

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 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 Mrs E Jay
Cllr P Redpath	Cllr Mrs T Redpath
Cllr Mrs P Richardson	Cllr Mrs E Stokes
Cllr B Yoxall	

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

District Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore and three members of the public.

WTC/136/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from County Cllr I Hudspeth.

WTC/137/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr P Jay declared a Prejudicial Interest in Agenda item 19(b), Decisions of the Uplands Planning Committee, in so far as it related to the decision relating to land in Banbury Road.

Cllr Mrs E Jay declared a Prejudicial Interest in Agenda item 19(b), Decisions of the Uplands Planning Committee, in so far as it related to the decision relating to land in Banbury Road.

Cllr Mrs A Grant declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 23, Skate Board Park, as a person involved in the promotion of this scheme was a personal friend and neighbour.

Cllr T Gardiner declared a Personal Interest in Agenda item 30(b), Professional Advisers, as he knew one of the firms involved.

WTC/138//08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 8 July 2008 and the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meetings of the Town Council held on 17 July and 19 August 2008 were agreed and signed as correct records.

WTC/139/08 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

A report submitted by County Cllr I Hudspeth was circulated at the meeting.

WTC/140/08 COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Mayor reported that it was the birthday of Cllr Ann Grant and Members expressed their good wishes.

The Town Mayor reported that he had received a proposal from a member of the public that amplification be provided for use at the public participation stage of Council meetings. This was to have been provided for tonight's meeting but in the event it had been unavailable.

It was noted that the Town Mayor intended to bring a further report on the issue of Honorary Townsmen and Townswomen to the meeting of Council to be held on 14 October 2008.

It was noted that a new style of Agenda had been introduced. It was agreed that this would be trialled for six months and then re-considered, subject to the word "Recommended" being replaced by the word "Option".

The Town Mayor reported that Woodstock had won a Gold Award again in the Bloom competition and warmest congratulations were conveyed to the Bloom team. A local awards evening was being arranged for 19 September when the Judges' comments would be available.

WTC/141/08 QUESTIONS

None.

WTC/142/08 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

None

WTC/143/08 CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLORS

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the appointment of Co-opted Members take place at the next Ordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 14 October 2008;
- (b) that all candidates be requested to submit a letter for consideration at the meeting on 14 October 2008, to include any relevant details about themselves that they wish the Town Council to consider;
- (c) that the use of a Person Specification in the appointment process be not agreed;
- (d) that the names of the people who have put themselves forward for appointment be made public after the closing date of 20 September 2008.

WTC/144/08 TOWN MEETING, TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2008

The arrangements for the Town Meeting to be held on Tuesday 16 September 2008 were reported and a copy of the Agenda was circulated.

WTC/145/08 TRAFFIC PROBLEMS 25 – 27 JULY 2008

The Council received and considered the report of Cllr A Glee on the traffic problems associated with the holding of the Game Fair at Blenheim Palace on 25 – 27 July 2008, the report of Cllr B Yoxall on the outcome of the survey on the impact of the Game Fair on Woodstock, and the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Traffic Advisory Committee held on Wednesday 3 September 2008.

Cllr Carritt, Vice-Chairman of the Traffic Advisory Committee, proposed that the Minutes of the meeting on 3 September be noted.

Cllr Yoxall reported that the response rate to the survey was only 4½% but nevertheless felt that some constructive ideas had been received.

Cllr Glees reported on the background to the formulation of his report to the Council, the facts that he had uncovered and the conclusions that he had come to. He reported on further discussions that he had had with the Chairman of the District Council's Safety Advisory Group and an Updating Postscript is attached to these Minutes.

The Town Mayor, Cllr P Jay, made a statement to the Town Council and he then Proposed, seconded by Cllr T Gardiner:

"The Council, mindful of the acute distress and annoyance caused to many of its citizens and others by the traffic chaos experienced on Friday 25th July in the area for several miles surrounding Woodstock on the occasion of the Country Landowners Association's Game Fair in Blenheim Park:-

1. thanks Councillor Glees for his report;
2. endorses his conclusions, most especially the strong objection to the Safety Advisory Group of the West Oxfordshire District Council being both judge and jury in the investigation of its own abject failure, as we find it, to protect the public from this catastrophe;
3. urges the responsible public authorities never again to license such an event unless and until the traffic management issues at and on the approaches to the venue, as well as all other material issues, have been fully considered by all the relevant authorities and found to pose no threat of a third repetition of the grave violation of the public's rights and welfare such as occurred in 2004 and again this July;
4. furthermore urges those members of the Safety Advisory Group with specific responsibility for traffic management issues, notably the county council and police representatives, to acknowledge and take responsibility for their failings on this occasion, together with the venue organizers, who failed to arrange efficient car parking; and
5. asks the Clerk to forward this report and this resolution to the responsible public authorities, especially Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council, who are investigating the matter and who have the responsibility for protecting the public in Woodstock and its environs in future from such disruption of their lives."

Members generally supported the terms of the Proposal, although certain Members felt that the wording was too belligerent and that it was not correct to conclude that the Safety Advisory Group was the wrong body to consider this matter.

The Proposal was put to the meeting and was adopted by eight votes to five.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Town Council's decision, as set out above, be forwarded to the relevant Authorities as indicated;
- (b) that the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Traffic Advisory Committee held on 3 September 2008 be received.

WTC/146/08 PLANNING

Ref: 08/1355/P/FP

Construction of 68 dwellings, access road, parking facilities, landscaping & associated ancillary development.

Land at The Holding and East of Marlborough School, Shipton Road

JA Pye (Oxford) Ltd

Decision: The Town Council welcomes the development but would prefer 50% affordable housing, which means an additional four affordable houses, and would request that the developer and Officers seek to meet the 50% target.

WTC/147/08 TOWARDS A LEISURE AND TOURISM STRATEGY FOR WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL

The Council received and considered a report from Cllr B Yoxall which set out questions to help the Council more precisely to determine its future role in promoting the town as well as through the provision and marketing of its facilities at the Town Hall and the Community Centre.

RESOLVED (By nine votes to four)

- (a) That Cllr Yoxall devise a questionnaire, based on his Strategy, for circulation to all Councillors;
- (b) That the results be reported to Strategy Committee who shall report to Council.

WTC/148/08 SKATE BOARD PARK

Cllr Mrs A Grant had declared a Personal Interest in this matter.

Members were reminded of a request that had been received from Matthew Drewitt for the provision of a skate board park in Woodstock.

RESOLVED

That Cllrs P Redpath, Cooper and Mrs Richardson meet with Matthew Drewitt and his friends to discuss this proposal further.

WTC/149/08 REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER – SEPTEMBER 2008

The Council received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer.

(a) Lists of payments for July and August 2008

RESOLVED

(i) that the list of payments made in the month of July 2008 and amounting to £27,897.68 be received and approved;

(ii) that the list of payments made in the month of August 2008 and amounting to £10,733.00 be received and approved.

(b) Bank Reconciliation Statements (2) for August 2008.

RESOLVED

That the Bank Reconciliation Statements for August 2008 be received and noted.

(c) Summary and Detailed Income & Expenditure Statements for August 2008

RESOLVED

That the Summary and Detailed Income & Expenditure Statements for August 2008 be received and noted.

(d) Internal Audit and Control

The Council noted that Internal Control Checks covering Proper Bookkeeping were completed for the month of July by Cllrs J Cooper, C Carritt and A Airey and no matters for concern were identified.

Internal Control Checks covering Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were completed for the month of August by Cllrs A Gardiner, A Gleys and Mrs A Grant and no matters for concern were

identified. A schedule of title deeds of properties owned by the Council and being held by the Council's solicitors was awaited.

(e) Carnival

The Council received and considered a report from the Responsible Financial Officer on the latest developments and arrangements regarding the Woodstock Carnival.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the cost of the extra insurance premium of £183.75 be paid by the Council from the Income received for the 2008 Carnival;
- (ii) that the Council provides an indication to the Original and current Carnival Committee of its view that any support for 2009 should be by way of a Grant / Donation and
- (iii) that the Carnival Committee be invited to present any alternative proposals for the involvement of the Council in future Carnival events to the Council no later than the October Town Council meeting;
- (iv) that, in the light of the foregoing decisions, the RFO do prepare a report for the Carnival Sub-Committee and come back to Council with a full proposal.

(f) Property Valuations

RESOLVED

That Wilsons Commercial be instructed to provide a Reinstatement Valuation of the Council's properties for Insurance Purposes in support of its insurance and asset valuation requirements.

WTC/150/08 REPORTS/PAPERS OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

(a) Property Working Group

The Council received the Minutes of the meeting of the Property Working Group held on Monday 1 September 2008.

RESOLVED

- (i) (By seven votes to four) that the scheme for the provision of a toilet for disabled people at the Town Hall be progressed on the understanding that research will be undertaken into the possibility of acquiring a Stanner lift for the stairway of the Town Hall;
- (ii) that the Town Clerk sensitively pursue the question of "enhancements" with Hall & Ensom regarding their report on the future of the Community Centre, before agreeing to make payment;
- (iii) that the Town Council advertise for Architects to submit proposals for a vision for the Community Centre in the C21 at an agreed budget;
- (iv) that the Town Council ask Robert Montgomery to update the costing estimate provided by P.Gibbs for the works to the roof of the Park Street properties and proceed as soon as possible to prepare a specification for tendering purposes so that the work can be done at the earliest possible moment;

- (v) that the cost of the works to the roof of the Park Street properties should be split one third/two thirds between the current and next financial years;
- (vi) that Mr Ian Lenagan be thanked for his help in obtaining a more realistic estimate from P. Gibbs;
- (vii) that the consideration of proposed tariffs for the Town Hall and the Community Centre be deferred;
- (viii) that the Side Room at the Community Centre be used as a community facility and for short term lets after suitable sprucing up;
- (ix) that it be noted that Mr M Hall has already undertaken an inspection of 2 Market Street.

(b) Christmas Lights Working Group

The Council received and considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Christmas Lights Working Group held on Thursday 4 September 2008.

RESOLVED

that, in the light of the Christmas Lights Contract having been market tested in 2007, and that the work is highly specialized in nature, the contract be awarded to Botanicare for another year.

WTC/151/08 WORK TO EMERGENCY LIGHTING AT THE TOWN HALL

Further to previous consideration of this matter at the meetings of the Council held on 13 May and 8 July 2008 it was reported that ADT had indicated that it was a British Standard requirement to provide safe and illuminated escape routes for the occupants of the building.

West Oxfordshire District Council, who licensed the premises, had reminded the Council that the Town Hall was licensed under a system of Premises and Personal licences introduced in 2005. These licences were not renewed. They lasted for ever unless otherwise suspended, revoked or surrendered. This system of premises licensing very much put the onus on individual premises to do their own risk assessment of what was required in or on their buildings especially since the advent of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

A Recommendation from the Town Clerk that the quotation received from ADT Ltd for the provision of illuminated exit signs in the sum of £1361.64 was not accepted by seven votes to four.

A Member called for a named vote, the result of which was as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Cllr Mrs E Jay	Cllr Mrs A Grant	Cllr A Glee
Cllr J Cooper	Cllr T Airey	Cllr Mrs T Redpath
Cllr B Yoxall	Cllr P Redpath	
Cllr P Jay	Cllr Mrs E Stokes	
	Cllr C Carritt	
	Cllr Mrs P Richardson	
	Cllr T Gardiner	
TOTALS		
4	7	2

WTC/152/08 FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING FOR STAFF

RESOLVED

That the quotation received from the Oxfordshire Fire Service in the sum of £385 for fire extinguisher training for all staff be accepted.

WTC/153/08 IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW ORDERING SYSTEM

RESOLVED

That a new Order Book system be introduced, to be used for all purchases of goods and services on behalf of the Town Council, although flexibility will be allowed in appropriate cases

WTC/154/08 REPORTS/PAPERS OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

(a) Strategy Committee

The Council considered these Minutes in two sections, firstly in the allotted place according to the Agenda and secondly after the consideration of Planning issues (Minute WTC/155/08 refers).

The Council received and considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Committee held on Tuesday 2 September 2008.

With regard to Minute SC/14/08 on the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East, the recommendation (a) of the Committee was not adopted by nine votes to three.

RESOLVED

(i) that the Council's comments on the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East be as follows:

1. (By ten votes to three)

Woodstock Town Council opposes the proposals by the Secretary of State to increase the housing provision beyond the levels included in the draft South East Plan;

2. (By eleven votes to two)

That the Council welcomes Policy CO4 in so far as it maintains a Green Belt around Oxford but rejects the proposed revision of Green Belt boundaries.

(ii) that with regard to the draft of the document "Shaping Futures" prepared by the West Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership:

1. the Council's comments be agreed, as set out in the Appendix to these Minutes

2. that the Town Council appoints a Group under suitable leadership to consult with young people in Woodstock and those concerned with their welfare regarding their needs and to make recommendations regarding affordable facilities and amenities that should be produced, preferably in partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, including possible re-development of youth and community centres.

(iii) that the response agreed under (ii) above be also used as a response to the draft Sustainable Community Strategy for Oxfordshire;

(iv) That the County Council be advised that the Town Council has no knowledge of the usage of or need for the Octabus dial-a-ride service;

(v) That the Council records its concern that the Traffic Advisory Committee is not functioning as quickly as it should.

(b) Communications Sub-Committee

The Council received and considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Communications Sub-Committee held on Thursday 31 July 2008.

RESOLVED

(i) that the Girl Guides be no longer used for the distribution of Council newsletters;

(ii) that the request for the inclusion of an accommodation link on the Council's website and any future requests of a similar nature be not agreed;

(iii) that the request for a budget of £500 in 2009/10 be considered as part of the budget process.

WTC/155/08 PLANNING

(a) Applications

(i) Ref: 08/1320/P/FP

Extension to existing row of garages to provide additional storage space.

Woodstock Police Station, Hensington Road

Thames Valley Police Authority.

Decision: No comment

(ii) Ref: 08/1201/P/AC

Affix non-illuminated fascia sign to front elevation

38 High Street

The Midcounties Co-op Society

NB This application included amended plans and an amended description.

Decision: No comment

(iii) Ref: 08/1202/P/LB

Affix non-illuminated fascia sign to front elevation

38 High Street

The Midcounties Co-op Society

NB This application includes amended plans and an amended description.

Decision: No comment

(iv) Ref: 08/1360/P/FP

Erection of single and two storey rear extensions.

45 New Road

Mrs K Oliver

Decision: No comment

(b) Decisions

Cllrs Mrs E Jay and P Jay had declared Prejudicial Interests in the item regarding the exception site development in Banbury Road. They left the room and took no part in the debate or the determination of the item. Cllr T Gardiner took the Chair for the consideration of this item.

The Council received a report on the decisions of the Uplands Planning Committee of West Oxfordshire District Council for the period from 6 June 2008, as supplied to the Town Council.

Cllr Mrs T Redpath referred to the decision of the Uplands Planning Committee in respect of the application by Vanbrugh Unit Trust for development of a rural exception site in Banbury Road and she proposed as follows:

“(a) Woodstock Town Council condemns the disregard shown by the West Oxfordshire District Council Uplands Planning Committee to the Town Council’s justified and rational objections to the building of an exception site development in Banbury Road. The WTC objections were passed in a formal resolution by a significant majority of the Council and this reflected local residents’ opinion. The Planning Committee’s decision is in flagrant disregard of the District Council’s own expressed policy on rural exception sites and ignores the fact that such developments should be a partnership between the District and Parish Councils and the community;

(c) that the foregoing decision be sent to the Leader of the District Council, the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer and David Cameron.”

The proposal was put to the Council and was adopted by seven votes to four.

A Member requested a named vote the result of which was as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Cllr A Glees	Cllr B Yoxall	-
Cllr Mrs A Grant	Cllr Mrs E Stokes	
Cllr T Airey	Cllr J Cooper	
Cllr Mrs T Redpath	Cllr C Carritt	
Cllr P Redpath		
Cllr Mrs P Richardson		
Cllr T Gardiner		
TOTALS		
7	4	0

RESOLVED

That the Proposal, as set out above, be adopted.

The Town Mayor, Cllr P Jay, did not return to the meeting after this item and Cllr T Gardiner remained in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

WTC/156/08 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That Cllrs Mrs A Grant and P Redpath be appointed to serve on the Communications Sub-Committee.

WTC/157/08 MEMBERSHIP OF MAYOR’S COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That Cllr P Jay be appointed as a full member of the Mayor’s Committee, rather than being an Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member as at present.

WTC/158/08 STARTING TIME OF PRESENTATIONS

At the meeting of the Council held on 15 January 2008 it had been decided that all presentations to the Council should commence at 7.15pm (i.e. 15 minutes before the start of Council meetings). Cllr T Gardiner has requested that this decision be reviewed.

RESOLVED (By five votes to two)

that all presentations start at 7.30pm in the future.

WTC/159/08 *TREES AT NEW ROAD PLAY AREA*

Further to consideration of this matter at the meeting of Council held on 10 June 2008, it was reported that the local resident had stated that the identity of the person who planted the trees was not known and requested again that the Town Council take action.

RESOLVED

that the Council offer to contribute 50% of the cost of reducing the height of these trees to six feet subject to the resident agreeing to accept responsibility for maintaining these trees at this height in the future.

WTC/160/08 *POLICY FOR PROVISION OF NEW SEATS AND BENCHES*

Members were reminded that a request had been received from Joan Morton for permission to site a memorial bench on the grassed border behind the grave of her son Christopher at The Lawn Cemetery. Members had previously agreed that a Policy should be agreed with regard to the siting of seats and benches and a draft was enclosed for consideration.

RESOLVED

- (a) that a Policy with regard to the siting of seats and benches be agreed, as set out in the Appendix to these Minutes;
- (b) that the request from Joan Morton be agreed, subject to compliance with the new Policy.

WTC/161/08 *DOG FOULING IN WESTLAND WAY*

The Council considered a letter from a resident of Westland Way requesting the provision of a dog bin in the area.

RESOLVED

That a dog waste bin be erected as requested.

WTC/162/08 *AGENDAS AND MINUTES FOR THE WEBSITE*

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Agenda and Minutes of all meetings that are open to the public be published on the website;
- (b) that the Agenda for these meetings be placed on the website as soon as they have been distributed to Members;
- (c) that the Minutes of Committee meetings be published on the Website as soon as they have been distributed with the Agenda for the next Council meeting, with a note indicating that they are Draft Minutes only, unless they are presented to another meeting of the Committee if that takes place before the next meeting of the Council.

WTC/163/08 CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

WTC/164/08 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/165/08 PROPERTY MATTERS

The Council received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer.

a) 24 Market Place – Rent review (Red Carpet Couture Ltd)

Members noted the report and that the RFO would continue to monitor with Wilsons on a weekly basis.

b) Professional Advisers

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr T Gardiner, had declared a Personal Interest in this matter. He took no part in the debate and did not vote on the decision.

RESOLVED

That, subject to a phased transfer to allow for completion of instructions in the course of execution, Meeson Williams be appointed to deal with agency and professional services property requirements of the Council.

c) Community Centre – First Floor Room 3. (Holderness)

RESOLVED

That the payment of £195 net be confirmed in respect of legal fees for the lease of office 3, 1st floor, Community Centre.

d) 2 Park Street – Lease renewal (Post Office)

RESOLVED

that the appointed advisers to the Council be instructed to undertake negotiations for the completion of a new lease on 2 Park Street, Woodstock

e) 2 Market Street – lease termination (Raithby)

RESOLVED

that the appointed advisers to the Council be instructed to undertake marketing of a new lease for 2 Market Street and continuance of negotiations with parties currently interested.

f) 4 Park Street – Fair Rent Assessment (Gunton)

RESOLVED

that James Smith be instructed to apply for reassessment of the rent of 4 Park Street, Woodstock as per his recommendation;

g) Rent Receipts

Members received an oral report on the situations at 6 Park Street and 4 Market Street. The Council noted the recommendations in respect of both properties.

WTC/166/08 STAFFING ISSUES

(a) Senior Administrative Officer – Mrs Z Lewis

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED

(i) that Mrs Lewis be confirmed as a permanent member of staff, undertaking the duties of Senior Administrative Assistant;

(ii) that Mrs Lewis be granted time off in lieu for attendance at evening meetings.

(c) Environmental Warden – Mr T Wright

RESOLVED

(i) that Mr Wright be confirmed as a permanent member of staff, undertaking the duties of Environmental Warden;

(ii) that Mr Wright be paid at the rate of £7.50 per hour for the duties that he undertakes in addition to the Environmental Warden duties, this decision to be reviewed after six months.

WTC/167/08 QUOTATIONS FOR WORKS

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding quotations received for the following contracts:

(a) Safety Inspection Of Memorials, Hensington Road And Green Lane Cemeteries

RESOLVED

That the quotation submitted by IMI in the sum of £3.00 per memorial, including a digital photograph of each memorial, be accepted.

(b) Replacement Of Doors Leading From Main Hall Of Community Centre Onto Car Park

RESOLVED

That the quote submitted by Wooldridge and Simpson in the sum of £1,127.00 be accepted.

(c) Repair Of Main Steps Leading To Town Hall

RESOLVED

That the quote received from OG Stonemasonry in the sum of £590 be accepted.

(d) Painting Of Railings Outside Hensington Road Cemetery

RESOLVED

That a decision on this matter be deferred for further information.

WTC/168/08 PICTURE OF BLENHEIM

The Council considered the recent advice received from Day and Faber regarding the provenance of the picture of Blenheim in the Council's possession.

A proposal that the picture be sold on the open market, at terms advantageous to the Council, was rejected by five votes to four. By a consensus it was agreed that the picture be retained in the Council's ownership.

WTC/169/08 AGREEMENT FOR USE OF COBBLES BY LA GALLERIA RESTAURANT

The Council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED

That Cllrs Yoxall and Carritt do draw up a plan showing where ten tables and chairs can be accommodated on the Cobbles and a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Council.

The meeting rose at 11pm

Signed Date