

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF  
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2015  
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:**

|                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cllr E Poskitt (Mayor) | Cllr C Carritt (Deputy Mayor) |
| Cllr J Cooper          | Cllr B Yoxall                 |
| Cllr Mrs E Stokes      | Cllr P Jay                    |
| Cllr S Parnes          | Cllr Mrs E Jay                |
| Cllr Mrs S Rasch       | Cllr T Wray                   |

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** There were no members of the public at this meeting.

**WTC/170/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr M Robertson and County Cllr I Hudspeth. Cllr L Maybury did not attend this meeting.

**WTC/171/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Declarations of interest in item WTC/174/15 Budget 2016-17 (v) Grants and Donations were received from the following Cllrs:

Cllr E Poskitt: As she is involved in Volunteer Link Up.  
Cllr J Cooper: As Chairman of the Woodstock Youth Club.  
Cllr Mrs E Stokes: As a member of the Youth Club Committee.  
Cllr C Carritt: As Treasurer of the Youth Club Committee.  
Cllr S Parnes: As his wife works for the Citizens Advice Bureau and a member of the Youth Club Committee and also a Trustee.

**WTC/172/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:** None

**WTC/173/15 QUESTIONS:** The following question had previously been submitted by Cllr S Parnes in accordance with Standing Orders:

1. Having possessed an asset of value in the form of a piece of art presumed to be created by, and/or under the guidance of, landscape architect Lancelot "Capability" Brown, why has the Town Council not consulted the public about what to do with the piece or how to spend any future proceeds from any future sale of it since the failed auction attempt in July? The BBC reported on 25 June 2015: "It is expected to fetch about £100,000 when it is sold in London on 8 July." Subsequently, on 08 July 2015, the BBC followed up with a report that the item "has failed to sell at auction" and the BBC noted "Auction house Bonhams said the sketch was 'extremely rare' as much of Brown's work remains in private collections." Doesn't the Mayor consider the public should have an opportunity to submit ideas, bearing in mind the asset and/or any proceeds of it are public funds?
2. Has the so-called "Capability Brown" illustration been insured by the Town Council? If so, what has been the most recent insured value or value-range of WTC's policy cover applicable to this item?
3. Bearing in mind the approaching culmination of this Council's four-year term in May, when all Woodstock Town Council seats will be filled by election providing opportunity for the Community to determine which new candidates or re-elected Members will join the Council, does the Mayor agree that expenditures and policy decisions relating to far-reaching matters and issues of long-term impact should in principle be deferred until after the new Council Membership is seated in May - in order to give the community its then newly appointed representatives an opportunity to guide and inform progress with fresher clarity of the Community's preferences?

Cllr T Wray joined the meeting at this point.

In response to question 2 the Mayor confirmed that WTC had insured the 'Capability Brown' picture for £33,765.26. She commented in response to Question 1 that the matter had been raised at the Annual Town Meeting four years ago and there had been no comments forthcoming from residents. There had been comments in minutes and meetings since. Her answer to question 3 was 'no'.

### **WTC/174/15 BUDGET 2016-17**

- (i) A paper from the Council Member for Finance dated 11<sup>th</sup> November entitled "Budget 2016-17"
- (ii) Excel Workbook: "Budget 2016-17-V5"
- (iii) Excel Workbook: "Copy of Budget 2016-17-V6postcutspj2"
- (iv) A paper from the Council Member of Finance dated 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015 entitled "Postscript to 11 November Paper"

Cllr P Jay, as the Council Member for Finance, presented items (1) – (14) above. He explained his paper and the implications contained therein. Cllr P Jay proposed that WTC:

- a) Adopt the budget set out in the tables called <budget 2016-17-V6postcutspj2>;
- b) Set the precept for 2016/17 at £95,000; and
- c) Approves the forward plan to 2021/22 as set out in those tables.

Cllr J Cooper seconded this motion. Discussion followed.

Cllr B Yoxall proposed an alternative strategy as an amendment to the motion to enable disabled to have easier access to a Town Hall equipped with a disabled toilet in the next 12-18 months rather than having to wait till 2022/23. Cllr Mrs E Stokes seconded this motion. The amended motion centred around WTC taking out a £60k loan from the Public Works Loan Board to enable an entrance ramp to be installed at the Town Hall entrance on Market Street and a disabled toilet in the Town Hall sooner than envisaged in the budget excel workbook <budget 2016-17-V6postcutspj2> . Discussion followed during which everybody agreed that disabled facilities were an important feature that the Town Hall should have. However, there were differing views about the funding stream and timescales that should be applied to achieve these facilities. A vote was then taken the result of which was 3 votes for but 7 votes against and so the amendment to the motion fell. It was noted that there may be grants available for these disabled facilities.

The main motion was then considered in further detail and the following points discussed:

1. The Living Wage: Woodstock Town Council has committed to pay the Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation. The Living Wage for 2016 has now been announced. Maintaining the differentiation between roles and salaries is important and so the 2016/17 salaries bill may increase by approximately £3.7k. The Town Clerk noted that a pay increase had already been allowed for in the budget for 2016-17 but she will confirm the potential effect on the budget in a report to the Mayor's Committee.

**ACTION** *The Town Clerk will bring a paper about the Living Wage and staff pay to the Mayor's Committee in January.*

2. Laying out the Cemetery Extension: The Town Clerk updated the Council about the approximate number of grave spaces left at the Green Lane Cemetery. Based upon current usage the cemetery extension is likely to come on line sometime in 2017 or early 2018. A layout plan and the installation of paths will be needed before then. It was recognised that this is an important consideration and that provision should be made for this work to be done in April 2017.

**ACTION:** *The paths and layout of the Green Lane cemetery extension will be included in the 2017/18 budget and also brought forward for inclusion in the 2016 budget review meeting because it may be able to bring this work forward if funds become available.*

3. Woodstock in Bloom Budget: Cllr B Yoxall noted that the proposed 'Bloom' budget for 2016/17 was £2,000 and proposed that this budget be increased to £2,433 to include money for the Hoggrove Steps. This motion was seconded by Cllr C Carritt but fell on a vote – 3 votes for but 7 votes against.
4. Community Centre Garden: Cllr B Yoxall proposed that the money allocated to the garden and repair of the garage walls at the back of the Community Centre be used instead to fund exterior decoration and repair of first floor windows at the Community Centre. It was noted that the garden budget comprised the bequest from the 11<sup>th</sup> Duke of Marlborough and donations in memory of Cllr Mrs P Richardson. This motion fell on a vote: 1 vote for and 9 votes against.
5. Precept: Cllr P Jay explained that the £5k increase in the precept represented an increase of 1 pence per day for a typical Band D household.

Cllr P Jay's motion was then put and the Council

**RESOLVED** that

WTC:

- a) Adopt the budget set out in the tables called <budget 2016-17-V6postcutspj2>;
- b) Set the precept for 2016/17 at £95,000; and
- c) Approves the forward plan to 2021/22 as set out in those tables (whilst noting points 1 and 2 above).

- (v) Grants and Donations applications: Cllrs E Poskitt, C Carritt, Mrs E Stokes, S Parnes and J Cooper had previously made general declarations of interest in this agenda item.

The six applications for grants and donations in 2016/17 were received and considered and discussion followed. The budget available for grants and donations is £3k. Cllr B Yoxall proposed that the allocation be the same as last year but that the £1k allocated to the Woodstock Guide and Scout Hut be split with £500 to the Scout and Guide Hut and £500 to the Football Clubhouse refurbishment. Cllr Mrs E Stokes seconded this motion. Discussion followed. It was noted that the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association has not applied for a grant this year, each applicant should be assessed against the current application and that successful applicants should report the outcomes of previous grants before they are eligible to apply for additional grant funding. Further discussion followed about various allocations and

at the end of these the Mayor proposed an amendment (as follows), Cllr Mrs E Stokes seconded the motion and the Council

**RESOLVED** that the grant allocation for 2016/17 is as follows:

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| OWT Football Club                | £650          |
| Woodstock Scout and Guide Hut    | £650          |
| Volunteer Link-Up                | £150          |
| Woodstock Youth Club             | £1,000        |
| Citizens Advice Bureau West Oxon | £300          |
| Woodstock Carnival               | £250          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>£3,000</b> |

Cllr S Parnes asked for a named vote the results of which were as follows:

For: Cllrs E Poskitt, C Carritt, B Yoxall, Mrs E Stokes, S Rasch, T Wray, Mrs E Jay and J Cooper.

Against: Cllrs S Parnes and P Jay.

***ACTION:*** the Town Clerk will produce a covering letter to advise the successful applicants that they are required to report the outcomes of their grant allocations before any further applications for grant funding will be considered.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed ..... Date .....