



MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING,
MONDAY 15th JUNE 2020 AT 7PM *(remote Zoom meeting due to Coronavirus)*

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

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey, Information Officer Mrs J Wyatt, District Cllrs K Tucker, C Braun, G James, & 1 public member.

T.6013 Apologies for absence. Noted that Cllr S Smith was not present. No apologies received.

T.6014 To receive Declarations of Interest/Dispensations now or as soon as known. Personal interests declared by Cllr N Pinnegar (account payments) and Cllr N Pinnegar and Cllr P Barton (Mount Pleasant verges).

T.6015 Public Forum No issues raised.

T.6016 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillors

County Cllr J Cordwell circulated a report in advance. It was noted that there are currently very few new COVID-19 cases occurring in Gloucestershire. Some Gloucestershire primary schools are now reopening and KLB school is open part time for years 10 and 12 from today. The new operating system at Pike Quarry Household Recycling Centre is working well, although there are reports of some long waits for booking slots, which Cllr Cordwell is investigating.

A District Council report was circulated in advance. The report included proposals for a cycle route through The Chipping car park about which the Town Council was not consulted. Cllr Braun will make the Strategic Director aware of the Town Council's concerns and Town Trust ownership.

T.6017 Minutes of the Council Meeting: 18th May 2020 – It was **resolved** to approve these Minutes, subject to amending the wording of **T.6004** from 'six county councillors' to 'six county councils', all in favour.

T.6018 Chairman's announcements – to receive report from the Chairman Cllr R Claydon provided a written report on a recent meeting with Hawkfield Homes about the redevelopment of the SDC sheltered housing at Dryleaze Court. A site meeting is planned to determine the position of the boundary between Dryleaze Court and the Bowls Club following difficulties in ascertaining the position from existing plans. The Town Council will be formally consulted on Hawkfield Homes' proposal to call the development The Hill View. Other issues raised will be discussed at the next Planning Committee.

T.6019 Accounts

- a) To note increase in charges for cleaning to all buildings to cover increase in minimum wage. Noted; additional charges are likely to be £700 per annum.
- b) To note assessment of potential loss of income due to Coronavirus pandemic. Noted; Rent loss to the end of September is estimated to be £5,940 (Town Council) and £5,590 (Town Trust). Actual amounts for the whole year are likely to be higher.
- c) To agree earmarked funds going forward. It is proposed to establish a Pandemic Contingency Fund in response to the prospect of significant rent loss for the Town Trust plus other additional costs (due to extra cleaning, installation of screens and WAMA funding etc) estimated at £16,200 in total. Discussions followed to identify

other earmarked funds that could be diverted to this Contingency Fund. It was **resolved** to re-allocate funding to the Pandemic Contingency Fund as discussed and that the money remaining from the Town Crier celebrations should be reallocated to the Symn Lane play area, all in favour.

d) Budget 2020/21 – to note report. Noted.

Cllr N Pinnegar left the meeting.

e) To approve June accounts for payment. It was noted that an unexpectedly high bill from Ecotricity for the Old Town toilets was under investigation. It was **resolved** to approve the accounts, subject to this issue being resolved prior to payment, all in favour.

Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the meeting

T.6020 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

a) To approve final annual accounts for Financial Year ending March 2020. It was **resolved** to approve the final annual accounts, all in favour.

b) To receive and approve internal audit report. Proposed to approve, **resolved**, all in favour.

c) To complete and approve Annual Governance Statement section 1. It was **resolved** to approve the Annual Governance Statement section 1, all in favour.

d) To approve Section 2 Accounting Statements of external audit accounts form. It was **resolved** to approve the Section 2 Accounting Statements, all in favour.

T.6021 Co Option of Two Councillors It was noted that the Council is now free to co-opt to the two vacancies. This has now been advertised via posters and the town Council website and social media channels.

T.6022 Dog Control Order Consultation –To agree comments to Stroud District Council by 13/7/2020. Following a discussion it was **resolved** that the consultation response should be agreed, subject to playing fields being added to areas requiring dogs on leads and ‘canal towpaths and designated cycle tracks’ being removed from PSP04, all in favour.

T6023 Tree purchase offer – To consider resident offer to purchase a crab apple tree to plant in Marchesi Walk below 38 Court Orchard. Concerns were raised about whether other residents had been consulted about the tree proposal, and its ongoing maintenance if planted. It was **resolved** to accept the offer, subject to confirmation that other residents are in agreement with the planting and that the resident of 38 Court Orchard accepts responsibility for future maintenance, nine in favour, one abstention.

Cllrs N Pinnegar and P Barton left the meeting

T.6024 Mount Pleasant Verges Investigation – To decide if Council wishes to proceed with investigation cost of £5776, with contributions from SDC (£2000) and GCC (£1200) leaving Town Council to still find £2576.

It was acknowledged that residents are very unhappy with the current state of the verges, however it is difficult to justify the cost of the investigation, particularly in view of current financial losses to the Town Council due to COVID-19. Concerns were also raised about how any works would be funded following the investigation. The problem has arisen due to the redevelopment of the Full Moon and neighbouring garage site conversion to housing. Although Stroud District Council has offered £2,000 towards the survey costs, it is considered that SDC should accept full responsibility for the issue and fund the full amount of the survey, since it is SDC actions which have caused the problem to exacerbate. It was **resolved** not to fund the investigation and to invite SDC to review their current offer of assistance, all in favour.

T.6025 Allotment Agreement for Wotton Area Climate Action Network – To ratify changes to the Allotment Agreement for this group regarding tree seedlings. It was **resolved** to ratify the proposed changes to paragraph 5.12 of the Allotment Agreement subject to the requirements for fruit trees and other trees being split into two separate paragraphs for clarity, all in favour.

T.6026 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – To acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. It was agreed that the hard work of local traders who have been able to keep their shops open to support residents during the pandemic should be acknowledged. The Mayor will write to the Gazette expressing the Council's thanks. Wotton in Bloom are to be thanked for putting up hanging baskets this year at no cost to traders; but donations are being sought. A card is to be sent to Alex Wilkinson, Chair of Wotton in Bloom.

T.6027 Clerk's Report – next report to be in July. The Town Clerk commented that building works at the Civic Centre is now mostly complete and decoration/moving rooms is underway. Items from the One Stop Shop are expected to be moved up to the new location shortly. Fitting of the electric new Civic Centre doors was interrupted due to concerns about possible asbestos, test results are awaited before work can proceed.

T.6028 Correspondence

- a) Noted card thanking the Council for Great Western Air Ambulance grant.
- b) Land at Durns Road – To receive request to purchase adjacent land owned by Town Council. The land at Durns Road was originally acquired for development of a streamside walk across the town, which would be prevented if the land was disposed of. Additionally, Secretary of State permission would be needed for any agreement to sell. It was agreed that this request should not be considered further.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only

Clerks & Councils Direct May 2020; Countryside Voices Spring 2020 Noted.

T.6029 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. Cllr P Barton reported on a meeting held by the Wotton Youth Partnership. SDC monies allocated for mental health work have been re-awarded to The Door and £500 has been allocated for a junior park run. A £2,500 grant has been received from the Mercers and £500 returned from the playing field.

T.6030 Town Affairs – very brief comments from Members or items for future agendas.

Cllr T Luker - An overgrown area of land at the entrance to The Oatground from Knapp Road is obscuring the street sign, ownership of the area need to be established. Cllr T Luker will email the details to the Town Clerk, but residents were advised that it might be quicker to cut themselves as the area is very small.....

Cllr P Barton - A resident in Jays Mead has complained about a large tree causing damage to her fence. Responsibility for the tree needs to be determined; this is unlikely to be council land but details to be provided.

Cllr R Hale - A bollard has been knocked over at the War Memorial; this has already been reported by the driver and being dealt with by the Town Clerk.

The public and district cllrs left the meeting.

Town Trust Items

1. To receive and approve internal audit report.

It was noted that there had been a reduction in income due to lower investment returns and a reduction in expenditure. This was because last year's expenditure included the cost of works to the Town Hall heating system. It was **resolved** to approve the internal audit report, all in favour.

2. End of Year Accounts, 2019/20 – To approve these accounts.

It was **resolved** to approve the End of Year Accounts, all in favour.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 8:34pm

Signed:Dated: