

Stronger Communities

Advisory Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 7th June, 2021 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Stronger Communities Committee - O Collins, L Ashbourne, J Aitman, R Bolger, D Butterfield, H Eaglestone, V Gwatkin and A Prosser (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

Admission to Meetings

All Council meetings are open to the public and press unless otherwise stated.

As an Advisory Committee of the Council this meeting will take place virtually via Zoom. All decisions of this meeting will be recommendations to Full Council.

Zoom login details of this meeting will be published on the Council's website prior to the meeting.

Recording of Meetings

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Town Clerk or Democratic Services Officer know before the start of the meeting.

Agenda

1. **Apologies for absence**

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Deputy Town Clerk (adam.clapton@witney-tc.gov.uk) **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

Standing Order 30(a)(v) permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

3. **Election of Vice-Chair**

To elect a Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2021/2022 municipal year.

4. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 8)

- a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2021
- b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda. (Questions on the progress of any item).

5. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of **five minutes** each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 42. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

6. **Communications & Community Engagement Report** (Pages 9 - 12)

To receive the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

7. **Third Party Events Report** (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

8. **Christmas Lights Update** (Pages 17 - 18)

To receive the report of the Operations and Estates Advisor.

9. **Bus Shelters Update** (Pages 19 - 24)

To receive the report of the Project Officer.



Town Clerk

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 15 March 2021

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	H Eaglestone
	T Ashby	L Duncan (In place of L Ashbourne)
	D Enright	V Gwatkin
	D Butterfield	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	3 members of the public.	

SC127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr L Ashbourne advised she would be leaving the meeting early and was being substituted by Cllr L Duncan. Cllr D Enright would be joining the meeting later.

SC128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared by members at the meeting.

SC129 MINUTES

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Stronger Communities meeting held on 25 January 2021.

SC130 TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

SC131 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED IN THE SUBSEQUENT ITEMS

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 25 January 2021.

SC132 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

David Inman from the Rural/Market Group and Beth Sherlock from Witney Pride to address the committee on agenda items 5 and 12 respectively.

The Committee reconvened following public participation.

SC133 **WITNEY PRIDE**

The Committee received and considered requests from the Witney Pride Group concerning the international day of homophobia, transphobia on 17th May, as well as its planned event on 22nd May 2021.

Members were supportive of both causes and welcomed the opportunity to be able to promote the events individually as well as through the Town Council's social media platforms.

RESOLVED:

1. That Witney Town Council supports the Witney Pride event on 22nd May 2021 by promoting the event on its social media and by members sharing video messages or photos to help generate support and interest; and,
2. That Witney Town Council flies the Pride flag on the 22nd May instead of 1st June to coincide with the Witney Pride event; and,
3. That the Corn Exchange is lit up in LGBTQ colours to mark the international day against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia on 17th May 2021.

SC134 **RURAL/MARKET TOWN GROUP**

The Committee had heard from the representative of the Rural/Market Town Group under public participation and were encouraged to hear of its increasing membership and the benefits membership would bring.

As the free membership had been extended until September 2021 due to the pandemic, members were happy to defer the decision on becoming a paying member until later in the summer.

RESOLVED:

That the decision to become a paid member of the Rural/Market Group be deferred until September 2021.

SC135 **INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY PANEL**

The Committee received and considered a verbal update from the Chair who presented recommendations from the panel following a recent meeting.

Members heard that a 'Belonging in Witney' page would be beneficial on the website which could include a form where people could share their experiences and stories anonymously. These forms would be passed onto and looked at by the panel directly, with issues being fed back to the Council.

The creation of an affiliated Town Council Facebook page, to create a forum area to discuss ideas and information was agreed. This would be specifically in relation to the Inclusivity & Diversity Panel and some of its members would be moderators.

Finally, it was agreed the Town Council would promote 'Belonging to work' webinars, offered for free by panel members among its network of local organisations.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes the recommendations of the Inclusivity & Diversity Panel; and,

1. Creates a 'Belonging in Witney' page on the Town Council website - this will have a statement about the endeavour, and a webform for people to share their experiences and stories with the Town Council anonymously; and,
2. Creates a group linked to the Town Council's Facebook page to establish a forum that people can join to talk and share information/posts/ideas.
3. Promotes through its networks, free 'Belonging at work' Webinars for local businesses to ensure as many local organisations have the opportunity to take part.

SC136 OPERATIONS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor which provided updates on the Christmas Lights Tender, floral displays and hedge maintenance at Curbridge Road/Thorney Leys.

RESOLVED:

That the Operations Report and its contents be noted.

SC137 TREES - UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning Wychwood Project tree planting and required remedial work on trees at Pensclose and Cogges Hill Road.

Members heard that Wychwood Project had unfortunately not been able to complete their planting work so it would be finished in the next season. As such they had yet to draw down the budget of £500 awarded by the Council so this would be rolled over into the new financial year.

The Committee also discussed the remedial works suggested by the Landscape & Forestry Officer concerning trees T792 and T794. The Council's tree consultants had advised a pull test should be carried out at the cost of £1,926 to investigate their viability and safety. The results may provide time for replacements to be planted before their inevitable felling and it was unknown what impact Ash die-back might have on these trees in the meantime.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the suggested works to trees T792 and T794 be undertaken; and,
3. That replacement trees be planted this autumn in preparation for their future removal.

SC138 BIN REQUESTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer which concerned several new litter and dog bin requests across the town.

Members were sympathetic to the requests made by members of the public but were aware of the associated costs and the strain on the Council's budgets now and in the future. The collection of waste was being considered as part of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy so it was agreed these requests should be deferred until after its publication. The Committee was mindful that a policy would be required to ensure that any new bins were well situated and absolutely necessary in the area.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the requests for new litter and dog waste bins be deferred until after the publication of the Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy; and,
3. That a policy on the installation (and ongoing emptying) is created by Officers to inform residents and guide future requests.

SC139 COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer concerning upcoming events and initiatives.

Members welcomed community engagement regarding In Bloom planting at the flowerbed near to Langdale Hall and a town-wide Heritage Open Day event post Covid-19. There was also agreement on running the Council's Christmas competitions this year and commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as a Town Council in 2022.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the Town Council allows the Witney Horticultural Society to plant the flowerbed adjacent to Langdale Hall; and,
3. That the Town Council wishes to run a community engagement event for Heritage Open Day this year promoting local eateries, breweries and food producers; and,

4. That the Town Council should run the usual three Christmas competitions: Civic Christmas Card, Christmas Light and Mayor's Carol Service song sheet. The first two of these being run online and the latter being offered to residents in the town's residential and care homes; and,
5. That the Town Council establishes a task and finish group to organise the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022, membership being confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting.

SC140 WITNEY CARNIVAL

The Committee received and considered a request from the Witney Carnival Committee for a grant of £4000 towards the 2021 event.

Members were supportive of the event and recognised that the community would be looking forward to such events this summer. There was, however, still uncertainty on the Covid-19 pandemic roadmap to normality. The Town Council had lost income in the last year and would not want to exacerbate that by pledging additional funding if the event may get cancelled.

It was possible individual elements of the Carnival could be funded or the Town Council could procure them directly but a budget would first need to be located and it was not possible to make a decision at this meeting without knowing where the funding could be budgeted from.

RESOLVED:

1. That the grant request from the Witney Carnival Committee be noted; and,
2. That Witney Town Council supports the Carnival and refers this request to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee to see if a budget above the £1000 already committed can be found.

SC141 NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

The Committee received and considered a request from Guideposts for the Town Council to support National Autism Awareness month in April.

Members welcomed the initiative and agreed the Council should support the Awareness month in April.

RESOLVED:

That Witney Town Council supports National Autism Awareness month in April by sharing a purpose made video on its communication platforms, provided by Guideposts.

The meeting closed at: 7.04 pm

Chair

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STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: 7 June 2021

Title: Communications & Community Engagement Report

Contact Officer: Communications and Community Engagement Officer -Polly Inness

Background

To provide a brief update on Communications and Community Engagement

Current Situation

This report is intended to remind councillors of opportunities for community engagement coming up and ascertain what is going ahead in 2021, COVID-19 permitting.

In Bloom April - May

The In Bloom group has met and discussed various matters. Dedication banners for the Welch Way and Langdale Gate beds have been ordered. Vouchers have been issued to the community gardening groups. Wheelbarrows, compost and vouchers will be delivered to schools in the week following half term. An In Bloom web page will be added to the website as not all the gardeners have Facebook accounts but a web page is accessible to all.

Youth Council

Officers have continued to correspond with the Youth Council chairs throughout the last year. They have been asked to share Census information and the satisfaction survey with their peers and more recently asked how we might best facilitate a meeting for them, based on numbers attending. They are keen to meet as they will need to elect new officers. One of the chairs has been in touch to say that as some of them will be turning eighteen they will be stepping down. They have begun a recruitment drive within their schools to attract replacement members. This Chair has offered to carry on as a mentor for the new Youth Council, which is a great bonus as they have recently lost their independent mentor.

Heritage Open Day

The plan is to invite local hospitality and dining providers to take part with a map of those locations to be available throughout the Heritage Open Day dates. This fits well with the Witney Town Covid-19 Recovery workshop initiative that officers have been involved in

discussion with Emma Phillips of WODC and other stakeholders about. There may be some funding or other support that can be offered by WODC to this event.

Newsletter

The digital summer newsletter is now in production.

Belonging in Work webinars

As part of the Council's Inclusivity and Diversity and Belonging in Witney programme a series of Free Webinars, hosted by Helen May are currently being advertised on our social media pages.

Wild Witney

Recommendation P216 of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee held on 20th April 2021 was to promote Plantlife's 'No Mow May' Campaign this summer. As part of this recommendation, it was suggested that the Town Council further promotes wildflower planting by creating a 'Wild Witney' competition for Witney residents. This would be for households to leave an area in the garden for wildflower planting and would be run in the same way as the annual best -dressed house competition.

Children's Christmas Light Competition

The Council's Children's Christmas Light competition has been launched on Social Media and the website with a deadline of mid-July, to allow for the manufacture by the Lights contractor.

Resident's Annual Satisfaction Survey

A link to a report in Survey Monkey showing the data capture of the annual survey which took place in April and May will be made available to members before the meeting.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications other than those already budgeted for except for the suggested Wild Witney competition, where no budget has been set.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note this report and;

Consider if they would like to have the data of the annual residents' survey presented in a particular format for the next meeting, or recommend actions arising based on the information provided.

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STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: 7 June 2021

Title: Third Party Events Report

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer – Tomas Smith

Background

This purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the current situation regarding third party events being held in 2021. The first event is always scheduled in July and in correspondence and planning officers are working within the changing parameters of the Governments Pandemic guidance. All parties involved are happy for events to be different this year, with all the planners happy that there is even a possibility of having something to look forward to. These events range from community play days to the annual Remembrance Service.

Current Situation

Witney Carnival

Witney Carnival is being called Witney's Big Teddy Bear's Picnic 2021 which is being organised by the Rotary Club of Witney and partners. The carnival Chair, Mr R Spurs has applied to have it on the **10 July at the Leys between 12 Noon and 5pm**. Please see below the summary of the event provided by Mr Spurs:

Summary and Event Description

The Witney Carnival has been a regular event for over 25 years and traditionally takes place on the second Saturday in July. This year because of impact of Covid19 on Events the Carnival will be replaced by Witney's BIG Teddy Bear's Picnic, 2021. A much smaller Event than the annual Carnival and Procession.

The Event is organised by an organising Committee made up of members of the Witney Rotary Club, Witney Lions, Witney Air Training Corps and Witney Round Table. Any proceeds from the Event are divided between the 4 charitable organisations to provide charitable grants for local people and other charity work approved by the four organisations.

The Event itself is held on the Leys and consists of several varied activities that take place throughout the afternoon. Activities include: a small funfair charity stalls, stationary exhibits, and refreshment outlets serving food and drink. A stage will be in place where music entertainment will be provided. The principal purpose of the 2021 Event is to provide a family entertainment event where the public need not spend any money other than for refreshment. There is no charge for visitor entry.

Key Points:

- The Event outlined above will provide some much-needed relief for young families in and around Witney.

- By adopting this minimalist approach to delivering the Event the financial exposure to all the organising Clubs is limited.
- The support of the Town Council and the SAG are essential to enable the Event to happen.
- It is unlikely that the Event will make much profit if any.
- Unless there is a clear change in Covid19 restrictions to enable a degree of social mixing the Event will not take place.
- It is anticipated that no more than 1000 people will be attending the event at any one time.

The Council is currently still waiting for an updated Risk Assessment from the Carnival planning committee and for confirmation of some finer details which we require to allow the event to proceed.

OPA Play Day

The Council will be working with Oxford Play Association to hold a children's play day on Thursday 5th August on Oxlease at Cogges. The day will run from 11am until 3pm and we have received an up-to-date risk assessment and event plan, so officers are happy for the event to proceed. This should provide fun and games for families and children of all ages as well as providing free entertainment for children who may not have had much to look forward to due to lockdown(s).

Witney Feast

It is intended that Witney Feast will go ahead this year in September, Officers have an initial meeting scheduled with the organiser, Mr Wilson on July 1st. At this point officers will work to deliver a responsible and safe event for the people of Witney and the surrounding area which will work within the Council's and any Government restrictions, which may or may not still be in place at this time.

Remembrance Day

The Remembrance Day Service is being held on **Sunday 14th November 2021**. Officers have been in contact with the RBL representatives and its previously employed parade marshal who have helped run and organise the Remembrance service over the years.

Officers are in the process of contacting all groups who are usually present on the day to ascertain their individual needs and requirements for the service.

All other standard operating procedures usually associated with the Remembrance service are currently being reviewed and Witney Town Council Officers are currently working on the detail and requirements needed to ensure the day is run with the maximum dedication and efficiency.

Officers are looking into the necessity of having a Military Parade which needs to be run by a qualified parade marshal, or if it should be a more relaxed event in line with the RBL's vision for the service which would not require a parade marshal and instead would be more of a community/Town remembrance service for all.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Financial implications

There are no perceived financial implications at this point other than those already budgeted for.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note this report.

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STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 7th June 2021

Title: Christmas Lights Update

Contact Officer: Operations & Estates Advisor - John Hickman

Background

The Christmas Lights Contract for 2021-2023 was put out to tender on 31st March to 5 companies that provide this service.

Current Situation

3 Companies returned their tender documentation by the closing date of Wednesday 19th May 2021.

At a tender opening meeting on Monday 24th May attended by Councillors, Luci Ashbourne, Gwatkin, Aitman & Eaglestone, tenders were checked and scored with Lighting and Illumination Technology Experience Ltd (Lite) being selected to provide the display for the 2021-23 period with a possible 2 year extension to the contract.

Lite Ltd were informed of this decision on 26th May 2021 with a contract start date of 2nd June 2021. The Operations and Estates advisor and LITE Ltd are setting up a first contract meeting date during June 2021.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates. Operational timing devices are to be fitted on each power connection to control the operational hours of the lighting to reduce energy usage, also all lights are LED.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. Risk should be minimal as all relevant documentation has been provided including good references from other clients.

Financial implications

The financial cost of this display is within the suggested budget given by council for this display.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report:

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: 7 June 2021
Title: Bus Shelters
Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The Project Officer was tasked with procuring a vandal proof shelter for outside the Burwell shops.

There was originally a bus shelter in this position which was vandalised and removed by the Town Council several years ago. Since that time, several requests from residents have been made for a replacement to be added on this busy S1 town centre bus route.

Current Situation

The Deputy Town Clerk repeatedly tried to contact the Council's usual supplier, Commutaports, regarding an anti-vandal shelter last year with little success. The Project Officer followed up on this and unfortunately did not receive any reply either.

Attached to this report are three options for vandal proof shelters from different companies, with images. Option 3 is a new to market product that is in production and is about to be launched.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Members will note that option 3 includes a sedum roof. Sedum is a natural plant cover that encourage biodiversity, absorbs carbon, improves air quality and reduces noise pollution. This would be an excellent option in the light of the climate emergency.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The anti-vandal shelters should vastly reduce the risk of this shelter needing repair or replacement.

Financial implications

As stated in the appendix.

A resolution of the previous Council administration had agreed installation of this shelter from the Council's rolling capital. It should be noted that the hardstanding at this site will also need to be replaced by the Council's works team, prior to the shelter being installed.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider which option the Council would like to see installed at Burwell Shops.

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