

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2009
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

District Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore and Mr L Lee.

WTC/209/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs E Poskitt and I Thomas and also County Councillor Hudspeth.

WTC/210/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda item 7 (i) Cllr Mrs V Edwards declared a personal interest as she knows one of the bidders. Agenda item 7 (ii) Cllrs B Yoxall, P Jay and Mrs E Jay declared personal interests as they know the prospective tenants of 4 Market Street.

WTC/211/09 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore reported that Berkeley Homes had lost the planning appeal ref: APP/D3125/A/09/2104658 relating to 4 Oxford Street Woodstock. Cllr T Gardiner made Mrs Dunsmore aware of the uncertain future facing the fish manø in Woodstock, due in part, to the District Council's licensing costs.

WTC/212/09 BUDGET

- (i) The Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 17th November were received and considered.
- (ii) Cllr J Cooper, Chairman of the Finance Committee presented a report for consideration. He put forward three proposals at the start of the discussion. These were seconded by Cllr T Gardiner:

1) Planning Specialist

During the Spring of 2011 an examination in public will take place in relation to West Oxfordshire District Councils Local Development Framework and proposed that in BUD 004-2 the budget for a local planning specialist be increased by £14,000 to a total of £15,000.

RESOLVED (11 votes for, 2 against)

2) Garage Revenue

That the revenue expected to arise from the sale of the garage be increased in the budget.

RESOLVED (11 votes for, 2 against)

that this be done and that the money be ring fenced for the Community Centre.

3) Pension for Staff

That a provision of £5,000.00 be included for the provision of a pension for staff

RESOLVED (9 votes for, 1 against)

Mr L Lee then left the room temporarily in order to adjust the figures on the computer spreadsheets so that these reflected these Council decisions before other detailed budget discussions took place.

Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore then left the meeting.

VAT

The issue of VAT was then discussed. Cllr T Gardiner referred Cllrs to a report which they had previously received from the then RFO. In this it was recommended that the Council register some of its property portfolio for VAT purposes. This recommendation had been rejected at the time but Cllr T Gardiner recommended that the Council review its position in light of the current occupancy situation and the prevailing economic conditions. The Mayor proposed that 2-8 Park Street and 2 & 4 Market Street be registered for VAT. Cllr T Gardiner seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED (13 votes for)

The budget spreadsheets were then examined in detail.

Level of Council Reserve

The Mayor proposed that the target reserve figure be set at £50,000. This proposal was seconded by Cllr B Yoxall.

RESOLVED

Community Centre Capital Expenditure

Cllr B Yoxall proposed that the Capital provision in years 2012/13 be reduced from £10,000 to zero and in years 2013/14 be reduced from £20,000 to zero. This proposal was seconded by Cllr C Carritt.

Cllr P Redpath proposed an amendment that proposed that years 2012/13 be reduced to £5,000 and years 2013/14 be reduced to £10,000. This amended proposal was seconded by Cllr Mrs V Edwards but defeated (4 votes for and 8 votes against).

The original proposal was then put to the meeting and was adopted by eight votes to five. A Member called for a Named Vote, the result of which was as follows:

FOR: Cllrs G Myatt, Mrs P Richardson, J Cooper, Mrs E Jay, C Carritt, B Yoxall, Mrs E Stokes, T Gardiner (8)

AGAINST: Cllrs A Glees, Mrs A Grant, P Redpath, Mrs T Redpath, Mrs V Edwards (5)

ABSTAINED: The Mayor.

RESOLVED

Cllr T Gardiner asked that it be recorded in the minutes that £65,000 remains in the budget for capital expenditure overall for the Community Centre.

Precept Increase

Cllr C Carritt proposed that the precept for 2010/11 remain as currently budgeted (i.e. a £5,000 increase over the year 2009/10 to £60,000), but that in 2011/12 and thereafter, it be increased by £5,000 each year reaching £90,000 in 2014/15. This proposal was seconded by Cllr T Gardiner.

Cllr P Redpath proposed an amended proposal that the additional £5,000 should be applied from 2010/11 onwards. This amended proposal was not seconded.

The original proposal was then put to the meeting and adopted by nine votes to four. A Member called for a Named Vote, the result of which was as follows:

FOR: Cllrs Mrs P Richardson, P Redpath, J Cooper, Mrs E Jay, C Carritt, B Yoxall, Mrs E Stokes, T Gardiner and Mrs V Edwards (9)

AGAINST: Cllrs G Myatt, A Glees, Mrs A Grant and Mrs T Redpath (4)

ABSTAINED: The Mayor.

RESOLVED

Cllr B Yoxall proposed that the date from which the Council starts ring-fencing money in the budget for the provision of a new cemetery be deferred by 2 years. This proposal was seconded by Cllr T Gardiner. This proposal was rejected on a vote (5 votes for the proposal but 6 votes against).

Cllr T Gardiner asked each functional group within the Council to review all of their charges.

Cllr B Yoxall thanked the Deputy Mayor for taking the Council through the figures on the spreadsheets and also Mr L Lee for his involvement.

In summary, Cllr J Cooper asked that all budget amendments including those for VAT, planning specialists, pension provision, contingency level and the precept increase be approved by Council. Cllr T Gardiner seconded this proposal and it was adopted by 9 votes to 4.

A Member called for a Named Vote, the result of which was as follows:

FOR: Cllrs Mrs P Richardson, J Cooper, Mrs E Jay, C Carritt, B Yoxall, Mrs E Stokes, T Gardiner, G Myatt, The Mayor (9)

AGAINST: Cllrs P Redpath, A Glees, Mrs A Grant and Mrs V Edwards (4)

ABSTAINED: Mrs T Redpath.

RESOLVED

WTC/213/09 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

Cllr T Gardiner proposed 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. Cllr J Cooper seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED

WTC/214/09 APPOINTMENT OF NEW FINANCIAL ASSISTANT

The Council received and considered a report from the Town Clerk/RFO which explained the recruitment process that had been undertaken. She recommended Mr L Lee's services be retained for up to a further 50 hours in order to ensure an adequate handover period. Cllr Glees proposed that Mr Lee's additional hours be approved. This proposal was seconded by the Mayor.

RESOLVED

that the proposal be passed and that the Town Clerk/RFO be authorised to amend the previous job description to reflect the role of the Financial Assistant.

WTC/215/09 PROPERTY

(i) Rectory Lane Garage

Cllr Mrs V Edwards declared a personal interest as she knows one of the bidders.

The Council received and considered a report from the agent employed by the Town Council to undertake the sealed bid process. This gave details of the 4 sealed bids that had been received and recommended that the highest bid be accepted by the Council. Cllr Mrs V Edwards as chairman of the Property Working Group proposed that this recommendation be approved by Council and also the 1.75% fee for the agent. This proposal was seconded by Cllr C Carritt

RESOLVED

That the agent be asked to proceed with the sale to the highest bidder.

(ii) 2 & 4 Market Street

2 Market Street

The Town Clerk reported that British Gas had confirmed that the gas supply to this property was now a dead supply and that it could cost between £2,000 and £10,000 to reconnect it. Cllr Mrs V Edwards proposed that this matter be referred back to the Property Working Group, that the agent be instructed to delete all references to a gas installation in the property details and that heads of terms should then be sent to the prospective tenant. This was seconded by Cllr A Glees.

RESOLVED

4 Market Street

Cllrs B Yoxall, Mrs E Jay and P Jay each declared a personal interest in 4 Market Street as they know the prospective tenants.

Cllr Mrs V Edwards notified Council that the estimated cost of connecting gas to No.4 Market Street is £2,000. Cllr P Redpath proposed that this cost be split between the prospective tenant and the Town Council.

Cllr C Carritt amended this proposal and proposed that the Councils agent be asked to negotiate a sharing of the costs with the proposed tenant. This amended proposal was seconded by Cllr Mrs V Edwards.

RESOLVED

The meeting rose at 10.30pm.

Signed Date