

MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY
Held on Monday 13th May 2019, at 7pm in the Civic Centre



Present: Cllrs, P Smith (Mayor), R Claydon (Deputy Mayor), P Barton, John Cordwell, June Cordwell, T Luker, M Short, J Turner, N Pinnegar, R Hale, D Thomas.
District Cllrs K Tucker, Ms C Braun.

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey & Administrator Mrs D Hyam Members of the Public 11

1) **Welcome** The Mayor Welcomed members of the public and introduced SDC Chief Executive Kathy O'Leary.

2) **Guest Speaker SDC Chief Executive Kathy O'Leary.**

Ms O'Leary outlined her aims for the future of the District Council.

- The County, District and Local Town and Parish Councils must collaborate and work together to achieve value for money. It will be important to visit towns and villages in the district to listen to local communities to establish what can be achieved.
- There is impression that Wotton feels forgotten by the District Council along with others, however there will be not be such an emphasis on Stroud as it is important to build relationships with Town and Parish Councils and Councillors.
- Over the next five years Councils will struggle to meet costs with the reduction in funding from Central Government. SDC has been financially secure but this has been due to using reserves to balance accounts. It will be important for the District Council to be self-sufficient for a stable future.
- In future services that are not statutory might be at risk. Youth services that were cut by GCC have proved to be successful with alternative support, such as the Youth Centre in Wotton which is funded and managed by the Town Council. SDC may look at introducing agency services for the residents such as a handyman service so that residents can find a reliable tradesman to carry out maintenance. This would use knowledge available at the Council and generate much needed revenue.

The Following Questions were raised by the Public

UTEA. Concern was raised by a resident regarding funding of £2,500 on a 3 year programme and would this support continue in light of the housing developments in Charfield and Kingswood? Other ways of funding may have to be considered such as a lottery for good causes. This will be presented to Councillors as there are many strict safeguards.

Decline in High Streets. Cllr D Thomas raised concern regarding empty shops etc. Many businesses are struggling due to rents and taxes.

It is important to offer a greater experience to attract customers to the High Streets, such as cafés, restaurants and markets.

SDC Carbon Neutral by 2030. A member of the public asked how this can be achieved.

SDC are looking at ways to change the car fleet to electric or dual fuel vehicles. There will be a lot of research into the positioning of charging points and how cars perform in this hilly district. A report will be submitted on 6th June outlining proposals to the Environment Committee,
Communication between SDC and WTC. Cllr M Short raised concerns that in some cases work had started on projects and applications before notification was received by WTC, such as the bin shelters at Bearlands as no consultation took place.

It was noted that communication has to be improved and this is being looked into. However, another system may have to be considered to make the improvements needed.

Local transport for elderly people in the area. Concern was raised regarding access to services such as the Memory Group that meet in Wotton. Residents from outlining villages have to rely on volunteers, family or friends to give them lifts due to poor public transport.

As budgets are being squeezed rural transport is a big issue and ways of using community schemes and other solutions are being investigated.

2) **Adoption of Previous Minutes** of the Annual Parish Assembly of 23rd April 2018 and any matters arising from those minutes. It was proposed by Cllr R Hale and seconded by Cllr P Barton to approve the Minutes as presented, all in favour.

3) **Brief Report from the Mayor** Cllr Paul Smith

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk and staff for their hard work during a very difficult time due to reduced resources caused by long term leave. He thanked Councillors for their support with taking on work to help the staff and he also thanked members of the committees and co-opted members for their support over the last year. He had nothing further to add to his written report in the booklet.

4) **Brief Reports from Town Council Committee Chairs.**

Planning (Cllr R Claydon)

The report in the booklet outlined the number of significant applications received and Cllr Claydon highlighted the following;

- Garages at Mount Pleasant. WTC objected to this application and was not informed of the application going to the DCC therefore was unable to raise any objections.
- Land North of Holywell. WTC objected to this application and it was refused by the Planning Authority.
- Garages at Berkeley Close. Following concerns raised by local residents WTC objected to this application.
- Dryleaze Court. WTC supported this application and suggested changes to the plan.
- District Local Plan 2020-2030 SDC is required to provide 12,800 new homes most will be towards Gloucester City and does not include Wotton. Public consultation on the final proposal will take place in the Autumn.

Footpaths (Cllr R Claydon)

Cllr Claydon thanked members of the committee for their work over the past year. The report in the booklet included the following points:

- The committee surveyed over 70 footways and problems were reported to GCC.
- Wotton is to become part of the "Cotswold Gateway Project" the Cotswold Conservation Board will be installing noticeboards and markers for several routes.
- Wotton Walking Festival was held recently and has been very successful attracting more walkers to the town.

Allotments (Cllr P Barton)

Nothing further to add to the written report provided in the booklet.

Regeneration (Cllr A Wilkinson)

No report available and Cllr A Wilkinson was not present at the meeting.

Wotton Youth Partnership (Cllr June Cordwell)

Nothing further to add to the written report in booklet.

Wotton Library. No attendee, however a written report provided in the booklet.

Wotton in Bloom. (Mrs J Tebb) A written report provided in the booklet.

Wotton Pool. No attendee, however a written report provided in the booklet.

Wotton Community Sports Foundation No attendee, however a written report provided in the booklet.

Synwell Playing Field. (Mrs A Hartley) A written report provided in the booklet.

Heritage Centre (Mrs J Walshe)

A written report provided in the booklet. Mrs Walshe highlighted that visitor numbers have increased and that she was disappointed that SDC have no tourism officers. It was pointed out that the Heritage Centre does not get any funding from SDC but is supported by WTC.

Wotton-under-Edge & District Community Recreational Trust. (Mrs J Walshe)

A written report provided in the booklet Mrs Walshe added that Beaumont le Roger will be joining the trust as an affiliated group.

County Council Matters (Cllr John Cordwell)

A written report was provided Cllr John Cordwell highlighted the following points;

- It was noted that there has been an average of 35% cost increase in tenders from local bus operators to retain the existing service provision.
- The conversion of street lighting to LED in Wotton will continue until the end of July.
- Last year councillors were allocated £30k over three years to support local projects. Allocations to date include a total of £6.36k to the two primary schools in Wotton.
- This year resurfacing work is planned for Synwell Lane.
- Safety concerns have been raised regarding the queuing traffic at the recycling centre at Horsley which can at times back out along the B4058 to the junction with the road leading to Cockadilly.

District Council Matters (District Cllr Catherine Braun and Cllr K Tucker)

A written report provided in booklet.

7) Questionnaire Results (Cllr R Claydon)

From the results the Town Council have agreed that the way forward would be to proceed with Old Town Toilets and commission architects plans, secure funding from SDC (£40k now available) and seek a Public works loan. The area could easily accommodate a unisex modular toilet that would allow for seating and a garden similar to the garden in front of the Rope Walk Toilets. The Town Market would wait until Symn Lane car park is available. The OK Path lighting requires further analysis to ascertain the real need and it may become part of the "Greenway" which could lead to alternative funding.

8) Public Forum

Old Town Toilets

- It was suggested that a local architect could be approach who might give services at a reduced rate.
- As a new building was being considered for the toilets could it be designed to be dementia friendly with different coloured doors walls etc.
- It was important to include baby changing facilities.

Ok Path KLB

- It would be beneficial to conduct a survey of the students at KLB to ascertain support for the project.
- There was strong feeling that GCC should contribute to the project rather than the WTC.
- It was noted that residents from Kingswood and Wotton use the path regularly in day light but not at night due to the lack of lighting.
- It was suggested that the new Head Teacher Mr T Rand be approached to discuss the project.

The Assembly Concluded at 8.45pm

Signed.....Date.....

Chairman & Town Mayor