

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

**Held on Monday 7 September 2015
at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

Present

Councillor: Cllr C K Woodward (Chairman)

Councillors:	Dr S E Bartingdon	D S Enright
	H W Chirgwin	C Holliday
	P J Dorward	J S King
		D Temple (from 6.05pm)

Non-Committee Members:	A K Beames (sub for J M Doughty)
	Mrs B J Churchill (sub for D Temple until his arrival)

Officers:	Town Clerk	Democratic Services Officer
	RFO	Events and Communications Officer

C401 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for her absence was received from Cllr J M Doughty.

C402 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

C403 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
- b) there were no matters arising from the Minutes.

C404 OPERATIONAL REPORT ON STREET SCENE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager as circulated with the agenda. A discussion followed on the possibility of relocating bike racks from the outside of the Natwest to the area between the Halifax and St. Andrews bookshop on the other side of the road. The request had been made by a street trader who wished to extend her stall during the Christmas period which would not be possible if the bike racks remained in situ. All costs would be paid by the trader.

A member commented that from a disabled viewpoint that area was rather congested with street furniture. Members agreed that this was a good idea.

The second issue raised in the report was that of additional litter and dog waste bins, which had been requested by residents. WODC currently had a policy not to increase the number of waste bins due to the high ongoing costs. The residents request for bins all fell on land not owned by the Town Council, and the Facilities Manager had been told that WODC would only consider these if the Town Council met all associated costs including ongoing ones. These would be high, although an exact quotation had yet to be received.

A member said that he was depressed by the report and by the fact that the responsibility was put onto the Town Council. The amount of Council Tax received was increasing as the town grew, and he queried why waste provision was being clamped down on. He would like to see a meeting held with WODC to discuss the matter.

The RFO commented that there was no room for the Town Council to negotiate on this matter. WODC employed contractors to do such work and their prices were fixed until the end of their contract with WODC. The Town Clerk added that the provision of bins on new developments were usually funded by Section 106 agreements.

A member explained that as both a Town and District Councillor he had been pressing hard on environmental issues. He suggested that once quotations had been received, the Town Council writes to both the District's Cabinet Member for the Environment and the Environment Scrutiny Committee explaining that the Town Council finds it difficult to afford further provision of bins, despite the fact that there is a need for more, and to ask how the issue could move forward. Members agreed this was a good idea.

The Town Clerk reminded members that there was budget provision for a public defibrillator to be put in the town. The one that had been planned for W H Smith (not funded by the Town Council) had not been installed. She explained that one could not be placed on the Town Hall or the Corn Exchange as they were listed buildings, but an opportunity had arisen to adopt one of the telephone boxes by the bus stop at the Town Hall. If the Town Council did so, a defibrillator could be located there.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the relocation of the bike racks be agreed, but that both areas involved must be made good afterwards;
- 3) that the Town Clerk writes to the District Council's Cabinet Member for the Environment and the Environment Scrutiny Committee explaining that the Town Council finds it difficult to afford further provision of bins, despite the fact that there is a need for more, and to ask how the issue could move forward;
- 4) that the Town Clerk looks into adopting one of the red telephone boxes outside the Town Hall in order to locate a defibrillator inside.

C405 **WITNEY IN BLOOM**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the In Bloom working party held on 4 August 2015 as circulated with the agenda. Two members informed the Committee that they would be speaking to Sainsbury's about the roundabout by the store. Flowers and colours had also be chosen for next year.

The Events and Communications Officer explained that there had been a query as to whether to enter the larger competition. A potential change of grounds contractors could impact on the displays in the town. In order to embrace the competition the Council needed more help from OCC, WODC and local businesses.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted.

C406 **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Events and Communications Officer as circulated with the agenda.

A member asked if an 'app' for the Town Council could be considered for the dissemination of information and communication with the public. She was aware that other tiers of local councils had such apps. The Events and Communications Officer said that this could be investigated.

In answer to a members question it was confirmed that the Council's newsletter would be produced three times per annum. Members thanked the Events and Communications Officer for her work on the newsletter.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the costings for a Town Council 'app' be investigated and brought back to a future meeting.

Cllr A K Beames entered the meeting at 6.25pm.

C407 **UPDATE ON CIVIC EVENTS**

The Committee received and considered a report by the Events and Communications Officer updating members on civic events for the period 2015/16. She highlighted that the nominations for the Citizen of the Year was now open, and agreed to circulate Members with the application form.

A member explained that she would be having a meeting with WODC and other organisations to ensure that the town's events did not clash with those of other towns. The Events and Communications Officer would be attending this meeting, but she emphasised that Witney had to adhere to its own schedule of events as much as possible and not change to fit in with other areas' plans.

Another member asked about plans for the Annual Town Meeting. The Events and Communications Officer explained that this was not in her remit as it was not a civic event. The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that the Annual Town Meeting was a statutory meeting of the electorate facilitated by the Town Council.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

The meeting adjourned at 6.35pm for 15 minutes for a meeting of the Christmas Lights Working Party.

C408 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING PARTY

The Committee received a verbal update on the meeting held previously. It had been agreed that Cllr Dr Bartington would look into finding a cheaper alternative to the Reindeer, and that the Working Party supported the proposal to run a Christmas market 13-16 December 2015.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal report be noted.

C409 STREET FURNITURE

The Committee received and considered correspondence from a WODC Planning Officer concerning Bill's Restaurant (sited in the old Post Office) asking to relocate bike racks that had been attached to the building. The Committee understood that this was mainly due to Bill's wishing to put tables al fresco at the front of the building.

The Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee said that this issue was being looked at already and the Committee had made a site visit. It had been suggested that the bike racks could be sited under the trees in front of where the battery man traded.

The Chairman commented that it had previously been decided that this was not a good idea due to bird excrement from the trees. He felt that this area was already cluttered with street furniture and felt that space should not be filled just because it was there. He felt that two Committees should not be discussing the same issue and proposed that the Planning and Development Committee should make a decision on the relocation of the bike racks.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the correspondence was noted;
- 2) that the matter regarding the relocation of the bike rack be referred back to the Council's Planning and Development Committee make a decision on the relocation of the bike racks

The meeting closed at 7pm.
