

SPORTS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 22 January 2018

At 6.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Cllr C K Woodward (Chairman)

Councillors: B J Churchill T J Morris
 H B Eaglestone J S King
 A K Beames (sub S E Bartington)

Officers: Town Clerk Operations and Estates Officer
 Administrator

Also present: 1 member of the public

R029 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dr S E Bartington & Cllr L M Price.

R030 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr King declared a non-pecuniary interest in Raleigh Crescent Play Area project as it was near his property (minute R035) and a personal interest as his wife played bowls for West Witney Bowls Club (minute R036).

R031 MINUTES

- a) **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held 6 November 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 meeting held on 6th November 2017.

R032 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned in line with Standing Order 42 so the member of the public could address the Committee.

- Mr Jeff Hunter on behalf of Premier Tennis

The Committee reconvened following the address by the member of the public, and **RESOLVED** to move the agenda item regarding Premier Tennis in line with Standing Order 14(a)viii in order that the discussion could be heard.

R033 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: Members agreed, contrary to 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 allowed to stay in the meeting.

R034 **PREMIER TENNIS**

Members received a report on the maintenance of the tennis courts at the Leys along with plans to refurbish the mini golf area. Both parties agreed that this was a good partnership and working arrangement that will enhance the Leys as a come to destination.

Clarification was needed on the draft terms offered to Premier Tennis regarding a full repairing lease. An agreement on the Pavilion roof had been reached but the committee had already heard that the maintenance of the tennis courts, re-surfacing and re-painting was simply not possible due to the amount of investment Premier Tennis had already made, including the mini golf which would open in time for Easter. This itself had so far been solely funded by Premier Tennis but support and sponsorship would need to be sought from local businesses and the District Council.

With agreed financial projections over the next fifteen years previously agreed, the Town Clerk asked if Premier Tennis were suggesting taking on the provision of the tennis courts and then asking for reimbursement. This was possible and had happened elsewhere but the Council would be in a position to reclaim VAT on cleaning and resurfacing whereas Premier Tennis could not. The committee heard that the courts were due for re-surfacing in approximately seven years and would ideally be done at the time of the end of a lease but this was not possible in this case. It was agreed that it was a good decision to continue maintaining and re-surfacing the courts

A further issue of parking was discussed. An arrangement with a business in Station Lane had been offered for weekend parking for clubs but it needed to be stressed that the Town Council could not offer parking in someone else's car park. The most pressing concern was weekday parking; there was a possibility of a TRO with restricted parking which could be funded by a nearby Section 106 request. The Town Clerk was looking into this.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that Witney Town Council agrees to continue maintaining the Tennis Courts at the Leys, while Premier Tennis will continue to clean them with ongoing provision made for this.
2. that the committee reverts back to open session

Mr J Hunter left the meeting.

R035 **OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Members received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Officer as circulated with the agenda. He reported that there had been further issues with the installation of the swing at Oxlease Play Area and Huck would be returning for a third time. Play bark would be supplied and by the end of January the play park should be completed

and safe. A member drew attention to the chippings on the path that could impede wheelchair users. It was advised that this should improve over time but if further problems were reported it could be re-visited.

Members considered the points raised by the Operations & Estates Officer regarding the refurbishment of Raleigh Crescent Play Area following consultation by the Project Manager. In relation to the third point, members agreed that there was a problem with vandalism and anti-social behaviour but were in favour of reducing the shrubs to how they were before the park was handed back to the District Council and installing a solar light at an appropriate height in the area.

The committee noted that the Splash Park opening and closing times for contractor re and de-commissioning should be 29th March (Easter holidays) and close at the arrival of Witney Feast in September.

The Operations and Estates Officer advised he had met with the Chair of Witney Allotment Association at Hailey Road regarding its non-agreed clubhouse. It was previously a simple composting toilet and had grown to something more substantial following a private discussion with the Council's nominated member representative. The District Council had been consulted and some evening events had taken place. It was suggested that the Association write to the Town Council, as the landowner, requesting retrospective permission. There were approximately one hundred subscribers on the waiting list for allotments and this had taken about half of one plot.

A Member raised the possibility of the Round Table donating a bench in memory of the late Arthur Titherington. The Town Clerk advised that this could be included in a bench report being presented to the next Community Services meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report is noted;
2. that the recommendations for Raleigh Crescent Play Area be agreed with the proviso that the shrubs at Raleigh Crescent are reduced, not removed and the inclusion of a solar light at an appropriate height be investigated by the Operations & Estates officer;
3. that the Splash Park opening times as recommended be agreed.

R036 BOWLING GREEN IRRIGATION SYSTEM

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer as circulated with the agenda. Members discussed the current lease, pitch letting pricing and agreements with both West Witney and Witney Mills Bowls Clubs who use the ground. The problem arose from the fact that the system was not owned by the Council and was installed by one of the clubs. Members agreed that any agreement with the clubs on Town Council sites should be fair and that correspondence should be sent to them explaining the situation and if they did not comply the Council would be requesting removal of the system.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;

2. that the Council writes to the Clubs as set out in the report and that if requests are not complied with the Council would be requesting removal of the irrigation system;
3. that the Operations & Estates Officer investigates the cost of new irrigation system in time for the next Policy & Resources committee meeting.

R037 **LAKE & COUNTRY PARK**

Members received the correspondence from the Lower Windrush Valley Project regarding the relocation of the nesting box and a copy of the water quality report as circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman advised that a meeting had taken place to look at setting objectives and a vision for what the Council were trying to achieve from the Lake & Country Park, with him, Cllr Woodward, Officers and the Lower Windrush Valley Project. A further meeting would be taking place soon.

The Committee also received correspondence from a resident concerning the disused railway bridge within the Country Park. Members heard that the bridge itself falls under the ownership of the Town Council but adjoining land was in private ownership. There were warning signs at the bridge and barriers that were in place had been cut which had previously been a problem historically. The merits of removing or making the bridge structurally safe were discussed but both of which would be costly and no budget was in place for this. The bridge was also considered a heritage asset for the town.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the water quality report from the Lower Windrush Valley Project be noted;
2. that the relocation of the Nesting Box at Witney Lake and Country Park be agreed;
3. that a reasonable repair for the railway bridge be carried out as soon as possible with the Operations & Estates Officer investigating the use and costs of a natural barrier, or preventative wire to be presented at the next Policy & Resources meeting;
4. that the Town Clerk discuss with the Council's insurers the risk issues and investigate whether a risk assessment may be required;
5. that the resident who raised the safety issue with regard to the railway bridge be informed of these discussions and actions.

R038 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

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

The financial situation with regard to Oxlease Play Area was pointed out by the Town Clerk and members agreed it was unfortunate there was a shortfall in funding which would have to be covered from the general reserve; there was now however, a great park in place. A

member felt that the an issue regarding reclaimable VAT had not been fully understood at the time the Meadow Park Group offered to embark on this project which was something the Council should learn from in the future. An agreement between partners should be drawn up so that both parties are clear and understand the procedures and financial regulations which need to be followed.

A member queried the budgeted amounts for the Park Road and Moorland Road Play Areas. In the absence of the RFO the Town Clerk advised that an amount of money had to be re-allocated towards the WREN grant application for Oxlease and a shortfall and future works, including Moorland Road Play area would be discussed with data from the survey results.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the shortfall for Oxlease Play Area be taken from the general reserve;
3. that RFO be requested to provide Cllr T Morris with a breakdown of the un-reclaimable VAT for the project;

R039 PLAY AREAS SURVEY

The Committee received and considered the Play Area Survey Report as circulated prior to the meeting. The Chairman suggested that in the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman that this item be deferred to the next meeting. Members did note the low number of responses and questioned the data included; it may have been misleading as proportionate to certain areas.

The Operations and Estates Officer suggested that the report circulated to the Amenities committee in 2015 which audited the equipment in each play area and established a plan of works be brought to the next meeting. Members agreed.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the update be noted;
2. that the survey results be deferred to the next meeting of the Sport & Recreation meeting and it be reviewed alongside the Play Area Audit Report of 2015.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Chairman