

**AMENITIES MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday 12 September 2016**

**At 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**Present:**

Councillor: Dr S E Bartington (Chairman)

(Cllr Temple took the Chair until Cllr Bartington arrived at 6.05pm)

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

Non-Committee Members A K Beames (Sub for P J Dorward); H W Chirgwin

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

Also present: 3 members of the public  
Mr J Cox from Adventure Plus

A485 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs P J Dorward and J S King.

A486 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

A487 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 11 July 2016.

There were no matters arising.

*Cllr Bartington entered the meeting at 6.05pm and took the Chair.*

*Cllr Morris entered the meeting at 6.25pm.*

A488 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The meeting adjourned at 6.05pm in line with standing order 42 in order for Mr West and then Miss Melanie Jones to address the Committee, followed by Mr Jonathan Cox of Adventure Plus giving a presentation to the Committee on the lake and country park. The meeting resumed at 6.35pm.

A489 **TOWER HILL CEMETERY**

The Chairman moved this item up the agenda as a member of the public had addressed the Committee about the Cemetery. A member asked if the member of the public could have an answer regarding a query on crosses on graves. The Works Contracts Supervisor explained that the lady did not own the grave in question and the Council could only discuss such issues with the grave owner.

Members felt that a Friends of the Cemetery group would be helpful in bringing such matters to the Council and were supportive of this being set up via the Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Sub Committee.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Sub Committee assists in the formation of a Friends of the Cemeteries Group.

*Miss Melanie Jones and another member of the public left.*

A490 **PARK ROAD ALLOTMENTS**

The Chairman moved this item up the agenda as a member of the public had addressed the Committee about the allotments at Park Road.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as well as the address from the allotment tenant.

It was explained that there was an issue/delay over gaining a new lease on the land from Cottsway Housing and until this was resolved further issues could not be dealt with. The Chairman asked why 2 allotments were vacant and the Town Clerk replied that it was difficult to let them when the future of the land was unknown. The gentleman in question would be given an answer once the lease issue was resolved. It was suggested that he might like to join the Allotment Association although Park Road plots were managed by the Town Council.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the report of the Town Clerk be noted and that Mr West would be given a response to his queries as soon as the issues with the lease were resolved.

A491 **LAKE AND COUNTRY PARK**

The Chairman moved this item up the agenda as Mr Cox from Adventure Plus had addressed the Committee concerning his wish to utilise the area for Adventure Activities.

The RFO asked Mr Cox if the group could use Hardwick Park or West Oxfordshire Sailing Club. He replied that both were private and not suited to the activities he wanted to put on. He was passionate about people being able to get out on the water.

A member pointed out that there were dangers in the lake such as iron girders that in some case were vertical and Mr Cox agreed that these issues would need to be carefully addressed.

The Chairman reported that the survey of the Lake and Country Park had now received 200 responses which were being analysed. She was very much in favour of promoting the activities carried out by Adventure Plus.

As there was an item on land management in connection with the lake and country park later on the agenda members felt that this should be considered alongside it.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the proposals for the lake and country park by Adventure Plus be considered under the agenda item for the land management proposals for the lake and country park.

*Mr Cox left the meeting at this point.*

A492 **OPERATIONAL REPORT AND COMMITTEE MATRIX UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Works Contracts Supervisor as circulated with the agenda. He highlighted the need to replace litterbins at the Leys Recreation Ground. There was a discussion on the style of litterbin and the RFO confirmed that currently there was £3,000 in the budget for litterbins.

*Cllr Holliday left the meeting at 7pm*

The quotations for the hay meadow grass cutting were considered, and a Member suggested that this could be left until a land management plan was in place.

A member asked if a shelter for the skate park could be investigated as the pipes were being blocked in. The Town Clerk replied that the last one had been removed at the request of the police.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that replacement litter bins at The Leys and Skate park be agreed subject to the choice of design;
3. that the prioritising of high priority jobs listed on the matrix of committee projects be delegated to the Town Clerk, Works Contracts Supervisor in consultation with the Chairmen of Amenities and Community Services Committees. A separate list would be compiled for completed items;
4. that the hay meadow be left as it was until a land management plan was in place.

A493 **PLAY AREAS**

a) Oxlease

At this point the Chairman declared an interest as she was Chairman of the Cogges Meadow Park Group and had not been present at the start of the meeting.

She reported that £1,000 had been granted from Greggs for bins. The Group had also been nominated for a Tesco groundwork Grant, which would be voted on in local stores.

The result of the WREN application would be delivered in October.

b) Park Road Play Area

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. She informed the Committee that she had been approached by Cottsway Housing Association who claimed they owned the land. The Town Clerk had a paper trail going back to the 1980's which illustrated that it should have been transferred to the Town Council, however the land had been registered to Cottsway on the transfer of Council housing stock in 2001, which she believe to be an error.

Members felt that it would be a good idea to put the regeneration on hold until ownership was established. A member suggested that if the issue was not moving then the CEO of Cottsway could be contacted as she was very approachable.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report of the Town Clerk be noted;
2. that the play area regeneration be put on hold until the land ownership was resolved;
3. that the Town Clerk should contact the CEO of Cottsway if she didn't get a timely response from Officers.

*Mr West left the meeting.*

A494 **MINUTES OF SUB COMMITTEES**

a) Public Halls Sub Committee – 19 July 2016

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Public Halls Committee held on 19 July 2016.

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

b) Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Sub Committee – 28 July 2016

A member referred to page 3 of the minutes and asked if all ward members could be informed if there were any issues in the cemeteries. Another member agreed with this but was mindful that ward members needed to be clear on who would speak to the member of the public involved. Members were cautioned to check with officers before they spoke to anyone to get the full picture.

The Chairman of the subcommittee confirmed that he and another member had had a meeting with the Vicar about the future vision for Cogges Church. It had been proposed to reserve the area around the cemetery for community use.

He also confirmed that he had had further communication with the disabled resident and that someone had taken her to the cemetery for a visit.

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

A495 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

A496 **WINDRUSH CEMETERY – FEE PROPOSAL FOR REPORT ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS AND FURTHER EXTENSION**

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

**RECOMMENDED:** that the fee proposal as detailed in the Town Clerk’s report be accepted, and that it be funded from the earmarked reserve.

*Cllr Chirgwin left the meeting at 7.46pm.*

A497 **LAKE AND COUNTRY PARK – FEE PROPOSAL FOR LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Members received and considered the confidential report of the Facilities Manager as circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman reported that phase one of the proposal had already been completed by the Lower Windrush Valley Project, Adventure Plus and herself.

The RFO pointed out that the Council’s existing vision for the area was for it to be a self-policing area for everyone to enjoy. There was no budget for a land management plan and if the Council was unsure what the vision for the future was a plan would serve no purpose.

The Chairman suggested that the results of the survey could be brought to the next meeting and this could help form the basis for a vision for the park.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that at the current time the Council does not to proceed with a land management plan;
3. that a vision is formed for the future of the lake and country park once the result of the survey have been analysed – report to be brought back to the next meeting;
4. that the future maintenance of the lake and country park should be discussed with the new grounds contractors.

A498 **PROVISION OF FOOTBALL PITCHES AND ADMINISTRATING THE BOOKINGS SYSTEM**

The Committee received and consider confidential verbal reports from the Council's officers, so that Members were aware of the current issues occurring with the letting of the Council's pitches. A new system had been introduced to try to make things smoother but there were still issues occurring.

Members were conscious that taxpayers' money was funding the football pitches which were subsidised to a high percentage. They wanted to know what percentage of players actually lived in the town.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the officers' verbal report be noted;
2. that a letter be sent to teams asking for a breakdown of membership and fees.

A499 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

**RESOLVED:** that standing order 48 (a) be suspended to allow the meeting to continue past two hours.

A500 **INCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** that the meeting be re-opened to the press and public.

A501 **THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND AND SPLASH PARK**

a) Witney Swifts Cricket Club

Members received and considered correspondence from Witney Swifts Cricket Club which was seeking support to improve the changing rooms and install cricket nets.

The Chairman proposed giving the club support so that they could apply for funding. Another member commented that they wanted the Town Council to fund any improvements. He suggested sending the club a list of sources of funding and agreeing to give the club a letter of support.

The RFO cautioned members that as the Town Council had applied for The Leys to become a Field In Trust, the footprint of existing buildings could not be altered.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the Town Council sends the club a list of sources of funding and agrees to give it a letter of support.

b) Correspondence from a Visitor to The Leys

The Committee received and considered correspondence from a visitor to The Leys who had been very impressed.

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

c) Report of the Works Contracts Supervisor on the Splash Park

Members received and considered the report of the Works Contracts Supervisor on the problems that had been experienced with the Splash Park, as circulated with the agenda. He informed the Committee that electrical works should be completed that week.

*Cllr Beames left the meeting at 8.15pm*

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the situation with regard to the issues encountered with the waste pump, electrical issues and grey water pump and the additional costs incurred for the operating of the facility be noted;
3. that the officer's suggestion not to install artificial grass around the splash pad but to install drainage material and appropriate top finishing around the splash pad be agreed.

*Cllr Beames re-entered the meeting at 8.20pm*

A502 **DRAFT POLICY ON FREE USE OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND FOR FITNESS CLASSES**

The Committee received and considered the second draft of the policy on use of fitness classes on Council owned land as circulated with the agenda

**RECOMMENDED:** that the policy be agreed and put into use.

A503 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. The Chairman asked if the timescale for the S106 money for the skatepark could be clarified. The RFO agreed to investigate this.

The RFO highlighted that the sum of £45,000 for a bandstand from the World War One Working Party was a ballpark figure and was in no way a commitment to spend.

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

A504 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT – PHASED REPLACEMENT OF WASTE RECEPTACLES TO RECYCLING BINS**

The Committee considered the options to replace bins with recycling receptacles. A member pointed out that a total replacement could take ten to twelve years and suggested that over the next two years bins are changed over subject to a "bin audit". Costs would be needed.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the Town Council progresses with the replacement of bins with recycling units by undertaking a bin audit with a view to replacing them all within two years.

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The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

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Chairman