

MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, MONDAY 18th FEBRUARY 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, L Farmer

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

T.5722 Apologies for Absence – Cllr A Wilkinson

T.5723 Declarations of Interest or Dispensations – Cllrs John & June Cordwell, personal - Glos CC incinerator project, Cllrs P Barton & N Pinnegar personal - Mt Pleasant

T.5724 Public Forum - none

T.5725 Wotton Pool

a) A Powerpoint presentation was given by Wotton Pool Management explaining recent improvement works and also in the wider context of 8 years since transfer from SDC. The new Sport England grant of £35k will mainly go towards tiling the pool (September) plus improvements to the reception and changing rooms. The benefit of the solar panels is not fully apparent yet due to weather vagaries last year and also tweaking of the new panel system. The management were congratulated on their fundraising over the past two years and also for increasing visitor revenue and numbers at the same time as undertaking major refurbishment work. Although grants are being received and solar panels will contribute, the extended Service level Agreement last year and the £28k subsidy from Wotton Council Precept is vital to show funders the commitment of town council support and to ensure stability of the basic funding stream, which allows pool management to apply for more grants for further works.

b) to approve their request for £6000 towards capital expenditure works as explained in presentation & detailed in the Pool SLA agreement; proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar seconded by Cllr J Turner, agreed by all to approve payment.

T.5726 To receive Police Report – no report or attendance for a few months. Clerk asked to find out why Kingswood parish council receives frequent police attendance.

T.5727 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor

County – County Cllr John Cordwell provided a written report, which was noted.

District –an extensive report was circulated in advance. Cllr K Tucker explained the background to the continuing Bearlands bin receptacles saga – it seems that they are finally being used. It is requested that Durant Court does not suffer the same fate shortly and that consultation for such ugly receptacles is commenced. Clarification is sought over CIL payments from possible redevelopment of SDC owned Pitman Place garages and play area site, since funds appear to have been promised to Synwell Playing Fields without any consultation with the town council.

T.5728 To approve the Minutes of the council meeting of January 2019. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton and seconded by Cllr R Claydon to approve the Minutes as presented, agreed all in favour, minus 1 abstention.

T.5729 Chairman's Announcements – Cllr P Smith to attend St George's Day celebrations on 20th April, and the Fair Trade exhibition at Wotton Baptist Church on 2nd March. Further to discussions at the last Council meeting, ideas were given to the Clerk

for the brass plaque in the town hall, in remembrance of Bob Woodward OBE – to ratify cost of £120 for plaque with approval on March agenda. Buildings Manager to make wooden mount.

T.5730 Accounts

- a) To agree re-appointment of I Selkirk as internal auditor for FY18/19; proposed by Cllr L Farmer, seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve all in favour.
- b) To agree grants submitted to WTC as part of budget process to be paid April 2019*
 - (i) Secret Gardens Trail - £150. Proposed by Cllr T Luker, seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve all in favour.
 - (ii) CVTN - £150. After discussion concerning only 10 beneficiaries in Wotton, Clerk is requested to enquire how the service is marketed in Wotton.
 - (iii) British School Making a Difference project - £300. Despite concerns about the project only reaching about 20 disadvantaged children, it was proposed by Cllr P Barton, seconded by Cllr R Hale and agreed 10 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention to approve, when proof of total project funding is provided.
 - (iv) British School playground improvements - £1000. Much discussion concerned the availability of the school outside area for community use after the proposed development. Clerk is asked to investigate further & request details of how the general public would access the site (eg evenings, weekends, daytimes, term and holiday periods and timings) and would this be free access.
- c) To purchase & install new accounting software package – preference is Scribe £730.p.a. which provides specific accounting software for almost 1000 parish councils nationwide. Proposed to approve, with installation in April for new financial year, by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr T Luker, agreed by all. Also noted that payroll function has now been outsourced to SGW Payroll Ltd from 1st Feb 2019.
- d) To approve Clerk's attendance at SLCC Glos Branch AGM Cheltenham, 21st March & talk by J Derounian (Univ of Glos) on Community Engagement & Community Development Projects, cost £25; proposed to approve by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded by Cllr P Barton, agreed by all.
- e) To approve updated Risk Assessment document for 2019 as part of audit process. After a minor amendment it was proposed to approve this document which is required annually for audit purposes by Cllr L Farmer, seconded by Cllr R Claydon, agreed by all.
- f) To consider commemoration item for Wotton Town Crier's service of 50 years. An engraved glass Galway bell has been ordered for £35 -proposed Cllr John Cordwell, seconded by Cllr P Barton, agreed by all. Mrs J Walshe was thanked for bringing this matter to the council's attention. A civic reception idea to celebrate 50 years as Town Crier is the preference in the Town Hall one Friday evening in July, and the Clerk is asked to make investigations into catering and invitations, with assistance from Cllrs P Barton and T Luker.
- g) To approve spend of £600 from Earmarked Funds for purchase of stone for Holywell wall repairs by Cotswold Wardens – WTC to pay quarry direct (4 x tons at £150 each); proposed to approve by Cllr T Luker, seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, agreed by all.
- h) Budget 2018/19. Report of expenditure against budget to end Jan 19 was noted.
- i) To approve the accounts schedule for payment; the clerk explained late additions to payments. It was proposed by Cllr P Barton, seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, agreed by all, to approve net payments of £8,806 for Town Council and £648 for Town Trust.

Cllr N Pinnegar left the room

T.5731 Mt Pleasant verges – to consider the poor state of vehicle chewed up verges and consider submitting complaint to SDC. Cllr P Barton provided a written report to Council outlining the serious problems in the road, with the lack of parking

leading to chewed up, muddy verges and buses getting stuck in the mud on this residential street, made worse by SDC's recent planning approvals for extra housing development and their closure of the off road garages site which was used for parking. Recent responses from SDC are inadequate. Cllr P Barton answered various questions about the issues in the road and was informed about new porous tarmac possibilities.

Cllr P Barton left the room

Council discussed the problems created by SDC's approval of Full Moon planning application, further worsened by SDC's garages closure and its sale for housing, leading to displacement of many local vehicles. Mt Pleasant is clearly unable to cope and a site meeting with District Council officers is requested on an evening when the problem is most evident asap. Also we request that the funds raised by the garages sale are directed to suitable hardstanding, thus alleviating some of the problems it has exacerbated.

Cllrs P Barton & N Pinnegar returned to the room

T.5732 Wotton Directory – to consider whether to continue with one year's (x4) Mayor's report inserts – cost £260 for a half page (therefore £65 per issue). It was proposed by Cllr J Turner seconded by Cllr M Short and agreed by all to continue with these inserts for another year.

Cllr June Cordwell left the room

T.5733 Incinerator –to consider signing Javelin Inquiry request from WTC (Cllrs Hale, Smith). Details were circulated amongst councillors in advance. Questions were asked of the County Cllr John Cordwell regarding the county process followed and the investigation's answers received so far.

Cllr John Cordwell left the room

After much discussion, it was proposed by Cllr M Short and seconded by Cllr R Claydon and agreed 7 in favour with 3 abstentions, that the proposed letter from this Town Council to Glos County Council requesting an Inquiry is not signed by the Council for a variety of reasons:

- *It is impossible to gauge the accuracy of the position stated in the letter*
- *The letter could be used by environmentalists as a blocking mechanism*
- *Many of the issues seem to be answered by the 2015 Ernst & Young Value for Money Report. This states that the project is expected to achieve VfM over its 25 year life ie savings of over £100M (NPV £62M) compared with the landfill, with affordability from 2022*
- *There will be an audit report which will make an independent judgement about whether the contract is value for money. Companies have firewalls to ensure independence.*
- *The probity of the contract award is being challenged in court and this will provide other information sought by those supporting the need for an enquiry. It needs to be understood that PFI/PPP contracts (public/private/partnerships) are enormously difficult to negotiate and establish. Competition effectively stops when the "preferred bidder" is appointed (in this case in 2011). Re-establishing competition at a later stage would involve cancellation costs (£60M+) and years more delay.*
- *The real problem with this project (apart from environmental concerns) was the significant cost increase and delay caused by a failure of GCC to secure timely planning permission in mid 2013.*
- *PPP contracts contain much sensitive commercial and financial information and it is hardly surprising that GCC sought to withhold information.*
- *PPP contracts work on the basis of a negotiated "Take or Pay Level". In this case the base tonnage gate fee. This is what the Council pays whether or not its use reaches that level. By implication, usage above that amount will result in cheaper rates (because the baseline viability income has been reached). The value for money analysis examined different usage rates (to reflect different re-cycling targets) and third party revenues. Financial viability was demonstrated.*

This Council questions the wisdom of GCC considering this form of contract in the first

place and for proceeding without the assurance of securing on-time planning permission – which subsequently caused a significant time delay and cost increases. The plant is due to be operational this year and real evidence of costs and value will be available. A review should be sought once sufficient operational information is available. Any new enquiry would cost taxpayers.

Councillors should sign in an individual capacity, if they wish, omitting the word Cllr.

Cllrs John & June Cordwell returned to the room

T.5734 Market Towns Funding Initiative SDC – to note that Wotton will now receive £40k towards stated projects, which is in line with other district towns. To agree to signing & returning the documentation as requested by SDC. Discussions stated the need to explain that this council must consult the public if a public works loan will be applied for, and that community support is awaited with the return shortly of the questionnaire where Old Town toilets redevelopment is one of the options. It was proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed all in favour that the grant acceptance letter is signed and returned by the Chairman, whilst explaining that public support for this project is awaited shortly and that funds are requested in the next financial year 2019/20. District Cllr K Tucker was thanked for his assistance with this project, without which, a lesser amount would have been secured.

T.5735 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:

- Mr I Pullen - for early and efficient snow plough clearance recently
- Stroud Youth Council - two young people are chairing this from Wotton (await Cllr June Cordwell information)
- Mr G Carpenter – for extensive litter picking along the OK path to KLB after hedge cut.

T.5736 Clerk's Report written report noted. The Clerk explained about office email problems in the past week and that hopefully now all is sorted.

T.5737 Correspondence to note or request action:

- a) KLB invitation to Japanese Guests farewell evening Wednesday 20th March 6:30 to 8pm for Mayor & Town Clerk. Clerk to confirm attendances.
- b) Noted resident complaint about lack of parking in Bradley St/Haw st area.
- c) Noted resident complaint about dangerous parking at Knapp rd near allotments
- d) Noted resident complaint about new double yellow lines in Gloucester St
- e) Noted The Door newsletter
- f) Noted invitation to Mayor to toast St Georges Day on Saturday 20th April 11am.
- g) Complaint from local printer regarding WTC printing of questionnaires was noted, however council procedures were followed regarding securing the contract for works. The Clerk can make enquiries with them, and any other local printing companies, should future work opportunities arise.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only: none

T.5738 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended

FOOTPATHS & PROW – not met

SPECIAL PURPOSES – not met

ALLOTMENTS – two new tenants secured and one more possible shortly

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – Cllr June Cordwell provided written report

REGENERATION – no report available

WCSF – not attended
HERITAGE CENTRE – meeting this week
SDC – parish councils event; powerpoint circulated by email
GATEWAY PROJECT – meeting held with this walking /cycleway promotional project back on track. Information to be sent out soon with a request for volunteers
WALKING FESTIVAL – final booklet nearly ready for printing, fundraising quiz this week
SYMN LANE NEW CAR PARK – working party met and doing research on various features; will submit report in March.
CUTE(Christmas Under The Edge) – volunteers secured and event planning commenced

T.5739 Town Affairs

Cllr L Farmer – enquired about the state of Horsley recycling centre – will forward details to County Cllr John Cordwell

It was proposed by Cllr M Short and seconded by Cllr J Turner and agreed by all to enter Closed Session due to matters of a staffing, legal & contractual nature

T.5740 FY18/19 accounts - to appoint accountant for preparation of FY18/19 accounts due to sudden staff absence. The Clerk gave details of exploratory meetings with Mr S Tasker and the quotation received. It was proposed by Cllr L Farmer seconded by Cllr June Cordwell to approve the quotation for year-end accounts preparation for Town Trust and Town Council, to take maximum 3 days, agreed by all.

T.5741 Staff Cover – the Clerk updated Council on staff cover/absences for the next few months. It is now necessary to employ extra office administrative help urgently. It was proposed by Cllr P Smith and seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all to delegate this to the Clerk to secure help as necessary to fulfil council duties. It was also agreed (proposed by Cllr June Cordwell, seconded by Cllr P Barton) by all to financially compensate the Information Officer for the increased work level, which she is undertaking admirably, in the deputy clerk’s absence. Clerk to implement as necessary.

T.5742 Revised NALC/SLCC national salary scales for FY19/20 – all staff are on national contracts aligned to NALC scales. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr L Farmer, and agreed by all to adopt these scales & increases from 1st April 2019.

T.5743 Civic Centre Refurbishment works - to appoint contractor for window repairs and /or replacements and exterior wall/cill works. A document provided breakdowns of exterior masonry repair works needed and prices/quotes for masonry repairs, scaffolding, and repainting existing windows or putting in new double glazed ones which are better for security and heat retention, at not too much extra cost. Concrete cills are broken in places and will also be repaired. It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr R Claydon and agreed by all that Windowcraft are chosen for new double glazed window units (as long as replacement pvc cills are included in the quoted price),and that A Foxwell is to repair masonry, cills, and repaint exterior.

It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr L Farmer to exit closed session, all in favour. This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.40pm

Signed:Dated: