

AMENITIES MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 2 November 2015

At 7.05pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: Mrs B J Churchill (Chairman)

Councillors: Dr S E Bartington A D Harvey
C Brown C Holliday
H B Eaglestone J S King.

Officers: Town Clerk Works and Contracts Supervisor
Responsible Financial Officer Democratic Services Officer

1 member of the public

A521 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

A522 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Harvey declared an interest in agenda item 12 – Grounds Maintenance-Grass Cutting – as he was the District Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Grounds Maintenance.

Cllr Churchill declared an interest in agenda item 8c – verbal report from the Public Halls Committee held earlier that evening – as she was a trustee of the Witney Corn Exchange Trust.

A523 MINUTES

RESOLVED to adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 14 September 2015.

A524 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2015

A member asked about WREN funding and was advised that this would be discussed under agenda item 10.

A525 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

A526 LEYS RECREATION GROUND – SPLASH PARK SIGNAGE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager. The wording on the signage was discussed and several amendments were made. There was some discussion about whether the splash park should remain unlocked at night and the RFO suggested that it was left unlocked but money was put into the budget for any repairs due to vandalism. It was agreed that anyone wanting to vandalise the park would probably scale the fence even if

the park was locked. A Member enquired as to the progress of the installation of CCTV at the Leys – the Town Clerk said she would chase up WODC as they were dealing with this.

Members noted the map that the Facilities Manager had asked if they would like added to the sign, but it was felt that if equipment or layout changed, the sign would be out of date.

A member also noted that “Fine Print” had not been mentioned as a supporter of the project whilst they had contributed banners and leaflets.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the proposed wording on the signage be amended to read as follows:

WELCOME TO THE LEYS SPLASH PARK AND ADVENTURE PLAY AREA

This area was created in partnership between Witney Town Council and Liven Up the Leys community group. Witney Town Council and Liven Up the Leys would like to say thank you to our funding partners for helping us to make this play area possible.

We ask all to respect this facility for all in this town to enjoy.

Under 12s should be supervised at all times.

All enquiries please call the Town Council on 01993 704379

Fine Print would be added to the list of contributors.

A527 HAILEY ROAD ALLOTMENTS – ROWAN COTTAGE

The report of the Facilities Manager was received and considered by the Committee. Members were dismayed that more money was needed to be spent on remedial work. This additional work would reinstate a stable wall for the gabions to be attached to. In response to a member’s question the Town Clerk confirmed it was not possible to claim under the Council’s insurance. She informed the Committee that even with this additional amount to be spent, the overall cost was still within the original budget.

Members agreed that this needed to be done. The Town Clerk noted that the work needed to be done immediately as the contractor was standing by and the remaining work could not be completed until a stable wall had been reinstated. She would e-mail all Councillors in order to get agreement for the work to proceed as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the work as detailed in the Facilities Manager’s report go ahead at a further cost of £14,553.00 plus VAT.

A528 WITNEY LAWN TENNIS CLUB – REQUEST TO ERECT SIGNAGE AT WEST WITNEY SPORTS

GROUND

Members received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager concerning the request from Witney Lawn Tennis Club for retrospective permission to erect signage at West Witney Sports Ground. They had recently obtained retrospective planning permission from the District Council.

The Committee felt that as the Club had only received planning permission for one sign, the three smaller signs should be removed.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and permission be granted for the large sign to remain – although to sit flush with the Council’s sign, but the three smaller signs to be removed.

A529 **MINUTES OF THE SUB COMMITTEES**

A) **WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND – 13 OCTOBER 2015**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee meeting held on 13 October 2015.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes of the West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee be agreed and the recommendations therein approved.

B) **CEMETERIES AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS – 26 OCTOBER 2015**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Sub Committee held on 26 October 2015.

A member commented that communication with the Church was much improved.

In response to the member of the public who had addressed the Committee, it was noted that access to the cemetery was 365 days a year and as the access system was working, there was no need to instigate another three month trial of removing the bollards.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes of the Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Committee be agreed and the recommendations therein approved.

C) **PUBLIC HALLS – 2 NOVEMBER 2015**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on the meeting held earlier that evening. Issues discussed were snagging at the Corn Exchange, staging at the Corn Exchange and feedback from hirers. A member of the public had presented a proposal to hold a music/club night and Mr Richards had enquired about using it as cinema again.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal report be noted.

A530 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer. She highlighted to members that the budget was on track and requested ideas of what projects/items they would like to be included in next year's budget, giving the example of a budget for memorial maintenance. She asked members to e-mail her with their ideas during the next few weeks.

The Responsible Financial Officer recommended that at least £5,000 per annum was budgeted for closed churchyards and £6,000 for memorial testing. A member proposed the figures that the Responsible Financial Officer had suggested.

The Town Clerk added that there should be consideration of a budget for pitch drainage and a rolling budget for play area refurbishment.

A member noted that the Council was hoping for money from S106 for bus shelters and play areas, although it would be some time before it was released. Another member added that the Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee had invited all members to give him a list of any S106 projects to go to the District Council.

Another member asked for a list of all the play areas in Witney and who owned them, as this would help with budgeting. Another member suggested a spreadsheet of all the play areas the town council owned detailing what equipment was in them and the year of installation. The Town Clerk agreed to try to arrange this.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

A531 **PLAY AREAS**

A) **OXLEASE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Cllr Bartington on the campaign to regenerate Oxlease play area. She reported that she had instigated a consultation with stakeholders and that there was support for the project. A working party would be held on Wednesday and there was a broad range of people involved. She felt it would be helpful to register as a charity which would help access to funding streams. The project was called Meadow Park and there was a website – www.meadow-park.org. Children at the local school had come back with designs they would like to see.

Cllr Bartington thanked the Administrative Assistant for his help in providing maps. There was potential for a WREN application to be made, although it would be best for any application to be made in the Town Council's name. Members were very impressed with progress so far and it was proposed that the WREN application should go ahead as the project was so far advanced.

B) **QUARRY ROAD**

The Town Clerk had received a letter from a young boy who was asking for the small goal at Eton Close, which was due to be removed, to be relocated to Quarry Road Park. Members agreed to this request.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the verbal update from Cllr Bartington be noted, and support given to progress a WREN grant application for the Oxlease play area;
2. that the correspondence be noted from the young boy and the small goal at Eton Close be relocated to Quarry Road.

A532 RECREATION GROUNDS/SPORTS PITCHES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager, which included the current STRI report. The Works and Contracts Manager said that he had asked for more recommendations on pitch improvements/maintenance.

A member asked if the Town Council had considered applying to the Sport England Protected Playing Fields Fund. The Town Clerk said that the Facilities Manager had been talking to the F.A about grants.

RECOMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that consideration of costs for the verti draining and options are deferred until the next meeting after the Works and Contracts Manager had received further advice;
- 3) that consideration of the long term pitch drainage and consequently a budget be deferred until the next meeting after the Works and Contracts Manager had received further advice;
- 4) that the situation regarding pest control and the pathway estimate is noted.

Cllr Harvey left the meeting due to his non-pecuniary interest in the next item.

A533 GROUND MAINTENANCE – GRASS CUTTING

The Committee received and considered the report from the Facilities Manager, which included maps highlighting land which could be swapped with WODC in order to have consistency for grass cutting frequencies.

A member asked what the situation was regarding advertising on roundabouts. The Town Clerk advised that the District Council had never co-operated on this – as advertising consent was needed via the Planning process. She had recently attended a presentation by the County Council which had highlighted this as a potential source of income to Parish Councils, to encourage parishes to take on the maintenance from OCC. The Chairman advised that she and Cllr Browne were in dialogue with Sainsbury's about their roundabout.

The Town Clerk expressed concerns that, although the report stated there were no financial implications, she had not seen any costings from either party and she was aware that some of the areas were not like for like. As an example it was suggested the Town Council may take over the playing fields at Madley Park (29883 sq m) – compared with 35,237 sq m of amenity land on Cogges. She was not sure that the maintenance of fine turf was a fair swap for amenity land. She felt that the potential swap should be costed out before Members took their decision on this matter. Members although they agreed in principle with the concept of

swopping parcels of land, they shared the Town Clerk's concerns with regard to the financial implications and required a cost analysis of the areas proposed to be swapped.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. that the report be noted
2. that any decisions concerning the land swop be deferred until the full cost of this has been obtained and brought back to a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Chairman