

**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2018 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**



**Present:** Cllrs P Smith (Chairman) T Luker, N Pinnegar, June Cordwell, R Claydon, C Young, John Cordwell, R Hale, J Turner, P Barton, L Farmer, A Wilkinson

**In attendance:** Town Clerk Ms S Bailey, District Cllrs G Butcher & K Tucker, 4 members of public

**T.5457 Apologies for Absence** all present

**T.5458 Declarations of Interest** Cllrs John & June Cordwell noted dispensation granted for Glos County Council business (ref: accounts payments)

**T.5459 Public Forum** – none

**T.5460 Wotton Swimming Pool** – Wotton Pool Management team gave a Power Point presentation on refurbishment works of changing rooms and new rear deck, & grants received for this. Funds are still being sought for tiling the pool (to eliminate constant painting) and finishing the roof/solar system, with a Sport England application looking very hopeful for the majority, leaving just £9000 to find. The team was congratulated on their efforts, particularly for the fundraising.

**T.5461 Wotton Branch of the Royal British Legion** A brief report was given on plans to commemorate the end of World War I by a local RBL member, namely to request that WTC chooses a Wotton Town Councillor representative to visit Flanders as part of a nationwide visit. The RBL member also explained the dire situation of the local RBL branch financially and concerns for the future ability of commemorative events such as Remembrance, given the advanced age of the majority of RBL members. A meeting was requested with the Town Council to explore opportunities for joint working. A separate meeting is to be arranged to explore this, with an RBL grant consideration for possible Flanders representation.

**T.5462 To receive Police Report** – no attendance by Police; a report listing call logs was noted.

**T.5463 To approve the Minutes** of the council meeting of 15th January 2018 - to approve these Minutes It was proposed by Cllr R Hale and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar to approve the Minutes with one minor amendment, agreed 11 in favour, 1 abstention.

**T.5464 Chairman's Announcements** – no report

**T.5465 Accounts**

a) To consider information and quotes for appointment of contractor to undertake Council's 5-yearly tree survey. A report was prepared which loosely extrapolated and analysed the comparable costs of the previous 3 years of tree work invoices using the different rates provided by each company, in order to assess whether the higher cost of the initial electronic GPS survey would be worth the extra investment even with cheaper procurement rates for actual tree works. This resulted in very little difference and it was therefore proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr T Luker that the current surveyor Mr Unwin's quote be approved for approximately £1050, with some extra surveying for Hill Rd and Conygre Woods, agreed by all. Cllr Claydon was thanked for providing the analysis.

- b) To consider providing a lidded grit bin in Coombe at a cost of £112 incl. delivery. It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr C Young to purchase this, agreed by all.
- c) To approve Caretaker attendance at brushcutter course at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester at a cost of £160. It was proposed by Cllr L Farmer and seconded by Cllr P Barton fund this, agreed by all.
- d) To consider Allotments Committee quote/request £680 for strimming work at Knapp Rd allotments; or consider caretaker doing this following brushcutter course above. It was agreed to defer this pending completion of brushcutting course above.
- e) To consider quotes for ascertaining soil depths in the cemetery to establish which areas have sufficient depth of soil for double graves and which are suitable for single depth only. After consideration of the different quotes which provided different methods of investigation (trial pits, samples, radar), it was proposed by Cllr L Farmer and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar that Subsurface Geotech is suitable as an investigation technique and that £1600 be approved, agreed by all.
- f) To approve payment from Town Trust to Town Council of the administration fee of £7,000. It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve, agreed by all.

- g) To approve payments from Town Council to Town Trust as follows:
  - (i) £2000 to rebuild permanent endowment following Town Hall refurbishment as required by the Charity Commission;
  - (ii) £4700 to Town Trust (Police Station £3500 & Chipping Car Park £1200 rent loss)

It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr L Farmer to approve both above payments, agreed by all.

- h) To receive report on Tolsey Clock and to approve hire of a cherry-picker (prices being obtained) to enable maintenance works as requested by Tolsey Clock technician. The Clerk explained initial problems identifying suitable cherry picker hire due to sloping ground, pavement width restrictions needing road closure, and high costs involved, however suggested a local farmer with a cherry picker mounted land rover had been used before and who was quoting £43 per hour. It was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell and seconded by Cllr T Luker to use the local farmer, agreed by all.

- i) To approve Mayor attendance at Breaking the Mould conference in Frome on 12th April 2018 at a cost of £99 plus mileage £31. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve, agreed by all. A report is requested following the conference, which may also help with ideas for improving a town council's local reputation.

- j) Budget 2017/18. To note report of expenditure against budget. Noted as healthy.

- k) To approve the accounts for payment. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr L Farmer to approve payments, agreed by all.

**T.5466 Audit:** to approve appointment of Mr I A Selkirk as independent internal auditor for Town Council and Town Trust for the Financial Year April 2017 – March 2018. It was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr R Claydon to approve internal auditor, agreed by all.

**T.5467 Old Town Toilets:** to further consider options for the future of the toilets due to continued poor state of equipment and building itself, cost of yearly maintenance, low usage, & high quotes received to rebuild the facility of around £80,000. Awaiting roof quote. Thornbury town toilet system details obtained as requested at last meeting. The Mayor is investigating possible public usage of nearby toilet facilities and will advise further at the next council meeting. Cllr Luker is also talking to a local builder about the possibility of refurbishing the building in stages, commencing with a pitch roof, and costs.

**T.5468 Greenway Group:** to receive a brief update on recent charitable status, and funding aims of the group. Cllr R Hale explained that constitution details have just been sorted and the group is under the umbrella of the Recreational Trust. The recent meeting was well supported and the survey results data is currently being analysed. The group is liaising with Sustrans and £7000 fundraising is the target for a feasibility study. Council commented that it is concerned that the survey did not emphasise that the project would take a long time to deliver, with significant expense involved, thus falsely raising expectations of people completing the surveys who are expecting it to happen very soon.

**T.5469 Good Deeds Section:** Thanks to Volunteers – to acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community; a card to be sent to the ladies organising the new Play Area at Bearlands for successfully fundraising almost £45k.

**T.5470 Clerk's Report** a written report supplied of main activities undertaken. It is very pleasing to note that the new caretaker in post and the phased return of the buildings manager is leading to many outstanding repair jobs being tackled.

**T.5471 Correspondence** to note or request action:

a) To note Stroud District Council letter concerning further conduct complaints against several Town Councillors & consider how to take the matter forward. The Mayor read a statement stressing how Councillors **must** understand and abide by the Town Council's Code of Conduct and ask the Clerk about anything if not clear. The issues in the Monitoring Officer's letter will be considered at a councillor working group meeting, to be arranged by the Clerk, which all Town Councillors are expected to attend.

b) To note email concerning the demise of the Road Safety Partnership due to financial cuts and to consider if this Council wishes to comment. County Cllr John Cordwell is awaiting a response from Glos County Council on the future of road safety training and partnerships in this area and will report to the March meeting.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only: Cobalt News Spring 2018

**T.5472 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended**

County Council – written report provided by Cllr John Cordwell. 2026 is the deadline for registering public rights of way. Extra paths not already highlighted should be highlighted asap for inclusion in the lengthy registration process. The new highways contract will be finalised over the next few months. The 'highways local' funding pot still exists, but is much less than last year

District Council – written report provided by district councillors. Dog fouling issue is a concern at the Oatground in Synwell and the Neighbourhood Warden is involved.

PROW & Amenities Committee – the recent meeting discussed pressing on with footway surveys, allocating routes to members, and highlighting specific problem areas. 4 new members have joined the committee.

Finance & Special Purposes Committee – will meet in 2 week's time.

Allotments Committee – the contractor has done a good job completing the new path entrance at New Rd site, ready for the new water pipe installation shortly. The first allotment plot may shortly be taken by the Dementia/Memory Group due to ease of access; an investigative site visit to take place next week. The first allotments newsletter has just been sent out and will be posted on the newly installed noticeboard at New Rd site, also on the Knapp Rd existing board, in addition to website and email.

Wotton Youth Partnership – the new 'one to one' room at the youth centre has now been emptied of debris ready for preparation.

Town Regeneration Partnership – members have been newly co-opted for the Blues Festival, Wotton in Bloom, and the Secret Garden Trail. A dementia friendly action plan for the town was discussed along with the future of Old Town toilets. SDC Market Towns £50k district funding was noted and details requested. A new market will still be considered even if a new car park is no forthcoming. Under the Edge Arts is suffering financially and likely to lose nearly £6000 this year.

WC Sports Foundation – not attended.

Wotton Pool – presentation earlier at this meeting covered everything.

Heritage Centre – no report

Walking Festival – planning for the second event is in the final stages and brochures will be ready next week; the Clerk requested many copies (including electronic) as they were in short supply last year. The Recreational Trust has given a grant towards this.

Recreational Trust – requests that final grant applications for funding for local good causes are forwarded asap.

Beaumont le Roger twinning – expecting a record number of visitors later this year.

SDC annual parish forum – Powerpoint presentations have been circulated by email. Still problems with the Planning Authority's new website after a system bug; a new launch expected end of March. Central Govt's annual support grant to SDC is now zero and from 2020 SDC will be expected to 'contribute' £524,000 to central Govt (the first local authority in Glos to do so, as a result of being efficient, resulting in Wotton taxpayer funds going to central Govt...). SDC is fighting this. 20% staff reduction at SDC over next 4 years means morale is very low. Council requests that the Clerk prepares a letter to the local MP stating WTC's annoyance/concern at local taxpayer funds being forcibly sent to Central Govt.

## **T.5473      Town Affairs**

Cllr John Cordwell noted that the bench and bin have been moved from outside the former Nat West Bank building. Clerk replied that SDC had moved the bin, however the bench was moved as requested by WTC Members & awaiting a new home; the

hairdresser has refused permission outside their shop, and the chip shop owner has yet to respond.

Cllr J Turner – had received complains about no pavement at Locum Place – he was advised to tell them to contact Glos County Council.

Cllr P Barton – commented that the Dementia Group did a good job and hoped that they secured good rates for hiring the facility at Chipping Club Room. Clerk replied that they benefited from excellent rates, which were very competitive.

### **Meeting of WOTTON TOWN TRUST**

1. Land Registration – To consider solicitor response. Wellers Hedley Solicitors forwarded a very detailed letter from the Land Registry asking for more legal documents and proof of ownership/usage/maintenance. The Clerk drafted a very detailed response after researching through files held in the safe, providing this draft for Councillors to consider prior to this meeting. It was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell, seconded by Cllr R Claydon, and agreed all in favour to respond with this letter as drafted.

2. Auction of Fleur de Lys – noted that broken fleur stone remnant from top of Chipping Hall sold at Wotton Auction Rooms for £95 at its second presentation

*This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.15pm*

Signed: .....Dated: .....