

## Parks & Recreation

### Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



**Monday, 13th January, 2025 at 6.00 pm**

To members of the Parks & Recreation Committee - D Newcombe, R Crouch, J Aitman, S Simpson, J Treloar, T Ashby, O Collins and R Smith (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** 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.

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committee Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) in advance.

#### **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 Deputy Town Clerk or Committee Clerk 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 Committee Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) **prior** to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

Standing Order 30(d)(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 of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 9)

a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee held on 4 November 2024;

b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on the progress on any item).

4. **Participation of the Public**

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. 5

5. **Finance Report**

To receive and consider the report of the R.F.O concerning the financial position of items under the remit of this Committee in 2024/25 and the upcoming 2025/26 period.

**(To Follow)**

**Parks**

6. **King George's Footpath Update** (Pages 10 - 11)

To receive and consider the report of the Head of Estates and Operations.

7. **Unterhaching Park Lighting** (Pages 12 - 13)

To receive the report of the Head of Estates & Operations.

**Recreation**

8. **The Leys Event Field Use** (Pages 14 - 15)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations Manager.

9. **Major Projects Update** (Pages 16 - 23)

To receive and consider the report of the Project Officer.

10. **Witney Swifts Cricket Club Agreement** (Pages 24 - 26)

To receive and consider the confidential report of the Head of Estates and Operations.



Town Clerk



# Agenda Item 3

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

Held on Monday, 4 November 2024

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

### Present:

Councillor D Newcombe (Chair)

Councillors:	R Crouch S Simpson T Ashby	R Smith D Enright (In place of J Aitman)
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie  Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Mark Lewis Nigel Warner	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Head of Estates & Operations Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	None	

### PR596 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Treloar and O Collins.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor J Aitman, Councillor D Enright attended as a substitute.

### PR597 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D Newcombe declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 as he was a member of Witney Rifle Club, based at West Witney Sports Ground Projectile Range.

Councillor R Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 as her children used the King George V field as their route to school.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

### PR598 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 9 September 2024 were received.

PR482 – The Committee Clerk advised Members that the organisations that use West Witney Sports Grounds had been written to in order to ascertain if they wished to take on the

responsibility of the Portaloos by way of a management agreement; clubs had until 15 November to respond. Should no interest be shown, the facilities would be removed.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 9 September 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

PR599 **PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC**

There was no public participation.

*(Cllr S Simpson joined the meeting at 6:05pm)*

PR600 **FINANCE REPORT: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 AND DRAFT BASE REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2025/26**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) concerning the base revenue budget, draft estimates on budget parameters for 2024-25 and a revenue budget summary.

For the benefit of Members, the RFO outlined the contents of the report and explained the reasoning behind the movement of some of the budget lines to better reflect expenditure following the works depot move. This was reflected in the notes attached to the budget forecast showing where funds had been vired.

The Committee heard that the RFO, when calculating cost of living increases was using a 2% projection due to the falling inflation rate over the past year. Members were also advised that the costs of Ground Maintenance had increased by a greater rate and therefore larger increases to some of the related budgets would be needed for 2025/26.

The Committee heard that following the transfer of Unterhaching Park from West Oxfordshire District Council it had come to light that the electricity costs would need to be met by the Town Council. Members considered if this cost should be taken from the commuted lump sum received from WODC. Members unanimously agreed that a decision be taken nearer the end of the financial year end to potentially allow the commuted lump sum to remain and the cost be met from existing budgets.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the cost of lighting at Unterhaching Park be reviewed at the end of the 2024/25 accounting period and,
3. That, the draft revised base revenue budget for 2024/25 and the estimated base revenue budgets for 2025/26, as detailed be approved.

PR601 **REVENUE GROWTH ITEMS, SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS, AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO concerning the financial standing of the Council's current and future projects.

Members were advised of the funding streams and budgets in place for the revised capital and special revenue projects for 2023-26 and what was needed in order to bring about their completion.

Items proposed as capital and special revenue projects for 2024/25 and beyond included funding for the Councils programme of large projects and accrual of parcels of land to its portfolio, although these would add additional strain on its finances. Members were pleased to hear of the progress of these facilities being transferred over to the Council's ownership.

Members noted that the costs indicated in the report regarding the transfer of sports pitches at Windrush Place, Raleigh Crescent and Deer Park were only reflective of the ground maintenance of the grassed surfaces and that due to the overall land area, estimated at approx. 55,000 square metres, then the costs would increase when additional staffing and machinery were taken into account.

Members heard further from the Head of Estates & Operations (HoE&O) regarding the advances on the Splashpark specification and tender process which was still on target for delivery in May 2025. In response to a Member's question, the Town Clerk/CEO confirmed that money would continue to be placed in a sinking fund for both the Splashpark and for the newly developed Wheeled Sports Park to ensure the facilities are futureproofed.

The Committee was disappointed to hear of the lack of progress from Oxfordshire County Council in their response to the Leys parking restrictions and Traffic Regulations Order which had slowed however, the HoE&O assured Members that Officers continue to push for a response.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the revenue growth items for 2025/26 and revised capital and special revenue project budget for 2023-26 be approved.

PR602 **SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26**

The Committee received and considered the proposed recreational charges for 2025-26 as part of the budget setting process.

The RFO explained that there was a modest increase of 2% to each of the charges, Officers would further review the charges and remove those which no longer were relevant such as the hire of bowls woods and sports equipment hire.

Members recognised that the increase was small however, asked that Officers prepare a breakdown analysis of the services provided so that the Committee may see the level of financial subsidy that the Council provide to sporting activities, for example the cost of providing a football pitch each week. The Town Clerk advised that this exercise had been carried out in part previously and therefore full details could be included in the explanation of the precept amount when it was issued in 2025.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the proposed fees and charges for 2025-26 as presented, be agreed and,
2. That, Officers prepare a breakdown of subsidies for the services provided

*(The RFO left the meeting at 6:38pm)*

**PR603 PLAY AREAS REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Projects Officer which provided an update on the Council's play areas.

Members were pleased to hear of the review being carried out and that there were plans for the installation of inclusive play equipment as items were replaced across the Town. Members asked to see the review once completed.

Following on from the discussion on Unterhaching Park, the Committee were advised there was a question over who was responsible for the lighting at Waterford Lane, which would be explored further by officers before the transfer.

A Member asked that now the transfer was complete that a picnic bench be considered for inclusion at Raleigh Crescent play park.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Play Area Review be presented to a future meeting of this Committee and,
3. That, Officers consider the inclusion of a picnic bench at Raleigh Crescent play park.

**PR604 SPORTS/FOOTBALL PITCHES UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager which was accompanied by a report on the Council's grass sports pitches by STRI (formerly the Sports Turf Research Institute).

Members welcomed the positive comments within the report with outlined the continued improvement in the Council's sports pitches and praised the impact the Council's in-house ground's maintenance regime. Members expressed their thanks to the Operations Manager and his team.

The Committee also received a verbal update from the Head of Estates & Operations on the potential use of the Deer Park & Raleigh Crescent sports pitches. The transfer of these areas from WODC was progressing however, these pitches would only be suitable for use as training pitches due to the lack of onsite facilities.

At a point later in the meeting a Member raised that one of the improvements in the report outlined that the area currently used for events at The Leys was once again in a condition where it could be considered for hosting sports activity; though it was understood by the Committee that owing to the yearly events schedule this would not automatically mean the area could be used uninterrupted, Members asked that Officers carry out a feasibility review for presentation at the next meeting.

The Committee asked that the report findings were communicated in the most appropriate way with all of the sports users that benefit from the use of the Council's facilities.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the continued improvement in the Council's grass sports pitches be welcomed and,
3. That, officers evaluate the possibility of sports use on the Leys events field and report back to the next meeting and,
4. That, communications on the finding of the STRI report are issued via the appropriate channels.

**PR605 CRICKET AT THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk/CEO which provided details following a meeting with Swifts Cricket Club and the Oxfordshire Cricket Board (ECB).

Members heard of a proposal to establish an artificial wicket in place of the current grass surface. Members heard that this could lead to a return of cricket to the Leys with potential use by Henry Box School as well as youth or woman's cricket.

The Committee were unanimous in agreement that Officers should continue with discussions with the ECB, Henry Box School and any other involved parties.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers continue with discussions for the establishment of an artificial wicket at The Leys.

**PR606 PROPOSED KING GEORGE V FIELD FOOTPATH**

The Committee received correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council's Place, Planning and Co-ordination Team detailing their request to establish a pathway across town council owned land at the King George V field, funded by the use of Section 106 Contributions from the development at Wood Green School.

Members were pleased to hear of the proposal for a shared path to facilitate access across King George V Field, principally for the benefit of Wood Green School's pupils accessing the side gate of the school via Pens Close. Members asked that OCC progress the idea and provide options for delivery to the Town Council for further consideration.

A Member also provided an update on two another schemes that OCC were progressing; the establishment of a shared pathway from Oxford Hill to Woodbank and a pathway between the Windrush Estate and Deer Park Road. The Member advised that those schemes had reached the tender stage with an expectation for delivery of both in May 2025.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the correspondence and the update on the other paths for the benefit of residents be noted.
2. That, Officer progress with discussions with OCC for a shared pathway at King George V Field.



PR607 **MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer providing an update on the various major projects that the Council was currently engaged with.

Members also heard that following the success of the Street Art Event at the Wheeled Sports Park that Officers were looking to host a similar event in Spring 2025.

The Committee was disappointed to hear from Courtside CIC of fresh delays to the redevelopment of The Leys. The Head of Estate & Operations advised that Officers were working very closely with the Courtside Team to monitor progress. Members were hopeful that with a new proposed start date of 18 November that completion would be ahead of Autumn 2025 as had been indicated by Courtside.

Members were also pleased to hear of the progress of the Raleigh Crescent Sports & Social Park and looked forward to receiving further updates as it was expected this project would be the next to be delivered.

The Committee, in response to their request made at the meeting of this Committee on 9 July 2024 received details of the Councils financial arrangements with Witney Mills Bowls Club.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the major project update report be noted and,
2. That, the Community Hub update provide by Courtside CIC be noted and,
3. That, the summary of Witney Mills Bowls Club financial agreements be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 7.24 pm

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Chair

## PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE



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**Agenda Item:** King George V Footpath  
**Meeting Date:** 13 January 2025  
**Contact Officer:** Head of Estates and Operations

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The purpose of this report is to provide detail of an opportunity for a footpath to be installed at King George V Field.

### Background

Oxfordshire County Council are in the early stages of working with Witney Town Council to scope the spec for a new path across King George V Field which is a town council recreation space. The path is for Wood Green School pupils who currently cut across the field from Kingsfield Crescent to Pens Close to access the side gate of the school. There is a live planning application to increase the size of the school, so an opportunity to collect some S106, and a specification and cost estimate is required for the path in order to collect an adequate amount of S106.

### Current Situation

Witney Town Council Officers have been working with the Highways team at OCC and have approved a specification for the proposed footpath and estimated costs.

The proposal is for OCC to secure S106 funds for the total costs associated with the installation of the path and for WTC to be responsible for all future repair and maintenance. OCC are currently working to establish the roles and responsibility for delivery that will satisfy the S106 agreement. Lighting along the footpath is also being researched, more detail will follow as the scheme progresses.

At this early-stage Officers are seeking approval to continue to pursue this opportunity.

Location Plan: King George V Field,  
Newland, Witney, OX28 3JN

3m wide footpath to take the most  
direct route around existing MUGA.



## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – To ensure equality in footpaths for school children involves creating safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for all children, regardless of their background and abilities taking into account;
  - Accessibility for all designed with ramps or low curbs at intersections to make them accessible for children with disabilities, those in wheelchairs, or using strollers.
  - Wide Paths to accommodate children walking in groups, as well as those with mobility aids or bicycles.
  - Clear Signage should be visible and understandable for children, including children with visual or cognitive disabilities. The use of visual cues can help younger children understand where to walk.
- b) Biodiversity – Designated footpaths help contain human activity to specific areas, minimizing the potential for habitat destruction in other parts of the landscape.
- c) Crime & Disorder - Footpaths should be well-lit to ensure children can walk safely during the early morning or late afternoon hours.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - Footpaths provide safe spaces for pedestrians, encouraging walking over driving. This helps reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to cleaner air and a reduction in the overall carbon footprint.

## **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.

There are no identifiable risks at this initial stage to WTC.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Footpaths help to encourage Social Interaction allowing people of all ages and abilities to move through communities, whether to meet friends, run errands, or participate in social events.

## **Financial implications**

- No WTC expense identified at this stage

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and

1. Approval for Officers to continue to pursue this opportunity.

## PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE



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**Agenda Item:** Unterhaching Park Lighting  
**Meeting Date:** 13 January 2025  
**Contact Officer:** Head of Estates and Operations

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the electricity costs for the lighting at Unterhaching Park.

### Background

The Unterhaching Park was transferred by West Oxfordshire District Council to Witney Town Council on 18 December 2023 and the transfer included nine street style lamps. Officers were asked to report on the energy costs when sufficient data was available.

### Current Situation

WTC now have a twelve months of electricity consumption data for the lighting at Unterhaching Park which through the current energy supplier 'DRAX' equates to £2,250.

In view of other play areas and green spaces that are in the pipeline for transfer from WODC to WTC any lighting in these locations must be carefully considered. WTC have always had extensive discussions before accepting responsibility for the lighting due to the repair, maintenance and electricity costs.

A commuted sum of £30,000 was included in the transfer and Officers will look at the viability and benefits of replacing the lights with the latest LED equivalent.

### Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

a) Equality - Thoughtfully designed park lighting ensures that everyone, regardless of background, ability, or socio-economic status, can safely enjoy parks at night.

b) Biodiversity – Consideration must be given to how artificial lighting in parks can disturb the natural activities of various species, particularly nocturnal animals like bats, insects, amphibians, and certain bird species. These animals often rely on darkness for feeding, mating, and navigation.

c) Crime & Disorder - Well-lit parks are less prone to criminal activities. Proper lighting in public spaces, like parks, can discourage crime, particularly violent offenses, theft, and anti-social behaviours.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency - Lighting is an essential part of urban design that influences safety, aesthetics, functionality, and environmental sustainability. Proper lighting enhances the attractiveness of outdoor spaces, promotes security, and supports energy efficiency.

## **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.

No risks identified at this time.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

The social value of lighting in Unterhaching park extends beyond just improving visibility. It plays a critical role in shaping public spaces and fostering positive community experiences.

## **Financial implications**

- N/A at this stage

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report as an update.

## PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



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**Agenda Item:** Leys Event Field Use  
**Meeting Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
**Contact Officer:** Operations Manager

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### Background

The east side of the Leys recreation ground known as the events field, ceased being used for football in 2020. The impact of having a full football season being played on the field along with a busy events schedule meant that the compaction of the field built up to an unsafe level. This unsafe level was similar to playing football on concrete, so the council made the decision at the Halls and Green Spaces Committee meeting on 13 January 2020 (H13 Refers) to exclusively use the field for events.

### Current Situation

Witney Town Council's sports pitches including cricket and bowls are inspected annually by the STRI group. These inspections recommend actions to officers to ensure pitches don't deteriorate and remain safe for play. STRI found in 2020 that the east side of the Leys was too compacted for play however their recommended actions could never be actioned because it would have involved reducing the events schedule.

The inspections by STRI in August 2024 found that the compaction levels of the events field have reduced considerably. The surface firmness has fallen to 185 gravities a reading which makes the field safe for sports to be played. The compaction has managed to elevate naturally through non-mechanical means by the cancellation of football plus events not taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The events field can accommodate an 11 a side pitch, these are oversubscribed across Witney Town Council grounds. To enable this to happen new goalposts would have to be purchased and sockets installed. Once completed the field could accommodate football for an entire season however, this would ultimately recompact the field. It wouldn't then be known if the field would be playable for the following season until the assessment by STRI in August of that year.

This does present an issue where no guarantees can be made to football clubs that football would be able to be played on the events field the following season. However, with goal sockets in place, the field would be able to have football be played. Officers would then have to manage the field each season in line with the weather and the events schedule. This may be more effective than in the years prior to 2020 as the council have since bought the ground maintenance in-house offering officers more flexibility to renovate in a staged approach.

There is limited time left in the 2024-25 season, should Members agree to commit to returning football to the Leys events field officers would be looking at making an 11 a side available in the 2025-26 season. This is because of the lead time and installation of goal posts plus providing notice to the teams to make bookings. The field could be used for junior football but the demand for the 2024-25 season isn't present plus this could lead to large growth within the clubs which would then present an

issue if the field was then unplayable the following seasons. But for an 11 a side football, the Leys is a good option for clubs that need alternative sites for waterlogged pitches at West Witney and King George V.

## **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 primary risk with reintroducing 11 a side football at the Leys is it not being a permanent facility. Clubs will need to understand that this pitch could only act as a temporary site, so they don't take its reintroduction as a chance to expand their teams. Witney Town Council would have to ensure it communicates this effectively with clubs.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

The council should be seen as doing all it can in supporting grass roots football and in making the leys playable through an ad hoc method it is best utilising its facilities for this purpose.

## **Financial implications**

- If required, the materials required to renovate the 11 a side on the events field can be siphoned from the materials used for the Ley's recreation ground, so no additional expenditure would be required.
- The cost for a set of 24 ft x 8ft socket aluminium goals posts is £1,500.00 ex VAT, the sports equipment budget for 2025-26 would cover this: 4046/202 at £2,000.00

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Determine if the reintroduction of 11 a side football on the events field of the Leys Recreation Ground is to resume.

## PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



**Agenda Item:** Major Projects Update

**Meeting Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Contact Officer:** Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major projects that are currently in flight.

### Background

As you are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5x themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major projects linked to Parks and Recreation, which are: 'Courtside Hub at the Leys (inc. Parking Restrictions)', 'Raleigh Crescent Sports & Social Area', 'Splashpad Renovation' and 'Portaloos at West Witney Sports Field'

### Courtside Hub at the Leys



### Current Situation

- Heavy machinery has arrived a significant grounds work has commenced
- Noticeable improvement in communication and project governance
- Provisional project completion date has changed to early Summer 2025



- Chasing response from OCC to accept enforcement responsibilities, which will enable Witney Town Council to commence TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) process. Proposed restrictions are:
  - Free Parking
  - Monday to Sunday 8am to 6pm
  - 4 hours – No return for 2 hours

## **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – n/a
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to achieve over 100% improvement in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – contractor is now on site, which ensure site security and reduces risk of trespassing, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally materials which will also improve thermal efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

## **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.

- Due to delays the council have experienced during pre-construction phase, a reputational risk with the community still exists and remains on our risk log. This is being managed through regular reporting and collaboration with Courtside and contractor
- Officers intend to phase the council's £250,000 contribution to Courtside at set milestones that are weighted towards the end of the project, to minimise the risk of any financial loss.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- Courtside philosophy is to serve the community, providing a social and welcoming space for Witney's residents and visitors
- Increased variety of sports will encourage Witney's residents to exercise and feel the physical and social benefits
- The completion of the Courtside Hub, coupled with new skatepark, mini-golf, splashpad and excellent play area, establishes the Leys as a destination park for the area.

## Financial implications

- Witney Town Council's contribution of £250,000 will be segmented and phased in accordance with project milestones and acceptable level of risk.
- Work is underway to renegotiate the lease between the council and Courtside

## Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

## Raleigh Crescent Sports and Social Park



## Current Situation

- After successful consultation, officers have clarity on what the community want from the park
- Witney Town Council are working in partnership with District Council to procure this project due to constraints surrounding S106 monies. Procurement process has been clarified.
- Procurement tender has been written and issued to WODC for review and distribution through their procurement channels.

## Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – inclusivity and accessibility to everyone are important design features of this park, which are highlighted in tender and subsequent evaluation process.
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to deliver above the minimal uplift in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – location is an area subjected to occasional anti-social behaviour, which was raised at consultation events. We have asked for this issue to be addressed within the design through lighting and seating innovations.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials and lighting will be energy efficient.

## **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.

- Differences in Town Council and District Council protocol, processes and cultures could present challenges when transferring ownership to Witney Town Council. We are managing risk by learning from previous experience with Play Park and effective comms through robust procurement process and project management.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- A key objective of the park is to encourage exercise through fun activities, which attracts users from every segment of the community to encourage social, generational, cultural and physical integration.
- Another key objective is making a safe and fun area for girls to socialise and participate in sporting activities.
- The park will address a growing concern of anti-social behaviour in the existing park, due to its covered seating areas, which are poorly lit.

## **Financial implications**

- The project budget is reliant on S106 monies from District Council, which means the town council must work in partnership to deliver project. Robust processes need to be in place to ensure smooth transfer of ownership is achieved.

## **Recommendations**

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

## **Splashpad at the Leys Play Area**



### **Current Situation**

- As detailed in previous Committee Meeting minutes (Mar 2024), the Splash Park renovation project was agreed with a budget of £172,500 from earmarked reserve and a planned completion for 2025 summer season.
- After a successful period of operation between Spring and Summer of 2024, officers have identified several improvements to enhance the Splashpad and make more reliable.
- Community consultations held in Summer 2024 have provided officers with a clear view of what improvements the users would like to see.
- The Splash Park currently connects to the Courtside drainage system, which means the effective drainage of the Splash Park is dependent on Courtside correct managing and maintaining their drainage and pump systems. With the anticipated increase of foul and grey wastewater exiting the facility, this could create a strain on the system and risk back flowing to the Splash Park. Officers have formally raised this risk with Courtside and exploring alternative drainage options to make the Splash Park drainage systems independent.
- Splash Park contractor have been engaged to gauge interest and Tender document for the Splash Park renovation has been started.

### **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – WTC aim to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to safe, inclusive, and engaging play environments with good accessibility, diverse equipment, safe spaces that are welcoming and enjoyable for everyone, helping to break down barriers and promote social equality from a young age.
- b) Biodiversity – Integrating biodiversity into playground design not only enriches the play experience but also fosters a deeper connection between children and the natural world.

WTC aim to incorporate natural elements like trees, shrubs, and wildflower meadows, which help support local wildlife and create more engaging environments for children.

- c) Crime & Disorder – consideration is given to equipment that can withstand vandalism and reduce risk of anti-social behaviour. Efforts will be made revitalise spaces leading to improved community relations and a reduction in crime and disorder, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – consideration is given to ensuring equipment is manufactured from sustainable and recycled materials for equipment and surfaces. This reduces the carbon footprint and promotes eco-friendly practices.

## **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 Splash Park has been at the receiving end of some poor feedback from the community, which has prompted this project. This highlights a reputational risk that officers will carefully manage with effective communication and delivering the valued project improvements in time for the warmer weather.
- The cost of eliminating the risk of drainage issues by making the Splash Park drainage system independent is unknown and could consume a significant proportion of the earmarked budget and reduce the planned improvements the council would like to make. Making the Splash Pad separate would benefit the Courtside Hub and mitigate their risks associated with drainage capacity. Therefore, the council will engage with Courtside when costs are known to negotiate funding/contribution.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- A key objective of the play areas review is to identify parks that can be improved to encourage exercise through fun activities to attract users from every segment of the community which encourages social, generational, cultural and physical integration.

## **Financial implications**

- We have an earmarked reserve budget of £172,500

## **Recommendations**

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

## Portaloo at West Witney Sports & Social Club



### **Current Situation**

- Council agreed that Portaloo should be removed at previous committee meeting, due to management and hygiene issues.
- Portaloo hasn't been removed due to issues finding a company to dispose of. Therefore, they remain unlocked and open for members of public to use.
- Officers have consulted the clubs who use the sports field and all have confirmed the loo is useful and it to stay, but haven't volunteered taking on cleaning and management.
- An alternative solution to using the Portaloo is landlord will open the Social Club when the club requires it to, at an agreed price.
- Portaloo is planned for removal when the Club renovation project is complete, early 2026. Officers are exploring digital/intelligent access systems for the new facility to enable clubs to access the toilets when the social club is closed.
- Officers explored the rental of social clubs disabled outside toilet but the risks were too high of affecting their DDA compliance, therefore this idea was abandoned.

### **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – n/a
- b) Biodiversity – n/a
- c) Crime & Disorder – n/a
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – n/a

### **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.

- There is a risk of reputational damage as the Portaloo has been the subject to one complaint. The complainant has escalated to local MP.
- In its current state the Portaloo does raise a hygiene risk as it is not managed or cleaned by any organisation and continues to be open to the public.
- If the Portaloo is closed, it will encourage users of the sports field to respond to the “call of nature” publicly, which isn’t acceptable.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- n/a

## **Financial implications**

- No financial implications

## **Recommendations**

1. That the report be noted.
2. The Portaloo to remain in place until the building has been renovated, but is locked and every club has a key/code that their members can use
3. The clubs are given a key/code and instructions of use and expectations that the clubs will collaborate to keep the toilet in an acceptable level of cleanliness.

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