

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 13 JANUARY 2009
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr P Jay (Town Mayor)	Cllr T Gardiner (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr C Carritt	Cllr J Cooper
Cllr Mrs V Edwards	Cllr Mrs A Grant
Cllr A Glees	Cllr Mrs E Jay
Cllr G Myatt	Cllr P Redpath
Cllr Mrs T Redpath	Cllr Mrs P Richardson
Cllr Mrs E Stokes	Cllr I Thomas
Cllr B Yoxall	

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Inspector J Malhi, PC Richard Conner and PCSO P Workman (Thames Valley Police), Ms N Sperrink and Ms H Norris (Green Gym), Mr H Morris (Editor, Woodstock and Bladon News) and three members of the public.

WTC/263/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Cllr I Hudspeth.

WTC/264/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Mrs V Edwards, Mrs E Jay and P Jay declared Prejudicial Interests in Agenda Item No. 9(a), Banbury Road Exception Site, as they were Garden Tenants of the Blenheim Estate.

Cllr P Redpath declared a Personal Interest in Agenda item no. 11, Environmental Matters – Green Gym Programme and Funding, as he was a member of the Green Gym.

WTC/265/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 11 November 2008 were received and signed as a correct record.

WTC/266/08 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mr Innis addressed the Council on the question of the recent increase in vandalism in the town. Mr Innis reported that he had objected to the applications for late licenses for public houses in the town. His objections had been unsuccessful but he had been assured that any public order offences that resulted would be dealt with; they had not. He reported on acts of vandalism that had taken place in the town centre between 11pm and 2am, threats of violence and lack of attendance by the Police. He called on the licensees of public houses in the town to take action over this matter.

The Town Mayor, Cllr P Jay, advised Mr Innis that the Town Council was fully alert to and engaged with this situation and invited Mr Innis to remain to hear the discussion with Chief inspector Malhi.

WTC/267/08 COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Mayor reported that he had been advised that the grave that had recently been dug at the Lawn Cemetery had been excavated with the use of a mechanical digger, in contravention of Council regulations. The Town Clerk was sending a letter to the local undertaker advising him of the serious view that the Town Council took of this situation.

WTC/268/08 QUESTIONS

None.

WTC/269/08 VANDALISM

The Council noted the letter sent to the Chief Constable regarding the recent outbreak of vandalism in the town. As a result of this letter, Chief Inspector Jack Malhi, West Oxon Area Commander, and two colleagues were present at the meeting of the Town Council. Chief Inspector Malhi advised the meeting of recent crime data for the town which was very low. PCSO Workman reported on the outbreaks of vandalism and criminal damage that had taken place in the town in early December and 21/22 December, which were out of character for Woodstock, and advised that positive investigations were underway. Members advised the Police representatives of the incidents of vandalism and alcohol-fuelled events that had taken place and asked why there was no Police presence or reaction to deal with these matters. Chief Inspector Malhi responded by emphasising the relatively low Police resources that were available and the increases in their duties, which meant that a continuous Police presence in the town was not possible. Local resources had been affected by sickness etc but steps were now being taken to appoint a Neighbourhood Specialist Officer for Woodstock and an Inspector for the Woodstock area. He responded to the points made earlier by Mr Innis regarding problems emanating from the public houses in the town and advised of the action taken as a matter of course by the licensing authority and the Police. The Witney Inspector was taking on the role of looking at licensing issues in the District and this would include Woodstock. In summary, Chief Inspector Malhi emphasized that the Police would deal with these issues and take whatever action was possible.

Members of the Council noted that it was local Council Tax payers who were paying for the Police service and therefore the Police needed to respond to their concerns. Vandalism was taking place all over the town, not just in the centre. A focused Police presence was vital, especially on Friday and Saturday nights, to deal with drunken behaviour. In response to a question, the role and powers of PCSO's were explained. Chief Inspector Malhi expressed concern at the lack of communication between the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Action Group and he suggested that the Town Council might wish to appoint representatives to serve on that body.

Chief Inspector Malhi and his colleagues were thanked for their attendance at the meeting. The Town Mayor particularly emphasised the central importance of a police presence in the town at reasonably frequent intervals and in response to emergency calls. He asked Chief Inspector Malhi to consider the points raised by the Council and to report back before Easter. Chief Inspector Malhi undertook to consider this.

The Town Council received a report from Cllr C Carritt which listed recent acts of vandalism and anti-social behaviour that the Town Council had been advised of. Cllr Carritt noted that this was a repeat of a previous episode of anti-social behaviour and suggested that there was a need for a long term dialogue with other agencies such as the Neighbourhood Action Group, Pub Watch, the licensing authority etc.

The Town Council noted the reply that had been sent to Mr Hall, a local resident, setting out the action that had been taken so far in this matter, and noted the Town Mayor's column in Woodstock and Bladon News.

The Town Council received a report from Cllrs Mrs V Edwards, P Redpath and Mrs A Grant on engagement with young Woodstock citizens re amenities. Cllr Redpath reported that approaches to the football club and to Blenheim Palace for land for a BMX track had been rebuffed. Steps were now being taken to identify opportunities for grant aid. Members commented on other possible initiatives including the rebuilding of the Youth Club.

RESOLVED

(a) that the various letters and the Town Mayor's column in the Woodstock and Bladon News on this matter be noted;

(b) (i) that Chief Inspector Jack Malhi be thanked for attending the meeting;
(ii) that he be requested to consider the various issues raised at the meeting and that he be invited to attend a meeting of the Council before Easter 2009 to report on any action that has been taken as a result;

(c) that representatives of the Town Council seek a meeting with the Woodstock Neighbourhood Action Group to ensure that its concerns regarding anti-social behaviour are fully considered and acted on appropriately

WTC/270/08 ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

Green Gym Programme And Funding

Cllr P Redpath had declared a Personal Interest in this item.

The Council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk regarding the programme and funding for the local branch of Green Gym, now that it was an independent body. Nina Sperrink and Hilary Norris from local Green Gym were present at the meeting. They signified their support for the recommendations in the Town Clerk's report and answered questions from Members.

Cllr P Redpath reported on the progress which was being made towards a grant from WREN to BTCV to undertake important works at the Watermeadows. The Clerk was requested to apply for approval for the works from the Environment Agency as soon as he received the necessary information. The question of whether Blenheim Estates had any responsibility to contribute to the cost of these works was also considered.

Cllr Redpath also reported that it appeared that the County Council was accepting responsibility for the clearing of the grille near the Black Prince Public House, although there was a problem about the amount of resources they were able to devote to this.

RESOLVED

(a) that the outline of the works to be undertaken by Green Gym in Woodstock be approved by the Town Council and that the schemes themselves be then devised and implemented by Green Gym;

(b) that funding of £1,250 per annum, being the cost of each session (£50) x 25 sessions, be met by the Town Council; either as a new commitment or by regarding it as part of the Environmental budget;

(c) that the Finance Committee be requested to consider whether the funding referred to in (b) above is to be regarded as a new commitment or as part of the Environmental budget;

(d) that the Town Clerk write to Blenheim Estates stating that the Town Council is proceeding with works at the Watermeadows in conjunction with BTCV as they are essential but, given the outstanding question as to the legal liability for maintenance of the Mill Stream, would like to enquire as to whether Blenheim would be willing to contribute to the costs..

WTC/27108 CO-OPTION OF NEW TOWN COUNCILLOR

The Council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk regarding the co-option of a new Town Councillor to replace Tony Airey. Three people had put their names forward to fill the vacancy and Members were invited to vote as to who should be co-opted. Following this process, which was

undertaken in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, the Town Mayor, Cllr P Jay, declared that Dr Elizabeth Poskitt had been appointed.

RESOLVED

That Dr E Poskitt be appointed as a Co-opted Member of Woodstock Town Council.

WTC/272/08 PLANNING

(a) Young's Garage Site

(i) Town Meeting, 16 December 2008

The Town Council received the Minutes of the meeting of the Town Meeting held on Tuesday 16 December 2008. The Motions agreed at the meeting were endorsed and adopted by the Town Council.

RESOLVED

1. That Cllr Mrs V Edwards be thanked for taking the Minutes of the meeting.
2. That the Motion passed by the Town Meeting, as follows, be adopted as Council policy:

- Views with acute concern plans for the development of the Young's garage site which it regards as a key strategic location in Woodstock.
- Welcomes the reported decision of the W.O.D.C. planning officers to recommend that the planning committee not approve the proposals in their current form.
- Urges the Town Council to engage with the developers and the W.O.D.C in the development of acceptable plans for the future of this site and
- In particular considers that:
 - i) Affordable Housing should represent substantially more than 20% of the units in the development
 - ii) The building known as "Mrs. Young's House" should not be demolished as part of the development
 - iii) the railway station should be preserved as part of the development
 - iv) the architecture should be worthy of this key location which these present plans are not
 - v) a substantial increase in parking facilities in Woodstock should be included in plans for the development of the town centre
 - vi) there is strong support for the wish of the doctors to find a site in the centre of town suitable for expansion of the practise by at least one practitioner and including appropriate access for patients and others by vehicle and on foot
 - vii) the Town Council should engage the services of a planning consultant to support the Council's efforts to monitor this development and to press on the W.O.D.C. the wishes of the people of Woodstock as expressed at the meeting.

(ii) Employment of Planning Consultant

The Town Council considered the appointment of a Planning Consultant to represent the Town Council's interests in the on-going consideration of proposals for the development of the Young's Garage site.

RESOLVED

1. that the Town Clerk, in consultation with Cllrs Mrs T Redpath and T Gardiner, be appointed to meet with Mr S Sensecall of Kemp and Kemp and, subject to satisfaction with the offered terms and conditions, to appoint him to act for the Town Council with regard to the Youngs Garage site applications for planning permission, at a maximum cost of £1,500;
2. that Cllr Mrs T Redpath be appointed as Lead Cllr in respect of the Youngs Garage site planning applications.

(b) Banbury Road Exception Site

Cllrs Mrs V Edwards, Mrs E Jay and P Jay had declared Prejudicial Interests in this item. However, as there was nothing further to report on this matter they did not leave the room.

RESOLVED

That a reply to the Town Council's original letter of 12 November 2008 be demanded

(c) General Planning Issues

It was reported that Mr Jon Westerman, Senior Planning Officer with West Oxfordshire District Council, was unable to attend this meeting to discuss general planning issues in Woodstock., due to family illness.

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

That the Town Council records its intense disappointment at the inability of Mr Westerman to keep the appointment and that he be invited to attend the next meeting instead.

The Proposal was put to the meeting and was adopted by ten votes to four. A Member requested a named vote, the result of which was as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Cllr P Jay	Cllr C Carritt	Cllr Mrs T Redpath
Cllr T Gardiner	Cllr J Cooper	
Cllr Mrs V Edwards	Cllr Mrs E Jay	
Cllr A Glees	Cllr Mrs E Stokes	
Cllr Mrs A Grant		
Cllr G Myatt		
Cllr P Redpath		
Cllr Mrs P Richardson		
Cllr I Thomas		
Cllr B Yoxall		
Total		
10	4	1

RESOLVED

That the Town Council records its intense disappointment at the inability of Mr Westerman to keep the appointment and that he be invited to attend the next meeting instead.

WTC/273/08 TRAFFIC CHAOS ASSOCIATED WITH GAME FAIR

It was reported that no further replies had been received from the District Council to the Town Council's letters on this and other topics.

RESOLVED

That the Town Mayor write to the Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council regarding the lack of responses on these matters and that a suggestion be made to him that the traffic chaos associated with the Game Fair in 2008 should be investigated by the Scrutiny Committee of West Oxfordshire District Council.

WTC/274/08 *PROPERTY REPORT*

The Town Council received and considered a report from the CMfP. Members noted that tenders had now been received for the Park Street roof project and that the Property Strategy issue was due to be discussed by the Property Working Group at a meeting to be held on 27 January 2009.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report of the CMfP be noted;
- (b) that the Property Working Group be requested to investigate whether fire exits were blocked during the Christmas pantomime at the Community Centre.

WTC/275/08 *REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER – JANUARY 2009*

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

- (a) List of Payments for December 2008

RESOLVED

that the list of payments made in the month of December 2008 and amounting to £29,776.87 be received and approved;

- (b) Bank Reconciliation Statements (2) for December 2008

RESOLVED

That the Bank Reconciliation Statements (2) for December 2008 be received and noted.

- (c) Summary and Detailed Income and Expenditure Statements for December 2008

RESOLVED

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

- (d) Budget 2009-10

Hard copies of the completed Budget 2009-10 documentation were distributed at the meeting.

RESOLVED

- (a) That it be noted that the levels of Capital Expenditure proposed will lead to complications regarding the ability of the Council fully to recover VAT;
- (b) that it be noted that the District Council added £104 to the Town Council's precept in respect of election administration costs;
- (c) that the Town Council record its displeasure at this procedure and send a cheque for £104 to the District Council.

WTC/276/08 *SEALING OF DOCUMENTS*

None.

WTC/277/08 WATERMEADOWS WORKING GROUP

The Town Council received a report of the meeting of the Watermeadows Working Group held on 15 December 2008.

RESOLVED

that the report be accepted, subject to it being noted that Millar charges 1 for £200, and not 1 for £20 as stated in item 6 Pollarding/Trees.

WTC/278/08 PLANNING

(a) Application
Ref: 08/1877/P/FP
Erection of two storey and single storey extensions.
27 Bear Close
Mr Gordon Brown
Decision: No comment.

(b) Decisions of the Uplands Planning Committee.

RESOLVED

That the Decisions of the Uplands Planning Committee for the period from 3 September 2008 be noted.

WTC/279/08 LOCAL VILLAGE / TOWN WEB PAGES

The Council received and considered a report from Cllr B Yoxall.

RESOLVED

That, subject to further consultation with Cllr Mrs V Edwards, the proposed web page regarding Woodstock be submitted to the County Council for inclusion in their web site.

WTC/280/08 MARKET TOWNS MATTER

The Town Council agreed a response to a questionnaire from the County Council regarding this matter, as follows:

What's working well?

Our relationship with WUTW (local business association), now formalized through a framework agreement which recognizes the overlapping, but not coterminus, concerns of each body and provided for collaboration agreements wherever there is scope.

The wide range of community and commercial events that draw residents and visitors together.

the cooperation of schools, churches and OCC Museum

What barriers exist?

Lack of parking provision

Balancing the needs and activities of Blenheim Palace with the needs of other businesses in the town
Vandalism and anti-social behaviour as a brake on business vitality

What further support is needed?

Better police response to anti-social behaviour

WUTW is not sufficiently representative of all aspects of business in the town despite their vigorous efforts at recruitment.

WTC/281/08 ***NETS ON BLACK BOXES***

The Town Council received and considered an email from Leontine Cookson regarding a recent initiative by the District Council to replace the lids to the black recycling boxes with nets.

RESOLVED (By thirteen votes to one, with one abstention)

(a) that the District Council be advised that the Town Council considers the nets on black boxes initiative to be a bad idea;

(b) that Leontine Cookson be advised of the latest position.

WTC/282/08 ***DATES FOR MEETINGS OF TOWN COUNCIL AND TOWN MEETING 2009/10***

RESOLVED

that the proposed dates for meetings of the Town Council and the Annual Town Meeting in 2009/10 be approved, as set out in the report of the Town Clerk.

WTC/283/08 ***CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS***

Members recorded their thanks to the Town Mayor for donating the sum of £160.61 raised at the Christmas carols evening to the Youth Club fund raising effort.

WTC/284/08 ***EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS***

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/285/08 ***PROPERTY MATTERS***

The Town Council received and noted a report from the Responsible Financial Officer.

WTC/286/08 ***TENDERS FOR WORKS TO ROOF OF 2 – 6 PARK STREET***

The Town Council received and considered a report on the tenders that had been received for the works to the Stonesfield slate roof of 2 - 6 Park Street.

RESOLVED

That Mr R Montgomery, the Council's Consultant Architect, be requested to undertake further investigations into the two tenders which have been submitted and report further to the next meeting of the Property Working Group.

WTC /287/08 FIRE PRECAUTION WORKS AND ELECTRICAL WIRING WORKS AT THE TOWN HALL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

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

RESOLVED

- (a) That the quotations in the sums of £477.00 and £67.75 submitted by MC Fire Protection in respect of fire precaution works at the Town Hall be accepted;
- (b) that the quotation in the sum of £492.00 submitted by MC Fire Protection in respect of fire precaution works at the Community Centre be accepted;
- (c) that further quotes be sought for the electrical wiring works at the Town Hall.

The meeting rose at 10.45pm

Signed Date