

Witney Town Council

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To : Members of the Recreation Committee (and all other Town Councillors for information)

You are hereby summonsed to a Meeting of the **RECREATION COMMITTEE** to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Witney on **MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2015** at **6pm** for the transaction of the business stated below.

RECORDING OF MEETINGS

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography. As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Town Clerk or Democratic Services Officer know before the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee Members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Democratic Services Officer prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. **MINUTES**

- a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Recreation Committee held on 17 November 2014 (previously circulated)
- b) Matters arising from the minutes.
- c) Action Plan/Committee Vision

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. Any member of the public who so wishes may speak, at this point in the meeting, for a maximum of five minutes on any matter relating to an item on the agenda.

5. **WITNEY VIKINGS FOOTBALL TEAM REQUEST TO ERECT A SIGN AT BURWELL RECREATION GROUND**

To receive and consider the report of the Facilities Manager (copy enclosed)

6. **REVISED BUDGET 2014/15 AND ESTIMATES FOR 2015/16**

To receive and consider the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (copy enclosed)

7. **BOUNDARY WALL – THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND WITH THE BUTTERCROSS WORKS SITE**

To received and consider the report of the Works Contracts Supervisor (copy enclosed)

8. **WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND**

- a. To receive and consider the verbal update from the Facilities Manager on progress made to date on compliance matters at the West Witney Sports & Social Club – if appropriate.
- b. To receive a report from Alder King on the structural condition of the West Witney Sports & Social Club – to be available at the meeting
- c. To receive the Facilities Manager's Options report relating to West Witney Sports Ground (copy enclosed)

9. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC** - To consider and if appropriate, to pass the following resolution

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the commercially sensitive and confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

10. **PREMIER TENNIS – PARTNERSHIP PROPOSAL**

Premier Tennis will be in attendance to give a presentation on a partnership proposal for the management and operation of a community café and tennis participation programme (copy of confidential presentation enclosed)



Town Clerk

Recreation Committee

Date: 12th January 2015
Title: Witney Vikings Football team – Request to erect signage
Contact Officer: Facilities Manager

Viking Football team

The Viking football team have written to Officers requesting permission for new signage on Burwell Recreation Ground.

The club would like to erect a sign facing onto Thorney Leys Road stating the site is the home ground of the Witney Vikings. The club are happy to finance the sign themselves and agree to its continued maintenance. The sign design would be provided prior to commission for approval.

These are the same terms as the signage relating to Tower Hill football club erected at West Witney Sports Ground some years ago.

Recommendation

- That the request for signage be approved.

Recreation Committee

Date: 12th January 2015

Title: Boundary Wall - Leys Recreation Ground with Buttercross Works site

Contact Officer: Works/Contracts Supervisor

1 Buttercross Works Boundary wall with the Leys Recreation Ground

1.1 Background

Cottsway as agents of GreenSquare requested in March 2014 to remove the boundary wall between the Buttercross Extra care scheme and the Leys Recreation Ground. The Planning & Development Committee undertook a site visit, following this the committee decided they would like the wall to remain and that the ownership of the wall should be definitively established, the councillors opinion was that the wall was in a good state of repair and was integral to the historic aspect of the town. November 5th 2014 Cottsway invited a WTC representative to visit the site and inspect the wall as they felt it was in a bad state of repair.

1.2 Action Taken

The Works and Contracts Supervisor visited the site on 2nd of December to inspect the wall and also took photos of its condition. On 11th December the Works/Contracts Supervisor and Councillor C Curry met with representatives from Cottsway and Bouygues Construction to discuss planting between the Leys and the Buttercross site, the wall again was discussed.

1.3 Current situation

The area of wall GreenSquare are raising issues with over runs from Station Lane alongside the bowls green and tennis courts to the rear corner of the Leys Depot.

The wall is only visible from the Leys in one or two areas as there is a Privet hedge in front of most of the Leys side. On the Buttercross works side is a 8 foot tall chain-link fence with barbed wire on top, the wall is visible from the Buttercross works side to a limited extent due to being covered in Ivy with small trees between the wall and chain-link fence, some areas of the wall are visible and are in a poor state of repair with some parts collapsing or have already collapsed.

The representative from Bouygues now believes that the wall belongs to WTC. The Town Clerk is trying to establish its ownership.

There is at the moment no access to the wall from either property so ongoing maintenance is going to be difficult from either side.

It should be noted that the top area of the wall from the back corner of the Leys Depot to the top corner of the Leys Road alongside the WODC toilets is in much better condition and would require much less work to retain.

Photo's of both sides of the wall will be circulated at the meeting.

1.4 Financial implications

If the wall belongs to WTC there will be quite a significant cost implication should the council wish to keep and repair the wall or if the council should decide to remove the wall.

However the council could leave the wall in its current state as it is inaccessible from the Leys recreation ground due to the hedge and also inaccessible from the Buttercross works side due to the chain-link and barbed wire fence, provided that neither the hedge or the fence are removed there would not necessarily be a need to repair the wall.

1.5 Recommendations

If it is established that the wall belongs to WTC the councillors should consider what boundary they would require to the Leys, which parts of the wall they may wish retained or removed, set aside a budget in order to carry out the relevant works.

If the wall belongs to the developers then the council should enter into discussions with the developers to agree a solution to the boundary wall issues.

Recreation Committee

Date: 12th January 2015
Title: West Witney Options Report
Contact Officer: Facilities Manager

Background

The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the options following the decision of Council to allow the West Witney sports and social club until the 30th January 2015 to comply with relevant health & safety legislation.

The Council must *urgently* consider the future of the whole facility, which has suffered from under investment due to the previous Council policy and continues to worsen in condition. This statement does not solely apply to the “club house/social club” and Councillors should be mindful that the policy changes, dissolving the working party and other delays have resulted in the worsening and depreciation of facilities to the entire site. It also means that current tenants and other clubs are finding it difficult to gain leases or grant funding for their own dilapidated or unsafe facilities.

Officers wish to highlight that whilst the initial issue is surrounding the sports and social club building, this is simply one small symptom of the continued delays in making decisions regarding the **whole sites** future, and that decisions must be made with the facility as a whole in mind, and not the small issues of the social club.

Points to consider

£295k of S106 monies pledged for West Witney

1. The Town Council could commission, build and manage a suitable facility for changing etc, with these funds. It would provide the community with a safe and suitable facility in a very short period of time. It could be possible to have such a facility open in 2015.
2. This sum could provide the much needed £45k investment into pitch draining, ensuring that the Town Councils asset is managed appropriately, and generates an appropriate income! Football pitch availability remains an issue at the site; due to the inability to use the wet pitches/rotate the pitch use appropriately. Continuing to ignore a major pitch flooding issue damages the reputation of the Town Council and is very difficult for officers to manage. It Wastes time and money.
3. The Town Council does not have any obligation to provide facilities at all, but the provision of suitable, clean and safe changing facilities aids the use of pitches and supports clubs ability to move within leagues. This should be the priority of Council policy and not the provision of a social pub/club.

Current situation

The current policy has been to await a business plan from the WWUG regarding the future overall running of the site. The group have previously requested a very long term lease for the site in order to gain grant funding for an ambitious new build. They wish to run the whole site and all associated

facilities. This process has taken much longer than anticipated and there is still no outlined plan. This has been further delayed by the issues surrounding the poor management of the social club house of late.

Councillors must bear in mind the legal advice regarding offering any kind of lease to a tenant/group who has breached current lease conditions so spectacularly. The management of a small social club building has proven very difficult and one must ask if such an organisation are at all capable of managing the whole site, all sporting clubs and fixtures, significant grounds maintenance and skilled grounds management, as well as the overall H & S of all activities, clubs and the site.

The significant length of lease and required management of the overall site are at present far beyond the capacity of the WWUG in the opinion of Officers. The continued debate around granting such a lease is and will continue to delay all progress at the site, denying the community the facility they deserve.

Should the Social club ensure compliance for the club house building by the 30th January; the Council will need to make a financial investment in improving the current facilities also, so that we are compliant with landlord expectations. If the Council decide at this point not to make an investment, having allowed the club to spend money complying it would reflect very badly on the reputation of the Town Council.

Officers suggest that the WWUG should be offered a short term lease of 12 months - 5 years, to allow them to grow the WWUG organisation, manage effectively the current social club and ensure compliance of the building with legislation and ultimately as a tenant. This would allow sufficient time to gain the skills, fundraise, research, develop, present and negotiate a financially sound long term management plan for the whole facility.

At this time the Council would be in a better position to truly evaluate the capacity of the organisation and offer a longer term lease to enable the organisation to gain additional funding, part of their own financial planning laid out in any such management/business plan drawn up by the organisation.

Please note: it is unlikely that the full funds pledged would not be available until this time from the development, and therefore 5 years would seem an entirely sensible amount of time for an initial lease for both parties.

Action taken

Officers have commissioned a structural report for the sports and social club house and this may be available at the meeting.

Officers have requested meetings with social club H & S members to discuss and monitor compliance and officers will report back progress verbally at the meeting.

Financial Implications

The costs of meeting the landlord compliance may be available at the meeting.

The costs to provide the draining of the pitches at the site have been estimated at up to £45,000.

The loss of revenue from pitch hire is not known at this time.

Recommendation

- That the pitch drainage is considered a priority and the works carried from the pledged funds
- That The Town Council considers using the remaining funds pledged to build and provide a suitable changing facility at the site, manage it and the income from it in line with its other

sports facilities. (The Social club could be an annex to such a building and continue to be run by the current organisation, assuming compliance conditions etc.)

or

- That upon reaching satisfactory compliance and provide evidence supporting an ongoing management plan, the WWSUG are offered a 5 years lease agreement on the existing club house.
- That's WTC will make the relevant financial contribution to the club house in this circumstance to ensure its own compliance with the lease.
- That the WWUG use the 5 year lease to build the organisation and develop, present and negotiate a long term plan, considering the use of the current funds remaining of approx. £250k.