

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

Held on Monday, 1 July 2019

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	L Duncan	D Enright
	T Ashby	M Jones
	D Butterfield	L Ashbourne
	O Collins	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Officer
Others:	1 member of the public.	

H308 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllr R Bolger, Cllr J King and the Town Clerk.

H309 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

H310 MINUTES

Members received and considered the minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces committee meeting held on 3 June 2019.

a) **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 3 June 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:** H212 – Members heard that the situation regarding wording on a memorial had changed as the headstone was to be erected at Windrush and not Tower Hill Cemetery as previously thought. The Operations and Estates Officer advised the Council was a member of the Cemeteries Liaison Group and he would refer this issue to them for advice and a new policy may be required in order for similar issues to be dealt with in the future. Members agreed that there was now an opportune delay before a decision was needed in September.

RESOLVED: that the advice provided from the Cemeteries Liaison Group forms a decision and appropriate new policy which is delegated to the Chair and Operations and Estates Officer to determine

H311 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - THE MEETING WILL ADJOURN FOR THIS ITEM**

The Committee adjourned so that Mr T Powell could address the committee regarding the Corn Exchange Working Party.

H312 **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.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted

H313 **OPERATIONAL REPORT - PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer prior to the meeting. The Operations and Estates Officer confirmed that the sewer repairs included on the report were underground repairs at the Leys.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H314 **PUBLIC HALLS**

Members received and considered the report of the Public Halls Officer and Office Manager. There had been some successful large events but overall, the usage figures for the Corn Exchange were low and members were advised this had been a trend since its refurbishment in 2014. The Office Manager advised there were a number of issues that needed to be fully explored by the Corn Exchange Working Party.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that all items, including VAT and pricing are considered by the Corn Exchange Working Party.

H315 **CEMETERIES AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. A site visit had taken place at Tower Hill Cemetery with several committee members to address concerns raised at the previous meeting. A discussion took place concerning deterring wild animals from eating funeral flowers, grass cutting around headstones and on a raft of access and navigational issues at Tower Hill Cemetery. Members were asked to forward any access complaints to the Operations Office and were reminded that if the gates were locked during the week there would a funeral taking place.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;

2. that the Operations and Estates Officer provides the Friends of the Cemeteries Group with the name of wild animal deterrent spray in order for Cllr M Jones to pass onto florists and undertakers in Witney;

3. that the Town Council's Grounds Maintenance contractors continue to be responsible for unlocking the gates at Tower Hill cemetery at the weekend, and as a back-up plan for a trial period;

- a) that the bollard inside the gate is removed by Town Council staff on Friday afternoons and returned on Monday;
- b) that the code for the Tower Hill gate lock be offered to the Friends of the Cemeteries in order for them to gain access to the cemetery in the failure of the above.

H316 **SPORTS, RECREATION GROUNDS & PARKS**

a) Park Road Play Area

Members received a report from the Town Clerk updating the current legal situation with regards to ownership and agreed that it should be rigorously pursued in order to bring this play area back into use quickly.

b) Oxfordshire FA

The committee were in agreement that a larger vision on sports across the Council's estates and Witney was required to consider the expanding and shifting population of the town. It was agreed that a forum should be held in order to formulate this vision.

c) Witney Town Bowls

Members advised a successful meeting had taken place with the club on 27 June 2019 and the three main issues of; sewer across the Leys, grey water at from the Splash Park and the use of the sixth rink were discussed. The club had been supportive of the discussions and long term plans for the area.

d) Update from the Operations and Estates Officer

The committee received the report of the Operations and Estates Officer concerning the installation of a container at West Witney Sports ground for Parkrun, the West Witney Bowls Irrigation System, the request for an additional pitch for Witney Vikings, football storage and the preparation of cricket wickets.

Members heard that the number of football teams were expanding across Witney and many played at the same time – it would be beneficial from a grounds maintenance view if some could play during other times of the weekend.

RESOLVED:

1. that with regard to Park Road Play Area this issue be deferred to the next meeting along with the current budget in place and any previous consultation findings;

2. that the Town Council facilitates a Sports Forum with all sports teams before the end of 2019 to formulate a long term vision of sport provision in the town.
3. that the Town Council writes to Witney Town Bowls Club to request a strategy to reach out to the community, including schools, ICE centre for use of the sixth rink;
4. that the Council investigates the sewerage at the Leys alongside re-development of the Coffee Shed/Pavilion within the next two years; and that within this time, no football pitches or events are allowed to be in the vicinity of the sewers.
5. that the Town Council agrees to the request for an additional pitch by the Witney Vikings Football Club, subject to them being asked if they are able to re-arrange the schedule of games during the weekend;
6. that the Town Council contacts Witney Swifts Cricket Club to advise that they submit a proposal concerning ground covers and ask if they are able to apply for a grant from the England Cricket Board;
7. that a grant of £500 be agreed for Witney Mills Cricket Club towards the maintenance of the ground.

H317 **ALLOTMENTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer as circulated prior to the meeting. There was discussion on the future of skips being provided to allotment sites and on whether the Council would buy a shredder for the Allotment Association. Members felt that the Association should be composting at the sites and skips would contradict the work of the Council in terms of its commitments on climate change.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the request from Witney Allotment Association for a shredder be turned down;
3. that Witney Allotment Association are advised the Town Council will not be providing a further skip following the final scheduled one in 2019;
4. that following the Town Council declaration of a climate emergency, the Witney Allotment Association are advised they will need to write something into their constitution regarding environmental impact, and;
 - a) that the above forms part of the lease negotiations and that the WAA provide ways in which they will mitigate their carbon footprint.

The meeting closed at: 8.50 pm

Chair