

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 6 March 2023

Title: West Witney - Bowls Green Irrigation System

Contact Officer: Operations Manager - Angus Whitburn

Background

Both Bowls green in Witney operate with associated clubs that manage the buildings and irrigation systems. The maintenance of the bowls greens itself is managed by the Town Council, historically by its contractors and now by its in-house works teams.

The maintenance of the green has to work simultaneously with the good management of an irrigation system. When this doesn't happen it often results in repeated work or a damaged sward of grass.

In 2022 the Operations & Estates Advisor recommended to the council that Witney Town Council takes over the responsibility of commissioning and servicing both site's irrigation systems. This would have meant relocating the control boxes for the Leys bowls green, so it was accessible by staff. West Witney irrigation control is already externally mounted. At the time council rejected this recommendation.

Current Situation

West Witney Bowls teams have again made the request that Witney Town Council takes over the commissioning and servicing of the irrigation systems. This would be the servicing and season's maintenance through an external contractor only; any improvements or re-engineering work to the system wouldn't be involved.

Witney Town bowls who play at the Leys bowls green have agreed to continue to run the system in-house, they have a member who is trained to service the system and make the required adjustments. They have also confirmed that they don't perceive a problem in reacting quickly to required adjustments from the council's maintenance teams.

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.

A detailed well-scheduled series of works has to go into the maintenance of a bowls green. When those carrying out the work don't have the co-operation of the irrigation system this series of work goes to waste, and it takes considerable time to plan and carry out a new schedule of work.

Financial implications

Described here or as stated in the report above.

- Cost to commission and decommission west witney bowls green: £300.00 excluding VAT
- Cost of ongoing system maintenance: £100.00 per visit, recommend 3 visits a season.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Consider Witney Town Council taking over the commissioning, decommissioning, and servicing of West Witney bowls green irrigation system.