# Minutes of Wotton-under-Edge Town Council Meeting held on

#  Monday 24th January 2022 at 7pm in the Civic Centre

## Present: Cllrs R Claydon, M Tucker, P Barton, J Cordwell, T Creese, T Luker,

## N Pinnegar, L Taylor, D Thomas, J Turner

## In attendance: A Durn (Town Clerk), Y Milsom (Deputy Clerk); County Cllr L Cohen; District Cllr C Braun; 6 members of the public.

## T.6451 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllrs J Lewis and R Hale; and District Cllr K Tucker

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##  T.6452 To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Declarations of interest: Cllr Turner in respect of Accounts for payment; Cllr J Cordwell in respect of Symn Lane development.

## T.6453 Report from County Councillor

This item was brought forward as County Cllr Cohen had another meeting to attend. Her report was noted. She requested that the Town Council arrange a meeting with her and Gloucestershire Highways representatives to discuss highways issues in the town. She had recently arranged for some lengthsman work to be done in the Marchesi, Synwell, and British School areas of the town. She also spoke of County budget matters and mentioned that there was still time to submit views on the bus consultation.

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 12th February 2022 at 11.00am. Due to safeguarding, if residents would like to attend can they inform me in advance by email or phone. Details below. It would be useful if this information could also be shared on the Town Council website.
2. **Budget 2022/2023**

The County Council’s Cabinet is set to agree a £519million budget. The budget was reviewed by the various scrutiny committees last week.

At its meeting on 26 January 2022, Cabinet will consider the views expressed before proposing a final budget for the County Council to vote on at its meeting in February 2022.

 The Lib Dems will be proposing a number of amendments which will include:

* Funding for 20mph schemes
* Releasing money from the Highways Act Commuted Sum Reserve to pay for urgently needed highway maintenance
* Supporting measures to invest more in electric chargers (which would include solar canopies) for rural communities
1. **Improving the county’s bus services**

Gloucestershire County Council wants residents to have their say on the future of bus services in the county.

Earlier this year the government published its National Bus Strategy ‘Bus Back Better’. This sets out the vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered.

Within this strategy, Gloucestershire County Council, as the Local Transport Authority, has recently published its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). This sets out the council’s

strategic vision for bus services in the county.

The BSIP covers bus times and frequency; bus priority; zero emission buses; fares and tickets; passenger experience; and information and branding.

The council is now working on a partnership with bus operators in the county to set out how they will deliver the improvement plan.

Residents across the county can help shape this and have their say on the future of Gloucestershire’s bus services by taking part in a survey.

The survey closes on 30 January, 2022, and is available at <https://haveyoursaygloucestershire.uk.engagementhq.com/bus-service-improvement-plan-survey>

All published documentation in relation to the BSIP is available on the GCC website at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/BSIP](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/BSIP).

1. Potholes and highway maintenance

I’ve spent several days running around Wotton to monitor the state of the outlying roads as well as those in the centre of town and there are potholes on almost every street and main road. I am about to look at how the Highways Local budget is spent but also want to ensure that we are properly represented when decisions are made about major road resurfacing projects. I’d like to propose that we have a meeting dedicated to this subject and agree the new priorities. It would be extremely helpful if John Cordwell was involved to ensure we use our collective experience to maximise what we can leverage for Wotton and the surrounding villages.

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| COVID-19 update 07 January:Key messagesStaff and pupils in secondary schools are no longer required to wear face coverings in classrooms.From 27 January people will not be required to wear a face covering. It is is encouraged to wear face coverings in crowded and indoor areas.From 27 January, it will no longer be necessary to show an NHS Covid pass at venues and eventsPeople are no longer required to work from homePeople with COVID- 19 can end their self -isolation after five full days* It is extremely important to get your [booster jab](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDAsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2NvdmlkMTkuZ2xvcy5uaHMudWsvdXBkYXRlLTE1LTEyLTIwMjEtYWNjZXNzaW5nLWEtY292aWQtMTktdmFjY2luZS1ib29zdGVyLWluLWdsb3VjZXN0ZXJzaGlyZS10aGlzLWRlY2VtYmVyLyJ9.XIhEvIqxCMT9TP9T85QXCJvtLJE21F4yyZoqJhZ5SVM/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) to help slow the spread of Covid. There are three ways you can do this:
	+ At a GP-led community vaccination centre – you will receive an invite from local GP services to book an appointment
	+ At a community pharmacy or the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital JabVan - book via the [National Booking System](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwOi8vd3d3Lm5ocy51ay9jb3ZpZHZhY2NpbmF0aW9uIn0.N67wOX9s7SXcgRqkqtp2b1Ejor40AVy7vMSqcw9R6QI/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) (or call 119)
	+ Visit a [drop-in clinic.](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2NvdmlkMTkuZ2xvcy5uaHMudWsvdmFjY2luYXRpb25zLyNsaW5rLWRyb3BpbiJ9.S1ofI6tB6O--jlg6m3Xc8STcOGc3V53MW8C1eCAAuD4/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l)
* You can find information about booster jabs in different languages by visiting the NHS's '[vaccine information in other languages](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL2NvdmlkMTkuZ2xvcy5uaHMudWsvdmFjY2luYXRpb25zL3ZhY2NpbmUtaW5mb3JtYXRpb24taW4tb3RoZXItbGFuZ3VhZ2VzLyJ9.0ygE6LxMRuRyfuoXeXXNSuT4vP7tGgTaqRQGYQ4AjSw/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l)' page.
* If you are asymptomatic and receive a positive LFD test result, [you no longer need to get a confirmatory PCR test](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ292ZXJubWVudC9uZXdzL2NvbmZpcm1hdG9yeS1wY3ItdGVzdHMtdG8tYmUtdGVtcG9yYXJpbHktc3VzcGVuZGVkLWZvci1wb3NpdGl2ZS1sYXRlcmFsLWZsb3ctdGVzdC1yZXN1bHRzIn0.4SsXOvVApCbau-q_rwZ0BjXGEy2lCZrFVLeeVd7QpC0/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) but still must s[elf-isolate](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ292ZXJubWVudC9wdWJsaWNhdGlvbnMvY292aWQtMTktc3RheS1hdC1ob21lLWd1aWRhbmNlL3N0YXktYXQtaG9tZS1ndWlkYW5jZS1mb3ItaG91c2Vob2xkcy13aXRoLXBvc3NpYmxlLWNvcm9uYXZpcnVzLWNvdmlkLTE5LWluZmVjdGlvbiJ9.Gwencu6RW29XrEJFZKytZvSEabPsAuXOaABlS0MvSCU/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) immediately.
* If you have [symptoms of Covid](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDcsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5uaHMudWsvY29uZGl0aW9ucy9jb3JvbmF2aXJ1cy1jb3ZpZC0xOS9zeW1wdG9tcy8ifQ.Lnb-9ZvLHTOt-DveURre1eZQsDCnR40deE5iqjDQuBg/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l), you should still book a PCR test via the [National Booking System](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDgsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ2V0LWNvcm9uYXZpcnVzLXRlc3QifQ.tZsu8wP9xr2CB68bL9A0p7c72ucfpI82alep7riG_Ok/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l)
* Covid hangs around like smoke so if you're meeting with others inside, make sure to let fresh air in.
* Find out more about the latest Covid guidance by [visiting the Government website](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ3VpZGFuY2UvY292aWQtMTktY29yb25hdmlydXMtcmVzdHJpY3Rpb25zLXdoYXQteW91LWNhbi1hbmQtY2Fubm90LWRvIn0.x_okL6WA5WClFlfiCxhaXGuVp6f645P1jnEUM0TPsuY/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l).

**Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) locations⁶*** Car Park, Oldends Lane, Stonehouse, GL10 2DG (Friday-Sunday, Thursday-Friday)
* Dursley Rugby Club, Hounds Green, Dursley GL11 6AJ (Monday)

**Permanent Testing Site Locations****PCR Testing Sites****Gloucester RTS**Hempsted Meadows, David Hook Way, Gloucester, GL2 5LE**Cheltenham LTS**Coronation Square, Edinburgh Place, Cheltenham, GL51 7RG**Stroud LTS**Stratford Park Leisure Centre, Stratford Road, Stroud, GL5 4AFYou can[book a test here](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nb3YudWsvZ2V0LWNvcm9uYXZpcnVzLXRlc3QifQ.WCcKZzUtTcUd_A8ESg_Pse_EBLUELtSUnsQ4i6aZCcg/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) for one of these sites if you have any COVID-19 symptoms. **Assisted Testing in Pharmacies (LFD)**You can [see which pharmacies you can take a rapid test at](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTQsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nbG91Y2VzdGVyc2hpcmUuZ292LnVrL2NvdmlkLTE5LWluZm9ybWF0aW9uLWFuZC1hZHZpY2UvY292aWQtMTktdGVzdGluZy1pbi1nbG91Y2VzdGVyc2hpcmUvdGVzdGluZy1mb3ItdGhvc2Utd2l0aG91dC1jb3ZpZC1zeW1wdG9tcy90YWtlLWEtcmFwaWQtdGVzdC1hdC15b3VyLWxvY2FsLXBoYXJtYWN5LyJ9.QR5xpYqKSz3eXli5f4zCMK0WU2-FKn1LSLP3zA1DzO8/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) if you do not have any COVID-19 symptoms.**LFD Home Test Collection**Anyone can [collect LFD kits](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTUsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nbG91Y2VzdGVyc2hpcmUuZ292LnVrL2NvdmlkLTE5LWluZm9ybWF0aW9uLWFuZC1hZHZpY2UvcmFwaWQtdGVzdGluZy8ifQ.5EYUUPRbjbQBnfug36AgSYVEhDx_yDIh-_Np3T49aDI/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) for use at home from any of the locations listed, including some pharmacies and local libraries.**LFD Home Test Delivery**                    If you cannot get tested at your workplace or are unable to go to a test site or collect test kits, you can [order a test kit to your home](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMTYsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAxMDcuNTE0MDM0MTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nbG91Y2VzdGVyc2hpcmUuZ292LnVrL2NvdmlkLTE5LWluZm9ybWF0aW9uLWFuZC1hZHZpY2UvY292aWQtMTktdGVzdGluZy1pbi1nbG91Y2VzdGVyc2hpcmUvdGVzdGluZy1mb3ItdGhvc2Utd2l0aG91dC1jb3ZpZC1zeW1wdG9tcy9vcmRlci1hLWhvbWUtdGVzdC1raXQtb25saW5lLyJ9.Pj0Qz1ePvucyakoFUdJt1qEKdWjgYh7ydtZAW8i66zU/s/998756000/br/124318217990-l) |

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Cases

* In week 3 (Monday 10th – Sunday 16th January) there were 5,046 confirmed cases of COVID19.

Of these cases:

* + 866 were in Stroud
	+ 1274 were in Gloucester
	+ 1112 were in Tewkesbury
	+ 566 were in Forest of Dean
	+ 944 were in Cheltenham
	+ 621 were in Cotswold

\* Please note these figures are provisional and subject to change. (Source: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/> as at 16.00 19/01/2022)

The rate of cases in the last 7 days per 100,000 is 788.6 in Gloucestershire, 810.2 in the South West, and 967.4 in England[9](#Fn9).

Deaths mentioning COVID19

In week 51 (Saturday 1st January – Friday 7th January) there were 11 deaths mentioning “novel coronavirus (COVID-19)”, which is 8.7% of all deaths, this compares with 6 (5.0% of all deaths) in Week 52.

\*Please note these figures are based on all deaths registered by the 15th January they are provisional and will be subject to change.  They include deaths that make any mention of COVID-19 on the death certificate.

(Source: Weekly provisional figures on deaths occurring and registered in England and Wales by Local Authority)

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

Councillors asked about the EV Chargers project and Wotton under Edge. County Cllr Cohen said she would get an update and feedback to Council.

Cllr Cohen was thanked for her report.

*County Cllr Cohen left the meeting*

## T.6454 Minutes of the Meeting of 10th January 2022

It was **resolved to** approve the Minutes of the meeting of 10th January 2022. Agreed all in favour.

## T.6455 Public Forum

Representatives of Wotton Area Climate Action Network (WACAN) spoke in support of their grant application to the Town Council. They detailed their ongoing work, which included talking to schools, public meetings, tree planting, and various other actions to mitigate and reduce the carbon footprint of the town and improve biodiversity. They have worked closely with the Town Council, regularly offering their expertise. District Cllr Braun pointed out that the projects initiated by WACAN empower people to do something positive for the climate emergency and that Wotton is privileged to have such a pro-active group.

Representatives of Synwell Playing Field Association (SPFA) spoke in support of their grant application. There were many priority works that needed attention at the playing field, including grass-cutting to the standard required by the league and Wotton Rovers Football Club; protective netting particularly between the play area and football pitch; new play equipment and maintenance of current equipment; a disabled toilet in the changing rooms; events for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee; new boundary hedging; removing brambles, and creating a wildflower area. The impact of COVID is that they have been unable to fundraise which in turn had led to difficulties including maintaining the grass-cutting to the standard required by the football club.

A student from KLB School had submitted the second draft of a business plan for a Wotton Farmers Market. It was suggested that this should be deferred to the February Town Council meeting to give time for full consideration.

The Chairman thanked the public for their presentations and attendance.

*3 members of the public left the meeting*

## T.6456 District Councillors Report

The District Councillors report was noted. District Councillor Braun mentioned the Stroud District Council (SDC) Economic Development Strategy and said that comments from the Town Council would be welcome. She also mentioned that additional restrictions grants were available for businesses impacted by COVID. The draft SDC budget was to be approved on Thursday.

*2 members of the public left the meeting*

Councillors mentioned businesses in the town which had continued to operate during COVID lockdowns and had provided a valued service to the town, but which were not eligible for any grants and were therefore struggling financially. Cllr Braun agreed to look into this. She also would send details of the Community Well-being grants to Synwell Playing Fields Association.

**Stroud District Councillors’ Report – January 2022**

**Report of** **meetings during December**

*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)

*Recordings of meetings are available via the Committee meeting webpage on the Council’s You Tube channel:* [*https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeH\_AmF0s-TShcYlM8Stweg/videos*](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeH_AmF0s-TShcYlM8Stweg/videos)

**Community Services & Licensing Committee – 2 December**

* **Community Wellbeing Grants For 2022/23** – it was agreed to continue with the large grant scheme and to move it to a three year grant instead of a one year grant (as happened last year). This provides more sustainability to the voluntary sector. Applications will be invited later in January to start in the next financial year.

A smaller grant scheme for grants of less than £1,000 will be set up. This will be similar to the small grant scheme that operated throughout the pandemic. It’s aimed at smaller groups – with a much shorter application form. These short grant applications will be reviewed every quarter.

* **New arrangements for managing Leisure Centres** – the Committee discussed a detailed Management Options Appraisal. It was agreed to support the recommendation by the Leisure Review Management Option Task and Finish Group that a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) with ‘Teckal’ exemptions is adopted as the preferred option for Stroud District Council to manage its two Leisure Centres in Stratford Park Stroud and The Pulse, Dursley from 1st November 2024 (instead of an in-house service, which was the other option considered).

Based on 2019/2020 costs, setting up a LATC is estimated save SDC 200k per year, prior to any investment, whereas the in-house option would cost an additional £107k. The saving could be used to invest in the facilities in line with the Leisure and Wellbeing strategy. In a mature year, after investment the LATC could create a surplus of £350K as opposed to £260K from the in-house operation. A LATC would require a board of directors to be set up, and the risk of reward and failure under the LATC structure will still sit with the council.

At this stage the Museum in the Park and SDC Health and Wellbeing services will not be included – but may be reconsidered once the LATC has matured. Further work will now be undertaken to explore the options for setting up a new Local Authority Trading Company.

* **Financial reports:** This covered the quarterly budget (forecast outturn position against the revenue and capital programme) and revised revenue estimates for 2021/22 and for 2022/23
* **Performance Indicators** for the new Council Plan (2021-26) relevant to the committee were agreed.
* **Additional reports** were presented on the Gloucestershire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, the Museum in the Park, the Police and Crime Panel, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Mental Health Champions, Performance Monitoring and Woodchester Park Mansion.

Full details can be found along with Committee reports on the website and in the recording [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=1126&Ver=4).

**Housing Committee – 7 December**

* **Financial Reports** – budget estimates were reviewed for the current and next financial years, and for the medium term financial plan, as well as the quarterly budget monitoring report for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. Members questions included the impact of inflation and on the issue of new council homes at the former Ship Inn site in Stonehouse.
* **Performance Indicators for the new Council Plan** (2021-26) relevant to the committee were agreed.
* **Cleaner Estates & Service Standards** - verbal update on action plans, with questions on waste collection at flats and installation of CCTV to manage anti-social behaviour at Chapel Street, Cam.
* **Member Reports** were received from Task & Finish Groups on Tenant Representatives, Retrofit/Carbon Reduction, Tenant Engagement and Empowerment, Housing Repairs and Voids. Progress is being made on getting empty SDC properties re-let more quickly.

The Committee papers and meeting recording can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=1129&Ver=4).

**Environment Committee – 9 December**

* **Public questions** – covered SDC’s responsibilities on litter, and how the council will support sustainable farming within its economic strategy.
* **Ubico** - Beth Boughton, Managing Director of Ubico, presented the updated five-year company strategy, and the Committee received a financial report for the quarter and the revised budget for FY22/23 (£6.685m).
* **Performance Indicators** for the new Council Plan(2021-26) relevant to the committee were agreed.
* **Allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy**– the Committee recommended to Strategy & Resources Committee the following allocations for 2022/23:
	+ - Nailsworth flood prevention and drainage scheme (£52,500)
		- Archway School 3G Astro Turf pitch (£150,000)
		- Stratford Park Outdoor Pool heat exchange (£20,000)
		- Cainscross Cycle Scheme Feasibility Study (project variation of 21/22 - £75k commitment).
* **Strategic Planning** – it was agreed to establish a new Strategic Planning Advisory Board, an officer and member working group considering matters of strategic planning policy and implementation.

It was also agreed that an informal meeting would take place in January to agree a timeline on the Severn Estuary Mitigation Strategy, and that any additional air quality monitoring proposal from Cllr Kay could be costed for further review.

The Committee papers and meeting recording can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=1128&Ver=4).

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The **Council meeting scheduled for 16 December** was cancelled, due to Covid and the difficulty with social distancing for members in the Council Chamber. There were no urgent items for discussion / approval that could not be postponed until the next Council meeting in February.

**Consultation – Economic Development Strategy**

The Council has prepared a Draft Economic Development Strategy, which covers the next 10 years and is open for consultation until 10 February 2022.

Views are welcome on all parts of the strategy including:

* Does the vision meet the overarching needs of the District?
* Do you agree with the key economic objectives and commitments outlined?
* Do you feel we have the correct priority sectors outlined in the District?
* What are the top three priority sectors for your area?

The strategy can be seen here <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-the-council/have-your-say/consultations/the-economic-development-strategy>

Please send comments to Amy.Beckett@stroud.gov.uk  and with reference to the relevant section of the document.

**Coronavirus grants to local businesses**

SDC has so far paid out over £45 million in business grants during the pandemic. A further scheme for hospitality businesses who have been adversely affected by Coronavirus (Additional Restriction Grant 5) opened on 4 January 2022. The Council has identified businesses which meet the eligibility criteria and they are being invited to apply for a grant.

Central Government has announced further funding for businesses. Details on all grants will be available on the SDC website: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/business/business-rates>

**Funding for energy saving improvements for inefficient homes**

Over £5m has been secured to help improve homes with low energy efficiency ratings (EPC rating D, E, F or G) which aims to benefit households most at risk of fuel poverty in Gloucestershire & South Gloucestershire.

Most of the funding will go towards improving 200 properties which are off the gas grid in rural areas - but there is also funding available to help 100 homes on the gas network. From January, eligible households will be invited to apply to take part. To register interest in the scheme or for funding towards efficiency improvements call the Warm and Well advice line tel: 0800 500 3076.

**SDC Annual Survey**

Every year SDC commissions a budget survey to measure performance and set priorities. Telephone surveys were conducted with a random and representative sample of 500 residents and 200 businesses. Results showed that levels of satisfaction with SDC remain high, and much higher than a national survey of residents carried out by the Local Government Association at a similar time.

The survey found that 75% of residents are satisfied with how SDC runs things, compared to a national average of 56%. For residents the top three priorities for SDC were:

* promoting economic recovery and working with local partners to support thriving market towns and rural vitality (93%)
* working with partners and communities to tackle the climate emergency and work towards becoming a carbon neutral district (87%)
* increasing the supply of affordable housing and help prevent homelessness (85%).

There was a similar picture for businesses with 70% satisfied with how SDC runs things (63% last year). 49% of businesses had applied for a Covid-business grant from SDC, with 85% agreeing that the application process was clear and easy to follow. The full results of the survey can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/3q5lDRz>

**Brimscombe Port redevelopment - asbestos removal**

SDC paused demolition work at the Brimscombe Port redevelopment site following an incident on 14 December where the approved method of asbestos removal was not followed. Public safety remains the council’s top priority during the redevelopment. Background air monitoring was carried out and investigations undertaken. On 5 January the Health and Safety Executive concluded that unplanned action by an excavator operative did not result in a significant release of asbestos fibres to the local area and there was little or no risk to people outside the site boundary. SDC’s independent asbestos specialist has made recommendations which the contractor is acting on. Demolition works excluding asbestos removal have now recommenced in line with recommendations from the investigations.

**Animal Welfare actions**

In December, SDC Animal Welfare Officers reported on the rescue of a neglected and starving Anatolian Shepherd Dog at Harescombe. The dog, named Thor by a vet nurse, weighed only half of what a dog of his size should when he was found. Teckels Animal Sanctuary cared for him on behalf of SDC before he was moved to a foster home. Officers are seeking further information about this case. The Animal Welfare Service can be contacted on 01453 754490 or by emailing environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk

The Chairman thanked the District Councillors for their report.

## T.6457 Chairman’s Report

The report had previously been circulated and was noted. In the quarterly review with The Door it was suggested that a multi-agency meeting including representatives from KLB School was needed.

## T.6458 Farmers’ Market

The latest draft of the business proposal for the Farmers’ Market would be considered at the February Town Council meeting.

## T.6459 Accounts

1. It was noted that the Fire Extinguisher servicing was a Town Trust item.
2. The result of the bid to the Build Back Better Fund had not yet been received. Projects for the Welcome Back Fund have to be paid for in advance and before 31/3/2022, after which they could be claimed back if the funding bid is successful. Funding bulletins were shared with local groups, but it was noted that it takes a lot of time and expertise to apply for grants. Information on projects from the Town Council had been submitted to the SDC Director of Place for his work on the Levelling Up Fund and other possible funding.
3. It was noted that, following new legislation which had abolished business rates for public toilets, a refund totalling £1047.90 had been received from SDC in respect of Old Town Toilets for 2020 and 2021.
4. The budget report to the end of December 2021 was noted.

*Cllr Turner left the meeting*

1. It was **resolved** to approve January payments for the sum of £16425.17 excluding VAT. Agreed all in favour.

*Cllr Turner returned to the meeting*

## T.6460 Christmas Trees – Wotton Lions Request

It was **resolved** to defer this item to the February Town Council meeting.

*District Cllr Braun left the meeting*

## T.6461 Tree Stump, Marchesi Walk

It was noted that the horse chestnut tree stump on Marchesi Walk was unsuitable for carving as it was diseased and would quickly degenerate. Councillors agreed to leave the stump in situ as it would be good for wildlife, and it was suggested to ask WACAN as they may have ideas for it.

## T.6462 Regeneration and Events including the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

A meeting had been held on 20th January. Various groups in the town had plans underway and were progressing their ideas. The next meeting would be held on 17th February at 7pm.

## T.6463 Budget and Precept

1. It was **resolved** to approve price increases to burial fees and allotments from 1st April 2022 as detailed in red on the backing document, except for the fee for the erection of a wooden cross, which would be reduced to £75.
2. After a passionate and lengthy discussion, it was **resolved to** use £24,500 from earmarked reserves to pay for some of the one-off items in the budget to reduce the precept, andto raise a precept of £421,348 for the Financial Year April 2022 to March 2023.
3. After a detailed and lengthy debate, it was **resolved to** approve the following grants for payment in April 2022:

(i) Synwell Playing Fields Association - £5000, £3169 of which will come from earmarked CIL funding.

 (ii) WACAN - £2000.

 (iii) WCSF Sensory Garden - £800.

 (iv) GWAAC - £220.

 (v) Cobalt - £168.

## T.6464 Suspension of Standing Orders

It was **resolved** to suspend Standing Orders to continue the meeting beyond 10pm to complete the agenda items.

*Cllr T Creese left the meeting*

## T.6465 Stroud District Council Draft Economic Development Strategy

It was **resolved** to arrange a separate meeting to discuss the Strategy and then delegate to the Clerk to respond to SDC.

## T.6466 Public Rights of Way Working Group

The meeting had been rearranged for 23rd February 2022.

## T.6467 Thanks to Volunteers

Deferred.

## T.6468 Brief Reports from Councillors

Deferred.

## T.6469 Planning

Noted. The decision on the planning item had already been received.

## T.6470 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.

*Cllr Cordwell, Y Milsom and 1 member of the public left the meeting*

**T.6471 Symn Lane Development Update**

An update on discussions with the developer and SDC Planning was noted.

*Cllr Cordwell returned to the meeting*

**T.6472 Clerk’s Report**

A verbal update on the Town Hall refurbishment and the Clerk’s annual leave was noted.

The meeting ended at 10.10pm

Signed: Date: