

**MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
AT 7.30PM ON TUESDAY 27th NOVEMBER 2018
IN THE TOWN HALL, WOODSTOCK.**

PRESENT:

Cllr. P Jay (Mayor)
Cllr. F Collingwood
Cllr. M Parkinson

Cllr A Grant (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr. J Cooper
Cllr. E Poskitt

The Mayor addressed the meeting and paid tribute to the Clerk for all her hard work over the past few days overseeing the installation of the Christmas Lights. The Clerk confirmed that she will have a debrief meeting with Dennis Allen, Wake Up To Woodstock (WUTW) and Simon Newton, Director of Darke & Taylor obtaining a better understanding of the 'Night Of A Thousand Candles' event and to discuss health and safety issues relating to the Christmas Lights being manually switched on.

WTC164/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Cllrs D Davies, U Parkinson, P Redpath, T Redpath & S Rasch.

Cllr S Parnes did not attend the meeting and no apologies were received from him.

WTC165/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Cllr J Cooper	Item 6 Budget 2019-20 (iv) Personal interest as he is a member of Woodstock Youth Club Committee
Cllr J Cooper	Item 6 Budget 2019-20 (iv) Personal interest as he is the Treasurer of Sustainable Woodstock
Cllr A Grant	Item 6 Budget 2019-20 (iv) Personal interest as she is the Secretary of Woodstock Youth Club Committee
Cllr E Poskitt	Item 6 Budget 2019-20 (iv) Personal interest as she is a member of Sustainable Woodstock and does work for VLU Good Neighbours.

WTC166/18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

None

WTC167/18 QUESTIONS

The following questions were received:-

- 1) The recovery of the outstanding rent makes a material difference to the Council's 2019/20 Budget. Following the decisions at the Council meeting on Tuesday 23rd October, on what date was the formal claim served on the guarantor under the guarantee given in respect of the unpaid rent at a WTC property and if the rent remains unpaid, on what date will the Final Statement of Account be served with a view to commencement of formal Court Proceedings?

The Mayor responded that neither of these have been served and he confirmed that he had spoken to a senior partner of Freeths who had confirmed that the delay in serving the rent demand letter had been due to discrepancy between some of the figures Freeths had received from WTC and Breckon & Breckon. She advised that once Freeths had received the correct information the letter will be sent. The senior partner advised The Mayor that she had also been on annual leave and her colleague wanted to review matters with her before responding to WTC.

- 2) Since July WTC has been in dialogue with Blenheim asking for a bus lay-by at the proposed new southbound bus stop on the A44. Blenheim's response included two statements against WTC's proposal which, on investigation, have proved to be factually incorrect, yet Blenheim has now submitted a new unchanged planning application retaining the buses stopping on the carriageway. In the light of this, does the Mayor still believe that a continued dialogue with Blenheim will benefit the town?

The Mayor responded yes he believes that to have continued dialogue with Blenheim will benefit the town and he was much encouraged by the overwhelming support shown at the Town Meeting held the previous evening. He stated that he also believes that Cllr F Collingwood has been invited to meet with Blenheim and OCC. Cllr F Collingwood confirmed that he has sent some suggested dates through to both parties.

WTC168/18 BUDGET 2018-19

The Mayor and Council extended their thanks to both the Finance Assistant and Cllr F Collingwood as Council Member for Finance for the hard work they had put into preparing the 2019/20 budget.

Cllr F Collingwood, as the member responsible for finance proposed the following motion, seconded by The Mayor:-

That the Council

- a) Agrees to the 2019/20 expenditure on the Causeway Zebra Crossing (£3,600) and the Consort Chain (£1,500),*
- b) Adds £9,900 to the provision (Reserve) for the Ramp and disabled toilets but be made available to pay for legal, architectural and planning fees incurred during 2019/20,*
- c) agrees the precept remains unchanged at £100,000, and*
- d) if the back rent is recovered, it is earmarked for repairs to the Community Centre carpark.*

A lengthy debate followed, during which the following points/ proposals were made:-

- It was proposed that £1000 to be allocated to the Community Plan Working Group.
- The report from the Wychwood Project outlining future tree work required in the water meadows was considered and it was felt there was enough money in the water meadows and mill stream bank repairs budgets to accommodate the recommended work.
- Cllr Grant requested the cemetery extension funds be carried over to 2019/20 budget which will enable Council to progress planning the layout of the new burial area.

- The possibility of installing a toilet accessible for wheelchair users in the Town Hall and the requirement for a ramp to enable access into the Market Street entrance of the Town Hall was discussed at length. As it was thought that the viability of installing ramp access was a crucial part of the project, the Clerk would instruct Breckon and Breckon to proceed with investigating its viability and obtain the necessary architectural designs/plans and listed building planning permission where appropriate.

Financing the cost of the work via a Public Work Board Loan was also discussed as was the possibility of obtaining grants/funding from either the District or County Council.

The Mayor requested that Breckon & Brekon are asked to provide answers to the following questions:-

- 1) If WTC are to have a disabled toilet in the Town Hall what follows from that about the access and ramp?
- 2) Who is competent to design such a feature?
- 3) What is a ballpark estimate of cost?

A vote was then taken, Cllr A Grant requested a named vote.

VOTE: For: 5 (Cllrs P Jay, F Collingwood, E Poskitt, J Cooper & M Parkinson)
Against: 1 (Cllr A Grant)

The grant applications were considered and Council agreed to allocate the £3,000 available as indicated below:-

Woodstock Ladies Circle	£150.
Woodstock Scouts and Guides	£550
Volunteer Link Up (West Oxfordshire)	£150
Woodstock Youth Club	£900
Citizens Advice (West Oxfordshire)	£200
Clean Slate	£150
Sustainable Woodstock	£400
Oxfordshire Association for the Blind	£0
Old Woodstock Mock Mayor	£500

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was then proposed by Cllr A Grant and seconded by Cllr J Cooper that in view of the nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be temporarily excluded from the meeting (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1).

WTC169/18 PROPERTY MATTERS

Council discussed the options raised in Cllr A Grant's report of either paying for a clearance or of selling the items that were left in one of Council's rented properties when it was vacated.

Council agreed to sell the items and that Cllr M Parkinson and Cllr A Grant would take the lead on arranging this.

After a lengthy discussion regarding outstanding rent arrears, The Mayor proposed, seconded by Cllr M Parkinson:-

That the Clerk responds to the email that had been received (after consulting with the appropriate colleagues) and instructs Freeths to send out the letter on that basis. The next stage - the matter comes back to Council at a later date to decide what further action to take if any.

A vote was taken, Cllr F Collingwood requested a named vote.

VOTE:	For:	5	Cllrs M Parkinson, P Jay, A Grant, E Poskitt & J Cooper
	Against:	1	Cllr F Collingwood

RESOLVED: The motion was carried.

After briefly discussing the tenancy of the cobbled area by the Town Hall, Council agreed that the Clerk would contact Freeths and clarify whether the tenant had any rights of adverse possession as no lease agreement has been signed by the tenant for a number of years.

WTC170/18 SIGNING AND SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The council agreed for the Clerk to sign the new lease agreement for 4 Park Street

Finally, The Mayor requested the bound copy of the 2019/20 budget be made available as soon as possible. Cllr Collingwood said he would ask the Financial Assistant to do this within the next fortnight.

The meeting closed at 21.20hrs