

AMENITIES MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 11 July 2016

At 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: Dr S E Bartington (Chairman)

Councillors: P J Dorward T J Morris
H B Eaglestone L M Price
C Holliday D Temple

Non-Committee Members J D Doughty (Sub for J S King)

Officers: Town Clerk Works Contracts Supervisor
Responsible Financial Officer Democratic Services Officer
Facilities Manager

Also present: 1 member of the public

A346 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr J S King.

A347 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman declared an interest in agenda item 8b as she was a Committee member of the Cogges Meadow Park Group.

A348 **MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED:** to adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 23 May 2016.

b) **MATTERS ARISING :** there were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2016 to be discussed at the meeting.

A349 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The meeting adjourned at 6.08pm in line with standing order 42 in order for Mrs Lyn Jones to address the Committee. The meeting resumed at 6.13pm.

A350 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES MATRIX**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Faculties Manager and the objectives matrix as circulated with the agenda. Officers were thanked for his comprehensive piece of work. It was clarified that the black items were those that took priority over committee objectives. The rest were coded in a traffic light system as requested.

A member suggested that the Chairman could work with the Facilities Manager on finalising priorities.

The Chairman asked if the list could be separated into ongoing and capital projects. She felt it would be helpful for the relevant sub committees to prioritise their projects within the matrix.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Chairman and Facilities Manager work on priorities within the matrix with the relevant sub committees prioritising their projects within the matrix.

A351 OPERATIONAL REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Works Contracts Supervisor as circulated with the agenda. The Chairman thanked the Works Team for their hard work. The Works Contracts Supervisor confirmed that the main project had been the completion of line marking of the parking bays at The Leys which was working very well.

He asked if the Committee wanted to prioritise the work in the skate park next or work on Park Road play area.

The Chairman of the BMX/Skate Park Working Party explained that in the meeting held prior to the current meeting, it had been recommended not to do the work at the skate park at the current time as the users did not want it, and further consultation would take place.

A Member raised the issue of parking at The Leys, commenting that people were parking on the grass side and asked if there could be no parking signs. It was explained that the road itself belonged to OCC Highways. The Town Clerk suggested that PCSOs could be asked to make further patrols in the area at schools pick up and drop off time as this was when the problem appeared worse. The Works Contracts Manager said that it might be possible to move the "Please do not park" signs to this area. The Chairman suggested meeting with the head of the school about the issue and another Member offered to meet with them.

The Works Contracts Supervisor informed the Committee that he had a request from the Nomads football team to play at West Witney. West Witney FC had played at both Witney and Carterton but had then decided to only play in Witney. The team had now folded and Nomads wanted to take their place. This would mean running at maximum capacity and he was concerned that they might not like his allocation of pitches depending on the weather. Verti draining would not solve the problems when it rained heavily and this put some pitches out of use. He was concerned that either way there would be complaints. Members felt it was fair to let the Nomads use the pitches but on the condition that they may be moved if pitch conditions dictated it. If the team complained the Council would write to their Chairman and remind them that use was agreed with the proviso that they might be moved onto other locations if the pitches needed to be rested due to rain.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted.

2. that the Chairman and Cllr Dorward arrange to meet with the head of Henry Box School to discuss the parking issues at The Leys
3. that the Nomads be given permission to play at West Witney with the proviso that they might be moved onto other locations if the pitches needed to be rested due to rain
4. that work at the skate park (excepting the seam repairs) be put on hold and Park Road play area is prioritised by the Works Team.

A352 **LAKE AND COUNTRY PARK**

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

The Facilities Manager reported that a survey had been drawn up with the Lower Windrush Valley project (LWVP). There had been 12 responses so far. The Chairman had offered to carry out some face to face surveys. Cllr Dorward also offered to help. Another Member said that Mountain Warehouse had offered to take some surveys.

The Chairman reported that younger people had not been impressed with the prize that could be won for completing the survey – a key to the bird hide. A member said that he had asked Mountain Warehouse for a £10 voucher but this request had to go to Head Office. Another Member said he would pay for a voucher if necessary.

There were some issues with collating the survey responses as there was no budget for this and LWVP did not have the resources. The current website hosting the survey did not have analytics. Cllr Temple offered to help collate responses. The Chairman would meet with the LWVP to discuss the best way forward. The Chairman also advised that she had invited John Cox from Adventure+ to give a presentation to the next meeting.

A discussion followed about the access to and from the Country park via the two railway bridges. The Works Contracts Supervisor had visited the site and it was clear that the fence had been cut by an angle grinder. Members wondered if the bridges could be made safe but recognised that the ownership of the land and the bridges needed to be established. The Chairman believed that SusTrans had been looking at funding a cycle route in the area but this would be a longer term project.

The Town Clerk suggested that the state of the bridges might be an issue for WODC Environmental Health because of its derelict state and Cllr Morris agreed to look into this.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. the Chairman would meet with LWVP to discuss how to move forward with the survey, but that Cllr D Temple would assist administratively with the input of survey data in order to provide a coherent report;
3. that the ownership of the railway bridges and the land surrounding them is determined;

4. that a price for making the bridges safely passable is obtained (although ownership still needed to be established);
5. that the Chairman investigate longer term plans with SusTrans.

A353 **PLAY AREAS**

a) Raleigh Crescent

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda, which outlined the history on how the Council came about leasing it from WODC. She read out an email from the Leisure Manager which explained that WODC might be looking to locate an adventure playground or MUGA using S106 money to this site, although an agreement was yet to be signed. The Town Council had previously not accepted WODC's offer to take on a lease for the area, and it had sought the freehold, which WODC had refused.

The Works Contracts Supervisor confirmed that the current equipment was in an appalling state and huge investment would be needed to bring it up to standard. Members felt that the Town Council would be interested in a 25 year lease, but subject to knowing what S106 money was available and an undertaking that the current equipment would be upgraded. All were in favour of this except Cllr Eaglestone.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Town Clerk confirms the Council would be interested in a 25 year lease, but subject to knowing what S106 money was available and an undertaking by the District Council that the current equipment would be upgraded.

b) Oxlease

A draft design for the new Oxlease Play Area was circulated, and the Chairman informed the members that a WREN application had been submitted.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal update from the Chairman be noted.

c) Park Road

The Facilities Manager had provided Cllr Brown with a copy of the report on the consultation that had been done in October 2014, when the play area had closed. He also had a photographic index of all the equipment the Council already had that could be used in this play area. The regeneration of the play area was now a priority for the Amenities Committee.

Cllr Holliday left at 7.30pm.

Members discussed how to proceed – there had been a previous resolution to refurbish the play area with existing equipment, although this differed to the plan that had been drawn up by WODC after the consultation. The Chairman liked the plan and thought that it should be followed. The Works Contracts Supervisor pointed out that the Town Council did not have

the equipment that had been included in that plan and that it did not have the funds or capacity to include a community garden as indicated on the plan. After much discussion it was decided that the existing equipment should be installed and officers use their judgement on how this best fitted in. A space could be left as grass in the centre for a community garden in the event that funds were available in the future.

RECOMMENDED: that the existing equipment should be installed and officers use their judgement on how this best fitted in. A space would be left as grass in the centre for a community garden in the event that funds were available in the future.

d) Quarry Road

Members considered a letter had been received from a resident of Quarry Road asking for the play area to be refurbished. Members noted that this was not a priority area. It was suggested that the resident should be written to explaining that this was not currently a priority area but that all play areas were refurbished on a rolling programme.

RECOMMENDED: that the resident should be written to explaining that this was not currently a priority area but that all play areas were refurbished on a rolling programme.

A356 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

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

The RFO asked that members give consideration to any projects they would like to do so that they could be built in to future budgeting.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that any projects members wished to be included in future budgets be forwarded to the RFO by 3 August 2016.

A357 **REQUEST FROM RESIDENT FOR PLANTERS AT BURWELL**

A resident had written to ask if she could place planters on the green at Burwell and her correspondence was circulated with the agenda. The lady had addressed the committee earlier under public participation to explain her request further and answer any questions of the Members. There was plenty of space in the area and the planters would be paid for and maintained by the Community Garden Group. Members were all in favour of this.

RECOMMENDED: that the resident/Community Garden Group be given permission to place and plant up planters as requested.

A358 **REQUEST FOR FREE USE OF COUNCIL LAND FOR FITNESS CLASSES**

The Facilities Manager had brought details of three different fitness classes to the Committee, correspondence circulated with the agenda. All had been using The Leys without permission and some without public liability insurance.

Members felt that all three were quite different and could not be treated as one issue. The boot camp could potential cause some damage with heavy tyres being dragged around and the mums' fitness class had seen mums leaving buggies with babies unattended at the side of the road whilst exercising under a tree.

Members felt it was important to differentiate between commercial activities and the less organised activities. Currently there was no policy on such matters, although the Council did operate terms and conditions of hire for users of the recreation grounds and its public halls. The RFO volunteered to write one and bring it back to the next Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the RFO would write a Policy on such usage, including suggested charges, and this would be reviewed at the next meeting;
2. that groups wishing to use The Leys apply for a licence (renewable after 6 months), sending in all required documents (public liability insurance, risk assessments);
3. that there would be a charge for commercial ventures but groups could apply for a grant from the Town Council;
4. that the T'ai Chi group could continue without a charge or licence as it was not commercial and was loosely organised.

A359 **MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES**

a) West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee – 20 June 2016

The Town Clerk pointed out that these minutes had already been agreed by full Council at the meeting on 22 June 2016. The Chairman of the Committee gave an update of the situation at the ground and his discussions he had seeking use of the masterplan presented to the Council last year. He had made it clear that commercial housing development was not an option.

b) BMX/Skate Park Working Party – 11 July 2016

The Chairman of the Working Party gave a verbal update of what had been discussed earlier that evening.

As mentioned during the discussions on the Operational Report, minute A351 refers, he advised that the blocking in of the skate park ramp has been deferred as the users did not want it done. The working party recommended spending the £600 previously allocated to the blocking in of the ramp for materials to construct a graffiti wall at the skate park.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the verbal report from the meeting held earlier be noted;
2. that the blocking in of the skate park ramp has been deferred as not now needed see minute A351 above;

3. that the funds for the works required to block the skate park ramp in be diverted to be spent on materials to construct a graffiti wall at the skate park.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm.

Chairman