

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

**Held on Monday 19 November 2018
at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

Present

Councillor: Cllr C Holliday (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames H W Chirgwin
 C Brown A D Harvey
 B J Churchill L M Price (sub D S T Enright)

Officers: Mrs Sharon Groth - Town Clerk
 Mr John Hickman - Operations and Estates Officer
 Mrs Polly Inness - Communications Officer
 Mrs Nicky Cayley - Democratic Services Officer

C558 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Enright and Harvey.

C559 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in matters relating to items on the agenda.

C560 **MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 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 10 September 2018.

C561 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

C562 **PRESS COVERAGE UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications Officer.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

C563 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Members asked that their thanks be recorded to the Officers who had given so much time to the Armistice Centenary Celebrations.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications Officer, covering the newsletter, a presentation to the Society of Local Council Clerks about the Poppy Mile, and the Youth Council.

Members were concerned to hear that the Youth Council was not working as expected and felt that perhaps the format should be less formal. A member who was also a County Councillor suggested that she could see if they would be able to attend some meetings with young people in Oxford City via Youth Work/ the Looked After Children team.

The Committee was also keen to have the Youth Council on board for consultation about the forthcoming destination play area at West Witney.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that Cllr Price investigates how the Youth Council could become involved with other young people via her County Council connections and the Youth Council is then written to and invited to any events;
3. that the Youth Council could be run in a less formal manner using face time for example.

C564 **EVENTS**

Heritage Open Days

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications Officer. There was much discussion about Heritage Days and the theme which would be “People Power”. The Communications Officer commented that there had been great community cohesion during the last 2 years. Members suggested subjects including the Witney Mills and the Female Blanket Workers Union.

A member suggested that sources of information could be the People’s History Museum in Manchester and The Plunkett Foundation, which held information about such unions. Witney Museum may also be of some help.

Members agreed to request £1,000 for the event from the next fiscal year’s budget.

Bus Shelter Art

The Communications Officer drew members’ attention to the Bus Stop Art photo competition for which there had only been 2 entries. She suggested that in the event that there were no more, photos from the Armistice Centenary Celebrations could be used. Members thought this to be a good idea, especially as the two entries were on this theme.

Mental Health Week

It had previously been decided to run an event focused on children and young people. The Town Clerk asked Councillor Price if OCC would be able to offer any support. She agreed to ask what their plans were, although it was primarily Oxford Health NHS Trust which worked with young people and mental health.

The Communications Officer advised that a Saturday would be the best day to hold the event so that school aged children could attend. She had thought the Corn Exchange to be a good location although a member suggested the Coffeeshed on The Leys.

The Town Clerk reminded members that there was no budget for this, and therefore members agreed a £1,000 supplementary estimate.

Dementia Week

The Town Clerk explained that although there had not been any approach at this time from Dementia Alliance, the Council would probably be asked for support. It was agreed by the Committee to budget for £1,000.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Heritage Open Day becomes a standing item on the Committee agenda and that £1,000 be requested in next year's budget;
3. that if no further entries were received for the Bus Shelter Art Competition, photos from the Armistice Day Centenary celebrations be utilised;
4. that a Mental Health Day focusing on Young People be held perhaps in the Corn Exchange/Coffeeshed, and that a £1,000 supplementary estimate be agreed in the current financial year;
5. that £1,000 is put into the budget for 2019/20 for Dementia Week.

C565 **TREES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. This provided an update on the Inspection Report and the Cedar of Lebanon tree at St. Mary's Churchyard.

It was noted that the "Wishing Tree" at Tower Hill Cemetery was suffering from a root fungus and professional advice was for a pull test to be undertaken. If it failed it would need to be taken down. If it passed then the tree would be indemnified by the testing company.

The advice for the Cedar of Lebanon in St. Mary's Churchyard was for it to be turned into a monolith and left as a natural habitat for wildlife.

A member raised concerns about the cost of tree inspections at Unterhaching Park which would shortly be transferred to the Town Council. The Town Clerk explained that there was £30,000 accompanying the transfer so this would pay for the tree survey.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the year 1 tree works as noted in the tree survey report be carried out;

3. that the recommended pull test to the T310 beech tree (the Wishing Tree) in Tower Hill Cemetery to ascertain its current condition be carried out;
4. that an additional £3,000 be allocated to the 2018/19 Arboriculture budget to cover works required this year;
5. that a £5,000 contingency fund be set aside to enable officers to deal with damages caused to trees by severe weather conditions in future years if required.

C566 **VANDALISM REPORT**

The Committee received and considered an update on the vandalism in the town.

The Town Clerk reported that she had met with Police Inspector Hookham who was keen to see CCTV on The Leys. She had explained to him that the Town Council had previously had funding for this but the District Council had not been able to add funding, although initially it had pledged to assist. The Police were unable to contribute financially but a stand-alone scheme had been suggested with a ball park figure of £5,000.

Cllr Chirgwin left the meeting at 6.52pm.

Members requested that a scheme be fully costed up and also WODC be contacted about their role in a scheme, given that they also had assets on the Recreation Ground. It was felt it would be beneficial if Burwell Recreation Ground/Hall was also covered given the amount of anti-social behaviour in the summer.

It was also suggested that the Police and Crime Commissioner be written to about the lack of funding for CCTV and to ask how this scheme could be supported.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that a CCTV scheme for the Leys Recreation Ground and Burwell Recreation Ground be fully costed;
3. that WODC be asked how they could support such a scheme;
4. that £10k be added to the budget for CCTV schemes at The Leys and Burwell Recreation Grounds.

C567 **SEAT IN NEWLAND BUS SHELTER**

The Committee received and considered a request from a resident for a “flat top” seat at the bus stop at Newland.

The Operations and Estates Officer explained that the bench had been a contribution from a resident and that if a flat top bench replaced the perch seat, it would not comply with DDA regulations as wheelchairs would not have the room to access it. Members felt there was no need to change the bench at this time.

RECOMMENDED: that the request from the resident be noted and the seat is not replaced.

C568 **WITNEY FEAST**

The Town Clerk provided a verbal report on the fact that the Council's agreement with the fair operator had come to an end this year, and negotiations had commenced for its renewal.

Currently Mr and Mrs Wilson paid £7,700 for the use of The Leys and ran the fair on the Monday and Tuesday. They had offered to increase the rent for next year by £1,000 on condition that they could run the fair on the Saturday and Sunday as well. The Town Clerk advised that attempts in the past to raise the rent had not been successful, but the fact was that the event did cost the Town Council money. A member felt that the Town should be aware of this fact. Members felt that the rent should be £8,700 for the two days with the Saturday and Sunday being charged at an additional rate.

Member also requested portable toilets and consultation with local residents.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the verbal update be noted;
2. that in addition to a £1,000 increase in rent, an additional fee if they wanted to operate on the Saturday and Sunday should be negotiated by the Town Clerk;
3. that the fair operators be requested to supply portable toilets as part of the event;
4. that residents be made aware that there is a cost to the taxpayer.

C569 **FINANCE REPORT: BUDGET MONITORING COMMITTEE INCOME & EXPENDITURE TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2018**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

C570 **REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL/SPECIAL PROJECTS PROGRAMME: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19 AND ESTIMATES 2019/20**

a) Revised revenue budget 2018/19 and base revenue budget for 2019/20

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted;

b) Revised Capital and Special Revenue projects programme 2018/19 and Revenue growth items and Capital/Special projects programme 2019/20

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, covering known and desired projects. Capital projects included blue plaques and a new bus shelter at Burwell precinct.

The planned production of Thrush Green and the addition of CCTV required costing.

A member referred to bus stops for the new developments and reported that he thought there was \$106 money available. The Town Clerk added that there were ongoing negotiations about the bus stops and pathway for the Windrush Cemetery.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

C571 **MINUTES OF WORKING PARTIES**

World War One Working Party – 9 October and 30 October 2018

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 9 and 30 October 2018.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Christmas Lights Working Party – 5 November 2018

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

C572 **REQUEST FOR A CLOTHES RECYCLING BIN SITE FROM SCOPE**

With the agreement of the Chairman the Committee received and considered a request from SCOPE for a site for a clothes recycling bin. Members initially considered Madley Park Hall, but felt that Madley Brook School may be a better site. They advised the person requesting a site to contact the headmistress. It was also felt that it could be beneficial to advertise on social media for a site.

RECOMMENDED: that SCOPE be advised to contact Madley Park School to see if a bin could be sited there.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Chairman.