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

#  Tuesday 19th April 2022 at 7pm in the Civic Centre

## Present: Cllrs R Claydon, M Tucker, P Barton, J Cordwell, J Lewis,

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

## In attendance: A Durn (Town Clerk), Y Milsom (Deputy Clerk); District Cllr K Tucker; Police Sergeant Gloyn and PCSO Hudman; 2 members of the public.

## T.6525 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllr T Creese; District Cllrs G James and C Braun; County Cllr L Cohen.

##  T.6526 To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

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

## T.6527 Minutes of the Meetings of 21st March 2022 and Extraordinary Meeting of 28th March 2022

It was **resolved to** approve the Minutes of the meetings of 21st March 2022 and 28th March 2022.

## T.6528 Neighbourhood Police Team Report

Police Sergeant Gloyn and PCSO Hudman of the Stroud District Neighbourhood Police Team were welcomed to the meeting. They cover Wotton Under Edge, Kingswood, Hillesley, Alderley and North Nibley. PS Gloyn previously came to the October 2021 Town Council meeting at which he reported response times for priority calls were not being met in around 50% of cases. Unfortunately, IT issues had prevented him from downloading the latest data but, as of three weeks ago, there had been no big improvement. As at that moment, there were 120 open incidents including emergencies being dealt with. The issue was insufficient personnel. Action that is being taken includes Officers being redeployed from proactive routine tasks to try to tackle the backlog. Budgets were being scrutinised with the longer term aim of recruiting an additional 150 staff, to include volunteers, some extra Police Officers, PCSOs, and volunteers. The data showed an increase in violent offences, but this was due to a change in criteria in how incidents are defined and recorded, for example, anti-social behaviour now includes swearing. Wotton remains in the safest group of communities in the district. Updated data will be provided to the Town Clerk when the IT issues have been resolved. Current issues include anti-social behaviour at the Youth Centre – they are supporting youth workers in this matter; extremist literature – being investigated; a team of burglars operating locally; and the possible release in the next few weeks of an individual who had caused considerable trouble in the town. Criminal Behaviour Orders would be enforced if the individual caused further problems.

The Officers were thanked for their time.

*2 Police Officers left the meeting*

## T.6529 Public Forum

A member of the public spoke of his disappointment with the lack of improvement in Police response times.

A member of the public spoke of plans for St Mary’s Church to achieve Eco-Church accreditation, a scheme organised by a Christian charity and supported by the Church of England. The scheme has different progress levels and applies to all aspects of the church, including the building and the grounds. The Town Council is responsible for the maintenance of the closed churchyard and some of the projects will affect how this is managed, therefore they are seeking Council support for the adjustment of maintenance schedules to enable the scheme to progress. They are liaising with Wotton Area Climate Action Network (WACAN), who have already offered advice and are meeting with them shortly to discuss detailed plans.

## T.6530 St Mary’s Churchyard

It was **resolved to** bring forward this agenda item concerning the request for support for St Mary’s Eco Church plans. It was further **resolved to** support the Eco-Church project by adjusting the churchyard maintenance schedules in accordance with the plans, when known.

*One member of the public left the meeting*

## T.6531 Reports from County and District Councillors

The following report from County Councillor Cohen was noted:

1. **Highways Maintenance and Speed Controls**

I meet with the Town Council on Wednesday 23rd March to discuss 2022/2023 priorities and to review the comments that had been posted on social media and received by email from Wotton residents. The list is extensive, but a number of issues come up repeatedly which will be prioritised. I will be meeting with the clerk to prepare a plan of action which will be discussed at the Town Council meeting in May. I plan to make this publicly available in advance to allow residents to attend and ask further questions/ provide supplementary comments.

1. **Ukraine**

I have attached the full briefing document from Gloucestershire County Council which is for the benefit of anyone in the process of becoming a sponsor or considering taking this step.

The have been delays with all parts of the process but at County level we are taking direct action including making phone calls to sponsor families to update and speed up checks.

If anyone needs my help with any part of this vital initiative, please phone or email. Contact details below.

1. **Plans unveiled to support young people leaving care**

**Gloucestershire County Council’s cabinet have been asked to approve plans to transform a former care home in Stroud into accommodation to help young people develop the skills they need to live independently**.

Council’s cabinet will be asked to consider changing Southfield House into semi-independent accommodation, with specialist support services, that will help young people leaving care, by giving them the support they need as they head into adulthood and find their independence.

The plans for Southfield House will build upon the success of ground-breaking Trevone House in Gloucester, by providing additional high quality in-county accommodation and support for care leavers. Award winning Trevone House was designed with young people at its heart, with input from young people with experience of being in care and Southfield House will follow the same successful model.

The plans are part of the council’s sufficiency strategy, which aims to make sure children and young people in the county get the right placement, first time and the chance of a flourishing future.

If approved, Southfield House will host semi-independent accommodation for up to 30 young people aged from 16 to 25 including:

* 18 flats for young people who are leaving care, at Southfield Main House
* 8 flats and 1 crash pad for care experienced young people who are in employment, training, or apprenticeships, at Southfield Old House

To make sure the building is fit for purpose, the council propose to invest £3.35 million for refurbishing and building work.

The council will engage with the local community at all stages of this project, working to ensure these young people become part of the wider community.

1. **Special school for Stroud proposed**

**Gloucestershire County Council has identified the need for a new special school in Stroud so children with Moderate and Additional Learning Difficulties (MALD) can be supported locally.**

The proposed new school would offer 60 places for children aged 4-11 years with MALD for the academic year 2023/2024 in the school building formerly occupied by Severn View Primary Academy.

The county council is asking parents and carers, head teachers, and local residents, especially those who live close to the proposed location for the new school to share their views on the proposal.

There is an increasing demand in Gloucestershire for special school places which means these children sometimes have to go to schools out of the county or to independent schools when there aren’t places available locally.

The council wants to expand provision to make sure more children have the opportunity to go to school close to where they live and that specialist places are available where there is the most demand.

It has already increased the capacity of other special schools in the county and a new £9.5m special school for children and young people aged 11 – 16 years, Brook Academy, is opening in Brockworth, in September 2022. However, analysis shows that more special school places will be required in the coming years.

1. **Cabinet agrees to consult over health and social care recommendations**

At its meeting on March 30th the Cabinet agreed a series of recommendations to help stabilise and shape the future of Gloucestershire’s independent health and social care market.

The proposals were put forward following a period of engagement with Gloucestershire’s independent care market at the end of 2021 to help ensure the changing and more complex needs of residents can be met.

As well as being asked to agree to developing new services that helps protect and maintain people’s physical and mental wellbeing, supporting them to stay independent at home for as long as possible. Cabinet also agreed to begin a six-week consultation on the proposed closure of four of its existing care homes:

* + Orchard House, Bishops Cleeve, Tewkesbury
	+ Westbury Court, Westbury, Forest of Dean
	+ Bohanam House, Gloucester
	+ The Elms, Stonehouse, Stroud

Demand for standard residential care home places has been falling consistently for the past five years. At the same time, more people are wanting to be cared for at home.

99% of Gloucestershire residents (across all ages) who responded to a survey at the end of last year said it was ‘very important’ or ‘quite important’ to be supported by community-based care so they could stay in their own home for longer.

To further support people’s stronger desire to stay at home for longer, the cabinet also agreed a new approach to using advances in technology to support caring for people at home.

The approach being taken by the county council has the backing of local NHS leaders who with an equally strong desire to support people to remain well and independent for as long as possible fully agree with the approach the council has set out.

Following the decisions take today, the county council and The Orders of St John Care Trust, who run the care homes as part of the Gloucestershire Care Partnership, will consult residents, their families, and employees to capture their views, concerns and comments as part of a six-week consultation.

1. **Holiday activities for families across Gloucestershire.**

Bookings are now open for the spring Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) funded by the Department of Education, for children eligible for benefits related free school meals.

Using grant funding, the council is also once again able to offer local holiday activities which are available to all children and young people across the county.

The **spring programme will run for 4 days between 11 and 14 April 2022. Families who have registered previously will be automatically enrolled and do not need to sign up again.**

[Find out more about the programme here](https://track.vuelio.uk.com/z.z?l=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ2xvdWNlc3RlcnNoaXJlLmdvdi51ay9lZHVjYXRpb24tYW5kLWxlYXJuaW5nL2hvbGlkYXktYWN0aXZpdGllcy1hbmQtZm9vZC1wcm9ncmFtbWUv&r=13732735958&d=16074744&p=1&t=h&h=8653c3e593b9f97ad11e3d72efbdd597)

1. **Significant progress made in Children’s Services says Ofsted (Taken from press release)**

**In the first line of its inspection report, published today, Ofsted recognise the significant progress the council has made in many areas of its children’s services.**

The report goes on to highlight the relentless drive for improvement and significant financial investment made by the council, which has resulted in children being better protected.

Inspectors also commend social workers for their passion in achieving the best for children they support and how generally a more stable workforce is helping to deliver better support for children and young people.

The council’s social work academy, another area of strength identified by inspectors, will support the council in delivering a strong, effective workforce for years to come.

Cllr Stephen Davies, cabinet member for children and young people at Gloucestershire County Council, said: “This is a report we can be proud of.  More importantly, it is a report that clearly states children and families in this county are better supported and better protected. I want to thank our staff, our partners and everyone else who has worked to achieve the significant improvements recognised today by Ofsted.

“We know we still have work to do to get to where we want to be; inspectors have highlighted key areas in their report. Addressing these areas will be our focus for the coming months and years.

“We’ve got what it takes to be rated GOOD by Ofsted and I have no doubt we will get there – the children, young people and families of this county deserve it.”

Chris Spencer Executive Director for children and young people services said: “I want to say a big thank you to the many dedicated and passionate staff we have working with children and families in this county. It is largely down to their efforts and drive that we have been able to achieve the level of improvement set out in Ofsted’s report today.

“In the face of a global pandemic such positive outcomes are even more special and, whilst there is still more to be done, we can be proud of the significant progress we have made.”

1. **Gloucestershire living with covid**

As the remaining government covid measures come to an end, it’s important to acknowledge the fantastic community response seen across Gloucestershire throughout the pandemic.

Gloucestershire County Council also recognises the efforts of communities over the last two years and shares sincere thanks to the county for pulling together during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Gloucestershire Help Hub - run by the county council and designed to connect those who could help with those who needed help as a result of COVID-19 and isolation - received a total of 3742 individual offers of help; proving Gloucestershire people will go above and beyond to help those in need.

What you do to **prevent** the spread**:**

* Wash hands and use sanitiser regularly
* Open a window to ventilate indoor spaces
* Consider wearing a face covering in crowded places
* Stay at home and rearrange plans if unwell
* Get a jab; vaccinations remain the best way to prevent serious illness.

There are some settings and circumstances where additional infection, prevention and control measures will continue to help **protect** people who are most at risk of harm from COVID-19 and **contain** any spread of the virus. This includes in care homes who will put specific measures in place that work for their specific circumstances. We will also make sure rapid testing is available for individuals for those at greater risk to ensure they can access new treatments as quickly as possible, to minimise the impact of covid on them.

In the same way as the Government is intending to remain able to respond to any new variant, Gloucestershire will remain ready to respond in a number of ways, including:

* Prepared to bring back Local Contact Tracing
* Prepared to carry out Targeted Community Testing
* Access mass surge testing if required
* Building resilience in our workforce in advance

More about our plans for living safely with covid can be found [here.](https://track.vuelio.uk.com/z.z?l=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ2xvdWNlc3RlcnNoaXJlLmdvdi51ay9jb3ZpZC0xOS1pbmZvcm1hdGlvbi1hbmQtYWR2aWNlL2Z1cnRoZXItY292aWQtMTktaW5mb3JtYXRpb24vbGl2aW5nLXdpdGgtY292aWQtMTktaW4tZ2xvdWNlc3RlcnNoaXJlLw%3d%3d&r=13733059852&d=16076461&p=1&t=h&h=9c896dcf4416f07c2ad36da13224eda9)

**Covid -19 vaccinations will be offered to all 5-11 year olds from April in the latest phase of the vaccination programme.  Parents and carers will receive an invite from local NHS services, inviting them to book an appointment for children in this age group -often by text if your GP practice has a contact number. It is hoped that the Easter holidays will be used as an opportunity for children to receive the vaccination.**

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

The following report from Stroud District Councillors was noted:

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

Report of meetings during March

*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 & Resources Committee – 10 March**

Meeting papers can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1141&Ver=4)

* **Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan**

The Committee discussed and approved these documents. Following public consultation some changes had been made to the draft strategy, including updating the baseline data, clearer references to other complementary strategies and policies and removing the priority areas for parish cluster groups – which had appeared confusing.

The action plan sets short term actions from 2022 – 25. **Tourism** is a key objective and interviews have been held for a new SDC tourism post to work with the market towns. A question was asked about the slow role out of Fastershire and the Chief Executive confirmed that it was due to be discussed at an upcoming county level meeting. Councillor Phil Robinson at Gloucestershire County Council is the point of contact for this work. An update on delivery of the Economic Development Strategy will be provided in 6 months.

* **Regeneration & Investment Board**
	+ Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid. Work is progressing on the bid led by SDC – entitled Gateways, Landmarks and Access for All. A summary of the emerging bid can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4158/Stroud%20Bid%20-%20%20Gateways%20Landmarks%20and%20Access%20for%20All.pdf).
	+ Project Updates had been discussed by the Board including for the One Public Estate (Zero Carbon) project, and the current situation with Tricorn House, where the Council continues to apply pressure on the owners to maintain the site and facilitate its redevelopment
* **Brimscombe Port redevelopment** – demolition work continues and is expected to conclude in April/May. SDC officers are in discussion with three shortlisted developers as part of the competitive dialogue stage of the procurement process to appoint a developer partner for the site. Following assessment, the preferred bidder is expected to be confirmed in July. Next steps will be submission of a planning application (expected Jan 2023) with development work due to take place between October 2023 and October 2025.
* **Gloucestershire meetings**
* Leadership Gloucestershire report – included an update on discussions about the options for a county devolution deal under the Levelling Up white paper proposals. Glos CC are preparing options, with the district councils providing comments.
	+ Gloucestershire Economic Scrutiny Committee meeting – GFirstLEP provided an update on the Gloucestershire Infrastructure Investment Fund (a revolving loan fund governed jointly by GFirstLEP and GCC), on strategic planning in Gloucestershire, and on economic growth issues in the county.

**Community Services & Licensing Committee – 24 March**

Meeting papers can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=1138)

There were many reports, including an update on the progress with Stratford Park Lido, budget monitoring and two review proposals:

* Taxi Policy Review

The Committee considered a recommendation that local authorities should consult on whether CCTV would have a proportionate positive impact on public safety in their district and also to set up a task and finish group to develop a draft vehicle emission policy in accordance with the target in the Council Plan.

* Play Area Review

The Committee agreed to conduct a review, consult and develop SDC owned play areas across the district.

**Reports for information** were provided on the Gloucestershire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee, Covid-19 Engagement Board, Museum in the Park (Cowle Trust), Police and Crime Panel, Citizens Advice,

Mental Health Champions, Performance Monitoring, Woodchester Park Mansion, Stroud Arts Festival Limited.

**Information sheets** were shared on Physical and Mental Health, Health and Wellbeing, The Pulse,

Careline, Neighbourhood Wardens, Community Grants, Local Authority Trading Company progression (the preferred option for future leisure centre management), and Customer Services

**Development Control Committee – 29 March**

The Committee papers can be found at this [link](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=141&MId=1139). Six applications were considered:

* Hambutts End, Edge Road, Painswick, Stroud - Rebuild garage on existing base - Permitted
* 137A Summer Street, Stroud - Demolition of agricultural barn and erection of passivhaus dwelling - Permitted
* Dudbridge Industrial Estate, Dudbridge Road, Stroud - Details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale pursuant to the grant of outline planning consent under hybrid planning permission (for the retrofit of Building A (Redler), Building B and Building J, providing 30 apartments, historic archive, cafe and associated bin and bike stores. Approved
* Dudbridge Industrial Estate, Dudbridge Road, Stroud - Details of appearance, landscaping, layout & scale pursuant to the grant of outline planning consent under hybrid planning permission for residential development comprising 94 no. dwellings. Approved
* Land North Of, Cirencester Road, Minchinhampton - Proposed Medical Centre and Dentist, associated access, car parking and landscaping. Permitted
* Land Parcels A & B, Near Whitminster - The construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning for a renewable energy scheme of up to a 49.9 megawatt (MW) solar farm and up to a 49.9MW battery storage facility. Permitted

**Environment Committee – 31 March**

The committee considered the following reports which can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=140&MId=1140&Ver=4):

* Budget Monitoring quarterly report
* Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Project variation for Cam & Dursley Rail Station
It is no longer possible to provide additional car parking spaces, so the funds will be used to improve bus and cycle infrastructure instead.
* Climate and Nature 2030 Strategy - Annual Report (2021-2022) – approved – and will now go to Council. Cllr Dave Mossman asked about electric car parking chargers. Conversations are underway with a commercial provider around the business model for provision of chargers on SDC car parks.
* Walking and Cycling Task and Finish Group: findings and recommendations approved – see detail [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s4528/Appendix%20A%20for%20Walking%20and%20Cycling%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20Findings%20and%20Recommendations.pdf). An annual report on progress was requested – and there will be regular monitoring of delivery through the performance management process.
* Member Reports on the Strategic Planning Advisory Board, Stroud Regeneration Committee, and Performance Monitoring.
* Cllr Beki Aldam asked a Member Question requesting the committee consider more widespread air quality monitoring to help address air pollution.

**Other issues**

**Council Tax rebates** **to help with rising energy costs**

SDC is urging residents to pay Council Tax bills by direct debit, in order to receive their £150 Council Tax energy rebate more quickly. More than 54,000 households in the Stroud district will receive their Council Tax bills for the year 2022/23 in March. Householders who live in Council Tax bands A to D will qualify for a £150 rebate as part of the Government’s initiative to help households with rising energy costs. It will not be taken off residents’ council tax bills when they are issued but will be a separate payment.

The rebate is expected to be paid to people who pay their Council Tax by direct debit from April, after their first payment has been collected. It will be paid into the same account the payments are taken from.

Anyone who continues to pay their Council Tax by other methods will be contacted with details of how to apply for the rebate in due course. There is more information about the energy rebate on the Stroud District Council website www.stroud.gov.uk/energyrebate and at www.gov.uk/government/news/households-urged-to-get-ready-for-150-council-tax-rebate

**Ukraine**

Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, SDC is showing support for Ukraine and its people by flying the Ukrainian flag outside the council headquarters at Ebley Mill in Stroud. SDC has a gas supply contract with Gazprom Energy. The contract is ending this year, and we have been exploring whether there are any possibilities of early termination and have agreed in any case not to renew the contract.

Council officers and councillors are working to support the local council response to facilitate the settlement of Ukrainian refugees – see latest briefing notes (sent separately).

**Canal Project**

The final stages of the Cotswold Canals Connected Ocean railway bridge project are in sight as the drained section of canal known as the Ocean is to be refilled, starting on 1 April. The Ocean railway bridge near Stonehouse was replaced between Christmas and New Year by Network Rail on behalf of the Cotswold Canals Connected partnership. The previous bridge with its narrow opening was too small to allow boats to pass underneath.

**Noise nuisance**

Two separate Leonard Stanley residents have recently appeared at Cheltenham Magistrates’ Court on charges relating to their persistent failure to stop their dogs from causing a noise nuisance. One of the residents was fined £300 and ordered to pay £2,000 costs and a £34 victim surcharge. Another was fined £870 as part of a total financial penalty of more than £7,800 including £6906.80 costs.

**New eco-council homes**

Seven new eco-friendly homes for affordable rent have been built in Minchinhampton by SDC. The properties include one three-bedroom house, two two-bedroom houses and four one-bedroom flats. They were built on the site of a former MUGA (multi use games area) and a block of council garages that had both fallen into disrepair. Built by Beard Construction to high environmental specifications, the buildings are highly insulated, fitted with solar panels and air source heat pumps, resulting in an EPC rating of A. Local wildlife is catered for with features including bat and bird boxes, hedgehog holes and insect hotels. The flats have bike storage, access to a rotary washing line and allocated parking spaces. The same specification is being used for all future council house builds.

Stroud District Council is the only local authority in Gloucestershire which still owns and manages council houses, with the others having transferred them into other social housing organisations. Work is almost complete on nine bungalows in Broadfield Road, Eastington, and 20 units on the site of a former sheltered housing scheme in Nailsworth which are scheduled to be completed in May.

**Keeping dogs on a lead – reminder**

As more people are enjoying the lighter evenings, Stroud District Council’s Animal Welfare Officers have issued a reminder to ensure dog walkers know where dogs must be kept on a lead. Canal towpaths, designated cycle tracks, cemeteries and footpaths used to reach schools and colleges are all covered by Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) that means dogs must be kept on a lead in those areas.

Other PSPOs require dog owners to pick up dog faeces, put dogs on leads when directed to do so by an officer and keep dogs out of areas signed as exclusion areas, e.g., children’s play areas, enclosed sports pitches including Multi Use Game Areas, basketball courts and tennis courts.

Failing to pick up dog faeces is an offence resulting in a £75 Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution in court, with a maximum fine of £1,000. A number of ‘planned action days’ by SDC’s Animal Welfare Officers will take place throughout Spring along the towpaths and cycle tracks to check that PSPOs are being adhered to, as well as extra spot checks where dog fouling complaints are received.

**Warning over cold callers targeting vulnerable residents**

SDC issued a warning about cold callers after a number of incidents were reported. In one, a vulnerable elderly SDC tenant was visited at home in the evening by two women claiming to be from the council, who said that work was needed to be carried out on their garden. Further reports have been made of cold callers offering to carry out garden work, some in the aftermath of the recent storms. Council officers always carry ID, and if they are carrying out work on council houses will only do so after first making an appointment by phone or letter. Reputable tradespeople rarely knock on doors and offer their services unannounced.

**International Women’s Day 2022**

SDC celebrated International Women’s Day on 8 March, which this year had the theme of “Break the Bias” which is about challenging bias, stereotyping, and discrimination. Only 35% of elected councillors are female and only 17% of the country’s council leaders are women.

Some Councillors expressed disappointment that Wotton projects were not benefitting from Levelling Up Fund monies, with most of the funding going to the Stroud area. District Councillor Tucker offered to check the status of CIL strategic funding for Wotton.

District Cllr Tucker reported on his continuing campaign for improvements to the service at Lloyds chemist; and updated on the local situation with regard to Ukrainian refugees.

## T.6532 Chairman’s Report

The report had previously been circulated and was noted. It was also noted that the Head Teacher of KLB School had resigned with effect from 31st March 2022.

## T.6533 Accounts

1. It was **resolved to** approve the Honorarium of £400 for Tolsey clock maintenance.
2. The grants for payment, as approved at the Council meeting of 24th January 2022, were noted as follows:

(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.

1. It was **resolved to** approve payment of the annual grant of £3500 to Wotton Historical Society for Heritage Centre costs.
2. An increase of 10% in costs of Smith’s cemetery waste collection from 1st April 2022 (£1.06/lift and Annual Duty of Care of £5.00) was noted. The annual cost would increase from £596 to £656.12
3. An increase of 5% in costs for Suez Civic Centre waste/recycling collection commencing 1st May 2022 was noted.
4. It was **resolved to** approve payment of £175 plus VAT for an inspection report in respect of a birch tree on Marchesi Walk.
5. An M&G guide to reviewing investments was noted. It was suggested that the investments should be reviewed later in the year.
6. Budget report 2021/22 – The budget position at the end of March 2022 was noted. It was **resolved to** approve earmarking of funds at 31st March 2022 totalling £449,600 as presented.

*Cllrs Pinnegar and Turner left the meeting*

1. It was **resolved to** approve the accounts for payment for April 2022 totalling £17041.83 excluding VAT.

*Cllrs Pinnegar and Turner returned to the meeting*

## T.6534 Councillor Resignations

The resignations of Councillors R Hale and D Davidson were noted, and notices had been published accordingly.

*One member of the public left the meeting*

*District Cllr K Tucker left the meeting*

## T.6535 Tree Management

A professional report was received on a birch tree on Marchesi Walk, following concerns raised by local residents. The report assessed that there were no safety concerns and that the tree is a good shape. One of the residents has not accepted this conclusion and has threatened legal action. It was **resolved to** accept the report’s recommendations and not to carry out any work on the tree; and that if the resident wishes to remove branches overhanging their property, they should be aware of the legal requirements and that they would be liable for any consequent detrimental effect on the stability or health of the tree.

## T.6536 GAPTC Call For Resolutions

The Council did not wish to submit a resolution for debate at the GAPTC AGM on 23rd July 2022.

## T.6537 Regeneration and Events including the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

It was noted that the Jubilee Events programme was almost complete, comprising a wide range of events to appeal to most people. A meeting was being held tomorrow to discuss the details of the Big Jubilee Lunch. The road closure for the 5th June 2022 had been submitted to Stroud District Council as required. 500 leaflets are being printed and the events advertised on the VisitStroud website and in the Wotton Directory. Outside of the Jubilee weekend, other events in the town will also have a Jubilee theme, such as the Walking Festival and various sporting events. The Arts Festival begins on St George’s Day, Saturday 23rd April 2022.

## T.6538 Anti-social Behaviour Pledge

It was **resolved to** sign up to the County Anti-social Behaviour Pledge.

## T.6539 Help for Ukraine Support Hub

It was **resolved to** offer Town Council support to this group as detailed in the backing document, to include use of meeting rooms, Welcome information packs, communal allotment plot, a separate website page, with information available in both the One Stop Shop and Heritage Centre. It was noted that the welcome packs would also be available to anyone new to the area.

## T.6540 NALC Civility and Respect

Councillors did not wish to participate in the NALC video on this topic.

## T.6541 Brief Reports from Councillors

Allotments – brambles had been cleared at both sites as previously agreed.

Wotton Youth Partnership – it was hoped this organisation would continue to operate for the benefit of local young people. This would be discussed at the Youth Partnership AGM on 10th May 2022.

## T.6542 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.6543 Clerk’s Report

a) It was **resolved to** pay the Clerk in lieu of remaining carried over leave from 2021 providing this was within budget. It was noted that the Council had a duty of care to the staff and should support the Town Clerk to enable her to take her annual leave for 2022.

b) Leases for the Heritage Centre and Chipping Hall had been scrutinised by specialist solicitors to clarify landlord/tenant Health & Safety responsibilities. The solicitor had raised several queries which needed further investigation. It was **resolved to** arrange a Zoom meeting with the solicitors, the Clerk, and Cllrs Claydon, Tucker, and Taylor, and to approve a budget of £1500 in this matter.

c) Old Town Toilets – After Easter the architects will complete the building regulations documentation and will liaise with Stroud District Council to get approval. Quotes can then be obtained to appoint a Quantity Surveyor.

d) Town Hall – The Clerk is still pursuing a response from the former Project Manager’s accountants, who are dealing with the business affairs of his estate.

e) Tourism and Visitor Economy – The Clerk’s report was received, and it was noted that a new tourism officer has been appointed by Stroud District Council, to start in July.

f) Annual Town Council meeting 16th May 2022 – Councillors were reminded to consider appointments of Chair/Mayor, Deputy Chair/Mayor, and committee and working group membership.

It was **resolved to** exit the confidential session.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

Signed: Date: