



MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING,
MONDAY 20th JULY 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, J Cordwell, R Hale.

In attendance: Town Clerk Ms S Bailey, Deputy Clerk Mrs Y Milsom, Information Officer Mrs J Wyatt, District Cllrs K Tucker, C Braun, G James, Mr K Church.

T.6031 Apologies for absence.

Apologies received from Cllr P Barton. It was reported that Cllr S Smith had sadly passed away. A condolence card is to be sent to her family.

T.6032 To receive Declarations of Interest/Dispensations now or as soon as known. Personal interests declared by Cllr N Pinnegar (Mount Pleasant), Cllr M Tucker (accounts)

T.6033 Public Forum No issues raised.

T.6034 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillors

Cllr J Cordwell had circulated a report in advance. No comments or questions received. A District Council report was distributed in advance. Several items were noted for discussion under the relevant Agenda items. There is no update on the Gloucester Street/Bradley Street housing redevelopment, which has been on hold pending the rehousing of four tenants. This has been delayed since March following lockdown but SDC hopes to progress this now.

T.6035 Minutes of the Council Meeting: 15th June 2020 – It was **resolved** to approve these Minutes, all in favour.

T.6036 Chairman's announcements – to receive report from the Chairman.

Cllr R Claydon submitted a report in advance on meetings he and the Clerk had attended with Hawkfield Homes clarifying boundary details of the Dryleaze Court development and sustainable development measures, the Greenway Steering Group to discuss route issues. He also attended Mill Close with the Clerk to consider temporary building works access request to Town Council land at the rear of their property.

T.6037 Co-option of Councillors – To consider and approve co-option of new Councillors to existing two vacancies. Mr K Church was welcomed to the meeting. Mr Church introduced himself and outlined his reasons for applying to become a councillor and what he hoped to achieve in the role.

Mr K Church left the meeting.

Following a brief discussion, it was **resolved** to co-opt Mr K Church to the Town Council, all in favour.

Mr K Church returned to the meeting

Cllr R Claydon advised Mr Church of the Council's decision and explained the procedure to be followed. Mr Church is to arrange an appointment with the Town Clerk to sign the necessary declaration.

T.6038 Accounts

- a) Noted receipt of £1,438 (S106 funds) used for purchase of recycled material picnic benches for Holywell Leaze (now installed) & replacement balance beam for Symn Lane Play Area.
- b) Website Accessibility Compliance – to consider issues and approve quote for provision of assessment. Recent transfer of the website to new provider had not

covered the site content as expected, which must also comply with accessibility standards by the end of September 2020. A quote of £450 to assess the site content has been received from them to undertake a selection of tests. Options discussed were to lower costs by proceeding with a reduced site assessment, obtaining additional quotes, or declaring a disproportionate burden. It was noted however that the timescale to complete the work is limited. It was **resolved** to delegate the matter to the Town Clerk in order to progress a second quotation and proceed as appropriate, all in favour.

- c) To approve spend of up to £400 for summer youth activities - costs towards external chairs, activity materials and sanitising equipment. It was **resolved** to approve spending of up to £400 requesting that The Door ensures value for money when purchasing sanitiser, all in favour.
- d) To select and approve insurance renewal option for Town Council and Town Trust. A cost analysis had resulted in favourable renewal quotes being secured. It was **resolved** to accept the 3 year renewal quotes of £4847 (Town Council) and £2677 (Town Trust), all in favour.
- e) To approve quote for Town Hall roof insulation after Evolve reneged on their agreed installation when undertaking all of council's other insulation works. Three quotes were obtained, two of which were for similar lower amounts. It was **resolved** to delegate the selection of the most suitable contractor from the two lower quotations to the Town Clerk, all in favour.
- f) Budget 2020/21 – Report noted. It was noted that previous electricity charges for the Tolsey Clock and CCTV systems were higher than anticipated. The office will investigate the reasons for the higher costs.
- g) To approve June accounts for payment. The updated payment list reissued just prior to this meeting with a few other additions also included significant changes relating to Ecotricity refunds. Ecotricity were slow to correct billing errors until Cllr D Thomas intervened.

It was **resolved** to approve the payment list, eight in favour one abstention (£3,476 net for Town Trust and £36,133 net for Town Council).

T6039 New Model Code of Conduct Consultation – To consider document and agree comments for submission to LGA by 17th August. Cllr R Claydon had reviewed the document and circulated comments for consideration prior to the meeting. Following much discussion it was **resolved** the use this document as the basis for the Council's formal response to the LGA, all in favour, with the Clerk liaising with Cllr Claydon regarding the final wording.

T6040 Remembrance Event – To appoint Councillors to co-ordinate the organisation of this event; and agree to a reduced, Covid compliant, ceremony for this year for discussion with RBL. It is proposed to hold a significantly reduced size and breadth of remembrance event to include only a brief ceremony involving those who normally lay wreaths at the war memorial itself. To ensure the event meets government distancing guidelines it would not be a public event. A full road closure would result in lower noise levels at the event, but would be more difficult to organise, and therefore a partial road closure just below the war memorial itself is proposed. Cllrs R Claydon, R Hale and N Pinnegar volunteered to be the representing councillors to work with the Royal British Legion on this reduced event. It was **resolved** to forward the proposals to the RBL and other interested parties to enable discussion and agreement on the format of the November 2020 event, all in favour.

T6041 Re-opening of Council/Trust Facilities

- a) Council noted the detailed document produced by the Clerk explaining how the

various council managed facilities and venues had either closed or operated on a reduced regime during lockdown.

- b) To agree to reopen Symn Lane Play Area after a risk assessment and with appropriate signage. Guidance given by the Government to councils which operate play areas has been very confusing and contradictory. Although this Council wishes to reopen the facility for the community it is impossible to sanitise each piece of equipment after use and signage must be erected highlighting the risks to users. Furthermore the issue of whether to keep the play area open overnight was considered, as this would require volunteers to operate. It was **resolved** to reopen the play area with appropriate signage and to keep the play area unlocked overnight for a trial period and to reconsider implementing a locking rota if problems arise, all in favour.
- c) To consider whether to reopen Old Town Toilets. Concerns were raised about the poor condition of the toilets and whether it would therefore be possible to meet government guidelines for cleanliness and hygiene. A further councillor site visit was considered but ruled out on the basis that the condition of the facility was already known and was not likely to have improved. It was **resolved** that the toilets should remain closed, all in favour. The Clerk is also asked to continue chasing the architect about plans submission to the planning authority regarding the rebuild.
- d) To reopen the new One Stop Shop from mid-August in new location inside the main civic centre, after Covid measures installed. Final preparations are also now being made with the documentation move and mid August completion is envisaged: it was **resolved** to reopen the One Stop Shop from mid-August, all in favour.
- d) To agree to keep Civic Centre, Town Hall, Chipping Club Room and Youth Centre closed through July and August - however to keep the buildings under review in line with Govt guidance and when hirers wish to return. Risk assessments will need to be completed for each facility and signage installed & cleaning schedules revised/cleaners re-engaged. A document explained the situation regarding hirers and their plans for a return which vary widely. It is currently planned to reopen all buildings in September subject to demand from users, although this will result in reduced usage initially. It was however noted that The Door had requested use of the Youth Centre once a week during August to provide an outreach facility for study purposes. Discussions are currently taking place regarding specific usage and cleaning arrangements. It was **resolved** that all buildings should remain closed through July and August with the exception of the Youth Centre, all in favour. Office to continue with Covid installation measures and risk assessments prior to reopening, including analysis of cleaning regime.

T6042 Budget Meeting – To agree date for budget meeting – suggest 25/11/20 or 2/12/20. It was **resolved** to hold the budget discussion meeting on 2/12/20, all in favour.

T6043 WCSF – To approve, as landlord, WCSF project to provide 2 new grass football pitches in the Community Parc. Funding is mostly sourced via CIL/S106 contributions from nearby Charfield housing developments. It was **resolved** to approve the WCSF project, all in favour.

Cllr N Pinnegar left the meeting.

T6044 Parking at Mount Pleasant – To consider SDC response to extra funding request towards survey to investigate verge parking issues/possibilities; and consider the way forward. It was suggested that the Town Council should approach GCC Highways to obtain an estimate of likely costs of the final project itself in order to assess the viability of the project actually happening, since there is little point paying for the initial survey of a project where the actual project cost is not able to be funded. It was **resolved** that the

Town Clerk should approach GCC Highways for a cost estimate which may demonstrate whether paying for a survey is practicable, all in favour.

Cllr N Pinnegar returned to the meeting.

T6045 COVID Plan for reopening boost to main shopping streets – To consider and approve this plan (Cllr M Tucker). Following SDC webinar and discussion, it was agreed that lamppost boards and hand sanitiser stations should be removed from the original plan. It was acknowledged that vehicle speed were an issue and methods of dealing with this were considered, including provision of speed bumps, painting speed limit signs on the road and extra build-outs. A community speedwatch would depend on enough volunteers being available and arranging training. SDC will hopefully attend a Wotton site visit after receipt of this plan and approve its implementation giving assistance on taking matters forward therein. It was **resolved** to accept the plan subject to the revisions outlined above and that Cllr M Tucker will finalise the document and progress the plans with SDC, all in favour.

T6046 IT issues – the Clerk circulated a document outlining council IT improvements need i.e. Microsoft 365 cloud storage/software & hardware upgrades, file migration and emails. Improvements are needed due to the age and issues with the functioning of the Council's current IT systems. A change to M365 is proposed and a quote from the Council's current IT service provider has been obtained, however the quotation/advice is inconsistent and it was **resolved** to invite a few other companies to quote for the IT provision. The current file storage system is failing and a working group to review the suggestions is proposed to be established asap, all in favour, comprising Cllrs R Hale, R Claydon and M Tucker, reverting to council in August.

T.6047 Good Deeds Section: Thanks to Volunteers – To acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community. It was agreed that the Swimming Pool Company should be commended for their efforts in reopening Wotton Pool, a thankyou card will be sent.

T.6048 Clerk's Report The Town Clerk's report had been circulated. The success of the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk in securing COVID Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grants for the Town Hall and Chipping Clubroom of £20,000 was noted. The resignation of the Information Officer was noted and Mrs J Wyatt was thanked by the Mayor for her assistance and help over the years. She will be missed.

T.6049 Correspondence

- a) To note receipt of email detailing non-availability of unused garage units, owned by SDC, in Dryleaze Court; and SDC refusal to permit a shed to be erected at the rear of a Dryleaze House property. Circulated to Cllrs. Council invited District Cllr Braun to provide an update to the situation. Some of the garage tenancies have now ended in one of the blocks. The remaining garages are being used for storage and will be sold at which point the interested party will be able to make a bid. There are no new lettings in the second block and SDC will be seeking planning permission for one new bungalow in due course. There is no update on the shed but permission is not expected to be given by SDC. Cllr Braun will respond to the SDC tenant.
- b) Copied into resident complaint to Glos Highways regarding danger of footpath exiting Merlin Haven onto New Rd B4058 opposite Chipping Surgery. Circulated to Cllrs. Visibility could be improved by cutting back some of the vegetation – Cllr J Cordwell will follow this up with GCC
- c) Suggestions from Wotton Lions of erecting no litter dropping signs on posts around Wotton, and request for WTC views and assistance. It was acknowledged that litter could

be a problem in some areas although was agreed that a targeted approach to the issue would be most appropriate rather than blanket signage. It was suggested to invite the Lions to provide information on litter problem hotspots giving more detailed proposal on signage for further review.

d) Signage at The Green Synwell- resident request for WTC to consider installing new road sign due to new houses at Reynolds Close (by SDC) being mixed up with the existing ones at the Green, leading to delivery & locating problems. Although WTC should not be responsible for the new signage costs, this council can obtain an idea of the likely cost of such signage and consider how to take the matter forward, establishing how costs should be met. To be considered as an agenda item once costs have been obtained.

e) Request for assistance (Mrs S Hunt) litter pick information for Wotton in Bloom-waiting SDC. A response from SDC is still awaited regarding litter bag collection.

Brochures/Newsletters for information only Clerks & Councils Direct July 2020.

T.6050 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.

No meetings held apart from the Youth Partnership which had met via Zoom. It was reported that the same people were standing for office again.

T.6051 Town Affairs – very brief comments from Members or items for future agendas.

Cllr D Thomas had attended a Zoom meeting on climate change and has raised various issues relating to renewal energy projects for rural areas with Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP, and is liaising behind the scenes with various parties.

Mrs Y Milsom, Mrs J Wyatt, public and district cllrs left the meeting.

Closed Session – *confidential matters of either a legal, contractual or staffing nature*

T6052 Staff Vacancy – To note resignation of information officer; and to ratify measures to recruit to new post of Assistant Clerk as agreed by Council in January 2020. Resignation noted with post departure at end of July. The Clerk circulated details of the new assistant clerk post, explaining how that role would lead, subject to satisfactory performance and qualification, to the post of deputy clerk. The current deputy clerk wishes to significantly reduce hours and will move to the role of finance officer. A discussion was held regarding the relative pay scales and council's office plans and funding of the various roles. It was **resolved** and agreed by all to approve the reorganisation document at the agreed pay scales, and advertise the post in line with suggestions as soon as possible.

Town Trust Items

1. To note receipt of £10,000 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant to alleviate loss of income due to the Coronavirus pandemic for the Town Hall; and to note that a further application has been made for the Chipping Clubroom. Noted.
2. To approve compilation of Minutes, January – June 2020. It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes compilation as presented, agreed by all.

This completed the business of the Town Council at 9.40pm

Signed:Dated: