



**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING,  
MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2019 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**

**Present:** Cllrs R Claydon (Chairman), N Pinnegar, T Luker, J Turner, D Thomas, John Cordwell, June Cordwell, R Hale, M Tucker, S Wood, P Barton, A Wilkinson

**In attendance:** Town Clerk Ms S Bailey. District Cllrs K Tucker, G James & 1 member of public.

**T.5839 Apologies for absence.** None received

**T.5840 To receive Declarations of Interest/Dispensations** now or as soon as known. Personal interest declared by Cllr N Pinnegar, ref Bear St Garage payment

**T.5841 To comment on Police statistics for Wotton.** Cllr R Claydon downloaded the latest monthly statistics, and noted the spike in burglaries (to 5) – more information available on the Police UK website.

**T.5842 Public Forum–** Mr G Kitchen commented on the Community Governance Review decision by SDC and the devastating loss to the Wotton Parish of KLB School and the Community Parc. He thanked the Town Council and Cllr John Cordwell for all of the documentation and assistance provided to try to alter this course of events, with regards to a petition, which unfortunately resulted in the Monitoring Officer of SDC stating that SDC would ignore a petition if presented, and that he would recommend that SDC Councillors do nothing to change their decision, even with a petition. Mr Kitchen was thanked for his input.

**T.5843 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor.** County Cllr Dr JE Cordwell provided a written report and highlighted that the PCSO had conducted a random speedwatch at Coombe Rd which so far had resulted in no speeding evident. Vehicle Activated Signs and ANPR cameras were very costly - £6000 upwards and the Glos Highways Manager said that more evidence was needed to demonstrate the problem. Extra '30' signs were not allowed due to regulations. A written District Council report was circulated. It is unclear when SDC would submit its recommendation to the Boundary Commission – Cllr K Tucker to investigate. Disruption in Chamber during the session where boundaries were discussed (and Cllr C Braun was speaking) led to complaints of poor District Cllr conduct and all Cllrs subsequently made to attend further Code of Conduct training.

**T.5844 Minutes of the Council Meeting** of July 2019. Proposed by Cllr June Cordwell, seconded Cllr P Barton, agreed 11 in favour, 1 abstention, to approve these Minutes.

**T.5845 Chairman's Announcements** No written report this month however the Chairman congratulated Cllrs June and John Cordwell on their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, and also asked that councillors this evening pay attention to the rules of debate, given the busy agenda.

**T.5846 Accounts**

a) To approve two Councillors' (Cllrs Tucker & Wood) attendance on 30<sup>th</sup> October at GAPTC's Being a Better Councillor course total cost £170. Proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded by Cllr J Turner to approve, all in favour.

b) To decide lift maintenance contractor from November 2019. After briefly discussing the merits of each quote, it was requested that more information be obtained regarding the initial contract takeover inspection by the new contractor and at what cost, and bring back the item to the next available council meeting.

c) To approve Clerk attendance at SLCC Regional Training Seminar on 30th October 2019 in Cheltenham at a cost of £80. Proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded by Cllr R Hale to approve, all in favour.

d) Budget 2019/20, to note report. A few questions were answered in advance of the meeting. Budget versus spend is healthy. Cllr June Cordwell asked if the procedure for the Heritage Centre claiming its grant could be provided, and if the line in the budget for Neighbourhood Warden spending could be removed if possible.

*Cllr N Pinnegar left the room*

e) To approve the accounts for payment. Proposed by Cllr June Cordwell, seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve, all in favour. Total of £23,826 net for Town Council payments and £1,156 net for Town Trust payments.

*Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the room*

**T.5847 Appointments to Organisations**– it was proposed by Cllr J Turner seconded by Cllr John Cordwell, agreed by all, to appoint Cllrs to the following vacancies:

a) Working Groups	-Symn Lane Car Park	Cllr M Tucker
	-Old Town Toilets Rebuild	Cllr S Wood
	-Civic Centre Reception Doors	Cllr S Wood
b) Reps	-Wotton & District Recreational Trust	Cllr S Wood
	-Beaumont-le-Roger Society	Cllr R Hale
	-Wotton General Charities	Cllr S Wood
	-WCSF	Cllr June Cordwell
	-Watercourse Warden	Cllr M Tucker
	-Greenway Group	Cllr M Tucker
	-GMTF ( <i>in place of Cllr A Wilkinson</i> )	Cllr M Tucker

**T.5848 SDC Community Governance Review** – To consider making comments to The Boundary Commission with reference to SDC’s proposals to realign boundaries between Kingswood Parish Council and WTC, and remove WCSF site and KLB School from the Parish of Wotton to KPC at their review ahead of 2020 elections.

The SDC meeting and its voting process was discussed in detail (the Wotton amendment failed by 3 votes but the Kingswood amendment failed by many more votes). The overall SDC member vote was 22-8. This Council has a number of options including a judicial review which will be discussed in closed session:

a) A petition to SDC for a new Community Governance Review (Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 S83), but SDC likely to reject as their CGR was only recently completed. 7.5% of local electors needed i.e 335 votes needed.

b) Petition SDC using standing procedures. 1100 votes will grant a right for a debate in council. Fewer signatures would mean a reply from Officers. Unlikely to change SDC decision.

c) Write to all or some of SDC, LGBCE, DCLG, but SDC is unlikely to change its decision. LGBCE have stated that their role is not to review legitimacy of CGR process, but only to consider impact on Ward Boundaries (ie only Wortley). It may however take note of WTC objections.

d) Write to our MP Sir Geoffrey Clifton Brown.

e) Wotton District Councillors to raise a motion at SDC to rescind the previous decision but unknown if SDC would vote differently than on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019. However this process may have the effect of delaying SDC’s submission to LGBCE.

- f) Write to Local Government Ombudsman (only individuals can do this and not WTC) and only once LGBCE has approved the change.

After much discussion of the above possibilities, including the inaccuracies portrayed by Kingswood Parish Council, about the lack of consultation within the Wotton Community by SDC, about the thoughts of KLB School and WCSF and their position, and of the desire of SDC to rush through this process without consideration of the distress it will cause to the Wotton Community in order to satisfy their tight timescale for 2020 elections, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr John Cordwell, and agreed unanimously, to undertake a), c), and d) and to support e) if District Councillors are able to take this action. SDC advice is requested for the format needed for the petition.

**T.5849 SDC Review of Polling Districts and Places 2019 Consultation** – to consider whether Council wishes to offer comments. Consultation period ends 7th October 2019. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr John Cordwell and agreed unanimously to object to the polling review consultation document, pointing out that SDC is assuming in this document that its amendment proposals in its recently completed Community Governance Review regarding Wotton ward K5 will be accepted by LGBCE. Thus the consultation document is inaccurate and it should be demonstrated within it, that the proposals are subject to final acceptance by LGBCE.

**T.5850 Website** - to appoint a working group to investigate alternative website provision and maintenance following the demise of the company appointed to this task; to set a date, within 2 weeks of TC meeting to progress this issue and prepare proposals, if possible, for September Town Council. A working group is formed of Cllrs R Hale, John Cordwell, J Turner, M Tucker. In advance of this the Clerk will canvass and survey many local parish/town councils and their websites/clerk views to ascertain other company providers and obtain further quotations. The group will then meet to discuss the quotes and provide recommendations to Council - likely to be in October.

**T.5851 Climate Change** – to receive report from Climate Change working group and discuss ways of moving forward. Cllr R Claydon updated the spreadsheet which summarised current state of analysis of the working group which met and discussed ways forward on 29<sup>th</sup> July. Cllr D Thomas expanded on some of the ideas and explained that the next meeting to discuss more details would be on 27<sup>th</sup> August. The Clerk emphasised that proposals with financial backing info would ideally need to be more advanced in order to feed into the budget process for the next financial year, commencing in November.

**T.5852 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers** – To acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. The lady who anonymously cleans Rope Walk outside area most mornings is still thanked; she now cleans the shopping street too. A thank you card will be sent to the organiser of the car volunteer network in Wotton who kindly drive people to hospital appointments, etc.

**T.5853 Clerk's Report**-circulated in advance and noted. The Clerk was also alerted yesterday to some Cloud Computing training by SLCC in Aylesbury in two weeks' time, which missed this agenda, but Cllrs are happy to authorise this officially on the next agenda, since we need to research into future office IT methods and how cloud usage could satisfy GDPR requirements.

**T.5854 Correspondence to note or request action:**

- a) To note emails following up on concerns regarding speeding traffic on Coombe Road and consider possible actions. VAS and ANPR signs are very expensive to buy and Glos Highways has indicated that evidence is needed of problems on this stretch. Clerk will ask about possibility of borrowing an electronic sign. Also Clerk to ask for Community Speedwatch info from the Police and if local community volunteers are interested in being trained to operate this. Police are asked to give feedback on their random speed checks on that stretch lately and if they would attend a council meeting to chat to us briefly about this.
- b) Noted letter from CPRE advising of new image/logo to meet new challenges.

*Brochures/Newsletters for information only; CPRE booklet*

**T.5855 Brief reports from Councillors**

*Footpaths Committee, Special Purposes Committee, Allotments Committee, Wotton Youth Partnership, Town Regeneration, Sports Foundation, Wotton Pool, Heritage Centre and any other meetings attended.*

FOOTPATHS & PROW – not met

SPECIAL PURPOSES – not met

ALLOTMENTS – The Memory Group is hoping to take delivery soon of a donated bench by SDC for dementia users to rest weary limbs when working their plot.

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – intends to donate funds to Synwell Playing FC for their fundraising for new all weather pitch needing £40,000.

WOTTON POOL –re-tiling starts mid-September after season’s pool closure, next project is to fund raise for refurbishment of changing rooms.

REGENERATION – postponed – new date being sourced by Partnership Chairman

WCSF – no report

HERITAGE CENTRE – meeting next week

RECREATIONAL TRUST –pot of funds emanating from cinema now largely used up and has benefitted many local organisations with thousands of pounds.

**T.5856 Town Affairs** – very brief comments from Members or items for future agendas:

Cllr June Cordwell –asked about decision to make tree sculptures at Marchesi Walk; Clerk asked Council’s arboricultural consultant on site a few months ago after the severe tree work was carried out and he advised that they would regrow from the stumps - thus WTC is advised to wait a year to see evidence of growth.

**Closed Session** *confidential matters of either a legal, contractual or staffing nature whereby the public are excluded under Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.*

Proposal to enter closed session by Cllr J Turner, seconded by Cllr John Cordwell, agreed by all.

*This item is moved to closed session due to possible insurance claim against Council*

**T.5857 New Rd allotment trees** - to consider felling of poplars nearest the road at New Rd allotments site. Branches have continued to fall from this tree in high winds - consider removal or other course of action. It was proposed by Cllr A Wilkinson seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar and agreed by all to engage our arboricultural consultant Mr Unwin to revisit these poplar trees for an updated professional opinion costing £150.

**T.5858 SDC Community Governance Review** – to discuss possible legal action via Judicial Review. The Clerk has obtained an initial impression of this legal work from

our solicitor Wellers Law and its likely cost implications. Council is resolved to keep this matter under consideration.

**T.5859 Civic Centre Reception Doors** - to consider appointing contractor for replacement doors with recommendation from working group. A summary backing document was provided with 4 quotes, of which two are serious candidates, although questions arose as to the safety/suitability of a swing-opening electric door, and the unsuitability of maintaining an exterior, non-electric door which must be manually locked-open daily.

After discussions, it was resolved by a vote of 11 to 1 to agree to electric doors rather than manual. It was then agreed that the working group of Cllrs J Turner, D Thomas, S Wood and N Pinnegar assess the quotes again and revert to Council with a more suitable/workable proposal for Council to consider.

**T.5860 Staff vacancies**

a) Buildings Manager Resignation – to note and to agree recruitment process and delegation of necessary matters to the Clerk (in consultation with Chair/Vice Chair). Also to note that due to departure of caretaker two weeks ago, the Council may need to close some facilities if volunteers are not found to assist, until replacement staff are recruited as soon as possible. Resignation of buildings manager noted and advertisement/delegation unanimously agreed, proposed Cllr June Cordwell seconded Cllr T Luker.

b) Caretaker Vacancy – To approve re-advertising of this vacancy and agree recruitment process and delegation of necessary matters to the Clerk (in consultation with Chair/Vice Chair). Approved as above in (a), also copies of the schedule requiring volunteer support for locking up the civic centre and moving of tables /chair was circulated again and stressed that unless willing helpers are found, then customers would be turned away and the facility facing closures at certain periods. The first two weeks of September are particularly difficult periods, when civic centre is very busy again. Please contact the office with offers of assistance.

*This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.40 pm*

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