

**CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 26 September 2023

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

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows R Smith J Aitman	S Simpson D Temple J Treloar (In place of J Robertshaw)
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie Claire Green Sharon Groth Carl Whitehead	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities Town Clerk Park Ranger
Others:	None.	

P515 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor J Robertshaw, Councillor J Treloar attended as a substitute.

P516 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

P517 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P518 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 25 July, 15 August & 5 September 2023 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of Climate Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 25 July, 15 August & 5 September 2023 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

P519 **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.

Members were reminded of the importance of considering items to be included in the 2024/25 budget which would be discussed in the next cycle of meetings.

The Committee provided some items for consideration. They would like to see bike racks installed at West Witney Sports & Social Club (WWS&SC), the continuation of the Forest School grant if it proves successful. They also asked for the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer to be consulted so as to set a budget appropriate to support his programme of works, in answer to this final point it was advised that the B&GSO was preparing a Management Plan which would include the necessary budget detail.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, WWSSC Bike racks and Forest School grant funding be added to the plan and budget-setting for further consideration by officers.
3. That, appropriate budgets are set for biodiversity and green space works.

P520 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

Members received and considered additional correspondence received regarding Planning Application 23/00179/FUL. Members did not wish to submit any additional comment to the existing objection submitted.

The Chair also advised that for future meetings, members would be asked to lead the discussion for planning applications that fall within their ward.

Resolved:

1. That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council and,
2. That, the correspondence of South Leigh & High Cogges Parish concerning 23/00179/FUL be noted and,
3. That, the wishes of the Chair be noted in respect of future applications.

P521 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning decisions received from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

Members also received a verbal update from the Administrative Support Assistant for Stronger Communities & Planning who relayed feedback taken from the Planning Officer's Delegated

Report. Members were pleased to hear that their observations had been considered in a positive manner.

The Administrative Support Assistant for Stronger Communities & Planning also advised of the upcoming Local Plan 2041 Consultation and reminded members that they were encouraged to engage with this important future planning.

Resolved:

1. That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted and,
2. That, the verbal update in respect of observations made by the committee is noted.

Councillor S Simpson joined the meeting at 6:12pm

P522 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - EXTERNAL LAKE REPORT

The Committee received a verbal update from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer in respect of the Barometric survey carried out on the Country Park Lake.

Members were surprised to hear the details of the depth of the lake which ranged from 20cm to 5.2 metres however, were pleased this data provided a benchmark by which the B&GSO could monitor water levels.

They noted there was no bus found, contrary to local speculation.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

P523 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer which provided an update on the Management Plan that was being prepared.

Members raised some questions which the B&GSO was able to respond to in respect of the Water Quality of the lake, which remained very good; there were not as many incidents of contamination by sewage as reported further up the waterways.

The Committee also heard that the reports commissioned by the council had been used in preparation of the Management Plan to help formulate a list of actions.

Resolved

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at 6:40pm, rejoining at 6:50pm.

P524 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - CYCLING

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer regarding cycling at the Country Park.

Councillor Bailey proposed, seconded by Councillor Simpson that the decision be delegated to Officers for signage to be ordered and installed, as required around the lake area, to identify areas where cycling was allowed. The council's website would also be updated to confirm the details. All Members were in agreement.

Resolved

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, signage be organised by Officers as required to highlight areas where cycling was allowed and
3. That, the Council website be updated.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at 6:52pm

P525 PAVEMENT LICENCE - THE FLEECE

With the express permission of the Chair, the Committee discussed an application for a new pavement licence for The Fleece Public House, Church Green, under the Business and Planning Act 2020, due to the short timescale of the consultation. Members had no concerns.

Resolved:

That, a 'No Objection' comment is forwarded to the licencing team at WODC.

The meeting closed at: 6.59 pm

Chair