

She also took the opportunity to inform Members on the "Awareness Day" she was organising which had the support of the Mayor, Cllr Baker. She was getting 25 organisations together to explain what they did, and how their services could be accessed and included topics such as sexual exploitation, drugs, bullying, anti-social behaviour and alcohol.

Ms Wiffen wanted to change things in the community and had approached Nortons to see if they would turn it into a café for young people and had even offered to get funding for this. She felt that the doors of The Hub were often locked and people asked her where they could go.

She saw the café as an opportunity to provide a safe place where mentoring and safeguarding could take place. She was also concerned about children living in poverty and envisaged them being able to access such a service. She had youth workers and faith youth workers on board. She did not want the pavilion to go to young mums as there were other places for them to go. She wanted it for those who had nothing.

The date of the awareness day was 11 June from 10am – 4pm and would be held in the Market Square. Ms Wiffen had great support for the day but wanted it to turn into a longer term project.

Cllr R Curry asked what she wanted the Town Council to do for her. Ms Wiffen said that Cllr Baker had put her in touch with Rotary and Witney TV. She had filled in a grant application but realised that it would not be considered by the Council until a couple of days before her event.

Cllr R Curry proposed that the Committee approach the Chairman of the Policy and Finance Committee with the Town Clerk to see if funding could be agreed outside the Committee and then report back at the meeting.

Cllr King said he was a bit taken aback as the NAG had not heard anything about this day. He said that the antisocial behaviour mentioned by Ms Wiffen was prevalent in Witney and he had witnessed it recently on Deer Park where young people were drinking alcohol apparently purchased by their parents. Ms Wiffen replied that she wanted the members to see through the problems to the core issues.

Cllr R Curry reiterated that the Committee needed to know what Ms Wiffen was asking for from the Town Council, apart from potentially giving a grant and use of the pavilion. Cllr Baker asked what would actually be at the Awareness Day and how much she had asked for in terms of the grant. Ms Wiffen explained that she hoped to produce some booklets and that she had asked for £750. Cllr Baker commented that the members understood the issues but not what the core structure of the day would be. If money was granted what would it be used for.

Ms Wiffen advised that the group was developing a website and sending out letters to businesses. Money would be used for t shirts for volunteers and media advertising. She also wanted blue bunting.

Cllr Beames asked what Ms Wiffen was looking for in terms of the use of the pavilion – was it one day a week, two days, for example. Ms Wiffen was looking for full time usage to provide a safe and appropriate environment for the age group and perhaps even to run workshops there.

The Chairman thanked Ms Wiffen for attending, and said he agreed with Cllr R Curry's proposal to consider the grant application outside of the Committee in order to meet her timescales which would be reported back to the Policy and Finance Committee in the normal way.

Cllr King said he would raise the Awareness Day at the Neighbourhood Action Group.

Ms Wiffen left the meeting at 6.25pm.

RECOMMENDED: that the grant application for the Awareness Day be circulated and considered by the Members of the Policy and Finance Committee prior to the next meeting of 9 June 2014 in order to meet the timescale of the event.

Subsequently a grant of £250 was agreed.

R228 **COMMITTEE VISION**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk and Facilities Manager. The Town Clerk explained that as the first meeting of this Committee for the municipal year, members were asked to consider what they would like to achieve. The Facilities Manager had compiled a list of current and planned projects for consideration and guidance.

The Town Clerk explained that the fee proposal for feasibility studies in respect of the QE11 Field (Burwell) and The Leys had been referred back to the Sports Facilities Working Party. Cllr Curry said that he was concerned about timescales and consequences regarding leases at the West Witney Sports Ground. The Town Clerk advised that there was only one existing lease – this was with the West Witney Bowls Club and was due to expire in 2018. It had previously been decided to give all the clubs 5 year leases however the clubs wanted longer leases to aid their grant funding applications.

Cllr R Curry said that he understood a presentation was going to be made to the Council by the West Witney User Group but they had not been ready. He felt that a deadline should be set for this presentation. Cllr Beames explained the User Group had been getting professional advice on their documentation. Cllr R Curry asked if members thought it was reasonable to ask for a presentation by the end of June. Cllr Baker was minded to agree with Cllr R Curry. However, the Council needed to decide on what would happen if the group was not ready to make a presentation.

A discussion pursued on the leases and implications. The Chairman suggested that information should be received by 23 June with a presentation being given by 7 July.

The Facilities Manager continued to outline projects. The Committee was to receive a presentation on a proposal for usage of the tennis courts later on the agenda – she advised

caution in making a decision as there had already been one proposal that had been turned down and therefore she felt that care should be taken in any decision making.

The Facilities Manager outlined plans for future ground maintenance and said that pitch and fine turf management were in line with usage. Staff also ensured that a booking was made before a pitch was marked out. Cllr Dorward commented that a member of the public had said to him that they felt the lines were marked out too frequently. The Facilities Manager assured him that marking out was kept to an absolute minimum.

Assessment of The Leys usage was planned. Essentially it was a football pitch but there were lots of big events happening that were detrimental to the pitch. Cllr Beames reported that he had received complaints the ground was too cut up and full of holes for the public to enjoy. Cllr R Curry suggested that perhaps the Council should be planning to move the football elsewhere.

The Facilities Manager explained that at the moment The Leys was trying to be all things to all people. There were big limitations in regard to football space. The Sports Turf Research Institute provided a report of the state of the pitches – lately this had demonstrated they were compacted by heavy lorries. Cllr Dorward asked for his thanks to be given to Gavin Jones as the contractor did a fantastic job of cleaning up The Leys.

Cllr R Curry asked why the Council was paying a consultant to look at pitch space. The Town Clerk explained that fee proposals had been received but were referred to the Sports Facilities Working Party which had not yet met. Cllr R Curry asked why staff could not provide a pitch usage report. The Town Clerk and the Facilities Manager replied that the SSGB report had done this already and had spoken to users to get their views. The Facilities Manager said that if space for football was an issue then perhaps Burwell and King George V Field should be priorities.

Cllr R Curry recalled that the County Council and District Council had agreed to refurbish changing rooms at Woodgreen School on the condition that they were accessible to the community outside of school hours, and if this was not the case, then it needed to be resolved. He thought that the District Council should be contacted as Town Council users could not access them. The Facilities Manager said that they were not Town Council Users, as all arrangements were made by the school. The pitch was not well liked by teams in any case.

The Committee discussed the situation and community usage of the Woodgreen site and Cllr Beames proposed approaching the District Council to see if the Town Council could manage the pitches.

The Facilities Manager referred members to the buildings and asset management in the Committees remit. She advised that the pavilion at The Leys had now been smartened up. It was now much improved with a kitchen and better toilet facilities. She suggested that local community groups could use the pavilion to run a café to raise funds to support their work elsewhere. The idea was to have a different group each day – Liven Up the Leys could be one such group, and the Cricket Club had expressed an interest amongst others.

CLlr Baker had concerns that one group thought they could take up permanent residence. The Facilities Manager commented that the idea was definitely for it to be shared out. Cllr Baker asked if Ms Wiffen could be officially informed that the pavilion usage would be on a daily rotational basis for local community groups.

The Facilities Manager wished finally to draw members' attention to Condition Surveys required by some buildings, of which West Witney Sports Ground was in greatest need. Cllr Beames said that the User Group had raised various issues if a new build was not going to happen. The Chairman asked when this needed doing and the Facilities Manager replied that it needed to be done 2 years ago. Members discussed the need for a condition survey and its implications.

The Facilities Manager said that both staff depots at The Leys and West Witney were not fit for purpose and also required consideration at some point.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted
2. that the Town Clerk arranges a suitable date for the presentation from the West Witney User Group. All Councillors would be invited.
3. that the District Council be approached to explore the possibility of the transfer of management of the pitches at Woodgreen to the Town Council.
4. that the pavilion/café at The Leys be offered to local community groups on a daily rotational basis for fundraising.
5. that the Facilities Manager obtain quotations for a condition survey on West Witney Club House. ***Subsequently it was agreed to use the Condition Survey from 2010 for the time being as an information document as to the condition of the buildings. The Town Clerk circulated this to Committee Members.***

R229 **PRESENTATION ON "LEYS RECREATION GROUND – TENNIS IN THE PARK"**

The Chairman welcomed Jeff Hunter (Managing Director) and Joe Cartledge (Business Development Manager) of Premier Tennis.

Mr Hunter hoped that members had had time to read the previously circulated proposal. He explained the companies background and its aim was to get more people involved in tennis. In this instance to get Witney people into or back into tennis. In order to be successful the promotional element needed to be right, as did the administration. It was not enough just to provide good tennis – customers needed to be looked after.

The proposal for The Leys involved a 3 phase build up approach, and would share the risks and the rewards with the Town Council.

Mr Cartledge said that for this summer it was proposed to run 13 hours per week coaching for children and adults. A lot of people wanted to play tennis but had no partner and this kind of coaching enabled them to play. Premier Tennis already had coaches working at Madley Park Hall on Saturdays for small children and ideally the company would like to work with local schools.

They had tried to keep the pricing structure simple - £5 for coaching sessions and £4 for organised play. Once there were 5 players per session, the company would be in profit – some of which would be filtered back to the Town Council. They anticipated using two or three courts at once, and therefore there would still be spare courts for the general public. However, they proposed that whilst they controlled entry to the courts they were using, the Town Council might like to introduce a key fob system for other courts where an annual fee was paid for access and a booking system was operated. Mr Hunter and Mr Cartledge invited questions.

Cllr R Curry asked if he was correct in thinking the proposal was Premier Tennis used two/three courts at a time which would cost them and Witney Town Council nothing, and once a certain level of business was reached they would share the profit with the Town Council, but the risks would also be shared. This was confirmed.

Cllr King noted that the company claimed to have tested the market and asked if they had projected numbers. Mr Hunter replied that they did not have the data but they had 22 participants signed up in the tots programme at Madley Park Hall with limited marketing. Tennis was the sport with the most latent demand and the idea was to create a mix of revenue streams including key fobs.

In response to Cllr King's question the Facilities Manager explained that during the period between the May half term holiday and Witney Feast, people had to pay to play tennis, and outside these times it was free. The Facilities Manager asked if Premier Tennis thought the lighting was adequate at The Leys. Mr Cartledge said that it would not be an issue as they planned to play at weekends in the day to start with.

The Chairman asked if there had been any feedback from the schools they had approached. Mr Cartledge said that Witney Community School had been keen. In Oxford the company was doing PE lessons in 8 primary schools, which encouraged participation outside school too. Mr Hunter explained that they had wanted to approach the Town Council first before getting involved too much with the schools – they did not want to promise something which they could not deliver. He emphasised that the programme could be changed on demand; currently there were 35 hours per week running in Oxford and this had started with 2 hours per week in Florence Park.

Cllr R Curry said that the proposal was something that would need to be discussed, but asked when the company was hoping to start. Ideally they were looking to start the week after Wimbledon finished – the second week in July. If the programme started past August it would lose momentum.

Cllr Baker asked how long the company had been running for. They replied that Premier Tennis had been running for ten years, although this had been in the form of holiday camps. They personally had been involved for a year.

Cllr King asked if hypothetically phase one of the proposed programme could be looked at as a trial. He wasn't sure they could proceed beyond this if the numbers were not there. Mr Hunter replied that the numbers put forward were just facilitated tennis and therefore phase one could be treated as a trial for both parties.

Cllr Dorward proposed that the Committee recommend to Policy & Finance and full Council that phase one should proceed. Cllr Baker felt that the proposal should be discussed more before moving to ratification.

The Chairman noted that Springfield School had not been approached. Mr Hunter reiterated that they had been reticent to approach schools until they were confident of delivery, but they would include Springfield School in any discussions. The Chairman asked if marketing would cost the Town Council, and it was confirmed that it would not, although it was hoped that they Town Council and members might be able to provide some good contacts. The company would be seeking to get funding to cover set up costs.

Cllr R Curry said that the proposal needed discussion, but a decision needed to be made very quickly. If the proposal went to Council, it would only leave 2 weeks as a lead in period. The Facilities Manager proposed that Premier Tennis operated the café at The Leys for a day and gave free taster sessions alongside. Mr Cartledge said that 29 June was National Tennis Weekend which would be a good time to showcase what was offered. They could run a "one off" promotional day independent of any other requirements.

Cllr Beames asked if they would consider just renting courts. They replied that this would be too much of a risk. Cllr R Curry asked if Premier Tennis would collect all rental fees on behalf of the Town Council. Mr Hunter replied that this was something which could be discussed at a later stage. The Chairman thanked Mr Hunter and Mr Cartledge for their presentation and they left the meeting.

Cllr King wondered how this proposal faced up to West Witney Tennis Club who charged a membership fee. Cllr R Curry reminded the Committee that any new lease with the Witney Lawn Tennis club would require the courts to be open to all.

Cllr Beames commented that he was aware of another coach who hired courts at The Leys for lessons. He had no doubt that Premier Tennis would get the numbers, but he didn't see why they could not just hire the courts, or at least start off by hiring courts. Cllr R Curry thought the key point was which way the Town Council would make more money.

Cllr Baker had concerns over accepting this proposal following the two other proposals made by another individual to the Council, neither of which had been accepted. The Facilities Manager commented that both those proposals had the risk heavily weighted towards the Town Council. In response to Cllr Bakers question the Facilities Manager replied that the other coach didn't operate on a regular basis it was sporadic.

The Chairman stated that the Committee needed to decide what was best for the Council. Cllr R Curry liked the proposal and would like to see the tennis courts properly used. Cllr Baker also liked what she had heard. This element of the company had not been going for long, but they seemed very proactive. She was in favour of the trial. Cllr King said previous proposals had posed significant risk to the Council, whereas this proposal was weighted 50/50. Cllr Beames was still not in favour and could not see why the company could not hire courts. He thought running the courts could even be put out to tender. Cllr R Curry pointed out that doing nothing cost the Council anyway.

Cllr Dorward proposed going ahead with phase 1a of the proposal as detailed in the hand out from Premier Tennis – running from mid July to mid October 2014 and shortly before phase 1b (from mid October to mid March 2015) was due to start, the initial period should be reviewed. If it had not worked, the agreement would end.

RECOMMENDED: that phase 1a of the proposal from Premier Tennis be accepted, subject to a review at the end of the period, before deciding on whether to proceed with phase 1b. The condition of acceptance was that there would be no risk to the Town Council if Premier Tennis did not make any money.

All agreed with the exception of Cllr Beames who was not in favour.

R230 **LETTER CONCERNING THE COUNTRY PARK**

The Committee received and considered a letter from a local resident complimenting the Council on the Country Park, and the work done by staff.

The Committee was pleased to hear such positive comments.

RECOMMENDED: that the letter be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

Chairman.

