

**RECREATION COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday 7 July 2014  
at 6.15pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**Present**

Councillor: Cllr C Holliday (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames                      B J Woodruff  
                  Mrs B J Churchill

Non Committee Member:                      D S Enright

Officers:                      Town Clerk                      Democratic Services Officer

**R306 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Mrs J C Baker, Ms M J C Curry, P J Dorward, and J S King. Cllr King was attending "Connecting Oxfordshire" at Henry Box School on behalf of the Town Council.

**R307 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**R308 MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Recreation Committee meeting held on 19 May 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**R309 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

There were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed at the meeting.

**R310 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present for this item.

**R311 OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager as circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman updated Members on his meeting with the Headmaster of Woodgreen School and Martin Holland from WODC regarding the community playing fields at the school and they were working towards ensuring the changing rooms were open in the evenings and weekends.

A Member raised the fact that the school was looking for funding to refurbish the AstroTurf. Currently it had about 2/3 years life left and there was no money in the school budget to replace it. There were also future plans for the swimming pool. There had been discussions on how the school might use the sports facilities in the area. He said that at some point the school may wish to speak to the Town Council about the King George V Field and the changing room issue. This would be a way off yet, but he thought it was worth mentioning.

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Sports Facilities Working Party had prioritised The Leys and Burwell over King Georges field, but in the light of this information, perhaps King George V Field might move ahead of Burwell. She would ask the Facilities Manager to obtain a fee proposal for a feasibility study on this recreation ground. The north and east end of the town was not so well served by sports fields and facilities.

Members discussed the possibility of working in partnership with the school and WODC and it was felt that the school should take the lead, with the Council supporting it where possible.

The Committee considered the correspondence from OPFA regarding the Witney Mills site which was in the ownership of All Souls College. The Committee discussed options available to try and preserve the site, saving it from development. Members were united in the fact that the Council should act to protect the land in any way that it could. A Member commented that the 'Right to Buy' would not afford the protection needed and he thought the best option was to obtain Town Green status. The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had maintained the land at one time, and now gave an annual grant to Witney Mills Cricket Club towards the ongoing maintenance.

A Member had obtained some information from Witney Mills Cricket Club and gave a brief plotted history of the land, which All Souls College had purchase it in 1995. The Town Clerk believed that the club had only recently had a lease and the rent had been significantly increased last year. It was noted that the land had to be registered as a Town Green by May 2015. It would be necessary to get the public involved and to gain evidence of peoples' use of the land. A Member asked if there would be a cost associated with this and the Town Clerk thought there probably would.

The Committee discussed the various groups who should instigate the application and it was thought it would be better coming from a community group with Town Council support. The Town Clerk agreed. Cllr Beames said that the Windrush Valley Protection Group had been in contact about other land and suggested that CPRE might also want to get involved. The Town Clerk suggested that OPFA be asked who would be best to lead on applying for Town Green status.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;

2. that the Town Clerk write to Woodgreen school informing them of the Council's support for the future use/development of King George V Field and enclosing a copy of the SSGB report;
3. that the Facilities Manager sources a fee proposal in respect of a feasibility study on King Georges Field;
4. that Premier Tennis be requested to change the photograph to one of the Town Hall, or to remove the business names from the background photograph;
5. that the Officers seek further advice from OPFA and the Open Spaces Society on how the Council can support an application to register Witney Mills as a Town Green in order to protect it from future development.

R312 **MINUTES OF THE SPORTS FACILITIES WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Sports Facilities Working Party held on 24 June 2014.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the minutes be noted.

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The meeting closed at 6.57pm

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Chairman.