

SPORTS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 22 May 2017

At 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: D Temple (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames J S King
B J Churchill L M Price
H B Eaglestone C K Woodward

Non Committee Member: D S Enright

Officers: Town Clerk Operations and Estates Officer
Democratic Services Officer Responsible Financial Officer
Asst Ops & Estates Officer

R232 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for her absence was received from Cllr Bartington.

R233 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

R234 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Cllr Temple be elected Vice Chairman for the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

R235 MINUTES

a) Amenities Committee Minutes – 6 March 2017

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2017 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman;

b) **MATTERS ARISING:** there were no matters arising from the minutes of the Amenities Committee held on 6 March 2017.

R236 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

R237 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE FOLLOWING YEAR**

RECOMMENDED: To consider this item at the end of the meeting when updates had been received.

Cllr Beames entered at 6.05pm.

R238 **OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer as circulated with the agenda. This updated the Committee on improvements at the recreations grounds, Lake and Country Park, Hailey Road allotment wall, new recycling bins, amalgamation of cricket teams, RoSPA inspections and repairs to The Leys basket swing.

There was a discussion on the allocation of cricket facilities following the amalgamation of Hailey and West Witney Cricket Clubs due to lack of players, he suggested that the Swifts be given the option to move to West Witney to help their parking issues. This was thought to be a good idea.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the recycling bins (two at The Leys, one at King George V Field and one at Moorland Road) be installed;
3. that Witney Swifts Cricket Club be offered the use of West Witney Cricket facilities on opposite weekends to Hailey and West Witney Cricket Club.

R239 **UPDATE ON THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer as circulated with the agenda.

There had been issues with the bowling greens, due to moss killing, but the largest issue was the irrigation system not working at West Witney Bowls Club. This meant that it was a struggle to get enough water onto the green. The system belonged to the bowls club. Members discussed this problem and understood that if the Town Council took it on then it would become an expectation. A member asked if this responsibility was clear in the lease and the Town Clerk replied that she believed it was. Members felt it was appropriate to write to the Club and inform them that it had come to the Council's attention that the green was suffering from lack of irrigation and if it transpired that the green needed additional grounds maintenance as a result of this, the Town Council reserved the right to charge them any fees incurred. A member also asked if the Operations and Estates Officer could

investigate the cost of replacing the system in the event that the Town Council took it on in future.

A member noted the extra cutting needed for the Lake and Country Park and commented that there appeared to be increasing additions to the grounds maintenance contract. He asked if all the additions meant that the cost was now the same as the previous contract. The RFO assured him that it had not reached that level.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the additional grass cutting works at the lake and country park be agreed;
- 3) that a letter be written to West Witney Bowls Club regarding the lack of irrigation informing them that if it transpired the green needed additional grounds maintenance as a result of this, the Town Council reserved the right to charge them any fees incurred by this;
- 4) that the Operations and Estates Officer investigates the cost of a new irrigation system for West Witney bowls green.

R240 **LEYS RECREATION GROUND – VARIOUS MATTERS**

a) Football pitch renovations – site close down

The Operations and Estates Officer referred to his report concerning the close down for maintenance of the pitches. The traditional close down was from the end of the May Fair to 10 July, but the extra events on The Leys were preventing this. He was proposing a close down from the third week of May until the first weekend of July for next year and beyond. He had already discussed this with the Chairman of Witney Music Festival who wasn't happy but did understand. They had offered to move their date to mid-July but their licence did not permit this and they did not want to move to another venue. There had also been an informal discussion with LibFest.

After discussion, members agreed that the work needed to go ahead for 2018, and there was time to put relationship management in place with users.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the close down of the football pitches for maintenance goes ahead in 2018 from the third week of May until the first weekend of July.

b) Persistent Litter Problem – particularly in the car park area

The Town Clerk had received a letter from a resident complaining about litter on The Leys, especially in the car park area. The Town Council did litter pick early every morning. Members agreed that there did seem to be a problem. A member suggested that McDonald's (who did litter picking in the area around their restaurant) might be asked to extend the area to include The Leys car park and to install an additional litter bin.

Members also noted that there had been a complaint about speeding. A member suggested that the County Councillors were lobbied to see what could be done as it was Highways land. A member who was also a County Councillor agreed to look into this and would seek money from the Community Safety Partnership to see if improvements could be made.

RECOMMENDED:

- 3) that the correspondence from the resident be noted;
- 4) that the Council approaches McDonald's to see if they would extend the area of their litter pick to include The Leys car park and to install an additional litter bin;
- 5) that the member who was also a County Councillor would speak to the Community Safety partnership about speeding on The Leys to see if anything could be done and funded.

c) No smoking signage in the splash park

A resident had written in to complain that people were smoking in the splash park which was predominantly a children's play area. The Town Clerk highlighted the initiative Oxford City Council had taken recently to implement a voluntary ban in all its children's play areas. Members supported the idea of further signage in the play park although the Council could not enforce it. A member thought that parents would "self-police" if there were additional signs.

RECOMMENDED:

- 6) that the correspondence from the resident be noted;
- 7) that additional large visible no smoking signs be installed in the play area up to a budget of £100.

d) Parking on The Leys

The Committee received and considered communication from the police about parking on The Leys outside of the marked bays, particularly along by the churchyard. They were concerned that it was a safety issue and had approached OCC Highways about having yellow

lines put down. A member was pleased to hear this but pointed out that WODC would need to enforce any order. A member suggested that a letter was written to Henry Box School and the Order of St. John Care trust as it was understood that their employees regularly parked on The Leys. The Town Clerk added that she had met with the Business Manager of Henry Box School and she had denied that any staff parked there.

Another member suggested asking David Tole from OCC Highways Department to meet with the Town Council to discuss the issue further. Members agreed this was a good idea.

RECOMMENDED:

- 8) that the correspondence from the Police be noted;
- 9) that letters are written to Henry Box School and the Order of St. John Care Trust asking them not to park on The Leys;
- 10) that David Tole from OCC Highways Department be requested to meet with the Town Council to discuss the issue further.

R241 RUNNING FREE – CONSULTATION ON PRESERVING THE FREE USE OF PUBLIC PARKS

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk along with a consultation document from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Town Clerk pointed out that recently the Council had formed a policy covering commercial operators such as boot camps and charged accordingly.

RECOMMENDED: that the report of the Town Clerk and DCLG consultation be noted.

R242 PLAY AREA – UPDATE

The Committee received and considered a report from the Town Clerk updating members on five play areas in the town, not currently in the Town Council's ownership.

Cllr Woodward left the meeting at 7.14pm.

She informed Members the District Council held a substantial amount of S106 money to refurbish the Raleigh Crescent Play Area on the condition that the Town Council took it on a 25 year lease – previously this tenure had been rejected by members.

Members discussed the option of a lease but felt unable to make a decision until a feasibility study with costings (to include future maintenance) had been carried out. A member proposed that Nicole O'Donnell from OPFA was employed to carry this out.

Cllr Woodward re-entered the meeting at 7.16pm.

She also highlighted the fact that WODC still wanted the Town Council to take the freehold of Unterhaching Park including the copse, wall and lighting. This had previously been rejected by the Town Council which was only prepared to take on the play area.

Members discussed the park and decided that more information was required. Officers were asked to obtain aerial photos, site photos, and the WODC tree survey for the site. A site visit would also be arranged.

Cllr Enright entered the meeting at 7.30pm.

Members received and considered a report from the project manager on the Oxlease Play Area. There were some problems still to be overcome, particularly additional information requested by main funders WREN on the chosen supplier and design.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the Town Clerk's report be noted;
- 2) that a feasibility study be commissioned for taking on Raleigh Crescent Play Area including costings and future maintenance costs, and that this be carried out by Nicole O' Donnell from OPFA;
- 3) that with regard to Unterhaching Park, Officers obtain aerial photos, site photos, and the WODC tree survey for the site. A site visit would also be arranged.

R243 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

R244 **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.

R245 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

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

R246 **LEYS RECREATION GROUND – TENNIS, CRAZY GOLF AND PAVILION – MAINTENANCE AND AGREEMENTS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential reports of the Town Clerk and the Operations and Estates Officer.

The Town Clerk highlighted the changes in the tenant’s business model which had come to her attention – particularly the subletting of tennis lessons and the introduction of a discount card. Her report also included the costs the Council still bore from the provision of Tennis, Crazy Golf and the Pavilion.

Premier Tennis was keen to gain the Council’s support to refurbish the Crazy Golf course, details of which had previously been circulated to the Amenities Committee at the meeting on 6 March 2017. At that time the Members were keen to renegotiate the terms of the agreement, and given the knowledge of changes it was now a necessity.

The Operations and Estates Officer’s confidential report included quotations for re-colour coating the tennis courts.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the confidential reports be noted;
- 2) that Premier Tennis be asked to make a presentation on its current business model for running the facilities on the Leys Recreation;
- 3) that the decision on colour coating of the tennis courts is deferred until after the presentation.

R247 **INCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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

R248 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee returned to this agenda item. Members decided that they wished the Committee to concentrate on the following areas:

- Play areas
- Management plan for the lake
- Tennis Courts
- Road at The Leys

A member commented that it would be good to see a sporting area developed at East Witney.

It was proposed that the Committee’s mission statement might be :-

This Committee pledges to deliver first class sporting and leisure facilities for the whole of Witney.

This was not formally adopted.

RECOMMENDED: that the following areas be prioritised for the forthcoming municipal year:-

- Play areas
- Management plan for the lake
- Tennis Courts
- Road at The Leys

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Chairman