



**Minutes of Wotton-under-Edge Town Council Meeting
held on Monday 16th February 2026 at 7.00pm in the Civic Centre**

Present: Cllrs P Smith (Outgoing Chair), L Hewish (New Chair), J Cordwell, J Lewis, P Underwood, D Thomas, B Britton-Griffiths, E Edwards, R Greenup, R Halpin, F Hulls, M Jeffery

In attendance: A Durn (Town Clerk), P Wilson (Buildings and Facilities Manager); Stroud District Cllrs C Braun and G Kitchen, and County and District Cllr L Cohen; plus 8 members of the public

T.7688 To elect the Town Mayor and Chair of the Town Council and receive the Declaration of Office

It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr L Hewish to be the Town Mayor and Chair of the Town Council

T.7689 To elect the Deputy Town Mayor and Vice Chair of the Town Council and receive the Declaration of Office

It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr R Halpin to be the Deputy Town Mayor and Vice Chair of the Town Council

T.7690 To receive Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted for Cllrs E Edwards and R Greenup (attending late)

T.7691 To consider and approve a candidate for co-option on to the Town Council and receive the Declaration of Office

An application had been received and questions asked of the applicant. It was RESOLVED to approve M Jeffery to be co-opted as a Town Councillor. Cllr M Jeffery signed the Declaration of Office and joined the meeting.

Cllr R Greenup joined the meeting

T.7692 Councillor Resignations

The resignations of P Smith and R Claydon were noted. The Chair thanked them for all their hard work over the years as Town Councillor.

T.7693 To receive Declarations of Interest and requests for Dispensations

None received

T.7694 To approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 19th January 2026 and the ExtraOrdinary Town Council meeting of 26th January 2026

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 19th January 2026 and the ExtraOrdinary Town Council meeting of 26th January 2026

T.7695 Public Forum

There were no comments

Cllr R Halpin expressed an interest in the Wotton Lions request and did not take part in discussions or voting

T.7696 Voluntary Grant Request

The request was reviewed. It was noted that the Wotton Lions support many community organisations and events in Wotton. It was RESOLVED to award a grant of £100.

T.7697 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

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County Cllr L Cohen reminded everyone about the Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund

[What is the grant for? | Gloucestershire County Council](#) which was still available.

She talked about the potholes in the area and reported that it is also a national problem and that more funding is needed from Central Government. She urged everyone to report highway issues including potholes on

<https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/> If a pothole is circled in white paint, it

means that it has been scheduled to be repaired in 28 days. Bradley Street is scheduled to be fixed in March 2026 in liaison with Stroud District Council newbuild development. She has pitched for Long Street to be scheduled in for 2026/27 from the highways budget. She reported that Gloucestershire County Council is reviewing the highways contract for more flexibility. She asked everyone to clear the drains of mud and leaves outside their properties to help with flood prevention. She also asked dog walkers to be responsible and to pick up their dog's faeces and bin it at home if the bins are full as there is very limited budget for bin emptying. There followed a discussion on dog faeces fouling and owner behaviour and that education was needed. Cllr Greenup reported that had run a campaign on dog faeces fouling in a deprived area in Wales and also worked with schools. County Cllr L Cohen was interested in this and asked Cllr Greenup to work with her on a campaign.

District Cllrs C Braun, G Kitchen, and L Cohen 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).

District Cllr G Kitchen reported that dog faeces fouling and overflowing bins can also be reported on <https://fixmystreet.gloucestershire.gov.uk/>.

There are [Culture grants 2026](#) available for a maximum of £2000 to support arts & culture activities in the Stroud district. The grants will focus on supporting future generations.

Garden waste can now be collected from properties in narrow lanes as there are smaller vehicles in use.

District Cllr C Braun reported that she is leading a meeting in March 2026 with the Forestry Commission about the forestry works and tree felling in Westridge Woods. There was a discussion on problem parking areas in Wotton and possible solutions. It was agreed that there needed to be a separate meeting on this.

County and District Councillors were thanked for their reports and attending the meeting and answering questions.

T.7698 Accounts

- a) It was RESOLVED to agree to the removal of former Councillors P Smith and R Claydon as signatories from Unity Town Council Bank Accounts
- b) It was RESOLVED that Cllrs L Hewish and R Halpin to be added as signatories to Town Council Unity Bank Accounts

- c) The Unity bank reduction of interest rate & change to fees and charges going forward were noted.
- d) Cllrs R Halpin and B Britton-Griffiths reported that the quarterly audit checks of the finances were in order.
- e) It was RESOLVED for Cllr D Thomas and J Lewis to carry out next quarterly audit
- f) It was RESOLVED to agree renewal of annual membership to National Allotment Society of £70
- g) It was RESOLVED to agree renewal of annual membership to Gloucester Playing Fields Association of £100
- h) It was RESOLVED to approve renewal of contract for 14 pages with extra pages as required in the Wotton Directory for 2026/27
- i) It was RESOLVED to approve quote from S Tasker for Independent Internal Audit for 2025 – 26

County & District Cllr L Cohen left the meeting

- j) It was RESOLVED to approve quote and award contract to CH Stokes Tree Surgery & Fencing Ltd for replacement fencing at Knapp Road Allotments
- k) It was RESOLVED to approve quote for hedge trimmer, blower, and battery charger from T Hawkins for battery-operated equipment
- l) It was RESOLVED to approve quote from Jackson Lift Services Ltd for repairs to Civic Centre lift following service
- m) It was requested that 3 quotes be obtained for updating the lift alarm system
- n) The 2025/26 budget report was noted with no comments.
- o) It was RESOLVED to approve February 2026 accounts for payment

T.7699 Play Gloucestershire

The 2025 Quarter 4 report was noted. The 3-year Service Level Agreement was reviewed. It was RESOLVED to agree to a 3-year SLA with Play Gloucestershire delivering play activities in Wotton.

T.7700 Training for Councillors

There was a discussion on the need for training for Councillors and the opportunities were reviewed. It was felt that it would be better value for money and of more benefit if the Council received bespoke training in person. It was RESOLVED to commission Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils to provide a series of bespoke training for various topics.

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors of the Code of Conduct training being led by the Monitoring Officer. All Councillors strongly encouraged to attend.

T.7701 Election of Membership to Committees, Working Groups, and Partnerships:

Concerns were raised about the time availability of Councillors for Working Groups, Committees, and Community Organisation representation.

Cllr R Halpin agreed to join the Public Rights of Way Working Group as the Council representative.

Councillors to review the following and discuss at the next meeting.

- a) Planning Committee

- b) Remembrance Parade Working Group
- c) Allotments Working Group
- d) PROW/Amenity Areas Working Group
- e) Town Regeneration and Events Working Group
- f) Commemoration Working Group
- g) Finance and Special Purposes Committee
- h) Strategic Planning Working Group
- i) Car Park Working Group
- j) Climate Change Working Group

T.7702 Appointment of Representatives to organisations:

- a) Wotton & District Recreation Trust
- b) Beaumont-le-Roger Society
- c) Wotton Youth Partnership
- d) Wotton-under-Edge General Charities
- e) Wotton-under-Edge Combined Charities
- f) Wotton Community Sports Foundation
- g) Snow Warden
- h) Water Course Warden
- i) Wotton Area Climate Action Network
- j) Rural Services Network
- k) Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum
- l) Synwell Playing Fields Committee
- m) Wotton-under-Edge Swimming Pool
- n) Wotton in Bloom
- o) Under The Edge Arts
- p) Greenway Group

T.7703 Annual Town Meeting 2026

It was RESOLVED for the Annual Town Meeting to be held at 6.30pm before the April 20th 2026 Town Council meeting with a public drop-in meeting on a Saturday so families and working people are more able to attend. It was suggested 16th May 2026, Cllr B Britton-Griffiths to check Chipping Hall availability.

T.7704 Civic Calendar of meeting dates 2026/27

It was RESOLVED to approve the civic calendar for 2026/27

T.7705 Projects

- a) Town Hall & Chipping Hall

The scaffolding has been replaced to a works scaffold and surveys carried out on the condition of the buildings. The subsequent schedule of works is being developed and actioned. The completion is expected by the end of August 2026, weather permitting.

- b) Symn Lane Play Area Improvement Project

Bluecoat School have been very helpful and allowed the use of their carpark during half-term for parking and delivery vehicles. The outdated play equipment is being removed. Estimated completion by Easter 2026.

- c) Symn Lane Car Park

The specialist carpark construction consultant and the developer are due to meet in the first week of March to discuss the schedule of works and inspection.

d) Solar Panel Project Civic Centre

A structural engineer will initially assess the Civic Centre roof in March 2026

T.7706 Brief reports from Councillors

Cllr D Thomas reported that Wotton Area Climate Action Network (WACAN) will hold a public social evening on 9th March 2026 at the Chipping Hall.

T.7707 EXEMPT: 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 for the Public and Press to leave the meeting

P Wilson (Buildings & Facilities Manager), and District Cllrs C Braun & G Kitchen left the meeting

T.7708 Staffing Report

The Chair asked that Council be sensitive to people and to be kind. She paused the meeting for a brief reflection.

Councillors referred to the employment lawyer's meeting held before this Council meeting which they found useful. It was RESOLVED to approve the backpay at a spot salary point and not as an incremental point from November 2021 to August 2025.

T.7709 Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk reported on her huge workload, the impact on staff of the pay and how staff felt they had been treated, and Councillor behaviour and communication etiquette that she felt needed improvement. She hoped that the training would improve the working relationship. The Chair thanked her for her honesty and raising it with Council.

The meeting ended at 9.55pm

Signed:

Date: