



**Minutes of Wotton-under-Edge Town Council Meeting
held on Monday 20th January 2025 at 7.00pm in the Civic Centre**

Present: Cllrs P Smith, R Claydon, D Thomas, P Barton, P Jones, J Cordwell

In attendance: A Durn (Town Clerk); Y Milsom (Deputy Clerk), Stroud District Cllrs C Braun, G Kitchen, and County & District Cllr L Cohen plus 19 members of the public.

T.7292 To receive Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Lewis and J Tyler and accepted

T.7293 To receive Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

Cllr J Cordwell – grant application from KLB Friends

T.7294 To approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 16th December 2024.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of 16th December 2024

T.7295 Public Forum

A representative of the Wotton Heritage Centre advised that they wished to withdraw the application to increase their grant.

A member of the public asked if there was to be any form of public commemoration for Sir David McMurtry. It was understood that the family intended to organise a memorial service.

A member of the public requested that the grant application for Synwell Playing Field be viewed sympathetically especially as new equipment had been damaged and needed replacing.

T.7296 Budget and Precept 2025/2026

In view of the number of representatives present from organisations applying for grants it was RESOLVED to bring forward item 8 on the agenda.

- a) Fees and Charges – It was RESOLVED to approve minor increases to the cemetery and facilities fees, but not to increase allotment rents.

It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow interaction between the public and councillors to aid consideration of the grant applications.

- b) Heritage Centre Grant – Utility charges and the inadequacy of the heating system were discussed. It was RESOLVED to approve a grant of £5500.
- c) Grant Applications – After a lengthy interactive session with representatives of the applicant organisations, it was RESOLVED to approve the following grants:
 - (i) Gloucestershire Breastfeeding Support Network - £200
Cllr Cordwell left the meeting
 - (ii) KLB School Friends - £500 for equipment for SEND students.

Cllr Cordwell rejoined the meeting

- (iii) Synwell Playing Field Association - £5000
- (iv) Christmas Under The Edge - £435 to pay for insurance
- (v) Wotton Community Sports Foundation – funding towards Skate Parc repairs - £1000
- (vi) Wotton Swimming Pool – This was a continuation of the Service Level Agreement (SLA) rather than a grant application. An amount of £28,000 had been paid since the inception of the SLA in 2011. The SLA is now due for renewal, and it was requested that this sum be increased in recognition of the considerable rises in running costs. It was proposed and seconded to increase the sum as follows:
£35,000 – motion not carried
£30,000 - motion not carried
£33,000 – agreed in favour
It was therefore RESOLVED to increase the SLA allowance to £33,000 for the 2025/2026 financial year. A meeting would be arranged shortly with the Swimming Pool representatives to discuss the renewal of the SLA.
- (vii) The Keepers - £500 towards food costs.
- (viii) Wotton Pride - £250.75 to cover insurance and first aid costs.

One member of the public left the meeting

- (ix) Great Western Air Ambulance Charity - £300
- (x) Cobalt - £200
- (xi) Stroud District Citizens Advice Bureau - £300
- (xii) Tabernacle churchyard grasscutting - £250

18 members of the public left the meeting

It was RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders.

- d) Budget and Precept – There were lengthy discussions regarding the allocation for the Youth services budget, listed buildings costs, and use of reserves to offset the precept. It was RESOLVED to use £10,000 of general reserves to offset the precept; and to approve a precept request for £526,688 for the financial year 2025/2026.

Deputy Clerk left the meeting

T.7297 To receive report from District Councillors and County Councillor

The following report was received from County Councillor L Cohen:

County Councillor's Report

January 25 – Prepared by County Councillor Linda Cohen

Happy New Year! Wishing you all a peaceful, healthy and happy 2025.

Priorities for quarter one in '25 while we wait to hear if elections have been proposed due to the planned shake up of local Government.

- Buses
- Crossing patrols and road safety measures
- Potholes and path maintenance
- Use of Thornbury Tip for residents in Berkeley Vale

We all know that the NHS is facing huge challenges but NHS Gloucestershire has some useful advice here to help us and those we care for to remain fit and well, and do what we all can to keep pressure off frontline services: Stay Well This Winter : One Gloucestershire

Contacts:

I am available on email Linda.cohen@gloucestershire.gov.uk or phone 07791110906. I aim to respond within 24 hours. If the matter is urgent, please ring. My remit covers: highways, public transport, education and skills, children and family services, social care and health, environment, waste recycling.

If you want to alert Gloucestershire County Council to any highway issues, please use www.fixmystreet. This applies to potholes, safety issues, overhanging trees, debris on the highway, broken pavement, drains. This is the most effective and quickest way to remedy any problem.

Highways

Resurfacing work/ remedial work:

Rushmire Hill Geotechnical Stabilisation Works

Gloucestershire County Council is undertaking carriageway stabilisation works on a section of the B4058, also known as Rushmire Hill, which has experienced significant deterioration due to ground movements over recent years.

These works will require a road closure of the top section of Rushmire Hill and Old London Road from 06/01/2025 to 04/07/2025. GCC is aware that the closure will cause some disruption and frustration to local road users, residents and businesses and will be contacting those parish councillors affected by the closure and working hard with the

main works contractor and local area teams to monitor the known local roads which are likely to be used instead of the diversion route to try to keep the disruption to a minimum.

Please use official diversion routes.

There is a web page set up for this scheme at [B4508 Rushmire Hill | Highways](http://B4508RushmireHill|Highways) (gloucestershire.gov.uk) where regular scheme updates are, and will be, posted. The buses will be affected by these works in particular the number 40 to Nailsworth and Stroud. I have asked GCC for further clarification to the general advice that the buses will pass through Dursley.

Road Safety

I have written before that we need to establish if there is interest from residents to volunteer to provide road crossing patrols at the British School (Wortley Road), Kingswood (B4060) and North Nibley (B4060).

If you are interested and would like to find out more, please email your Parish or Town Clerk.

Separately I am looking at any traffic calming measures for North Nibley to slow traffic during school travel times.

We are still waiting for news on the TRO for Kingswood for parking restrictions opposite Tubbs Turf.

I am continuing work on a project for the Bradley Street/Dryleaze/ Ellercroft Road intersection.

The meetings to discuss these projects was delayed due to the workload created by the weather conditions in December these will be rearranged in the next fortnight.

Public Transport

84/85 Bus Service

It is now unlikely that there will be any resolution to this until there is a new administration at Shire Hall. In the meantime, I would ask residents to try and link up with the Y8 dial up service which leaves Charfield every two hours WESTlocal Route Y8: Yate Link | The Big Lemon . This service is funded for the next 18 months.

There have been issues with residents using The Hopper and being prevented from taking the bus due to the size of shopping trollies. I have written to officers and the cabinet member and will tackle again next week.

A reminder that residents can borrow an e-bike for up to three months in a new scheme to promote sustainable travel in Gloucestershire.

E-bikes are hired on a monthly basis, with a maximum hire period of three months. It costs £70 per month for standard rental and £30 per month for jobseekers. If you decide to purchase a bike or accessories, all hire fees are refunded in the form of a bike voucher to encourage continued cycling. For more information on the project and support with getting going, visit:

<https://www.thinktravel.info/cycling/pedal-eazy/>

Lengthsman Work

Lengthsman work has continued in Wotton, the villages and Berkeley Vale.

Recycling Centre Thornbury Vs Horlsey

I am due to talk to officers next week about the campaign for residents in Ham and Stone and Berkeley Vale to be able to use the tip at Thornbury (South Glos) rather than the one at Horsley (GCC). This will half journey times and allow residents to use the trip for other purposes, further reducing the impact on the environment. I have set up a petition and we are attracting press interest. I need to demonstrate need and potential use to make my case to both councils for it to be worth their while setting up a collaborative arrangement. Please continue to sign the petition (311 signatures as I write) here -<https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/use-our-nearest-tip>
** I note that there has been an initiative to canvass opinion about whether there should be a change to the existing bookings set up at the Horsley recycling centre. To date findings are inconclusive. I will monitor and act accordingly.

Changes to adult social care contributions policy set to be approved

Gloucestershire County Council's cabinet is being asked to approve changes to its Adult Social Care Fairer Contributions Policy which may allow some people to keep more of their income.

Adult Social Care services are paid for by the county council with contributions from the individuals it supports. People can be charged for their care and asked to contribute in line with their financial circumstances.

The council wants to make sure its fairer contributions policy is clear, accessible, and fair, to support individuals with choice and control over their care. Earlier this year, it held a public consultation to ask residents' opinions on potential ways the policy could be changed, to help understand what would have the most positive impact for people with care and support needs, and how the policy could be fairer for everyone. At its meeting on Wednesday 4 December, council's cabinet was asked to approve changes with effect from April 2025, which may allow some people to keep more of their income. They are:

- increasing the Minimum Income Guarantee for everyone with care and support needs by £5, and

- disregarding the difference between higher rate and standard rate of the daily living element of Personal Independence Payments when assessing how much someone with care and support needs should pay towards their care. Cabinet will also be asked to approve an option to introduce an administration fee at some point in the future, for people who pay the full cost of their care but ask the council to arrange care and support services on their behalf. All proposed changes are subject to the revised Fairer Contributions Policy receiving the necessary funding when the council's 2025-2026 budget is set by full council in February 2025.

The cabinet paper and associated reports can be viewed here

Council wants your views on 2025/26 budget

Gloucestershire County Council wants the views of the public on proposals for its 2025/26 budget.

The council's Cabinet approved the proposed budget along with plans to launch a public consultation at its meeting on Wednesday, 4 December.

A public consultation will run from 5 December 2024 until 5pm on 10 January 2025 and will allow residents to have their say on the proposed spending plans.

For more information and to take part in the consultation, visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/budget2025-26.

The proposed spending plans for 2025/26 will see spending rise by more than £32.7 million on 2024/25 levels, to almost £650 million.

The council is in the financial position to be able to continue support for existing services as well as make significant investments across the county.

The £649.6 million proposed budget includes significant investment into the council's priority areas of highways, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), adult services, infrastructure, and the environment.

A further £10 million is proposed to be put towards delivering on the council's £100 million four-year commitment to go on improving Gloucestershire roads, with a greater focus in 2025/26 on tackling rural roads.

A total of £12.8 million is set to go towards a new £16.5 million 200 place special school.

Young people with SEND and their families would be supported with an extra £2.1 million.

£7.5 million towards the future construction of three new adult care homes is being set aside, with further investment planned in future years.

The council plans to increase capacity and improve school buildings and facilities of other schools across the county with a £12.4 million investment.

Household Waste Recycling Centres across the county will see improvements with a £1.3 million injection.

The budget proposes raising £16.5 million to help fund services through a council tax increase of 2.99%. The proposals would also see £7.8 million raised specifically to support work with the most vulnerable adults in the county through a further 2% increase in the adult social care precept.

Despite this increase the council still expects to have one of the lowest council tax levels of any county council. Based on a band D property, residents would pay an additional £6.65 each month.

The council continues to challenge itself to work more effectively and as a result has identified £24.5 million in savings, additional income and efficiencies for next year.

There followed queries from Town Councillors on the following: whether the survey on the bank next to the new Symn Lane car park had been actioned (unknown); if a grit bin could be installed at the top of Court Orchard; if an updated bus timetable could be circulated due to the impact of the B4058 closure; and concerns over the impact of the B4058 closure on Blackquarries (Gloucestershire County Highways Major Projects Team is reviewing); the Devolution White Paper on creating unitary authorities – a discussion followed on the challenges and queries on the possible models for Gloucestershire.

County Cllr Cohen raised concerns on the grant application process explaining that volunteers can find it difficult to present to Council and to answer queries. She asked if the questions could be asked in advance. The Chair explained that questions were asked for in advance of the meeting. County Cllr Cohen stated that the charity and community sector is struggling for funds and gave her thanks to the voluntary groups in Wotton Under Edge and all they do for the town.

The following report was received from District Councillors:

[**SDC Councillors' report - January 2025**](#)

Wotton-under-Edge, North Nibley & Stinchcombe

Along with residents' casework and in addition to council and training meetings at Ebley Mill, Cllrs Kitchen, Braun & Cohen attended the regular council meetings at North Nibley, Stinchcombe & Wotton-under-Edge.

Council meetings

Link to meeting agenda and documents in the committee title.

[**Development Control Committee - 3rd December**](#)

- Land at M5 Junction 13 west of Stonehouse (New FGR Site) - S.23/1484/REM
 - Reserved matters (layout, scale, external appearance of the stadium and the landscaping of the site)
 - Permitted - unanimous
- Forest Green Rovers, New Lawn, Forest Green (Existing Site) - S.18/0815/OUT
 - Resubmission of S.17/0850/OUT - The demolition of the existing FGR Stadium to provide up to 95 dwellings and community use
 - Up to eight years to complete the new stadium before construction can start
 - Permitted - unanimous
- Bentley Cottage, Vicarage Street, Painswick - S.24/1747/HHOLD
 - Erection of a two storey side extension and single storey front extension
 - Officers recommended refusal for a number of reasons
 - Refused - after lengthy discussion (just one abstention)
- Very little revenue being generated by way of fees (29% of what was expected for the year). Fee increases likely.

- [Video recording](#)

[Environment Committee - 5th December](#)

- Approved the collection of household batteries and vapes/e-cigs from the kerbside from April 2025
- New additional materials to be collected at kerbside – most likely including small electricals – in similar timeframe
- Approved two Community Infrastructure Levy projects – feasibility studies for a new Doctors' practice and a Health Hub in Cam
- Funding for the Nailsworth Cycle track were not approved, work will continue with County
- [Video recording](#)

[Housing Committee - 10th December](#)

- Depooling is the separation of service charges from rents.
 - Approved with caps and mitigations for hardship.
 - Separate charges from 01 April 2025.
- Housing budget and HRA medium term plan reviewed and approved
 - Increase in temporary accommodation cost against budget, maybe covered by grant.
 - Overall position much better than this time last year.
 - Possible spike in right to buy due to reductions in discounts coming.
 - Social and affordable rents to increase by 2.7%
- [Video recording](#)

[Community Services and Licensing Committee - 12th December](#)

- Performance and budget monitoring along with revenue forecasts
 - Pressures: CCTV replacement, Ubico costs, Housing benefits, Public spaces & Stratford Park in-house
 - Savings: Revenue & Benefit salaries
- Approved Active Lifestyles Be Active concession scheme.
- Approved Active Lifestyles Leisure Oversight Board membership and seek approval of the terms of reference for the board.
- [Video recording](#)

[Full Council - 19th December](#)

- Approval given for £630,000 to purchase commercial units being developed at [Brimscombe Port](#). Ensuring the Council has more control over the space provided and the development is in line with the council's and key stakeholder's vision.
- Agreed to sign the UK100 Charter for Collaboration which supports the ambition of delivering clean energy alongside climate goals.

- Agreed to support [Ubico](#)'s request to explore growth opportunities with potential new shareholders and fund a share of those exploratory costs.
- [Video recording](#)

Other news

- Rushmire is closed from 6th Jan for 24 weeks. Please use the [official diversion](#) via Dursley to minimise the frustration of getting stuck on single track back roads.
- Cllr Braun, SDC Leader, gave an update on English Devolution and the fate of Stroud District Council. A summary by our local democracy reporter here [Gloucester News Centre](#).
 - Gloucestershire County Council is lining up an urgent decision to apply for Unitary Status by the deadline of 10 January at a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday 9 January.
 - Agenda item 5. [More details here.](#)
- Museum in the Park's [Annual Report](#) has been published.

Prepared by Cllr Gareth Kitchen based on Councillor activity in December with updates from Cllr Linda Cohen & Cllr Catherine Braun.

There were no questions or comments from the Town Councillors for the District Councillors.

The County and District Councillors were thanked for their reports and attendance at the meeting.

County & District Cllr Cohen and District Cllrs Braun and Kitchen left the meeting.

T.7298 Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Cllr P Smith, had previously circulated the following report:

1. It is of great sadness that I had heard of the death of Mike Zimmer who was a Town Councillor up to 2015.
2. Attended the induction of the new minister, Wotton Baptist Church, the Rev Andy Eyre, where I was asked to give a welcome speech on behalf of the Town Council and the residents of the town.
3. Chaired the Budget meeting.
4. Chaired the working group for the Symn Lane Car Park.

There were no comments.

T.7299 Finance

It was RESOLVED:

- a) The bank transfer of £100,000 from savings account to current account was noted.

- b) It was RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs J Lewis and J Tyler to undertake the quarterly internal audit for the period October – December 2024.
- c) It was RESOLVED to ratify Berry Plumbing Services the contract of cleaning the Thermostatic Mixing Valves in all buildings in accordance with Legionella audit recommendations.
- d) It was RESOLVED to agree the contract variation for the hearing loop system installation to include the addition of the audio sound equipment and installation, the replacement of the hand held microphone with the wireless microphone, stand, and charging dock.
- e) It was RESOLVED to defer the consideration of the legal work for Streamsfield registration due to the quote not received
- f) It was RESOLVED to award the contract to Gabriola to plant the bank at New Road allotments and to carry out ongoing maintenance.
- g) The 2024/25 budget report was noted.
- h) It was RESOLVED to approve the January 2025 accounts for payment

T.7300 Town Hall and Chipping Hall

The structural engineer survey and drone survey had been carried out.

T.7301 Potters Pond EV Chargers Project

A plan of works had been circulated. The installation is expected in February/March with dates to be confirmed.

T.7302 Consultations

a) To review and respond to the Stroud District Council draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2025-2030 [Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2025-30](#)

There was no comment.

b) To review and respond to the Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation Reforms [Consultation on Compulsory Purchase Process and Compensation Reforms - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space](#)

This item was referred to the Planning Committee.

c) To review and respond to 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England' [Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

The Chairman had circulated his draft response. It was RESOLVED to submit the Chairman's responses.

T.7303 Brief reports from Councillors

Wotton Pool AGM – Cllr Barton gave a brief report.

T.7304 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 from the meeting

T.7305 Symn Lane Car Park

The schedule or works were reviewed in detail and amendments agreed to be submitted to Stroud District Council for their negotiations with the developer.

The agreement from Stroud District Council for the housing was reviewed and it was RESOLVED for comments to be sent to the Town Clerk to respond to Stroud District Council.

The meeting ended at 10.25pm

Signed:

Date: