

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2011
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cllr J Cooper (Town Mayor) | Cllr Mrs V Edwards (Deputy Mayor) |
| Cllr C Carritt | Cllr E Poskitt |
| Cllr B Yoxall | Cllr T Gardiner |
| Cllr A Glees | Cllr Mrs L Glees |
| Cllr Mrs A Grant | Cllr Mrs E Jay |
| Cllr P Jay | Cllr P Redpath |
| Cllr Mrs T Redpath | Cllr Mrs P Richardson |
| Cllr Mrs E Stokes | |

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Four members of the public.

WTC/287/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore and County & District Councillor Hudspeth.

WTC/288/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr C Carritt declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 (i) (b) Planning Application Ref: 11/0448/P/FPEXT because he lives near to 80 Manor Road.

WTC/289/10 NOTIFICATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BY-ELECTION DETAILS

The Mayor advised the council that one of the two candidates who had intended to stand in the by-election had withdrawn their application. The counting and returning officer at WODC notified WTC that Mr B Yoxall would therefore become a Cllr as soon as he signed his Acceptance of Office. Following queries from several Cllrs the Clerk had obtained and circulated written confirmation from the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) that agreed with WODC's interpretation of the rules governing elections. The Clerk confirmed that Mr B Yoxall had signed his Acceptance of Office and the Mayor welcomed him onto Woodstock Town Council. Discussion followed during which several Cllrs queried whether Mr Yoxall had been properly elected and suggested that he should wait until the May meeting to officially take up his role on the council. Cllr P Jay considered that any document that declares on 7th April what happened on 5th May was not valid. He proposed that WTC rejects the opinion of the returning officer as repeated to WTC by the Mayor and considers that Mr B Yoxall cannot and should not be seated as a Cllr until 5th May or thereafter. Cllr Mrs T Redpath seconded this motion. Discussion followed.

Cllr C Carritt cautioned that if Mr B Yoxall had signed his Acceptance of Office but WTC decided to go against this it could invalidate the business at the meeting. The Mayor repeated the advice received from the returning officer at WODC. Cllr P Jay reaffirmed that he considered this to be wrong. A member called for a named vote (Mr B Yoxall did not participate), the result of which was as follows:

For: Cllrs P Jay, Mrs C Redpath and P Redpath (3)

Against: Cllrs E Poskitt, A Glees, T Gardiner, Mrs L Glees, C Carritt, Mrs E Stokes, Mrs P Richardson, Mrs E Jay, Mrs V Edwards and J Cooper (10)

Abstention: Cllr Mrs A Grant (1)

This motion failed. Cllr B Yoxall was welcomed on to Woodstock Town Council with immediate effect.

WTC/290/10 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF:

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 8th March 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

WTC/262/10 Property Matters (i) 8 Park Street: The resolution was amended as follows: That WTC employ WT Harris as recommended by Carter Jonas to undertake the refurbishment work at 8 Park Street to the sum of up to £17,074 plus agents fees and VAT.

WTC/277/10 Bowser Disposal. In the third sentence the word 'neither' was deleted and replaced with 'none'. The next sentence was amended to read 'The Community Wood Team was recently approached to see if it would be of use to them but it is not.'

WTC/280/10 Property Update. The words 'and the Bear Hotel' was added to the last sentence of the second paragraph. The fourth paragraph was amended to read 'The need for a Property Working Group meeting in the near future was agreed and it was suggested that the rest of the property meetings should also be diarised for 2011.'

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 22nd March 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record subject to 'Cllr I Thomas' being deleted from the list of Cllrs present at this meeting.

WTC/291/10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION WITH RESPECT TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

The council noted the report that had been received from Cllr I Hudspeth. Cllr A Glee reported that the meeting about the CLA Game Fair scheduled for 29th March 2011 was cancelled. The Mayor provided the council with an update about the Woodstock Visitor Information Centre and reported that unfortunately the WODC Cabinet had not reconsidered its decision. Therefore the information services at the museum will be delivered by Oxfordshire County Council staff.

Mr Ray Kinch then addressed the council. He reminded the council that he had asked WTC to provide some allotments at the Annual Town Meeting of 2010 and that there are now 25 people on an allotment waiting list. He reported that he had been working closely with the Clerk and the staff at Blenheim Estates to try and find a suitable site and one had now been identified. A rough site layout has been drawn up, access routes identified, the number of potential plots calculated, the initial rental amount and a draft lease discussed with Blenheim Estates and the practical requirements of establishing an Allotment Association considered. The project is still subject to the Duke of Marlborough giving formal approval for the proposal to proceed and therefore a detailed proposal must be submitted for consideration by His Grace. Mr Kinch was surprised that no budget had been allocated for allotments in the 2011/12 budget. He had recently addressed the Environmental Working Group. Confirmation had recently been received that an initial lease of 20 years would be acceptable. It was suggested that a budget of £7.5k would be required to establish the allotments. Grants will be applied for but it was hoped that the Council would contribute £3k and under write any budget shortfalls if required. Discussion followed. Cllr T Gardiner asked for clarification about the suggested budget and Mr Kinch explained that this was for one off costs to establish the site: the provision of water, rabbit proof fencing, a short stretch of access road suitable for use by disabled residents and hedge planting. He said that once established the allotment site would be self-financing.

The Mayor asked that the relevant part of Item 15 (3), the report of the Environmental Working Group be brought forward and taken at this point. The Council agreed to this proposal. Cllr P Redpath said that he had not yet seen a detailed scale plan of the proposed site but had visited the area. He considered that the proposal required considerable discussion and that further details were required. He suggested that it might be better to use part of the planned cemetery extension for allotments until it is required for burials, when it would be taken back and used for that purpose. The land would be owned by WTC. This is being done elsewhere. The Deputy Mayor thanked Mr Kinch for his work on this proposal. She reminded the council that the cemetery extension was not due to be purchased until 2016 and was therefore currently unavailable. She noted that although the relevant part of the cemetery extension would not be required for 18 years, WTC would then need to evict the allotment holders and another allotment site would have to be sought. She asked how other PC's were proposing to handle this situation. Cllr Mrs T Redpath said that in such cases the plots were not permanent but would be available for tenancies of 10 or more years. Cllr C Carritt reported that the development of the new Community Woodland Project was now nearing completion. He noted that this had been a great co-operative action between Blenheim Estates, WTC and residents and such collaborations should be actively encouraged. Cllr C Carritt proposed that WTC warmly welcomes the prospect of allotments for Woodstock and resolves to facilitate a working group to consist of 50% councillors, and 50% made up from those signatories to the request for allotments. Further, it is resolved that WTC commits to investigating funding sources and to contribute to any shortfall. This motion was seconded by Cllr Mrs E Jay. Discussion followed.

Cllr P Redpath said that WTC had a duty to make sure that money is not spent unnecessarily and was disturbed that Cllr Carritt had proposed a motion without reference to the EWG. He suggested that the proposal for allotments be put back to the EWG so that the option for using the cemetery extension could be investigated further. Cllr Mrs E Jay considered that a referral back to the EWG was unnecessary, the clerk and residents should be congratulated on developing the proposal this far and that the project should now progress. She offered to ask for donations towards the required finances. Cllr Mrs A Grant suggested that one option might be to fund the project from the Legacy Fund. Cllr Mrs P Richardson reminded the council that this was the fourth time that WTC had been asked to provide allotments since she had been on the council. Cllr E Poskitt congratulated Mr Kinch and the Clerk on their work with Blenheim Estates to identify a suitable site and referred the Council to the four part recommendation included in the EWG report that the Clerk should contact Thames Water to confirm the cost of connecting the water supply, investigate grants and the associated criteria, make a formal proposal to the Duke of Marlborough and subject to the approval of His Grace progress the project. Cllr Mrs T Redpath said that she had not been given the opportunity to move her report. The Mayor noted that he did not consider cemeteries and allotments to be compatible.

RESOLVED (12 votes for, 3 against)

That WTC warmly welcomes the prospect of allotments for Woodstock and resolves to facilitate a working group to consist of 50% councillors, and 50% made up from those signatories to the request for allotments. Further, it is resolved that WTC investigate funding sources and to contribute to any shortfall.

Nominations for Cllrs to be on this working group were sought. Cllr Mrs E Jay was proposed by Cllr E Poskitt and seconded by Cllr A Glees. Cllr Mrs T Redpath was proposed by Cllr P Redpath and seconded by Cllr A Glees. Cllr P Redpath was proposed by Cllr Mrs A Grant and seconded by Cllr A Glees. Cllr Mrs P Richardson was proposed by Cllr Mrs E Jay and seconded by the Mayor.

RESOLVED

That the allotments working group will consist of 4 Cllrs and 4 residents.

WTC/292/10 COMMUNICATIONS

None

WTC/293/10 QUESTIONS

The following question has been lodged by Cllr Mrs T Redpath in accordance with Standing Order 24.

With all the talk about reducing the number of Woodstock Town Councillors making the ratio of councillors to the population of Woodstock more in line with that of other parish and town councils in Oxfordshire, there has been no debate in Woodstock about the decision of the Local Government Boundary Commission in which it is “minded” to reduce the number of members of Oxfordshire County Council. The proposed changes mean that the number of councillors will decrease from 74 to 64 and the county council divisions have to be re-examined. The distribution of membership taking into account both a reduction in members and the predicted rise of 29,046 electors for the county means that each county councillor serving an average population of 8,163 rather than the previous average of 6,668. This is at a time when development in the whole county is increasing - but mainly in targeted areas. Those areas experiencing the greatest increase in housing numbers (e.g. Witney, Bicester and Didcot) are not within the existing catchment of the division in which Woodstock sits. This must inevitably mean that there will have to be boundary changes placing an additional burden on the member elected to represent Woodstock. Can the Mayor please obtain more information on the expected changes as they will affect Woodstock and pass that information to the Town Council?

In response to the question the Mayor circulated a report by The Head of Legal and Democratic Services at WODC entitled ‘Electoral Review of Oxfordshire County Council’ that was presented to the Cabinet of WODC on 16th March 2011.

WTC/294/10 MOTIONS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

None.

WTC/295/10 FINANCIAL ISSUES

(i) To receive the list of Payments for March 2011

The Mayor proposed that the list of payments made in the month of March 2011 amounting to £24,887.74 be received and approved. The Deputy Mayor seconded this proposal.

RESOLVED

That the list of payments made in the month of March 2011 amounting to £24,887.74 is approved

(ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statements for March 2011

The Council received and considered the bank Reconciliation Statements for March 2011.

(iii) To receive the Summary and Detailed Income & Expenditure Statements for March 2011

The Summary and Detailed Income and Expenditure Statements for March 2011 were received and considered. The Clerk answered a query from Cllr P Redpath about the use of temporary staff for holiday relief and a query from Cllr Mrs A Grant that the travel expenses claimed by staff.

Cllr Mrs A Grant asked why more detail could not be provided on the reports that were delivered each month and the Clerk confirmed that this was a feature of the RBS software package.

Cllr B Yoxall queried the under-spend on the Hensington Road Cemetery and Water Meadows. Cllr Mrs T Redpath reported that savings had been made because the Green Gym had undertaken much of the work that had been required.

The Deputy Mayor noted the high level of expenditure on property fees. She asked that the next CMfP investigate this matter and seek to establish fixed fees as it is difficult to budget at present.

(iv) Answer to question at the TC meeting of March 2011 about Christmas Lights

A report that had been produced had been in response to a question asked by Cllr J Dunsmore who was unable to attend this meeting. The council agreed that this report be carried forward to the May meeting.

RESOLVED

That the report about Christmas Lights will be carried forward to the May council meeting.

(v) Quarterly Report on the Disposition of Woodstock Town Council Funds

A report by the Finance Assistant was received and considered. This report arose from a recommendation made during one of the internal financial reviews and was considered to be very useful.

(vi) To Consider the Revised 'BigPIC'

The chairman of the finance committee explained that the function of the revised BigPIC was to bring together the functions of all of the other tables and this simplified version should be easier to explain. Cllr P Jay proposed that the Council accept the revised BigPIC and the Deputy Mayor seconded this motion.

RESOLVED

That the revised BigPIC would be used by WTC from now on.

(vii) Report on Items of Expenditure on the 2010/11 Budget for consideration to carry forward to 2011/12

The report on items of expenditure in 2010/11 Budget for consideration to carry forward to 2011/12 was received and considered. The Deputy Mayor considered that only the budget for the work on 8 Park Street and Christmas Lights should be brought forward. Cllr T Gardiner suggested that the budget for a project started but subject to slippage should be carried forward but if a project dropped out during the year it should be re-bid or drop away. The

chairman of the finance committee proposed that he go through the figures with the RFO and Finance Assistant. This suggestion was seconded by the Deputy Mayor.

RESOLVED

That the chairman of the finance committee proposed that he go through the figures with the RFO and Finance Assistant.

WTC/296/10 PLANNING MATTERS - APPLICATIONS

(i) Planning Applications

The council received and considered the following planning applications:

(a) Ref: 11/0451/P/FP

Alterations to previously approved application 10/0386/P/FP to allow changes to barns including window openings.
Hensington Farm Barns, Banbury Road, Woodstock.

RESOLVED

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

(b) Ref: 11/0448/P/FP EXT

Erection of detached dwelling and garage (To extend the time limit of Planning Permission 08/0335/P/FP)
Barn Piece House, 80 Manor Road, Woodstock

RESOLVED

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

(ii) New Development Banbury Road

The council received and considered a request from WODC to make suggestions for the name of the new housing development in Banbury Road. The Clerk had also circulated a copy of WTC/319/09 to remind the council of the previous discussions. Discussion followed. The Deputy Mayor suggested that the development be called 'White's Close' as previously discussed but other Cllrs suggested that it might be better not to use the names people or places. Cllr Mrs A Grant proposed calling the new development in Banbury Road 'Capability Close' and this was seconded by Cllr C Carritt.

RESOLVED (The vote was originally tied so the Mayor used his casting vote and the motion was passed 5 votes for, 4 against)

That WODC be advised that WTC would like the new development to be named 'Capability Close'.

WTC/297/10 PETITION ABOUT WINTER WEATHER

The Winter Weather petition by Woodstock residents was received and considered by the council. Cllr B Yoxall considered a £3k budget was reasonable and suggested that an application be made to the 'Big Society' fund. He said that the bid submission would require a detailed action plan and he offered to produce this. The Mayor proposed that this matter be considered by the Strategy Committee and advised Cllrs that he would like to join this committee in the future. Cllr B Yoxall agreed to this proposal.

RESOLVED

That the strategy committee will consider winter weather.

WTC/298/10 *UPDATING OF 2003 SOFTWARE*

The council received and considered a request from the Clerk to approve the expenditure of £720 (ex VAT) to upgrade the office software on the three office computers to 'Microsoft Office Professional 2010'. This package includes 'Publisher' which is used for the Town Council Newsletter. Front page will be retained for the Town Council web site.

RESOLVED (10 votes for, 5 votes against)

That WTC approved the total expenditure of £720 (ex VAT) on 'Microsoft Office Professional 2010' for the three office computers.

WTC/299/10 *FOOTBALL CLUB CAR PARK*

Cllr P Jay reminded Cllrs about the insurance problems associated with other users parking in the Football Club car park. It has become apparent that it is not possible to insure or use the car park unless it had been covered by tarmac and marked with white lines. The Deputy Mayor enquired whether football club members and their visitors were currently covered by insurance when using the car park and it was suggested that they were. The Mayor agreed to report back to the Council after he has confirmed the current position with the football club.

WTC/300/10 *'RESIDENTIAL PARKING PROVISION POLICY FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS'*

The Council received and noted a consultation that OCC are currently undertaking entitled 'Residential Parking Provision Policy for New Developments'.

WTC/301/10 *MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES & SUB-COMMITTEES*

(i) Annual Town Meeting

The council received and noted the draft minutes of the 2011 Annual Town Meeting.

(ii) Legacy Fund

The council received and considered the draft minutes of the meeting of the Legacy Fund that was held on 22nd March 2011. Several Cllrs considered that amendments were required to these minutes.

RESOLVED

That WTC refer the minutes back to the Legacy Fund Trustees.

(iii) Environment Working Group

The minutes of the Environment Working Group (EWG) held on 1st April 2011 were received and considered. Cllr Mrs T Redpath asked that it be recorded that the allotment recommendations made by the EWG had been superseded by the earlier discussion during the town council meeting.

The EWG had considered the possible encroachment on the water meadows and recommended that the status quo be accepted but that future encroachments would be the subject of immediate action.

RESOLVED

that the status quo be accepted but that future encroachments would be the subject of immediate action.

Weed spraying was discussed and it was considered too late to obtain new quotes for 2011.

RESOLVED

That the contract for Charlton Environmental is extended for a further year and that a variety of quotes should be obtained in good time for the 2012 season.

Cllr P Richardson proposed that the WTC grass cutter be asked to quote for cutting the grass at the War Memorial four times a year and removing the arisings. This motion was seconded by Cllr E Poskitt.

RESOLVED

That the WTC grass cutter be asked to quote for cutting the grass at the War Memorial four times a year and removing the arisings.

WTC/302/10 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 for items 15 (iv) - 17. This proposal was seconded by the Deputy Mayor.

RESOLVED

That the public should be excluded for the EWG report on the cemetery , the report of the Property Working Group, the Property Update and discussions concerning the 2011 Caretaking Requirements for Woodstock Town Council.

WTC/301/10(iii) cont'd

Cemetery

- (i) An error appears to have occurred several years ago in the Green Road Cemetery. This matter has been internally reviewed and is now in the hands of the WTC insurance company.
- (ii) The Council received and considered a request from a resident who purchased two reserved cremations plots in 1999 but now wishes to release these plots and has enquired about a pro rata refund.

RESOLVED

That a total refund of 50% be offered to the resident in question.

- (iii) A resident has enquired about positioning an inscription on a bridged memorial headstone in an unusual way. The Clerk had sought and reported the advice of the Technical Services and Guidance Manager of the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management

RESOLVED

That the Clerk obtains written confirmation of the expert advice and then writes to the resident in question and offer him the solution recommended by the Technical Services and Guidance Manager of the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management.

WTC/303/10 PROPERTY UPDATE

- (i) Update on the Community Centre Re-modelling

Cllr L Glees updated the Council about the situation relating to donations and grants. The Woodstock Society has offered a £2k donation towards a new sound system and it is hoped that other groups will also make donations. She has received a lot of letters of support from local groups and individuals.

An interest in the Big Society fund has been registered and this has the support of Cllr I Hudspeth. A large bid will be submitted to WREN and also to the GARIT Foundation but there are one or two management concerns relating to these bids which have yet to be resolved.

The Deputy Mayor reported that she and Cllr P Redpath had met with several builders and are currently obtaining quotes. In order to successfully bid for a grant WTC would need to appoint a surveyor to oversee the project. The Deputy Mayor will check whether WTC is obliged to use Carter Jonas to supervise this project.

The Deputy Mayor proposed that WTC authorise her to prepare a brief for the project management and likely expenditure involved in this three phase CC project and invite three surveyors to quote for this work. This motion was seconded by Cllr A Glees. Discussion followed. Cllr B Yoxall reminded the Deputy Mayor that the council had agreed to work with the Market Town Health Check which will be available at the end of 2011.

RESOLVED (14 for, 1 abstention)

That the Deputy Mayor will prepare a brief for the project management and likely expenditure involved in this three phase CC project and invite three surveyors to quote for this work.

(ii) Disposal of Old Papers

Cllr A Glees has studied the papers that were under review. He subsequently made several enquiries and has confirmed that they are of interest to the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies. He proposed that they are not destroyed but passed to these historians. This motion was seconded by Cllr P Redpath.

RESOLVED

That the papers under review are not destroyed but passed to the Centre of Oxfordshire Studies.

(iii) 'Banbury' Fire Medal

The CMfP recommended that the 'Banbury' Fire Medal be presented to the Banbury family.

RESOLVED

That the 'Banbury' Fire Medal be presented to Honorary Townsman John Banbury and his family.

WTC/305/10 AGREEMENT TO EXTEND THE MEETING

The Mayor asked for agreement to extend the meeting for a further 10 minutes and the Council agreed to this request.

(iv) To receive and consider any property matters arising since the last meeting.
a) Town Hall Fire Protection and Maintenance Contract

The CMfP outlined proposals to transfer the contract for fire equipment testing and maintenance and emergency lighting at the Town Hall from the current supplier to the one already employed at the Community Centre.

RESOLVED

That the Fire and Emergency Lighting contracts for the Town Hall be brought forward to the May council meeting.

The CMfP asked for Council agreement to purchase and install the two sensors required by the Area Fire Officer. This is a health and safety issue which is within the Clerks authorisation limits.

RESOLVED

That the Clerk will ask Carter Jonas to arrange for the installation of the sensors itemised in the Fire Officers report.

b) Asbestos

The CMfP reported that an asbestos report had been received.

RESOLVED

That the asbestos report is brought forward to the May council meeting.

c) 2 Park Street Ceiling

Cllr B Yoxall made Cllrs aware that a crack has appeared in the ceiling of 2 Park Street.

RESOLVED

That the crack in the ceiling of 2 Park Street be brought forward and considered at the May meeting.

WTC/304/10 CARETAKING REQUIREMENTS FOR WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL

The immediate caretaking requirements of WTC were briefly discussed.

RESOLVED

That the Town Hall Caretaker be asked to service the Community Centre as well for the immediate future.

WTC/305/10 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

None.

WTC/306/10 CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that Morris Men and Blenheim Knights on horseback would feature in the Royal Wedding Celebrations on 29th April 2011.

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor and staff for their support during his term of office. The Cllrs thanked Cllr J Cooper for his work on behalf of the Town Council over the past year. Cllr E Poskitt thanked the Mayor on behalf of the town for the service that he had provided.

The meeting rose at 11pm.

Signed Date