#  Minutes of Wotton-under-Edge Town Council Meeting

#  Monday 16th August 2021 held in the Civic Centre

## Present: Cllrs R Claydon, P Barton, J Cordwell, T Luker, D Thomas, M Tucker, J Turner, L Taylor, T Creese, J Lewis, N Pinnegar

## In attendance: A Durn (Town Clerk), K Wilson (Assistant Clerk); District Cllrs C Braun, K Tucker; County Cllr L Cohen, plus 1 Member of the Public

## T.6312 To received apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs D Davidson and R Hale.

District Cllr G James sent his apologies.

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##  T.6313 To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

A Declaration of Interest in the item on August 2021 payments was declared by Cllr N Pinnegar

## T.6314 Public Forum

Members of the public were invited to speak, but none wished to.

A request to the Council regarding problems of on-street parking in Mount Pleasant had been received. There was a discussion about the lack of off-street parking and increasing development in the area. Queries were raised about traffic enforcement. County Cllr Cohen responded that she would discuss with residents in the area regarding problems and possible solutions and bring back to Council.

## T.6315 To discuss a request for dedicated bike parking in Long Street and agree actions

Requests had been received by email and through social media regarding introducing secure bike parking in Long Street, improving priority access for mobility scooters and people with disabilities, and requirements for taxis. There was a lengthy discussion on the various views expressed by the public, CCTV, signage, parking availability, Traffic Regulation Orders, current traffic strategy, and possible options.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would arrange a site meeting with the relevant Gloucestershire County Council Officers and Cllrs Tucker, Creese, Thomas and Cordwell to discuss problems, and possible solutions. The Town Council would use these options to hold a public consultation, the findings of which would be reviewed at a future Council meeting,

## T.6316 To receive reports from County and District Councillors.

The District Councillors had previously circulated the following report:

**Stroud District Councillors’ Report – August 2021**

**Report of meetings during July**

*All Stroud District Council and Committee papers can be found here:*[*https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings*](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings)

**Audit & Standards Committee** – 13 July 2021

The Committee considered numerous issues including:

* The Information Governance Framework
* The Annual Report on Internal Audit Activity 2020/21 (substantial assurance given for the council’s system of controls, governance, and risk management arrangements)
* Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts 2020/21 – noted and approved.
* External Audit Plan
* Treasury Management

The **audit of the SDC Planning Enforcement Service** was also discussed. At a previous meeting of the Committee, members requested Audit Risk Assurance to undertake an objective and independent review of the SDC Planning Enforcement Service due to concerns about its operation. This audit is due to commence in July with a report to the November meeting of the Committee. The Head of Internal Audit agreed to amend the wording on the scope of the audit so that there is specific reference to communication with Parish Councils. The draft Terms of Reference for the audit can be found [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1605231/item-11-appendix-a-draft-terms-of-reference-planning-review-enforcement.pdf).

Meeting papers can be found [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings/audit-standards-committee/audit-standards-committee-13-july-2021).

**Strategy & Resources Committee –** 22 July 2021

The committee discussed a Procurement Update Report and the following issues:

* **Parliamentary Boundary Review 2023**

A response from SDC to the consultation on the Review of Parliamentary Constituencies, was agreed, which stated that “Stroud District Council is largely in support of the proposals, and we are pleased that the initial proposals do not recommend the local authority area to be split between three different constituencies as recommended in the previous review. We also welcome the fact that this new proposal no longer contains any element of joining with constituencies outside the County Boundary of Gloucestershire.” Concern was noted about the proposal to transfer the wards of Hardwicke, Painswick, and Upton, Bisley and Chalford to The Cotswolds constituency which does not reflect local ties or geographical factors such as shape and accessibility. The response noted that the wards of Wotton-under-Edge and Kingswood are closer geographically to Stroud than Cirencester and were historically in the Stroud Constituency, and that there will be strong affiliation with the Stroud constituency. The Council did not suggest alternative arrangements due to the impacts of making changes on other constituency boundaries, so that the key criteria stipulated (such as electorate range) can be met.

* **Finance reports** – the main agenda item considered the financial reports for 2020/21 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account and the final outturn position.

The committee agreed transfers of General Fund underspend to earmarked reserves (paragraph 8 of the report) to cover future costs and fund priority works as follows:

* Business Rates Pool gain of £386k – to be ringfenced for economic development work to be set out in the Economic Development Strategy (currently in development).
* Revenues recovery funding £150k – to be allocated to the Revenues & Benefits team to provide support for business grants and test and trace support payments to local businesses and individuals
* Repairs and Maintenance Reserve - £50k – towards funding of the eventual replacement of the Community Services vehicles in line with agreed policy.
* Climate Change Reserve - £150k to be set aside towards the potential upgrade to electric road sweepers to be used by Ubico in the district.
* Recovery Reserve - A final balance of £50k is transferred to provide initial resource for projects emerging from the new Corporate Delivery Plan (in development).
* **A Leadership Gloucestershire** meeting report provided updates on the following:

**Western Gateway Board**

Current projects are being mapped, including a digital accelerator programme, under 4 broad headings: Innovation, Connectivity, Global gateway and Net Zero.

The bid for a fusion power plant at Berkeley and Oldbury has made it into the next Government round alongside 14 or 15 other sites nationwide, 6 or 7 of which were in Scotland and 8 were in England and Wales. This is expected to be shortlisted to 5 sites in due course

**One Gloucestershire – Integrated Care System**

Govt reform to the NHS is proposed in a Bill going through parliament. The new Integrated Care System pattern is expected to be in place by April 2022. Clinical Commissioning Groups will be closed down, with the ICS becoming a statutory body with commissioning functions.

**City of Culture** – Stroud District Council (along with other local authorities in the county) had agreed to support a bid by Gloucester City Council for the UK City of Culture – as the rules had been widened to allow groups of towns and cities to apply. However, Gloucester City Council subsequently decided not to submit a bid given the time and capacity required.

* A report from the **Regeneration and Investment Board** (a committee subgroup) provided updates**:**

**Draft Economic Development Strategy** – consultation on the draft will take place with stakeholders during the summer and early autumn

**Regeneration Pipeline and Brownfield Sites** –a pipeline of regeneration schemes and priority brownfield sites was approved as a a living and evolving approach to prioritising investment. The pipeline will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

**Levelling Up Fund** – Members approved the establishment of a task force to review options and develop a bid in round 2 of the Government’s Levelling Up Fund (LUF). SDC can bid for up to £20 million. The initial focus will be on Stroud Town Centre, its connections and potential to drive prosperity locally and across a wider area. Any bid will require the support of the Stroud MP as the funding is assigned to a Parliamentary Constituency (so Wotton Ward is out of scope!). The Cotswolds Constituency is a lower priority constituency (priority 3) than Stroud constituency (which is priority 2).

Meeting papers can be found [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings/strategy-and-resources-committee/strategy-and-resources-committee-22-july-2021).

**Development Control Committee** – 20 July 2021

The Committee considered two issues:

* Land at, Fromebridge, Whitminster (S.20/2109/FUL)

Agricultural improvement of old mineral excavation area with recontouring of land using imported subsoils and soils. Permitted - following officer advice.

* St Marys, Eastcombe, Stroud (S.21/1077/NEWTPO)

New Tree Preservation Order TPO 580 – confirmed.

Meeting papers can be found [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings/development-control-committee/development-control-committee-20-july-2021):

**Neighbourhood development plans approved**

Two NDPs for Cam and Horsley were approved through officer decision – as the full council meeting planned for July was cancelled (due to the cost of holding a social distanced meeting). Details can be found [here:](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings/officer-decisions-made-during-coronavirus-outbreak)

### **Grants for business - Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) 4**

A fourth round of ARG funding of £1 million for Stroud District Council has been announced. The discretionary grant is administered by SDC to support businesses affected by the Coronavirus pandemic

The grant covers the following sectors: Hospitality, Travel and tourism sector, including group travel, travel agents and tour operators, Wedding industries, Nightclubs, Theatres, Events industries, Taxis, Wholesalers, English language schools, Breweries, Freelance and mobile businesses (including caterers, events, hair, beauty and wedding related businesses). Eligible businesses will receive a one-off payment based on the number of successful applications received.

Applications must be submitted by 10pm on Sunday 8 August 2021. Businesses can find out more information at: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/business/business-rates>.

**Consultation on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

There are two related consultations:

* **Review of street or building names and monuments in the district**

This review is to ensure statues and commemorations, as well as the names of streets and buildings, are representative of local people’s values and those of a modern, inclusive Council. Feedback from the consultation will also be used to help determine a future approach to public spaces to help ensure that in future the different histories and achievements are reflected.

Residents are also being asked what they think and feel about the Blackboy Clock, Blackboy House, Castle Street, Stroud and a comprehensive report detailing its history and what we know about the statue and the clock has been published with the consultation documents. A Review Panel made up of community representatives, councillors and historians will review the findings to determine the action that should be taken.

* **Consultation on the new draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**

The new Policy sets out the Council’s commitment to providing an inclusive and supportive environment for our residents, our employees, members, contractors and visitors that is free from discrimination.  As a public body, we have both a legal and moral duty to promote equality, diversity and inclusion amongst residents, service users and our own employees. The draft policy includes the work that has been committed to undertake from April 2021 – March 2022. Following the consultation, responses will be collated, reviewed and incorporated into the policy, which will then be adopted at a full Council meeting. The consultation is open for comments until 1 September 2021.

Further information can be found [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/news-archive/were-committed-to-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-but-theres-more-to-do-and-you-can-be-involved)

**Electoral Register – Annual Canvass**

The annual canvass is underway to ensure that SDC keeps the electoral register up to date, identifying any residents who are not registered so that they can be encouraged to do so. The way the council conducts the annual canvass changed, and now residents will simply receive an email or a letter if the resident hasn’t provided an email address or did not respond to the initial email. All emails will be sent from elections@stroud.gov.uk with a subject line of ‘Household Electoral Register Communication - Stroud District Council’. Further information is available [here](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/elections).

**Summer holiday activities**

Extra summer holiday activities for every child in the district are being provided by Stroud District Council.

Swimming, gym sessions, fitness classes, DJ sessions, Forest Green Rovers tickets, and visits to Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Berkeley Castle are all being offered free-of-charge. Due to high demand, the scheme is limited to one activity event per family. The activities are being funded by the Community Outbreak Management Fund, as a direct response to the difficulties many families face during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Additionally there are additional activities available for children who are eligible for free school meals through the Holiday Activity and Food Programme. Further information is available [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/community-health-and-wellbeing/holiday-activity-food-programme-2021). (see “District Wide Offer” for activities open to all).

**Fine for illegal waste burning**

SDC brought a prosecution against a landowner in Bisley, who was fined more than £3,000 for burning waste and keeping it without permission. Further details can be found [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/news-archive/illegal-waste-burning-and-storage-costs-defendant-more-than-3-000-in-court).

**Plastic Free July**

Plastic Free July is a global movement which encourages people to do what they can to help save the environment from plastic pollution. More than 300 million people across the world have taken up the challenge to date. SDC produced some suggestions of ways to reduce consumption of single use plastic, from carrying a reusable water bottle, to refilling plastic bottles of toiletries and choosing more sustainable alternatives to single use cleaning wipes. Further information can be found [here](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/news-archive/its-plastic-free-july-heres-11-ways-to-stop-consuming-plastic).

County Councillor Cohen had previously circulated the following report:

**County Councillor Report – Councillor Linda Cohen**

1. My next **monthly meeting** to allow residents to meet and discuss concerns and new initiatives will be at The Keepers on Symn Lane in Wotton on Saturday 18th September at 10.30am. It would be useful if this information could also be shared on the Town Council website.
2. **Road safety / speed controls** – Town Cllrs Martin Tucker, John Cordwell, and I attended a very useful Local Parish Good Practice Speedwatch meeting where we heard from Gloucestershire Police and the local area Gloucestershire Highways Manager.

As a direct action from this meeting, I’d very much like to explore creating a campaign which we can run in local media and online to try and make road users more conscious of speed. We could combine with back to school and produce a different treatment for clocks going back.

1. **Highways**:

Closure of B4058 – I am trying to ascertain why no notice has been given to homeowners of the proposed work and road closures.

Synwell / Mount Pleasant Junction – I have responded to the request for help with this matter. Once this has been discussed at the Town Council meeting, I will action accordingly.

1. **Highways Local** – We are looking at further measures and education around Blue Coat and The British School for parents and road users. Separately I will be talking to KLB about a refresher for parents and pupils.
2. **Community Recovery Fund**

Gloucestershire County Council has launched a new £2 million fund to help communities to recover and rebuild from the impacts of Covid-19.

The fund provides a total of £40,000 for each of the county’s 53 electoral divisions to allow each county councillor to support bids in their area and ensure the benefits of the investment are shared across Gloucestershire.

The fund is open to (but not exclusively) community groups and voluntary organisations, parish councils and sports groups.

Anyone who would like to find out more can email me on linda.cohen@gloucestershire.gov.uk or ring me 07791 110906

1. **Foster Carers** – The County Council is announcing a new fast track fostering assessment for people who have experience caring for children and are interested in becoming foster carers. This is in response to the increase in the number of children coming in to care in Gloucestershire and the sharp decline in the number of people applying to be foster carers since the easing of Covid 19 restrictions.

To find out more [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering or call 01242 532654](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering%20or%20call%2001242%20532654)

1. **COVID-19**

Key messages:

Getting both doses of the COVID -19 vaccination is still our best chance of protecting ourselves from the most severe symptoms of COVID -19 and those people who are most at risk from the virus. Vaccination sites continue to offer first and second doses of the Covid vaccine to everyone aged 18 years and over.

Around three in four 18-29 year olds in Gloucestershire have had their first jab.

The NHS in Gloucestershire would like to reassure people aged 16 and 17 that they will receive an invite from local NHS services to book in for their vaccination soon, there is no need for them to contact their GP surgery at this time. This follows the announcement from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) that 16 and 17 year olds will be eligible for a first dose of Pfizer.

Testing is still worth us and you could be passing it on without knowing. Testing twice weekly if you don’t have symptoms helps protect others around you.

Secondary school pupils who have been testing regularly whilst at school are encouraged to keep going throughout the summer holidays.

Test and trace continues to play an important role in managing the virus and the risk of mutating and new variants developing. It remains a legal requirement to self -isolate if you are Covid positive and until at least August 16th for all contacts of a positive case to isolate. If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid you are still encouraged to get a PCR test.

* Continue to use the NHS COVID-19 app to ‘check in’
* Try and meet up with family and friends outdoors
* Face coverings, social distancing and regular handwashing remain effective ways to help reduce the risk of spreading Covid

**Testing**: Our nearest Mobile Testing Unit location is:

Dursley Rugby Club, Hounds Green, Dursley GL11 6AJ (Monday-Tuesday)

Lloyds Pharmacy Wotton-under-Edge provides onsite testing for people with no symptoms – 43 Long Street, GL12 7BX. Opening hours 9am-6.30pm (Monday – Friday), 9am-5pm (Saturday).

**Cases**

In the week Monday 26th July – Sunday 1st August there were 1621 cases of COVID 19.

Of these cases:

* 383 Gloucester
* 395 Cheltenham
* 233 Tewkesbury
* 306 Stroud
* 158 Cotswold
* 146 Forest of Dean

The rate of cases in the last 7 days per 100,000 is 253.20 in Gloucestershire.

In the week 17th -23th July, there 2 deaths mentioning ‘novel coronavirus’ which is 1.06% of all deaths.

My contact details linda.cohen@gloucestershire.gov.uk . Mobile 07791110906

The County and District Councillors were thanked for their reports and there followed a discussion with Town Councillors.

**Speeding** – Cllr M Tucker volunteered to help with a speed awareness programme. The Council needs to compile a list of items for a possible Traffic Regulations Order and liaise with Gloucestershire Highways and the Police. District Cllr K Tucker mentioned there is a mobile phone app available for checking speeding vehicles and confirmed he is a trained speed watch operator.

**Levelling-Up Fund** – it was noted that that the Wotton ward is out of scope for round 2 of the Levelling-up Fund as it is not in the Stroud constituency but in the Cotswold constituency which is a lower priority. It was expressed that this funding should benefit the outlying areas and not just Stroud town. District Cllr Braun explained that the Fund is based on parliamentary constituencies and Stroud was classed as a higher priority constituency. There was a short timescale, and the chosen bid is focussed on Stroud Railway Station and is being designed to benefit a wide area including connectivity and biodiversity. They are currently working with National Rail and Great Western Rail.

##  T.6317 Minutes of the Council Meeting of 19th July 2021

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting on 19th July 2021 as a true and fair record.

##  T.6318 Note the Draft Minutes of the Finance and Special Purposes Committee held on 19th July 2021

The draft minutes were noted and would be discussed at the next Finance and Special Purposes Committee.

## T.6319 Chairman’s Announcements

The Chairman circulated his report ahead of the meeting. He reported he had attended three meetings/webinars, Energy Saving Trust Webinar - On-Street Residential EV Charge Points, Greenway Steering Group, and Broadcasting Council Meetings Webinar. There were no questions.

##  T.6320 Accounts

### **To approve application for a Town Council Barclaycard (credit card) for the Town Clerk.**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the application for a Town Council Barclaycard for the Town Clerk.

### **To consider a request for room hire reduction due to the COVID restrictions.**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve a one-off room hire reduction to £15 per hour for 9 sessions.

### **Budget 2021 – To note report.**

### There were queries on IT Support and Tolsey Clock payments.The Clerk will investigate and report back to Council.

The report was noted.

 *An interest was declared by Cllr J Turner.*

*Cllrs J Turner, N Pinnegar, and District Cllr K Tucker and County Cllr L Cohen, left the meeting.*

### **To approve August accounts for payment.**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve August accounts for payment of £11,735.98 net of VAT.

*Cllrs J Turner and N Pinnegar re-joined the meeting*

##  T.6321 Meeting Dates

##  To agree the date for the informal Budget meeting.

##  It was RESOLVED to agree that the informal Budget meeting would be held on Wednesday 1st December 2021.

## T.6322 Events Working Group

**To discuss setting up an event working group.**

The Clerk explained people are approaching her regarding holding events including Christmas 2021 and the Queen’s Jubilee in 2022 and proposed setting up an Events Working Group linked to the Regeneration Partnership. The Chair invited volunteers to be part of the working group. Cllrs T Creese and M Tucker volunteered to be part of an Events Working Group.

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##  *Member of the Public left the meeting*

##  T.6323 CIL Funding Bid

**To discuss projects for CIL funding from April 2022 and agree a way forward.**

The Clerk had previously circulated information received from Stroud District Council and advised the next formal bids were due by 20/9/21. She reminded Councillors that Stroud District Council were holding an information session on 24/8/21 and asked for confirmation of attendees. Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon, and D Thomas accepted the invitation.

It was suggested that the Community Sports Foundation or Scouts at Conygre could be eligible for the strategic CIL monies. It was expressed that it would be good to see the community of Wotton benefit from available funds.

The Clerk will share the information with the organisations so that they may submit bids.

##

##  T.6324 Clerk’s Report – July 2021

The Clerk’s report was previously circulated. The Clerk gave updates on Old Town Toilets planning application, the land at Hill Road, and the Town Hall repairs. The Clerk advised Council that the next Regeneration Group meeting would be held on Monday 6 September 2021 and the next Tourism Meeting is in September 2021.

##  T.6325 Correspondence

##  There was no extra correspondence to report

##  T.6326 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**.

Allotment inspections are complete, and letters will be issued shortly.

WACAN Zoom meeting update:

* 1. It is too late to “bash” the Himalayan Balsam due to seed heads already being formed.
	2. Ful Moon Wood grass is to be strimmed.
	3. Reports of sewerage overflow into some stream will be investigated.

General Charities Trustees are holding interviews for possible tenants for a new apartment. The Chapel re-opened on 16/8/21.

*District Cllr C Braun left the meeting*

**T.6327 EXEMPT ITEMS**: **Prior to consideration of the following agenda items, councillors are invited to pass the following resolution: Pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by S100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that its consideration would involve the disclosure of exempt information**

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the Press and public.

##  T.6328 To receive a report on the CCTV System

The Clerk had previously circulated a report. There was a discussion on the report. A request for a further camera at the top of Church Street was received. The Clerk will report back to a future Council meeting.

##

##  T.6329 To receive a report from The Door and agree actions

##  The risk assessment submitted by the Door was discussed and Councillors would like to see a more comprehensive assessment being submitted. A recent incident was discussed, and actions were agreed. A contract review meeting was being organised for September 2021.

It was RESOLVED that Cllrs J Turner, P Barton, and R Claydon would attend the review meeting.

##  T.6330 Staffing Review

##  To consider and approve the recommendations of the Finance and Special Purposes Committee.

##  It was RESOLVED to call a Finance and Special Purposes Committee meeting on Wednesday 25/8/21 at 7pm to resolve clear recommendations for Town Council consideration taking into account the report recommendations, staff views, and the Committee recommendations.

## T.6331 Staffing Report

##  To receive report and agree actions.

## It was RESOLVED to use the Chairman’s allowance to purchase a thank you gift for the Cleaner’s 40 years’ service, hard work, and dedication.

1. The Clerk’s holiday dates were noted.
2. **I**t was **RESOLVED** to make the Caretaker’s contract permanent.
3. **I**t was **RESOLVED** to move the Assistant Clerk up one point on the pay scale in recognition of passing CILCA, back dated to the date of achieving the qualification.

##  It was RESOLVED to close the exempt session and open the meeting to the public.

##  The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Signed: ……………………………………Dated: …………………………