

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 1 July 2024

At 6.02 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor D Newcombe (Chair)

Councillors:	R Crouch	T Ashby
	J Aitman	R Smith
	S Simpson	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	One member of the public.	

PR361 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received retrospectively from Councillor O Collins.

PR362 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

PR363 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 13 May 2024 were received.

PR249 – Major Strategic Projects Update. In response to a Member, officers advised the bollard at West Witney Sports Ground had been repaired, and that they were still waiting to hear from Parkrun representatives regarding a meeting.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 13 May 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR364 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

The member of the public present did not participate in the meeting.

PR365 WITNEY SWIFTS CRICKET CLUB - SECURITY OF TENURE AT WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND

The Chair raised this agenda item in the meeting so the member of public present could listen to the discussion.

The Committee received a verbal update from the Leader of the Council concerning Witney Swifts Cricket Clubs request for an agreement on the use and maintenance of West Witney Sports Ground. This followed a meeting which had taken place with representatives from Swifts, Oxford Cricket Board and officers of the Council.

Members had previously been reluctant to offer exclusive use of the West Witney Ground which would restrict other users during the cricket season, but they were advised only two non-Witney teams had used the ground, which could still happen under any future agreement.

There was also recognition that the club needed a security of tenure for at least five years in order to grow and details on wicket and outfield maintenance would be covered in this to allay any further concerns Members had.

The Committee heard there were plans for juniors and women's cricket, and that The Leys wicket could and would be used in the future.

Officers advised that financially, income for the cricket pitches was minimal and operating figures provided by the Club were low so officers could enter negotiations to agree who does what and ensure some community use was retained.

Recommended:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, in principle, the Town Council agrees to allow Witney Swifts Cricket Club to hold a licence for the use of the Cricket Wicket and outfield at West Witney Sports Ground for the 2025 season and,
3. That, the details of the above licence be delegated to Officers and brought back before the Council's Policy, Governance & Finance Committee for approval.

The member of public left the meeting at 18.20pm

PR366 RESIDENTS SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was held at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

It was clear some of the comments were already being addressed in ongoing projects and, where possible, these should be highlighted in communications.

Officers advised further work was required by officers to assess the comments ready for the September meeting. Members asked that key points including play areas and inclusive play equipment were addressed at that time.

There was further discussion on how the Council communicates the benefits to biodiversity regarding grass areas which were left to grow.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a further report is prepared by officers analysing the results for the meeting of the Committee on 9 September 2024 and,
3. That, communications on items already addressed are issued and,
4. That, further consideration is given to communicating biodiverse benefits of wildflower planting and grass areas.

PR367 PROJECTS UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer, accompanied with verbal updates from the Head of Estates and Operations.

Members were provided with updates on the Leys Wheeled Sports Park, West Witney Sports & Social Club building, the Leys Courtside Hub, Raleigh Crescent new sports and social area, The Leys Splash Park, and The Leys Parking Restrictions.

The Committee were pleased that a bin had been installed in the Wheeled Sports Park and that the National Association of Local Councils were lobbying the Government over the reintroduction of the Community Ownership Fund after the General Election, which if awarded would go towards funding of the West Witney Sports Ground.

Members also welcomed an update on the Courtside Hubs project where the current state of the site had raised concerns with the public. The plans for the replacement Leys depot at West Witney had been finalised and would be registered by the Planning Authority shortly.

Community engagement was planned for a new sports area at Raleigh Crescent, both at the local cadet centre and the Witney Carnival; winter refurbishment of the Splash Park was also planned for the latter. Officers updated Members on this project and explained the difficulties encountered in getting the pads up and running this summer. Fortunately, after some unforeseen technical failures, it was now working from 12-6pm daily; extension to these timings would result in exceeding the water use budget for the year.

Finally, regarding Leys Parking Restrictions, the Committee were pleased the Council was able to apply for a Traffic Regulation Order and noted preference on timings had already been previously provided but further discussion should take place with Courtside Hubs on this issue.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, discussion takes place with Courtside Hubs regarding Leys Parking Restrictions.

The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

Chair