

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

Held on Monday, 9 January 2023

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

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman L Ashbourne T Ashby	L Duncan D Enright
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

PR13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

PR14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers. Cllr Gwatkin advised her spouse was involved with Junior Parkrun, but this was separate to the adult organisation being discussed under agenda item 9.

PR15 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 31 October 2022 were received.

The Town Clerk updated members that she was meeting with West Oxfordshire District Council regarding outstanding legal matters including the transfer of ownership of playparks.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 31 October 2022 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

Councillor D Enright arrived at 6.06pm during Public Participation

PR16 **PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from Witney Park Run concerning Agenda Item 9

The Committee reconvened.

PR17 **WITNEY PARKRUN - LICENCE RENEWAL**

The Committee was unanimous in approval of extending the licence for Witney Parkrun to continue carrying out their event at West Witney Sports Ground.

Resolved:

That, Witney Parkrun be granted a 4-year extension to run until March 2027, including Christmas and New Year events.

PR18 **THE LEYS TRAFFIC CALMING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

The Committee were disappointed not be able to view details of the County Council consultation responses regarding this proposed scheme. Only 22 responses were received but it was not possible to see if these were local residents or to validate the impact the changes would have on these respondents.

Members thought this low number of responses was not reflective of the thoughts of the residents of Witney and questioned why the nearest residents had not shown support when their former comments had led to this proposal. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the consultation was promoted via social media by both Oxfordshire County Council and Witney Town Council and support had been provided by the above residents unofficially when the plans had been produced.

Members believed the scheme would add road safety around the open space the Leys offers, however one member's opinion was that the use of speed cushions rather than speed bumps would not be sufficient to slow vehicles as they would simply "straddle" them.

The Committee requested that officers ask for a delay in the final decision being made by OCC in order to allow the Town Council to ask residents local to The Leys to provide their opinions.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers contact OCC to ask if the decision can be delayed and,
3. That, Officers explore options to further consult residents of Leys Villas.

PR19 LEYS PLAY AREA SURFACING

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager regarding the playground entrance as well as a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding recent comments received from RoSPA following an inspection.

Members agreed with the report and asked that the Operations Manager proceed with grounds renovation works in early spring.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that following a recent inspection from RoSPA, a second entrance should be considered, to provide a secondary exit point for any park user to use e.g., following intimidation. This second exit would also be useful in future, for example if further access works are required.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Council proceeds to complete ground renovation works in early Spring, closing the main entrance of the Leys with both triple swing sets. A temporary entrance would be created for this period and,
3. That, officers explore making the temporary entrance into a second permanent entrance.

PR20 SMOKE FREE OXFORDSHIRE BY 2025 – SMOKE FREE PARKS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

Members believed that the installation of signage would support park users that wish to encourage others not to smoke in the play areas. They also asked that any signage be extended to include Vapes as well as conventional smoking.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, an application be made to the Smokefree Community Fund for assistance in the cost of signage.

PR21 WODC PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

The Committee received a verbal update from the Town Clerk along with a copy of the West Oxfordshire Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan Report for consideration.

Members heard that West Oxfordshire District Council had recently appointed an individual to implement the strategy. The Town Clerk confirmed that she would be meeting with this person soon.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the council would be writing soon to all sports clubs to provide an update on the recreation grounds, including details on the pitch

renovations which have been carried out at The Leys, along with provisional plans for the rest of the current and closed season.

A Member added that she had received positive feedback on the councils' communications during the period of renovation at The Leys, this was further supported by the thanks received by the Operations Manager from Witney Vikings football team.

Resolved:

That, Playing Pitch Strategy, with action plan and verbal update be noted.

PR22 **FINANCE/BUDGET REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the financial report provided by the Town Clerk.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

PR23 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

PR24 **PROPERTY & LEGAL MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk along with a verbal update.

Members were disappointed to hear that the painting contractor for West Witney tennis courts could not return until spring to resolve issues with the Court re-coating and understood officers had done all they could at this point on this matter.

Members discussed the County Council's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and an application under the Wildlife & Countryside Act pertaining to land adjacent to Lakeside Allotments.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the update on West Witney Tennis Courts re-coating be noted and,
3. That, an objection is submitted regarding the LCWIP to use of land adjacent to Lakeside Allotments as a cycling and walking route and,

4. That, the Council objects to the application under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

PR25 **MAJOR/STRATEGIC PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received the confidential written report and verbal update from the Town Clerk.

Members asked if the council would consider using some of the £75,000 being held for improvements at Burwell Hall towards the cost of the installation of lockers and a refurbishment of the current changing rooms.

Members heard from the Town Clerk that should The Leys masterplan project proceed then a loan would be required to cover the £250,000 pledged in principle.

The Town Clerk also advised she was awaiting to hear further in respect of the development plans for West Witney Sports & Social Club. She was due to meet with representatives soon.

Resolved:

That, the report, and verbal updated be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

Chair