

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
ON TUESDAY 21st APRIL 2020
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING**

PRESENT:

Cllr A Grant (Mayor)
Cllr J Bleakley
Cllr P Jay
Cllr U Parkinson
Cllr E Poskitt
Cllr T Redpath

Cllr M Parkinson (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr J Cooper
Cllr S Parnes
Cllr S Rasch
Cllr P Redpath

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: The Clerk, Mrs Janine Saxton, CClr I Hudspeth, one member of the public and Kate Begley as she will be writing a summary of the meeting for the Woodstock and Bladon News.

WTC247/19 INTRODUCTION BY THE MAYOR FOR THE FIRST VIRTUAL MEETING:

The Mayor welcomed all in attendance, to Woodstock Town Council's first virtual meeting, saying that as this method of holding meetings was quite new, she hoped that any hiccups experienced would be forgiven.

Attention was drawn to the following house-keeping points:-

- As meetings can be filmed and recorded it should be assumed that this is happening.
- As there is a possibility of loss of connection due to a power cut or internet connection failure. If this happens please try to reconnect so that the meeting can continue which may take a little time if however this proves to be unsuccessful due to internet failure or a long power cut the meeting will be adjourned and reconvened at a later date and will be advertised accordingly.
- The Clerk and the Mayor will co-host the meeting and therefore, will not be on mute.
- All Councillors audio will be muted and will be unmuted when they wish to speak. Indications to speak will be by raising a hand.
- The signing of minutes once agreed as accurate will be signed retrospectively when restrictions are lifted.
- Public Participation - members of the public that have requested to address the Council will do so by joining the virtual meeting.
- Where a Councillor declares a pecuniary interest and would normally leave the room, they will be moved to the waiting room facility and rejoin the meeting by invitation once the particular agenda item has been dealt with.
- Councillors can vote by using the available thumbs up symbol but initially will be conducted by a show of hands. Councillors should have their hand in view on the screen. If there is any difficulty in keeping track the Clerk will take a roll call, a simple for, against or abstain will be all that is needed.
- Councillors are asked to keep presentations as short as possible and to be clear as to what they wish the Council to decide.

- These are difficult times, tension is running high and Councillors are asked to be respectful and compassionate towards others at all times.
- Confidential Items - on the advice of the National Associations of local Councils (NALC) any confidential issues should be dealt with at a separate meeting to ensure the control of who logs in.

Annual Meeting

Council do not have to hold an Annual Meeting but can do if they wish and a new Chairperson can be decided at such a meeting. Any acceptance of office will be signed retrospectively.

Future Meetings

Council during these difficult times are permitted to hold a meeting at any time without the Statutory 3 days notice if it is considered urgent or emergency business. It is hoped that these will not be necessary and the meetings will carry on monthly. Notifications will be posted on the Council Website and if possible on the Community Notice Boards.

WTC248/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

The resignation of Cllr D Davies was announced and the Mayor recorded thanks for his service to Woodstock and wished him well.

WTC249/19 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST:

Cllr J Cooper

Item 10 Planning: Personal interest as he is a member of WODC Planning Sub-Committee.

Item 11 Report Of The Financial Officer - April 2020: Personal interest as he has received reimbursement of a damage deposit payment.

Cllr E Poskitt

Item 10 Planning: Personal interest as she is a member of WODC.

WTC250/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

No requests to speak within the public participation session had been received.

WTC251/19 MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11th MARCH 2020

The Council **resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11th March 2020 were a true record of the March meeting with the following amendments:-

WTC224/19 paragraph 1, was amended to read 'Mrs Hilary Brown a member of Sustainable Woodstock provided an update on the issue of Climate Emergency and Woodstock activities related to climate action.

A hard copy of the update is available (on request via the Clerk) for anybody who would like a copy.'

Paragraphs 2-7 were deleted from the minutes.

The Council also **resolved** that reports presented within Public Participation would not be minuted in full and that future minutes would state that a hard copy of any report could be obtained via the Clerk.

Any questions raised in Public Participation would be included within the minutes where appropriate.

WTC252/19 REPORT FROM THE TOWN CLERK:

The annual increment for both the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer were noted.

The Council **resolved** to agree to pay for the monthly Zoom video conferencing facility and to reimburse the Clerk the cost of the monthly subscription payment (£11.99 plus VAT) until a point in time when the facility was no longer required.

Council were asked to review the underestimated amount of £20,000 for a loan that was originally agreed at the Budget Meeting on 26th November 2019 for the cost of the Lawn Cemetery Extension Groundwork and approve the increase of this amount to £45,000.

The Mayor proposed the following that Council ask the Clerk to apply for a Public Work Board Loan of up £45,000 which was seconded by Cllr P Redpath.

Cllr S Parnes requested a named vote.

VOTE:	For:	Cllrs J Cooper, E Poskitt, P Jay, M Parkinson, U Parkinson, S Rasch, P Redpath, T Redpath & A Grant
	Against:	Cllr S Parnes
	Abstaining:	Cllr J Bleakley

The Council **resolved** to ask the Clerk to apply for a Public Work Board Loan of up £45,000.

The Council **resolved** that the Clerk order copies of the Lockdown Mind Therapy Booklets and that she would check with the local open shops that they are happy to hold copies for residents to pick up in their shops.

WTC253/19 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' UPDATE:

The monthly Parish report from CCllr I Hudspeth was received by Council. CCllr Hudspeth confirmed that WODC are responsible for cleaning footpaths in Woodstock and OCC are responsible for maintaining them. The ownership of the footpath between Oxford Street and Woodstock Bowls and Tennis Club was being checked and if it is found to be OCC's responsibility he will explore further the issues previously raised.

It was pointed out to Cllr Hudspeth that the two bus stops at the entrance to the Park View estate are opposite one another and, if buses coming each way stop at the same time traffic will back up in both directions.

The matter of the cycle crossing near the Bladon roundabout which was said to have been included within the development plans was also raised. There was no sign of this being created. CCllr Hudspeth agreed to look into this matter.

The District Councillors' report was received by Council. The question of whether WODC have decided to hold virtual meetings was asked. It was stated that the first WODC virtual meeting to be held will likely be a Lowlands Planning Sub-Committee meeting.

WTC254/19 COMMUNICATIONS:

As the Mayor expected this to be her last meeting as Town Mayor she offered her grateful thanks to Councillors and staff that had assisted her through the Mayoral year. The public support she had also received has been overwhelming. It had been a pleasure to serve the town.

She confirmed that she had written on behalf of WTC to the Prime Minister when it was announced he had contracted the coronavirus to wish him a speedy recovery.

The Covid - 19 pandemic had been and still was an extraordinary time for all. The Mayor said she was sure everyone would agree that grateful thanks were owed to all frontline workers including within the NHS, our local Surgery, carers, food producers, shop assistants, delivery drivers, postal workers, not to mention the volunteers with the Help Hub and Helping Hands Old Woodstock that have been the lifeline for so many residents and finally to those who although that cannot leave their homes have given great support via emails, telephone and post to help alleviate loneliness. Many, many thanks to all.

Lastly the Mayor sent her heartfelt sympathy to all families and friends that have lost someone to this dreadful virus.

WTC255/19 QUESTIONS

No questions had been received.

WTC256/19 MOTIONS PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL:

There were no motions presented to Council.

WTC257/19 PLANNING:

Council considered the following applications and their responses are shown below:-

Ref: APPLICATION NO: 20/00416/HHD 27 Plane Tree Way, Woodstock

Alterations to front elevation to render.

The Council **resolved** to object to this application as they stated that the row of houses had won an award for their design when they were first built and rendering the brickwork would be out of keeping with the other houses within the row.

Ref: APPLICATION NO: 20/00530/HHD Lynholm, 7 Recreation Road, Woodstock

Single storey infill extension and extension of garage roof to create canopy to front entrance

The Council **resolved** to object to this application as the loss of the garage space within the property will have implications on the parking within an area where parking is already an issue and problematic because of its vicinity to the Primary School pupil entrance.

Ref: APPLICATION NO: 20/00781/HHD 8 Browns Lane Woodstock

Alterations to construct a pitched roof to existing front dormer to replace existing flat roof.

The Council **resolved** that they had no objection to this application.

WTC258/19 REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER – APRIL 2020

- i) To approve the List of Payments for March 2020 totalling £20,454.78 – The Council **resolved** to approve the payments made in March 2020.

- ii) To approve the Bank Reconciliation for March 2020 – The Council **resolved** to approve the Bank Reconciliation for March 2020.
- iii) To receive and consider the Income and Expenditure statements for March 2020 – The Council **noted** the Income and Expenditure statements without query or comment.
- vi) To receive the project monitoring spreadsheet – The Council **noted** that there had been no additions to the spreadsheet since the March meeting. The pictorial maps have not been progressed due to the current situation,

WTC259/19 FIXED ASSET REGISTER 2019/20:

The Council **resolved** to note and approve the additions to the Fixed Asset Register 2019/20.

WTC260/19 RISK ASSESSMENT – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT:

The Council **resolved** to approve the amendments to the Risk Assessment 2019/20 as shown below:-

Finance

- 302 Failure to comply with Inland Revenue Regulations
Administration Legal: checked by the Administrative Assistant removed.
- 303 Failure to comply with Customs and Excise regulations
Administration/Legal HMRE corrected to HMRC
- 304 Mis-use of Council Credit Card - **New addition**
Financial: Ensure card and PIN are kept separately and in secure management.
Ensure regular bank reconciliations.
Ensure regular reports to Council.
Ensure limit set for monthly Expenditure as per financial regulations.
- 304 Failure to maintain an effective payment system - **New addition**
Financial: Two signatories to authorise bank payments.

Investments

- 200 Maintenance of Investment Register - **new wording in line with now having investments**
Investments to be made as per Council Investment Policy.

WTC261/19 CLIMATE EMERGENCY:

A meeting was held with between Dominic Hare and the two District Counsellors just prior to the lockdown. It was ascertained that Blenheim would be prepared to help the Council to obtain a loan at a very good rate from low carbon promoting groups so that solar panels could be installed on the Community Centre roof.

Action: The Clerk agreed to check how many quotes had been received to date and chase any outstanding companies to obtain quotes where possible.

WTC262/19 SSE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND:

The Council **resolved** to apply to the fund for £1,500 toward the expenses that are being incurred by the local community groups supporting local residents during this unprecedented time.

WTC263/19 SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN:

The Council considered the following motion proposed by Cllr P Jay and seconded by Cllr T Redpath:-

that:

WTC “regrets the minister’s flagrant failure to address any of the major issues of principle raised in our letter, which merely catalogues the arbitrary and antidemocratic actions taken by the minister”.

Various comments and opinions were expressed before a vote was taken. A named vote was requested.

VOTE:

For:	Cllrs J Bleakley, J Cooper, E Poskitt, M Parkinson, A Grant, P Jay, P Redpath, T Redpath U Parkinson & S Rasch.
Against:	Cllr S Parnes

The Council **resolved** to carry the motion.

WTC264/19 CASUAL VACANCY IN OFFICE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR:

The report was noted as it was presented to the Council for information only.

WTC265/19 ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATIONS IN APPOINTMENTS OF TOWN MAYORS:

Cllr S Parnes summarised his report and clarified that the reference to ‘seniority’ within his motion below related to ‘length of service’ of a Councillor.

That for transparency and improved confidence in the Office of Town Mayor, the Town Council should consider agreeing a protocol for the custom and practice of appointing Town Mayors based on a rotating system of seniority in order to make the Council more representative of its constituency, with a clear succession plan, and more open to fresh approaches and prevention of bad habits.’

As Cllr S Parnes motion was not seconded it was not progressed.

Cllr T Redpath summarised her report submitted earlier that day, which pointed out that WTC currently followed the standard method for parish councils to elect a chairman. The chairman of a town council was entitled to be called Mayor and this was usually accompanied by a civic role that could not legally be separated from the role of chairman.

She thought it important to select the correct candidate able to chair the council and proposed the motion below which was seconded by Cllr A Grant.:-

That:-

WTC continues to choose its chairman who will act as Mayor for the term of the civic year at the Annual Council meeting. Candidates shall be nominated and seconded and the successful candidate chosen by majority vote. Any member of the Council will be eligible for nomination.

A brief discussion followed before a vote was taken. A named vote was requested.

VOTE:

For:	Cllrs S Rasch, U Parkinson, P Redpath, T Redpath, P Jay, E Poskitt, J Cooper, A Grant & M Parkinson
------	---

Against: Cllr S Parnes

Abstaining: Cllr J Bleakley

The Council resolved to carry the motion.

WTC266/19 MESSAGE OF BEST WISHES TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM:

The motion presented by Cllr S Parnes was discussed at length before it was amended in light of the Mayor having already written to the Prime Minister to wish him a speedy recovery, but of which not all Councillors were aware.

The amended motion below was seconded by Cllr J Cooper:-

that:-

Woodstock Town Council RESOLVES on behalf of the Council and its constituency to affirm and dispatch to The Rt Hon Boris Johnson, MP, The Prime Minister their pleasure that he is recovering. The Town Council further acknowledges with admiration and deep appreciation the NHS's brave and steadfast work in helping all COVID-19 patients in its care.

A named vote was taken.

VOTE: For: Cllrs A Grant, M Parkinson, E Poskitt, J Cooper, P Redpath, T Redpath, S Parnes, S Rasch & J Bleakley

Abstaining: Cllr P Jay & U Parkinson

The Council **resolved** to carry the motion.

WTC267/19 THE RURAL MOBILITY FUND:

The Council **resolved** that the Clerk would respond on behalf of Woodstock Town Council with a message of support for both proposals.

WTC268/19 WTC PROPERTY PORTFOLIO:

The property report was noted.

WTC269/19 ALLOWANCE FOR TOWN HALL STAFF WORKING FROM HOME:

Cllr S Parnes proposed the following motion which was seconded by Cllr M Parkinson:-

Woodstock Town Council RESOLVES to immediately offer all Town Hall office-based staff required to work from home due to the COVID-19 emergency, the option of receiving payment of the HMRC-validated default amount in tax free allowance for necessitated working from home: £6 per week tax (backdated to Monday 6 April 2020), and where applicable the earlier amount of £4 per week to the extent applicable and relevant).

It was clarified that the Town Hall based staff referred to are the Clerk, the Administrative Assistant and the Responsible Financial Officer.

After some debate a named vote was taken.

VOTE: For: Cllrs S Parnes U Parkinson, E Poskitt, J Cooper, A Grant & M Parkinson

Against: Cllr P Redpath & P Jay
Abstaining: Cllr J Bleakley, S Rasch & T Redpath

The Council **resolved** to offer the Office staff the option to claim the allowance of up to £6 per week if they wished.

WTC269/19 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The Council **resolved** that the Annual Town Council meeting would be held on Tuesday 5th May and the monthly Town Council meeting would be held on the 12th May.

All future meetings will be held online via zoom video conferencing until the current government restrictions are relaxed/lifted.

The meeting closed at 9.31pm