

LEISURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 10 September 2012

at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present

Councillor: C K Woodward (Chairman)

Councillors:	Mrs J C Baker	Mrs S E Davies
	A K Beames	P J Dorward
	R F N Curry	H B Eaglestone

Officers:	Town Clerk	Democratic Services Officer
	Amenities Manager	

Also present: 1 member of the press (from 6.15pm)

L389 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

L390 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in matters to be considered at the meeting.

L391 MINUTES

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

Ordinary meeting of 9 July 2012
Special meeting of 23 July 2012

L392 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute L314 – West Witney Sports Ground – In answer to a Member's question, the Town Clerk confirmed that the progress regarding the resurfacing of the tennis courts would be discussed under item 13 on the agenda.

Minute L338 – West Witney Sports Ground Working Party – The Town Clerk commented that the report under recommendation (3) would be presented to the next meeting of this committee.

L393 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

L394 AMENITIES - PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME AND REPAIRS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

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

The Amenities Manager's report contained details of the presentation for the Witney Schools Challenge on Thursday 27 September 2012 at 1.45pm in Langdale Hall, to which all Councillors were invited.

With regard to the Queen Elizabeth II Field, the Amenities Manager confirmed that the Land Registry documents had been received back from the solicitors and she would now progress the nomination.

Members considered the request for disabled parking bays in Station Lane Avenue 2 to provide easier parking for the Lake & Country Park. Members were sympathetic to this request as they appreciated that there was no specific parking for the Lake & Country Park. However, the provision of disabled parking bays in Avenue 2 was the responsibility of the highways department at Oxfordshire County Council, as this land was not owned by the Town Council.

The Amenities Manager's report also contained details of a request to allow the use of a metal detector on the Leys recreation ground. A Member, as an experienced user of a metal detector, commented on this issue, and Members endorsed his views.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that the request for disabled parking in Station Lane Avenue 2 be referred to Oxfordshire County Council.
- 3) that permission is not granted for the use of a metal detector on the Leys Recreation Ground.

L395 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda.

Members considered the income and expenditure accounts and the Town Clerk answered their questions:

BMX Track –there was a proposal for this to be included within the North Curbridge development under section 106 monies.

Paddling Pool –earmarked reserves were to enable improvements to the tarmacking around the paddling pool which, hopefully, would be completed during the closed season.

Cemetery Insurance –transfer from central support would cover this expense.

201 Recreation –individual cost centres would be set up for the various recreation grounds similar to the Public Halls.

206 Country Park – recharges are for outside services (contractor).

301/302 Cemetery agency recharges – higher for Tower Hill Cemetery as maintenance was more labour intensive.

305 Allotments – costs should be reduced following transfer of this service to the Allotment Association. The Town Clerk commented that under the lease agreement there would still be costs to the Council, the main reduction being in central support savings, which have been diverted to other cost centres.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the next cycle of meetings would consider the existing budget and the budget for the next financial year.

(The member of the press entered during discussion of the above item, being 6.15pm)

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that the provision of a BMX track should be self-funding.

- 3) that a report is prepared on the continuing costs of the allotment service, going forward over the next 4 years.

L396 SPORTS AND EVENTS AT THE LEYS

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

The report had been prepared in the light of a request received, following the success of the Jubilee Beacon lighting event on the Leys, for a music event in 2013 to highlight local young musicians. A Member commented that this should not conflict with current users, and there were several issues to consider, i.e. numbers attending, parking, etc.

A Member commented that the Town Council should facilitate the event only, and not be involved in the organisation. The Town Clerk reminded Members that a request had been received last year for use of the Leys as part of the Witney Music Festival. This had been denied, with West Witney being offered, but not used. It was also suggested that Langdale Hall could be used.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that the Town Council agrees to facilitate a music event at the Leys.
- 3) that Councillor Peter Dorward liaises with the organiser, working towards holding an event on one of the last two weekends in April.

L397 FACILITIES AT THE LEYS

The Committee received and considered the correspondence, as circulated with the agenda.

The correspondent raised comments with regard to activities at the Leys during the summer months, in particular, toilet facilities and the siting of the ice cream vehicle.

A Member commented that it was unfortunate that consideration of this correspondence, which had been received in July, was delayed due to the summer break in meetings.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the correspondence be noted.
- 2) that in future years a suitable position for the ice cream vehicle be agreed.
- 3) that the comments on the toilet facilities be referred to West Oxfordshire District Council.
- 4) that in future where there is a break in meetings, correspondence should be circulated to Committee Members immediately so that they can look at the issues as they are happening to assist them in making decisions at the next meeting.

L398 REQUEST FOR SIGNAGE

The Committee received and considered the correspondence, as circulated with the agenda, which had been referred from the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Amenities Manager confirmed that there were signs prohibiting dogs from play areas, but not for recreation grounds. Members agreed that it would be costly to erect signs which would not be enforceable.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the correspondence be noted.
- 2) that advice is sought on who has the power to create byelaws.
- 3) that is be referred back to the police for advice on how the Council could prohibit dogs from recreation grounds, and whether the police would be able to provide extra patrols.

L399 TOWER HILL CEMETERY

The Committee received and considered the correspondence, as circulated with the agenda.

Members were sympathetic to the situation where the elderly and disabled were unable to access Tower Hill cemetery at weekends when the vehicular access was locked. The Amenities Manager confirmed that the gates were unlocked during working hours only.

The Town Clerk remarked that once the facilities team were recruited it might be possible to open the cemetery occasionally for a few hours on a Saturday morning.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the correspondence be noted.
- 2) that Officers investigate the possibility of opening Tower Hill cemetery for vehicular access on a Saturday morning once a month.
- 3) that should (2) be possible, the dates are well advertised in advance.

L400 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING PARTY

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the working party held on 15 August and 5 September 2012.

Members were pleased to note that the new owner of Hilltop Nursery had agreed to continue the sponsorship/supply of the Christmas trees.

With regard to the minutes of 5 September 2012, it was noted that the risk assessment for 2011 had been for an attendance of 8,953 and not 5,000 as per the minutes.

Members thanked officers for their assistance with regard to the Christmas Lights Switch On.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted.

L401 LAND IN WITNEY

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on the search for suitable allotment land. She remarked that there were possibilities; however, she could not make a full report until she received confirmation that these could be made public.

L402 WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND

The Town Clerk confirmed that the independent condition survey on the current state of the tennis courts at West Witney had been carried out on 6 September. Further information had been requested, which the Town Clerk had to collect from the solicitor in Swindon as the files were with them. Members emphasised the need to resolve this issue. The Town Clerk commented that she was aware of the urgency and had urged the company to act as quickly as possible.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that should the report not be received within the next seven days, the Town Clerk updates the Committee, via e-mail, on progress.
- 2) that the outcome of the report be considered as soon as possible at a special meeting of this Committee. If possible, and without causing delay, this should be co-ordinated with the presentation from the West Witney User Group.

The meeting closed at 7pm

Chairman