



**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING,  
MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**

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

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

**T.5946 Apologies for absence.** Noted from Cllr A Wilkinson

**T.5947 To receive Declarations of Interest/Dispensations** now or as soon as known. Personal interests declared by Cllr P Barton Fountain crescent relative's property, Cllr N Pinnegar van fuel payment to employer & Walking Festival member, Cllr S Wood Knapp rd allotment tenant, Cllr R Hale spouse new chair of UTEA.

**T.5948 To comment on Wotton's Police statistics** Cllr R Claydon provided the latest statistics for November.

**T.5949 Public Forum** The Chairman and the Treasurer of Wotton Pool attended to explain how well the pool tiling works had been carried out by Rio Pools, and that the whole Sport England grant of £45k was received. Enovert Trust also donated £5k. The changing rooms refurbishment programme is still on schedule, with the builder starting early. The town council grant of £6k from this year's agreement and an advance of £6k from next year's agreement is vital to allow this work to take place all in one go. Mrs J Walshe spoke of Mr G Philips stepping down from the Arts Association after organising events for 50 years. Wotton's Climate Action Group has become a member under the Recreational Trust umbrella. The One Stop Shop of the Town Council was thanked for taking calendar donations on behalf of the Heritage Centre – only 10 are now remaining, with them selling very well this year. Mrs Walshe kindly offered to reorganise the kitchen crockery cupboards in the town hall in advance of town hall teas. Cllr C Braun explained that the Greenway Group is now fundraising for the next stage of the alignment process, which has a £24k budget, and for which £23k has been pledged. Although the order for the works is due to be given soon, in order that momentum is not lost, contributions to the remaining £1k are needed.

**T.5950 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor.**

County Cllr Dr JE Cordwell provided a written report highlighting the county draft medium term financial strategy and the FY20/21 budget, and the draft climate change strategy and action plan.

A District Council report was circulated. Cllr Ken Tucker explained that the senior new positions at SDC had now been filled and that he would accompany the new officers on trips to the parishes for introductions in spring. The Boundary Commission has not yet responded to the Wotton /Kingswood boundary realignment, however approval is expected imminently as the election timetable commences soon. Dryleaze House is expected to provide one of the new sheltered accommodation 'Hubs' which provide community activities as requested by residents across the district when surveyed. Some covers for the recycling bins will be dropped into the One Stop Shop for residents to use, in order that the cardboard does not get too wet.

**T.5951 Minutes of the Council Meeting:** December 2019 Minutes, proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded Cllr P Barton, agreed all in favour to approve these Minutes. The Clerk was thanked for organising the festive quiz.

**T.5952 Chairman's Announcements** Cllr R Claydon provided a written report. He also highlighted the climate action group meeting on Thursday this week where solar panels would be discussed and requested some councillor attendees. Also the RBL has requested councillor assistance for future remembrance events in November, and councillor participation is requested at an initial meeting to discuss what level of council assistance is envisaged (attendees Cllrs S Smith, J Turner, R Claydon, M Tucker)

**T.5953 Accounts**

- a) To approve purchase of flower bulbs for bank adjacent to swimming pool at a cost of £94, and to consider how to fund the purchase of wildflower turf for the bank costing £415. Cllr June Cordwell spoke of initial meetings and the enthusiasm of volunteers to prepare the bank and of the desire to encourage wildlife and flowers to this dull stretch of grass. After much discussion concerning the cost of the wildflower turf, the need to do this immediately due to mild weather, the positive publicity for this council, the benefits to wildlife and public morale, the questions over future bank maintenance needed and it being a test piece for other larger areas, and the remaining amenity budget, it was proposed by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr S Wood, and agreed 9 in favour, 2 against, 1 abstention, to approve bulb and turf purchase.
- b) Noted that Glos Local Govt Pension Scheme is now providing Pensions III-Health Liability Insurance for Scheme Employers, thus WTC will no longer have to purchase this; insurance budget is thus reduced by £1400 accordingly.
- c) To ratify purchase of replacement beam for Symn Lane play area cost £413 plus VAT. Existing one is severely rotten and unsalvageable. Lead time is 2 months with WTC staff to fit item before Spring. It was proposed by Cllr J Turner, seconded by Cllr R Hale, and agreed all in favour to approve.
- d) Noted Suez price increases for waste disposal at Council and Trust properties: General waste sacks increase from £2.35 to £2.54 per sack (+7.5%); recycling sacks increase from £2.20 to £2.30 per sack (+4.5%).
- e) To approve payment of Scribe accounts software for forthcoming year cost £730 plus VAT. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr T Luker, and agreed all in favour to approve.
- f) To approve Clerk participation in SLCC Climate Emergency & Action Planning webinar, 11/2/2020, special SLCC student rate £45 plus VAT. It was proposed by Cllr J Turner, seconded by Cllr R Hale, and agreed all in favour to approve.
- g) To ratify approval for additional works to upgrade laptop (from Windows 7 to allow updates & Microsoft support) cost £96 plus VAT. It was proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded by Cllr J Turner, and agreed all in favour to approve.
- h) To consider & approve adverts/Mayors reports in Wotton Directory for 2020/21 as follows:

- 4 half pages @ £288 (approx. 200 words plus logo and image); or
- 4 full pages @ £480 (approx. 400 words plus logo and image).

After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr P Barton, seconded by Cllr M Tucker, and agreed all in favour to approve 4 x half page report inserts for 2020.

*Cllr S Wood left the room*

- i) To consider options for rubbish removal at Knapp Road – Hippo bag @ £159 to assist 1 plot or skip to assist numerous plots @ approx. £300. Skip quotes were also obtained and a discussion followed, considering the state of some of the plots when tenants take them on, even with a year's free plot rent, when a lot of work needs to be done. A deposit system was introduced 2 years ago, however many plots have been in use for a long period before the deposit system to guarantee better handover state was introduced, thus poor quality handovers are still happening. It was proposed by Cllr P

Barton and seconded by Cllr T Luker, agreed by all, that a 6 yard skip costing £270 inc vat is hired for one day at the beginning of March for the Knapp Rd allotment site in order that a one off clearance of allotment items can happen. Administrator is to liaise with plot holders in order that good use is made of this facility for that day only, liaising also with New Rd plot holders if necessary.

*Cllr S Wood returned to the room*

j) To consider request from Blues Festival regarding arrangements for use of the Town Hall on 19/20th September as in 2019; & note staff investigating licensed capacity of the building. It was proposed by Cllr J Turner, seconded by Cllr R Hale, agreed by all, that donated use of the Town Hall is agreed on the condition that positive publicity is received and the BluesFest organisers publically acknowledge support of Town Council.

k) To approve worktop repair (choosing an option) at town hall kitchen. The Town Clerk prepared a costed document with various options for repair. After discussion of the state of the damaged worksurface, it was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr D Thomas that option 3 of repairing only the damaged corner section is chosen, despite the colour match not being exact for material cost of £149 plus fitting (£399 total). However a counterproposal by Cllr R Hale and seconded by Cllr M Tucker proposed that the whole worksurface is replaced, costing materials of £279, this was carried with a vote of 7 in favour and 5 against. Both options involve WTC staff fitting the surfaces, with the latter costing £729 total, including staffing cost & external specialist to cut the joined corner with a jig.

l) Budget 2019/20 report; noted as healthy and that the administration performs a good job of maintaining this area.

*Cllr N Pinnegar left the room*

m) To approve the accounts for payment. An updated schedule was forwarded to all with a couple of late invoice additions. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale, seconded by Cllr P Barton, agreed by all, that January payments of £34,995 for Town Council and £920 for Town Trust are approved.

*Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the room*

#### **T.5954 Budget & Precept 2020**

*Cllr June Cordwell left the room*

a) To approve Budget and set Precept for Year 2020/21. An updated draft budget was circulated to councillors following the detailed budget meeting of November 2019. After discussion about the reduction of 1% in Wotton's tax base provided by SDC, which affects the rise in Precept to +4% instead of an actual rise of +3%, it was proposed by Cllr John Cordwell, seconded by Cllr J Turner, agreed by all, that the Precept for FY20/21 is set at £319,061 and that the budget is approved as presented.

*Cllr June Cordwell returned to the room*

b) To approve price increases for Town Council and Town Trust facilities, proposed by Cllr N Pinnegar, seconded by Cllr T Luker, agreed by all.

*Cllr N Pinnegar & R Hale left the room*

c) To approve grants awarded for Year 2020/21, proposed by Cllr John Cordwell, seconded by Cllr J Turner, agreed by all, with the amendment that the Air Ambulance grant of £150 is a firm agreement rather than waiting for a request.

*Cllr N Pinnegar & R Hale returned to the room*

**T.5955 Wotton Swimming Pool Grant.** To approve £6000 repair portion of 2019/20 SLA and to approve advance payment of £6000 from 2020/21 SLA towards changing rooms project (to be paid immediately from earmarked reserves, reserves to be replenished in new FY). This is to assist cashflow in current winter's work schedule as major refurbishment works need to be undertaken all in one go. The Council is impressed with the standard and impetus of the works to the Pool and thanks all of those involved in this. It was proposed by Cllr S Wood, seconded by Cllr June Cordwell, agreed by all, that these payments are approved.

**T.5956 Town Council Meeting Dates** – To agree meeting dates for the year 2020/21. A list of dates was circulated in advance up to May 2021. It was proposed by Cllr S Wood, seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, agreed by all, that these dates are approved.

**T.5957 Govt Consultation** – To consider responses to govt consultation on strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments (consultation ends 5/3/20). After discussion of the issues surrounding the problems when travellers are moved on from sites, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr P Barton, agreed 11 in favour, 1 abstention, to support the summarised proposals of this consultation, although mentioning the concern that there are fewer and fewer places where the travelling community are authorised to stay, and that there needs to be an undertaking to provide more suitable sites for the legitimate travelling community, in order that the problem is not continually moved on to adjacent areas.

**T.5958 Symn Lane Play Area** – to consider anti-social behaviour deterrent options and locking/unlocking system. Cllr S Wood was thanked for taking on the co ordinating role of volunteers to lock/unlock whilst a more permanent solution is sought. Nearby residents are to be contacted to assist, with messages going out on social media. A specific locking up time would be preferred on a notice – although it is appreciated that winter to summer sundown involves a 5 hour change with the park well used on summer evenings after a hot day. The tall gate is to be looked at by council staff, after signs that youths are able to get a foothold on the latch area to climb over it when it is locked.

**T.5959 Buckingham Palace Garden Party** – the summary document was considered but no nominations were forthcoming.

**T.5960 To approve policy updates/revisions** as proposed by Special Purposes Committee. After a few minor amendments, and explanation of the equal opportunities policy now being replaced and incorporated into the equality and diversity policy, it was proposed by Cllr R Claydon and seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all that these updated policies are approved. Cllr M Tucker agreed to provide details of how the dignity at work policy could be improved for a future review. Also the definition of European Economic Area in the CCTV policy will be investigated if change is needed.

	<u>Policy</u>	<u>Current Review due date</u>
1	Model Publication Scheme	Feb 19
2	CCTV Policy	Feb 19
3	Media Policy	Feb 19
4	Grant Policy	Feb 19
5	Complaints Procedure	Feb 19
6	Dignity at Work Policy	Feb 19
7	Internet Email Policy	Feb 19
8	Grievance Procedure	Feb 19
9	Disciplinary Procedure	Feb 19
10	Equal Opportunities Policy	Feb 19 (now covered by no.11)
11	Equality & Diversity Policy	Feb 19
12	Training Policy	Feb 19
13	Health & Safety Policy	Oct 19
14	Adverse Weather policy	Apr 19
15	Town Crest Policy	Apr 19
16	Subject Access Request Form	Oct 20

**T.5961 Council Office Works** – To approve recommendation from Special Purposes Committee concerning changes to Office/One Stop Shop layout to enable more efficient and cohesive building usage and improved staff working arrangements. A backing document, explaining the efficiencies, was circulated in advance and questions answered concerning the removal of partition walls and not brick walls, of quotes being obtained for approval on February council agenda, the continued free one room usage by CAB, and the need for some type of measuring utility usage of shop area for charging. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale and seconded by Cllr M Tucker and agreed by all to approve this plan in principle with quotes for works to be decided on February agenda. A works specification and site plan will be sent to contractors immediately.

**T.5962 Climate Change Action Working Group** – to receive update on actions proposed to be carried out by the Council and inform the public of future council initiatives. Following the formation of a council working group in June 2019, a statement for publication was prepared by Cllr D Thomas to explain Council's achievements so far and future plans. It is noted that when grant windows open they are usually short in timescale and that any projects which need council approval, involving preparation of details/planning/other permissions, need to be ready 'to go' to be eligible. Thus projects need to appear on future agendas as soon as possible. The Clerk also highlighted various green initiatives already being undertaken by the council office administration to be included on the statement. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar and agreed by all to publish this statement.

**T.5963 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers** – To acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. Thank you cards to be sent to Mr G Philips for 50 years of Arts Association activities in Wotton, Mr M Clarke after his chairmanship ends for Under the Edge Arts in Wotton, and Mrs Burrows for having consistently volunteered in the locking/unlocking of Symn Lane play area for the past few years.

**T.5964 Clerk's Report** -circulated in advance and noted. A request for contribution towards SDC charges for dog bin emptying will be on February agenda.

**T.5965 Correspondence to note or request action:**

a) Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP) Review - Public Consultation notification. This will be on February agenda for Council comments.

b) Minerals Local Plan for Glos2018-2032. Inspector's Report noted.

*Cllr P Barton left the room*

c) Email from resident of Fountain Crescent asking that land allegedly gifted by WTC is registered to owner – nothing in files to state land was gifted. There is no evidence to show that this land was gifted to a resident and the land is already registered to Wotton Town Council. Furthermore, no councillors have any recollection of such an agreement. Clerk to reply accordingly. It is important to note that access to this ditch via Knapp Field needs to be maintained for clearance even if trees are planted in the field in future.

*Cllr P Barton returned to the room*

d) Noted - election timetable for May 2020 elections.

*Brochures/Newsletters for information only; none – mostly electronic*

**T.5966 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 – met with 6 cllrs and 5 members of public. Mr J Walshe of Heritage Centre attended and explained about the new leaflet. The Gateway project is still ongoing with the information officer constantly liaising on map alterations. Footpath issues are still being reported to Glos CC and their system is starting to give some feedback. Next meeting in April.

SPECIAL PURPOSES – met recently: all issues on this agenda.

ALLOTMENTS – meeting this week with tree consultation on Knapp Field

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – will meet on 4<sup>th</sup> February.

WOTTON POOL – discussed at start of agenda. REGENERATION – not met

WCSF – no report.

HERITAGE CENTRE – meeting this week.

WALKING FESTIVAL – new walks brochure almost ready for the 1<sup>st</sup> draft, will be 24 walks over 4 days this time, with a Thursday start.

TOWNS & PARISHES INFO meeting SDC – Cllrs D Thomas and J Turner attended, but a generally poor parish turnout. It was informative with various issues discussed. SDC will offer to meet towns and parishes in Spring to discuss climate action.

Beaumont Le Roger – AGM on Friday, French visitors to arrive in May.

GMTF – Cllr M Tucker said recent meeting very useful with good ideas, contributions and sharing of information

LEP – discussion on retail initiatives. Cllr M Tucker has managed to persuade them to do a free footfall report in Wotton to trial a new report concept (usual cost £2500).

**T.5967 Town Affairs** – very brief comments from Members or items for future agendas: *none*

**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 R Claydon, seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, agreed by all.*

**T.5968 Civic Centre electronic reception doors** – to approve contractor as recommended by Special Purposes Committee. A document outlining all options and costs was circulated in advance, following the various discussions and questions raised last autumn. It was proposed by Cllr S Wood and seconded by Cllr J Turner and agreed by all to appoint Alfram to install double sliding electric doors at the civic centre for £7992 plus vat.

**T.5969 Staff Appraisals/Reviews** – to note outcome from review process and consider re-organisation proposals regarding staffing in Council. After much discussion of the staffing matters under consideration, the increase by 1 scale point in relevant pay scales was proposed by Cllr S Wood and seconded by Cllr P Barton and agreed by all backdated to January. Furthermore it was proposed by Cllr R Hale and seconded by Cllr S Wood and agreed by all to approve the suggestions from Special Purpose Committee that the staff re-organisational matters proceed as suggested, with the office reorganisation works taking place first, before the changed deputy clerk role and new assistant clerk role can commence, involving a significant handover/training period.

## **TOWN TRUST MATTERS**

**T.5970 Town Trust Minutes** – to approve compilation of Town Trust Minutes from June to December 2019; proposed by Cllr June Cordwell and seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar and agreed by all to approve.

*Proposal to exit closed session by Cllr R Claydon, seconded by Cllr N Pinnegar, agreed by all*

*This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.50pm*

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