

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2011
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr I Hudspeth and 4 residents.

WTC/116/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

WTC/117/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs A Grant declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 8 Planning Application (a) Ref: 11/1200/P/FP as she is the current tenant of 30b High Street Woodstock and she is also a personal friend of the landlord. Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 11 Meetings of Committees and Sub-committees (a) Finance Committee (iii) VAT as the proposal contains reference to a friend and business associate. Cllr Mrs V Edwards declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 13 WiFi Update as she is a director of the WiFi company providing services.

WTC/118/11 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF:

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 9th August 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

WTC/109/11 Financial Issues (i) Payments for July 2011. The first sentence of the second paragraph on page 60 was amended to read as follows 'It was noted that the cost of the work undertaken at the Water Meadows by Mr Greatbatch represented two contracts and that Blenheim Estates will contribute up to 50% or a £500 contribution towards one of these contracts.

WTC/114/11 VAT. All references to diminimus were amended to read de minimis.

WTC/119/11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No residents wished to address the council at this meeting:

WTC/120/11 REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

A report from County and District Councillor Ian Hudspeth had previously been received and circulated. He reported that the Minerals and Waste policy Consultation was open until 31st October and noted that decisions taken about West Oxfordshire could impact upon the roads around Woodstock. He reported that the new Enterprise Zone in South Oxfordshire would result in 8,000 jobs and associated buildings and queried whether the minerals required for the new buildings should be dug in West Oxfordshire and then sent to South Oxfordshire. He reported that OCC are holding two open days about Winter Weather and that salt will be available for purchase by Parish and Town Councils. He said that the LDF would be considered by the full Council of WODC on 14th September 2011. Originally 130 people had asked to

address the Council but this had been limited to 68, each of whom would be allowed 4 minutes each for their address.

ACTION: *Kemp and Kemp will represent WTC at the LDF meeting on 14th September 2011 and make a 4 minute presentation on behalf of the council.*

Cllr I Hudspeth then updated the council about the library consultation. A draft leaflet was distributed to Cllrs for comment that included suggestions as to how residents might like to respond to the current OCC consultation (open until 30th September 2011). The flyer will be distributed to local houses and sent to the Woodstock and Bladon News in order to try and encourage the maximum number of resident responses. Cllrs E Poskitt and Mrs E Jay asked that a postal and email address be added to the flyer. Cllr Hudspeth agreed to add this information. The Mayor thanked Cllr I Hudspeth for his excellent work and said that she would be happy with the flyer if the address was added.

ACTIONS:

1. *Cllr Hudspeth will make the agreed amendments and then send the flyer to the Town Clerk.*
2. *The Town Clerk will arrange for 1900 fliers to be produced.*
3. *Cllr I Hudspeth will distribute 350 fliers to Bladon residents.*
4. *The Deputy Mayor will arrange for the remaining fliers to be distributed in Woodstock.*
5. *Cllr I Hudspeth will liaise with Woodstock and Bladon News.*

Cllr Mrs T Redpath asked Cllr I Hudspeth for his thoughts about the proposed new boundaries and noted that there was debate about whether Bladon should join Woodstock. Cllr I Hudspeth said that it was proposed that Combe, Stonesfield, Woodstock and Bladon should be grouped together. However the residents of Bladon considered that they were more closely aligned with Long Hanborough and other villages along the A4095. Cllr I Hudspeth considered that the new boundaries were reasonable.

District Cllr J Cooper reported that he had distributed his summer report to residents. He reported that a £35,500.00 grant towards the refurbishment of the Woodstock Community Centre had been given by the Cabinet of WODC. He reported that 'The Holdings' planning application had been defeated at the Uplands Planning Subcommittee and noted that Mrs T Redpath had spoken at this meeting as a resident of Woodstock and not as a Cllr.

WTC/121/11 COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported that the invitations to the civic reception had been issued. It will be held at the Marlborough School due to the large numbers because there is lots of room and good parking facilities. She thanked the Deputy Mayor and Cllr Mrs A Grant for their help delivering some of the invitations. She reported that she was holding a coffee morning on Saturday 1st October 10am – 4pm in the Mayor's Parlour and that there would be lots of stalls. The money raised will be equally divided between the Mayor's two chosen charities: the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Youth Centre. Cllr Mrs A Grant had donated a lot of items but other donations of cakes or raffle prizes would be gratefully received.

WTC/122/11 QUESTIONS

None

WTC/123/11 PLANNING MATTERS

The following planning applications were received and considered

- (a) Ref: 11/0200/P/FP
30B High Street, Woodstock
Change of use from retail (A1) to financial and professional services (A2).

Cllr Mrs A Grant declared a personal and prejudicial interest as she is the current tenant and also a personal friend of the landlord. She therefore left the meeting whilst this planning application was discussed.

RESOLVED

That WTC Woodstock Town Council objects to this application on the grounds of WODC planning policy SH3 (Change of Use in Town Centres) as it is concerned about the loss of a shop in the Town.

- (b) Ref: 11/1278/P/FP
21B Oxford Street, Woodstock
Alterations and erection of a single storey rear extension.

RESOLVED

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

- (c) Ref: 11/1294/P/FP
2-4 High Street, Woodstock
Conversion of part of shop to residential to serve existing dwelling. Erection of rear extension and alterations to garage.

RESOLVED

Woodstock Town Council objects to this application on the grounds of WODC planning policy SH3 (Change of Use in Town Centres) as the application includes the partial conversion of a part of the shop to residential and also because it will add a two storey building on top of a one storey building.

- (d) Ref: 11/1329/P/FP
91 Oxford Road, Woodstock
Erection of first floor rear extension.

RESOLVED

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

***ACTION:** The planning comments will be relayed to WODC by the office staff.*

WTC/124/11 COMMUNITY CENTRE UPDATE

The Chairman of the Community Centre Working Group reminded the council that it had been tasked to look at the refurbishment of the Community Centre and that there was a Council resolution that said that no refurbishment was to be done before the funds were secured and in place. She reported that the working group had come up with plans and secured enough money and therefore recommended that this project be moved forward.

The Mayor reminded Cllrs that they had previously agreed to speak only once on each agenda item and asked them to follow this rule.

The discussion that followed included suggestions about what the refurbished building might look like, the future of the existing garage and the timing of the receipt of the detailed paperwork from the working group that related to this agenda item. The Chairman of the working group advised the Council that it needed to agree to pay WREN the money required to release the grant within two weeks and also to approve the Clerk as the authorised signature to the contract. The Mayor noted that £60k had been ring-fenced for this project from the sale of the Rectory Lane garage and that it was excellent that Cllrs Mrs V Edwards, Mrs L Glees and the other members of the working group had successfully secured £50k funding from WREN, £35.5k funding from WODC and £5.5k in other donations. This should enable a really good refurbishment to take place. Cllr P Jay suggested that the Council needed to make a policy decision that evening to enable the WREN grant to be secured and that the details could be finalised afterwards. The Chairman of the working group reported that the WREN grant must be spent by 12th August 2012. She noted that the group was not seeking authorisation to spend the money at this stage but that the council had to agree to what the tender for the work should consist of. Cllr T Gardiner identified four things that appeared to be causing the most contention, namely: moving the bar/kitchen, the garage/garden/courtyard at the back of the centre, the potential removal of the ceiling and the heating system. Further discussion followed. Cllr P Redpath noted that a lot of people had put a lot of effort into this project so far such as Darrell Marchand. Cllr Mrs T Redpath said that she was keen to progress this project but noted that £145k will not go far and therefore WTC should ensure that every process is economic.

The Chairman of the Community Centre working group proposed that:

1. WTC minute their acceptance of the WREN grant
2. WTC approve the release of the 'payback' cheque in relation to the WREN grant.
3. WTC advertise the opportunity to tender on the Council website and place a news item in the Woodstock and Bladon news.
4. Carter Jonas be asked to look at the cost of tarmacing in reference to the car park.
5. The Town Clerk be asked to enquire further of WTC's insurers about the Football Club car park.
6. WTC accepts the proposals as outlined for the refurbishment of the Community Centre.
7. The Town Clerk writes to WREN to ask whether changing WTC's VAT status would affect the grant.
8. The Town Clerk be given permission to sign the contract.

This motion was seconded by Mrs L Glees. Discussion followed. The Mayor suggested that the recommendations should be taken as one motion with the exception of item 6. The Chairman of the Community Centre Working Group suggested that Carter Jonas be asked to draw up a draft tender specification that could be brought back to Council for further consideration. Cllr T Gardiner asked that the tender

specification include two options for the roof: one to include velux windows and another with a modified ceiling in order that WTC have all options included in the tenders. The Chairman of the Community Centre Working Group said that the grant application was based upon the removal of the ceiling and therefore WTC should not change this. Cllr Mrs L Glees noted that the WREN paperwork made it clear that all changes would require their approval and could result in more costs.

Cllr C Carritt proposed that item 6 of the motion be amended so that the word 'broad' be inserted before the word 'proposals'. The Mayor seconded this proposal and the Chairman of the Community Centre Group accepted the amendment.

Cllr T Gardiner proposed that the amended proposal be voted upon as separate items. The Chairman of the Community Centre did not accept this amendment and it failed when put to a vote.

The Mayor proposed that the amended proposal be voted upon in its entirety.

RESOLVED (8 votes for)

That the amended proposal be voted upon in its entirety.

The amended proposal was then put. A Cllr called for a named vote the results of which were:

For: Cllrs Mrs J Dunsmore, Mrs V Edwards, Mrs L Glees, E Poskitt, P Redpath, P Jay, Mrs E Jay, Mrs P Richardson, C Carritt, Mrs E Stokes, J Cooper and A Glees (12)

Against: Cllr T Gardiner (1)

Abstained: Cllrs B Yoxall, Mrs A Grant and Mrs T Redpath (3)

The Cllrs that abstained asked that it be noted that they had refrained from the voting as the motion was voted upon in its entirety rather than as separate parts.

RESOLVED

That:

1. WTC minute their acceptance of the WREN grant
2. WTC approve the release of the 'payback' cheque in relation to the WREN grant.
3. WTC advertise the opportunity to tender on the Council website and place a news item in the Woodstock and Bladon news.
4. Carter Jonas be asked to look at the cost of tarmac in reference to the car park.
5. The Town Clerk be asked to enquire further of WTC's insurers about the Football Club car park
6. WTC accepts the broad proposals as outlined for the refurbishment of the Community Centre
7. The Town Clerk writes to WREN to ask whether changing WTC's VAT status would affect the grant.
8. The Town Clerk is given permission to sign the contract.

ACTIONS: The Clerk will:

1. Arrange for the 'payback' cheque to be sent to WREN
2. Make further enquiries with the WTC insurers about using the Football Club car park.
3. Contact WREN to ask whether changing WTC's VAT status would affect the grant.
4. Sign the WREN contract when it arrives on behalf of WTC.

The Chairman of the Community Centre Working Group will:

1. Produce wording to advertise the opportunity to tender on the Council website and place a news item in the Woodstock and Bladon news.
2. Ask Carter Jonas to look at the cost of tarmacing in reference to the car park.

WTC/125/11 FINANCIAL ISSUES

- (i) To receive the List of Payments for August 2011

It was proposed and seconded that the list of payments made in the month of August 2011 amounting to £14,631.14 be received and approved.

RESOLVED

That the list of payments made in the month of August 2011 amounting to £14,631.14 is approved.

- (ii) To receive the Bank Reconciliation Statements for August 2011

The Council received and considered the Bank Reconciliation Statements for August 2011.

- (iii) To receive the Summary and Detailed Income and Expenditure Statements for August 2011

The Summary and Detailed Income and Expenditure Statements for August 2011 were received and considered.

- (iv) External Audit

It was noted that the external auditors have requested answers to several queries about the 2010/11 accounts. The outcome will be reported to the Council in due course.

- (v) Internal Controls

It was noted that the bank reconciliation had been considered in August and that it was considered that the current procedures were satisfactory.

WTC/126/11 MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

- (a) Finance Committee

- (i) Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on Tuesday 6th September 2011 were received and considered.

- (ii) Budget Review

The budget review was received and considered. Discussion followed.

Cllr P Jay noted that the budget review forecast showed a reserve that was £14k lower than the lower level of the WTC target reserve. He suggested that the Finance Committee needed to consider options for bringing this back in line by finding appropriate savings and that until these are presented it would be premature to approve the budget review.

Cllr B Yoxall noted that the Finance Committee meeting had not finished until 10pm and that there had been no time to consider the position in detail. Since then he had reviewed the property items and presented some suggestions as to how this year's property budget might be reduced. This would go a long way towards reducing the £14k difference. The Chairman of the Finance Committee said that he was pleased that Cllr B Yoxall had been able to reduce the budget in this way.

Discussion followed about specific items considered in the budget review. The new cemetery extension and the work associated with this such as the land survey and legal fees were discussed. The property expenditure was discussed. Cllr T Gardiner asked how much of the property expenditure had already been committed. Cllr A Glees considered it difficult to understand the process that had been undertaken by the Finance Committee and asked for clarity. He considered that if the WTC property needed money spending on it this should be spent and therefore the Finance Committee needed to prioritise the work that really needs to be done. Cllr Mrs V Edwards considered that WTC should utilise its best financial expertise when looking at property longer term and suggested that Cllrs P Jay and T Gardiner be involved on the Finance Committee. The Mayor said that any Cllr could ask to join the Finance Committee if they wished to do so. She noted that if you do not repair properties the bills escalate.

No decision was taken on the budget review. It will be further considered by the Finance Committee and re-submitted to WTC at the October meeting.

ACTIONS

The Finance Committee will further consider the budget review and bring it back to Council in October.

(iii) VAT

The Finance Committee had received and considered a variety of information that had been collected about VAT. The Chairman of the Finance Committee said that in the light of the grants etc awarded to WTC it was becoming apparent that there is an urgency to clarify the de minimis calculations. He referred to a VAT table that had been produced by the Finance Assistant and said that potentially there was a £60k VAT reclaim to come from the Shipton Road S106 money. He noted that Paul Claydon had produced an article in the Clerks Magazine that recognised the problem that WTC faces. Cllr P Redpath said that WTC should consider registering the CC for VAT and possibly all

eligible WTC activities. It was his opinion that WTC should register for VAT. Cllr Mrs V Edwards asked whether he had calculated the ramifications of doing this on the WREN grant and noted that it could reduce the value of the grant to £20k. Cllr P Jay said that assuming that WTC is already maximising the income it is able to get from bookings there could be a detrimental effect if the charges are raised by 20%. He explained why in his opinion it would be unwise to register the CC, or all of WTC's activities, for VAT and noted that to do so would tie WTC into this arrangement for 20 years. Cllr C Carritt was also concerned about the 20 year tie-in and supported the idea of saying no for now but to revisit the VAT matter again next year. Cllr Mrs A Grant considered that the table was incomplete and considered that WTC should register for VAT. Cllr Mrs T Redpath reminded the council that it was probable that the council would go over the de minimis of £7,500 and that if everything was registered WTC could reclaim the VAT. She suggested that the VAT increase in charges could be absorbed gradually. Cllr T Gardiner considered that Cllr Mrs T Redpath had made a good point but concluded that there was insufficient information currently available to be able to make a decision so further information was required. Cllr P Jay suggested that WTC could either make a decision now in which case there may be no need to register for VAT, or decide that more information is needed in which case a professional report should be sought from an accountant.

Cllr J Cooper proposed that the Town Mace Bearer, an accountant (Frank Collingwood), be contacted and asked to advise WTC about this VAT issue. Cllr P Redpath seconded this motion.

Cllr Mrs J Dunsmore declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this proposal as Mr Collingwood is a friend and business associate. She therefore left the room during the remainder of the discussions.

RESOLVED (10 votes for, 4 votes against and 1 abstention. The Mayor did not take part in the vote)

That the Town Mace Bearer (Frank Collingwood) be contacted and asked to advise WTC about this VAT issue.

***ACTION:** The Clerk will contact Mr Collingwood and ask him if he would advise WTC.*

WTC/127/11 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was 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 asked to withdraw.

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 asked to withdraw.

WTC/128/11 COMMUNITY CENTRE DISCUSSIONS CONTINUED

The Mayor suggested that WTC needed to decide upon its priorities to take forward. Cllrs C Carritt and A Glee were happy to let the Community Centre Working Group discuss the priorities. The Chairman of the Community Centre Working Group said that the working group was having difficulty agreeing priorities and considered it sensible to pass this task to Carter Jonas who would be asked to bring forward suggestions to an Extraordinary Town Council meeting. Cllr T Gardiner asked that options for the four key areas of debate be included in any proposals. Cllr P Redpath asked that a Community Centre Working Group meeting be called as soon as possible to discuss this matter further. Cllr C Carritt suggested that the garage could be removed as long as there was other storage space available at the Community Centre. Cllr B Yoxall suggested that WTC present the alternative options to Carter Jonas and ask them to work these up into a tender specification. Cllr P Jay said that there was already a council resolution about the WREN grant application and that this could be used to take most of Cllr Yoxall's concerns into account. The Chairman of the Working Group said that the working group would be happy to include different options in the tender specification as long as they did not jeopardise the WREN grant and proposed that this be done.

RESOLVED (14 votes for and two abstentions)

That the working group will include different options in the Community Centre tender specification as long as they do not jeopardise the WREN grant

The Mayor asked that the Council agree to bring Agenda Item 16 forward for discussion and the Council agreed to do this.

WTC/129/11 WOODSTOCK BOWLS AND TENNIS CLUB

The Chairman of the Woodstock Bowls and Tennis Club Working Group updated the council about progress on the lease and outlined the current areas under discussion. WTC's solicitor has recommended a further time extension of four weeks be granted to enable the lease to be completed. The Chairman of the Bowls and Tennis Club proposed that a further four week extension be granted. This motion was seconded by Cllr E Poskitt.

RESOLVED (12 votes for, 1 against and 3 abstentions)

That WTC agree to a further four week time extension to enable the lease to be prepared and signed.

Cllr C Carritt asked that the Mayor write a rebuttal to a letter in the Woodstock and Bladon News. WTC decided not to do so.

The Meeting was adjourned at this point because it was 10.30 pm. It was agreed that the remainder of the business on the agenda would be discussed at 7.30pm on Tuesday 20th September 2011.

The meeting rose at 10.30pm.

Signed Date