



**Minutes of Wotton-under-Edge Town Council Meeting
held on Monday 19th January 2026 at 7.00pm in the Civic Centre**

Present: Cllrs P Smith (Chair), R Claydon, D Thomas, B Britton-Griffiths, E Edwards, R Greenup, R Halpin, F Hulls

In attendance: H Saunders (Locum Deputy Clerk), A Durn (Town Clerk); Stroud District Cllrs C Braun and G Kitchen; plus 8 members of the public

T.7662 To receive Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted for Cllrs J Cordwell, J Lewis, P Underwood, L Hewish and from County and District Cllr L Cohen

T.7663 To consider and approve a candidate for co-option on to the Town Council and receive the Declaration of Office

None received

T.7664 To receive Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

Cllrs P Smith, R Claydon, B Britton-Griffiths – Beaumont-Le-Roget Twinning Society
Cllrs F Hulls, B Britton-Griffiths – Long Street Summer Social and Wotton Community Interest Group
Cllr B Britton-Griffiths – Wotton Pride

T.7665 To approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 15th December 2025

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 15th December 2025

It was agreed to move the item on Beaumont-Le-Roget Twinning Society visit as the next item so the representative could give her request

Cllrs P Smith, R Claydon, and B Britton-Griffiths left the meeting

Cllr R Halpin took the Chair

T.7666 Request from Beaumont-Le-Roger Twinning Society for free use of the Coombe Suite in Civic Centre on 22nd May 2026 to welcome representatives from Beaumont-Le-Roger, France on their visit to Wotton Under Edge

The Chair of Beaumont-Le-Roget Twinning Society gave the background to the Twinning Society explaining that it was set up 40 years and that strong friendships have been made. There are alternate year France/England visits with an expectation that the Mayor holds a civic reception. In 2026 it is the turn of Wotton Under Edge to host the French visitors with a visit planned for an introduction to the town followed by a Civic reception, the Twinning Society pays for the refreshments. The Twinning Society requests the free use of the Coombe Suite to hold the Civic reception. The acting Chair thanked the Twinning Society for attending the meeting and opened it for discussion.

It was RESOLVED to grant the request from the Twinning Society for the free use of the Coombe Suite to host the Civic reception with a payment of £250 held in case of damage to be returned if no damage incurred.

Cllrs P Smith, R Claydon, and B Britton-Griffiths returned to the meeting

Cllr R Halpin handed back the Chair to Cllr P Smith

T.7667 Public Forum

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

District Cllr G Kitchen represented the Save the Wotton Under Edge buses campaign. The Y8 regular buses connects Wotton Under Edge to many villages to Yate town. This bus is vital for employment, education, health, and leisure. There was a sustained campaign to save the bus route resulting in the Y8 (2 buses) being put in service on an eighteen-month trial. Gloucestershire County Council favours a demand response transport option; the campaign group feels the serves should compliment each other and not be in direct competition. Everyone is urged to use the Y8 as it is seen as a vital rural service. It is currently funded by West of England Combined Authority (WECA).

Heritage Centre volunteer and co-ordinator of the Town Hall Teas thanked the Town Council and Town Trust for their support and the free use of the Town Hall. The Town Hall Teas are much loved and the 2026 is already fully booked with a reserve list. She reported that the first year raised approx. £27 per local community group, and in 2025 approx between £200 and £700 is raised per local community group. In 2025, a total of £10274.56 was raised.

Heritage Centre volunteer reported that over £700 was raised for the bench to commemorate the Town Crier, George Carpenter, and his late wife. This will cover the cost of the bench, plaque, flower pots and flowers, with a contingency for maintenance. The Town Council staff will install the bench next to the Heritage Centre.

A former Town Councillor and qualified Youth Worker of 25 years' experience asked the Town Council to ensure a budget provision for quality youth services and youth provision is included in setting the 2026/27 budget and town precept.

T.7668 Chairman's Announcements - to receive report from the Chairman.

The Chairman gave Happy New Year wishes to Councillors and congratulated County and District Councillor L Cohen on achieving the completion of the very hilly half marathon in Sicily raising funds for children literacy and Read With Me charity.

T.7669 To receive reports from County Councillor and District Councillors

County Cllr L Cohen had circulated the following report:

Happy New Year to all. I hope you all had an enjoyable festive break.

Sadly, I have to reflect on the tragedy of the fire in Brimscombe on Boxing Day, where a mother and two children lost their lives, leaving a husband and father to deal with the unimaginable loss of his family.

Our thoughts must also be with the emergency services staff who are still dealing with this incident and who have been deeply affected. Also, Chloe Turner, Leader of Stroud District Council who has been co-ordinating efforts since then.

The community has pulled together to support everyone and shown incredible generosity. I pay tribute to everyone involved.

News

Budget consultation

The proposed budget is still out for consultation, closing 9 January 2026.

For more information and to take part go to -

<https://gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/budget-consultation-2026-27>

Surge in flu cases

Flu cases are the highest on record for this time of year – 50% higher than last year.

The Chief Medical Officers in Gloucestershire have issued an open letter with ‘top tips’ for the public as the county faces a surge in flu cases and a challenging winter.

Please find the letter here - <https://www.nhsglos.nhs.uk/news/take-action-to-help-you-your-families-and-the-nhs-this-winter/>

www.asapglos.nhs.uk can guide you through self-care options and provide information on the best service option for you to avoid unnecessary waits.

Local Government Reorganisation

Gloucestershire County Council is currently undergoing recruitment of a portfolio director for LGR. This is an important position which will guide the Council through the changes to local government. This role will support and be funded by all seven councils throughout the transition into new authorities.

£2million boost for projects driving local growth and innovation

Gloucestershire City Region Board has approved major funding through the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) to boost innovation, jobs, and sustainable growth. Seven projects will benefit, including a county-wide energy plan, careers hub expansion, inward investment support, advanced engineering growth, tourism data platform, Hartpury University’s Resilient Futures Lab, and a new cyber-focused venture studio. Together, these initiatives aim to strengthen infrastructure, attract investment, and create hundreds of jobs, positioning Gloucestershire as a hub for business, creativity, and long-term prosperity.

Employment summit

Key partners from across Gloucestershire came together to discuss how to support even more people in the county back to work at an Employment Summit.

We are now looking ahead to our latest government-backed initiative Connect to Work. This is a major new initiative launched in July 2025, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The programme is designed to help people with health conditions, disabilities or other barriers to employment move into or stay in meaningful work.

To find out more, please visit - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/grow-gloucestershire/employment-and-skills-hub/>

New Domestic Abuse Strategy

On 8 December Cabinet member Paul Hodkinson launched the new three-year Domestic Abuse Strategy. The main aims of the strategy are:

- Preventing abuse before it starts.
- Supporting victims and survivors.
- Holding perpetrators to account.

Domestic abuse can affect anyone from any background. In 2023/24, almost 20% of all crimes reported to Gloucestershire Constabulary were domestic abuse.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, support is available:

- Call GDASS on 01452 726 570 for support to victims and survivors who are aged 16 years and above. Visit www.gdass.org.uk.
- Call STREET (Safe Teenage Relationship Education and Empowerment Team) on 01452 228 802 for young people aged 13 to 19 years who have experienced harmful relationship behaviours/domestic abuse within their own relationships, or those who are using harmful behaviours/domestic abuse in their own relationships. Visit
- Call PRG (Positive Relationships Gloucestershire) on 01452 529 866, the behaviour change service for those aged 18 years and above who want to make positive changes to improve their relationships.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme & School-Age Childcare

At its meeting on Wednesday 3 December, Gloucestershire County Council's cabinet approved plans that will secure funding for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme for another three years, from April 2026 to March 2029.

The HAF programme provides holiday activities and healthy meals for children and young people who are eligible for income-related free school meals. It also offers support for families, including advice on food, health, and wellbeing.

Since 2018 this wide-ranging programme has provided families with six weeks of high quality, fun, enriching activities, and nutritious food for one week during spring, four weeks over summer and one week in the winter school holidays.

The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that Gloucestershire will receive funding to deliver the programme until 2029. This will allow the council to:

- Continue offering enriching activities and nutritious meals during school holidays
- Support children and young people across all districts, including those with special educational needs and disabilities
- Provide families with access to local advice and support services, helping them with food, nutritional education, physical activity, health, and wellbeing and more.

Gloucestershire's successful HAF programme provides essential services to our county's vulnerable children and families, and its achievements have been nationally recognised by DfE. The funding will allow the council to build on this success.

Last summer alone, over 10,000 children took part in HAF sessions across Gloucestershire, enjoying more than 24,000 activity sessions and meals. The programme has continued to grow stronger year on year, reaching 67 per cent of eligible children in 2024.

More information about the Holiday Activities and Food programme is available at www.familyhubs.gloucestershire.gov.uk/haf

New - Local Authority Capacity Support Fund

- The Department for Education (DfE) is providing local authorities with £12.9 million of additional funding in the 2026 to 2027 financial year **to support their capacity** to deliver a **sufficient and sustainable school-age childcare system**.

- This includes supporting the national rollout of free breakfast clubs and fostering links between holiday childcare and HAF to maximise opportunities to deliver a sustainable school-age childcare free or paid for provision for children from reception onwards, delivered **outside of normal school hours**, such as:
 - Before and after school
 - During school holidays
 - On inset days.

Other activity of note...

- Youth provision in Wotton and Kingswood ongoing work.
- Meeting to look at highways issues around North Nibley/Waterley Bottom and agree resurfacing works.
- Discussions with Councillor on accessible housing in North Nibley and support for initiative.
- Support for Stinchcombe Children's Day in February.
- Arrangements being made to visit all schools and local organisations in my area.
- Coombe Road speed survey.
- Wotton Charfield Kingswood Greenway liaison with interested parties.
- I will be reviewing the priorities set out for me by each Parish and Town Council to track progress and update.

Linda Cohen

Gloucestershire County Councillor – Wotton -under-Edge and Berkeley Vale Division
Cabinet Member for Education & Skills

Gloucestershire County Council

c/o Democratic Services, Shire Hall, Westgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 2TG

linda.cohen@gloucestershire.gov.uk tel: 07791110906

Any queries to be sent direct to County Cllr L Cohen

Stroud District Councillors had circulated the following report:

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 - 2nd December](#)

- Solar photovoltaic farm at Epney, Framilode (S.25/1011/FUL) - REFUSED
 - Committee followed the planning officer recommendation to refuse the application. There was considerable local opposition due to the proposed location in flood zone and visual impact. Noted insufficient biodiversity-net-gain and habitat-regulation assessments for protected sites, lack of consideration of construction traffic and inadequate mitigation for public rights-of-way users.
- Symn Lane Car Park, Wotton - Variation of approved plans (S.23/2101/VAR) - PERMITTED
 - Committee followed the planning officer recommendation to grant

permission. This will change the previously approved plans and removing 12 of the parking bays that had been planned adjacent to the access road. It will also require landscaping, improvement of the car park layout, provision of disabled parking and ancillary works.

- Demolition of outbuilding and two-story extension, Sheepscombe, Stroud (S.25/1431/HHOLD) - PERMITTED
 - Committee followed the recommendation to permit and also consented to the Listed Building application.
- [Video recording](#)

Environment Committee - 4th December

- Approved the new [Climate and Nature Strategy](#) for Stroud district.
 - Allows the council to increase our emphasis on restoring nature and adapting our district to the impacts of a changing climate (heat, floods, drought, storms), as well as continuing to focus on reducing carbon emissions from the council's direct operations and the goods and services purchased, capital works and pensions.
- Litter Code of Practice
 - Reducing litter is a key priority for the council. Currently there is a national 'Voluntary Code of Practice for Food on the Go' that was agreed over 20 years ago and is outdated and ineffective at addressing the scale of modern litter pollution. Agreed that the Council will seek national support for this voluntary code to be made mandatory. Noted that businesses have a vested interest in keeping their premises and surrounding area free and clear of litter to attract custom and achieve financial stability. However, there is little incentive for them to contribute to community cleanliness beyond their boundaries and no requirement for them to comply with the current voluntary code.
- Member - Officer Reports
 - Strategic Planning Advisory Board
 - Noted that the recent correspondence between the Council and the planning inspectors about the draft Local Plan, in relation to new National Highways evidence, that changed the requirements for junctions 12 and 14 of the M5 motorway. The Council has requested a dedicated hearing to consider this new evidence and reaffirmed it will not withdraw the draft Local Plan if such a hearing is denied. Instead, the Council will request that the Inspectors issue a final report explaining why they consider the Plan unsound. This report would provide Development Management with an assessment of all draft sites, identifying any potential issues or confirming their suitability for development.
 - Climate Leadership Gloucestershire
 - New Climate & Risk Vulnerability Assessment for Gloucestershire. Some gaps such as the risk of sea-level-rise were noted. This assessment will help to inform the council's assessment for Stroud district. An update on the county-side Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) had identified five priority actions (community energy, up-skilling, data & mapping, energy

stakeholder engagement, and deployment of renewables) for implementation.

- Cotswold National Landscape Board
 - Presentation of the international nature target of 30% of land for nature by 2030, and the 40% target for the Cotswolds, stressing urgent habitat restoration and the need for quantifiable land-use ambitions for sectors across the Cotswolds.
 - Called for stronger links between the Landscape Board's work and the district's Local Plan, plus greater funding for large-scale projects like the Cotswold Landscape Initiative.
 - Cotswold Voluntary Wardens - currently 373 active wardens. Core activities are Work Parties, Parish Wardening, Walk Leading and Outdoor Learning.
- Stroud Valleys Project Board
 - Discussed restructuring core posts to add a Project Development Manager, aiming to secure core funding and expand project delivery capacity.
 - Highlighted recent community-driven achievements: sensory garden award, river-guardian work, volunteer-led habitat restoration, and upcoming volunteer-run litter-pick events.
- Gloucestershire Resource & Waste Partnership
 - Summarised findings about hidden holiday-let costs falling on councils due to business rates/council tax misclassification.
 - Govt regulatory changes for household collection of plastic bags and wrappings expected within a couple of years. Until then people can drop off plastics at supermarkets.
 - Updated on national waste-policy changes (including producer responsibility and deposit return scheme) and their financial impact on councils, emphasising the need for coordinated lobbying and funding strategies and greater coordination in the county ahead of Local Govt Reorganisation.
- Litter Champion Update
 - Update on 15 areas of work, including launch of a network of Litter Champion Hubs, partnering with supermarkets, fast-food chains, schools, and community groups to install bins, run education events, and organise litter-pick days
 - Introduced AI-driven hot spot mapping, new anti-litter messages on parking tickets, and expanded "Litter-Pickers for Little Pickers" program with 45 schools signed up and over 7000 children set to benefit.
- Lower Severn Independent Drainage Board
 - Reported upgrades to two pump sites (Lapperfield, Marshfield) due by March 2026 and a new office hub, while recruiting apprentices to sustain expertise
 - Raised concerns about rising flood-risk impacts and the Environment Agency's commitment to only maintain river-defences to their current level, prompting a risk-register upgrade

- Walking and Cycling Annual Report
 - Committed £217k of walking-and-cycling projects, including feasibility studies for new cycleways (Cam-Dursley-Uley and Wotton-Kingswood-Charfield), Stroud town-centre way-marking, Access Bike sessions to support young people, projects in Standish, Frampton, Minchinhampton and Berkeley and the community e-bike hire scheme.
- Stroud Valleys Natural Flood Management Scheme Update
 - Work started in 2014, and there are now 1,234 Natural Flood Management interventions (leaky dams, flood-plain re-connections, tree planting) covering 40% of the catchment, delivering 40km of improved watercourses and 41ha. of habitat which has been improved or created.
 - Highlighted partnership with the Wilder Frome group, ongoing monitoring with the Environment Agency, and secured £110k annual funding through regional flood-risk grants
- Climate and Nature Grant Update
 - Awarded £50k to 33 community projects targeting climate adaptation, behaviour change, and nature recovery; 23 were NGOs, 9 parish/town councils, 1 school
 - Projects included sensory gardens, swift nest boxes, rain-garden installations, and repair-café workshops, with interim reporting showing high applicant satisfaction
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Progress Report
 - Since BNG became mandatory for all planning applications (Feb 2024), 119 applications were submitted: 35 granted, 44 pending, 40 withdrawn/refused; 9 granted sites have discharged the pre-commencement BNG condition
 - Discharged BNG sites have collectively added 18.76 habitat units (93% on-site), with three habitat-bank sites (Frocester, Orchard House Farm, Elmore Court) under final legal agreements.

- [Video recording](#)

Housing Committee - 9th December

- Approved a further grant application to Government for funding to support temporary accommodation for homeless households and for people on the Afghan Resettlement Programme. The grant would be matched from the Housing Revenue Account (for council housing only) totalling £1.3m.
- Noted that SDC has been allocated £60k to assist with developing a bid for the new national 10 year Social & Affordable Homes Programme worth £39 billion that launches in 2026.
- Adopted the [Resident Engagement & Communications Strategy](#) which has been co-produced with tenants and leaseholders.
- Adopted the [HRA Asset Management Strategy](#) SDC's long-term approach to managing, maintaining, and investing in our housing stock to ensure it remains safe, sustainable, and fit for purpose
- Member - Officer Reports
 - Housing Oversight Board

- The Board highlighted progress on stock-condition surveys (up to 50% completed) but noted the target of 90% is still unmet, prompting a procurement push for external surveys
- Key safety metrics were strong (gas safety and fire-risk assessments 100%), yet concerns were raised over rising rent-arrears, high void-turn-around times and a low call-answer rate, leading to agreed actions on data-clean-up, performance dashboards and service-improvement plans.
- Private-Sector Housing Team Officer Report
 - The team support tenants living in the private rented housing. Their workload is dominated by processing Disabled Facilities Grants and handling Anti-Social Behaviour/nuisance complaints in the private-rented sector; staffing shortages (2.4 vacancies) are limiting capacity.
 - Upcoming challenges include the new Renters' Rights Act (phased from May 2026) which will increase enforcement duties and most likely complaints, prompting a request for a dedicated enforcement officer and additional funding from Govt to cope with the expanded duties.
- Domestic Energy Efficiency Update - Warm & Well scheme
 - The Warm and Well scheme is managed by Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA) on behalf of the seven local authorities in South Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire and working with the NHS, charities and other partners. The scheme gives energy efficiency advice and support to householders and administers grants to help address fuel poverty. In Stroud district, the scheme delivered 21 energy-saving home improvements during Q1 and Q2, though the number of installations lagged behind the previous year due to Government rollout delays.
 - Client engagement surged with a notable rise in residents reporting health conditions and continued high fuel-poverty levels.
 - (For homeowners keen to invest in their own home energy efficiency measures, the [Furbnow Gloucestershire](#) scheme provides advice and end-to-end project management).

- [Video recording](#)

[Community Services and Licensing Committee - 11th December](#)

- Active Lifestyles Dursley - Gym Refresh
 - Refurbishment and enhancement including the replacement of outdated fitness equipment, installation of new studio cycling units, and essential facility improvements costing £110k approved.
- Officer of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) Funding
 - Acceptance of grant funding from the OPCC for Stroud Community Safety Partnership for Sport for Safer Streets and Graffiti removal projects
- Member - Officer Reports
 - Gloucestershire Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee
 - South West Ambulance Service is ending its partnership with the

fire service for emergency co-response and will rely more on volunteer Community First Responders (CFRs) who can reach incidents faster, especially in rural areas, and that the change improves both effectiveness and cost-efficiency.

- Winter preparedness (NHS Gloucestershire) a review of the previous winter's 'critical incident' highlighted several improvements: quicker ambulance response times, reduced 12-hour trolley waits, a more holistic approach for patients with complex needs, increased discharge of patients back home, and better communication across services.
- Police & Crime Panel
 - Highlighted ongoing efforts to curb anti-social behaviour and serious violence—via the ASB case-review programme, Hotspot Action Fund deployments, Safer Streets campaigns, and a strengthened neighbourhood policing guarantee. Also noted major upcoming governance shift that will replace the Police and Crime Commissioner model with local-authority policing boards by 2028.
 - A technical overhaul is underway to replace legacy systems (WAN rollout, modern analytics, citizen portal, expanded ANPR) to reduce cyber risk, and although the OPCC has mostly met its cost-saving targets, anticipating a larger budget gap by 2029/30.
- Citizens Advice
 - From April - Nov 2025, over 2,500 clients were advised on over 10,400 issues in Stroud and Cotswold districts. Personal Independence remains by far the biggest benefits enquiry area
 - In terms of debt queries, the increase in queries about credit and store card debt which exceeded the number of council tax arrears and fuel debts issues.
- Kingshill House, Dursley - Creative Centre
 - All courses and workshops fully booked and other events. Repair works and other House and grounds maintenance have been completed successfully.
- Active Lifestyles Lido - Stratford Park
 - Report on a strong season in 2025 with challenges noted on financial sustainability due to high operational costs and aging infrastructure.
- [Video recording](#)

Full Council - 18th December

- Independent Remuneration Panel - Members' Allowances
 - Council agreed the independent panel's recommendations to increase basic allowance for district councillors by £358 per year by 2029/30, to add some Special Responsibility Allowances, and remove the restriction of attending just one full council meeting of each parish/town council per month.
- Updates to the Constitution
 - The Constitution is a live document which requires regular review and revision. These updates were viewed as a tidying up exercise

- Councillor dispensation
 - Council authorised the absence of Cllr Nigel Prenter (Rodborough ward) for more than 6 months due to medical treatment.
- [Video recording](#)

Licensing Sub-Committee - AM 19th December

- Studio 18, Hope Mills Business Centre, Brimscombe
 - Premises licence for sale of alcohol. The Council received five representations against the application. Three were from local residents, one was from a local business, and one was from the Parish Council. Granted subject to conditions. (Police; occupancy limits. Incident logs, Challenge 25, CCTV etc.)
- [Video recording](#)

Licensing Sub-Committee - PM 19th December

- Standish Gatehouse, Horsemarling Lane, Standish
 - Premises licence for sale of alcohol and films in a rural area, for a new café space named Standish Gatehouse. Application granted subject to hours restriction and number of films per year.
- [Video recording](#)

Licensing Sub-Committee - PM 22nd December

- Woodchester Valley Vineyard and Winery
 - To vary a premises licence to extend hours for sale of alcohol and opening and extend the licensed area. Objections about traffic and pedestrian safety as well as pushing the boundaries of permitted agricultural use. Variation granted with conditions.
- [Video recording](#)

Other news

- £1.8 million investment at [Nouncells Cross](#) in Stroud, to upgrade 57 flats across two blocks, is underway.
- More than [£600,000 invested](#) in Stroud district's rural communities, under the Rural England Prosperity Fund including equipment repair at Synwell Playing Fields.
- 'Food on the go' outlets [urged to help more](#) to tackle litter.
- Working together to [tackle anti-social behaviour](#) - Report It to Sort It.

Prepared by [Cllr Gareth Kitchen](#) (Green) based on councillor activity in **December 2025** with updates from [Cllr Linda Cohen](#) (Lib Dem) & [Cllr Catherine Braun](#) (Green).

There were no comments or queries.

The County and District Councillors were thanked for their reports.

T.7670 Budget and Precept

- a) The facilities charges for Town Council and Town Trust facilities for the Year 2026/27 were discussed. There was a proposal to increase the allotment charges. The current vacancy rates and rents were reviewed against neighbouring Council allotments. It was noted that the Town Council rents and vacancies were the highest in the district and it was queried whether an increase in rent would increase the vacancies. It was countered by a Councillor that the geography of the sites probably means higher maintenance costs than other Councils and the costs should be born by those who benefit. It was

RESOLVED to increase the allotment charges from £42 to £48 for a full plot, and from £24 to £27 for a half plot to come into effect in October 2027. The other facility charges for burials and facilities to be unchanged.

- b) An application for an increase to the Heritage Centre grant was discussed. The grant for 2025/26 was for £5500. There was a disagreement by a Councillor who said he needed more information on how much the Heritage Centre needed to operate. It was RESOLVED to keep the grant at £5500 for 2026/27.
- c) The grant applications for 2026/27 were reviewed in detail. Applicants had already been sent detailed questions and sent in answers to Councillors. Further detailed questions were raised for each applicant at the meeting. It was RESOLVED to approve the following grant approvals for 2026/27:
- Synwell Playing Fields Association requested £5000 – replace equipment on the children’s play area: It was proposed to award £2200 but not seconded. It was proposed to award £5000 and seconded. It was RESOLVED to award £5000.
- Christmas Under The Edge requested £789 – non-refundable costs for the 2026 Christmas event e.g. road closures, insurance: It was RESOLVED to award £789
- Inspire Therapy requested £2000 – mental health provision for local children and parents: It was proposed to award £1000 but did not reach a majority. It was proposed to award £2000. It was RESOLVED to award £2000
- KLB Friends £500 – music and drama provision for students: It was RESOLVED to award £500
- Longfield Hospice £500 – ongoing care costs in 2026 for local residents: It was RESOLVED to award £500
- Transition Stroud £395 – litter pickers, hi-vis, and education materials for local children: It was RESOLVED to award £395

Cllrs F Hulls and B Britton-Griffiths left the meeting

Wotton Community Interest Group (Wotton Pride) £700 – event insurance, toilets: It was RESOLVED to award £700

Long Street Summer Social £2000 – event road closure, first aid, toilets: It was proposed to award £700 there were 3 for and 3 against. The Chairman used his casting vote to support £700. It was RESOLVED to award £700.

Cllrs F Hulls and B Britton-Griffiths joined the meeting

- d) To approve Budget and set Precept for Year 2026/27
- There was a lengthy discussion on the proposed budgets including increasing provision for the repair and maintenance of the Town Hall and Chipping Hall; upgrade of the CCTV; increasing biodiversity; and provision of youth services. It was RESOLVED to use £62,457 of general reserves to offset the precept; and to approve a precept request for £583,985 for the financial year 2026/2027.

District Cllrs C Braun and G Kitchen left the meeting

7 members of the public left the meeting

It was RESOLVED to approve the following grants:

South West Air Ambulance: £300

Cobalt: £250

Citizen Advice: £300

Tabernacle Church for grasscutting: £250

T.7671 Accounts

- a) It was RESOLVED to agree banking access and signatory of the locum Deputy Clerk
- b) Positive feedback was received from Cllrs E Edwards and R Greenup on the quarterly internal audit checks for period July – September 2025
- c) It was RESOLVED for Councillors R Halpin and B Britton-Griffiths to carry out quarterly internal audit / checks for period October – December 2025
- d) It was RESOLVED to disconnect the water and electricity meter from Old Town toilets.
- e) It was RESOLVED to not make a donation amount to Open Spaces Society's legal action appeal
- f) The increase in Suez contract waste and recycling prices was noted
- g) The 2025/26 budget report was noted.
- h) It was RESOLVED to approve the January 2026 accounts for payment

T.7672 To agree the date for the meeting with the principal employment law solicitor

It was RESOLVED to offer the 9th February 2026 at 7.30pm to meet the principal employment law solicitor

T.7673 Town Hall and Chipping Hall repairs project

- a) It was RESOLVED to note approval by MHCLG of a public works loan (PWL) of £300k
- b) It was agreed to defer to agree contract arrangements to an extra ordinary Town Council meeting on 26th February 2026 following Planning Committee
- c) It was noted that the scaffolding would be dismantled on 12th February 2026 followed by the erection of the works scaffolding on 13th February 2026. The first works would be to check health and safety compliance and for the structural engineer to survey the site.
- d) It was RESOLVED to call down £300k of the PWL in one application.

Cllr R Claydon took the Chair

T.7674 Planning Application

- a) S.25/2349/TCA T1 Mature Beech - Pruning of the lower branches by 1.5m and removal of small secondary limbs. 16 Bradley Street Wotton-Under-Edge Gloucestershire GL12 7AR. It was RESOLVED to support the application.

Cllr P Smith took the Chair

T.7675 Play Area Improvement Project

- a) It was RESOLVED to award the contract to Kompan as per the Financial Regulations 11aii and 18.2 due to Kompan being the procured preferred supplier and designer to all the Stroud District Council play areas and to having provided over 2 years of pro-bono consultation work with the two schools of Wotton Under Edge and developing subsequent designs for the play area to the Town Council. This was confirmed by the Town Council's solicitor.
- b) An update on the project was given. A site meeting is to be held with Kompan to discuss the schedule of works.

T.7676 Solar Panel Project for Civic Centre

It was RESOLVED to appoint a qualified structural engineer to assess the viability of the Civic Centre roof for installation of solar panels. Cllr F Hulls will join the Working Group.

T.7677 UK Town of Culture 2028

The Government had announced the new grant funding opportunity for a UK Town of Culture 2028. The deadline for Expressions of Interest is March 31st 2026. It was felt that it was too short notice however the Council could aim for 2029. It was RESOLVED that Cllrs F Hulls and B Britton-Griffiths would be the lead Councillors.

It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the completion of the meeting agenda

T.7678 Buses

It was RESOLVED to write to the local MPs, Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council, and West of England Combined Authority to ask for financial support for regular buses to serve Wotton Under Edge to Yate

T.7679 Symn Lane Car Park

The car park construction and the developer are to meet. The Town Clerk and Cllrs P Smith and R Claydon have met with Gloucestershire County Council Lighting Engineers to discuss lighting plans and cable installations. Discussions are ongoing.

T.7680 Brief reports from Councillors

Cllr Thomas raised highways issues around the town and was asked to report on Fix My Street.

Cllr B Britton-Griffiths raised the red crosses on highway property and was asked to report on Fix My Street.

The meeting ended at 10.30pm

Signed:

Date: