

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

**Held on Monday 21 January 2019
at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

Present

Councillor: Cllr C Brown (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames H B Eaglestone
 B J Churchill D S T Enright
 H W Chirgwin A McMahon (sub A D Harvey)

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

C027 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Further to the resignation of the previous Chairman, Cllr Brown was elected Chairman for the remaining municipal year.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Brown be elected Chairman for the remaining municipal year.

C028 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr Harvey.

C029 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C030 MINUTES

a) RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

b) MATTERS ARISING: C564 – The Town Clerk informed the Committee that despite her best efforts, the Communications Officer had not been able to secure any partners for the planned Mental Health Awareness Day. However, Oxford Health NHS Trust which was working with Witney Community Mental Health Team on developing a local network to support awareness and engagement with services had approached her for a meeting. There may be possibilities for them to support the Town Council running an event or for the Town Council to support their Mental Health Awareness event in May.

C031 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

C032 **OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. In response to a Members question the Town Clerk confirmed that meetings had been held with Witney Music Festival organisers and they were fully aware of the procedures which must be followed.

Members discussed the issues surrounding the vandalism at Newland Bus Shelter and whether the Council should continue to repair it if repeatedly vandalised. It was agreed that after the current repair it would not be repaired again and a press release should be put out to that effect. It was also suggested that this should be reported to the Neighbourhood Watch.

The Operations and Estates Officer asked members if they would be happy to see green waste bins installed in Tower Hill and Windrush Cemeteries, which they agreed to.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that green waste bins be installed at the Windrush and Tower Hill Cemeteries;
3. that the bus shelter at Newland is not repaired if vandalised again and a press release be put out to this effect.

C033 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

a) Annual Survey/Newsletter

Members received and considered the report of the Communications Officer. Whilst members saw the advantage in proceeding with Push Start for the delivery and production of the newsletter, a member asked if the Letterbox Magazine could do it at a better cost. The Communications Officer reminded members that this also went to homes outside of Witney and the survey was for completion by Witney residents only.

b) Press Coverage – Update

The Committee received and considered an update on press coverage.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report and the update on press coverage be noted
2. that Letterbox be asked if they could produce and distribute the newsletter within Witney only and within the budget. If this was not possible then the Council would proceed with Push Start.

C034 **ARBORICULTURE AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

a) Weed Control

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer concerning weed control in the town. He advised members that the process would need to be done twice per year. The Committee agreed to using this method.

b) Trees

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, updating the current position on trees throughout the town.

He had concerns about the two trees that the WW1 Working Party had agreed to plant at Welch Way next to the raised flower bed as they would not have enough room to grow. He felt that planting them at Tower Hill Cemetery instead would be a better choice. A member suggested that one could be planted at the Windrush Cemetery.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the reports be noted;
2. that the Council should re-introduce Glyphosate spraying to control weeds into the contract into the limited areas as detailed in the report.
3. that one remembrance sapling should be planted at each cemetery rather than on Welch Way.

C035 **INFRASTRUCTURE**

a) Request for seats at Oxlease Park

Councillors received and considered correspondence from a resident requesting some seats at Oxlease Park. Members felt that there was a need for seating for elderly residents and agreed to this in principle, with it being sited on the path on the Wadards Meadow side of the park. The Operations and Estates Officer was asked to consult with the residents who lived near to this.

b) Bus Shelter Update

The Committee received and considered the report of the Office Manager. There was an issue with the damaged Market Square bus shelter as a like for like replacement could not be found and the cost of a new one would not be covered by the insurance offer from the insurer of Stagecoach - who had hit the shelter, due to "depreciation". The Town Clerk advised that the original shelter was bespoke and it would require two of the replacements identified to cover the same area.

Members were not happy that the insurance offer made had taken depreciation into account. The Town Clerk was asked to go back to the Council's insurance company and ask them to negotiate a better compensation. Members also asked that a bespoke option be investigated – perhaps through Witney Welding.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the reports be noted;
2. that a bench be sited on the path adjacent to Wadards Meadow at Oxlease Park subject to consultation with nearby residents.
3. that the Town Clerk goes back to the Town Council's insurers and asks them to renegotiate the insurance officer for the Market Square shelter;
4. that officers approach Witney Welding about a bespoke shelter, if necessary.

C036 **VANDALISM**

The Committee received and considered an updated vandalism schedule. A member asked if the cost of the vandalism could be published on the website. The Communications Officer advised that it would fit in with the precept information. It was also requested to put this information into the next newsletter and to add this to the press release about the precept.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the cost of vandalism be published on the website and in the next newsletter and to add it to the press release about the precept.

C037 **BLUE PLAQUE COMMEMORATING PATRICK STEPTOE, GYNAECOLOGIST, PIONEER OF IVF – REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION**

The Committee received and considered correspondence from the Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board concerning plans to unveil a blue plaque in memory of Patrick Steptoe (who was born and educated in the town) at 52 West End. The Board was seeking a financial contribution towards the £500 cost.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the correspondence be noted;
2. that the Board be awarded £300 towards the cost of the Blue Plaque for Patrick Edwards, to be funded from the Council's current grant budget.

C038 **CONSULTATION ON PROTECTING AND ENHANCING ENGLAND'S TREES AND WOODLANDS**

The Committee received and considered a previously circulated consultation from the government. Members agreed that the Town Council's policy was in line with the consultation.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the consultation be noted;
2. that rather than responding to the individual questions the following response is made:

Witney Town Council supports the recommendations made and they are in line with its procedures.

C039 FUTURE OF THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING PARTY AND ITS REMIT

Members received and considered the report of the Office Manager. Members supported the idea of turning the Working Party into a sub committee and extending its remit.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Christmas Lights Working Party be developed into a “Christmas Sub Committee” following the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2019;
3. that Officers help facilitate a Christmas Market in 2019 with external providers and/or the help of service groups and charities where appropriate.

C040 MINUTES OF THE IN BLOOM WORKING PARTY

The Chairman of the In Bloom Working Party gave a verbal update on the meeting held earlier that evening.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal update be noted.

C041 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.

C042 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CCTV MEETING HELD IN DECEMBER 2018

The Committee received and considered the confidential minutes of the CCTV meeting held in December 2018.

RECOMMENDED: that the confidential minutes be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm

Chairman.