be tolerated.

Over the past few months, speed checks have been conducted in various locations with drivers being either ticketed or warned when found to be exceeding the speed limit.

We as police are limited as to what we can do in relation to parking issues – it is as frustrating for us as I am sure it is for the community to see vehicles parking on double yellow lines up Long Street! This is a matter that should be dealt with by Council Parking Enforcement Officers.

Youth engagement

The neighbourhood team have planned 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.

The Police Information Point within KLB School is now fully operational and accessible. A secure drop box has been included for the pupils which is only accessible by members of the team.



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Full Moon Public House. The SDC Development Control Committee has now considered this application, and agreed to defer it, for at least 6/9 months to allow the community more time to bid for the site as a Public House, and a going business concern. SDC also stated that the site was still over developed.

Fountain Crescent Site. SDC now wishes to sell off this site, instead of building affordable houses, which was the original intention.

Neighbourhood Planning. WTC met with Mr Ricardo Rios from SDC. He explained many aspects of Neighbourhood Planning - where it could contain matters and provisions relating to more affordable housing, green open spaces, design principles, and parking.

Houses and Car Parking by the Fire Station. Mr M Evans of Coburn Homes came to WTC with proposals for the land, prior to a planning application. Mr Evans showed draft plans, for 96 car spaces, 2 spaces for coaches and 10 houses. It was requested by Council that the houses should be of Cotswold stone and traditional build. A public meeting will be held. We supported in principle.

11 Haw Street. This old listed building, which was historically used as a wheelwright and, more recently, as a builders with workshops at the rear, is being converted for residential use.

Potters Pond Development. Now well on the way to being completed, it will be good to get the small footbridge reopened again for access. There have been problems with parking on the Potters Pond main road.

The Town Council was consulted by SDC on 100 planning applications and one change of lease holder.

Town Council Recommendations	District Council Decisions	Number
Support	Permitted/Consent	61
Support	Refused	3
Object	Permitted/Consent	20
Object	Refused/Withdrawn	5
Support	Withdrawn	1
Object	Deferred	2
Support	Awaiting Decision	7
Object	Awaiting Decision	1



***Cllr Terry Luker
Chairman Planning Committee***

Town Regeneration Partnership - Annual Report March 2016

The Town Regeneration Partnership exists to represent those who have an interest in Wotton-under-Edge and its future. It is a partnership between the Town Council and members of community organisations in the town.

Budget: The Town Regeneration budget for FY16/17 is £5000, providing support for the Farmers Market, Wotton in Bloom, Flower Baskets, Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum, Christmas Trees, and Christmas Shop Window Prizes. Funding for the Town Council website, town tidying, and public toilet refurbishment has also been included in the main Town Council budget.

Community Plan: Following on from last year's Community Questionnaire, members of the Regeneration Partnership, along with other councillors and community representatives, have been working on an update to the town's 2005 Community Plan. This work, which is supported by SDC and will be completed shortly, has identified the following priorities for action:

- Need for a diverse selection of shops and reduction in number of vacant premises.
- Improve condition of open spaces, allotments, churchyard, footpaths, pavements & verges.
- Promote tourism, arts, entertainments and festivals and improve public toilets.
- Provide more parking in the town at no extra cost to residents.
- Expand Youth Facilities and promote an Inclusive Society.

Open Spaces: Two work parties to tidy up St Mary's churchyard were organised by the Town Clerk and well attended by just over a dozen volunteers, who carefully removed overgrowth around graves and headstones. Scrub clearance was also undertaken by the Cotswold Wardens. The Town Council also funded significant repairs to the rear stone wall after it collapsed and the Council's contractor did further clearance of brambles at edges and rear of the churchyard. Grass will be sown on the cleared areas in Spring 2016. Many positive comments have been received from the public and more clearance work, wall repair and bulb planting is planned for 2016.



Festivals: Grants of £300 have been given to Under the Edge Arts for the Blues Festival; and to the Wotton Open Gardens and Sculpture Trail from In Our Towns funding. Efforts are also on-going to establish a Wotton Walking Festival in Spring 2017 if a sufficient number of people volunteer to help.

Wotton in Bloom: The baskets have once again been really lovely this year and stayed up longer than usual into October. Unfortunately one basket was stolen.

Farmers Market: The Farmers Market remains popular although there has been a continued decline in the number of stalls and, as a result, Town Council subsidy has increased. Plans are under consideration to make the market more general and improve advertising.

Town Hall Teas: The Council makes the Town Hall available free to community groups on Sundays for Town Hall Teas. In the last year, Town Hall Teas raised over £9000 for good causes and continues to be very well subscribed.

The Heritage Centre: Under a grant agreement with the Town Council, the Heritage Centre will become a Visitor Information Centre. Council funding will help secure the future of the Centre.

Christmas Trees: Once again the installation of the trees and lighting was undertaken by the Chamber of Trade with financial support to traders of £430 from the Town Council.

Wotton Cinema: The Cinema business has now been transferred from Community ownership to a new company. As a result of the transfer, the remaining residual funding will be transferred to the Recreational Trust for investment in the community.

Cllr Roger Claydon- Chairman Town Regeneration Partnership



Public Rights of Way and Amenities

Committee Report 2015/16



This year has seen some changes to the membership of the committee after several longstanding members stood down. This included the Chairman of the Footpaths committee, Chris Galbraith, his wife, Clair Galbraith and co-opted member Brian Rodman. Many thanks go to them for their contribution over many years. There continues to be a vacancy for someone with an enthusiasm for the local paths to join the committee as a co-opted member.

Members undertake a rolling programme of surveys of the paths in the Wotton Parish which helps to ensure that the local Public Rights of Way are readily usable. This survey has been ongoing for many years and we have been told on a number of occasions that the Wotton paths are noticeably better maintained than those in neighbouring parishes where such a system is not in place.



The Clump on Wotton Hill comes under the remit of this Committee. Following the uprooting of one of the young trees in the Clump, and also in accordance with the Town Council's Tree Survey, four new Scots Pine saplings were purchased by the Town Council and planted by the Cotswold Wardens. Many thanks to the Cotswold Wardens for their assistance with this. Particular thanks also go to Mr Julian Turner and Mr Staszek Jarmuz for their hard work in keeping down the undergrowth and clearing the litter in the walled enclosure.

In May 2016 the Cotswold Wardens are going to carry out wall repairs at the Holywell Leaze amenity site and build an outdoor classroom there. The classroom will be a low circular wall which will provide additional seating for the site.

There are concerns about the path in one area along Marchesi Walk where the bank is being undercut by the stream. This is being monitored and has been referred to the Gloucestershire County Council for their advice. The County Council is also looking at other areas further along the stream where the banks are being eroded.

The idea of a Walking Festival in the town is being explored, after the suggestion was broached to both this committee and the Town Regeneration Partnership. A working group of Councillors and interested members of the public has been formed to progress the project, aiming for a date in Spring 2017.

Cllr Paul Smith Chairman of the Footpaths Committee

Allotments Committee Report to Parish Assembly 2016

Wotton-under-Edge has 77 allotments: 42 plots at New Rd and 35 at Knapp Road. For those who would find a full size too large, we also have half plots available.

Traditionally rents have been collected in April. However, due to the major part of the growing season being lost when tenants decide not to renew their agreements, it was felt that the date of collection should be moved to October. This will come into effect in October 2016 following a six month payment in April 2016.

For newcomers to Wotton and residents alike having an allotment can be beneficial in so many ways, providing fresh fruit and vegetables along with exercising in fresh air and making friends.

It is important any new tenants realise that there is some hard work involved such as digging and ensuring that the plot is tended regularly. We have many experienced gardeners who are very willing to pass on useful tips including what grows well on the sites.

Knapp Road

Knapp Road Allotment Association has an active and enthusiastic committee which generates a good communal spirit and organises projects that benefit members and newcomers alike.

Many unusual crops are grown on the allotments, including hops for the first time last year by the association Chairman Alex Didcott....I never did get to try a pint of brew.

The association plan, with the support of the Town Council, to improve the top path and bank nearest Knapp Road to give tenants easier access.

Last summer I attended a BBQ at the allotments and I was pleased to see a good turn out on a typical English summer's day, damp and cold but the grub was plentiful and tasty. Mr David Wilson came along to judge the "Best Box of Produce Award" given in memory of Mr Cecil Smith, along with the Town Council "Best Kept Allotment Awards" kindly judged previously by Mr Wilson and Mr Jim Morrow.



New Road

Following the introduction of new water regulations for allotments in 1999, New Road was inspected, and it showed improvements are needed to comply. I met with contractors to discuss the up-grade of the water supply along with improvements to the paths, bank by the housing development at the Chipping Surgery and hand rail to the main gate. The main gate was damaged during works carried out by the contractors of the housing development which resulted in an unsatisfactory repair and this has now been rectified.

Unfortunately New Road allotment holders have not been able to form an association, but Mr Andrew Burns has kindly taken on the role as spokesperson on behalf of the tenants.

We are very grateful to members and site representatives of the Allotments Committee along with tenants for their support over the past year. Also thanks to Diana in the office for guidance over the past year.

Cllr P Barton, Chairman of Allotments Committee

YOUTH REPORT

Wotton Town Council currently funds two evenings of youth work at the Youth Centre, which take place every Monday and Thursday during term time. These sessions generally attract between 15 and 50 young people and are run by the team at Youth and Community Services in partnership with young local volunteers.

The sessions provide those aged between 11 and 18 with a warm, safe place to meet and socialise with their friends. Facilities include free wifi, pool, table tennis, an outdoor space, computers, TV/radio, c-card registration, tea/coffee and squash. There are also occasional evenings of smoothie making, film & popcorn nights, arts and craft activities, baking, card games, and opportunities to meet and talk with local organisations, such as SDC Neighbourhood Wardens, PCSOs & police, and Wotton Community Sports Foundation.



In April 2015 ownership of the Chipping Clubroom, which adjoins the Youth Centre, was transferred to Wotton-under-Edge Town Trust. The Trust also owns the Youth Centre building. It was an opportunity to increase the space for the Youth Centre, which could be a little crowded at times. The Town Council commissioned works to put a connecting door between the two buildings, doubling the space available for the young people including a larger enclosed rear space for lighter evenings.

Wotton Youth Liaison Group is working to connect up all those involved in youth work in the town. We are also fundraising and applying for grants to pay for a wide range of activities for young people. Our aims for the coming year include helping to coordinate a varied programme of activities for the summer holidays and increasing the number and diversity of young people involved in Wotton Youth Forum.

Katie Elliott

Chairman of Wotton Youth Liaison Group



Wotton Library – Ludgate Hill

We are open:	
Monday	Closed
Tuesday	10 – 1 & 2 – 6
Wednesday	10 – 1 & 2 – 5
Thursday	Closed
Friday	10 – 1 & 2 – 5
Saturday	9.30 – 12.30

Free Wi-Fi & Digital Excellence

Our exciting new development for this year has been the installation of Free Wi-Fi at the library. This has brought us many new visitors who have come in to take advantage of the service. Library customers have greatly appreciated being able to use mobile devices in the pleasant & relaxed setting of the Library, either because they do not have the service at home or because they have a problem with their home service. One grateful customer said we were 'a life saver' when they were waiting for their Wi-Fi to be installed.

We have used the advent of Wi-Fi to promote our digital services (e-books, e-audio and free access to Ancestry.co.uk) and to help people get to grips with all aspects of being online. With the support of our volunteers we helped get people started using PCs & the internet & offered help trouble shooting problems they might be having with their tablets & other devices.

Encouraging Children to visit the library

Whilst the Summer Reading Challenge remains the main focus of our work with children & their families (and this year was no exception!) we have also made sure we offer activities throughout the year. So children were invited to join us at the library to grow sunflowers; hunt Easter eggs and make sock puppets, jack-o-lanterns and stained-glass windows. During the summer they built paper planes, made animal masks; went on a bear hunt and undertook a range of silly tasks such as balancing a spoon on their nose as well as reading their 6 books for the Challenge.

Health Information

Libraries throughout the county have been working closely with health organisations to promote better information and Wotton was no exception. We have long had a range of books which GPs can recommend to people for whom they feel this would be a benefit. This autumn we also offered a new collection of 'Reading Well Mood-Boosting' titles. This was part of a national promotion of uplifting titles prepared by The Reading Agency, and included novels, poetry and non-fiction. The books were recommended by readers and reading groups around the country.



In addition, with support from the Alzheimer's Society, we had 2 Dementia Awareness promotions, providing information and books for people who are living with dementia or who just simply wanted to find out more about this illness.

Older & less mobile people

Our monthly Library Club continues to flourish with a small but regular group who come to the library via the Community Transport we provide. Volunteers are then on hand to provide tea & biscuits whilst club members get an opportunity to chat and choose their books before being taken home, or occasionally meet an interesting speaker.

If you would like more information about the Club please contact the library on 01453 842115.

Thanks - Once again we must thank our volunteers who give their time every week and the Town Council who make an annual contribution to our costs. Together this means we are able to maintain the 22 hours of library opening per week.

Report provide by Wotton Library

WOTTON IN BLOOM 2015



I am delighted to be able to report that once again Wotton in Bloom has been a great success. 2015 was a terrific year for us, everything worked in our favour from the weather to the amount of interest generated on our Facebook page.

We put up 135 baskets and troughs in the main streets of Wotton, and they looked magnificent. I believe that they have now become a feature of the local landscape and I know that local residents look forward to them going up, they have truly bought in to the project. I have been looking at local websites and see that they are liberally festooned with pictures of the flowers – especially the new Town Council website which could be an advert for Wotton in Bloom on its own.

Wotton in Bloom not only decorates the streets, but forges links with other organisations and businesses in the town. Our plants and baskets come from Wotton Farm Shop and they are watered and fed by Dave Howse Services. In 2015 we linked up with Oh So Clean who tested the brackets for the baskets and dealt with any minor repairs during the season. We really value our suppliers and it's a great thing to have such reliable, consistent and cheerful local businesses to call on.

In 2015 we raised a total of £10,431 from basket sales, donations and sponsorship. Our major donors were the Town Council, Renishaw plc, Bear Street Garage, Wotton Lions and Alderley plc. Many local residents contributed, as did a number of our clubs and societies. We are so grateful for this support as it is not a cheap project to run and we depend on every penny that we can raise. The total spent in 2015 was £10,143, so it was a close run thing. As a charitable body we are governed by Charity Commission guidelines and cannot enter into financial arrangements with our suppliers unless we have the money to meet our obligations. This means that every year we work hard to fundraise not only for the baskets and all associated costs for that year, but to make sure that there is always a ring-fenced sum in our account.

On behalf of the Wotton in Bloom team I would like to thank everyone who contributed in 2015: traders, clubs, individuals, local businesses, Sue Bailey and the Council team, PCSO Ben Rollins and all of our suppliers.

From my part, I would like to thank the group which meets each month to make this happen: Jill Tebb, June Cordwell, Clair Galbraith, Jo Roberts, Paul Grimes, Pete Roberts, Mike Zimmer, Trevor Mason and Angus Wilkinson. You are all stars!

Sue Hunt

Chair Wotton in Bloom 2015



Wotton Swimming Pool

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.



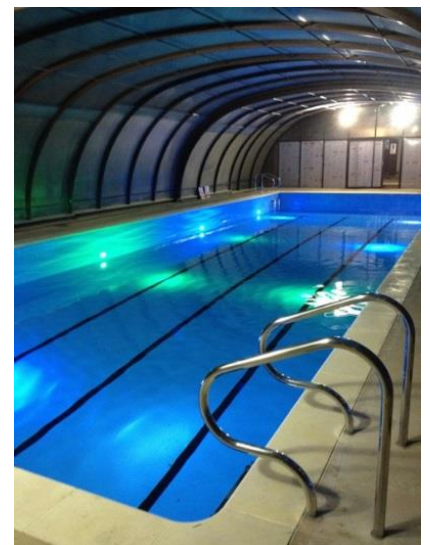
This season has been one of increased consolidation: We retained the entire management team and we retained the successful mix of sessions (public, lanes, parent and child, families, ladies therapeutic, adult general swim). We continued to offer private bookings and school usage was somewhat greater than last year. We also consolidated and increased our swimming lessons. These are economical, well attended and greatly appreciated by families in the area. The use of the pool during public sessions was about 20% lower than last year and this was probably associated with the poorer weather and possibly the increased school use and swimming lessons. Building on last year's experience, we got the pool ready in advance of the swimming season and used it to train the cadre of lifeguards. This meant we had a useful quota of freshly trained-and-tested supervisors to get the season going, along with the group of lifeguards whom we trained last year and remained in the town — many go away to college/university each year.

As regards the facilities, we have been thinking about improvements to the changing facilities and useable accommodation. A pool development group has met a number of times since the renewal of the service level agreement in 2014 gave us the confidence to consider some substantial developments. A clear strategy has evolved and been agreed with the Town Council (the site owners), namely to refurbish the changing rooms piecewise using a mixture of volunteer and professional services. This was thought to be a much more manageable project than demolition and rebuild as it involves smaller costs, distributed cashflow and the greater opportunity to use volunteer assistance.

On the practical front this year, we rerouted the return flow from the pool to the pump house using a bifurcated pipeline. This has safety benefits (it limits the suction on a single port) and has bypassed the 55 year-old buried cast iron pipe that was considered an operational risk when the pool was transferred to community enterprise operation in 2011. Also we repainted the pool tank to brighten up the facility for the season.

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. And we have continued to operate in accord with the keynotes we defined for the facility last year, namely, safe, high quality, indefinitely ongoing, low maintenance, community enterprise and 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) 24/2/16

Wotton Community Sports Foundation Report to Wotton Town Council - Annual Parish Assembly March 2016

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

Our site continues to be a well-used sports hub – we have to see the occasional congestion and clashes as a by-product of having an extremely popular facility.

I'm really pleased that we completed construction of our skate park last spring, which has been a very popular addition to our site. The progress that we've made towards the access path since then has been incredible: we've obtained the planning permission, and are within striking distance of our target, so I'm confident that we'll soon be making further construction for the benefit of the community.



Photograph courtesy of Wheelscape

The further tree planting, including 37 fruit trees, continues our commitment to improving the ecology of the site. I'm very enthused by our other planned features, such as the memory walk, and the jogging trail around the site, which I think will expand our appeal to the whole community.



Minor works on the site were mainly the two new shipping containers installed by the Rugby Club and the Round Table to replace the stone barn, which is unfortunately in a poor condition. However, the new shipping containers are a cost effective solution, and have minimal visual impact thanks to the paint scheme. We've also supported the Rugby Club with their floodlight installation, and undertaken general maintenance.

The other big change this year was that we formally entered into a partnership agreement with KLBS, through which we took over the running of the sports centre. It's fair to say that this has proved more challenging operationally than any of us had anticipated, but we should be proud to have a full community run facility, with a strong partnership serving the whole community. Bookings and usage on both sides of the fence are up since last year, and the JVC is now able to channel funds to the parent organisations, having repaid the setup costs.

Looking further forward, I'm really excited at the thought of further significant development on the site, with a full size floodlit 3G pitch, clubhouse and changing rooms. In the hopefully nearer future, we've got the two BMX tracks, the children's playground, the sensory garden and parkrun with the memory walk section also all being progressed. We need to keep focus on the overall development of the site – the map produced by local illustrator Karl Whiteley is a great tool for sharing our vision with the community!

Again, I am very grateful for the continuing support of 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

SYNWELL PLAYING FIELD

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 301658



This will be the 84th year that Synwell Playing Field has been available to the community.

- It was bought and paid for by subscriptions 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 11 Jubilee Field in 2012.
- It is affiliated to Fields In Trust and Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association.

A survey carried out in September 2015 by Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association reported the following:

Playing Field Pitch Assessment	Excellent
Site and Ancillary Facilities	Good
Playground Facilities	Good

And added that the site was a credit to the volunteers that maintain and run the Playing Field.

Synwell Playing Field Committee is made up of local residents who meet regularly to run and maintain this 4 acre field. 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.
- 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.

Football Matches played on Synwell Playing Field in the 2014- 2015 season were:

Senior Matches	33
Junior Matches	36

Wotton Rovers Football Club were still only able to contribute a reduced annual payment for using the pitch, so we are very grateful to Wotton Town council for extra funding that enables us to maintain the pitch to the "Excellent" standard reported.

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. A Facebook page has been set up, both to advertise this facility and to let people know what is going on at the field.

<https://www.facebook.com/SynwellPlayingField>

In 2015 the Field was hired for a number of events including:

A fund raising event for the Meningitis Trust

Wotton Baptist Church Play scheme games and barbecue.

Stroud District Council- Play in the park, a family fun event.

Wotton Children's Centre- Storytelling, craft activities and picnic.

Eastville Park Prison 'inmates v staff' football match.

Fund-raising stalls were also set up to raise money and promote awareness of the Playing Field at the **Medieval Fair and Charities Fair**.

Our care and maintenance of the Field and its environs extends to a commitment to the natural world. We planted approx 40 saplings at the bottom of the Field in conjunction with Stroud Tree Workshop, to form a wildlife area. We also cleared out rubbish and some of the shrubs and bushes with hired help from the Community Playback Scheme.

This year 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 to keep the Field in good order.

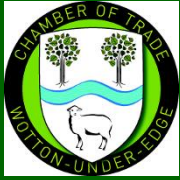
During the last year we have lost a number of our committee members and are concerned that, without a strong committee, the future of the Field as a community owned asset may be unsure. If you would like to help maintain this valuable community asset and would like to join the committee, it meets for an hour at 8pm every 3rd Wednesday of the month, in the Pavilion Clubhouse.

We would be very grateful for your help, support and ideas.

Our AGM is on Wed 16th March at 8pm in the Pavilion Clubhouse at Synwell Playing Field.

Report by Darrall Davies





2015 was not a year for the faint hearted with the usual pressures continuing to have an effect on the town's traders. Some businesses have sadly fallen by the wayside and some new ones have sprung up. It is a shame that there are still so many empty properties in the town. Membership has reduced slightly but not to the levels of recent times.

It was also a year for headline grabbing events:

Wotton and its community has suffered for decades from a shortage of parking. At the Chamber's AGM in February plans were unveiled to double the town's parking. It was a deal in which the Chamber's President, Alex Wilkinson, played a major part in setting up; one

Proposal could fix parking problems

which currently proposes ten residential properties and, much more importantly, a 96 space 'long stay' car park with extra provision for the parking of two coaches.

The freehold of the carpark would be handed over to the town for nothing and would enable the Chipping Car Park to become 'short stay'.

Although it had been hoped to have it sorted by now plans have, within the last couple of weeks, taken a major step forward, with the purchase from Gloucestershire County Council of a strip of land adjacent to the fire station which will enable adequate access to the car park and houses.

Then, in an attempt to tidy up one of the main entry points to the town, the Chamber was the main driving force behind putting up a poster in Old Town to cover up an unsightly boarded-up doorway. It is not for the Chamber to comment on the story behind this action, it is simply trying to improve the looks of the place and to welcome visitors.

It soon became apparent that planning consent would be required and so the sign was removed. However, within the last fortnight an application for Listed Building Consent has been accepted by the planning authority for consideration and a major campaign been initiated for the town's community to show its approval. Within just a few days hundreds of supporters had already registered on Stroud District Council's planning website.

In addition, the Chamber's association with the Wotton in Bloom project, now in its seventh year, has continued and is known to be attracting visitors to the town.

And what of the future year? Well, apart from working towards the successful outcome of those items mentioned above a new project is rapidly gathering momentum and set to attract more people to the town.

Following a suggestion and some input from the Chamber's President, Alex Wilkinson, Under the Edge Arts are organising the first Wotton Blues Fest to take place in September.

We can only hope that it is as successful as Wotton in Bloom and continues for years to come.

Alex Wilkinson

Outrage over sign removal by council



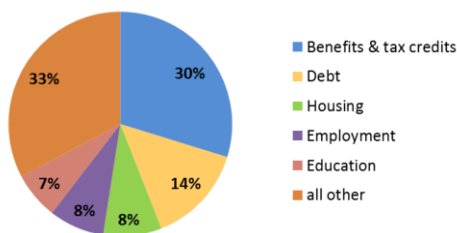
Citizens Advice Stroud District is a local charity that helps people resolve their legal, money, and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice and by working to influence social policy both locally and nationally.

Throughout the past year residents of Wotton-under-Edge have continued to benefit from our advice services, which they can access in a number of ways:

- Face to face at our Wotton Outreach on Tuesdays between 10am – 1pm
- Via our Freephone telephone helpline on 0808 800 0510 at other times
- Email advice via our website www.citizensadvice-stroudandcotswold.org.uk where there is also a wealth of online information.

Our service is provided by a team of highly trained and experienced volunteer advisers, most of whom bring a wealth of experience from previous careers.

During 2015 we helped **302** residents of Wotton to resolve **911** problems. **28%** of these people were disabled or had long term health problems.



The most common enquiries were about Welfare Benefits and debt issues with housing, employment and consumer issues also prevalent.

Some of the issues residents have had problems with in Wotton includes:

- Debt problems though the Wotton Debt Centre is very supportive.
- The introduction of Universal Credit to replace several other means-tested benefits, with hiccups in the transfer between benefits and difficulties budgeting for rent payments which the client is now responsible for
- Elderly, low income residents of outlying villages such as Kingswood having difficulty accessing public services. Of particular concern has been the loss of High Street banks.

84% of people said their lives were completely or significantly affected by their problem. After advice, this had reduced to 42%.

The vast majority of our clients report improvements to their physical health, confidence and wellbeing, and their relationships with family and friends. Importantly, they also say they feel more knowledgeable about how “the system” works, and more able to help themselves in the future.

Citizens Advice Stroud District is a great place to volunteer: we will be recruiting new advisers in April and more information is available on our website for anyone who might be interested.

We are grateful once again, to Wotton Town Council for its support which enables us to have an on-the-ground presence in the Town, making sure that advice is accessible to those that need it most.



Wotton-under-Edge & District Community Recreational Trust

Registered Charity No. 289185



Report from Wotton under Edge & District Recreational Trust-2015/16.

In 2015 following the AGM, the Recreational Trust Members began the process of updating and regulating its activities ready for a cash injection in March 2016. Funding will come from the transfer of the Cinema business to its new owners in the form of hardware and £20,000. The funding will become available in the spring for a return to the community who generated it in order to bring the Cinema back starting in 2002.

The Committee is made up of five Town Councillors and four members of the public.

There is a new constitution which regulates the way funding is distributed and is intended to stimulate new activities in the Town. Applications for match-funding new projects that need capital equipment by committed constituted organisations will be welcome. Funds will not be available for organisational running costs. Application forms will be made available in due course.

Jeff Walshe/Chair - WRT

Wotton under Edge
Bowls Club



Background.

In the 1970s local residents mounted a campaign to develop part of the land, which was then owned by the District Council, into a bowls Club. The public raised the required funds and help was sought from the Town Council and District Council (who owned the land). This resulted in a sale of "Bowling Green" land from SDC to Wotton Town Council (WTC) for £25,500 including covenant 6, which stated that the land was only to be used as bowling green.

In 1984 the Town Council created the **Wotton under Edge and District Recreational Trust** to manage the assets under a **Declaration of Trust** document dated 1984. The original four Trustees handed over responsibility to the Management Committee once the Trust had been set up and registered with the Charity Commission.

The Bowls Club is run as an autonomous group under the terms of two documents:

- i) **Agreement between the Recreational Trust and Trustees of the Bowls Club-2003**
- ii) **Licence between the Recreational Trust and Trustees of the Bowls Club-2003**

The Recreational Trust also manages the recreational area named as Streamsfield on behalf of the owners – The Town Council.

In 2003 the Recreational Trust expanded its umbrella activities by affiliating organisations with low financial turnover. This enabled those organisations to use the Charity number in their fundraising activities. When any organisation grew to a size where they could be self-sufficient, they left the Recreational Trust and set up independently.

The Trust has been supported with income from modest affiliation fees (since 2003) and the Cinema since 2006. There have been many recipients throughout Wotton as the Trust addressed requests for financial help for a variety of projects. All accounts are registered with the Charity Commission.

Jeff Walshe

Wotton under Edge Historical Society Museum & Heritage Centre

The Chipping, Wotton under Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 7AD



Telephone: 01453 521541

Email: wuehistsoc@gmail.com

Facebook: Wotton Heritage Centre

Website: www.wottonheritage.com

Report from: Wotton under Edge Historical Society -2015/16.

During the months leading up to this meeting, the Wotton Heritage Centre management team have agreed a partnership with the Town Council that will achieve two objectives for 2016/17 going forward.

- 1) The long term preservation of the Towns records, photographs and artefacts.
- 2) The introduction of a Visitor Information Centre at the front of Heritage Centre.

From April 2016, Wotton Town Council has agreed a sum of funding to offset the utility costs of running the Heritage Centre while initiating a proactive scheme to promote Wotton.

The introduction of a Visitor Information Centre at the front of the Heritage Centre will open to serve local residents and Tourists. It will be working in conjunction with the One Stop Shop to provide a service that is open for longer hours than present and in the front line location of the Chipping Car Park.

The Visitor Information Centre from its opening at Easter 2016 will actively be promoting Wotton online and in the Towns and villages nearby. It plans to work with other organisations in the town to maximise the message that Wotton is a good place to visit for both retail and leisure purposes.

The Heritage Centre will continue to raise funds to carry on developing the changes already in progress.

Upgrading access to the history and archives of Wotton-under-Edge for future generations. This will include modern local history as well as old record



Jeff Walshe

Heritage Centre Committee

Background:

In the 1930's a small museum was set up by the Town Trust in the Reading Room of the Town Hall. In 1945 it was taken into the newly formed Historical Society's care.

The library, photographs and artefacts were housed in a room in the ancient Tolsey and opened to the public only rarely. The Tolsey was sold in 1983 and the collection was stored in other places in the Town. Before long, it had outgrown these spaces and had already gained provisional registration as a museum. The former Fire Station in The Chipping, owned by the Town Trust was converted to the current Heritage Centre and opened in 1994 after funds were raised by the public and local benefactors. A room in room Ludgate Hill is still used as a store for the reserve collection. www.wottonheritage.com

Jeff Walshe



This of course can only be a very brief summary of what has been happening at the County Council. It was written at the end of February so some of the information may well have been overtaken by events.

County Council Membership

It is still a minority Conservative administration with a political composition of: 24 Conservative; 13 Liberal Democrat; 9 Labour; 3 UKIP; 1 Green; 1 PAB; 1 Independent; 1 vacancy. During the 2015/16 civic year the council has had a Labour chair and a Liberal Democrat vice-chair.

My roles on the County Council

I continue as Shadow Cabinet member for Fire, Planning and Infrastructure. The Cabinet Member I was shadowing has recently stood down from this position and another Conservative has taken his place, causing two vacancies for committee chairs: Planning and Commons & Rights of Way. I also continue as my group's lead member on the Highways Contract Advisory Group.

In addition to other roles I detailed in last year's report, during this year I was elected Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee and currently I am acting chairman. I have also served on three scrutiny task groups: Access to the Forest of Dean; Climate Change; and the EU Referendum scrutiny task group. More widely, I have continued to be a member of South West Councils and to serve on its Resources and Management Committee.

Children's Activity Fund

Started in 2014/15, this annual fund allocates £5k to each County Councillor for their divisions. During 2015/16, locally this has supported play equipment in Hillesley Playing Field and Hamfields Leisure Centre and sport activities in Wotton through the Youth Centre. I am waiting for details of the scheme for the coming year as it is understood that the criteria for this grant scheme may change but I already have two expressions of interest!

Highways Issues

The new local highways manager, Andrew Middlecote has been in post since last May. The £20k I was allocated for the last financial year, 2014/15, under the Highways Local scheme remained unspent at the end of the year as Amey was unable to progress any of the proposals. This was rolled forward to 2015/16 along with a further £22.5k for that year.

In July unanimous county council support was given to a motion expressing concern over highway repairs in the county and the poor performance of Amey and its poor communication with county councillors, parish councils and the wider community. It was revealed at that time that 58% of its work is delivered through 41 sub-contractors. There were issues over sub-contractors not being paid on time. Local unsatisfactory work by Amey sub-contractors required several revisits to Parklands. I received an apology that, despite my reminding them, most of the pyramid orchids on the verges of Old London Road were once again mown down.

Street Lighting

The LED lighting contract has been awarded to Skanska to convert all the county's street lights (around 55,000) to LED lighting and for the general maintenance of the council's street lighting, lit signs and bollards. In February an LED light was installed in Haw Street.

Gloucestershire Rail Study

I have continued to stress the reopening of Charfield station in meetings with GCC officers and through my response to the LTP consultation. The likely way forward for this is through the proposed MetroWest developments which provide an opportunity for improved Bristol-Gloucester services, including new stations, in the 2019 – 2029 period.

Consultation on Public Transport, Community Transport and Concessionary Fares Review

This consultation ended in January and the results were considered by Cabinet in February for any changes to services to begin in January.

Ten evening stakeholder events were held over the consultation period as well as on-bus and local centre engagement to encourage a strong and representative response from bus users. One of the evening events was held in Wotton after I complained that evening meetings further away would not be accessible by bus to Wotton residents! The Wotton one was well attended, particularly compared with others.

Soon after the start of the consultation Severnside Transport (a community transport based organisation based in South Gloucestershire) gave notice they could no longer afford to run the number 87 subsidised service managed by South Gloucestershire but to which Gloucestershire County Council contributed £54,000 annually. Changes agreed by South Gloucestershire, without notifying Gloucestershire County Council, resulted in South Gloucestershire providing a much reduced service between Wotton-under-Edge and Cribbs Causeway via Thornbury.

Consequently at short notice the County Council procured a replacement six month contract from Stagecoach giving a similar level of service for the Dursley – Wotton-under-Edge and Thornbury corridor, now numbered service 60. One option in Gloucestershire County Council's consultation on the Mikes Travel service 201 envisaged a revised service 87 to Dursley linking with "direct services to Gloucester. The second option was to run the 201 service on its current route three days a week.

The Cabinet meeting in February considered the feedback from public consultation on options to change the way the council invests in local bus services and other issues. One outcome was the acceptance of a recommendation to replace the 201 service with a revised service 87 to Dursley to link with direct services from there to Gloucester. So there will be no direct service to Gloucester from Wotton in future.

In answer to a question I asked at the Cabinet meeting, it was acknowledged that having to change buses at Dursley would lengthen journey times and also be an extra obstacle to use of the service by elderly and disabled travellers. However it was argued that this was offset by an increased choice of onward journey opportunities by using Dursley as a hub.

Locally, minor changes are also being made to:

- the Dursley-Berkeley-Bristol service 88 to improve reliability and coordinate with other services. The alternative was a more extensive reworking of the timetable.
- the Wotton-under-Edge – Stroud service 40. This is to be maintained at the existing level but also diverting the service to serve communities on the service 36, Stroud - Rodborough bus route which is to be withdrawn. The alternative of reducing the number of journeys undertaken by service 40 throughout the day was not pursued. The consultation meeting in Wotton was a significant factor in this.

S Glos Review of Bus Services 84 and 86

These are being revised by South Gloucestershire Council. Gloucestershire County Council was belatedly notified of the consultation which ended on 11th February!

I have been assured that the proposed 84 and 85 circular services will call at (our) Kingswood and that the service will be no worse than the current one. The timetables have not been decided and were not part of the consultation process. They could have an impact on school journeys, which I have questioned.

B4058 Speed Limit

The long wait for this TRO, reducing 50mph sections between Charfield and Wotton to 40mph was recently formally advertised with a closing date of 18th February. It is being financially supported by Kingswood Parish and Wotton Town Council and money from my Highways Local budget.

John Cordwell

Please note that the above are extracts only from the full report produced by Councillor Cordwell. The full report is available on request from Wotton-under-Edge Town Council, or directly from Councillor Cordwell, and includes: County Budget 2016/17; Other Highlights from County Council Meetings; Adverse Weather Plan; Local Transport Plan Review; Highways England; County Council Planning Committee; Fire & Rescue: Future Service Provision; County Council Solar Power Proposals; County Residual Waste Disposal Project – Javelin Park; Devolution in Gloucestershire; Fracking; and more detailed reports on: County Council Membership; My Roles; Street Lighting; Gloucestershire Rail Study.

SDC District Councillor report for 2015-16



The Stroud District Council (SDC) Local Plan, which defines the housing and employment requirements in the District until 2031, has been approved and issued. The plan encourages at least 11,400 homes and 58 hectares of employment land. The strategy is to locate development at higher tier settlements and restrict development outside settlement limits to conserve the countryside. The Stroud District Local Plan is available to view at local.plan@stroud.gov.uk.

A formal response to the 'We are Gloucestershire' bid for Devolution is likely to be received by early spring. The proposals would have to be adopted by each Council in Gloucestershire with the possibility of a new unitary authority being in place for April 2017. This bid can be viewed at www.weareglos.com.

A Sheltered Housing asset review has been completed, taking a view on the future suitability of the sheltered housing stock throughout the District. Wotton-under-Edge was found to have some sheltered housing where facilities and standards were suitable for future long term homes with limited renovations and other areas where substantial work would be required to bring housing up to standards.

At SDC's Development Control committee (DCC) on the 9th February 2016 the committee decided to defer a decision on the planning application at the site of the Full Moon public house for at least 6 months to allow the local community time to explore further options to run this as a community pub.



A revised scheme of polling districts and stations has been agreed following the Electoral review of the District by the Boundary Commission. (www.stroud.gov.uk)

The final arrangements for the **Multi Services Contract** (Refuse) for the in-house SDC owned Ubico refuse collection and sorting service have been approved. Full details of the new service are available at www.stroud.gov.uk.

Budgets have been set for 2016/17 and a District Council tax increase of just under 2% (1.99%) has been agreed by Stroud District Council. The Council tax setting meeting will be held on 25th February. Details are available at www.stroud.gov.uk.

Lesley Reeves District Councillor for Wotton-under-Edge ward 24th February, 2016

***We hope you have enjoyed reading these reports
If you have any comments,
or require further information, please contact:
www.wotton-under-edge.com***

WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL



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