

**MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 11th JUNE 2013
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllr J Cooper (Mayor)	Cllr M Robertson (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr Mrs V Edwards
Cllr C Carritt	Cllr E Poskitt	Cllr P Jay
Cllr T Wray	Cllr Mrs P Richardson	Cllr S Parnes
Cllr Mrs E Stokes	Cllr G Fleetwood	Cllr B Yoxall

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 18 Members of the Public and County Cllr Hudspeth.

WTC/35/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None.

WTC/36/13 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Cllr declared any pecuniary interests. The following Cllrs notified the meeting of general interests: Cllr Parnes declared a general interest as he resides on a development adjacent to a field where another development is planned. Cllr Poskitt– Agenda items 9 Planning as she is a West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) Member and sits on the Uplands Planning Committee. The Mayor - Agenda Item 9 Planning as he is a WODC Member involved in planning matters.

WTC/37/13 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 14th May 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

WTC/4/13: Declarations of Interest: The interest declared by Cllr Jay was amended to read “Agenda items 13 Public Participation and 16 Question 2 because he resides on Banbury Road and 18 (b) Planning application 13/0507/P/FP because he lives at The Retreat in Banbury Road”

The following addition was also made “Cllr Parnes - Agenda items 13 Public Participation and 16 Question 2 because he resides on a development near to the proposed site for development.

WTC/11/13: Public Participation (i) Mr Mike Cox - the last but one sentence was amended so that the word ‘compliment’ was deleted and replaced by the word ‘complement’.

WTC/20/13: OWL Extension: Action 1. The letter ‘s’ was removed from ‘Howes’

The minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 28th May 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record.

WTC/38/13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(i) Mr Philip Redpath

Mr Redpath considered that Agenda Item 8 was censorship and an abuse of power. He asked whether legal advice had been sought, urged Cllrs not to get involved and outlined what he considered to be the outcomes of previous such attempts.

(ii) Dr Bob McGurrian

Dr McGurrian the Chairman of the Woodstock Action Group (WAG) spoke about the public relations firm Meeting Place Communications (MPC) employed by Pye Homes. He commented on what he considered to be their methods and tactics and those of ‘pro-development’ groups. He considered it important that WTC and the community remain steadfast in their opposition to any further large scale development and warned of the potential consequences of not doing so.

WTC/39/13 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR UPDATES

(i) County Cllr I Hudspeth

County Cllr Hudspeth presented his June report. He said that the Marlborough Place road had not yet been adopted, the current design of the road was not suitable for any additional traffic and that to date no approach had been put forward. He reported that the new station car park at Long Hanborough should be up and running in the next week or so.

(ii) District Cllrs J Cooper and E Poskitt

The council received and noted the June 2013 report from District Cllrs Cooper and Poskitt.

WTC/40/13 COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor thanked all those who had helped at the recent Civic Service. He reported that McMillan Cancer Care would be the Mayor's charity this year. He asked that Cllrs try to hold a structured debate during meetings and speak only once unless they are winding up a debate.

ACTION: *Christmas Lights and the arrangements for Remembrance Sunday will be on the July agenda.*

WTC/41/13 QUESTIONS

The Mayor received the following questions from Cllr Parnes under Standing Order No 8 which Cllr Yoxall agreed to answer as he had been Mayor when they had been posed:

Please would the Mayor confirm which Town Councillors attended and/or were invited to:

- (a) the Partnership Pupil Parliament event; and*
- (b) the outdoor tree planting ceremony commemorating the Queen's coronation?*

Not all Town Councillors were invited, or given specific advance knowledge enabling attendance, and some Members of Council were made aware only retrospectively of these events having already taken place; these, despite the Partnership Pupil Parliament event being held at the Town Hall, and the tree planting being held outdoors with the Town Council having paid for the tree.

Does the Mayor agree the interests of transparency are pervasive regardless of municipal year, and that therefore Councillors and the public are entitled to know which Councillors attend(ed) the above and any such other Town Council –hosted or –co-hosted events?

The Mayor said that the partnership pupil parliament meeting was not circulated to everyone as he personally did not recall receiving an invitation. He said that if the sub text was that the previous Mayor attempted to exclude Cllr Parnes as an individual councillor he did not think that this was so. As for the outdoor tree planting the Mayor did attend this function but the invitations were not issued by the Town Hall and he suggested that Cllr Parnes pursue this matter with the organisers of the event.

The Mayor said that he saw no great value in spending time on events that have happened but gave an assurance that everybody was equal in that chamber that evening and that any suggestion otherwise was wrong.

WTC/42/13 MOTIONS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL

The following motion has been submitted by Cllr Jay in accordance with the WTC Standing Orders and seconded by Cllr Mrs Edwards.

The Council:-

- 1. Regrets the action of Councillor Parnes in publishing to all councillors an email addressed to Councillor Yoxall of 16 May, 2013, which includes the following passage, "Perhaps your relief is supported by details you are not sharing with the rest of us, which - based on recent issues and as yet outstanding questions - wouldn't be the first time" because of the suggestion that Councillor Yoxall has failed to share information which in his position he was duty-bound to share and that therefore he has failed in his public duty, aggravated by the assertion that he has acted in this way before and that his conduct is thus regularly lacking in integrity;*
- 2. Calls upon Councillor Parnes either to justify with evidence or to withdraw his suggestion of impropriety levelled against Councillor Yoxall and to apologise unreservedly to him; and*
- 3. Warns Councillor Parnes that in the absence of such justification or withdrawal and apology the council will consider a motion under Standing Order 10 to bar him from further participation in the council's deliberations until an apology acceptable to Councillor Yoxall has been received.*

Discussion followed. Cllr Jay said that it was important for Cllrs to recognise the difference between vigorous, robust political debate and impugning other people's motives, honesty or integrity and was not personal.

It was noted that although the Mayor had tried, he had been unable to broker a meeting between Cllrs Parnes and Yoxall before the agenda was issued and so could not resolve this matter before the meeting. It was recognised that the Council was an eclectic mix and that sometimes mistakes were made without deliberate intent, however this matter had been deeply regrettable.

Cllrs agreed that unnecessary and/or inappropriate email traffic must stop and Cllrs should utilise the Council chamber to discuss matters of concern.

Cllr Yoxall explained why he had been offended and what he would like to happen. He considered that he had been subjected to a barrage of innuendo, that his authority had been questioned over a period of time and that his actions had been discredited.

Cllr Parnes distributed documents called 'Background Documents' that included copies of the thread of emails, and references to SO's and Code of Conduct, and another called 'Select Examples'. He referred to an email of 16th May in which he explained that he had not intended to defame or embarrass anyone. During the discussion around the table he stated his regret if any offence has been caused, and reaffirmed this subsequently during the discussion.

In response to Cllr Jay's demand for a justification of the comment excerpted in his motion, Cllr Parnes distributed to Members a list of example issues on which he considered questions had not been answered or information had not been provided in a timely manner Cllr Parnes said that he considered it his duty as an elected representative of the public to try to understand what the Council is doing; attempt to clarify what he does not understand; and share concerns with colleague Members. He said that often such objectives are fulfilled by raising questions and sharing them and that these should be answered and not treated as hostilities.

He reminded Cllrs that under the Code of Conduct 6. "You must be as open as possible about your actions and those of your council, and must be prepared to give reasons for those actions" and suggested that not all Cllrs had always answered questions, or shared information, in a timely manner, or in some cases at all - even where responsive or proactive info might be relevant to matters being considered, or scheduled for consideration. He noted that Cllr Jay's Motion at the table was preceded by a nearly equivalent previous version distributed to Members by email which Cllr Parnes considered to be inflammatory and not justifiable.

S.O. 10 was discussed and Cllr Carritt proposed an amendment to the motion so that paragraph 3 of the motion is deleted. This was seconded by Cllr Poskitt but rejected by Cllr Jay. The amendment was voted upon and the council

RESOLVED (6 votes for, 5 votes against and 1 abstention)
That paragraph 3 of the original motion is deleted.

The Mayor confirmed to members of the public that professional legal advice had been sought and obtained from the Council's solicitors about this matter. Cllr Jay summed up the amended motion. A Cllr called for a named vote the results of which were as follows:

For: Cllrs Fleetwood, Mrs Edwards, Jay, Mrs Richardson, Mrs Stokes, Yoxall, Carritt and Cooper (8)

Against: Cllr Parnes (1)

Abstention: Cllr Robertson (1)

Cllrs Poskitt and Wray did not participate in the vote.

RESOLVED

The Council:-

1. Regrets the action of Councillor Parnes in publishing to all councillors an email addressed to Councillor Yoxall of 16 May, 2013, which includes the following passage, "Perhaps your relief is supported by details you are not sharing with the rest of us, which - based on recent issues and as yet outstanding questions - wouldn't be the first time" because of the suggestion that Councillor Yoxall has failed to share information which in his position he was duty-bound to share and that therefore he has failed in his public duty, aggravated by the assertion that he has acted in this way before and that his conduct is thus regularly lacking in integrity;
2. Calls upon Councillor Parnes either to justify with evidence or to withdraw his suggestion of impropriety levelled against Councillor Yoxall and to apologise unreservedly to him.

WTC/43/13 PLANNING

Cllr Poskitt declared a general interest as she is a West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) Member and sits on the Uplands Planning Committee. The Mayor declared a general interest as he is a WODC Member involved in planning matters. The following planning applications were received and considered.

(a) Ref:13/0638/P/FP: 39 Hensington Road, Woodstock - Erection of single storey rear extension

RESOLVED No comment.

(b) Ref:13/0659/P/FP: 11 Oxford Road, Woodstock - Removal of existing outbuildings and erection of single storey rear extension to form garden room and shed/store.

RESOLVED No comment

(c) Ref:13/0685/P/LB: 2 Union Street, Woodstock - External alterations to include replacement windows to front and side.

RESOLVED No comment

(d) Ref:13/0776/P/FP: 18 Shipton Road, Woodstock - Erection of replacement single storey rear extension to existing dwelling and erection of semi detached dwelling. Formation of new vehicular access and parking to serve both dwellings.

RESOLVED WTC **objects** to this planning application on the grounds that it is over development on that particular site.

ACTION: *The planning responses will be notified to WODC.*

WTC/44/13 **REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

The Council received and considered:

(i) The List of Payments for May 2013

RESOLVED That the Council receives and approves the list of payments totalling £29,029.94 made in the month of May 2013.

(ii) The Bank Reconciliation Statements for May 2013

Cllrs received and considered the bank reconciliation statements for May 2013.

(iii) The Summary and Detailed Income & Expenditure Statements for May 2013

Cllrs received and considered the summary and detailed income and expenditure statements for May 2013.

(iv) The Annual Statement of Accounts Report, Annual Statement of Accounts for 2012/13, Copy of Annual Return, Internal Auditor Report and Slippage Report

The Mayor proposed that Woodstock Town Council:

- a. Approve the annual statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March, 2013;
- b. Approve the annual return for the year ended 31 March, 2013;
- c. Receive and note the internal auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2013;
- d. Receive and note the slippage report for the year ended 31 March 2013

Cllr Poskitt seconded this motion.

RESOLVED (unanimous) that Woodstock Town Council:

- a. Approves the annual statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March, 2013;
- b. Approves the annual return for the year ended 31 March, 2013;

- c. Receives and notes the internal auditor's report for the year ended 31 March 2013;
- d. Receives and notes the slippage report for the year ended 31 March 2013.

WTC/45/13 WEB SITE SEARCH ENGINES

This item was brought forward from the May TC meeting. Cllr Carritt explained the benefits of installing the 'Google' search engine on the WTC web site as recommended by the WTC IT advisors. He said that the advantage of doing this well was that it will become a public resource. Concerns were raised about the possibility of advertising appearing in the results that occur. Cllr Carritt explained that there is a search facility that involves advertising and is free but that this had been discounted so there will be no advertising on the site. Cllr Carritt proposed, Cllr Jay seconded and WTC

RESOLVED (Unanimous) that the 'Google' search engine be installed within a budget of £100.

WTC/46/13 WAKE UP TO WOODSTOCK

This item was brought forward from the May TC meeting. A paper that had been prepared by Cllr Jay was noted.

WTC/47/13 WOODSTOCK PLAYGROUNDS PROJECT

The Deputy Mayor reported that further letters of objection and also additional constructive suggestions had been received. There will be a meeting on site with residents and the crime prevention officer and then the tender process will start. The Deputy Mayor reported that Blenheim Estates has approved the go ahead for the pendulum swing at Budds Close and for the roundabout at Old Woodstock play area. Although the National Lottery bid was unsuccessful WTC hopes that it may be awarded a WREN grant. In the meantime WTC will progress with the version of the scheme that it can afford. Cllr Mrs Richardson noted that the Budds Close play area had been vandalised at the weekend.

WTC/48/13 OWL EXTENSION

The Council received and considered a report from Cllr Jay.

RESOLVED (unanimous) that the council:-

1. Notes written and oral reports from Cllrs Jay and Robertson;
2. Noting its decisions of 14 May, authorizes Cllrs Jay and Robertson to place "stave" markers along the length of the reserve to indicate the exact route of then pedestrian path, avoiding a high level route except where this is physically the only option and arranging screening wherever it is unavoidable and minimising disturbance of wild life; and
3. Asks the clerk to keep the main grant-makers (the Big Lottery and WODC) supporting the development of the reserve duly informed of progress and plans.

WTC/49/13 DUPLICATION OF PUBLISHED CONTENT BETWEEN WTC WEBSITE AND DEVELOPER MARKETING MATERIALS.

Cllr Parnes considered that the inclusion of material pertaining to the Pye proposals was unwise considering the prevailing position of the town as a development application is anticipated. Cllr Parnes proposed that this material be removed from the web site but this proposal was not seconded and so fell.

WTC/50/13 WTC's FEEDBACK RESPONSE TO DEVELOPER AND PROPOSAL TO RETRACT WTC'S SUBMISSION

Cllr Parnes presented two proposals. The first was: 'In relation to the former Mayor's submission of WTC's feedback response form about an intended residential development, in view of circumstances preceding and subsequent to submission of the response form - including the facts that councillors did not have sight of content or wording of the submitted text, the Agenda for the April 23rd Mayor's Committee having not explicitly indicated that the content of the written response would be determined, and that the developer has since indicated the planning application is expected to be submitted at the end of June - that the developer be notified that WTC retracts its submission and asks in lieu that a re-submission be accepted'. Cllr Wray seconded this motion. Discussion followed. This motion fell on a vote (1 vote for, 10 votes against and 1 non-voter). The other motion was associated with the first. It was not seconded and so fell.

WTC/51/13 PROPERTY REPORT

The Council agreed to defer this item until later in the meeting and take it during the confidential session.

WTC/52/13 WALL HANGINGS TRUST

RESOLVED that the Cllr appointments to the Wall Hangings Trust should become part of the standard list of outside bodies which are reviewed annually.

ACTION: *The Town Clerk will put this item on the July agenda.*

WTC/53/13 WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL – TOURISM STRATEGY

The Council received and considered a report from Cllr B Yoxall about the Woodstock Tourism Strategy. Cllr Yoxall noted that two residents interested in updating the tourism strategy were party to the discussions. The following matters were proposed by Cllr Yoxall and seconded by Cllr Carritt.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

1. That the amendments to the Leisure & Tourism Strategy document of February 2009 proposed at points 1 a) - j) in Cllr Yoxall's report are approved.
2. That Cllr Yoxall will represent WTC on the 'Walkers are Welcome' steering group.
3. That Phil Keely and Taissa Csaky will be invited to make a presentation to WTC in July to enable Members to assess the value of contributing to the costs of membership of 'Walkers are Welcome'.
4. That Cllr Yoxall will continue the dialogue he started with Blenheim Estates in 2009 and that the Action Plan be revised to take account of these issues.

Cllr Yoxall agreed to work with Cllrs Mrs Edwards and Poskitt and bring back to council a plan for increasing footfall in Woodstock. The Mayor noted that attempts should be made to increase footfall as soon as possible.

ACTION: *The Clerk will put this matter on the July agenda.*

WTC/54/13 WOODSTOCK TRANSPORT NEEDS SURVEY

The council received and considered a report from Cllr Yoxall. Cllr Yoxall proposed, Cllr Mrs E Stokes seconded and WTC

RESOLVED (unanimous) that WTC:

- a) Notes the progress of the Working Group
- b) Approves the Transport Needs Survey form

- c) Commits to the planned actions in order to formulate a sound case for desired transport improvements as originally reported to WTC.

Cllr Yoxall confirmed that the survey is about public transport and will be undertaken by ORCC. Cllr Yoxall said that the route under consideration was between Shipton Road, Kidlington and Water Eaton. He hoped that services could also be provided to meet the needs of Marlborough Place and also to provide a facility for transporting children between Old Woodstock and the schools. Residents are trying to set up a Good Neighbours Scheme and would be pleased to hear of volunteers.

WTC/55/13 REPORT ON BENCHES ON TOWN SQUARE

Cllr Carritt presented an oral report and referred Cllrs to his previous email on this subject.

RESOLVED that

1. there should be a total configuration of six benches on the Market Square and that the details will be agreed at the July meeting.
2. Cllr Carritt will circulate options and costs to Cllrs in order that a decision can be made in July.

ACTION: *The Clerk will put this matter on the July agenda.*

WTC/56/13 PHASE 2 HISTORIC WOODSTOCK PLAQUES

Cllr Poskitt updated Cllrs about progress towards obtaining two additional Historic Plaques and confirmed that the designs by Giles McDonald will be brought to Council in due course.

WTC/57/13 MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUP

- a) Environment Committee
(i) Minutes

Cllrs received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee held on Tuesday 28th May.

RESOLVED:

1. The amended tree policy was approved.
2. The fishing policy was approved

Cllrs noted the report of the meeting with representatives from OCC and WODC about the parking review and survey that took place on 3rd June. WTC will not be required to fund the survey and if the review highlights changes that are required OCC/WODC will fund these. Cllr Edwards asked that the review include the amount of construction traffic in Woodstock as a percentage of the volume and Cllr Carritt agreed to do this.

- (ii) Control and Management of the Town Council's Cemeteries

Cllrs received and considered a report from Cllr Carritt and the Town Clerk. Cllr Carritt proposed that WTC adopt these terms and conditions to run alongside the existing "Rules for Using Cemeteries" and to support the invitation of funeral directors and grave diggers to a training session to be run by the ICCM at the town hall at a date to be decided. Cllr Fleetwood seconded this motion. Discussion followed during which Cllr Jay asked that the following words be added to the end of the motion "noting however that the proposed list will not be a closed shop" and this amendment was accepted.

It was noted that the title of item EC/9/13 a) should be amended so that the word 'contract' is deleted and replaced with the words 'Memo of Understanding'. It was noted that the draft risk assessment was based upon information from the ICCM and includes a code of safe working practice, the WTC rules and a risk assessment document and applies to anyone working in the Woodstock Cemeteries. Cllr Parnes

asked that this report be brought back to the July meeting in order that Cllrs have sufficient time to read it fully and this was agreed.

ACTION: *The Clerk will put this matter on the July agenda.*

b) Traffic Advisory Committee

The minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee dated 17th April 2013 were noted.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

That being of the opinion that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during the following items of business there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting.

WTC/58/13 PROPERTY UPDATE

(i) Report from the CMfP

The report from the CMfP was received and considered and WTC

RESOLVED that

a) WTC will ask for a quote for the kitchen boiler in the Community Centre only from Carter Jonas and subject to it being less than £2k instruct work to begin immediately.

b) WTC approves what remedial work is necessary to make the ground floor chandelier safe or replacing with 1st floor whilst installing a temporary alternative on the landing on the first floor until quotes can be obtained for 1st floor chandelier replacement.

c) Carter Jonas be asked to prepare a note of the process for handling rent arrears so that they are transparent and consistent. This will be issued to Cllrs and implemented from now on.

(ii) Refurbishment of the Community Centre (Phase 2)

WTC received and considered a report from Cllr Yoxall.

RESOLVED that this matter will be brought forward to the July meeting

ACTION: *The Clerk will put this matter on the July agenda.*

WTC/59/13 REQUEST FROM A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

A request from a member of the public was discussed. The Mayor said that he had written the letter agreed at the last meeting within a week of the May meeting and a response had recently been received. The Mayor said that it was the desire of WTC to sort out this matter as soon as possible. It was agreed that this matter would be deferred until the July meeting.

ACTION: *The Clerk will put this matter on the July agenda.*

The council went back into open session.

WTC/60/13 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

None

The meeting rose at 10.10pm.

Signed Date