

**HALLS AND GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING OF
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday 9 September 2019

At 7.00pm in the Gallery Room, Corn Exchange

Present:

Councillor: V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman (sub D Enright)	O Collins
	L Ashbourne (sub R Bolger)	L Duncan
	D Butterfield	M Jones
	A Mc Mahon (sub J King)	
Officers:	Mrs Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Mr John Hickman	Operations and Estates Officer
	Mr Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Mrs Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer

Also present: 8 members of the public

H352 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllr R Bolger, Cllr Enright and Cllr J King.

H353 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

H354 MINUTES

Members received and considered the minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 1 July 2019.

a) **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 1 July 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:**

H316 e) (3): The Chair asked if the Town Bowls Club had been contacted regarding reaching out to the community. The DSO confirmed that this had been done.

H316 e) (5): The Chair asked if the Vikings had been able to rearrange their games. The Operations and Estates Officer said that currently the situation was the same.

H317 (3): The Chair asked if the Allotment Association had been informed that the Council would provide a composter. The Town Clerk advised that they had asked for a meeting with the Chair and another member to have a discussion on the issues raised.

H355 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned so that Mr Woodley could address the Committee regarding a new path from the Buttercross Works to The Leys, and Punam Owens could address the Committee concerning a mobile catering van at Parkrun. Following the public participation, the Committee reconvened.

H356 **BUTTERCROSS WORKS FOOTPATH TO THE LEYS**

This item was moved up the agenda with the express permission of the Chair so that the member of the public could hear the discussion.

Members received and considered the report of the Office Manager. There was confusion over the original plans for the Buttercross Lane development which appeared to show the developer intended to install this at the time but it was not on the County Council's Highway Scheme. As the developer had now entered administration and there was no apparent reason why it had not been constructed, the only option was for the Town Council to put the path in. A member asked for the cost implications and the Operations & Estates Officer replied that the last estimate had been in the region of £4,500. If members wished to proceed then three quotes would be required.

Whilst one member felt that there was another route that could be taken to access The Leys, other members felt that there should be a smooth surfaced path to facilitate older residents crossing from the care home.

Members voted on whether to proceed, with 7 voting in favour. Quotes would need to be brought back to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: to proceed with installing the path, with quotes being made available at the next meeting.

H357 **PARKRUN – REQUEST FOR ON-SITE MOBILE CATERING UNIT TO BE ON SITE AT WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND**

This item was moved up the agenda with the express permission of the Chair so that the members of the public could hear the discussion.

Members considered correspondence from Parkrun along with the information they had heard earlier in the evening during public participation. Members were supportive of the idea and liked the fact that a local firm would be providing the catering van.

The Operations and Estates Officer advised that perhaps an initial license should be for the term covering the football season only because the Council did not yet know what the long-term future of the site would be.

RESOLVED: that Parkrun be permitted to bring a mobile catering unit on site via a licence to cover the football season initially.

H358 **COMMITTEE VISION & OBJECTIVES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee considered this item and determined that this should form part of the Witney Town Council Strategic Plan which was now in progress.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H359 **OPERATIONAL REPORT – PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. He advised that he had resolved the issues between the Crayfishermen and the anglers and they were both happy to co-exist.

A new company needed to be found to carry out the bat survey at St. Mary's Churchyard as the company previously commissioned appeared to have gone out of business.

A meeting had been held with the Town Clerk, Operations and Estates Officer, the Conservation Officer and the Church about the churchyard wall at St Marys. The Operations and Estates Officer was contacting a structural engineer in order to survey the wall and draw-up the spec for the repairs but the initial impression was that it could be a very expensive repair for the Town Council.

A member asked if the fixed wire test at Madley Park Hall had been resolved. The Operations and Estates Officer replied that it was ongoing.

Another member asked if the Teqbal Table was installed. The Operations and Estates Officer explained that it had been installed but he was currently withholding payment as it had not been done to an acceptable standard. This should be resolved soon.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H360 **PUBLIC HALLS**

Members received and considered the report of the Office Manager, containing an update on events being held. Bookings had been low due to school holidays.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H361 **CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2019, circulated at the meeting. The Town Clerk drew Members attention to the request for a budget in order to procure professional advisors on how the space could be best utilised for maximum usage. She advised that this would be subject to approval by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

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

H362 **CEMETERIES, CLOSED CHURCH YARDS AND WAR MEMORIALS**

1) Tower Hill Cemetery – Additional Pedestrian Entrance

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, concerning an elderly resident's request for a pedestrian entrance in the wall adjacent to Smiths Estate. This led to a substantive discussion on whether an additional access was really needed by more than one person, the cost implications and the possibility of misuse leading to vandalism in the cemetery. The Operations and Estates Officer advised that currently there was a memorial bench in front of that section of wall and the owner would need to be contacted to see if she would be happy for it to be relocated if the Committee wished to proceed.

RESOLVED: that quotes should be sought for the work and members should make a site visit to the cemetery before the next meeting.

2) Memorial Application – Spike Milligan Quote

This had now been approved and the lady in question contacted. The Chair advised that she had devised some guidelines for memorial inscriptions which had been circulated to the Committee. Members thought that these were exactly what were required and approved them.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and that the Guidelines for Memorial Inscriptions be approved.

3) Witney War Memorial – Request for Additional Inscription

The Committee received and considered the report of the Democratic Services Officer, concerning a local resident's request to have a name added onto the war memorial. There was a supporting letter from a surviving relative, despite the family previously having refused the option to have a commonwealth war grave. Additional correspondence had been received from another resident pointing out that there were other members of the armed forces who had died in service who were not and perhaps should be on the war memorial.

Members were in favour of adding the requested name, particularly as it was a woman. There was a discussion on the other names raised but a member commented that they had not been asked to actually add these to the memorial. Members did have concerns about what might happen if others did come forward, as there was only one space left on the memorial. This led to a request that officers look into how the war memorial could be extended.

The Town Clerk advised that there was no budget for this work and therefore the Committee would need to request a supplementary estimate from the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee or wait until the next Financial Year. Members felt that it should be done in the current financial year.

The Chair invited Cllr Melanie Jones to give an update on the Friends of the Cemeteries group as she was a member and had attended the last meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the name of L. Harris should be added to the Witney War Memorial;
3. that the request is referred to the Policy, Governance and Resources Committee for a supplementary estimate;
4. that Officers look into how the war memorial might be extended to accommodate further names;
5. that the verbal update from the Friends of the Cemeteries be noted.

H363 **SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUNDS**

1) STRI Report and Pitch Provision

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer and correspondence from Spartan Rangers, concerning pitch displacement. There followed a discussion on how and if both sport and events might be accommodated on the football side of The Leys. Officers advised that a major issue was that there was no clear period to do pitch renovations at the correct time of the year on this site. There was money in the budget to do work, but no opportunity to do this on The Leys due to the large events taking place. Furthermore the Council had already spent a considerable amount of money trying to improving the pitches in the last couple of years.

The Operations and Estates Officer added that if the Council still wanted football on The Leys, the Music Festival's stage would need to be moved to the other end where Libfest sited their stage. This would greatly reduce the impact on the pitch. They had not wanted to do this when he had raised this in the past and they had not wanted to move to another site either which could provide another solution for the large events and football to co-exist.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the STRI quote to provide a detailed specification for the maintenance and renovation of ALL the sports pitches at West Witney and The Leys, including a pesticide policy for both sites be accepted;
3. that a quote is obtained for a Turf Protection Flooring System be investigated for the football side of The Leys and that Henry Box be approached to see if it would consider allowing the larger events to use its sports field;

4. that the correspondence from Spartans FC be noted;
5. that the associated works to trees and hedges surrounding West Witney Bowls Green be carried out;
6. that the relocation of Swifts Cricket Club to West Witney be noted and consequently to note that further meetings would be needed with the club to ensure their requirements are met for the 2020 season.

2) Oxfordshire FA

The Town Clerk explained that this had been requested as a standing item by the last Council. She would be inviting the Oxfordshire FA representative to come and speak to the Council about its aspirations and possible funding streams.

RESOLVED: that the verbal update be noted;

H364 PLAY AREAS

1) Park Road Play Area

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, which included previous consultation along with a design which had been desirable a few years ago, but the land ownership situation had stopped progress. A member asked if there had been any movement with the solicitor. The Town Clerk replied that he was currently on holiday but a letter had been sent to the CEO of Cottsway Housing to see if an amicable agreement could be reached.

A member commented that the local residents felt very strongly that the park should be reopened and had asked if they should form a group to fundraise. The Town Clerk replied that if they wanted to fundraise it may be useful as this had worked well for match funding at Oxlease Park.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

2) Play Area Equipment

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer concerning quotes for additional equipment in play areas. Members considered quotes from 2 different companies and agreed to proceed with Proludic. In terms of surfacing, the Committee's preference was for wood bark where possible.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the quotes from Proludic be accepted;
3. that wood bark is used for surfacing where possible.

H365 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, who encouraged members to think about capital projects for the next financial year as budget setting would take place in the next cycle.

The Town Clerk advised that the Chair and Deputy Leader had met with the Wychwood Project to discuss a wildflower seeding project. This could be funded from existing budgets and would be a trial. Members agreed this project should go ahead.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the wildflower seeding project with the Wychwood Project should go ahead.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm.

Chair