

MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 20 January 2016

At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor J S King (Chairman)

Councillors:	S E Bartington	D S T Enright
	C Brown	T J Morris
	H W Chirgwin	L M Price
	B J Churchill	C E Reynolds
	H Eaglestone	C K Woodward
Officers:	Town Clerk	Responsible Financial Officer
	Democratic	

Also present: 1 Member of the public

057 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Beames and Doughty.

058 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr B Churchill and Cllr C Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest as they were Trustees of the Witney Corn Exchange Shadow Trust. Cllr J King, Cllr C Brown and Cllr B Churchill declared non-pecuniary interests in their association with West Witney Sports.

059 **MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the following meetings be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman:

- a. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2015
- b. Extraordinary meeting held on 30 November 2015

b) **MATTERS ARISING:**

25 November 2015

Page 3, minute A526 – a Member commented that the sign at Witney Tennis Club had still not been moved. Another Member replied that he had spoken to Mr Pyne of the Tennis Club who had assured him that this would be done within the next two weeks.

30 November 2015

A Member asked if anything had come out of the Oxfordshire Together partnership yet. The Town Clerk replied that the Town Council had received the opportunity to swap

some land both with WODC and OCC but after consideration this had not been in the Town Council's favour so it had been declined.

060 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was one Member of the public present who did not wish to speak.

061 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

The Police were unable to attend the meeting but the Town Clerk reported that Police Sergeant O'Leary had looked into crime affecting the Town Council's assets and there was nothing to report.

062 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Committee received and considered a list of engagements attended by the Mayor as circulated prior to the meeting. Members were also asked if they wished to participate in the "Clean for the Queen" weekend (4 – 6 March 2016). A Member added that WODC were providing equipment to help e.g. litter picker and high visibility jackets. Members wanted to support this and thought the way to do so was to get the various residents associations involved.

RESOLVED: that the Council and Councillors promotes the "Clean for the Queen" weekend on 4 – 6 March and gets residents associations involved.

063 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) Planning and Development Committee Minutes 8 December 2015 and 5 January 2016

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 8 December 2015 and 5 January 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations approved.

b) Public Halls Sub Committee Minutes 7 December 2015

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Public Halls Sub Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

c) West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee Minutes 2 December 2015

A Member asked if the Town Clerk had written to the Sports and Social club. The Town Clerk replied that she had and had received a reply with certificates. A meeting had been arranged for the 3 February 2016 between the Town Council and representatives from the West Witney Sports & Social Club Committee.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

d) Amenities Committee Minutes 7 December 2015

A Member asked if there had been any progress on pothole repairs on the cycle path at The Leys. The Town Clerk said she wasn't aware of this issue or that they had been repaired. The

Member asked if a letter could be sent to OCC as they owned the tarmac. It was pointed out by a Members that it could be reported to OCC via www.fixmystreet.com.

Another Member who was also a County Councillor offered to speak to OCC about the issue.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Amenities Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

e) Community Services Committee Minutes 14 December 2015

A Member advised that the issue of the 20mph speed limit throughout the town had been discussed at the Traffic Advisory Committee as requested but the police had thought that it would be too expensive to police and was therefore not possible.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Community Services Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

f) Policy and Resources Committee Minutes 11 January 2016

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

g) Communications Steering Group Minutes 13 January 2016

The Chairman of the Steering Group drew Members' attention to the development of an app for the Town Council. All agreed it would be great to have it ready for the Annual Town Meeting.

It was also reported that Woodstock Town Council had congratulated Witney Town Council on the website and had found it very user friendly. They had particularly liked the burials page and the leaflet. The Chairman congratulated the officers on this.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Communications Steering Group as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved

At this juncture the Town Clerk requested the Council's indulgence and asked Members when the Splash Park should be opened this year. A Member commented that it needed a bit of work as the concrete areas had turned green due to the amount of rainfall and the grassed area was extremely muddy. Ideally some permanent paving was required there. Some discussion followed as to when would be appropriate in terms of weather and school holidays. As the weather was variable from year to year, it was thought that Easter would be appropriate. Usage could then be monitored so that a more informed decision could be made next year. A report on this could be brought back to Amenities Committee. A Member proposed this and Members voted. 13 Members voted for this and 1 Member abstained.

RESOLVED:

1. that for 2016 the Splash Park be opened at Easter, dependant on weather and the state of the groundworks.

2. that usage of the Splash Park be monitored and a report to be brought back to a future Amenities committee on this.

064 **VERBAL REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD EARLIER IN THE EVENING**

The Committee received a verbal report of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held earlier that evening from the Chairman. The precept had been set at 3.26% for the forthcoming financial year. Staffing matters had also been discussed and the Town Clerk had given an update on the Corn Exchange and the sale of the Langdale Hall.

RESOLVED: that the verbal report be noted.

065 **DECLARATION OF THE PRECEPT FOR 2016/17**

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk be authorised to sign and serve a precept on the West Oxfordshire District Council, in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), requiring the District Council to pay the Town Council the sum of £1,272,878 in respect of Council Tax for the town during the financial year 2016/17.

066 **STANDING ORDERS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk along with the notes of the meeting of the Standing Orders WP and the resultant revised version of the Standing Orders which was being recommended by the Working Party.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report and notes of the meeting be noted;
2. that the proposed revised standing orders now stand adjourned in line with Standing Order 61(b), for full discussion and adoption at the next ordinary meeting of full Council.

067 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

068 **WEST WITNEY SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB**

Earlier in the week the Town Clerk had advised Members of a serious incident at West Witney Sports & Social Club (electric shocks in the shower) which had been reported to her on 18 January 2016. She had written to the Sports & Social club Chairman instructing that the showers be closed with immediate effect and the incident investigated as a matter of urgency.

A Member queried this as he had thought the electrical issues had been sorted out. The Town Clerk confirmed that she had received copies of the certification for the electrics towards the end of last year.

A discussion followed and Members agreed that the Town Council had a duty to safeguard both assets and those who used them. Some Members thought the club should be closed with immediate effect and portacabins brought in to serve as changing rooms. Others thought that if the Council's electrician checked the electrics and declared them safe the club house might only need to be closed for a day, but this would be very dependent on what the report of the electrician was. If it was clearly not safe then closure would remain the only option.

The Council was extremely concerned by the situation and understood the need to act quickly. However, there was still a desire to help the club if possible. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council's electrician was on standby to visit the following afternoon. Members felt that the Club had had the opportunity to carry out work before and had broken agreements it had made with the Council.

A Member asked what would happen to the live in steward. The Town Clerk suggested that he be advised to find other temporary accommodation.

Members voted on the proposal. 12 Members voted for the proposal, Cllrs Brown and Woodward abstained. Cllr Woodward asked that it be recorded that he noted the concerns on the issue.

RESOLVED:

1. that the whole facility (clubhouse and accommodation) be closed the following morning and the Town Council's electricians be instructed to inspect the facility and advise on if it could be re-opened.
2. if the facility could not be re-opened, authority be delegated to the Town Clerk and the Mayor to organise temporary changing rooms in order that the clubs could continue to use the pitches.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Chairman.