

**SPORTS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday 9 July 2018**

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

**Present:**

Cllr H W Chirgwin (Chairman)

Councillors:                      C Brown                              J S King  
    H B Eaglestone                      L M Price  
    B J Churchill                          D Temple

Officers:                              Town Clerk                              Operations & Estates Officer  
    Democratic Services Officer        Administrative Assistant

**R359 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr Harvey.

**R360 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**R361 MINUTES**

- a)     **RESOLVED:**                      that the minutes of the meeting held 21 May 2018 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 21 May 2018.

**R362 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

**R363 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The work programme had been brought back to the Committee for consideration following the last meeting.

The Town Clerk advised that the Cemeteries/Project Officer had asked the Committee to consider removal of some trees that were blocking the view of the lake at the Country Park as it would be on the route for the In bloom judging. She proposed to use some of the In Bloom budget to pay for the work. Members agreed to this request.

A member reported that she had contact from residents of Bishop's Mill who were keen to become involved with the Lake and Country park by way of nature trails etc.

The Chairman asked if the Town Council had formally taken on Unterhaching Play area. The Town Clerk replied that she had written to WODC agreeing to take it on for a commuted sum of £30,000 but had not heard back.

Another member asked for an update on parking at The Leys. The Town Clerk explained that the target date was autumn 2018, but she was due to have a meeting with the Parking Manager at WODC that week to discuss things further, as it would be applying for some TROs.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the work programme be noted.

R364 **OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

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

A member asked if the hot weather had impacted on grounds maintenance. The Operations and Estates Officer replied that it had.

He reported that the FA now had a “Fit to Play” report via an app which worked really well with the junior teams and he was hoping to introduce this with the senior teams next season. He had a meeting arranged with the FA and the clubs on 30 July. The new posts and sockets were in.

The Committee had been circulated with match reports for cricket, which were noted.

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

R365 **PITCH RENOVATION WORKS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer as circulated with the agenda. Officers pointed out that the Council had always done timely pitch renovations but a former manager had agreed to events during the time when renovation would have taken place as this had now become the ‘norm’.

Currently the football pitch at The Leys was in a bad state – there was little grass and the earth was compacted. The current spell of warm weather meant that none of the overseeding had taken.

As Libfest had been agreed for next year, there would be a 5 week window for renovation. The Witney Music Festival wanted to come in 2 weeks before Libfest which would mean hardly any chance for renovation work to be done. The other locations in the town had improved, whilst The Leys had become worse.

A member stated that she did not believe that the Council should plan works around the weather as it could be variable. In her opinion, The Leys should have maximum use for both sports and recreation and maintenance should be planned around events.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council's public halls were shut down for a short period each year for maintenance to take place and it was no different with the sports pitches. The Council had been criticised for cancelling matches due to poor ground conditions.

Another member disagreed – pitch maintenance needed to start right after the end of the season to give the pitches time to recover for the next season.

The Chairman advised that the Committee needed to listen to those who carried out the work and the Council needed to concentrate on getting the pitches back into playable conditions. Another member stated that ideally maintenance would fit around events but this was not really possible.

A member noted that the Music Festival had been offered many other dates – he did not see why they could not choose one of them.

The Operations and Events Officer pointed out that if the grass was lost from The Leys, the events would also be lost as the heavy vehicles would not be able to get on and off onto bare earth.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Witney Music Festival is denied use of The Leys on 15/16 June 2019;
3. that the Witney Music Festival is asked to consider selecting their event dates from the list of available dates provided via the mechanism of the Events Working Party, with the Town Council working with them to find a suitable date;
4. that the Council discusses the Music Festival looking for an alternative location such as West Witney Sports Ground or the Rugby Club, with them via the mechanism of the Events Working Party.

**R366 PLAY AREAS**

a) Operational Report

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. ROSPA had just inspected the plays areas and nothing urgent had been noted.

A complaint about the condition of The Leys play area had been circulated. The Maintenance Team had tried reseeding but this had not worked. He considered that the only viable option was to put bark chippings under the high use equipment. The Committee asked him to get quotes for this.

There had also been a complaint about a child being knocked over by a dog, and dog fouling, at Oxlease Play Area. The resident felt that a fence would have prevented the problem. A member said that she supported the fence as her child had been afraid of dogs. The Operations and Estates Officer advised that any fence would probably have to

be agreed by Historic England. The Chairman thought that Cllr Bartington in her capacity as County Councillor may have some funding for a fence.

Members were disappointed at the vandalism of the music station at the QEII field and asked officers to find another piece of age appropriate equipment to replace it, as the repair would be around £2,000.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the music station at the QEII Field be removed and another piece of age appropriate equipment is sought to replace it;
3. that the letter from the resident about the condition of The Leys Play area be noted and that a quote be sought to cover the areas under the high use equipment with bark chippings;
4. that quotes for a fence at Oxlease be sought and Cllr Bartington contacted regarding possible funding.

b) Update on Refurbishment of Play Areas

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update to the Committee. There was money set aside for Moorland Road. Park Road was still with the solicitor who believed that the land had been mistakenly registered to Cottsway Housing. Cottsway had offered a license to the Town Council but this would mean no security of tenure for the Town Council. Guideposts were looking at the possibility of taking over the allotments as a community garden.

*Cllr Laura Price left the meeting at 6.51pm.*

A member asked if stock equipment could be used at Moorland Road. The Operations and Estates Officer confirmed that this was possible as long as it fitted.

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

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The meeting closed at 6.51pm.

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Chairman.