

**HALLS & GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 13 January 2020

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

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| Councillors: | L Duncan | D Butterfield |
| | J Aitman (In place of D Enright) | O Collins M Jones |
| | L Ashbourne (In place of R Bolger) | |
| | T Ashby | |
| Officers: | Nicky Cayley | Democratic Services Officer |
| | Adam Clapton | Office Manager |
| | John Hickman | Operations & Estates Officer |
| | Tomas Smith | Venue Manager |
| Others: | 2 members of the public. | |

H1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Bolger, Enright and King.

H2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

H3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The meeting adjourned in line with Standing Order 42 so that Ms Elaine Bellenger and Ms Anna Gattrell could both address the Committee on the hire of the Corn Exchange.

H4 PUBLIC HALLS REPORT

This item was moved up the agenda with the express permission of the Chair, so that the members of the public could listen to the debate.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue Manager which had been previously circulated.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;

2. that the request for six subsidised uses of the Corn Exchange Main Hall for income generating events in 2020 and up to twelve (one each month) in 2021 be delegated to the Venue Manager and Town Clerk/Office Manager – and setting acceptable parameters to work within be agreed;
3. that sundry charges as followed be agreed :-

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|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Additional hours over booking time | £25.00 per hour, up to a maximum of 3 hours. | After 3 hours a full second session charge will be applied |
| Flip Chart Stand hire | £5.00 per session | Hirers can bring their own paper and pens or can also hire it from the Corn Exchange for a cost |
| Projector Hire | £10.00 per session | people inadvertently walk off with leads and maybe an additional cost would be in order to focus the mind in this respect |
| Staging | Negotiable. £25.00 with more than 1 weeks' notice. £50.00 for short notice | a couple of hours work for the caretakers |

4. that rather than charging for tea and coffee per cup for smaller groups, Officers investigate an appropriate rate for hire of the kitchen of the Corn Exchange or associated cost for use of equipment;
5. that four hourly booking slots for new hirers at Burwell Hall and the Corn Exchange be agreed;
6. that the hire charge for the Over 30's Disco be increased to the non-charitable charge of £240 per session for a period of one year;
7. that groups must stick to one room or pay for additional ones.

H5 **MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2019. There were no matters arising.

H6 **OFFICER'S WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received and considered the updated Officers' work programme. A member had a query on the £7, 000 allocated to Park Road Play area, which would be referred to the Town Clerk for clarification.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H7 **OPERATIONAL REPORT - PROGRESS ON REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer.

In addition, the Operations and Estates Officer advised that the one of the Church pillars had been hit again, by a contractor working on behalf of the Church. Whilst the overall repair would be going through the insurance system, there was an urgent need to make the area safe. A quote had been sought for this and the cost was £1, 360.00. The Committee agreed that this should be accepted and the money should come out of rolling capital.

The Chair asked if there were any other routes available to Parkrun as the existing route was waterlogged and very muddy. The Operations and Estates Officer explained that without running over the football pitches, which was not an option, this was the only route available, and this had been explained to Parkrun at the beginning.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the quotation of £1, 360 plus VAT to make the pillar at St. Mary's Church safe be agreed with the money coming out of rolling capital.

H8 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - SEWAGE UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, along with correspondence from the Environment Agency, and Thames Water. He explained that the Council needed to put up signage and barriers to prevent people from renting the watercourse at the Dyke.

The Chair informed members that the Town Clerk advised that in practical terms there was not much that the Town Council could do and members felt that the District Councillors should escalate this matter and that Officers should find out the name of an appropriate officer at the District Council whom they could discuss the matter with.

It was also requested that a letter be written to the County Council's Public Health Department, expressing the Town Council's concerns about the sewage.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report and correspondence be noted;
2. that the Council writes to the County Council's Public Health Department concerning the situation;
3. that Officers find an appropriate Officer at West Oxfordshire District Council and forward the name to those members who also sat on the District Council (i.e. the dual hatters).

H9 WAR MEMORIAL - NAMES AND ADDITIONAL PLAQUE

The Committee received and considered an update from Cllr Jones and also the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, who had been tasked to find a way to extend the war memorial's capacity for additional names.

Cllr Jones advised that further to a letter written advising of other local people who had not had their names added to the war memorial, a local historian, Mr Clements, had done research. He found that these people had been born in Witney and moved away, and in some cases were already remembered on other war memorials. Although Lucy Harris was not a resident of the town when she died, members agreed that it was appropriate for her to have her name inscribed as she would be the only woman listed.

As the Committee did not wish to add further names to the war memorial at this time, there was currently no requirement to add extra plaques.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that as Mr Clements had seemingly proved that none of the names requested to be added to the war memorial had that requirement (as they were either listed elsewhere or had not lived in Witney for a number of years), there was no need to add an additional plaque on the war memorial.

H10 ALLOTMENT UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, concerning both the conditions of the existing lease with the Allotment Association and the new site at West Witney.

Members wanted to work with the Allotment Association which was made up of volunteers, and it was agreed not to continue with dialogue about the lost sheds. However, the Committee recognised that this was a significant loss of asset to the Council at a cost of £12, 141.00. It was agreed to take this amount out of the allotment earmarked reserve so that it could be spent elsewhere if that were possible.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Council takes no further action regarding the breach of the terms of the lease regarding the sheds, but instead removes the value of these assets - £12, 141.00 – from the earmarked allotments fund to be redistributed elsewhere in the budget;
3. that if allotment tenants wish to erect a shed on their plots, they should be of a size and type specified by the Town Council and that if they were not, the Council would remove them;
4. that the Committee notes the associated works and cost regarding the new West Witney allotments, and that the cost can be met from the allotment earmarked reserve.

H11 CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 6 January 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Working Party be noted and the recommendations therein be approved.

H12 BOWLS GREEN - REQUEST FOR DISABLED RAMPS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, as the Bowls Clubs had requested ramps to make the greens DDA compliant.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that provision of disabled ramps at both West Witney and The Leys bowls greens be agreed at a cost of £1, 300.00 at The Leys from budget line 4046/202 and £750.00 at West Witney from budget line 4046/203.

H13 LEYS RECREATION GROUND - FOOTBALL PITCH ONE RENOVATION WORKS

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer concerning issues surrounding the use of The Leys, pitch 1 for both football and events.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the pitch one side of The Leys recreation ground becomes an events field;
3. that the cricket and junior football side of The Leys becomes a sport only area, with the only exceptions being the current Witney Carnival and caravan and vehicle parking for Witney Feast – no other events to be permitted;
4. that no events would be allowed on Witney Town Council's other sporting facilities;
5. that the Town Council consults with West Oxfordshire District Council and Wood Green School regarding the Town Council taking responsibility for Wood Green's field and the unhindered provision of the school changing rooms, and parking on Saturdays, Sundays and weekday evenings for sports teams;
6. that the Council writes to the District and County Councils requesting them not to put sports fields and changing rooms for community use in schools in future as it causes difficulties securing access;
7. that the Council writes to the County Council requesting separate changing rooms from the school if the pavilion should not be built;
8. that Officers investigate the possibility of portacabin changing rooms.

H14 WITNEY 5K HEALTH ROUTE

Members received and considered information on installing a 5k Health Route in Witney, as referred from the Policy Governance and Finance Committee (minute F478(f)) on 25 November 2019.

Whilst members applauded the initiative, there were practical concerns about maintenance of routes as well as the substantive cost. It was felt that this would be a very low priority project and that there may be digital ways in which something similar could work.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council does not proceed with the introduction of a 5k Health Route, but explores other options to come back in the future.

The meeting closed at: 8.02 pm

Chair