

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 8 JULY 2008
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr P Jay (Town Mayor)	
Cllr T Gardiner (Deputy Mayor)	
Cllr T Airey	Cllr C Carritt
Cllr J Cooper	Cllr A Glees
Cllr Mrs A Grant	Cllr P Redpath
Cllr Mrs T Redpath	Cllr Mrs P Richardson
Cllr Mrs E Stokes	Cllr B Yoxall

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

County Cllr I Hudspeth, District Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore and Mr K Butler (WODC).

WTC/89/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Mrs E Jay.

WTC/90/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr A Glees declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item No. 12(a) (iv), planning application in respect of 2A Park Lane, as he was a neighbour and friend of the applicant.

Cllr B Yoxall declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item No. 29, 6 Park Street, as he was a friend of the tenants.

WTC/91/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 10 June 2008 were agreed and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Minute WTC/48/08(b) Finance Committee - Resolution (i) delete "Cllr Mrs T Redpath abstaining".
Minute WTC/51/08(b) Proposal by Cllr Mrs T Redpath - delete "by eight votes to six".

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meetings of the Town Council held on 24 June 2008 and 27 June 2008 were agreed and signed as correct records.

WTC/92/08 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

County Councillor I Hudspeth advised the meeting that the County Council would be formally objecting to the proposal to site an eco-town at Weston Otmoor. A special Council meeting was to be held to elect a new member of the Cabinet to replace John Howell, who had been elected as the new MP for Henley. In response to a question from a Member, Cllr Hudspeth stated that the need for double yellow lines on the southbound carriageway of Oxford Street hill and the portion of Brook Hill fronting the bottom of Union Street had been passed to County Highways and there was no further action that the Town Council needed to take.

District Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore referred to an article in Woodstock and Bladon News regarding affordable housing and reported what she understood to be the correct number of people wishing to live in such accommodation, etc. in the town. In response, a Member stated that the figures quoted in the article had been obtained from a Housing Officer from the District Council.

The Town Mayor, Cllr P Jay, welcomed to the meeting Mr K Butler, Head of Administrative Services at West Oxfordshire District Council. Cllr Jay advised Mr Butler of the Town Council's shock at the decision of the Audit and General Purposes Committee not to allow the Council to continue to function with thirteen Members, following the recent election process. Mr Butler acknowledged that the law on this matter was not clear but he set out the background to the District Council's decision, and drew attention to the general presumption that any changes in the number of Members on a Council should take effect at the next Ordinary elections. He stated that the District Council could have called an election straight away, and therefore the decision to invite the Town Council to commence the co-option process was a reasonable response. In response to questions from the Town Mayor, Mr Butler stated that he did not have a remit to agree to further dialogue on this matter, but confirmed that if the Town Council commenced the co-option process in September with a view to taking a decision to co-opt in October, that would be sufficient.

Mr Butler responded to further questions from Members by confirming that there was no appeal process that the Town Council could resort to, unless there was new evidence to present; that he could not speculate on whether the speech made at the meeting of the Audit and General Purposes Committee by Cllr C Carritt in support of co-option had influenced Members; that he could not agree to consultation with the electorate of Woodstock on this matter; and that there was no policy which dictated how many Councillors a Town or Parish should have dependant on the number of electors.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Butler for his attendance and invited him to stay and hear the remainder of the debate on this matter, if he wished.

WTC/93/08 CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLORS

With the agreement of the meeting, the Town Mayor brought this item forward in the Agenda.

Members received and considered a report of the Town Clerk on the decision of the District Council's Audit and General Purposes Committee to request the Town Council to fill the three vacancies on the Town Council by co-option as soon as possible. If the Town Council did not take steps to fill the vacancies by 30 September, an election would be called by the District Council to fill them. The Committee had agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review for the Town, such that any changes which were to arise from such a review could be implemented at the next Ordinary elections for the Town in 2012.

It was Proposed by Cllr P Redpath, seconded by Cllr T Gardiner

That Woodstock Town Council seeks to co-opt three new Members to the Council, and invites members of the electorate to put their names forward for co-option. Nominations to be with the Clerk no later than 20 September 2008.

The Proposal was put to the meeting and was agreed by ten votes to two.

Cllr T Gardiner addressed the meeting on the actions of Cllr C Carritt in attending the meeting of the District Council's Audit and General Purposes Committee to speak in favour of co-option. He expressed his disappointment at Cllr Carritt's disregard for the essential culture of collective responsibility for decisions and questioned the evidence that Cllr Carritt had presented. Cllr Gardiner Proposed, seconded by Cllr Mrs A Grant

That Cllr Carritt be censured for his actions and the impact these actions may have on Council Members, council costs and council efficiency and that a vote of censure is taken immediately.

In response to an allegation that the Proposal sought to prevent Members from expressing contrary views to Council decisions, Cllr Gardiner stated that this was not the case; Cllr Carritt could have

advised Members that he could not accept the Council's decision and that he proposed to speak at the Audit and General Purposes Committee meeting. He had not done this.

Following a debate, in which Cllr Carritt declined to participate, the Proposal was put to the meeting. A Member requested that this be the subject of a named vote, the result of which was as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Cllr Mrs A Grant	Cllr A Glees	
Cllr T Airey	Cllr Mrs P Richardson	
Cllr Mrs T Redpath	Cllr J Cooper	
Cllr P Redpath	Cllr Mrs E Stokes	
Cllr T Gardiner	Cllr B Yoxall	
	Cllr C Carritt	
	Cllr P Jay	
TOTALS		
5	7	0

The Proposal was declared LOST.

It was then Proposed by Cllr Mrs T Redpath, seconded by Cllr P Redpath

That the Council regrets the action of Cllr Carritt in giving evidence to the District Council Audit and General Purposes Committee on the subject of co-option without giving prior notice or consultation to the Council body.

The Proposal was put to the meeting. A Member requested that a named vote be recorded, the result of which was as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Cllr A Glees	Cllr Mrs P Richardson	Cllr C Carritt
Cllr Mrs A Grant	Cllr J Cooper	
Cllr T Airey	Cllr Mrs E Stokes	
Cllr Mrs T Redpath	Cllr B Yoxall	
Cllr P Redpath		
Cllr T Gardiner		
Cllr P Jay		
TOTALS		
7	4	1

The Proposal was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED

- (a) That Woodstock Town Council seeks to co-opt three new Members to the Council, and invites members of the electorate to put their names forward for co-option. Nominations to be with the Clerk no later than 20 September 2008;
- (b) That the vacancies be advertised on notice boards, the web site, the August issue of the newsletter and the September issue of the Woodstock and Bladon News;
- (c) That any candidates be invited to write a few words about themselves for consideration by Council and may be requested to address the Council at the meeting when the co-option issue is decided;
- (d) That the Council regrets the action of Cllr Carritt in giving evidence to the District Council Audit and General Purposes Committee on the subject of co-option without giving prior notice or consultation to the Council body.

WTC/94/08 ***OUTSTANDING BUSINESS***

None.

WTC/95/08 ***COMMUNICATIONS***

The Town Mayor, Cllr P Jay, reported that the Marlborough School was to undertake a ten year development plan for Woodstock with which the Strategy Committee might wish to be involved. He also reported receipt of a letter regarding Mayor's Cadets; it was agreed that this should be left to the Mayor's discretion as to whether to accept.

WTC/96/08 ***QUESTIONS***

None.

WTC/97/08 ***REPORTS/PAPERS OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES***

(a) Mayor's Committee

The Council received and considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Mayor's Committee held on Tuesday 17 June 2008.

With regard to Minute MC/05/08, Policy on Minutes, the Council received and considered a submission from Cllr Mrs T Redpath on the proposal to amend the policy so that no background material would be included in a Minute. The Town Council considered the views of the Town Clerk. It was then Proposed by Cllr Mrs T Redpath, seconded by Cllr B Yoxall

That the recommendation in Minute MC/05/08 be amended by the deletion of all of the words after the words "That the Policy on Minutes dated 5 April 2006 be affirmed".

The Proposal was put to the meeting and was adopted by nine votes to two.

The revised Recommendation was then put to the meeting and was adopted by ten votes to two.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Policy on Minutes dated 5 April 2006 be affirmed;
- (ii) that the decision of the Council taken at its meeting on 8 January 2008 with regard to the delegation of powers in the Environment and Property areas be confirmed;
- (iii) that no changes be made to the contracts of employment, job description, hours of work or rates of pay of any Council staff, unless and until concrete proposals are made in writing, supported by appropriate evidence.

(b) Strategy Committee

The Council received and considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Committee held on Tuesday 24 June 2008.

With regard to Minute SC/05/08, Terms of Reference, Cllr P Redpath commented on the provision which would allow the Strategy Committee to consider the parish plan or equivalent. He noted the recent move to a Rural Town Health Check, which he said was hugely different to a parish plan, and he Proposed, seconded by Cllr T Gardiner

That the proposed Term of Reference 1(a), Preparation and development of Woodstock's parish plan or equivalent, be deleted.

The proposal was put to the meeting and was defeated by six votes to five.

Cllr T Gardiner was of the view that a Committee should not be allowed to take control of planning matters. It was pointed out that the Strategy Committee did not have any delegated powers and could not take decisions on these matters. It was Proposed by Cllr Gardiner, seconded by Cllr P Redpath,

That planning policy matters be deleted from the Terms of Reference of the Strategy Committee.

The proposal was put to the meeting and was defeated by seven votes to five.

On the basis that transport, traffic and road matters were too important to be dealt with by a Committee it was Proposed by Cllr T Gardiner, seconded by Cllr P Redpath

That transport, traffic and road matters be deleted from the Terms of Reference of the Strategy Committee.

The proposal was put to the meeting and was defeated by six votes to five.

It was Proposed by Cllr T Gardiner, seconded by Cllr Mrs T Redpath

That the items included in the draft Terms of Reference regarding risk assessment and affordable housing be deleted.

The proposal was put to the meeting and was defeated by six votes to five.

RESOLVED (By six votes to five)

(i) That, subject to the consideration of a report with regard to responsibility for Risk Assessments, the Terms of Reference of the Strategy Committee be amended to read as follows:

- 1) to meet and confer as it shall deem necessary in order to consider strategic issues coming before the Council, including:
 - a) preparation and development of Woodstock's parish plan or equivalent;
 - b) planning policy matters
 - c) transport, traffic and road matters within the Council's competence, including co-ordinating and conveying to other public authorities the town's point of view on such matters;
 - d) the Council's policy for the assessment and management of risk; and
 - e) the Council's policies for affordable housing;
- 2) to report and make recommendations to the Council.

(ii) (By eight votes to one with Cllr Mrs T Redpath abstaining) that the Transport Strategy set out as an Appendix to the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Committee held on 24 June 2008 be adopted, subject to the deletion of paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 which are not of a strategic nature;

(iii) that the Traffic Advisory Committee be requested to consider a view that the methods for dealing with hindrances to traffic in Woodstock when major events take place at Blenheim Palace should be reviewed;

(iv) that the Council's thanks to Cllr Yoxall for the production of the paper on the Transport Strategy be recorded;

(v) that the proposal by Cllr Yoxall that other Members of the Council might wish to produce similar papers on subjects like employment, education, leisure and tourism etc be the subject of report by Cllr Yoxall to Council, with a recommendation that it be referred to the Mayor's Committee; (Minute WTC/103/08 refers)

(vi) that the budget arrangements for dog waste bins remain where they are, but that responsibility for considering this issue shall lie exclusively with the Council;

(vii) that, in view of the absence of information, the item relating to the seat by the bus stop at Hensington Gate be not discussed.

(c) Carnival Sub-Committee

The Council received and considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Carnival Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 11 June 2008. The Chairman of the Finance Committee warned of financial consequences if the Council gave support to the Carnival in 2009.

WTC/98/08 *REPORTS FROM OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL*

(a) Town Clerk's Report

Various items set out hereunder.

(b) Report of the Responsible Financial Officer – July 2008

(i) List of payments for June 2008

RESOLVED

that the list of payments made in the month of June 2008 and amounting to £13,357.79 be received and approved

(ii) Bank Reconciliation Statements (2) for June 2008.

The Bank Reconciliation Statements for June 2008 were received and adopted.

(iii) Summary and Detailed Income & Expenditure Statements for June 2008

Following input from the Council Members for Environment and Property and the Town Clerk, the Budget had been phased with individual budget lines being either spread evenly through the year or allocated, on a best estimate basis) to specific month(s). The reports now showed:

- Actual Current Month
- Actual Year to date
- Budget year to date
- Variance Year to date
- Annual Budget
- Funds available

The Summary and Detailed Income & Expenditure Statements for June 2008 were received and accepted.

(iv) Budget Review Report / Town Hall Roof repair costs

The Council received a report covering the effects of known variations to the 2008-9 Budget to enable consideration of the following:

- The funding of the emergency Town Hall roof repairs
- The suitability of the format of the report for future reviews of the completed budget documents in the early weeks of a new financial year.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Budget Review Report be received and accepted;
- (b) that the proposed method of funding of the emergency Town Hall roof repairs be accepted;
- (c) that the variances regarding the Hensington Road cemetery and the inspection of the Community Centre be accepted;
- (d) that the Council's thanks be recorded to the Members and Staff involved in the completion of this project.

(v) Community Centre – First Floor Room 3.

It was reported that Messrs Breckon and Breckon had introduced a new tenant.

(vi) Bank Mandate

To complete the revised signing arrangements to reflect the constitution of the new Council and in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.3 a new mandate had to be authorised. An embargo that was placed on Cllr J Cooper in 1994 in respect of signing cheques was noted and removed.

RESOLVED

that a new mandate be authorised for completion to specify the Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor, the Council Members for Environment and Property and the Chairmen of the Mayor's, Finance and Strategy Committees as signatories.

WTC/99/08 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED

that the grazing licence in respect of the Watermeadows and the lease of Office 3, First Floor, Community Centre be sealed and signed by the Town Mayor and the Town Clerk.

WTC/100/08 PROPOSALS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

None

WTC/101/08 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Cllr A Glees had declared a Personal Interest in application 08/1038/P/FP.

- (a) Ref: 08/0960/P/FP
Erection of detached dwelling and parking, provision of two spaces for existing dwelling.
8 Crecy Walk
Mr R Molloy
Decision: Re-affirm previous decision.

(b) Ref: 08/0995/P/LB
Internal alterations to include opening up existing window door opening.
Manor Farm, 12 Manor Road
Mr Blake & Ms Kilcoyne
Decision: No comment

(c) Ref: 08/1004/P/LB
Internal alterations and removal of chimney stack
50 High Street
Mr M Price
Decision: No comment

(d) Ref: 08/1038/P/FP
Removal of detached garage and erection of first floor extension to include raising of roof pitch and insertion of three dormer windows on front and side elevations. Erection of single storey rear extension.
2A Park Lane
Mrs Gosling
Decision: No comment

WTC/102/08 HONORARY TOWNS-MEN AND –WOMEN

Further to consideration of this matter at the meeting of the Council held on 10 June 2008, Members received a revised paper from the Town Mayor.

RESOLVED (By nine votes to one)

That the revised scheme for the appointment of honorary towns-men and –women by Woodstock Town Council set out in Appendix B of the Mayor’s note of 19 June 2008 be approved.

WTC/103/08 TOWARDS A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR WOODSTOCK

The Council received and considered a paper from Cllr Yoxall, with revised recommendations.

With regard to the proposal that other Members might develop papers on matters such as education etc, reservations were expressed as to whether Members had the specialist knowledge that would be required.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the adoption of the Transport Strategy, subject to deletions, under Minute WTC/97(b) above be noted;
- (b) (By seven votes to four) that the development of a Strategic Plan for Woodstock covering a range of subjects such as Education, Employment, Environment, etc. be not progressed.

WTC/104/08 RESPONSIBILITY FOR STREET FURNITURE INCLUDING DOG BINS

Refer to resolution (vi) of Minute WTC/97(b)/08 above.

WTC/105/08 SEAT BY BUS STOP, HENSINGTON GATES

Refer to resolution (vii) of Minute WTC/97(b)/08 above.

WTC/106/08 RoSPA REPORT ON PLAY AREAS

The Council received the latest RoSPA report on the condition of the Town Council's play areas. Members were pleased to note a general improvement.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be accepted;
- (b) that a schedule of works to be undertaken be drawn up and annotated as each item is completed, prior to submission to Council;
- (c) (By eight votes to three) that the equipment required to carry out the remedial works be hired or acquired within a maximum cost of £500.

WTC/107/08 SAFETY OF HEADSTONES

The Council received a report about a headstone at the Lawn Cemetery that had fallen over and noted the action that had been taken.

WTC/108/08 COMMUNITY CENTRE

Further to consideration of this matter at the last meeting of the Property Working Group, it was reported that Messrs Hall and Ensom would charge the Council £1,250 inclusive of travelling and out of pocket expenses but exclusive of VAT to carry out an inspection of the Community Centre and curtilage, in order that the Council could better assess the case for rebuilding as against updating.

After a debate on this issue it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that Messrs Hall and Ensom be requested to undertake the inspection of the Community Centre;
- (b) that the cost of £1,250 be funded by way of viring £800 from the budget for the replacement of the fire door and the remainder from the car park budget.

WTC/109/08 TOWN COUNCIL SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Contributions were invited for the next Town Council newsletter. All articles had to be sent to the Communications Working Group c/o the Town Hall by the end of July.

WTC/110/08 WALLHANGINGS OPEN DAY

The Council received an oral report on the Open Day that had taken place on 28 June 2008.

WTC/111/08 OFFICE OPENING HOURS

RESOLVED

That the official opening hours of the office be confirmed as being 9am to 1pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and at other times at the discretion of the staff.

WTC/112/08 TOWN CLERK'S ORGANISER

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk do purchase an electronic organiser at a maximum cost of £150.

WTC/113/08 CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

WTC/114/08 ***EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS***

RESOLVED

That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

WTC/115/08 ***FUTURE OF WATERCOLOUR PICTURE***

RESOLVED

That The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Mr Robert Edwards do meet with Mr Richard Day of Day and Faber in order that he may examine the water colour picture in the Council's ownership and take further action if necessary.

WTC/116/08 ***COVER FOR HOLIDAY LEAVE FOR CARETAKER***

RESOLVED

That steps be taken to employ someone to undertake the Town Hall Caretaker's duties when she is on holiday.

WTC/117/08 ***6 PARK STREET***

It was reported that a letter had been received from Wilsons Commercial, confirming the agreement of the tenant to a revised rent to complete the Rent Review.

RESOLVED

that the RFO confirm the acceptance of the Council to the increased rent.

WTC/118/08 ***24 MARKET PLACE***

It was reported that negotiations over the rent review were still continuing..

WTC/119/08 ***2 MARKET STREET***

The Council considered a further letter from the tenant regarding his request for early termination of the lease.

RESOLVED (By ten votes to one)

That in view of the outstanding service that the tenant has provided to the residents of the town over a long period, Woodstock Town Council regrets the probable loss of a valuable hardware retailer and, in view of the personal circumstances pertaining to the tenant, Woodstock Town Council agrees to terminate the lease from a date to be negotiated between the RFO and the tenant and the Woodstock Town Council will undertake the advertising and appointment of a new tenant at its own cost, subject to a dilapidation review and action by the tenant.

WTC/120/08 ***4 MARKET STREET***

It was reported that all rent payments were now up to date.

WTC/121/08 2-4 MARKET STREET

Further to previous consideration of this matter, Messrs Hall and Ensom had suggested that the Council have a schedule of condition report presented, probably in Excel format, identifying the condition of the property and repairs required with some costings. In this instance priorities should not be necessary. To prepare such a report and provide costings would cost £950. A budget of £1,000 had been provided.

RESOLVED

That the quotation provided by Messrs Hall and Ensom be accepted.

The meeting then went back into Open Session for the remainder of the meeting.

WTC/122/08 FIRE PRECAUTION WORKS – TOWN HALL

Further to consideration of this matter at the last meeting of the Council, it was reported that the cost of the works highlighted by ADT was £1361.64.

RESOLVED

That enquiries be made to ascertain whether the carrying out of these works would be required in order to secure renewal of the Entertainments Licence for the Town Hall.

WTC/123/08 “SHAPING FUTURES” – A DRAFT SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR WEST OXFORDSHIRE

The Council received and considered a letter from West Oxfordshire District Council requesting comments on their draft “Shaping Futures” document.

RESOLVED

That the document be referred to the Strategy Committee for consideration and report to the next Ordinary meeting of the Council in September.

WTC/124/08 THAMES VALLEY POLICE – “HAVE YOUR SAY”

Thames Valley Police had invited a representative of this Council to attend a special event to be held at the Oxford Belfry Hotel, Milton Common, near Thame on Monday 21 July. No Member was able to attend.

WTC/125/08 INTERGENERATIONAL DANCE PROJECT IN WOODSTOCK

The Council received and considered a letter from the District Council regarding the above project.

RESOLVED

That a grant of £100 be made in respect of this project.

The meeting rose at 10.30pm

Signed Date