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

# Monday 18th July 2022 at 7pm in the Civic Centre

## Present: Cllrs M Tucker, T Creese, P Barton, J Cordwell (part), 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 County Cllr L Cohen; 2 members of the public.

## 

## T.6611 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from District Cllrs G James. Cllr J Cordwell and County Cllr L Cohen and District Cllr C Braun would attend late

## T.6612 To Consider and approve candidates for Co-option on to the Council

Cllrs R Claydon and J Lewis declared an interest and left the meeting

Applicants were thanked for their interest in being a Town Councillor and asked questions based on their application. The applicants left the room and a vote was taken.

It was **resolved** to co-opt S Hunt and T Young as Town Councillors and they signed the Declaration of Office. Cllrs S Hunt and T Young were welcomed to the Town Council and they joined the meeting.

A member of the public left the meeting

Cllrs R Claydon and J Lewis joined the meeting

## T.6613 To receive Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

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

## T.6614 To approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council Meeting of 4th July 2022

It was **resolved to** approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of 4th July 2022.

## T.6615 Public Forum

A member of the public referred to an email he had circulated to Councillors on issues he had raised regarding a community meeting on Police performance.

## T.6616 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.

District Cllr Tucker welcomed new Town Cllrs Hunt and Young, and said he looks forward to working with them. He reported that the UK Shared Properity Fund had been greatly over-subscribed with bids across the district and the shortlist of successful bids had been selected.

District Cllr Braun reported that County Cllr Cohen is dealing with the complaints relating to Synwell highways junctions and parking.

County Councillor’s 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/>

Councillors queried Cllr Cohen on the following:

LEVI funding – Cllr Thomas had sent a business case to a highways officer but had not had a response.

Cllr Cordwell queried the status of the investigations on Rushmire Hill stability.

Cllr Taylor queried the involvement of the NHS with buses.

Cllr Cohen responded that she would investigate the queries.

Cllr Cohen reported on the parking issues in Synwell. She has invited the local Police, Road Safety Officer, and the new Area Highways Manager to viti the site and discuss solutions.

Cllr Cohen asked for a detailed list of jobs for the 2 week Lengsthman Scheme.

## T.6617 Chairman’s Announcements

A report had previously been circulated, there were no questions.

## T.6618 Accounts

1. To note refund of £2595.35 from EON to compensate for out of contract rates paid for Civic Centre gas due to delayed set up of account.

The refund was noted with special thanks to the Finance Officer for her tenacity and hard work in obtaining the refund.

1. To approve Council insurance renewal of £4903.20. This is the final year of a three-year agreement with Zurich insurance.

It was **resolved** to approve the insurance renewal and it was noted that it was the final year of the agreement.

1. To note standing charge price increase for Old Town Toilets from 35p/day to 46.95p/day, an increase of £43.62/annum.

The standing charge increase was noted.

1. Budget 2022/23 **–** to note report.

The budget report was noted with no questions.

1. To approve July accounts for payment

Cllrs Thomas and Turner left the meeting.

It was queried whether the damage to the swing could be claimed under insurance.

It was **resolved** to approvethe July accounts for payment.

Cllrs Thomas and Turner returned to the meeting

## T.6619 Memorial Request

The request was discussed. It was felt that the request should be denied but concern was raised on the impact on the family’s grief.

It was **resolved** to delegate the decision to the Clerk.

A member of the public left the meeting

## T.6620 Ash Dieback and Replanting Scheme

There were no sites or project put forward.

## T.6621 Election of Membership to Committees and Partnerships

Councillors volunteered for Committees and Partnerships.

It was **RESOLVED** to elect the Councillors to the Committees and Partnerships listed below:

* 1. Allotments Working Group

Cllrs P Barton, T Luker, L Taylor, D Thomas, N Pinnegar

* 1. PROW/Amenity Areas Working Group

Cllrs R Claydon, T Luker, L Taylor, D Thomas, J Cordwell, N Pinnegar

* 1. Town Regeneration Partnership and Events Working Group

Cllrs M Tucker, T Luker, J Lewis, T Creese, N Pinnegar, S Hunt

* 1. Finance and Special Purposes Committee

Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon, J Cordwell, J Turner, N Pinnegar

* 1. Strategic Planning Working Group

Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon, P Barton, D Thomas, J Cordwell

* 1. Car Park Working Group

Cllr M Tucker, R Claydon, D Thomas, T Creese, S Hunt

* 1. Climate Change Working Group

All Councillors

* 1. Old Town Toilets Working Group

Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon, P Barton, T Luker, J Lewis, D Thomas

* 1. Remembrance Parade Working Group

Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon, N Pinnegar, T Creese

* 1. Roadways Condition

All Councillors

* 1. Town Hall Repairs

Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon, T Luker, J Lewis, J Cordwell, D Thomas

## T.6623 Appointment of Representatives to Organisations

The Chair encouraged all volunteers to make every effort to attend meetings of any organisations they volunteer for. Councillors volunteered to be representatives.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint the Councillors to the listed organisations below:

* 1. Wotton & District Recreation Trust

Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon, N Pinnegar, T Young, S Hunt

* 1. Beaumont-le-Roger Society

Cllrs M Tucker, R Claydon

* 1. Wotton Youth Partnership

Cllrs M Tucker, P Barton, T Creese, L Taylor

* 1. Wotton-under-Edge General Charities

Cllrs T Luker, J Lewis, J Turner, T Creese

* 1. Wotton-under-Edge Combined Charities

Cllrs R Claydon, N Pinnegar

1. Wotton Community Sports Foundation

Cllr T Creese

1. Snow Warden

Cllrs L Taylor, D Thomas

1. Water Course Warden

Cllrs M Tucker, L Taylor

1. Wotton Area Climate Action Network

Cllr P Barton

1. Rural Services Network

Cllrs M Tucker, J Turner (substitute)

1. Synwell Playing Fields Committee

Cllrs T Luker, P Barton (substitute)

1. Wotton-under-Edge Swimming Pool

Cllrs L Taylor, T Creese (substitute)

1. Wotton in Bloom

Cllrs M Tucker, J Turner

1. Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum

Cllr M Tucker

1. Town and Parish Information Network

Cllrs M Tucker, J Cordwell

1. Greenway Group

Cllr M Tucker

1. Wotton Walking Festival

Cllr L Taylor

## T.6624 Youth Services Committee

It was **resolved** to approve to form a new Youth Services Committee with the Terms of Reference to be discussed at the first meeting with recommendations to come back to Town Council.

## T.6625 Brief Reports from Councillors

The PROW Working Group had met, and a summary of issues had been sent to the office for forwarding to the County Council. It was suggested that the dedicated Councillors email and the Fix My Street app were a good way to inform the County Council of such issues.

Cllr Barton – WACAN meeting with Charfield Angling Group discussed pollution and extraction of local waterways

*Public and District Cllrs left the meeting*

## T.6626 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.6627 Cyber Security

Cllr Claydon will arrange sign off of actions with the IT contractor.

The new domain name was discussed. It was resolved to approve the Town Council domain to be wottonunderedgetowncouncil.gov.uk and to request approval from the Cabinet Office.

## T.6628 Youth Services Contract

## An update was given on anti-social behaviour and the current service. A request had been received to use the Baptist Church for future sessions as the sessions seemed to be more successful. The Council asked the following queries to be asked at the next meeting with The Door: before the request could be considered

* What are the financial implications?
* What variations are there to the current contract?
* What would happen if there was damage?
* Are the young people attending a different cohort and already attending the Baptist Church?
* How do we work with the young people?
* What is the experience and qualifications of youth workers?

The Door had also put in a funding request for summer activities. The Council raised the following queries:

* Should The Door be doing their own fundraising as per the contract?
* What are the fundraising efforts by The Door?
* Could The Door access HAF funding?

## T.6629 Town Hall

## There was a discussion on the advice in the report from Stroud District Council and the Quantity Surveyor on the options for next steps.

It was resolved to agree to the recommendations of a two stage process and to contact JDL, the Structural Engineer and Principle Designer, for copies of reports.

## T.6630 Symn Lane Car Park

a) Landscape Plan

It was **resolved** to change thesilver birch to crab apple trees as per the modified plan, and for the hedges to stay as they are.

Concerns were raised regarding the shielding for houses behind the GP surgery. Complaints had also been raised about the height of the wall. Complaints should be passed on to the developer.

Queries were raised about the Discharge of Conditions that was still outstanding, a variation of the Condition would incur a fee of £116.

It was **resolved** to send the changes to Stroud District Planning.

b) Bins

Stroud District Council will not be providing new bins in the area and will not collect from private land, i.e. the car park. It was **resolved** to ask Stroud District Council to carry out a bin survey and any surplus to be moved to the entrance to the car park.

c) EV Chargers

There was a brief discussion on Cllr Claydon’s report. It was noted that as the estimate cost was for over £25k then procurement would have to be through the Government’s Contract Finder process. There needed to be investigations into procurement procedures, legality of ev chargers and local council powers. There were concerns on the options available, costs, and funding.

It was resolved to obtain advice from NALC, Gloucestershire County Council, and procurement, and to test the market.

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

The meeting ended at 9.34pm

Signed: Date: