

**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, MONDAY 15<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2019 AT 7.00PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**



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

**In attendance:** Administrator Mrs D Hyam, District Cllrs C Braun, G Butcher & 2 members of public.

*Before the start of business, the Mayor Cllr P Smith asked the attendees to stand for a minutes silence in memory of a member of staff's husband who passed away recently and to note a thank you card received from her.*

**T.5762 Apologies for Absence** – Cllr A Wilkinson, Cllr P Barton, Cllr R Hale

**T.5763 Declarations of Interest or Dispensations** – Cllr N Pinnegar regarding the item concerning the verges at Mount Pleasant.

Cllr R Claydon submitted a request for a dispensation relating to personal interest arising from five Councillors being representatives and Trustees of the Wotton Recreational Trust which effectively owns the Bowls Clubhouse neighbouring the proposed development at Dryleaze Court (Planning Application S.19/0695/FUL). A dispensation was sought to allow the following Councillors P Smith, R Claydon, R Hale, N Pinnegar and A Wilkinson to participate in the discussion and vote on this planning application at the next Planning Committee meeting to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> April. It was proposed by Cllr M Short and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar with all agreed to allow this dispensation.

**T5764 Public Forum** – A member of the public wished to speak about the condition of the grass verges at Mount Pleasant. She understood that it was GCC Highways responsibility to maintain them and wanted to know the Town Council's view on how the verges can be improved. It was proposed by the Chairman Cllr P Smith to bring this item forward on the agenda, all agreed.

**T.5765 To comment on Police statistics for Wotton** – Cllr P Smith provided a report containing information and graphs of the statistics, which was circulated in advance. It was noted that a comparison over a two year period would be more beneficial. Cllr P Smith will produce more information for the next meeting.

*Cllr N Pinnegar left the room*

**T5766 Mount Pleasant verges** – Following a response received by Alison Fisk SDC it has been established, that the verges are the responsibility of GCC Highways and that SDC have been cutting the grass. Highways have stated that due to the verges condition not being a safety issue no improvements will be made. It was noted that the verges adjacent to the former Full Moon site should be made good by the developer. If hard standing was considered, it would only be suitable for the west side of the road as there is a steep drop on the east side. The introduction of double yellow lines are not scheduled for the area and would not alleviate the problem. Following much discussion, it was decided that a letter should be sent by the Town Clerk to GCC Highways to arrange a site meeting so that the difficulties with parking and safety issues regarding larger vehicles negotiating the road can be discussed.

*Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the room*

**T.5767 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor**  
**County** – County Cllr John Cordwell provided a written report, which was noted. Cllr John Cordwell added that GCC had submitted a response to the Home Secretary on the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) fire governance business. The response

outlined that the proposals will not save money, there are no identified improvements to public safety, cutting senior fire fighters would risk public safety, decisions would be taken in private with no public scrutiny and would jeopardise GFRS partnership with GCC and NHS.

District –an extensive report was circulated in advance. SDC Cllr C Braun requested that the Town Council consider sending a letter to support the food waste collection service which has recently been under review. It was pointed out that if the GCC capped the SDC payments rather than save any money it would cost GCC an extra £1m in landfill charges. It was noted that more information would be needed by the Town Clerk to review figures and other information and revert back to the Town Council.

**T.5768 To approve the Minutes of the council meeting of March 2019.** It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr T Luker with 8 agreed and 1 abstention to approve the Minutes as presented.

**T.5769 Chairman’s Announcements** – Cllr P Smith announced that arrangements have been made for a presentation to George Carpenter to celebrate 50 years of being Wotton’s Town Crier at the St Georges Day Celebrations at the Town Hall at 10.30am on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April. This will be followed by the unveiling of a plaque in the Town Hall dedicated to Mr Robert (Bob) Woodward by his widow. It is requested that Town Councillors attend – apologies in advance from Cllr N Pinnegar and Cllr M Short due to work commitments.

**T.5770 Accounts**

- a) To note increase in fees for contracted Connor cleaning services at all Council / Trust facilities due to national minimum wage increases.  
Proposed to approve by Cllr N Pinnegar and seconded by Cllr R Claydon all agreed. Also to note that the fees for the window cleaning services have also increased due to operative change (+11% for monthly OSS windows to £14.50 per mth & +7% to £73.50 for twice yearly civic centre windows). Proposed to approve by Cllr M Short and seconded by Cllr T Luker all agreed.
- b) To consider application for funding contribution request towards Greenway Phase II Feasibility Study, deferred from previous discussions. It was proposed by Cllr J Turner and seconded by Cllr D Thomas with all agreed that funds should be taken from reserves and the award a of £500 to the Greenway Project to enable the completion of phase II should be made.
- c) To approve annual Heritage Centre grant payment £3400 & note their draft accounts. Proposed to approve by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr R Claydon with all agreed.
- d) Budget 2018/19, to note final report for FY18/19 - No Comments were made.
- e) To approve the accounts for payment. Proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr R Claydon with all agreed to approve accounts for payment of for Town Council £16,450.11 net and for Town Trust £1,888.95 net.

**T.5771 SDC Community Governance Review** - to comment on SDC’s draft recommendations published 18th Feb– closing date for comments 6th May 2019. Following much discussion on the recommendations, a response will sent, as the review had not taken into account all the concerns raised by WTC and would result in Wortley being split between Wotton and Kingswood. In conclusion, it would be best for K5 to be included with Wotton. For Wortley, an alternative solution would be to move that hamlet wholly into the Alderley Ward. This will be delegated to the Town Clerk to submit a response as the proper officer.

**T.5772 Stroud District Council Housing Strategy 2019-2024** – to consider response to consultation by Thursday 2nd May 2019. Concerns were raised regarding empty houses in the district especially the Swedish styled houses in Wotton. Cllr C Braun explained that these have become an issue as they may not meet new regulations regarding thermal ratings and identified as having historical significance. SDC Cllr C Braun will look into the present situation. No comment to be made by WTC.

**T.5773 Rural Multi-Site Traffic Regulation Order** – to consider if WTC wishes to suggest other speed limit reductions needed to improve road safety to the Stroud District Road Safety Group and consider any financial contributions. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr T Luker with all agreed that a suggestion is made to extend the 30 speed in Old London Road from the current boundary by the viewpoint past the Conygres Scout Camp to the top of Adeys Lane. This is due to the area being frequented by walkers and other people parking their cars on the side of the road to walk into the woods. As regards the financial contribution for the VAS Mobile system, it was proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar and seconded by Cllr June Cordwell with 8 agreed and 1 abstention that if the need arose the Town Council could request a unit from the Police free of charge so there would be no need for this expenditure.

**T.5774 Youth Centre Computers** – to consider if parental software is needed to block inappropriate sites as per quote. Cllr M Short had investigated dedicated software for this issue and found that it would not alleviate the problem as attendees could still use their own devices to access inappropriate sites. The software in this instance would not be effective and could cost around £195. Following research Cllr M Short recommended a system (Cisco Open DNS) pointed at the router would block any inappropriate sites and this would give reasonable control with the benefit of being free of charge. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr D Thomas with all agreed to use the Open DNS system and for Cllr Short and Cllr P Smith to liaise on the installation.

**T.5775 Barn at WCSF -Permission requested to remove part of stone barn due to security concerns.** Cllr M Short explained that the building is difficult to secure and make safe and there have been several break-ins. It was intended to use the building as a clubhouse in the original plans, but this has been revised and a new building is planned elsewhere on the site. It was proposed by Cllr M Short and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar with all agreed that a site meeting with WCSF be arranged by the Town Clerk to discuss the problems with the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Town Clerk and the Buildings Manager. This would be to investigate if the building is inhabited by bats and owls, if planning permission is required for any demolition if the building is deemed unsafe and for the Town Clerk to have delegated powers to take appropriate action. Cllr M Short asked if the WCSF could present their latest plans to the Town Council and it was noted that plans and proposals could be presented at the next Parish Assembly meeting rather than the Town Council meeting in May.

**T.5776 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 D Horsfall for long service with Wotton Silver Band as he is retiring.

Mr A Jones for clearing gutters, weeds, and brambles in Wortley Road opposite the Cemetery.

Mrs Barlow for picking up rubbish on several occasions whilst walking in the town.

**T.5777 Clerk's Report** written report noted.

**T.5778 Correspondence** to note or request action:

a) to note thanks card from Great Western Air Ambulance for hosting a textile recycling unit – all textile recycling units helped to raise £100,000 for them last year.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only:

**T.5779 Reports from Councillors & meetings attended**

FOOTPATHS & PROW – not met

SPECIAL PURPOSES – not met

ALLOTMENTS – notes sent out.

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – not met

REGENERATION – not met

WCSF – recently attended too soon to report

HERITAGE CENTRE – not met

SYMN LANE NEW CAR PARK – not met.

GREENWAY GROUP – not met

RECREATIONAL TRUST- Cllr Claydon reported that monies from the cinema have now been allocated with the final the final grants being made to Synwell Playing Field and Wotton Dramatic Society. The remainder, of around £5000 will be retained for future expenses.

**T.5780 Town Affairs**

Cllr R Claydon A member of the public is interested in improving Streams field with planting trees and wild flowers on a volunteer basis. This proposal would need to be discussed, as there could be maintenance implications for the Town Council.

Cllr D Thomas Complaints have been received regarding the following:

The muddy condition of the path running along the side of the Bluecoat School.

The condition of the path surface of Shinbone Alley.

Speed cars in Coombe Road and Old Town.

Dogs fouling in St Mary's Church yard and if the CCTV could be used to identify offenders.

Cllr T Luker The brambles and bushes in Synwell Lane are very overgrown but it is realised that it is now the bird nesting season. But overhanging brambles could be trimmed – request Highways to cut brambles overhanging the path.

Cllr P Smith Complaint had been received from a resident regarding a bulky item collection. The resident contacted SDC to arrange for the collection and was told that this service was only available on line. It was understood that all services could be accessed by phone as well as online.

*It was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr R Claydon and agreed by all to enter Closed Session due to matters of legal & confidential nature.*

**T.5781 Questionnaire** - to consider preliminary finding of survey results and consider way forward. Cllr R Claydon compiled a report containing the analysis of results that was circulated prior to the meeting. It highlighted that of the 2800 questionnaires a total of 221 (7.9%) was received in response. The Old Town Toilets secured the most support with the Town Market coming second. The toilet project is consistent with the SDC Market Towns Initiative with funding of £40K reducing the cost to the tax payer. It was noted that this project could get underway immediately with an application for a public works loan. It was proposed by Cllr M Short and seconded by Cllr D Thomas with all agreed that the Town Clerk obtain quotes so that an architect can be appointed to draw up plans so that accurate quotes can be obtained from

conventional builders and providers of modular builds. It was also proposed that a working party be formed to include Cllrs J Turner, R Claydon, M Short and this will be extended to those who are not present. It was noted that the Town Market scored highly and would be considered following the completion of the proposed car park in Symn Lane as the market would not be feasible without the new parking. It was noted that the proprietor of Good Food on the Edge is liaising with WCSF with a view to starting a market on the site. However, WCSF would need permission from the Town Council for this to take place. The OK path lighting project also scored highly but further work was needed to better understand the real need and numbers using the path after dark and there was also concern that the path might be become part of the Greenway and would need to be lit as part of that project. The Town Centre Manager and Knapp Field Project received significantly less support and on the basis of the results, did not seem worthy of further consideration.

**T.5782 To consider white lining issues adjacent to Chipping Green & response from Chipping House & consider the way forward.** Following investigations by Cllrs P Smith and R Claydon it appears that this issue was detailed in previous Town Trust minutes and a Deed regarding access and usage rights has been found. It was proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar and seconded by Cllr T Luker with all agreed to defer the item to allow time to go through the documents and to take legal advice if required.

*It was proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar and seconded by Cllr R Claydon to exit closed session, all in favour.*

*This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.05 pm*

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