

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

**Held on Monday, 24 January 2022**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman D Butterfield	V Gwatkin
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Simon Wright	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	One member of the public.	

As there was no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Stronger Communities Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 14 February 2022.

**SC28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashbourne, Eaglestone and Prosser.

**SC29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Collins declared a pecuniary interest in Item No. 11 – Finance & Budget Report by virtue of being an employee of West Oxfordshire Community Transport who received funding from the Town Council. Councillor Collins indicated he would leave the meeting if there was any discussion regarding that part of the budget.

**SC30 MINUTES**

Councillor Collins clarified that his declaration of interest made at the meeting was pecuniary due to being employed by West Oxfordshire Community Transport.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021, as amended, were adopted and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

Minute SC573 – Public Benches - The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the District Council had responded regarding the provision of public benches in the town. Bench Types were to be agreed and it was noted that the siting of a bench outside 53 High Street was not being pursued.

It was further reported that funding was still available from the Welcome Back Fund and it had been suggested that a large-scale chess set could be installed on Market Square. Members, whilst supporting the principle, considered that there could be issues with storage of the chess pieces as this was already a problem for the Town Council. It was suggested, and agreed, not to support the suggestion as made but that alternative options should be looked at.

SC574 – Open Spaces Infrastructure - The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that this was still being finalised by officers.

SC575 – Tower Hill Bus Stop – It was reported that a letter had been sent to Oxfordshire County Council confirming the Town Council position regarding a new bus stop.

SC31 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Mr. Jeff Hunter representing Courtside CIC who operate facilities at The Leys addressed the committee in respect of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

*The Committee reconvened following public participation.*

SC32 **PLATINUM JUBILEE WORKING PARTY**

The committee considered the minutes of the Platinum Jubilee Working Party held on 8 December 2021 and 18 January 2022.

Councillor Aitman, Chair of the Working Party, outlined discussion that had taken place and thanked Mr. Hunter for his offer to help the Town Council with the celebrations. Members concurred and it was agreed that Mr. Hunter be invited to a future meeting.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the minutes of the Platinum Jubilee Working Party be noted: and
2. That, Mr. Hunter be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Party

SC33 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

Members thanked officers for the recently published newsletter which had been very informative and well received. A quote had been sought for the next publication and the committee was being asked to approve the costs within the existing budget allocation.

**Recommended:**

That, the cost of the design, print and distribution of the newsletter be approved providing it was in the agreed budget.

SC34 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer was considered.

Members considered the content of the annual satisfaction survey and areas to focus on. It was agreed that the survey needed to have broad strategic aims, be within the remit of the Town Council and for it to be clear that not all ideas being put forward could be delivered. The Committee emphasised the need to promote the survey and there was a role for councillors in this regard. It was suggested an overview of Town Council services should be provided, including Youth Service Provision, Climate Emergency and Active Lifestyles and that residents be encouraged to comment on their top priorities from these.

In respect of the Newsletter covers it was considered that highlighting the recent reopening of the Park Play Area, previous play area improvements and future aims on these, as outlined in the new Open Spaces Strategy would be appropriate. In addition, it was suggested that promoting the Corn Exchange once works had been completed could be included.

The Committee looked at the previously constituted Youth Council and agreed that it would be a positive thing to reintroduce. Members noted that there were various operating models and that the links between the Youth Council and the Town council needed to be clear. It was agreed that officers be asked to look at the set-up, with the Youth Council mentors, and report back to the committee.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the satisfaction survey should focus on the wider strategic aims of the Council, and priorities on its services, with headings relating to Youth Provision, Climate Emergency and Active Lifestyles being included;
2. That, the reopening of Park Road Play Area and the aims of the Open Spaces Strategy together with the promotion of the Corn Exchange be used for the remaining space on the front and back covers of the newsletter; and
3. That, the refresh of the Youth Council be supported and officers be asked, in conjunction with the Youth Council Mentors, to look at the constitution and operating model and report back to the committee.

SC35 **DEFIBRILLATOR - LAKE & COUNTRY PARK**

The report of Operations & Estates Advisor was received.

Members thanked Mr. Taylor for his fundraising for the purchase of a defibrillator and cabinet at the Lake & Country Park. It was noted that Bouyges E&S Solutions UK Ltd had also undertaken installation work free of charge as part of its community spirit programme. The Committee expressed their gratitude to the company for this.

It was noted that the project had been delivered within the allocated budget.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the Town Council officially thanks Mr. Taylor and Bouyges Ltd for their work in providing a defibrillator and that the Mayor writes to both accordingly; and
2. That, both contributions are included in any publicity regarding the installation of the defibrillator.

SC36 **CYCLE RACKS AND BIN AT BURWELL BUS SHELTER**

The report of the Project Officer was considered.

The committee expressed their support for the installation of cycle racks and a bin at the Burwell bus shelter as it was considered that its proximity to the local shops and providing safe cycle parking for shop and bus users made it an ideal location.

The budgetary position was noted, together with the infrastructure requirements and discussion ensued regarding contractual arrangements for emptying the bin. It was agreed that WODC/Publica be requested to undertake the emptying.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the provision of cycle racks and a bin at the Burwell bus shelter be supported; and
2. That, WODC/Publica be requested to undertake the emptying of the bin.

SC37 **WORLD WAR 2 PILLBOX**

Consideration was given to the report of the Project Officer.

Members expressed their support for the installation of an information board and it was noted that the proposed cost was within budget and the plastic used was recycled. The committee agreed the proposed wording but it was requested that, if possible, some additional wording could be added regarding the bomb that was dropped on Church Green.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the provision of an information sign on Langel Common for the WW2 Pillbox be supported; and
2. That, the proposed wording be agreed and officers be requested to look at whether some additional information could be added.

SC38 **FINANCE/BUDGET REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Town Clerk seeking a review of budgets allocated to the committee in light of decisions taken by the Council when setting its precept.

Members noted the present position and it was suggested that the £10k currently allocated in the revenue budget for CCTV could be removed as there was also an allocation within earmarked reserves towards the capital cost of cameras at the Leys and Burwell. However as a mobile camera had been sourced by WODC/TVP it was considered that this earmarked funding was no longer required. The money could therefore be reallocated from the revenue budget accordingly.

**Recommended:**

That the Committee makes the recommendations to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee that the allocation of £10k in the revenue budget for CCTV be removed, and the expenditure met from the Earmarked Reserve set aside for CCTV equipment no longer required.

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The meeting closed at: 6.50 pm

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Chair