



**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING,
MONDAY 16th SEPTEMBER 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, S Wood, P Barton, A Wilkinson

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey. District Cllrs C Braun & 5 members of public.

T.5861 Apologies for absence. Cllr M Tucker

T.5862 Allotments - to present prizes for Best Kept Allotments competition. Mr A Moore collected third prize for his plot at Knapp Rd allotments and was congratulated by Council.

T.5863 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.5864 To comment on Police statistics for Wotton. Cllr R Claydon downloaded the latest monthly statistics, and noted the spike in antisocial behaviour incidents – more information available on the Police UK website. The Clerk had followed up councils request for the Police to attend a council meeting but unfortunately, due to shift patterns and resources this was not possible. However PCSO H Pearson & PC P Matthews from the Neighbourhood Policing Team stated that if any Cllr or public member had any issues of concern, they would happily meet to discuss them at a prearranged time/date/place.

Regarding the speeding complaint at Coombe Rd by a resident, the Police are carrying out random speed checks but no significant speeding problems have so far been noted. A community speedwatch scheme could be set up which needs minimum 6 volunteers agreeing to operate at least 2 hours at varying locations weekly. Police would train volunteers. Cllr S Wood agreed to co ordinate this and establish interest amongst any volunteers. County Cllr John Cordwell has asked for the faded double yellow lines on this stretch to be repainted. The County Highways manager has stated that due to no accident figures on this stretch, he cannot assist with camera resource/funding, however the Police have put this location on their waiting list to site a temporary speed camera.

T.5865 Public Forum– Mr G Kitchen highlighted that he had filed a complaint about SDC assisting Merrywalks shopping centre in Stroud centre financially which would be to the detriment of footfall elsewhere in the district's local towns. He also lamented that the south west region and this area were not benefitting from the Govt's town centre High St improvement initiatives.

Mr York asked Council for views on re-ordering the Remembrance Parade in order that the young cadets are marching with elderly RBL members, but this would be in front of the town council & civic officials. Council has no problem with this and indeed many times it has been carried out this way. The Parade in Wotton began in 1921, is enjoyed by many, and combines a popular church service in addition to wreath laying. However due to the loss of many elderly RBL members and dwindling numbers, there is a worry that the Wotton branch (also incorporating the Charfield branch) can no longer continue and special measures have been instigated by the County RBL in order that the Wotton entity continues to function. Although this year's Parade is now under control, Mr York wishes to organise a committee so that the event can continue in future years. The Council asked to be kept informed of this, so that representation can be provided.

T.5866 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor.

County Cllr Dr JE Cordwell provided a written report; he highlighted the climate change strategy, Conservative Party defectors due to Brexit troubles, motions running out of time, and staff at Pyke Quarry Tip Site to undergo customer service refresher training after customer complaints of poor service.

A written District Council report was circulated. August was a quiet month with few meetings. The recent high profile dog fouling prosecution & fine has been much discussed. However it is unclear whether dogs are allowed on playing fields or not, after SDC sent an email this week explaining that public signs are not enforceable which refuse dogs access. Signs are just a deterrent. Although Development Control Committee approved the plans for houses in Gloucester /Bradley St, SDC will not proceed with the project yet whilst residents are being re-homed. This Council is, however, appalled that SDC approved permission, after Glos Highways did not object to the revised plans, which showed cars reversing out of the proposed car parking spaces onto a busy Gloucester St.

T.5867 Minutes of the Council Meeting of August 2019. Proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded Cllr T Luker, agreed 10 in favour, 1 abstention, to approve these Minutes.

T.5868 Chairman's Announcements No meetings attended other than the DCC Committee at SDC whereby the proposed appalling access onto Gloucester St was approved, which will necessitate vehicles in future reversing onto a main road from those parking spaces. This will cause access & safety problems in the future when these houses are built.

T.5869 Accounts

- a) To approve Cllr attendance 20/11/19 at Planning training course, cost £50 (on waiting list as filled very quickly). Proposed by Cllr John Cordwell seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve attendance, agreed all in favour.
- b) To decide lift maintenance contractor from November 2019. A document was circulated illustrating 4 different quotes. It was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell and seconded by Cllr J Turner, agreed by all, to approve Jackson Lifts as new contractor for 12 months, given the competitive pricing and nearby location.
- c) To approve Clerk attendance at SLCC Clerk's networking event on 27/11/19, cost £20. Proposed by Cllr J Turner seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve attendance, agreed all in favour.
- d) To approve works costing £230 to replace two rotten gateposts at Knapp Road allotments, proposed by Cllr R Hale seconded by Cllr T Luker to approve, agreed all in favour.
- e) To approve quotes for stream clearance work for Marchesi Walk and Dyers Brook. Proposed by Cllr S Wood seconded by Cllr T Luker to approve works by D Howse for £620 & £450, agreed all in favour, however next time it is requested that quotes are obtained from other contractors (suggestions requested by Clerk), and that if Marchesi stream is entered then footwear must be sterilised due to protected crayfish species.
- f) To approve Deputy Clerk membership renewal of SLCC at a cost of £196. Proposed by Cllr June Cordwell seconded by Cllr T Luker to approve renewal, agreed all in favour.
- g) Budget 2019/20, report circulated in advance & position noted as healthy.

- h) To approve the accounts for payment. Proposed by Cllr John Cordwell seconded by Cllr J Turner to approve net payments of £22,836 for Town Council and £1,271 for Town Trust, agreed 11 in favour, 1 abstention.

T5870 Completion of Audit – To confirm successful completion of audit for Financial Year 2018/19. The staff were thanked for the hard work to ensure that the positive audit was possible; the accountants service (S Tasker) was also appreciated.

T.5871 Climate Change – Tree Planting – To note that free trees and free local, expert advice are being offered as part of Climate Change carbon capture efforts. To consider support in principle for this initiative; and areas of Town Council land which may be suitable for tree planting. A paper was circulated explaining the offer of free trees & advice. Possible locations were discussed. It was proposed by Cllr J Turner and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar that this Council is supportive of the project in principle, but needs more detailed advice and clarification on proposals. Furthermore, any site would need to be suitably prepared by the volunteers, the trees should be free and planted by the volunteers, and the volunteers would need to look after the trees in terms of weeding and watering until established. Agreed all in favour. The possible planting areas to be considered are Marchesi Walk, Holywell picnic area, Wotton Cemetery, Hill Rd amenity area, and Knapp Field. However the trees must be suitable for the sites, adjacent residents may need to be contacted in some cases, and Knapp Field is large & would need more detailed consideration including pathways, usage of areas, and any planning applications & implications for future usage.

T.5872 Trees – Tree consultant has been requested to examine New Rd Poplars & Knapp Rd Elm. Mr Unwin's report & analysis was circulated which recommended re-pollarding of the poplars and felling the dead Elm.

After much discussion of the history/situation of these poplars, and a failed motion to remove them completely, it was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr June Cordwell and agreed 7 in favour, 3 against, to obtain quotations to re-pollard both of these poplars to approximately 8/9 metres in line with the arboricultural consultant's advice.

The advice to fell the dead elm was proposed by Cllr R Claydon seconded by Cllr D Thomas and agreed all in favour – quotations to be sourced.

T.5873 Cemetery Exhumation Request – To consider whether or not to grant permission. The history of this request was explained in detail, and how this would be the third exhumation of this deceased person, after having been moved to a grave in Scotland and then returned. Diocese permission would also be needed by the applicant's wife since the grave was in consecrated ground. Given the history of moves, the previous notice served that further permission would not be granted, and the belief that the cemetery is indeed a place of rest, it was proposed by Cllr June Cordwell seconded by Cllr S Wood and agreed 7 in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention, to refuse permission to exhume.

T.5874 Honorary Freeman Scheme - to consider an Honorary Freeman Scheme for the Town of Wotton-under-Edge, and approve draft policy. If Policy is approved, to consider granting this privilege to an individual under closed session below. The legislation allowing this scheme and the merits of operating such a policy were discussed in detail. After discussion of minor amendments needed to the suggested policy, it was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr J Turner and agreed 9 in favour, 2 abstentions, to approve this scheme and the amended policy.

T.5875 Town Cllr vacancy – to note result of legal notice expiring 14th September and whether an election has been requested, or if WTC is free to co-opt. No election has been requested by the public. Council will co-opt at the October Council meeting.

T.5876 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – To acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. Council thanks the unknown volunteer sweeper of Shinbone Alley.

T.5877 Clerk's Report-circulated in advance and noted. The Clerk thanked those councillors who attended the farewell event for the Buildings Manager who left last week after 16 years service – the Town Crest engraved wine glasses were much appreciated by him. Council thanks him for his service commenting 'the Council will miss him'. He is also praised for his fundraising efforts of £90,000 for the firefighters charity.

T.5878 Correspondence to note or request action:

- a) To note letter from SDC regarding a review of SDC toilet assets district wide including Rope Walk public toilets and their wish to discuss this further with the Town Council. Meeting arranged for Tuesday 17th September.
- b) To note letter sent from this Council (Cllr R Claydon) to the Secretary of Transport regarding grants for OLEV on-street charge points; response received confirming expiry of current grant in March 2020 however G Freeman MP is tasked with identifying another scheme to promote this area of transport – we await further news. Cllr D Thomas has also been in correspondence with this MP regarding solar power forecourt grants and the grant parameters of only being for feasibility studies.
- c) To note email from SDC regarding Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Member Information Evening on 18/9/2019 and to appoint an attendee. Cllr June Cordwell will attend.
- d) To note various emails concerning the poplar trees at New Road allotments; inspection of the trees has been discussed. Clerk to respond to adjacent complainant accordingly.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only; none

T.5879 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 – will meet this week

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – will meet on 24th September. SDC's Steve Miles was awarded best youth leader in the South West.

WOTTON POOL – now closed and pool being grit blasted ahead of tiling works.

REGENERATION – revised date of 25th September for next meeting.

WCSF – no report

HERITAGE CENTRE – report forwarded by Cllr June Cordwell. The Centre is very busy and doing well with visitor numbers.

Nailsworth Climate Change meeting - Cllr D Thomas attended and said it was interesting with a demonstration of air source heat pumps.

Wotton in Bloom meeting – Cllr J Turner attended. Fundraising and plans for 2020 were discussed, along with the poorer hanging basket displays this year seemingly caused by erratic watering schedules and different flower mixes.

T.5880 Town Affairs – very brief comments from Members or items for future agendas:

Cllr R Hale – trees are overhanging the footpath on north side of the Chipping and path needs sweeping. Also it appears darker around Chipping Green as if a streetlamp has failed.

Cllr T Luker – asked about attention to the problem areas/photos he highlighted recently. Clerk responded that Council is still awaiting his details of the problem areas regarding their exact locations and ownership responsibilities. Also, various streetlamps appear to be failing in Synwell Lane. Cllr Luker was advised to either report them on line via Glos CC website or provide exact details for the office to report them.

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 T Luker, seconded by Cllr R Hale, agreed by all.

T.5881 Civic Centre Reception Doors - to consider appointing contractor for replacement doors with recommendation from working group. As requested previously two contractors visited site again to quote for electric doors, but quoted very differently. After ceiling investigations one considers that electric sliding doors are not possible due to lack of headroom for equipment as steel beam is in the way. Thus double swing doors were proposed. The other contractor did not investigate, but quoted for electric sliding door of smaller 1.3m opening width. The working group has not met to suggest a solution. Given the difficulties this is presenting, it is suggested that the Mayor writes a final detailed specification, to be circulated to the working group for comments, then forwarded again to the contractors.

T.5882 Staff vacancies - To ratify appointment of new caretaker, and consider progress of buildings manager replacement. It was proposed by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr John Cordwell, and agreed by all, to appoint Mr Andrew Burns as caretaker for 20 hours weekly on a 2 year contract. The final of 4 advertisements has now ended and a few applicants will be interviewed shortly for the post of buildings manager.

T.5883 Notice of Easement – To note receipt from Land Registry of Notice of Easement of No. 4 the Chipping regarding rights over Town Trust property; and to note Council solicitor's advice thereon. Council did not object to this Land Registry application, since it is based on the original Deed of Confirmation from the Town Trust to the original property owner of June 2003. It does not confer any extra parking or land ownership rights of which Council is unaware. Await further contact on this issue before parking delineation matters are revisited.

T.5884 Honorary Freeman Scheme to consider an individual's recommendation for Honorary Freeman for the Town of Wotton-under-Edge. An individual has been nominated and will be considered at a special meeting in two weeks.

T.5885 Community Governance Review by SDC – to consider approval of cost for Judicial Review process, and revised legal advice. Counsel's fees for barrister opinion of 8 hours work are £2000. The solicitor has read more details of Wotton's situation and states there is a good case for consideration. It was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell, seconded by Cllr R Hale, and agreed by all, to appoint a barrister to formally

assess the merits of our case against SDC, to issue a pre-application protocol letter to SDC, and to advise WTC of the merits and wording of any petition. SDC has stated it will not assist WTC with guidance on any petition since legal action is being considered.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.40 pm

Signed:Dated: