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

# Monday 21st February 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); District Cllrs K Tucker and G James; 2 members of the public.

## T.6473 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllrs J Lewis and R Hale; District Cllr C Braun; and County Cllr L Cohen.

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## T.6474 To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Declarations of interest: Cllrs Turner and Pinnegar in respect of Accounts for payment.

## T.6475 Minutes of the Meeting of 24th January 2022

It was **resolved to** approve the Minutes of the meeting of 24th January 2022. Agreed all in favour.

## T.6476 Public Forum

Two members of the public gave a report on the Swimming Pool and distributed information sheets showing year on year comparisons. The 2021 season had been very good, although initially they had only been able to offer private hire sessions due to COVID restrictions.

*District Cllr G James left the meeting*

This meant that public swim numbers were down on previous years, but when the restrictions had been relaxed, they were able to offer all normal activities apart from lessons. The private hire sessions continued to be very popular, and they had achieved a good level of control of chemical management. The full Annual Report is available on their website. They thanked the Council for its continuing annual support of £28,000 as detailed in the Service Level Agreement and would invoice shortly for the remaining payment of £6,000 due in March.

*2 members of the public left the meeting*

## T.6477 Reports from County and District Councillors

a) County Cllr L Cohen was unable to attend the meeting. Her report had been circulated and is as follows:

County Councillor Report – Councillor Linda Cohen

Wotton-under-Edge Town Council

20th February 2022

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 26th March 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 Parish Council website.
2. Wortley Road – work started earlier than planned on Saturday 19th February. I went up at 8am to speak to officers and to check that work was going ahead after the storm and reminded residents on social media that the road would be closed. Work on Coombe Lane has also been completed.
3. Venns Acre – Despite the protestations of the Governors at Blue Coat that the trees were safe, as had been feared a tree came down this week. It was fortunate that the school was closed. I will be picking this up again with Governors.
4. Petty Theft, Vandalism, Anti-Social Behaviour – this is becoming a too common occurrence. Residents should not be expected put up with these incidents. I will be meeting with the Neighbourhood Policing Team in the next fortnight to discuss an action plan.
5. Storm Eunice – This was effectively managed by Council officers and other than a brief loss of power and water we emerged relatively unscathed. There has been the expected collateral damage of fallen trees. If anyone needs help with any matters that have arisen from the storm can they please make contact.
6. Full County Council Meeting:

All details are available at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy](http://www.gloucestershir.gov.uk/council-and-democracy)

The Liberal Democrats succeeded in securing £250,000 to progress ‘shovel ready’ 20mph schemes and £100,000 for a TRO reserve specifically looking at road safety schemes and safer crossings. This money will be spent on the red tape that too often stops these schemes from progressing.

We have also put in place the opportunity for communities to be consulted about making 20mph the usual speed limit where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix.

We will be putting forward a Road Safety motion in March.

It should be noted that the Liberal Democrats also proposed an EV charging £88k fund for communities and rural councils to bid into for matched funding in areas that aren’t covered by the Government’s OZEV grant funding. The Conservatives refused saying they did not believe this was an issue but conceded that the idea had merits and they might return to this in the near future.

The contract for installing EV points is about to be awarded. I will update the Town Council when I know more.

1. Highways Maintenance and Speed Controls

I met with Yakub Mulla to discuss plans for 2022/2023 and to look at the scheme of works that is already in planning.

Unlike last year when most of my Highways Local had already been allocated, the full fund is currently available.

Relatively it is a very small amount of money to meet everyone’s requirements – the highways are generally in a very poor state due to years of under investment and this will not be fixed in 12 months.

I am proposing to consult with each parish and town council and to agree the priorities for the next 12 months. We can then overlay these on the existing schedule of works, look at the gaps and I will use my budget accordingly. I would suggest that we also open this up to the community. This will form the basis of a clear plan and give us something tangible to share with residents.

It will also allow me to fund anomalies that are deemed not to meet the Council’s criteria but are of great import to our communities.

I plan to start this immediately once I have the respective town and parish council agreements.

1. **New project to support young families**

**In April 2022 the County Council will target the county’s most disadvantaged areas, to provide additional support for families with babies and toddlers born during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Steps Ahead will provide enhanced support across the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Gloucestershire. By targeting areas that experience greater levels of deprivation, the project aims to reduce longer-term consequences of the pandemic, particularly those that lead to health inequalities of parents and children.

Children and Families Centres will offer focused programmes, tailored group and individual support for families who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The county council will work in partnership with Aspire Foundation, Barnardo’s and the Health Visiting Team within Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust to launch ‘Steps Ahead’, which will be funded with £919,509 from the government’s Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

Support for families in the Cotswolds will be provided by Aspire Foundation. Both services will also offer a targeted outreach programme for families in need of support who do not have easy access to an existing Children and Families Centre.

The Health Visiting Team will deliver bespoke health related advice and support county-wide. This will include tailored packages of care and group work to support child development, providing nutritional, sleep and behaviour advice, as well as supporting child/family relationships and infant mental health.

If any families need this support and are unable to access please let me know.

1. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan: Cam & Dursley, Cirencester

**Gloucestershire County Council are developing** [Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAyMDkuNTMxNTAxOTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3d3dy5nbG91Y2VzdGVyc2hpcmUuZ292LnVrL3RyYW5zcG9ydC9nbG91Y2VzdGVyc2hpcmVzLWxvY2FsLXRyYW5zcG9ydC1wbGFuLTIwMjAtMjA0MS9sb2NhbC1jeWNsaW5nLWFuZC13YWxraW5nLWluZnJhc3RydWN0dXJlLXBsYW5zLyJ9.4vR2Uuc3OV9fwyN_b8AUC1bJ-xjUjSQEvnF95xMRC8o/s/1180383281/br/126376486285-l) **(LCWIPs) for Cam & Dursley, and Cirencester.**

LCWIPs identify local cycling and walking networks, and set out a high-level plan for how these will be improved over time to create safe, connected networks.

Funding for walking and cycling improvements is likely to be closely tied to schemes set out in LCWIPs.

An important part of producing an LCWIP is getting good input  [this consultation website](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMjAyMDkuNTMxNTAxOTEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3BpbnBvaW50Z2NjY3ljbGVyb3V0ZS5maXJlYmFzZWFwcC5jb20vbGN3aXAvIn0.YcVBHAembODmrUgRPI6aRYtx8mi2-lx8wlKWmVWYRu8/s/1180383281/br/126376486285-l) allows you to;

·         **Comment** on draft walking and cycling corridors;

·         **Identify** other, or alternative, links that may be needed; and

·         **Highlight** issues/locations where improvements are needed.

To access the website, please follow this link: <https://pinpointgcccycleroute.firebaseapp.com/lcwip/>

**Please could you respond by 28th February 2022.**

1. COVID-19

Cases

* In week 6 (Monday 31st January – Sunday 6th February) there were 7,105 confirmed cases of COVID19.

Of these cases:

* + 1383 were in Stroud
  + 1626 were in Gloucester
  + 1230 were in Tewkesbury
  + 871 were in Forest of Dean
  + 1434 were in Cheltenham
  + 757 were in Cotswold

\* Please note these figures are provisional and subject to change. (Source: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/> as at 16.00 09/02/2022)

The rate of cases in the last 7 days per 100,000 is 1224.8 in Gloucestershire, 1154.8 in the South West, and 1094.9 in England[9](#Fn9)

Deaths mentioning COVID19

In week 4 (Saturday 16th January – Friday 28th January) there were 6 deaths mentioning “novel coronavirus (COVID-19)”, which is 4.3% of all deaths, this compares with 12 (8.1% of all deaths) in Week 3.

\*Please note these figures are based on all deaths registered by the 5th February 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](mailto:linda.cohen@gloucestershire.gov.uk) . Mobile 07791110906

b) The District Councillors report was noted, as follows:

Stroud District Councillors Report: 1st January 2022 to 1st February 2022

*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)

**Strategy and Resources Committee – 13 January**

The Committee papers can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1132&Ver=4).

**Stroud Canals Vision and Strategy**

A new strategy was approved for the network of canals within Stroud District (the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, and the two Cotswold Canals running from Saul Junction in the west, to Chalford in the east).

The new Canals Strategy identifies 3 ‘Drivers of Change’ to maximise social, economic, and environmental benefits: continuity, clustering and crossings for each of 14 areas. The draft strategy will now be published for consultation, which will include a short film, and then adopted as a supplementary planning document by Environment Committee.  The strategy will be piloted at Wallbridge, Stroud. The strategy document can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s2699/Item%209%20-%20Appendix%20B%20-%20Canal%20Strategy%20Areas%20Profiles%20and%20Placemaking%20Frameworks.pdf) (an overview of the canal corridor is shared below).

Diagram

Description automatically generated with low confidence

* **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – The Committee approved the recommendations from Environment Committee for CIL funding for 4 projects – Nailsworth drainage improvement scheme (£52.5k), Archway School and Sport Centre 3G Astroturf pitch (£150k), Stroud outdoor pool (£20k) Cainscross cycle scheme feasibility study (£75k). Officers provided a reminder that CIL funding is only provided to address housing growth in the district.
* **The Fair Pay and Senior Pay Policy Statement 2021/22** – the Committee approved this annual statement on pay for staff.  Pay Ratios**:** Lowest paid are apprentices on £12.4k p.a. Lowest paid SDC employees on £18.3 k.  Highest paid is chief exec on £118.4k.  There is a ratio of 1:6 between lowest paid and highest paid SDC employees, and a ratio of 1:10 when apprentices are also included.  Govt advises salary differences should not exceed 1:20.   
  Headcount**:** there are now 417 employees– this has increased by since last year – due to filling vacant posts and a few new posts for the IT modernisation programme.
* **Council Tax Support Scheme**

Committee approved the support scheme for April 2022-March 2023. Council Tax Support is provided to around 6,000 households at an annual cost of £6.5m.  Funding from central Government is provided but has reduced in line with other central funding cuts, so SDC has absorbed the shortfall in funding to continue to offer up to 100% support for council tax.

Working age caseload for Council Tax Support is around 3,200 households – and there has been a small percentage increase since the start of the pandemic.  The Committee agreed a small change to the scheme to reduce the amount of admin required in issuing bills - when Universal Credit claimants have a ‘change in circumstances’.  This means Council Tax Support will now only be reviewed where the amount of Universal Credit changes by £10 or less per week.

* **Budget Monitoring Report Quarter 2**

For the General Fund, a modest overspend of £186k is forecast.  The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) shows a forecasted overspend of £519k – partly due to loss of income on void properties.  The capital programme shows a forecast spend of £32.9 m which is on track.

* **Council Plan Performance Indicators**

Performance Indicators for all activities and projects in the Council Plan were approved, along with a new performance monitoring template.

* **Member / Officer Reports**

Reports presented from Leadership Gloucestershire, the Regeneration and Investment Board and Brimscombe Port Board.

**Development Control Committee – 18 January**

The Committee papers can be found at this [link](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=1319).

**Site for Sports Pitches North of Parcels H10 & H11, Great Oldbury** (S.21/1050/REM)

Engineering works to facilitate the creation of phase 1 sports pitches and associated landscaping (approval of reserved matters under Outline permission S.14/0810/OUT) - Approved

**Establishment of Development Management Advisory Panel**

The Committee voted to set up an oversight panel for the development control and enforcement service, following concerns about and an internal audit into performance of the service, in particular planning enforcement. The new Advisory Panel will be made up of the Development Control Committee Chair plus three other committee members and will meet quarterly (or more often if required) with the head of service and other senior planning officers, to proactively consider issues with planning and enforcement service delivery, including interactions with parish and town councils, and staff recruitment. It will report back to Development Control Committee.

**Community Services & Licensing Committee – 20 January**

The Committee papers can be found at this [link](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=1130&Ver=4) and the meeting recording at this [link.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koD3T1OF-jU)

**Police and Crime Commissioner Annual Update**

Most of the meeting was spent in discussion with Nick Evans, the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner, who provided an update to the Committee on his priorities for the next three years and responded to questions, including on the number of officers in the county.

**Citizens Advice** – Cllr Jessie Hoskin provided an update that there were two new trustees and a new premises plan, and that Citizens Advice is starting a new delivery programme with local hubs.

**Youth Voice** **-** An update was provided on the Youth Voice work undertaken by SDC with young people who are involved through local Youth Forums and as members of Stroud District Youth Council, see [Information Sheet](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s2826/12.01.22%20-%20Youth%20Service.pdf).

**Museum in the park -** Information was shared with the Committee about work at the Museum during 2021, in relation to membership, extending community reach to new audiences, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the museum.

The Museum in the Park re-opened on 25 January with a new free exhibition ‘Ice Age’ which explores half a million years of ancient local history, including changing climate, rising sea-levels, mass migration and extinction of species. This is a touring exhibition from Museums Worcestershire, enhanced by rarely seen artefacts from The Museum in the Park’s own collection. There will also be free online talks, family activities at weekends and during school holidays. See [Information Sheet](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s2760/Item%207h%20-%20Stroud%20District%20Cowle%20Museum%20Service%20Information%20Sheet.pdf).

**S&R Committee 27 January – budget meeting**

The Committee papers can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1291&Ver=4).

**Council Tax**

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council an average council tax rise of less than 10p per week per household, which represents £5 to £222.52 at Band D for services provided by Stroud District Council.

New allocations include expanding the number of electric vehicles in its contractor Ubico’s fleet, supporting temporary accommodation to prevent homelessness, investing in children’s play areas, and support for a new tourism post. While Stroud District Council collects council tax for Gloucestershire County Council, The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire and parish and town councils in the Stroud district, only around 10% of the bill pays for services provided by Stroud District Council.

The Committee discussed the Council’s financial position for the year ahead, which is reasonable due to additional funding provided in the local government settlement from the New Homes Bonus. However, we are still expecting central Government funding to decline from next year when the long-awaited Fair Funding Review takes place.

**Capital strategy**

Committee approved the updated capital strategy which sets out the capital priorities: new build housing; regeneration of the canal; redevelopment of Brimscombe Port; addressing climate change; ICT infrastructure transformation; Ubico fleet for waste & recycling collections.

**Housing Revenue Account**

The Committee agreed the budget that had been presented to Housing Committee in December, with one change – that an extra £36k is included for a Resident Involvement Officer post for 2 years.  Social rents and affordable rents are set to increase by 4.1% in line with national rent guidance.

**Housing Committee – 1 February**

All the Committee papers can be found at this [link](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=1137).

**Grant for new Temporary Accommodation for the homeless**

The Committee agreed to provide a one-off capital grant of £190k to a social housing provider (Gloucester City Homes) to purchase and convert a building in Stroud (hopefully the Salvation Army Minister’s House) to provide temporary accommodation for single people or couples at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping, before they move onto permanent accommodation. The new property will also allow space for pets. At present, these households are generally sent to bed and breakfast style accommodation, often in Gloucester. Having specialist accommodation which provides for pets will help to encourage people who are rough sleeping to take up the accommodation – and it should save SDC money due the arrangement with Gloucester City Homes, which will reduce costs compared to the current arrangements.

**Housing for older people**

The Older Persons Strategy Action Plan and Independent Living Modernisation Programme were discussed. It was agreed that Grange View in Stroud, Burdett House in Stonehouse and Hamfallow Court in Newtown, Berkeley will have modernisation works carried out in the financial year 2022/23.

**Housing Revenue Account delivery plan**

An update on the priorities for council homes was discussed.

**Private rented sector – minimum energy efficiency standards**

New energy efficiency regulations for private rented property, known as the MEES (Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards) Regulations have set a minimum standard for privately rented domestic properties. These regulations apply to all tenancies since 1st April 2020, and landlords are no longer allowed to let or continue to let properties with an EPC rating below E, unless they have a valid and appropriately registered exemption in place. For the Stroud District, the EPC register currently has 594 registered EPCs for privately rented property where the rating is lower than an E (F or G) but only 16 registered exemptions.

SDC has secured funding to employ an officer in the Housing Renewal Team for six months to develop an engagement programme for approaching landlords and managing agents with regards to their MEES obligations. The programme will include an awareness raising campaign and a direct approach to identified landlords and agents. Accurate, appropriate and effective targeted communication materials will be developed to form part of the awareness campaign. The initial approach will be one of information and advice, Officers will liaise with landlords, letting agents and other stakeholders to provide advice, support and guidance on the MEES regulation compliance and penalties for non-compliance. Where landlords fail to engage or undertake any necessary action then enforcement under the regulations will be required. The Committee agreed to adopt a new MEES Regulations Policy to enable enforcement action to be taken.

**Other reports and updates** were shared on service standards, from the Tenant Representatives and from the three Housing Task and Finish Groups:

* Retrofit / Carbon Reduction
* Tenant Engagement and Empowerment
* Housing Repairs and Voids

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**Business grants**

Two new business grants have been announced to help local businesses which have been impacted by Coronavirus.

* **Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant**

One off grants up to £6,000 will be paid to hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses in England, business rated premises appearing on the local rating list only. SDC has identified the businesses that they believe will meet the eligibility criteria and have been emailing businesses from 25 January onwards.

* **Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG6)**

SDC has created a new Additional Restrictions Grant with Government funds, to provide additional support to businesses which have been severely impacted by Covid restrictions and uncertainty caused by the Omicron variant. This scheme now closes on Friday 11 February at 4pm.

For further information on these business grants and to apply: [www.stroud.gov.uk/business/business-rates](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/business/business-rates)

**Fusion Energy Bid**

Oldbury and Berkeley are the sites of the local bid to host the UK’s first prototype fusion energy plant. It was announced in October that these local sites were in the shortlist of five sites being considered.

There is an opportunity for local people to find out more about the programme, at upcoming public events

* Monday 7 February 5pm-8pm at Berkeley Town Hall
* Wednesday 9 February 3pm-7pm at Turnberries Community Centre in Thornbury,
* Public online webinar on Thursday 10 February between 6pm-8pm.

For more information on the public information sessions<https://western-gateway.co.uk/>.

**Climate Action**

Stroud District Council has been named as one of the best councils in the country for addressing climate change. The Council achieved a joint 10th place out of more than 400 local authorities the UK, and was rated the fourth-best district council in the country, and the top performer in Gloucestershire. Climate Emergency UK scored SDC at 77% across a range of measures designed to test the effectiveness of councils' climate action plans. <https://councilclimatescorecards.uk/>

**Water Source Heat Pumps**

Gas boilers have now been replaced with new water source heat pumps at the SDC Ebley Mill headquarters and the council’s Brimscombe Port Mill. Cotswold Energy Group was awarded the contract to design and install a suitable system, working in conjunction with another Stroud company (Renewables First). The heat pumps are powered only by electricity, saving more than 5,125 tonnes of carbon. The council was successful in applying for funding under the government’s renewable heat incentive scheme and will recover the capital costs of both installations over a period of years. This means the investment will eventually pay for itself and reduce bills.

**Unlicensed Scrap Collector Fined**

In June 2021, a scrap waste collector who did not have a licence was detained in Cam by police. Following joint work with SDC, the man has now received a fine from the Magistrates court of £1,426.

Stroud District Council clears around 900 fly tips a year and some of these are caused by unlicensed collectors who can’t prove where the scrap and waste they collect goes. Householders should ensure that that they only give or sell waste to a licensed operator.

**Applications for Community Grants**

SDC has invited applications from organisations for funds to help support communities recover in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Community Wellbeing Grant is for groups who work with their communities to reduce inequality and promote aspects of wellbeing such as physical, mental and financial health, social connection, arts, culture, heritage and the environment. This grant closed on 31 January. The Small Grants Fund is a new fund for awards of less than £1,000. The simple two-page application from is designed to support small groups with less experience of bid writing, to get small scale projects off the ground. New bids will be considered every three months, throughout 2022.

The application forms can be downloaded at <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/community-health-and-wellbeing/community-wellbeing-grants> or contact via email at hwb@stroud.gov.uk or phone on 01453 766321.

**New Rail Bridge – Stonehouse**

A fascinating 2 minute time lapse film (link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt6_waf6aPs>) has been released to show the work undertaken over the Christmas holiday to replace the Ocean railway bridge in Stonehouse, as part of the Cotswold Canals Connected partnership project.

The new bridge will enable boats to pass underneath. A team of 150 operatives from Network Rail and its contractor Alun Griffiths worked round the clock on behalf of the Cotswold Canals Connected partnership to ensure the project was completed while the railway was closed for seven days over Christmas. The original bridge had been replaced in the 1960s, with an embankment leaving only a narrow opening that was too small for boats to pass through, and needed to be replaced as part of the restoration of the Stroudwater Canal. The Ocean railway bridge project took more than two years of planning, which included casting the new bridge sections on site, catching and relocating thousands of fish and draining a 230-metre section of the canal. The team used a total of 4,000 tonnes of material for the foundations and backfilling around the new structure and 500 tonnes of ballast (track stone) when reinstating the railway.

The new bridge, with its integrated towpath, will allow boats to pass under the railway as part of the restoration of The Stroudwater Canal which will eventually make Stroud and Stonehouse canal towns once again.

Cotswold Canals Connected is a partnership of organisations led by Stroud District Council and the Cotswold Canals Trust which are restoring the canal network. Phase 1A, which is now complete, restored the section between Stonehouse and Thrupp. Phase 1B, which includes this project, will restore a further four-mile section between Stonehouse and Saul Junction providing a connection to the national waterway network. The partnership is committed to significant outcomes for wildlife, people and communities, and the canal heritage. For more information see the [website](http://www.cotswoldcanalsconnected.org/).

*Cllr G James returned to the meeting*

Cllr Tucker detailed ongoing issues with the frequent closures of Lloyds chemist in Wotton and thanked Cllr Taylor for pursuing enquiries with local surgeries. He is arranging a meeting with local MPs and asked that people report any problems with Lloyds Chemist to him.

It was noted that the draft plans of the Stroud Canals Project were available for the public to view in the One Stop Shop. Councillors commented that Wotton residents are disgruntled at the amount of money being spent on Stroud. They believe that there has been an unfair distribution of funding, which benefits the Stroud economy to the detriment of other towns in the district. District Cllrs James and Tucker would investigate and advise the funding sources for the water source heat pumps installed at Ebley Mill.

## T.6478 Chairman’s Report

The report had previously been circulated and was noted.

## T.6479 Farmers’ Market

This item was deferred to the next meeting as the report had been delayed due to illness.

## T.6480 Accounts

1. It was **resolved to** approve payments to the Town Trust of £2,000 in respect of the permanent endowment as required by the Charities Commission; and £4,700 in support for loss of rent in respect of the former Police Station (£3500) and Chipping car park (£1,200).
2. It was **resolved to** approve the quote for £233 plus VAT and appoint S Tasker as the independent internal auditor for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2022.
3. It was **resolved to** renew annual membership subscription of £100 of the Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association.
4. It was **resolved to** renew the annual subscription fee for the Scribe accounts package at a cost of £950 plus VAT.
5. The budget report to the end of January 2022 was noted.

*Cllrs Turner and Pinnegar left the meeting*

1. It was **resolved** to approve February payments for the sum of £13195.98 including VAT.

*Cllrs Turner and Pinnegar returned to the meeting*

## T.6481 Regeneration and Events Including the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

A meeting had been held last Thursday. Good progress had been made for events over the 4 days of the Jubilee weekend, which would commence with a Town Crier proclamation on the Thursday. This was to be an international, co-ordinated proclamation of Town Criers around participating countries worldwide. Synwell Playing Field was hosting a family fun fair and picnic. There would be a Jubilee lunch for children, for which a road closure would be needed. A number of organisations in the town were organising events including a flower festival, swimming gala, tea dance, beacon, music etc. The Clerk would be applying for a grant from the National Lottery Awards for All.

A quote for £387 from Corinium Event First Aid had been received for first aid cover for all 4 days. It was **resolved to** approve this quote.

## T.6482 Oak Saplings for Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

There was to be a National Civic event to plant the oak saplings on 11th March 2022. The British School and Bluecoat School had been approached to ask if they would like the trees to be planted in their grounds. The British School had agreed, and a response was awaited from Bluecoat School, with the WCSF proposed as a reserve location. The Royal British Legion Industries Shop was producing commemorative plaques for the trees at a cost of £120 each. It was **resolved to** approve the locations of the two saplings as detailed above, to be planted on 11th March 2022; and to purchase 2 plaques from the Royal British Legion Industries Shop.

## T.6483 Town Council and Planning Meeting Dates 2022/2023

A document had been circulated detailing proposed meeting dates. It was **resolved to** agree these dates.

## T.6484 National Lobby Day

This was an opportunity to lobby MPs and emphasise the importance of local councils. It was **resolved to** participate andinclude the following topics – Levelling Up Fund concerns, EV chargers, solar canopy, decarbonisation of public buildings. Cllrs Claydon, Thomas, Turner and Tucker would participate.

## T.6485 Boundary Commission for England Consultation

The secondary consultation on the proposed new map of constituencies in England takes place from Tuesday 22 February to Monday 4 April 2022. It was noted that the proposals would include Wotton Under Edge in the Stroud Constituency, which would be an improvement.

## T.6486 Thanks to Volunteers

It was **resolved to** send cards thanking the following volunteers/organisations: Martin Clarke and the team from UTEA for the very successful Window Wanderland; the Wotton Tidy-up Group; WACAN; and The Keepers. It was noted that The Keepers hold a tea and cake session on Wednesdays and would welcome a Town Council presence at these sessions.

## T.6487 Consultations

a) GCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans – The plans do not include the local Greenway and is of limited interest to this area. It was **resolved to** respond that we would wish to see the Greenway included in the plan. District Cllr G James would also pursue this matter.

b) OFCOM Review of Postal Regulation. It was **resolved** to agree with the NALC proposal andthatCllr Claydon would respond to the survey in support of the continuing structure of the sub-post office network.

## T.6488 Brief Reports from Councillors

Cllr Thomas had attended a Climate Change talk given by Rachel Green, Strategic Officer at SDC, held at Stroud Brewery. The event was targeting businesses to tackle the climate emergency.

Cllr Barton had previously circulated a report from the Wotton Area Climate Action Network (WACAN) meeting.

Cllr Claydon reported that the Public Right of Way Partnership meeting will be on 23rd March 2022.

Cllr Taylor reported that there will be a Walking Festival quiz to raise funds and asked 6 Councillors to form a group to enter. Cllrs Taylor, Claydon, Creese, Turner, Thomas, and Barton agreed to take part.

## T.6489 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.

*District Councillors Tucker and James left the meeting*

**T.6490 Streamsfield Quotes**

It was **resolved to** approve quotes as follows: £168 to remove leaning limb of oak tree; £545 for works to remove dead trees/hazards from copse, all waste material to be stacked on site as wildlife habitat. With regard to the dead branches overhanging the footpath from the oak tree situated in a private garden, it was **resolved to** write to the property owners reminding them of their responsibilities and that if they fail to take appropriate action, the Council will arrange the work and invoice them.

## T.6491 Allotments Quotes

a) New Road site. It was **resolved to** approve the quote from Smith & Sons for a total of £560 for various works to the bank below the Chipping Surgery, the debris to be buried on site as detailed.

b) Knapp Road site. There were concerns that birds had already started nesting in the brambles and that there was possibly a fox den there as well. It was therefore proposed that the immediate bramble clearance should be restricted to the open area next to plot 23 and a 2 metre clearance strip around the area next to plot 35 to prevent encroachment onto the plot. New quotes could then be obtained in October once the nesting season had finished in order to complete the works. It was **resolved to** delegate to the Clerk in conjunction with Cllr Barton to appoint Smith & Sons to negotiate the amended works.

## T.6492 Fire Risk Assessment Quotes

There were conflicting interpretations of the terms of the leases with UTEA and the Heritage Centre regarding responsibilities for fire risk assessments. The Clerk was seeking legal advice in this regard but suggested to continue with the work so that we are, as landlords, legally compliant and then, if it is determined that it is their responsibility they can be invoiced for the work.

*Cllr Cordwell left the meeting*

It was **resolved to** delegate to the Clerk to approve A & E Fire and Security to carry out the Fire Risk Assessments.

*Cllr Cordwell re-entered the meeting*

## T.6493 Clerk’s Report

The Clerk gave an update on the Town Hall works and confirmed that the PWLB had been informed of the situation. Lighting inside the Hall needed to be reviewed as a recent accident with the cleaner had highlighted issues. The cleaner is thankfully recovered.

A Police Crime Prevention specialist is meeting the local neighbourhood policing team to walk around the town with a view to assessing CCTV requirements.

A tree on Marchesi Walk had been brought down in Storm Eunice. It has crushed a metal barrier on the path to Court Orchard. It has been reported to Gloucestershire County Council.

The Clerk has still been unable to take her annual leave due to work pressures.

The Civic Centre car park fence is in a very poor condition and it was requested that it should be delegated to the Clerk, in agreement with Cllrs Claydon and Tucker, to obtain quotes and appoint a contractor to get this replaced as soon as possible. It was **resolved to** approve the delegation as detailed above.

The meeting ended at 9.15pm

Signed: Date: