

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2013
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: The Finance Assistant, 10 Members of the Public and the Administrative Assistant who minuted this meeting as the Town Clerk was on holiday.

WTC/118/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Mrs P Richardson (ill health).

WTC/119/13 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Cllr declared any pecuniary interests but the following Cllrs notified the meeting of the following general interests:

Cllr Mrs V Edwards: Agenda item 5 as she is a resident of Harrison's Lane.

Cllr Dr E Poskitt: Agenda item 6 as Vice Chair of the Friends of the Museum of Oxfordshire and Agenda item 12 as a member of the WODC Planning Committee.

Cllr S Parnes: Agenda Items 12c, 4, 8 and 10 as he resides on a development adjacent to a field that is the subject of a planning application and that may be affected by Shipton Road traffic.

Cllr P Jay: General as a resident of Banbury Road.

The Mayor: Agenda Item 12 Planning as he is a WODC Member involved in planning matters.

WTC/120/13 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 13th August 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

WTC/98/13: Public Participation. On page 45 'new development' was amended to 'proposed development'.

WTC/100/13: Planning, (i) Planning Applications (b) Ref: 13/0982/P/FP. The last paragraph was amended to 'should be asked to comment to the Town Council before representations are made'.

WTC/104/13: Motions. (i) In the last paragraph the spelling was corrected from 'sited' to 'cited'.

WTC/112/13: Electronic Availability. The first paragraph was changed to read 'considered it acceptable for Cllrs to distribute agendas electronically to anyone who found it difficult to access them'

The Mayor requested permission to move agenda items around to accommodate members of the public who had make requests to speak at the meeting.

WTC/121/13 COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor informed the Council that Mr Roy Huggins MBE, former Deputy Administrator to the His Grace, the Duke of Marlborough had accepted the invitation to attend the Remembrance Sunday service. The necessary arrangements would be made and a charge to the civic budget would be incurred as agreed by Council.

The Mayor informed the Council that the Local Authority World Heritage Forum will be meeting in the assembly room on 5th November and he proposed charging the civic budget with the room hire as this could further the Council's objective of achieving a buffer zone inclusion in the Local Plan to Blenheim.

The Mayor confirmed that Father Christmas would be attending the Mayor's Carol Concert on Saturday 14th December thanks to a donation to the Playbus charity from a benefactor to the town.

WTC/122/13 QUESTIONS

The Mayor received the following questions from Cllr Parnes under Standing Order No 8:

Please would the Mayor kindly confirm and explain:

- (a) the status of the independent road survey instructed by WTC in relation to the planning application for 64 dwellings on the field between Marlborough School and Budds Close;

The Mayor replied that the status is of high importance as demonstrated by the fact that the Council has engaged and paid a consultant to undertake this specialist work for us.

- (b) Whether the road survey specialists have been informed of the 3rd Oct Planning Sub-Committee site visit and delayed decision which is now expected 7th Oct; and
- (c) Whether the instructed road survey specialists are intending to top up their findings to date by adding further survey data after start of the school term.

The Mayor said that he believed this to be so, but he had been unable to confirm with Kemp & Kemp whether an instruction had been issued.

- (d) Whether Kemp and Kemp and the road survey specialists have been informed of the additional, recent planning application for two blocks of flats at 9 Shipton Road with a view to considering effects or common concerns relating to the application for 64 dwellings down the Shipton Road.

The Mayor said that there had been no Council instruction to do so, although an opportunity exists under item 12(c) if the Council decided to do so.

WTC/123/13 ARMY CADET FORCE

The Army Cadet Force has asked for permission to use the Water Meadows for manoeuvres but details have not yet been given. The Mayor asked for the item to be included in the next Environment Committee.

WTC/124/13 REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The council received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer.

- (i) List of payments for August 2013

RESOLVED

That the list of payments totalling £41,341.02 made in the month of August 2013 was approved by the Council.

- (ii) Bank Reconciliation Statements for August 2013

The bank reconciliation statements for August 2013 were received and approved.

(ii) The Summary and Detailed Income & Expenditure Statements for August 2013

The summary and detailed income & expenditure statements for August 2013 were received and approved.

Cllr Poskitt expressed concern over the reduced income from the Town Hall and Community Centre. Cllr Edwards, CMfP agreed and said that the matter was being looked into.

(iv) Budget Review

Cllr Jay moved that the budget review be formally adopted. Council noted the paper from Cllr Yoxall proposing a variation to allow for stage 1 and 2 works to be completed at 4 Park Street as it would be a more economical and practical long term solution and had no adverse impact on the budget. The amendment suggested reducing the Community Centre Phase 2 refurbishment budget from £20k to £5k and the Town Hall budget from £10k to £5k. Cllr Yoxall explained that this would still be the case if CMfP's suggestion to only undertake Stage 1 works was adopted. Cllr Jay explained that the Council started the year with more money in the bank than anticipated which makes it possible to do things that were not originally in the budget. Cllr Edwards reported that Carter Jonas had miscalculated their quotation and a saving of £1300 had been identified.

Cllr Robertson proposed an amendment concerning the extension to the OWL (Old Woodstock Line) footpath. She told the Council that the work to clear the path was almost completed but two pieces of work were outstanding. She proposed that in light of the small scale of the remaining works and the need to complete these swiftly, the Council gives delegated authority to the Town Clerk and the Deputy Mayor to see and agree a single quotation for rubbish removal and the erection of 2 signs and to subsequently let the contract, the total cost not to exceed £1000.

Cllr Carritt reported that since the Budget Review there has been a collapse of the riverbank in the Water Meadows opposite the Black Prince. The cost to repair is likely to be several thousand pounds. He suggested that the Council may wish to reinstate the money previously removed from the budget for the Water Meadows or agree to take from reserves once the amount is known. Specifications have been sent to three companies and the Council is awaiting quotations.

Cllr Parnes asked about the expected cost of the forthcoming election and budget provision for any further elections. The Finance Assistant reported that the last election cost the Council £1300 so it is likely to be less than the £2,000 budgeted. Cllr Parnes raised concerns about surplus being spent on Park St and Community Centre refurbishments. However funds are not allocated for a possibility of solar panels at the community centre.

RESOLVED

(A councillor called for a named vote - 9 votes for and Cllr Parnes voted against)

That:

The Council adopt the Budget Review as in the document subject to Cllr Yoxall and Cllr Robertson's amendments. Cllr Jay reported that there is a surplus over target reserves of £21k if required for emergencies.

Cllr Jay asked to record his thanks to Paul Thomas, the Finance Assistant for his work on the Budget Review. Paul Thomas left the meeting at the end of the finance matters.

- i. Mr Andrew Partridge addressed the Council about the planning application from Pye Homes. He wished to correct some comments he felt were misleading. He said that the suggestion that the development adjacent to Marlborough Place would include 32 affordable houses was not accurate and that Huw Mellor's findings suggested only two of the buildings are likely to meet the affordable housing criteria. He also felt that the suggestion that Blenheim Place needed the money from the development was unconvincing as it represents a very small sum when compared with their annual turnover. He said that neither of the schools had supported the application and it was unlikely it would have any positive impact on the town's economy. He also wished to object to the planning application for flats on Shipton Road because of the increased traffic in an already congested area.
- ii. Mr Dennis Allen addressed the Council about the importance of the sale of the Police Station. He reported that surveys have shown the lack of parking in the town to be an important issue and hoped that the opportunity presented at Hensington Road might have the benefit of providing additional parking.
- iii. Dr Bob McGurrin addressed the Council on two matters; the use of the town's Coat of Arms by the Old Woodstock Town Football Club. Dr McGurrin showed Councillors examples of the Coat of Arms being used on signage along with the football club and their sponsor Pye Home. He was concerned that there was an implication that the Town supported Pye Homes application.

Cllr Cooper responded that he recollected the Football Club were given permission to use the Coat of Arms in return for allowing users of the Community Centre to park in the club car park.

ACTION: *The Mayor would investigate this arrangement report back to the Council.*

Dr McGurrin also wished to confirm that the Woodstock Action Group supports the idea of the Doctor's Surgery moving to the Police Station site should they wish to do so.

- iv. Mr Chris Baylis addressed the Council on the subject of the sale of the Police Station. He stressed that this was probably the last opportunity for significant planning gain to provide more parking near the town centre. He urged councillors to support engagement with WODC and potential developers to ensure the best outcome for the site. Mr Baylis said that WODC had already suggested permission is likely to be given for an amount of housing on the site. He told the Council that the Woodstock Town Partnership would be holding a public meeting in the near future to gather the thoughts of the community as this would be very important to WODC in reaching any decisions.
- v. Cllr Colin Carritt addressed the Council as the Chairman of the Woodstock Town Partnership. He expressed concern that the motion brought by Cllr Jay entitled 'Who speaks for Woodstock' suggested that the Woodstock Town Partnership should not have liaised with Thames Valley Police over the matter of the sale of the Police Station. Cllr Carritt said that the Partnership had hoped that the Council would lead the way in negotiations but as that had not happened, the Partnership felt something needed to happen. He said that WODC would want the views of the wider community

as well as the Council. That the views of the schools, the retailers and the patients of the surgery would all be taken into account.

- vi. Cllr Ian Hudspeth said that as a member of the Woodstock Partnership he saw it as complementing the democratically elected Town Council rather than challenging or threatening it. He said he had been happy to chair a meeting to discuss the future of the Police station site although it was not a decision making body rather an opportunity for interested people to have an open and honest dialogue. Cllr Hudspeth said Thames Valley Police will dispose of the site at the best possible price and that WODC would be likely to grant permission for housing due to the development plan. Cllr Hudspeth suggested that the Council should not support Cllr Jay's motion but rather welcome all views from interested members of the community.

WTC/126/13 THE FUTURE OF WOODSTOCK POLICE STATION

Cllr Jay had proposed the following motion, seconded by Cllr Yoxall:

The council, recalling the sentiments expressed in the Town Mayor's letter to the September edition of Woodstock & Bladon News distributed at the August Town Council Meeting and cognisant of Councillor Carritt's report of 23 August, 2013, on a Town Partnership Meeting on 22 August, 2013:-

1. Considers that it is the role of this town council to be in the lead in investigating on behalf of the Town opportunities arising from the disposal of the Hensington Road police station;
2. Notes that it has not appointed any councillor to represent it at this meeting, nor delegated to anyone authority to speak or make agreements on behalf of the council at this meeting;
3. Asks for immediate oral reports by councillors who attended the meeting on what they said, if anything, on the council's behalf;
4. Considers that any development brief drawn up to represent a "consensus" of local support can only be properly prepared and approved by this council;
5. Would expect WODC to give weight only or chiefly to a consensus brokered by this council;
6. As to the reference in Councillor Carritt's report to housing development on the police station site, reiterates that Woodstock has completed its contribution to the district's housing strategy and opposes any further allocation to Woodstock within the Local Plan 2012;
7. Considers that the sale of the police station would indeed present a welcome opportunity for the creation of a new medical centre, provided that the existing Woodstock practice confirm that this would meet their requirements;
8. Asks the Mayor for an assurance that his participation in any further deliberations of the kind reported as having taken place on 22 August will be strictly on the basis of the points made in this motion and will not in any way commit the council to any development plans not already approved by this council; and
9. Asks for letters to be sent on behalf of the council to all those involved in the meeting on 22 August and to the local press confirming that the council's policy on planning issues affecting Woodstock is as stated in this motion.

Cllr Jay said that there was an important principle at stake and although all parties wanted to get the greatest benefit from the sale of the Police station site, the stated policy of the Council was to oppose further housing development on top of Woodstock's large recent contribution. There was a discussion about the role of the Town Partnership and the position of Councillors who attend their meetings. Concerns were expressed that TVP had suggested a very short timescale in which to dispose of the station and therefore it was important that the Council or other interested bodies act quickly to liaise with WODC over the best use of the site. The Mayor said that he had agreed to chair the next meeting of the Town Partnership Working Group on this issue. Cllr Jay suggested what was needed was a Town Council Working Group led by the Mayor to consider the issues involved.

Cllr Jay's original motion was rejected by 6 votes to 3 with 1 abstention. An alternative motion was proposed by Cllr Mrs V Edwards and seconded by Cllr Mrs E Stokes and it was

RESOLVED

That the Town Council sets up a Working Group led by the Mayor with a clear delineation from Woodstock Town Partnership or other outside bodies so it can assess the needs and wishes of the town with regard to the Police Station site.

WTC/127/13 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR UPDATES

(i) County Cllr I Hudspeth

Cllrs had previously been circulated County Cllr Hudspeth's September report. Cllr Edwards raised the issue of the blocking of Harrison's Lane during construction of the SOFO Museum. Cllr Hudspeth said he had asked the Asst Director (Environment and Economy) Martin Tugwell to respond to the concerns.

(ii) District Cllrs J Cooper and E Poskitt

The Council noted the September report from District Cllrs Cooper and Poskitt.

WTC/128/13 SOLDIERS OF OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

Cllr Yoxall presented a motion that was seconded by Cllr Stokes:

'Despite the action taken by the County Council since the meeting of 29 April at Woodstock Town Hall to address the concerns expressed by residents and members of the Town Council at that meeting over the SOFO Museum project, it is very strongly considered that the outcome is far from satisfactory. In the knowledge that:

- a) the County Council has most regrettably failed to engage in proper consultation over the SOFO project with the community of Woodstock
- b) the design of the building has been radically altered since consideration was first given to the original application dated April 2010
- c) insufficient consideration has been given to the implications for car parking
- d) manifestly inadequate thought has been given to the impact on neighbouring properties
- e) the latest projected visitor numbers point to the financial viability of the project being open to question

Woodstock Town Council deems it essential for Oxfordshire County Council to submit a revised planning application for the SOFO Museum building and to implement a new process of thorough community engagement before considering the revised application, hereby making a formal request for that to happen.'

RESOLVED to request that OCC submit a revised planning application and implement a new process of community engagement. Cllr Poskitt abstained as she is the Vice Chair of the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum.

WTC/129/13 PLANNING

The Mayor declared a general interest as he is a WODC Member involved in planning matters. The following planning applications were received and considered.

(i) Planning Applications

To receive and consider the following planning applications:

(a) Ref: 13/1178/P/FP, 22 Banbury Road, Woodstock

Erection of single and two storey extensions.

RESOLVED that Woodstock Town Council objects to this application on the grounds of overdevelopment and potential blocking of light.

(b) Ref: 13/1185/P/FP, 8 Market Place, Woodstock

Removal of Existing Dwelling, garage and workshop and erection of new two storey detached dwelling and garage.

RESOLVED that Woodstock Town Council has concerns about the access arrangements for construction traffic if this application is granted.

(c) Ref: 13/1193/P/FP, 9 Shipton Road, Woodstock

Removal of dwelling and erection of eight flats with associated parking and access.

RESOLVED that Woodstock Town Council objects to this planning application on the grounds of Policy B3 part B locally congested roads.

The Council agreed to update Huw Mellor from Kemp and Kemp planning consultants about this application taking into account the application from Pye Homes for large scale development in the field between Marlborough Place and Budds Close.

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

WTC/130/13 COUNCIL MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

Cllr Edwards confirmed that she would be happy to continue as the Council Member for Property if the Town Clerk is given more delegated authority.

The Mayor said that he felt it was up to the Communications Working Group to select a Chairman at their next meeting.

WTC/131/13 VOTING AT MEETINGS

Cllr Carritt proposed that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should continue to have full voting rights at all meetings they attend. Cllr Jay proposed that the Town Clerk be asked to ensure that all formal procedures for amending standing order accordingly are completed with dispatch.

RESOLVED (9 in favour, Cllr Parnes abstained, Cllr Wray left the meeting due to ill health)

That WTC reaffirms its policy that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor should have full voting rights at all meetings they attend and instructs the Clerk to ensure that all due processes for amending standing orders accordingly are completed without delay.

WTC/132/13 WINTER WEATHER MAINTENANCE

Cllr Stokes and Cllr Yoxall reported that they had carried out a survey of residents in Old Woodstock to ascertain feelings about the installation of a new grit bin. There had been an objection by a local resident who had contacted the council with his concerns. The survey suggested that the majority of residents felt the supply of another grit bin would be a good idea and therefore the Council supported Cllr Yoxall's proposal.

RESOLVED (8 in favour, Cllr Carritt and Cllr Parnes abstained) that the Council arrange for the installation of a new grit bin in Old Woodstock

WTC/133/13 WOODSTOCK PLAYGROUNDS PROJECT

Cllr Robertson reported that as the Council had been successful in obtaining a substantial grant from WREN for the playground project, they had decided to go back to the drawing board and work with the Project Manager on new designs. Cllr Robertson has written to all interested parties and people who live close to the parks to update them. It is hoped that the design will be approved by the end of October and the work carried out over the winter months.

WTC/134/13 CLA GAME FAIR 2014

The Mayor confirmed that he had written to Thames Valley Police to stress the importance of effective traffic management for this event but had not yet received a reply. Cllr Yoxall was asked and agreed to take the lead on behalf of the Town Council in liaising with all interested parties in connection with the Game Fair.

WTC/135/13 WOODSTOCK HISTORIC PLAQUES

The Council noted the minutes of the meetings of the Wall Plaques Group from April and June. Cllr Poskitt had previously distributed details of three new plaques for the Council's comments. Councillors were happy with the suggested wording.

WTC/136/13 WOODSTOCK PASSION PLAY

The Mayor reported that he was waiting for further details from the Methodist minister, Rev Todd.

WTC/137/13 TOURISM DEVELOPMENTS

Cllr Yoxall had previously circulated the details of meetings with Blenheim Estates, Wake up to Woodstock and the Director of the SOFO Museum. Council noted progress on these matters.

WTC/138/13 TRANSPORT NEEDS SURVEY

Cllr Yoxall had previously distributed the findings of the Transport Needs Survey. He said that it was unlikely to make the case for extended services but that he would continue to investigate funding for Community transport.

WTC/139/13 MEETING OF THE MAYOR'S COMMITTEE

The Council brought this item forward and agreed that although this item had been published on the agenda as being subject to exclusion of public and press, it was more appropriate to discuss in public session.

The minutes of the Meeting of the Mayor's Committee that was held on Tuesday 27th August were received and considered.

WTC/140/13 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Mayor proposed 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).

RESOLVED

That members of the public leave the meeting temporarily whilst the Council considered confidential information.

The Administrative Assistant left the meeting when the Council went into confidential session and Cllr E Poskitt minuted the rest of the meeting.

WTC/141/13 PROPERTY UPDATE

(i). Council received and considered the property report from the CMfP.

CMfP suggested that a decision on the purchase of a red runner carpet suitable for weddings in the Town Hall be 'parked' until there was a definite marketing policy for the Town Hall rooms.

CMfP raised the matter of the defibrillators being offered to Oxfordshire communities. The Council agreed to the CMfP's proposal that Woodstock should express a clear wish to accept a defibrillator but that siting of the defibrillator should be explored by the Town Clerk in conjunction with those offering the defibrillator and other relevant parties.

RESOLVED

That Council accept the offer of a defibrillator for the town and that the Town Clerk is requested to get advice from those offering the apparatus and from others about the most suitable place in town to site the defibrillator.

The refurbishment of Number 4 Park Street was considered under item 25.

(ii). Update on Community Centre

Cllr Yoxall stated that the ground floor windows on New Road would be replaced in early October – probably October 14th.

(iii). Update on Community Centre fire risk assessment

Cllr Poskitt reported that she, the Administrative Assistant and the Deputy Caretaker had been round the Community Centre as part of the fire risk assessment. She would be completing the assessment form for the Fire Services shortly. There were a number of items she wished to raise with Council but in view of the time she would leave most of these to be discussed at the Mayor's Committee. However it had come to light that none of the tenants at the Community Centre had had his or her electric appliances PAT tested. As all hirers of the Community Centre and Town Hall are obliged to have all electrical appliances used in the building PAT tested, the same should apply to the tenants. She recommended the Town Clerk be asked to write politely to all tenants in the Community Centre and in the Town Hall building (i.e. the shop) requesting they arrange for their electrical appliances to be PAT tested and that testing is kept up to date. She also suggested that this requirement should, in future, be included in the contents of leases to tenants of these buildings.

RESOLVED(unanimous)

That the Town Clerk write to tenants of the Community Centre and the Town Hall pointing out the regulations regarding PAT testing of electrical appliances in WTC buildings and requesting that they arrange for their appliances to be so tested forthwith and that such testing is kept up to date. In addition, Carter Jonas should be asked to include in future leases relating to Community Centre and Town Hall, a requirement for regular PAT testing of all electrical appliances used in the buildings leases.

WTC/142/13 MEETING OF THE MAYOR'S COMMITTEE

MC/13/13. The Council received, considered and approved the minutes of the meeting of the Mayor's Committee held on Tuesday August 27th. It accepted the resolution to the Council under item MC/13/13

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the complaints procedure adopted by Woodstock Town Council in January 2013 is amended to include a time limit within which complainants can ask for their complaint to be considered under stage two of the procedure at the 'Review of investigation and complaint (Second Stage)' and that the following words are inserted after the initial paragraph "If the complainant wishes to have his or her complaint reviewed they must notify the Town Clerk in writing within 28 days of receipt of the decision made in stage one of the procedure being notified to the complainant. This Council decision will be sent by recorded delivery.

MC/15/13 Council reviewed the recommendation from the Mayor's Committee under this item relating to HR support and put the matter to the vote:

RESOLVED (5 votes for and 4 votes against)

That WTC employs contractor (3) on a three year fixed contract with a review and break clause included after year one for the Personal, Health and Safety Service inclusive of Legal Expenses Insurance (employment claims and H&S protection) and pays the fee annually in advance to attract the 5% discount on the basic fee thus making the costs, inclusive of both insurances, £3107-50 plus VAT in the first year and £2650 plus VAT annually for the second and third years.

MC/16/13. The Mayor stated that in relation to this item he was still researching the matter and he hoped the issue could be resolved shortly.

MC/17/13. In relation to the recommendation under this item dealing with 4 Park Street from the Mayor's Committee to the Council, Cllr Parnes stated that he wished his objection to the proposal to be recorded. The Council noted Cllr Parnes concerns. The recommendation was put to the Council which

RESOLVED (8 votes for and 1 against)

That Council authorises Carter Jonas to obtain three quotes for both options, less the need for re-wiring, with the instruction from the Town Clerk that we may need to cut the specification a little further to achieve a more realistic budget. To this end, Carter Jonas should be instructed to use smaller local suppliers as well as those on their approved list to obtain a quote that is on budget.

MC/19/13 Council also agreed the recommendations from the Mayor's Committee relating to the revised grant application form and process

RESOLVED (unanimous):

That Council

1. Adopts the revised grant application form
2. Considers simplifying the categories of grant going forward
3. Approves the revised guidance note drafted by the Town Clerk and adopts it as a policy that is reviewed bi-annually
4. Approves the conditions included in section 5 of the guidance note that requires any grant beneficiaries to report back and explain how the money was spent
5. Approves the draft grant application poster

WTC/143/13 COMPLAINT

In relation to this matter the Mayor stated that the complainant had notified him that he did not wish to proceed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure and would not take his complaint further.

At this point the Council went back into open session.

WTC/144/13 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

There being no matters under this item, the meeting closed at 22.04 hours.

Signed Date