

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

**Held on Monday 18 March 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

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

Also present: Miss Y Digweed – Chairman of the Witney Youth Council

C113 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs King and Harvey.

C114 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C115 MINUTES

a) **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:** C035– the Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Office Manager had submitted all documentation to the insurance company in relation to the damaged bus shelter. Zurich had said that re negotiation would not result in a substantially higher offer – probably only £100.00 more than the current offer. Members agreed to accept the current offer and purchase a smaller shelter and budget for an additional one to be sited next to it in the following year.

RECOMMENDED: that the current offer from the insurers be accepted and a smaller shelter be purchased, with money budgeted for an additional one to site next to it in the following year.

C116 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Miss Digweed, Chairman of the Witney Youth Council addressed the Committee on the Youth Council's ideas for a Witney's Got Talent competition, a coffee morning and an Easter Egg Hunt on The Leys on Easter Sunday. Members were very supportive and agreed to give free use of the Corn Exchange on Easter Sunday and also for 2 days for Witney's Got Talent.

RECOMMENDED: that the Youth Council be granted 3 free uses of the Corn Exchange.

C117 **OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS SINCE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. This covered events, vandalism, bus shelters, health and safety, litter and dog bins and benches, and tree works.

The Committee was advised that the Operations and Estates Officer had received version one of the EMP for the Witney Music Festival. LibFest had paid its deposit and he was awaiting the EMP and the Carnival was in dialogue with him on an EMP.

The Committee was informed that currently there was no defibrillator in the phone box below the Town Hall as it had been used at the weekend. Officers were awaiting its return.

The pull test had taken place that day on the Wishing Tree at Tower Hill Cemetery and the results were awaited.

The Operations and Estates Officer informed members that he was also waiting for certification to prove that lights had been replaced at Madley Park Hall and for some results of electrical tests at Langdale Hall.

The Town Clerk drew members' attention to the supplementary report on Witney Feast. This provoked some discussion, particularly in relation to toilet provision. A member asked the Operations and Estates Officer what the actual requirements were and he replied that because the fair operated under the Showman's Guild and not the HSE, in fact there was no requirement to provide toilets at all. Members were also reminded that even if it was operating under normal circumstances, this would be difficult to quantify because people attending the fair were transitory and would only be there for up to 2 hours.

After further discussion on the current charges, it was decided that a £1,000 increase would be appropriate as the operators wished to run the fair on the Saturday as an extra day. It was agreed that the total charge of £8,700 should be subject to a 5% inflationary increase year on year for a five year period. The Committee also requested provision of toilets.

Members approved the installation of two additional litter/recycling bins at The Leys.

A member referred to the bus shelter art work project and stated that people still disliked the one at Oxford Hill/Newland. The Communications Officer replied that she had received some positive comments about it but that she had written to the charity that had advertised via this shelter. The member added that the seat in the bus shelter at Staple Hall mentioned at the Annual Town Meeting was very hard to sit on. He wanted to know if a flat seat could be installed. The Operations and Estates Officer replied that anything else would make the Council less DDA compliant than the current situation. Another member asked about seats which flipped up like those at Gloucester Green bus station in Oxford. The Operations and Estates Officer replied that he thought they were an integral part of the shelter and not something that could be retro fitted.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that Witney Feast be charged £8,700 with a 5% inflationary year-on year increase for 5 years.
3. that permission to operate on the Saturday prior be granted on a trial basis, so long as the fair operator provided additional toilets;
4. that two new litter/recycling bins be installed at The Leys.

C118 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

a) Communications report

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications Officer, which gave updates on the Annual Satisfaction Survey, and the Citizen of the Year awards.

b) Press Coverage – Update

The Committee received and considered an update on press coverage.

RECOMMENDED: that the report and update be noted.

C119 UPDATE ON PRODUCTION OF THRUSH GREEN

The Communications Officer provided a verbal update on the planned production of Miss Reid’s “Thrush Green”. The people behind the production had now decided to do a compilation show of all of Miss Reid’s works in Holy Trinity Church rather than “Thrush Green”. They had spoken about funding but unfortunately this was via Cllr Morris and the Communications Officer had not been informed. The group had said that they would like to do the outside production next year and she had advised them that they would need to submit a grant form if they wanted funding and that this was not a given. She had also encouraged them to use local actors as they had originally planned rather than buying in actors.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal update be noted.

C120 HERITAGE OPEN DAY

The Communications Officer advised that this was the 25th anniversary of Heritage Open Days and that the theme was people power.

After some discussion, she agreed to contact an officer at WODC to ascertain what their plans were and Cllr Enright would raise this at the next meeting of the Witney Chamber of Commerce. Members were encouraged to send any ideas to the Communications Officer.

RECOMMENDED: that members send any ideas for an event to the Communications Officer.

C121 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

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

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

C122 **VANDALISM**

The Committee received and considered an updated vandalism schedule. A member asked if there were any trends in the vandalism. The Operations and Estates Officer advised that the play areas which had been most recently refurbished were the hardest hit.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

C123 **MINUTES OF THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Christmas Lights Working Party held on 4 March 2019. A member remarked how much progress had been made in 4 years.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

C124 **FLYING THE RAINBOW FLAG**

A request had been received from a resident who had purchased a rainbow flag for the Council last year to fly the flag again for Oxford and Witney pride. Having noted that the duration would be over two weeks, members were unsure whether it should be flown for the whole period. It was decided to refer this to Full Council for a final decision.

RECOMMENDED: that this item be deferred to Full Council.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm

Chairman.