

C515 **REQUEST TO PURCHASE AMENITY LAND – THORNEY LEYS**

The Chairman decided to bring this agenda item forward in order for Mr Quigley who had addressed the Committee on this matter to hear the debate.

A member asked if there had been a precedent for selling amenity land. The Town Clerk replied that the Council had not sold any land in the last 10 – 15 years, although requests had been considered. A member said that rather than selling land it would be preferable to make sure it was well managed and attractive and useful as amenity land.

Another member asked how much the land would sell for. The Town Clerk replied that there would have to be a professional valuation at the cost of the prospective purchaser. A member commented that she was mindful of protecting green space from development. The Town Clerk reminded members that it would be possible to put a restriction on the land preventing building.

Having recently refuse the sale of similar land, another member commented that he was worried that if this land was to be sold on this occasion it could open the floodgates. The Works Contracts Manager added that there was very little amenity land and the land in question was an area where children could and did play. There was also a footpath passing through the land.

A member proposed that further discussion be held on the matter. This was seconded. Another member proposed that the land was retained as it was Council Policy not to sell amenity land – it was not taken on a case by case base. Members voted on the proposals with 4 members voting in favour of further discussion. This proposal was therefore carried.

Members also requested a site visits to assist them in further deliberations.

RECOMMENDED: that the decision to sell the land in question be deferred until the next meeting and that a site visit is held prior to the meeting so that Members are familiar with the area.

Mr Quigley left the meeting

C516 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

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

The RFO explained that there had not been much expenditure as the Council was only ¼ way through the financial year. Additional proposals were for £2,000 to do something to commemorate World War 1 on The Leys, and for £10,000 to come out of reserves to go towards a new bandstand. It had also been proposed for £500 to be spent to commemorate the battle of Passchendaele.

A member asked if the S106 public art money could be used for the planned obelisk memorial at The Leys. The Town Clerk explained that the money and the project was in the hands of WODC, although it was in fact commemorative.

The RFO advised that the intention regarding the bandstand was to contact Blenheim Estates to see if it could be sited on Church Green with possible funding from Blenheim.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that members confirmed the priority of the capital projects for 2017– 18 and with others being carried forward to the 2018 -19 budget year.

C517 **OPERATIONAL REPORT**

Members received and considered the report of the Works Contracts Manager as circulated with the agenda. He further reported that the trees which had been causing problems at Manor Road should now have had the work required done, and the pollarding at Burwell would be done by the end of October or early November. The Chairman wondered if it would be worth getting quotes from other contractors or the new grounds maintenance contractors for tree works. The Works Contracts Manager replied that the current Arborist was competitive and the advantage was that he understood the Council's tree stock, the conservation area and where TPOs were in place. Members were in favour of getting comparative quotes and the Works Contracts Manager agreed to do this for the tree works at Curbridge Road.

Cllr Morris arrived at 6.31pm

A request had been received from The Rotary Club to plant 5000 purple crocus corms to raise awareness for "Purple For Polio". The Works Contracts Manager had suggested the following sites:-

- Witan Way between Leisure Centre and Farm Mill on the grass verge by the shrubs
- Langdale Gate close to the circular bed
- The centre of Welch way roundabout
- Little Green at Woodstock Road
- The small triangular grass area of Woodgreen alongside Holy Trinity Church

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the necessary tree works be agreed;
3. that the Rotary's request to plant crocuses on WTC land be agreed subject to agreement of a site.

With the Chairman's permission the Town Clerk advised Members that court proceedings had been issued against the Council in respect of a tree on Farmer's Close. However, the Council's insurance company was dealing with the matter and the Town Clerk would update the Committee accordingly.

C518 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE: PLANTING SCHEMES FOR AUTUMN 2016 & SPRING/SUMMER 2017**

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

The Chairman commented that some of the sustainable planting was not looking too good and another member said that he had received complaints about it. Another member said that she had been disappointed with the bed celebrating the Queen's 90th Birthday.

Cllr Enright left the meeting at 6.37pm.

The Town Clerk drew attention to the request from Witney Horticultural Society to plant up the Langdale bed in 2017 to celebrate 70 years. Members had no objection to this as long as the Society planted and maintained this for the year.

A member suggested that there was a middle ground between sustainable and bedding planting. The Communications Officer suggested that the plants removed could be offered to the public for a donation to the Mayor's charity.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the scheme for planting and the floral choices as detailed in the report be agreed;
3. that Witney Horticultural Society be advised that it would be able to plant and take responsibility for the Langdale Bed for 2017;
4. that the contractors are contacted regarding the carpet bedding theme for 2017 and asked to generate 3 designs for consideration.

Cllr Enright re-entered the meeting at 6.46pm

C519 **BUS SHELTERS AUDIT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Administrator as circulated with the agenda, as well as the proposal from Primesite Media tabled at the meeting.

Only one company (Primesite Media) offering bus stop advertising with replacement shelters had shown interest. The Town Clerk thought that further work and investigation was required as they had not identified the bus shelters which were in poor repair. She also needed to understand the terms of contract, particularly the length.

The Chairman of the Public Transportation Working Party added that there had been some debate about this at the last meetings. She wanted to draw members' attention to the Bus Stop Audit which identified which areas were priorities.

Another member suggested getting references on the company that had responded from other Councils. He added that the College had been in touch to say they may be able to design something for the bus stops as part of Social Action Week. The finer details would need ironing out. He proposed identifying one to give them a trial. A member suggested either Oxford Hill or Deer Park as a lot of students got on and off buses there. Members agreed that a meeting with the college with updated information on Primesite media would be needed.

The Chairman of the Public Transportation Working Party added that the report included those informal stops and she understood that a member of the Working Party had secured £500 for the Staple Hall bus stop. She wanted to see a consistent style throughout the town.

The Committee thanked David Miles for his work on the bus stop audit.

A member proposed that the audit was used for the basis to prioritise replacement stops and these should include the ones that are on major bus routes such as the S1.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that more information on what Primesite media could offer be obtained by the Town Clerk;
3. that a meeting be held with the College, Cllr Enright and Town Clerk to discuss a way forward on the Bus shelter art;
4. that the bus audit be used as a base to prioritise replacement stops and these should include the ones that are on major bus routes such as the S1.

C520 EVENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

a) Events Diary 2017

The Communications Officer explained that she was putting together the Events diary for 2017 and asked if members had any events they would like to be added. Any events would need a budget. She also reported that she had been asked to promote the food festival but she thought that perhaps she could ask for something on the rewards section of the app in return – for example two for one entry.

There was a discussion about using other sites in the town for events such as the Music Festival as there was the possibility that The Leys was overused. The Works Contracts Manager said that the compaction of The Leys was very bad and this impacted on the football pitches.

RECOMMENDED: that the Communications Officer sends round the draft events calendar to members and any suggestions are sent to her for possible inclusion.

b) Heritage Open Day

The Communications Officer reported that the opening of Town Hall archives had been a tremendous success and had been much enjoyed. The Committee thanked the Communications Officer for her hard work, Mr Nigel Phillips for attending to oversee the event and offer information and Cllr Bartington for her work coordinating events across the Town.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal report be noted.

c) Volunteer Recruitment Fair

The Committee was informed that this would take place on 13 October. A member thought it would be good to have such an event in the evening but it was pointed out that it was run by volunteers hence this had difficulties.

RECOMMENDED: that the event be noted.

d) Turn Witney Blue

Members received and considered the Minutes from the Witney Steering Group/Dementia Action Alliance. All members were in favour of supporting the event.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted and that the Town Council supports the event in 2017.

C521 **LAUNCH OF CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2016**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications Officer as circulated with the agenda. She explained that Citizen of the Year was about to launch and forms for nominations would now be available.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

C522 **CURBRIDGE ROAD AND TREE PLANTING PROGRAMME**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Works Contracts Supervisor as circulated with the agenda. He explained that he was putting in place a programme to get the hedge back under control. His report detailed the works needed and the associated costs which were not budgeted for. It would take 2 or 3 years to build up a decent hedge again. He advised that members may wish to set money aside for financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19 for this project. A member thanked the Works Contracts Supervisor and the team for all their hard work on this.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that boundary residents are notified of intended works to trees and hedges;

3. that the remaining area of hedge is cleared of dead wood and debris and gaps are planted with whips in autumn/ winter 2016;
4. that works as detailed in the report are carried out in January/February/March 2017;
5. that any additional works to tree and hedges are carried out as required during 2018 i.e. replacing lost whips, cutting hedge to shape to bring hedge back to good condition, and thereafter returning the hedge to be maintained under the grounds maintenance contract.

C523 DEFIBRILLATOR INSTALLTION IN TOWN CENTRE TELEPHONE BOX

Members received and considered a report by the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda. Both the defibrillator and phone box were now in the Town Council's ownership but an electrical contractor was required to install the defibrillator. She had attached a quotation for consideration.

The Town Clerk also informed members that she had contacted the Rotary Club of Witney to see if they could assist with cleaning and painting the telephone box but had not yet received a response. A member offered to ask the Round Table if they could assist.

RECOMMENDED: that the extra infrastructure expenditure be agreed in order to complete the installation of the defibrillator in the phone box.

C524 MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

a) Christmas Lights Working Party – 5 September 2016

A member referred to item 5 (i) – The Town Clerk pointed out that it was for this Committee to decide the fate of the Advent Fayre, because to date there had only been 3 offers of help from Councillors. Cllrs Bartington, Brown, Doughty, Holliday, Morris and Woodward confirmed they were available and would help out.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted, and the recommendations contained therein be agreed.

b) World War One Working Party – 31 August 2016

Minute WW07 – Cllr Holliday confirmed that had spoken to the cadets and they had agreed to take ownership of the event to commemorate the Battle of the Somme on 18 November 2017.

The Works Contracts Supervisor confirmed that he was going to meet SSE to investigate the possibility of re-locating the street lights next to the existing Leys war memorial.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted, and the recommendations contained therein be agreed.

c) Public Transportation Working Party – 29 July, 9 September and 16 September 2016

The meeting of 16 September was held in closed session and a recommendation had been made to put £15,000 per annum into the budget for bus provision. Go Ride had not yet confirmed if its service would continue.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the minutes be noted, and the recommendations contained therein agreed.
2. that the recommendation to put £15,000 into the budget annually for bus services be agreed.

Cllr Holliday left at 7.57pm.

C525 DEER PARK MEDICAL CENTRE

With the permission of the Chairman the Town Clerk brought to Members urgent attention the fact that the Oxfordshire CCG had signalled the possibility of closing the Deer Park Medical Centre. Some work had already been done by Cllrs King and Churchill who were members of the Patients Forum.

All members were concerned about this possibility and of the displacement of 4,500 patients. There were meetings planned – both public and with stakeholders – but members agreed that the Town Council should write to express its concern that the Medical Centre was at risk and to ask what could be done to retain it.

RECOMMENDED: that the Town Council writes to the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to express its concern that the Medical Centre was at risk and to ask what could be done to retain it.

The meeting closed at 8.01pm.

Chairman