

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

Held on Monday, 4 September 2023

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

Present:

Councillor D Newcombe (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	D Edwards-Hughes
	T Ashby	R Smith
	R Crouch	S Simpson
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	3 members of the public.	

PR446 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Collins.

PR447 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

PR448 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 3 July were received.

PR365 – Members were advised correspondence had been sent to the District Council. Further actions were with the Operations Manager.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 3 July be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR449 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representation from a member of Witney Road Runners concerning Agenda Item 9.

The Committee reconvened.

18:06pm – Cllr Simpson arrived during Public Participation

PR450 **WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND STORAGE REQUEST - WITNEY ROAD RUNNERS**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the members of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager following a request from Witney Road Runners (WRR) for a storage container at West Witney Sports Ground.

Members were concerned about any impact the siting of the container would have on any potential plan to relocate the council's depot to West Witney. The Head of Estates and Operations reassured members a suitable site would be sought so as not to have any negative impact.

A proposal was made by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Crouch that the council allow a 20-foot length, green coloured container to be permitted with all costs being met by Witney Road Runners. A vote was taken, and all Members were in agreement.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the request by Witney Road Runners for the siting of a storage container at West Witney Sports Ground be agreed and,
3. That, the Operations Manager liaises with Witney Road Runners to arrange the installation.

18:14pm - Members of the Public left along with Councillor Ashby

PR451 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) which summarised the budgets under its remit, along with associated costs centres and codes.

The Deputy Town Clerk asked that members consider projects for 2024/25 Budget Setting before the next meeting. A Member raised that one project for consideration is a hogging path to support the Park Run at West Witney.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

PR452 **PLAY AREA RENEWALS**

The committee received the report from the Operations Manager regarding the replacement of play equipment at Burwell and King George's play areas.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Estates and Operations explained how RoSPA carry out the grading and associated risk of play equipment. He outlined the replacement

play equipment outlined in the report was well researched and it was replacing items that were over 10 years old and well used.

Members discussed a previous resolution to replace all equipment in play areas at the same time, but a pressing need had been presented before them and equipment degraded over varying times. With regard to the replacement of the Burwell play area Cable Way; it was agreed that as this was a very well used piece of equipment it should be repaired. Some members were initially hesitant in replacing the Multiplay apparatus at King George's Field however, following discussions it was agreed to proceed with this replacement in order to ensure that the play parks remain useable and safe for children.

A proposal was made by Councillor Smith, Seconded by Councillor Aitman to proceed with all the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and there was unanimous agreement.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the council continues with periodic replacement of play equipment when required and,
3. That, replacement of the Cableway at Burwell and Multiplay area at King George's be delegated to officers to proceed with a maximum budget of £38,651 funded from the Council's Play Area EMR and as a supplementary estimate from the general fund.

18:23pm Councillor Ashby returned during Agenda Item 6 – Play Area Renewals

PR453 SKATE PARK REFURBISHMENT UPDATE

The Committee received the report and verbal update from the Head of Estates & Operations (HE&O) providing an update on the Skatepark refurbishment.

Members were pleased to hear that the contract had been awarded to Bendcrete Skateparks and that final consultation will now take place with skatepark users to consult on any final small amendments. Members heard from the HE&O that Bendcrete would be advertising this final consultation via school and notices at the park so that they can gain the feedback face to face, which they find is the most effective way.

A Member raised questions regarding the access to the refurbished skatepark for disabled users and what action was to be taken in relation to the promotion of safety equipment. The HE&O advised that provision was in place to ensure all user have access and that promotion of safety equipment would be encouraged but is not mandatory.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

PR454 RECREATION GROUND SIGNAGE

The Committee received the report of the Operation Manager regarding the installation of signage at the council's recreation Grounds.

Members raised several questions which the Head of Estates & Operations was able to answer to confirm that signage was a legal requirement to inform users of the grounds of specific prohibitive activities. Members were keen to ensure that the signs were minimal, clear, welcoming, and as positive as possible. Using wording such as “respect and responsible” rather than “no”.

Members discussed the size of the signs, a vote was taken 5 votes for Option A and 2 votes for Option B. Therefore, a A2 sized sign was chosen.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, officers to draft a A2 sized sign for presentation to the committee for approval and,
3. That, a maximum amount of £2,775 be agreed for the signs, funded from property maintenance budgets for the grounds. Any additional being sought from the Council's Infrastructure Earmarked reserve.

PR455 **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.

PR456 **PLAY AREA TRANSFERS UPDATE**

The Committee received a confidential update from the Town Clerk relating to the transfer of play areas from West Oxfordshire District Council to Witney Town Council.

Members were pleased to hear the completion of the transfer of Underhatching Park and Copse was approaching, as well as the advanced progress with the transfer of Raleigh Crescent. They looked forward to hearing news on the transfer of Waterford Road and Cedar Road play areas soon.

The Town Clerk also provided an update on the current position of additional football pitches for the town, predominantly at Windrush Place. Further updates would be given as negotiations continued.

Resolved:

That, the confidential report and verbal update be noted.

PR457 **MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received a confidential report from the Town Clerk providing an update on Major projects.

Members were concerned plans for the Leys Masterplan did not initially include changing rooms; facilitating sports teams was a key service and these were requested to “future proof” the development. The Head of Estates and Operations provided additional comments via a verbal update to answer Members’ questions.

Members were pleased to hear that the installation of the new boiler at Burwell Hall would soon be completed.

An update on refurbishment of West Witney Sports & Social Club was also provided. Members heard clear plans had been drawn but the project may be postponed until the new year; this was beneficial to both parties and would allow the Club to avoid losing peak season income and allow the Council to ensure procurement was in line with its financial obligations.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.15 pm

Chair