

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2010
IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOM, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr J Cooper (Town Mayor)	Cllr Mrs V Edwards (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr C Carritt	Cllr T Gardiner
Cllr A Glees	Cllr Mrs A Grant
Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore	Cllr P Jay
Cllr P Redpath	Cllr Mrs T Redpath
Cllr Mrs P Richardson	Cllr Mrs L Glees
Cllr Mrs E Jay	Cllr I Thomas.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Three members of the public.

WTC/189/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllrs E Poskitt and Mrs E Stokes.

WTC/190/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 5: Grant Applications because he is the Chairman of the Youth Centre. Cllr C Carritt declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No. 5: Grant Applications because he is a Committee Member of the Carnival Committee and also the Treasurer of the Youth Club. Cllr Mrs V Edwards declared prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No. 7: WIFI because she is a Director of Urban Connections. Cllr Mrs A Grant declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item No. 8: Property Update as she is a shop-keeper.

WTC/191/10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mr Yoxall addressed the council about winter weather. He was dismayed that WTC had decided not to make a provision in the 2010/11 budget for winter weather and reported his wife's anger. Mr Yoxall said that he understood the pressures when making budget decisions but quoted from the recent addition of OCC's Oxon News which suggested that councils were best placed to help themselves and provided examples of how they might do so. He hoped that WTC would reconsider its position. The Deputy Mayor explained that budget figures were not the responsibility of any one Cllr. She also recalled that she had supported the motion about winter weather at the July meeting.

Honorary Townsman Dr R Edwards expressed concern about the maintenance of the gutters at the Town Hall. The Town Clerk reported that contractors should be undertaking this work on 6th December 2010.

Dennis Allen addressed the council about the insurance costs associated with the Woodstock Carnival. He said that the Carnival involves several hundred people and is organised on a small budget. He reminded the council that it had previously given a grant of £700 towards the cost of the insurance cover but that there has been some confusion about whether a grant needed to be applied for annually or whether this would be awarded automatically. He had tried unsuccessfully to clarify the situation earlier in the year. He said that because Wake-up to Woodstock now has an insurance policy that includes cover for the carnival the costs have come down. He asked that WTC award a £500 grant towards this years carnival costs and consider giving an annual grant of £500 for the next 2 or 3 years and then review the situation. He thanked Cllr C Carritt for his help with the carnival insurance.

WTC192/10 PLANNING MATTERS - APPLICATIONS

(a) Ref: 10/1601/P/AC

14 Park Street, Woodstock

Erection of replacement fascia letters, hanging sign and ATM housing.

RESOLVED

That WTC has no comment to make about this planning application.

(b) Ref: 10/1645/P/FP

111A Manor Road, Woodstock.

Erection of single storey extension.

RESOLVED

That WTC has no comment to make about this planning application.

(c) Ref:10/1672/P/FP

15 Banbury Road, Woodstock.

Erection of first floor rear extension.

RESOLVED

That WTC has no comment to make about this planning application.

WTC/193/10

GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Mayor declared a personal interest as he is the chairman of the Youth Club. Cllr C Carritt declared a personal interest as he is a committee member of the Carnival Committee and also the treasurer of the Youth Club. Several Cllrs questioned why grants and donations were being discussed before the budget had been agreed. The chairman of finance reminded Cllrs that a precedent had been set during the last 6 years whereby a total amount for grants and donations is put forward and it was therefore normal to discuss the grant applications before the budget consideration. He said that grants and donations formed an important component of the overall budget without which it was neither practical nor logical finally to fix the budget nor set the precept. Discussion followed. Cllr T Gardiner asked whether the finance committee recommended restricting the funds available to £2500 for 2011/12 and the chairman of the finance committee confirmed this. The Chairman of the Finance Committee spoke about the Woodstock carnival and suggested that it was an important, popular event that gave pleasure to many within the community and also raised funds for charity. He proposed the following three part motion that WTC:

- (a) Award a grant of £512 to the carnival for budget year 2010/11
- (b) Award a grant of £500 to the carnival for budget year 2011/12
- (c) Consider subsequent years (from 2011/12) on their merits on the basis of specific applications at the usual time.

This motion was seconded by Cllr T Gardiner. Discussion followed. Cllr Mrs T Redpath queried where the 2010/11 payment would come from. The chairman of the finance committee confirmed that it would come, like all other marginal spending, from reserves. The Deputy Mayor reminded the council that there was only a small amount of funds available after all income and essential expenditure had been taken into account. Some Cllrs proposed that the motion be considered in separate parts but this motion failed.

RESOLVED (6 votes for, 3 against)

That a grant of £512 would be awarded to the carnival for budget year 2010/11, £500 for 2011/12 and that subsequent years (from 2011/12) be considered on their own merits on the basis of specific applications at the usual time.

At this point some Cllrs raised concern that they had not seen all of the paperwork submitted by the grant applicants and so felt unable to assess them.

Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore asked that it be minuted that she objected to the fact that that grants were being decided before the outcome of the budget was known. The chairman of the finance committee

respected Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore's point of view but reserved the right to disagree about the proper sequencing of the top-down and bottom-up aspects of the necessarily iterative budget process.

The Mayor asked the council if it would be prepared to consider grants and donations further at the next meeting when they had been in receipt of the additional paperwork.

RESOLVED

That grants and donations would be discussed further at the December Town Council meeting.

WTC/194/10 BUDGET 2011/12

The council received and considered a paper from the finance committee that presented the Budget 2011-12: Finance Committee recommendations. The chairman of the finance committee thanked Cllr P Redpath for his helpful paper and calculations on the precept and apologised for a small error that had appeared on page 6 of the Finance Committee's report. He distributed an amended sheet.

The chairman of the finance committee reminded the council that SO 54 required WTC to set a budget before the end of November and proposed the following three part motion that the council:

- a. Adopt the budget set out in the tables called 'budget 2011-12 (5) (PJ19).xls
- b. Set a precept of £85,000 for 2011-12; and
- c. Appoint a commission including the chairmen of the council's principle committees and working parties to consider the long-term options and to make recommendations before the end of the year.

This motion was seconded by the Deputy Mayor. Discussion followed. Cllr P Redpath proposed the following motion under part (a) of this 3 part motion relating to budget, BUD005. He proposed that the refurbishment works to 8 Park Street be completed without further delay with the intent to let the property as soon as practically possible. If necessary, expenditure up to a maximum of £8k be brought forward to 2010/11, funding being taken out of reserves in that year and automatically returned to reserve in 2011/12. This was seconded by the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor asked that this motion be clarified to record that this money would come out of the '10/11 Budget Review surplus reserves' shown in the BIGPIC. Cllr P Redpath accepted this amendment. The chairman of the finance committee asked the Mayor whether this motion breached SO 36 of the council. The Mayor ruled that in his opinion this motion complied with SO 36 as an additional report had been received.

RESOLVED (12 votes for, 1 vote against)

That the refurbishment works to 8 Park Street be completed without further delay with the intent to let the property as soon as practically possible and if necessary the expenditure to a maximum of £8k be brought forward to 2010/11, funding being taken out of reserves in that year and automatically returned to reserve in 2011/12.

Discussion then followed about part (b) of the motion – the precept.

Cllr T Gardiner asked proposed that part (b) of the motion be amended to set a precept of £70k with an off-setting saving being found from the capital expenditure budget. Cllr C Carritt seconded this proposal and discussion followed.

Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore supported Cllr T Gardiner's proposal and said that families had limited funds whilst items such as food were going up in price. The Mayor also supported the proposal and noted that the government was reducing its support for council tax budget and therefore more money is coming out of household budgets.

Cllr P Redpath disagreed with the amended proposal noting that things would not get done unless volunteers were used. Cllr I Thomas agreed and suggested that the availability of grants is likely to reduce in the current economic climate but the council will still need to meet its commitments.

The Deputy Mayor reminded Cllrs that the proposed precept was based on the amount needed to meet the council's commitments if it wanted to try to cover its expenditure. Cllr Mrs T Redpath said that WTC had endeavoured to keep the precept low for many years whilst other councils had made steady increases. She noted that there were now more houses in Woodstock so the precept would be spread further.

The chairman of the finance committee said that he believed that the committee had done a responsible job and presented a sensibly balanced budget. He said that he applauded the work undertaken by the Deputy Mayor to pare the budget back in 2010/11 and that the proposed precept was required to balance things for 2011/12.

Cllr C Carritt feared that although PC precepts were not being capped this year they could be in future years and so this would be the year in which to make any increase, although he recognised that such an increase could be significant for some residents.

A member called for a named vote, the results of which were as follows:

For: Cllrs C Carritt, Mrs P Richardson, Mrs J Dunsmore, T Gardiner and J Cooper (5)

Against: Cllrs P Jay, I Thomas, A Glees, Mrs A Grant, Mrs T Redpath, P Redpath, Mrs E Jay, Mrs L Glees and Mrs V Edwards (9)

The amended motion thus failed.

The original three part motion was then put.

RESOLVED (9 votes for and 3 against)

That WTC

- a. Adopt the budget set out in the tables called 'budget 2011-12 (5) (PJ19).xls (as amended by Cllr Redpath's motion)
- d. Set a precept of £85,000 for 2011-12; and
- e. Appoint a commission including the chairmen of the council's principle committees and working parties to consider the long-term options and to make recommendations before the end of the year.

WTC/195/10 WIFI

The Deputy Mayor declared a prejudicial interest as she is a Director of Urban Connection and left the room whilst this item was discussed.

The council received and considered a paper from the Clerk reporting a letter and the guidance from NALC as requested at the last meeting. The Mayor proposed that the three recommendations in the Clerk's paper be approved namely that:

- (a) WTC post an item of news on the web site announcing that WiFi is coming to the centre of the town.
- (b) Subject to confirmation from WTC's solicitors that the contract is in order, the Clerk be authorised to sign the contract with Synaptix
- (c) WTC authorise the Clerk to order the 6 new IP Addresses required for the WiFi installation to progress.

Cllr Mrs A Grant seconded this proposal.

Discussion followed Cllr A Glees considered that it was important that due process be seen to be done. Several Cllrs suggested that WTC should advertise the proposed service and make it clear that people were being invited to apply to submit proposals. Cllr P Jay proposed an amendment to part (a) of the motion to add the following words to the end of this part of the motion 'and that possible providers

wishing to show an interest are invited to put forward proposals to the Town Council by the end of this calendar year'. This amendment was accepted by the Mayor.

RESOLVED

That:

- (a) WTC post an item of news on the web site letting the world know that WiFi is coming to the centre of the town and that possible providers wishing to show an interest are invited to put forward proposals to the Town Council by the end of this calendar year.

Discussion followed about the need to bring this matter back to council in January 2011. Cllr P Jay proposed that item (b) be amended and the words 'any new applications being received and' be inserted after 'That, subject to' and that (c) be amended so that this part of the motion has the words 'That subject to any new applications being received' inserted at the beginning.

The Mayor agreed to these amendments and the motion was then voted upon

RESOLVED (9 votes for, 2 votes against)

that:

- (b) Subject to any new applications being received and confirmation from WTC's solicitors that the contract is in order, the Clerk be authorised to sign the contract with Synaptix.
(c) That subject to any new applications being received WTC authorise the Clerk to order the 6 new IP Addresses required for the WiFi installation to progress.

WTC/196/10 A44A

Cllr Mrs E Jay distributed a paper to Cllrs. She said that she wanted to remind Cllrs of what the A44A group does and that the council needed to develop its response to OCC's 'Local Transport Plan, 2011-2030' in order to meet the January 2011 deadline. She proposed the following three-part motion that:

- (a) WTC reiterate its support for the aims of A44A – the working party for a safer A44 – which unites the 8 towns and parishes along the A44 between Oxford and Evesham.
(b) WTC support the gist of the document 'Update from the A44A' which is soon to be sent to all county councillors in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. A summary was circulated at the meeting. Broadly it urges:
- better implementation of the HGV Advisory Route of the A44
- the downgrading of the A44 between Southcombe and Troopers Lodge as suggested in the latest OCC Transport Plan Consultation document as a solution to Chipping Norton's serious air quality problem
- more freight on rail
(c) WTC authorise Cllrs Mrs E Jay and P Redpath to work with the clerk to send, by 9th January 2011 a response to OCC in reply to the Local Transport Plan Consultation Document. A draft was circulated at the meeting.

Cllr C Carritt seconded this three-part motion. Discussion followed. Cllr P Redpath said that the cost of the leaflet was being borne by the A44A group (which is not part of the Council) and that the document had been circulated amongst several collective parishes' that meet in order to get their collective view.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That

- (d) WTC reiterate its support for the aims of A44A working party.
(e) WTC support the gist of the document 'Update from the A44A' which is soon to be sent to all county councillors in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.

(f) WTC authorise Cllrs Mrs E Jay and P Redpath to work with the clerk to send, by 9th January 2011 a response to OCC in reply to the Local Transport Plan Consultation Document.

WTC/197/10 WODC (1) REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES; AND (2) COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

(1) Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Cllr C Carritt reported that he had followed up the Woodstock response rates with WODC and had found that there was no real case to pursue an additional polling station any further at this stage. He recommended that WODC staff be thanked for their assistance and this matter be taken no further.

RESOLVED

That WTC not pursue an additional polling station.

Cllr Mrs T Redpath left the meeting at this point.

(2) Community Governance Review

WTC has already confirmed its wish to reduce the number of Cllrs on the council from the current 16 to 12. WODC has now asked for the reasons for this request. The Mayor proposed that WTC inform WODC that it was requesting a reduction to 12 Cllrs on the grounds of population and because the current number of Cllrs dated back to the time when Woodstock was formally a borough that had 12 elected Cllrs and 4 aldermanic members. Cllr P Redpath seconded this motion. Discussion followed. Cllr T Gardiner reiterated his concern that reductions in the number of Cllrs might affect the functionality of the council. This view was supported by the Deputy Mayor who was worried about an increased work load on staff. The Mayor said that the Audit and General Purposes Committee at WODC will make the final decision and so Cllrs will be able to express their individual worries to this committee.

RESOLVED (7 votes for, 4 against)

That the Clerk notifies WODC that WTC wishes to reduce the number of Cllrs serving on the council from 16 to 12 on the grounds of population and because the current number of Cllrs dated back to the time when Woodstock was formally a borough with 12 elected Cllrs and 4 aldermanic members.

At this point Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore reported that she had received an additional £550 towards the Christmas Lights and passed this money to the finance assistant for banking. The council thanked Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore for her efforts.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Mayor 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. This proposal was seconded by the Deputy Mayor.

RESOLVED

That the public be asked to withdraw from the meeting.

WTC/198/10 PROPERTY UPDATE

Cllr Mrs A Grant declared a prejudicial interest in 24 Market Place as she is a shop-keeper and left the room.

1. 24 Market Place

The CMfP reported the latest communications from the agent marketing this property. She outlined the matters that he would like the council to consider. The Deputy Mayor proposed that the clerk write to Mark Meeson and ask him in his professional opinion which tenant he will be recommending to council to give the best return to the council and that this recommendation be backed by both bank and personal references. This motion was seconded by Cllr C Carritt. Discussion followed.

RESOLVED (9 votes for)

That the clerk write to Mark Meeson and ask him in his professional opinion which tenant he will be recommending to council to give the best return to the council and that this recommendation be backed by both bank and personal references.

The meeting rose at 10pm.

Signed Date