# Minutes of Wotton-under-Edge Town Council Meeting

# held on Monday 17th October 2022 at 7.00pm in the Civic Centre

## Present: Cllrs M Tucker, T Creese, J Lewis, J Turner, P Barton,

## T Luker, D Thomas, T Young, N Pinnegar, J Cordwell

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

##

## T.6688 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted for Cllrs R Claydon, S Hunt, L Taylor, and County Cllr L Cohen, and District Cllr C Braun.

## T.6689 To receive Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

Cllrs N Pinnegar and J Turner – Payments

## T.6690 To approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting on 28th September 2022

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 28th September 2022 as a true and fair record.

## T.6691 Public Forum

## Members of the public can make representations, raise questions, or submit comments

The Lions gave a report on the Christmas trees and lights and their request for a contribution. They will be fundraising with a street collection and seeking donations.

A member of the public asked about purchasing land from the Council for a garden extension and stated that he would pay for legal advice and a valuation of the land.

## T.6692 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillors

County Cllr L Cohen presented the following report:

1. **Highways / Paths**

Lengthsman work starts in two weeks and will last for a month tackling clearing footpaths and roads and general maintenance across Wotton-under- Edge.

A request and reminder please as we approach winter that residents can report any 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/>

2. **Road safety**
I will be meeting with our primary schools this month to discuss a pilot to use crossing patrols to improve the safety of our children and pedestrians crossing the roads. Once the details of this have been agreed we can look at creating designated crossing places which could include a dropped pavement and signage to help all pedestrians and those using mobility vehicles to cross safely. Given the difficulties involved and the length of process to change speed restrictions and apply other controls I am looking at creative ways that we can effectively and quickly improve safety for all pedestrians and road users.
I have also requested a visit from parking officers to tackle the repeated parking by some drivers on double yellow lines which compromise visibility and add to the road safety issues across Wotton.
I have asked for the overgrowth on the speed signs on the Coombe Road / B4058 junction to be cleared. I am also looking at alternative more effective signage provision.

3. **Buses**

I am meeting with Cllr Philip Robinson the Cabinet Member for bus transport this week for a drive around the area to highlight the issues and to secure backing for a new community bus project.

This is an absolute priority after Stagecoach withdraw and reduced services across the county last week, a sounding bell that the County Council must take responsibility for funding and running the essential services we need not only to go to work, school and socialise but also to meet our environmental targets.

The County Council has this week piloted a £1.35 million rural minibus pilot to make a new offer of transport in two of the county’s most rural areas.

A bespoke minibus service, called The Robin, will start life by launching in two phases. The Robin is planned to launch in the southern area of the Forest of Dean on Monday 17 October with an area of the north Cotswolds to follow shortly after.

The Robin will provide on-demand services that will fill a gap where there is no bus provision, complementing existing services. Residents can book affordable journeys via an app or over the phone. The service will provide a link from bus stops in hamlets or village centres to local transport hubs and train stations, making existing public transport services more accessible.

I am hoping to make the case for Wotton and the surrounding villages and towns (extending to Berkeley) to have an equivalent. I will report back at the next meeting.

**4.Cost of Living**
I am supporting the community initiative and will ensure that Wotton benefits from any funding or support that is available at County level.
Separately I have agreed to fund a sign for The Keepers to be sited at the entrance to Symn Lane to ensure that everyone in the community is able to find the community hub and access support. Highways will produce and erect the brown ‘finger post’ sign.

**5.Dentistry**
A reminder that I am speaking on a motion at the next County Council meeting to address the need to make NHS dentistry available to those who need the service. There are currently no NHS practices accepting new patients in the county. I am also pushing for routine checks to take place in schools and care homes. I would welcome input from any residents who would like to inform the discussion.

**6.Books available from Gloucestershire Libraries to support baby loss**

Gloucestershire Libraries have teamed up with Footsteps Counselling and Care to provide a comprehensive range of books relating to topics around baby loss and pregnancy-related issues.

The titles are also available to bereavement midwives, GPs and other practitioners within Gloucestershire to support those affected and coincides with Baby Loss Awareness Week this week (9-15 October).

A selection of 17 titles has been chosen by county librarians, with guidance from Footsteps, and reflect the many issues around baby loss.

These include miscarriage, still birth, fertility struggles and traumatic birth, as well as supportive books for young siblings to help them understand and deal with these issues.

The titles are available in several formats so people can gain instant access to them when support is needed, and they are all available now.

Anyone in Gloucestershire can join their local library for free, either in person or online. If you have a residential address in the county, you can join online quickly and easily and access to e-books and e-audiobooks is instant once you are a library member.

Simply visit [https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries/library-](https://track.vuelio.uk.com/z.z?l=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ2xvdWNlc3RlcnNoaXJlLmdvdi51ay9saWJyYXJpZXMvbGlicmFyeS1tZW1iZXJzaGlwLWpvaW5pbmctYW5kLXJlbmV3aW5nLw%3d%3d&r=13948314825&d=17540284&p=1&t=h&h=132ab2e3cccd37aafe09e715543b99f4)

**7.FOSTERING**
Foster carers are urgently needed across the county. The number of children needing foster placements has risen by 30% and is likely to rise further with the pressures of the cost -of- living crisis and the toll it takes on families.

Whether you are employed or not, you live alone or as part of a family, if you are interested in fostering, Gloucestershire County Council would love to hear from you. Contact the Council now for an informal conversation to find out more about how it can support you to become a foster carer for Gloucestershire County Council.

Please visit [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering) or call 01242 532654.

**8.County Council meetings – Your questions**
At every County Council meeting (the next meeting is November 9th) I have the opportunity to ask questions on behalf of any resident. If there are any issues that affect you directly or you want to question more generally what the Council is doing, please let me have your questions by Friday 20thOctober. You can also attend in person.

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

Cllr Cohen highlighted the discussions with Stagecoach on the cancellation of buses; and encouraged the reporting of issues with highways and paths through the County Council website <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/highways/roads/your-highways-report-it/>

District Cllr K Tucker presented the following 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)

**Development Control Committee – 6 September**

* Thomas Keble School, Eastcombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire S.22/0918/FUL – Committee agreed To PERMIT the application subject to an amendment to Condition 5 removing the reference to construction related deliveries and an additional condition to restrict construction delivery traffic on site between 9am and 3pm Monday to Friday and adding an informative advising the applicant of the need to maximise the screening planting on the western boundary as is practically possible.

**National period of mourning**

Due to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September and in line with the protocol adopted by other councils, the public committee meeting agendas were shortened during the period of national mourning, and limited to time sensitive items. This applied to the Housing Committee meeting (13 September) and Community Services & Licensing Committee meeting (15 September). The Environment Committee, which was due to take place on the day of the Queen’s death (8 September), was postponed until 4 October.

**Play Area Development Action Plan**

Both the Housing Committee and Community Services Committee agreed to support the Play Area consultation and Development Action Plan. A decision was needed by the Committees in order to allocate grant funding of £300k is to be spent on updating SDC owned play areas, 3 of which will have significant updated equipment. Recommendations were based on a physical condition survey and further work on community use of the site as follows:

* **New signage** – for all 32 SDC owned play areas
* **Repairs** to play areas highlighted by ROSPA inspections and additional report include: Innocks Estates Play Area, North Nibley; Deveraux Crescents, Ebley; Daffodils Play Area, Kings Stanley; Norton Wood, Nailsworth; Orchard Road, Cainscross; Bunting Hill Play Area, Nailsworth. These repairs will be funded by existing budget from the Housing Revenue Account or SDC General Fund.
* **Investment** in play areas to be focused on the five play areas: Cambridge Avenue, Dursley; Acacia Drive, Dursley; Mason Road, Stroud; Archway Gardens, Cainscross; Wharfdale Way, Stonehouse.
* **Repurposing** of existing play areas into an alternative green space provision include: The Brambles, Manor View, and Little Mill Court. Community consultation is required prior to any repurposing of the play areas.

Further information can be found here: [Item HC.015](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=1358&Ver=4).

**SDC Health & Wellbeing Action Plan (2022-25)**

This item was discussed at the Community Services Committee. This presentation focused on priorities in the current Council Plan and Leisure & Wellbeing Strategy that impact health and wellbeing and provided more detail about priorities that have previously been agreed by Full Council. Members resolved to adopt the Health & Wellbeing Plan.

For further information see details here ([item 9 – 10](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=1331&Ver=4)).

**Standards Sub-Committee – 27September**

The Sub-Committee discussed a complaint against a parish councillor in relation to Fretherne with Saul Parish Council. Further details can be found [here.](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=273&MId=1398&Ver=4)

**Audit & Standards Committee – 27 September**

The Committee considered an internal audit progress report, treasury management report, statement of accounts, annual audit letter and corporate risk register.

They also considered the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s (LGO) Annual Review for 2021/22 which gives the total number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGO with regard to Stroud District Council. Further details can be found [here](https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=138&MId=1326&Ver=4).

**Strategy & Resources Committee – 29September**

**Finance reports:** The meeting focused on financial reports: the outturn report for 2021/22, the latest quarterly budget monitoring report and information about assumptions and challenges for the Medium Term Financial Plan. There are currently many uncertainties about the likely local government financial settlement this year, as well as the high rate of inflation and rising interest rates. Further budget setting work will be undertaken during the autumn / winter.

**Public conveniences –** this issue was included in the Property Review Update.The first stage of a review of public conveniences, to have initial conversations with Town and Parish Councils took place in 2020. All said that the PC’s in their town or parish are an important local facility that should be retained. The second stage, to install counters to obtain accurate data on the number of people using the facilities was delayed because of Covid. It is anticipated that this work will be carried out in late spring/early summer 2023 before identifying options and making a recommendation to S&R in late 2023

**Canal update:** The Cotswold Canals Connected Project was successful in securing £8.9m funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) towards a £20+ m project to restore sections of the Stroudwater Navigation and reconnect this to the national canal network. Work is currently underway on archaeological excavation and a planning application for the “missing mile” section of the canal between Stonehouse Ocean and under the M5 motorway.

Further information can be found here: https://stroud.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1364&Ver=4

Cllr K Tucker also explained the recent political changes in the leadership and the alliance at Stroud District Council.

**T.6693 Chairman’s Announcements**

The Chairman had previously circulated a diary report for September and October. It was a busy time including various meetings with residents, CCTV and EV Charging companies, Stroud District Council Planning, GHR developer and the Working Group re the developing car park at Symn Lane; the Cost of Living Support project at The Keepers; the new reporter at The Gazette who is keen to include articles on Wotton Under Edge; Greenway multi-use path from Wotton to Charfield Station; Recreation Trust; many meetings with volunteers, community groups, entertainers for the organising of the Christmas Under The Edge event; and the Lions on the Christmas Tree donation request.

There were no comments.

**T.6694 Symn Lane Car Park**

An update was given on the meetings with EV Charger suppliers, the grant organisation had asked the Council to review the bid and include updated quotes. Discussions are being held with Stroud District Planning and the developer on the location of parking bays. The landscape planting plan is to be agreed.

**T.6695 Accounts**

1. **To consider request from Wotton Lions for financial assistance towards new brackets, batteries and lights for the town Christmas trees and possible additional funding towards purchase of trees; and agree way forward.**

There was a discussion on the replacement of tree brackets and fittings, lights, and batteries, and the increased costs of trees and delivery.

It was RESOLVED to contribute £935 towards the costs of the purchase and installation of the Christmas trees and lights.

1. To approve quote for clearance work to the stream banks at Marchesi Walk and Dyer’s Brook.

It was RESOLVED to agree to DH Howse to carry out the clearance work at the streamside at Marchesi and Dyers Brook.

1. To agree volunteer/s to carry out the Councillor quarterly internal audit for the period July – September 2022.
2. It was RESOLVED for Cllrs T Creese, T Luker, and T Young to carry out the Councillor quarterly internal audit for July to September 2022.
3. Budget 2022/23 **–** to note report.

The report was noted. There were no comments.

Cllrs J Turner and N Pinnegar left the meeting

A member of the public left the meeting

1. To approve October accounts for payment

It was RESOLVED to approve the October 2022 payments.

Cllrs J Turner and N Pinnegar joined the meeting

**T.6696 Investment Zones**

The report was reviewed and discussed. Concerns were raised that this would mean a planning free for all and would not be acceptable for Wotton Under Edge.

The District Councillors explained that the deadline for Expressions of Interest to the Government was 14th October 2022 and that the County Council expressed an interest, but Stroud District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council stated a strong opposition to an expression of interest, and as planning authorities this would need to be included in the assessment.

**T.6697 Community Speedwatch Fund**

The criteria for funding was reviewed and discussed. It was suggested that the following locations be assessed by a road safety officer as part of Phase 1: Wortley Road, Haw Street, Coombe Road, Old Town, New Road, Golf Club, Farm Shop. Cllrs M Tucker and T Creese would meet with the road safety officer.

**T.6698 Training for Councillors**

Feedback from Cllrs D Taylor, T Young, and S Hunt was received on the training sessions they attended.

The Council reviewed the training opportunities provided by the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC). It was RESOLVED to book the following:

Finance for Councillors – Cllrs S Hunt and M Tucker

Chairmanship Skills – Cllr M Tucker

Councillor Networking for Young People – to cancel Cllr T Young and add T Creese

District Cllr K Tucker queried if District Councillors could attend these courses. The Town Clerk would investigate.

**T.6699 Assets of Community Value**

It was agreed to defer this item to the next Planning Committee to allow Councillors time to review.

**T.6700 Firework Display at WCSF**

The display was noted. It was requested that earlier notification is brought to Council at the same time the event is being planned next year.

**T.6701 Stroud District Council: Town and Parish Council Charter Consultation**

It was RESOLVED for Cllrs T Creese, P Barton, and D Taylor form a mini-working group to review and recommend any amendments and for the item to be included at the next Planning Committee for discussion and approval.

**T.6702 Tourism**

An update was given on the Tourism Content Writer 5 Market Towns procurement process. The awarding of the contract would be reported at the next Council meeting.

**T.6703 Events:**

* + 1. To receive an update on Remembrance Sunday on 13th November 2022

An update was given from the Working Group. Cllrs R Claydon, D Taylor, and J Lewis volunteered to post the road closure leaflets to businesses and residents. District Cllr K Tucker was thanked for his help in the road closure approval. The final working group meeting is on 25th October 2022.

* + 1. To receive an update on Christmas Under The Edge (CUTE) on 3rd December 2022

The launch meeting was held. The road closures have been agreed. Bookings are being taken for stalls and entertainment, Police, and Firefighters and fire engine, Father Christmas and his grotto will be present with the Town Hall Teas. More volunteers are needed.

Two members of the public left the meeting

**T.6704 To agree attendance at the following meetings:**

* + 1. **Gloucestershire Net Zero Conference – 16th November 2022 at Gloucestershire University**

Cllr M Tucker will attend if there are spaces available.

* 1. **Stroud District Council Cycling and Walking Event – 18th November 2022 at Ebley Mill**

The Town Clerk will attend and no councillors are available.

**T.6705 Brief reports from Councillors**

Cllr P Barton – Annual Allotment Tenants meeting: approximately 30 attended. Achievements and issues were discussed including a future projects list. It was agreed that the repair and refurbishment of the main paths was the priority project.

Cllr P Barton – Wotton Area Climate Network: The notes of the meetings had been circulated. They had a public stall and consultation in the High Street which received good participation.

Cllr T Luker – Synwell Playing Field Association – Meeting Minutes had been circulated.

Cllr M Tucker - Recreation Trust – New Secretary and Acting Chair appointed

Cllr T Creese – Wotton Community Sports Foundation – Meeting Minutes to be circulated.

**T.6706 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 Cllrs K Tucker and G James left the meeting

## T.6707 Staffing Review

The staffing review needed to be completed and jobs evaluated. The quotes were reviewed and discussed.

It was RESOLVED to award the contract to LGRC.

**T.6708 Symn Lane Play Area**

The quotes for the replacement gate to Symn Lane Play Area had been agreed at a previous Council meeting, however, the prices had changed and therefore needed to be brought back to Council for consideration.

IT WAS resolved to purchase the gate from GB Sports due to it being robust and its lifespan.

**T. 6709 Youth Services Contract**

A positive meeting had been held with the National Youth Agency (NYA), Cllr T Young, and the Town Clerk to discuss the detail of the work programme.

Cllr T Young reported on her discussions with Play Gloucestershire. The Service Level Agreement is to be signed off.

**T. 6710 Land at Durns Road**

There was a lengthy discussion on the land and the potential for a footpath to run from Potters Pond alongside the stream as per the footpath on Marchesi Walk.

It was RESOLVED for the interested member of the public to provide plans through his solicitor for valuation and Council consideration.

**T. 6711 Symn Lane Car Park**

An update was given on the development of the car park and concerns raised:

* The location of the parking bays and the meeting of the Planning and S106 requirements
* The protection of the tree and the proposed location of parking bays
* The stability of the bank and the installation of a gabion wall
* The wall adjoining highways
* The developer stating he will leave the site on 1st December 2022

The meeting ended at 9.40pm

Signed: Date: