

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH NOVEMBER 2018 AT 7.00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE



PRESENT: Cllr A Wilkinson (Chairman), Cllr P Smith, Cllr P Barton, Cllr T Luker, Cllr R Claydon, Cllr N Pinnegar, Mrs J Walshe (Heritage Centre), Ms S Hunt (Wotton in Bloom), Mr M Tucker (Chamber of Trade), Mr R Garlicki (Wotton Blues Festival), Mrs T McLusky (Beaumont-le-Roger Society) Mr M Clarke (UTEA) Mrs J Tebb (Secret Gardens Trail) In Attendance: Information Officer Mrs J Wyatt

932. Apologies

Apologies were received from Mr G Phillips (Wotton Arts Festival)

933. Declarations of Interest/Dispensations – None

934. Public Forum – No public present.

935. Minutes of the Town Regeneration Partnership Meeting Held on 9th July 2018

Proposed by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Barton that the Minutes of the Town Regeneration Partnership meeting held on 9th July 2018 be approved as a correct record. Agreed - all in favour.

936. Code of Conduct for Committee Co-optees

Members discussed the options for consideration as set out in the review document. The view was expressed that as the Committee acts in an advisory role to the Council it is not necessary for people to be co-opted and its remit could be transferred to a working group. All sub-committees are affected by this issue and the proposed changes would not mean that they have less of a say. The Committee's remit and membership has evolved since it was set up and the proposed change offers an opportunity to review this. **It was proposed by Mr Clarke and seconded by Mrs Tebb to recommend that Committee changes its role to a working group and that the review of its remit is included in the Agenda for the next meeting. All in favour.**

937. Old Town Toilets – The issue was considered at the last Town Council meeting and although there was still no decision on the Market Towns Funding application, it would be considered further at the next Council meeting as part of discussions on the 5-year Project Strategy. Suggestions put forward by Committee members included (1) £40,000 to do a complete renovation of the existing building, including disabled ramp and (2) advice from a local builder that it would be cheaper to install new toilets and the cost would not be great because the services were all in place. A number of quotes had already been included in the Project Strategy. **The Town Clerk will be asked to share the specification so that new quotes can be based on this and to ensure that quotes are comparing like with like. Any new quotes should be submitted to the Town Clerk.**

938. Project Strategy – Five projects have been identified which the Town Council would like to progress subject to costs and funding. Cllr Smith and Cllr Claydon have been assessing the spending this is likely to involve over the next five years. The Strategy is to be considered at the November Town Council meeting following which it is planned to consult with the community on the proposal. The project headings for consideration are: Old Town Toilets, Ok Path lighting, appointment of a Town Centre Manager, upgrading of Knapp Field and the reintroduction of a Town Market. It was noted that Council would also consider the options for consulting residents which could include delivery of a survey with the Wotton Directory. A discussion followed about how the Strategy aimed to include projects that would benefit the whole town. It was suggested that some parts of the town felt 'left out' and this needed to be addressed. A discussion took place around whether ideas put forward at this stage would be considered. Committees need to review their budgets earlier in the year if they are planning for projects to be included in a strategic budget. A new approach needs to be taken to identify what Wotton doesn't have compared to other areas. Projects can then be costed and submitted with funding proposals. Although ideas are invited, it is likely that they would now be considered for future years in view of the timescale.

939. Budget – Members reviewed spending to date under this year’s budget and agreed that in future this should be monitored at every meeting. It was noted that the actual cost of watering hanging baskets was £6350 plus 20% VAT. Wotton in Bloom has donated another £400 since the figures were produced for the meeting. The final figure the Town Council will pay is £1,750, £250 less than budgeted. It was also noted that the Shop Window Competition was not going ahead so this element of the budget would not be spent. This was due to lack of time rather than financial reasons and discussion took place about how planning for this needed to start earlier in future years, especially if traders need to plan for a competition theme.

Members discussed the £500 Xmas tree grant. Due to concerns about health and safety and insurance issues following the installation of Xmas trees last year, the Chamber of Trade has decided to consider other options. Members saw a demonstration of proposed laser lights prior to the meeting and a discussion followed about how the lights would work and could be funded. Although traditional trees are popular, safety considerations need to be taken into account. Laser lights are used effectively in other towns where in some cases the original installations have been expanded. Disposal of traditional trees is also becoming more difficult and costly. If traders wished to install their own traditional trees they could still do so at their own cost and liability. The cost to the Council to provide laser lights would be the same as Xmas trees. **However, the change of use of the grant will need to be agreed by Town Council, proposed by Mrs Tebb, seconded by Cllr Claydon, all in favour.**

Members discussed the Committee’s budget requirement for 2019/20. Watering costs for Wotton in Bloom are expected to increase next year, although the amount is not currently known. It was also noted that the Blues Festival was expecting a general increase in costs next year although this will not affect the budget. A formula for arriving at projected costs for next year was suggested, taking into account the expected increase in the minimum wage. **A figure of £8,500 was calculated for next year’s budget request, proposed by Mr Tucker and seconded by Mrs Tebb, all in favour.**

940. Cotswold Edge and Severn Vale Tourism Network – Mrs Walshe advised members that she is still attending Tourist Information Centre and other networking meetings. The next Dursley Networking meeting is at Cattle Country on December 12th, Mrs Walshe will circulate the details to members. It was noted that this work being done on a local level was of greater importance now that Stroud District Council (SDC) no longer has a tourism team.

941. Wotton Market – It was noted that this project was on hold pending additional car parking becoming available.

942. Fair Trade Town – It was noted that Wotton’s Fair Trade Town status had been renewed for another two years.

943. Stroud Market Towns Project Funding – A decision on allocation of funding is still awaited as noted in 937 above.

943. – Xmas Trees – This item was reviewed as part of the budget discussions in 939 above.

944. – Town Map Boards and Leaflets – A postcard and leaflet produced by Thornbury Town Council were shown to members and discussed. Information about events and shops are included with links to the My Thornbury website for more details. Similar promotional material could be produced for Wotton by the Heritage Centre, the Chamber of Trade and the Town Council together. The cost of producing the postcards would be less than £200 for 5000. The My Thornbury website is understood auto-collect local information and load it onto the site which also includes information about local traders. The developer of this site is understood to own the domain name for My Wotton. It was noted that the Wotton Community Site carries out a similar function and that information had previously been provided for an online visitor guide for the Stroud District. It was thought this may no longer be available due to the loss of SDC’s Tourism Team. The Chamber of Trade is seeking costings from companies to produce a new town map. It was noted that the current Wotton visitor map was not easy to read and an example visitor map of Chipping Campden was

shown to members which was thought to very clear and user friendly. Discussion followed about the five town map boards which need renewing. It was suggested that any new artwork produced for postcards and leaflets could be also used for the map boards for cost effectiveness, clarity and consistency. It was also suggested that any new map should include the locations of defibrillators. Estimated costs are: postcards £167, town map £1,500, map boards £2,000. It was noted that advertising could be sought to reduce costs and that the Chamber of Trade would also make a contribution. Grants may be available to fund the map boards. A working group consisting of Mr Clarke, Mrs Hunt, Mrs Walshe and Cllr Wilkinson will research costs and options for the map boards. **Mrs Hunt proposed an additional £550 be included in the 2019/20 budget for postcards and leaflets. This was seconded by Cllr Pinnegar, all in favour.**

945. – Britain in Bloom – It was reported that this year had been Wotton in Bloom’s most successful year, with a Silver Gilt Medal having been awarded in the Britain in Bloom competition. Preparations are now underway for next year’s Wotton in Bloom with various fundraising initiatives taking place. It was noted that the Town Council holds the watering contract and Wotton in Bloom donates the money it raises to cover the cost of this. Over £10,000 was raised this year towards watering costs. In 2019, Wotton in Bloom intends to continue with fundraising and arranging for the flower displays. Bloomers 2 will continue their work to clean and tidy the town. However, a person or group is needed to coordinate the 2019 entry for Britain in Bloom. Cllr Wilkinson thanked Mrs Hunt and Wotton in Bloom on behalf of the Regeneration Committee for all their hard work this year.

946. – Save the High Street Initiative – It was noted that to qualify for the initiative, a town needs to have at least 16% empty shops in its high street which is not the case in Wotton. The Chamber of Trade is however in contact with Save the High Street and has discussed the possibility of Wotton being used as an example town in future work. A visit to Wotton is proposed and Mr Tucker will provide further details if this is arranged.

947. - Updates

Cotswolds Gateways Project – It was noted that progress to implement the project was slower than expected. This was due to changes having been made to some of the walk routes in various areas following funding approval, which meant that information had to be resubmitted. A meeting between the Cotswold AONB and the Cotswold Wardens is being planned to progress the implementation.

948. Reports from Partners

a) Blues Festival – This year’s festival was another great success and very well supported by residents and businesses. It was noted that although there were fewer attendees from Wotton, attendance from outside the town had increased. Venues had reached capacity this year and it was noted that huge investment would be needed if it was considered desirable to expand the festival in future.

b) UTEA – A meeting had been held to develop a new Wotton Arts Hub, in order to exchange ideas, identify gaps and ways in which local groups could work together. An idea was under consideration to badge Wotton as an Arts and Crafts Town. A shortage of studio space for performances has been identified. Discussions have been held with Wotton Arts Festival about working with them for their 50th anniversary year and how the two organisations could be brought together in the longer term. Various events have been held and are planned for next year. Dementia Awareness training is taking place on 4th January 2019.

c) Chamber of Trade – A fundraising event for the British Legion is being held on 23rd November with some tickets still available.

d) Wotton Arts Festival – A New Year’s Eve concert is being held at St Mary’s Church. Plans are in place to celebrate St George’s Day next year with an evening concert being held in the church. The Arts Festival will run from 27th April to 5th May 2019, with various events already planned.

e) Town Hall Teas – £11,923 has been raised this year, a slight increase on last year. Next year's teas are all booked with a reserve list in place. A tea is planned for Boxing Day starting at 11am.

f) Heritage Centre – The current WW1 display has been well attended and ends at Christmas. This will be followed by a display about Wotton's pubs. Over 8,000 artefacts have been input into the Adlib system. Funds now need to be invested in increasing the capacity of the database. Although this is normally a quieter time of year, visitor numbers are still strong at over 50 on some days with the gift shop and calendars doing well. The Centre is one of only two in the Cotswolds where footfall has not decreased. It is hoped that Radio Gloucestershire will visit the town following a recent phone-in programme.

g) Beaumont-le-Roger Society – The Society has stalls booked at the Christmas Shopping evening and the Charities Fair.

h) Secret Gardens Trail – Plans are progressing well for next year's event with all the gardens already booked.

949. Any Other Brief Reports

No reports were given.

950. Any other business – A query was raised about the Wotton Times. It was noted that the next edition had been delayed due to illness but was planned for November/December.

951. Next Meeting Dates - The next meeting will be held on 4th February 2019.

This completed the business of the Town Regeneration Partnership Committee.

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Town Regeneration Partnership