

MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2019 AT 7.00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE



Present: Cllr P Smith (Chairman), R Claydon, N Pinnegar, M Short, June Cordwell, John Cordwell, T Luker, P Barton, J Turner, R Hale, D Thomas, A Wilkinson

In attendance: Clerk Ms S Bailey, District Cllrs C Braun, & K Tucker & 3 members of the public

T.5700 Apologies for Absence – Cllr L Farmer

T.5701 Declarations of Interest or Dispensations – Cllrs John & June Cordwell noted dispensation relating to Glos CC interests. Cllr N Pinnegar personal RBI, Cllr R Hale car park application personal.

T.5702 To receive Police Report – no report. PCSO Walkley has suggested a councillor as a liaison point for Wotton, however the Council considers that due to changes sometimes of councillors and Police it is more consistent if the main point of contact and liaison continues to be the town council office administration.

T.5703 Public Forum Mrs J Walshe commented on positive growth in Heritage Centre visitor figures for last year, which were contrary to other Cotswold attractions. Furthermore the new 2019 postcard to encourage visitors to Wotton is being printed. Mr M Tucker of the Chamber of Trade spoke of the desire to see the Town Council seize such an opportunity to take over the management and running of the new Symn Lane car park, and offered support from the Chamber of Trade for this venture in the future.

T.5704 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

County – County Cllr John Cordwell provided a written report, which was noted. Further meetings held were with the Police Crime Commissioner who still wishes to take over the fire service from County Council control, and meetings with Ringway the new highway maintenance contractor, and Atkins the new services contractor.

District –an extensive report was circulated in advance. Cllrs Tucker and Braun were thanked for their work in securing a larger market towns initiative fund settlement in favour of Old Town toilets renovation (£40,000). This followed an excellent visit to Wotton, hosted at the civic centre, where the new chief executive (Kathy O’Leary)and finance manager met Cllrs and staff from Wotton and environs.

It has been rumoured that the garages at Pitman Place are to be sold by SDC – District Cllrs are asked to investigate the legality of doing this with reference to previous planning conditions for parking for the social housing.

T.5705 To approve the Minutes of the council meeting of December 2018. It was proposed by Cllr M Short and seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve the Minutes as presented, agreed all in favour.

T.5706 Chairman’s Announcements – none

T.5707 Accounts

a) To approve caretaker attendance at GPFA Playground Inspection Training Seminar 13th Feb 10am-1pm at Brockworth cost £45; proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr J Turner to approve, agreed all in favour.

b) Budget 2018/19. To note that next budget report will be available in February.

c) To approve the accounts for payment. After a few minor additions were explained, it was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar to approve these

payments of £19,682 net for Town Council and £2350 net for Town Trust, agreed all in favour.

Cllr R Hale left the room

T.5708 Car Parking proposals in Wotton – to consider strategy for Wotton’s future car parking provision in the light of SDC’s recent planning decisions and possible charging proposals:

a) to take on the management & ownership of the proposed Symn Lane car park (ref Minute T5597) following negotiations with the developer and SDC. After much discussion concerning various aspects of the management of this car park such as solar panels, electric vehicle charge points, possible travellers & car repair issues, possibilities of coach revenue, security cameras & enforcement issues, and various financial aspects relating to the costs of running a car park, Cllr P Smith produced a document which summarised the conclusions of the extensive backing document, for which Cllr R Claydon was thanked.

It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr D Thomas, and agreed 10 in favour 1 abstention, that:

This council agrees to take on the ownership and management of the new Symn Lane car park subject to the following assurances;

- a. That all highways within the proposed development have been adopted by the relevant authority or other responsible bodies.
- b. That all drainage outside the proposed car park has been adopted by the relevant authority or other responsible bodies.
- c. That on hand over the developer (Colburn Homes Ltd) will have obtained from Stroud District Council, Certificates of Completion and any other documentation required that the car park has met all planning conditions.
- d. That the developer (Colburn Homes Ltd) draws up a legal agreement to be signed by the developer and the Town Council for the ownership of the car park and to include all matters agreed at the meeting between the Town Council, the developer and the Planning Department held on the 29th November 2018, as laid out in those minutes sent to all parties and agreed.
- e. A working group is established to carry out the actions of paragraph (c) of this meeting’s backing document, namely detailed financial assessments for those items which are the Council’s responsibility; identify sources for those items which the Council is responsible for providing (EV charging stations, lighting, CCTV, notice board, waste bins, signage and (if needed) parking payment machines) & assist the Clerk with the preparation of procurement documentation; urgent action to explore grant opportunities for EV charging infrastructure and make the necessary applications; maintain liaison with the Developer to ensure that everything is provided as expected at handover; consider what the charging and usage arrangements for the new car park should be; in view of the controversial nature of the new car park, consider and propose how the Council’s decision should be presented positively to the community.

Cllr R Hale returned to the room

The town councillors of the working group above Cllrs R Hale, R Claydon, P Barton and P Smith were thanked for their input into the research process.

b) to consider Wotton Town Council’s management of other car parks in Wotton and the need for one single organised car parking strategy in the town & any implications. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr R Hale that a working group be established to look into a parking strategy for the whole town in the next few months, comprising Cllrs J Turner, P Smith, R Hale, D Thomas, R Claydon, A Wilkinson, agreed by all.

T.5709 Christmas event 2019 – to consider supporting a Wotton Christmas event December 2019. The Clerk outlined correspondence with the previous year’s event organisers and offered council assistance for next December. However they turned down the council administrative help offered and are independently securing volunteers to assist them. Council asks that they keep Wotton Town Council in touch with how their plans are progressing, and also respond if they encounter problems. Cllr

R Hale assisted with last year's event and the Clerk will also keep him informed of correspondence with the organisers.

Much discussion followed regarding Christmas trees in the town and Christmas lights and who is responsible for such. The public appear to favour traditional trees in front of shops, however they are now quite costly with insurance and health & safety issues. The Clerk is researching Victorian lanterns which could be hung yearly outside premises similar to those in Berkeley. Further ideas involved a different approach such as decorated trees in the church or a themed bake-off competition in the town hall. It was agreed to establish a working group to investigate further options – Cllrs R Hale, A Wilkinson, M Short, N Pinnegar, J Turner, June Cordwell.

T.5710 Budget & Precept 2019 – to approve Budget and set Precept for Yr2019/20. Following previous detailed budget meetings and the draft 19/20 budget sheet provided, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr J Turner and agreed by all, to set a Precept request of £309,688 which will be 4% yearly increase.

Cllr N Pinnegar left the room

Documentation was provided showing the budget meeting's grant considerations – it was proposed by Cllr J Turner seconded by Cllr R Hale to agree this grants budget, all in favour. The individual grants will be presented to February agenda for approval

Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the room

The proposed unchanged cemetery fees were documented as were the slightly raised facility hire charges, it was proposed to approve these rates by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, agreed all in favour.

T.5711 SDC Annual Event for Towns/Parishes – to consider attendance at SDC offices: 7pm evening session and from 4pm planning session – Wednesday 30th January. It was agreed that the following Cllrs would attend this event - Cllrs P Smith, R Claydon, D Thomas, M Short (from 6 or 7pm).

T.5712 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – to acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. Suggestions for thank you cards are for the Cotswold Wardens who have carried out a tremendous hedge-laying task from Old London Rd footpath to Westridge Woods. Also a previous significant benefactor to Wotton has recently died – Mr Bob Woodward MBE – and the Clerk is asked to look into ways of commemorating him somehow eg a brass plaque in the town hall or Parklands entrance, also to liaise with his family to ask for their thoughts. Cllr D Thomas will pen thoughts via the Clerk to send to the Gazette regarding his contributions to Wotton.

T.5713 Clerk's Report written report noted. The Clerk also displayed the new postcard from the heritage centre (already distributed by email) and asked for Councillors' thoughts. Its production is time sensitive given the dates & events on the rear - WTC is contributing a third of its cost. All appeared in favour of its production, which was discussed in detail at the last Regeneration Partnership meeting.

T.5714 Correspondence to note or request action:

a) complaint from resident about speeding in Wotton's town centre. Lack of signage in Long St/Church St was discussed in detail, along with poor lighting of the Bear St zebra crossing. Clerk is asked to forward this complaint to the Glos Highways Manager, copying in County Cllr Dr JE Cordwell. Speedwatch schemes were discussed which could be operated by volunteers – liaise with PCSO and SDC neighbourhood warden on potential for this.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only: none

T.5715 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended

FOOTPATHS & PROW – postponed

SPECIAL PURPOSES – not met

ALLOTMENTS – New Rd site trees cut with contractor doing excellent job. No drainage problems apparent on new path at entrance despite a previous complaint.

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – not met

REGENERATION –next meeting in two weeks

WCSF – AGM & met recently. Lots of initiatives, strong push at the moment for the new sensory garden. Due to the cold snap of weather last year and various sporting event cancellations, the sinking fund for general repairs has diminished.

HERITAGE CENTRE – report provided by Cllr June Cordwell. Visitor numbers are up, various ongoing initiatives, IT system being upgraded for Adlib database.

WOTTON POOL – AGM last week; will attend Council meeting in February

BEAUMONT le ROGER – AGM recently; many committee member changes coming up. Trend noticed towards more individual car travel to France in order to extend family holidays rather than favouring mass coach travel.

T.5716 Town Affairs

Cllr J Turner – received Marchesi Walk tree complaints. Cllr P Smith looking at this area already and Cllr Turner will join him to assess tree contractor works

Cllr M Short – asked that any council reports emailed amongst people are correctly titled with their subject rather than just a ‘date’ or ‘council report’.

Cllr R Hale – received complaints about so many ‘pick up dog mess’ stencils by SDC.

Cllr P Barton – asked that Mt Pleasant’s appalling state of vehicle chewed up verges be an agenda item for February.

It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr John Cordwell and agreed by all to enter Closed Session due to matters of a staffing, legal & contractual nature

T.5718 To appoint Open Spaces Contractor for a 3 year period. Bids were analysed and previous pricing compared. It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr J Turner and agreed all in favour to appoint D Howse for a further 3 year period. Clerk to liaise and also investigate improvements to flower beds & weeding.

T.5719 To consider white lining issues adjacent to Chipping Green & legalities.

After discussions concerning the Land Registry situation and correspondence received from Chipping House, it was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr P Barton, agreed by all, that the Clerk responds to the Chipping House owners that the Wotton Town Trust/Council awaits proof of their application to the Land Registry process by 31st March 2019, before resuming white lining plans.

T.5720 To continue staff cover for next few months; & consider absence of Deputy Clerk.

The difficult situation was explained in detail by the Clerk and kind thoughts sent to the Deputy Clerk. Staffing reorganisation and the extra resources urgently needed for the next few months was discussed, with particular attention to the accounts and audit. Some outsourcing of payroll and accounts preparation may happen temporarily. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr June Cordwell and agreed by all that the Clerk is authorised to undertake necessary steps short term to

ensure additional resources are secured as appropriate in order to comply with council procedures.

T.5721 To note Land Registry matters ref: Knapp Rd allotments & next steps needed in process. Although a consultation draft letter was prepared, it was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr R Hale that the deliberation of this letter's content is postponed until feedback is received from the questionnaire regarding adjacent Knapp Field usage, agreed by all. To be reconsidered in April.

It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr R Hale to exit closed session, all in favour.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.25pm

Signed:Dated: