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

#  Monday 15th August 2022 at 7pm in the Civic Centre

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

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

## In attendance: A Durn (Town Clerk); District Cllrs K Tucker and C Braun, County Cllr L Cohen; 3 members of the public.

##

## T.6631 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from District Cllrs G James

##  T.6632 To receive Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

Cllrs Turner and Pinnegar declared an interest in respect of accounts for payment.

## T.6633 To approve the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of 18th July 2022

It was **resolved to** approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of 18th July 2022 with the amendment of including Cllr J Cordwell joining the meeting with Cllrs Claydon and Lewis after Minute no. T6612.

District Cllr C Braun joined the meeting

## T.6634 Public Forum

A member of the public referred to his previous request to purchase land at Durns Road and expressed his ongoing interest in this. He requested that the Council take this forward and left further information for Councillors to review.

Two representatives of The Door youth services provider referred to a statement that had previously been circulated and there followed a discussion on youth service provision across organisations in Wotton Under Edge and the various funding sources. They referred to the challenges in Wotton Under Edge and requested that the Council consult with young people and collaborate with partner organisations. There followed a discussion on the National Youth Agency curriculum and framework, wider youth service provision than just youth clubs, and community youth work models.

## T.6635 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillors

 District Councillors’ report:

*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 - 9 June**

**Levelling up bid -** The Committee approved the District Council’s bid to the Government’s Levelling Up Fund (Round 2). The bid will be for the value of around £16 million (final figure to be confirmed) and will be submitted in July. If the bid is successful, all funding must be spent by March 2025, so there has been a focus on projects which can be delivered within this timescale. There are 3 project themes within the bid each delivering a number of smaller projects:

1. Gateway spaces
* Wallbridge green space - the transformation of this canal side public realm into a welcoming green space to provide a strong sense of arrival to the town, to welcome people, to be a space for picnics, festivals and events and an attractive place for people to walk, cycle and travel by boat through
* The Sub Rooms Town Square - For decades the space outside the Subscription Rooms has played an important part in Stroud town life. This project is to transform the space into a true “Town Square” to be used and enjoyed by all.
* Incubator units - the creation of 12 new small, start up, energy efficient office units in the town centre, with support from SGS college and Growth Hub
* Purchase of brownfield land and associated costs for the development of homes in the town centre on a strategically important site.
1. Cultural Landmarks
* Lansdown Hall and The Sub Rooms - ramped access and internal improvements to make these heritage arts venues accessible for all.
* Brunel Goods Shed - the purchase, ramped access and internal improvements to make this heritage arts venue accessible for all.
1. Connections
* Improved pedestrian and cycle routes around Wallbridge, surrounding streets, underpass under Dr Newtons Way and up Rowcroft.
* Improvements to the end of the Nailsworth to Stroud cycle route at Bath Road, Rodborough to make it safer and more accessible for cyclists and pedestrians and to link it through to the improvements around Wallbridge.
* Improvements for cyclists and pedestrians around the town centre at the Sub Rooms/ George Street triangle and light touch around the town centre, London Road, Russell Street and Station Street.
* Real Time Passenger Information at Stroud Railway Station and Merrywalks Bus Station. These would ‘link’ both locations so the travelling public would have travel information for onward journeys.
* Brunel Mall - opening up the car park to the station to add additional station car parking and reducing the traffic in the town centre.

It is hoped that this work will be the catalyst for wider master planning of Stroud station – with separate funding to be secured in the future for station improvements. In line with the rules of the Levelling Up Fund, the bid has been supported by the MP for the Stroud parliamentary constituency. We expect to hear in the autumn if the bid has been successful.

**LGA Corporate peer Challenge** – the Committee discussed feedback from the Local Govt Association which was reported to the council in May and agreed an action plan which will include the ongoing work to improve customer services and progress the Working Together Project with Town and Parish councils. This includes adopting the Town and Parish Charter which will set out Consultation, Communication, Engagement and Resource commitments. SDC will also enhance the regular forums already in place and consider the role of Town & Parish Councils during emergency response.

The Committee reviewed the Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring report and received updates on the Brimscombe Port project, and from the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee and Scrutiny Committee.

**Development Control Committee – 14 June**

* Parcel H13, H14 & H15 Land West of Stonehouse, Grove Lane, Westend, Stonehouse S.21/2814/DISCON - Discharge of condition 46 on permitted application S.14/0810/OUT – Area Masterplan Document for Areas H13, H14 & H15 - Approved
* Phase 4B Land West of Stonehouse, Great Oldbury Drive, Great Oldbury, Gloucestershire S.21/2815/REM Phase 4B Primary Infrastructure (Highway) – Approved
* Land at, Pike Lane, Nailsworth, Gloucestershire S.21/1523/VAR - Variation of Condition 1 of S.17/0883/REM – Changes to detailed house designs of plots 1 & 8 - Refused

**Environment Committee – 16 June**

The Committee approved the sections relating to Stroud District to be included in the Environment Agency’s **Flood Management Plan** – inclusion in this Plan gives a basis for possible future funding (the primary SDC initiative funded to date in this way is the very successful Natural Flood Management programme). As part of this, an amendment proposed by Cllr Norman Kay was accepted, giving the officer the task of discussing with the EA how the Plan would be reviewed and if necessary, amended in the light of the recent report into likely heightened flooding/coastal erosion around the UK, including parts of Gloucestershire.

The Committee approved the Council’s new **Litter Bin Strategy**, which codifies the process for approving a bin (type/location). The Committee thanked the Litter Free Group for their input into the strategy, and members were pleased that officers had chosen to engage with this local voluntary group for their input.

The Committee **appointed representatives** to a number of external bodies for the year, and heard reports from the Stroud Regeneration Committee, the Strategic Planning Advisory Board and our Performance Monitors. Cllr Norman Kay requested that the annual **air quality report** should be added to the Forward Plan, and it was noted that members had previously requested that this year’s be further reaching than last, with the emphasis on going beyond what is statutorily required and looking at remediation for local pollution hotspots/issues.

**Community Services & Licensing Committee – 23 June**

The committee discussed the Corporate Care Standards, which will now be known as the **Service Standards**. The committee resolved to accept them, after some discussion on response times by SDC to queries and requests from the public. It was emphasised that a ten-day response was the maximum, and all queries were answered as soon as possible.

The committee also resolved to approve a **rise in taxi fares**. This was in response to the taxi trade telling SDC it was becoming unviable as a living, due to the current cost of living crisis. In addition, taxi fares have not been raised at all for a number of years. Fare increases will be available on the website and are due to come into effect on 18th July.

**Woodchester Mansion** had approval for a grant of 50k for essential maintenance works. The heritage of this fascinating local building was discussed, and its importance to the people of Stroud District.

Also discussed were the recent improvements to the **Lido in Stratford Park**. Credit was given to officers, members and staff at the Lido who are working to improve accessibility and the swimmer experience (including looking at raising the temperature of the water).

The **Housing Committee** meeting planned for June was postponed and will now take place on 5 July.

**Other issues**

**New council homes in Nailsworth**

The official opening was held on 16 June for twenty energy efficient new homes that were built on the site of a former sheltered housing scheme at Ringfield Close. The new homes are a mix of 15 houses and flats for affordable rent, and five houses and bungalows for shared ownership. The properties are highly insulated, fitted with air source heat pumps and solar panels, resulting in an energy-efficient EPC rating A.

**Shared Prosperity Fund**

Stroud District Council has been allocated £1.37 million through the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF), a national funding pot with the aim to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK through the support of high-quality skills training, improving pay, supporting employment and productivity growth.

The District Council must submit an outline Investment Plan, for review by Government before 1st August 2022 to secure the funding, which is to be spent over the next 3 years. Local parishes, towns and community groups are being invited to submit Expressions of Interest. The decision on priorities will be decided at the Council meeting on 21 July.

Town Councillors asked for updates and received the following responses:

The Council houses development on Gloucester Street would likely be starting in September 2022.

The new Stroud District Monitoring Officer has been appointed and will be shared 50/50 with Cheltenham Borough Council. She will start her post later in the year.

There will be funding availability for the Cost of Living Crisis.

The Officers assessed the UK Shared Properity Fund bids and were impressed with the quality received. The final bid is to be confirmed in the Autumn.

Suggest that anyone interested in the Co-Car Club that they contact Transition Stroud for details.

**County Councillors report:**

1. **Highways / Paths**

This month I met with the Town Council to finalise priorities for the rest of the financial year.

Some of the key areas of road resurfacing are already in the plan for 2022/23 or have been completed. These include:

Nind Lane- complete

Damery Lane – complete

Wortley Road – complete

Alderley Road (surfacing)

New Road, Kingswood (patching)

Wotton Road, Kingswood (surfacing)

Symn Lane and Clarence Road (binding)

Gloucester Street (patching)

Wotton Road/Stumpwell Lane (patching)

This month Lisle Place has also been repatched.

I have also asked for the Wortley Road from Bearlands to the end of Wortley Terrace to be patched as a matter of urgency.

The junction of Drylease and Bradley Street needs maintenance including patching, refreshing of markings, weeding and drain clearance.

A walkabout is planned with the Highways officer in the next month to identify any outstanding issues.

The roses by the library will be cut back this week and the stream by Marchesi Walk is to be cleared. This will be a light touch approach to protect wildlife.

A fortnight of lengthsman activity is planned in August to tidy hedges, footpaths and pavements. This will include Old Town and the OK Path.

There will also be a focus on clearing drains in good time before the change in the weather. We will be rerunning the Leaf It Out campaign and would ask all residents to help where they can by clearing leaves and weeds from drains near their properties.

A reminder that residents can report an issue related to: potholes; lights, signals and signs; damage to pavement or kerb; road markings and stud issues trees, hedges and vegetation; drainage and flooding; spillages or obstructions on the road; Winter Maintenance - Grit and PROW - public footpaths & bridleways (not pavements).

issues can also be logged here:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/your-highways-report-it/>

1. **Buses**

The Bus Services 84 and 85 are under threat of being withdrawn as they are subsidised by Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils . These services are vital for surrounding villages and for the people of Wotton who shop in Yate and get connections into Bristol and Hospitals.

Following my contact with the leaders of B&NES and South Glos the councils have delayed suspension of the services for 7 months to give time to meet with colleagues from GCC to look at new and improved but sustainable ‘on demand’ / community services – creative solutions to solve the issue rather than accept the loss of these bus services. I would welcome hearing from residents and members of the Town Council with thoughts about how we might design a new service.

In addition to this development I met with my fellow County Councillor in Dursley as well as District Councillors in Berkeley and Berkeley Vale and Wotton and Wotton Town Council to explore a new community bus service linking Wotton, Hillesley, Kingswood, North Nibley, Stinchcombe, Alkington, Ham and Stone, Dursley and Berkeley. There will be a particular focus on creating a service which aligns with other public transport timetables e.g. services to and from Cam and Dursley station and in the longer term the proposed Charfield service.

Meetings have already been arranged with officers from GCC and South Glos and existing community bus service operators to inform the process.

1. **Road Safety**

**New Fund**

A new fund has been launched to help create a greener, safer and healthier county, as part of a partnership between Gloucestershire County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

The £600,000 Community Speedwatch Safety Fund will give communities the tools they need to combat speeding in their areas.

The fund aims to make the county’s roads safer for the pedestrians, cyclists and motorists that use them.

Applications can be made for a range of measures, including Road Safety Officer support, speed surveys, ‘Twenty is Plenty’ wheelie bin stickers, vehicle activated signs to encourage drivers to slow down, and community speedwatch cameras.

Bids must be supported by the local county councillor and submitted by 31 August.

 For more information on the fund, visit:

 <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/your-community/the-community-speedwatch-fund/>.

Wotton Town Council will be applying for funding for a visit from a Road Safety Officer to provide an expert assessment of the measures that can be taken in Wotton to make our roads and pavements even safer, together with speed monitoring equipment.

**Back To School Safety**

This campaign will launch the week before children go back to school and will include road signs, a social media campaign and work with schools and parents.

Full details in the August Report.

1. **Cost of Living Crisis / Fuel Poverty**

I am acutely aware of the difficulties that families in the community are already facing due to the increase in the cost of living and the challenges that are yet to come when fuel prices rise again in October.

I spoke in support of the motion last week at the County Council meeting to ask the council to lobby the Government to reduce VAT and to also use the windfall tax to help support families this winter.

I will ensure that all residents are given as much information as possible about help that is available and will continue to push for effective support to be in place well in advance of the cold season.

1. **HAF**

The holiday and activities food programme is open for registrations. The scheme offers free entertainment and lunches for children receiving free school meals and also provides tickets for free activities for all children across the county.

Find out more here about what’s on offer:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/holiday-activities-and-food-programme-haf/>

1. **Meet the Gadgeteers with Gloucestershire Libraries**

Gloucestershire Libraries are inviting children to meet the Gadgeteers this summer and get involved in a science and innovation-themed Summer Reading Challenge.

The national event, which is led by the Reading Agency charity in partnership with public libraries, is being launched on Saturday 9 July and runs until 30 September 2022.

It aims to encourage children to enjoy reading and visit their local library and a range of free events and activities is being held in libraries around the county throughout the summer.

Children aged four to 11 will be able to join six fictional Gadgeteers by taking part, with free materials available from libraries and online via the challenge website.

The characters - brought to life by children’s writer and illustrator Julian Beresford - use their curiosity and wonder to understand the science behind a range of interests, from fashion and technology to cooking and music.

Summer Reading Challenge events at Gloucestershire libraries can be found here and you can find out which services are available for families to enjoy here.

[**https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-july-2022/meet-the-gadgeteers-with-gloucestershire-libraries/**](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-july-2022/meet-the-gadgeteers-with-gloucestershire-libraries/)

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

Town Councillors asked for updates and received the following responses:

There is a site meeting with the County Highways Manager on the Synwell bend and parking on 18th August 2022.

The County Council is working on support during the Cost of Living Crisis and is keen to work in partnership with other organisations.

## T.6636 Chairman’s Announcements

A report had previously been circulated, there were no questions. The Chairman confirmed he would included the County and District Councillors in the circulation in future.

## T.6637 Accounts

1. It was RESOLVED to approve the quote from A&E Fire & Security for connecting Civic Centre fire alarm to a monitoring service, plus ongoing monitoring fee
2. To approve the quote for cutting the hedge and repairing the boundary fence alongside New Road allotments to the electrical substation. This item was deferred for further detail and quotes.
3. To appoint Councillor/s to undertake quarterly internal audit for April to June 2022.

It was RESOLVED for Cllrs S Hunt and T Green with Cllr R Claydon as substitute to undertake the quarterly internal audit to June 2022.

1. Budget 2022/23. The report was noted with no questions.

2 Members of the Public left the meeting

Cllrs N Pinnegar and J Turner left the meeting

1. To approve August accounts for payment

It was queried whether the Council should purchase its own strimmer rather than hire. An explanation was given regarding value for money and that may be an option for Council to consider at budget preparation. A query was raised on the gate at Full Moon Wood, it was explained that this was previously approved.

It was RESOLVED to approve the August accounts for payment.

## T.6638 Training

There was a discussion on the training opportunities put forward by the Gloucestershire Association of Town Councils. It was explained the Council is only as good as its people and that included Councillors and staff being kept up to date on governance and Government policy and projects. Councillors were asked to send their requests to the Town Clerk.

## T.6639 Cost of Living Crisis

To discuss the Council’s support for residents and businesses during the cost of living crisis

The Town Clerk had written to other organisations and schools regarding joining up support for the town which had received overwhelming support. There followed a discussion on how this could be done and what support could be offered.

It was RESOLVED to for the Town Council to work in partnership with other organisations and to include Cllrs T Creese, J Turner, S Hunt, T Young, P Barton, and M Tucker.

## T.6640 Funding Bids

a) To agree the Community Speedwatch Funding bid

There was a lengthy discussion on the options for the bid, perception in the town, and the success of methods used by neighbouring parishes. The limitations of the bid were due to there not being a Community Speedwatch Group in place and no evidence base of statistics.

It was RESOLVED to apply to the Community Speedwatch Fund for professional surveys and advice. This was approved and supported by County Cllr L Cohen.

b) To receive feedback on funding bids and agree actions:

1. Build Back Better Fund

Events were held over the 4 days of the Jubilee weekend which were partly funded by the BBBF. The invoices and receipts had been received from community groups for their activities over the 4 days.

It was RESOLVED to agree to paying for these activities and for the balance to be used for other events in the town e.g. Christmas Under The Edge. These resolutions were approved and supported by County Cllr L Cohen.

1. GWR Community Fund – OK Path Lighting

Feedback had been received from GWR. They stated that the bid had been strong but there needed to be further work done to be project ready to meet the deadlines of the bid.

It was RESOLVED to work with Gloucestershire County on drawing up and costing a specification for solar lighting for the OK Path and to ask them to remove the hedge.

1. UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Solar Canopy

There was a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the Solar Canopy project, and it was suggested that there may be funding opportunities in the future which could be considered.

## T.6641 Disability Awareness

To agree Councillor attendance to the Stroud District Council disability awareness event in Wotton Town on 18th August 2022. Unfortunately there were 2 other events happening that had Councillor commitment.

It was RESOLVED for Cllrs R Claydon and J Turner to attend the disability awareness event on 18th August 2022.

## T.6642 Tourism and Events

* + 1. To receive a report on tourism support for Wotton Under Edge

An update was given on the development of a tourism App for trails in Wotton Under Edge. The first trail is being piloted and is focussed on the town. The Council thanked the Heritage Centre for inputting the data and trialling the App. Other trails suggested by Cllr J Cordwell were: Heritage Trail, Pubs Trail, Millennium Trail.

* + 1. To discuss and agree the Council’s support for events:
1. Tour of Britain 2022

It was RESOLVED to purchase 3 Welcome to Wotton Under Edge banners which can be used for other events.

1. Christmas 2022

The next Christmas Under The Edge event will be held on Saturday 3rd December 2022 and preparations are underway. A working group meeting for all those interested will take place in September.

It was RESOLVED for this be organised as a Town Council event.

1. Other

To let the Town Clerk know of any events so she can update Cotswold and Stroud Tourism partners and publications.

## T.6643 Consultations

i. Community Governance Review

It was RESOLVED to not make a response.

ii. Developing a tourist accommodation registration scheme

It was RESOLVED for Cllrs R Claydon and L Taylor to draft a response and bring back to Planning Committee for consideration.

County Cllr L Cohen and District Cllr C Braun left the meeting

**T.6644 Thanks to Volunteers**

To acknowledge recent volunteer work for the benefit of the town/community.

It was RESOLVED to thank:

The volunteers at the Heritage Centre for their hard work and time in developing the tourism App for the town.

Wotton Lions for organising the successful Ride Over the Edge cycling event on 31st July 2022

Read With Me volunteers for the Not So Secret Book Club held on Synwell Playing Fields

Mr Marau for organising the European teenage visits to Wotton and its attractions

**T.6645 Brief reports from Councillors**

Footpaths Committee, Special Purposes Committee, Allotments Committee, Wotton Youth Partnership, Town Regeneration, Sports Foundation, Wotton Pool, Heritage Centre and any other meetings attended.

Wotton Pool – impressed with the energy saving project. Would like to investigate access next to the Fire Station.

Recreation Trust – AGM held. There is currently no Chairman, a temporary Secretary, and one Trustee vacancy. Recruitment is ongoing.

Salix Funding – Cllr Thomas said that there may be a funding opportunity for decarbonating Council buildings

Allotments – Tenants Meeting to be held on 3rd October 2022. Works ongoing with hedges, fencing, and gates.

## T.6646 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.6647 Land at Durns Road

 To consider request to purchase land at Durns Road

There was a discussion on the request and the legal requirements regarding the sale of land.

It was RESOLVED for Cllrs L Taylor, J Cordwell, R Claydon, and J Lewis to review the deeds and covenants and bring back a report.

## T.6648 Youth Services Contract

 There was a lengthy discussion on the current contract, the National Youth Agency Framework and Curriculum, and the challenges faced by young people in Wotton Under Edge. The current contract terminates on 9th September 2022 but the Council felt that time was needed to review the contract and specification to get it right for young people. The Chairman reported that he was meeting with the current youth services provider with the Town Clerk and needed an agreement on whether to renew or extend the current contract, and that it was very late and offered to suspend Standing Orders to complete the agenda or to call a separate meeting to discuss the rest of this item and the other items on the agenda not yet discussed. There followed further discussion on the options for the contract and the supporting of young people and the importance of having a new contract that was fit for purpose.

It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to discuss and agree the resolution on the extension or renewal of the current contract.

It was RESOLVED to not renew or extend the current contract.

It was RESOLVED to finish the meeting and call an Extraordinary meeting to complete the outstanding items of this agenda.

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

The meeting ended at 10.20pm

Signed: Date: