



**MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING,
MONDAY 16th MARCH 2020 AT 7PM IN THE CIVIC CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs R Claydon (Chairman), T Luker, J Turner, D Thomas, June Cordwell, S Wood, M Tucker.

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey. District Cllr C Braun from 19.50, 0 public.

T.5974 Apologies for absence. Noted from Cllrs John Cordwell, S Smith, R Hale, A Wilkinson, P Barton, N Pinnegar

T.5975 To receive Declarations of Interest/Dispensations now or as soon as known. Personal interests declared by Cllr S Wood regarding allotment. A Dispensation request was submitted by Cllr Claydon requesting approval for Council's Recreational Trust members to participate in discussions regarding the bowling club grant application; it was **resolved** to approve this request, all in favour.

T.5976 To comment on Wotton's Police statistics Cllr R Claydon provided statistics for February. See www.police.uk/gloucestershire/CB3/crime/stats/ for info.

T.5977 Public Forum no public

T.5978 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillor. County Cllr Dr JE Cordwell provided a written report explaining the county council's low emission vehicle strategy and the basis for future investment of charge points. A District Council report was circulated in advance. Elections have been cancelled due to coronavirus, cllrs will stay in post until May 2021. The usage of two taxi spaces outside the Co op is considered, and clearer plastics recycling info was disseminated.

T.5979 Minutes of the Council Meeting: February 2020; it was **resolved** to approve these Minutes, all in favour.

T.5980 Chairman's Announcements Cllr R Claydon provided a written report. He thanked Cllr June Cordwell for her hard work for many years being a town councillor and wished her well after her resignation from Council to take effect in May 2020. He encouraged other Cllrs to stay in post for the next 12 months. Furthermore an extraordinary council meeting is called in one week's time to consider the Pandemic Contingency Plan and delegation of further authority to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk. A quorate of 5 cllrs is requested/needed.

T.5981 Accounts

- a) To approve Town Council Risk Assessment as at March 2020. After a few minor amendments, it was **resolved** to approve this Assessment which is part of the external audit process, all in favour.
- b) To approve Town Council Asset Register as at March 2020. After a few clarifications, it was **resolved** to approve this updated Register, all in favour.
- c) Noted completion of Councillor quarterly audits with no issues. The Deputy Clerk was thanked for the easily identifiable layout of information for analysis, also to note the new Scribe printout of entries was easier to follow for the checking process.
- d) To approve Buildings Manager attendance at SDC Health & Safety/Risk Assessment in the Workplace one day course on 1/10/20 at a cost of £61; it was **resolved** to approve this, all in favour.
- e) Budget 2019/20. Report noted as healthy.

f) To approve the accounts for payment; after explanation of a few late invoices, it was **resolved** to approve the accounts payments of £40,565 net for Town Council and £2,013 net for Town Trust, all in favour.

T.5982 Grant Applications – To consider two grant applications from remainder of current financial year budget, in aid of Cobalt and Dryleaze Bowling Club. Although there are some surplus funds in the grant budget due to previously approved projects no longer needing the funds, the Chairman explained that considering grants outside of the normal procedure stated in the grant policy would set a difficult precedent. Furthermore, neither are urgent. The recipients and their needs were discussed in detail. It was **resolved** to pay Cobalt a grant of £200 from the residue of this year's grant fund, payable in May 2020, but advising them of the October date for future requests, all in favour. The Bowling Club has applied for £5000 to replace paving and a small wall around the green, however it is very surprising that these problems were not mentioned in any of the detailed feedback reports already submitted to the Recreational Trust. It was **resolved**, agreed by all, that a provision of £500 is earmarked from the current grant residue as a possible grant, subject to further information regarding specification of works, quotations, and secured match funding to cover the balance of the total cost.

T.5983 Minutes of Council meetings -to agree to dispense with recording of names of Cllr proposer and seconder and to state 'it was **RESOLVED** that' or 'it was **NOT RESOLVED** that' followed by the resolution. This motion was suggested for adoption to reinforce the fact that the Council acts as one corporate body and individual councillors are part of the overall process. The need for recording the vote details following the motion was discussed in detail as it provides a flavour of the debate; it was **resolved** to approve this change, 3 in favour, 2 against, 2 abstentions, thus carried – starting with the March 2020 Minutes.

T.5984 Pensions Policy – To approve updates to the Town Council's Workplace Pensions and Auto-Enrolment Policy in response to comments received from Glos County Council Pensions section; it was **resolved** to approve this, all in favour.

T.5985 Town Tidying – To appoint working group to organise this project (Cllr P Barton). This project emanated from the Regeneration Partnership and Cllr P Barton wishes to take the issue further setting up a working group doing a footway survey of the town's untidy areas, and recording such matters in order to identify what can be done with each of the problem areas. Council requests a proper report of problem areas; Cllrs S Wood, J Turner and T Luker offered assistance.

T.5986 Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan Consultation – To consider comments to submit. Consultation evens were attended by Cllrs D Thomas, M Tucker, J Turner and R Claydon. A draft submission document was prepared and circulated by Cllr R Claydon. After a few comments stressing the vital importance of including the Greenway route in the Plan, and stressing the need for better public transport in Wotton to connect to a future re-opened Charfield Railway Station, it was resolved to submit this response, agreed by all.

T.5987 Mount Pleasant Parking problems– To consider how Council wishes to proceed in respect of feasibility study costs. Following a site meeting in Autumn 2019, costs were estimated by Glos Highways to be £5776 for a design study including trial holes regarding the possibility of widening the verges to allow more and safer parking. The parking situation has worsened due to SDC selling off the garages site for housing

and also approval of the Full Moon planning application for conversion to housing. SDC has offered £2000 towards the study. County Cllr JE Cordwell may be able to contribute some from a local budget. It is requested that Glos CC are also asked to contribute, and to re-visit this issue on a future agenda.

T.5988 Wotton Cemetery grave-digging – To note that grave-digger wishes to place skips at the cemetery, from shortly before, until shortly after burials, for the removal of excess spoil; and to consider implications/permission. A document explaining the issue and possible problems was circulated. A trial of this a week ago resulted in council staff needing to chase the skip's removal and also damaged grass. Due to the lack of alternative ideas for spoil removal, it was **resolved** to approve a trial of this system for 6 months, agreed by all, however it is requested that smaller skips are used and that they are lifted onto the grass and not dragged.

T.5989 Future Remembrance Events – To agree a way forward, working with the RBL and a Council Working Group to establish system. A detailed proposal document was produced by Cllr R Claydon after a number of meetings with stakeholders to establish a possible format for the event in the eventuality of its organisation falling under the umbrella of the town council together with specific community members/voluntary groups. The event is very popular in Wotton and it is clear that the RBL cannot continue to organise it due to age and dwindling members and lack of Public Liability Insurance cover. The document encompassed a complete risk assessment and roles/obligations upon each stakeholder. It is clear that the order of the event and some details would need to change in future in order to simplify the road closure management going forward. It was **resolved** to approve this document and its remit falling to the town council, agreed by all, however the nomination of the working group members would be decided in May at the annual meeting of council.

Cllr S Wood left the room

T.5990 Allotments Request – to consider request to grow trees on allotment plots (Cllr P Barton). The Wotton Area Climate Action Network (WACAN) are proposing to grow trees from seed or cuttings and wish to take over 2 allotments at Knapp Rd. Allotment regulations would need to be amended since only small rootstock grafted trees with specific permission are currently allowed. After much discussion of the benefits of growing local trees, for local projects, by local people, it was **resolved** and agreed 5 in favour 1 abstention, that 2 plots at Knapp Rd (exact plots to be negotiated) are to be tenanted by an individual from WACAN paying the usual rent and deposit, and that the plots can start cultivation from Spring, but tree planting is to await the changes in allotment regulations – likely in April or May.

Cllr S Wood returned to the room

T.5991 Old Town Toilets – To approve planning application for the rebuild of Old Town Toilets with environmentally sustainable principles. Following a meeting between the architect Mr Snook and many Councillors/the Clerk, an updated plan was produced and discussed. The new single unisex toilet would be built on the higher part of the site, thus avoiding the need for expensive drain & utility costs, with the funds saved spent more beneficially on environmental principles such as materials re-use, solar panels, sustainable insulation, etc. The new building would be in a vernacular style befitting the conservation area, and also encompass as many green principles as possible, with an attached remembrance garden and bench. It was **resolved** to approve this plan, requesting a daylight window in the janitorial area if possible, and stressing the need for external signage to avoid confusion, agreed by all.

T.5992 Recycling Litter Bins – To consider best locations for 2 SDC replacement litter bins with recycling facilities; and whether Council wishes to contribute to purchase more such bins. Although the best locations would be busy town centre streets, the new bins are too large for the old narrow pavements. Suggested locations are outside the youth centre and Old Town bus stop, however Ubico bin usage rates for Wotton have been requested from SDC to demonstrate which bins are the most popular - await SDC response. Usage rates of the new recycling bin will be required before Town Council expenditure on extra bins can be considered.

T.5993 CCTV – to consider whether to fund Police remote access to Wotton's CCTV camera system: licence cost of £375 p.a. Two incidents recently have involved the buildings manager spending much time to show the police how to view footage on the CCTV system – different officers attend usually. Redhand are attempting to allow its 7 town camera system to be views at Police HQ enabling quick remote access and less travel time for the Police and less Council staff interruption and effort. It was **resolved** that this investment would be worthwhile if it saved officer time of all stakeholders, agreed by all.

T.5994 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – To acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. A volunteer in Old Town was thanked for offering her help if anyone is isolated in their homes during coronavirus.

T.5995 Clerk's Report-circulated in advance and noted. The Clerk highlighted the Town Hall kitchen refurbishment, which has already received many positive comments.

T.5996 Correspondence to note or request action:
Brochures/Newsletters for information only; none – mostly electronic

- a) Noted – card thanking the Council for donation to the Great Western Air Ambulance
- b) Noted - public member suggestion for reducing the two taxi bays outside the Co-Op to one and replace with disabled bays. Council commented that the taxi bays are used, and that a Traffic regulation Order would be required to do this – which would likely not be supported by the District Council.
- c) Noted response from SDC to Town Council's suggestion for removing dog waste bins and offer to assist with new bin purchase – SDC declined this.

T.5997 Brief reports from Councillors

Footpaths, Special Purposes Committee, Allotments, 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 – not met.

WOTTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP – meeting will be cancelled.

WOTTON POOL –no report

REGENERATION –not met

WCSF –next meeting is at the same time as town council meeting.

HERITAGE CENTRE – Cllr June Cordwell provided a written report, and stated that she will become a HC Trustee once she steps back from being a town councillor. The venue has just announced closure due to coronavirus.

GLOS PARISHES CHARTER and Transportation Consultation – Cllr D Thomas, M Tucker and J Turner also attended this and commented on the lack of sustainable transport investment in Wotton regarding both the Greenway, and access to the re-opening of Charfield Railway Station (and the lack of cross boundary working with South

Glos Council). Other points noted are the lack of enough county funds to tackle potholes, and lack of grants available for installation of new EV charging points despite EV being a prevalent theme in the consultation document.

GMTF – talk was dominated by climate change issues.

WOTTON COMMUNITY HUB ASSISTANCE – initial meeting attended by many in the community by Skype or at Keepers room at the Star, all wanting to help each other/ neighbours, etc affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. Very positive & encouraging.

SYMN LANE PLAY AREA – locking /unlocking continues largely by Cllr S Wood – other volunteers are requested to contribute time. There is a large hole in the fence which needs repair, also someone managed to change the combination lock number.....

T.5998 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.*
It was **resolved** to enter closed session agreed by all.

T.5999 Tree Quotes, Wotton Cemetery – To consider quotations and approve option for 2 cypress trees located in cemetery and overhanging property in Jays Mead:

a) Prune branches away from neighbour boundary line – this will unbalance the trees and look unsightly, or

b) Removing the trees & possibly replacing with more suitable specimens for that location.

It was **resolved** to appoint Tree Management for £598 to remove the 2 cypress trees and consider replacing them with locally grown trees at a later date, agreed by all.

T.6000 Carpet quotes – to consider quotes for replacement CAB rooms carpet (necessary due to 2 x internal wall removal) in line with office reorganisation. 3 quotes were obtained and the details of carpet explained to Council; it was **resolved** to approve Carpet Giant of Yate to replace carpet for the significantly cheaper sum of £567.

T.6001 Town Hall – To consider which surveyor to appoint to assess condition survey and building works needed via a maintenance plan. A February 2020 storm highlighted the poor woodwork on the Town Hall upper exterior levels – prompting the request for a surveyor to assess the whole building and produce a report with prioritised maintenance plan for the whole building. 3 quotes were obtained. It was **resolved** to appoint local agent David James & Co at a cost of £2200 (plus cherry picker for external access) to undertake this work, agreed by all.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.50pm

Signed:Dated: