

**IN BLOOM SUB COMMITTEE
OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
Held on Thursday 5 September 2019
At 3.30 p.m.
in The Council Chamber, Town Hall, Witney
Present**

Cllr J Aitman (Chairman)

L Duncan	H B Eaglestone
V Gwatkin	M Jones

Lyn Jones – Burwell Community Garden/Allotment Association
Brenda Woods – Edible Gardens
Diana Blackman – Witney Horticultural Society
Rob Steere – Woolgate Shopping Centre
Luke Gladdy – Continental Landscapes
Jessica Bailey – Continental Landscapes

Officer: Tracy Minns – Cemeteries and Projects Officer
John Hickman – Operations and Estates Officer
Nicky Cayley - Democratic Services Officer

B348 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Josie Holmes – Witney Flower Festival – and Row Martin – Witney Allotment Association.

B349 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

B350 MINUTES

a) Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

b) Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2018

There were no matters arising to be discussed at the meeting.

B351 UPDATE ON IN BLOOM 2019 AND IN BLOOM 2020

Members received and considered the report of the Cemeteries and Projects Officer.

The judging day had gone well, despite it being the hottest day of the year. Judges had been particularly impressed with the Windrush Cemetery and the wildflower meadow, The Leys, the School wheelbarrows and meeting residents on the drive round.

The Cemeteries and Projects Officer commented that there had been less community involvement this year and things had been a little fraught in the run up to the judging day.

This led to the question of whether to enter the competition next year. It depended on if people wanted to enter just for the result or whether it was about community involvement. The Council would continue with the planting and schools' wheelbarrows and facilitating community gardens if it was decided not to enter. The town would not look any better or worse.

Members had a lengthy discussion on this and centred particularly on the idea of sustainable planting, including the possibility of planting bulbs in the future and having perennials at the back or beds and annuals at the front.

Rob Steere asked about the possibility of businesses sponsoring roundabouts etc. Officers explained that this was not permitted by WODC as Witney was a conservation area, but Lyn Jones raised the idea of willow sheep on roundabouts and Mr Steere said that he would take this idea back and see if any of the Woolgate businesses might be interested in purchasing/sponsoring these.

Cllr Jones proposed an idea in which individual could sponsor a bed or some bulb planting in memory of loved ones.

The Operations and Estates Officer advised that a possible theme for next year could be 100 years of The Leys – perhaps the Welch Way bed could be planted really nicely with a banner behind explaining the theme?

Officers advised that the ashes scattering area at the Windrush Cemetery needed improvement and an idea was to plant lavender to deter rabbits from eating the roses.

The Community Gardens asked if their beds could be supported by extra watering. Officers explained that this would be an extra cost to the Council but that perhaps the new Witney Land Army might be able to help.

Members considered what prizes should be given to the winning school wheelbarrows and it was decided that gift vouchers would be appropriate with Cllrs Aitman, Duncan and Enright presenting them in school assemblies.

Members agreed that next year the regional In Bloom Competition should not be entered and instead sustainability should be the focus point.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the regional In Bloom competition should not be entered in 2020;
3. that the school wheelbarrows should be continued for 2020;
4. that the schools with the winning wheelbarrows should be presented with gift vouchers by Cllrs Aitman, Duncan and Enright.

The meeting closed at 4.25pm.

Chairman