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

Held on Tuesday, 30 January 2024

At 6.01 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows R Smith J Aitman O Collins	J Robertshaw S Simpson G Doughty (In place of D Temple)
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie Claire Green Sharon Groth Angus Whitburn Carl Whitehead	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities Town Clerk Operations Manager Park Ranger
Others:	Four members of the public. Councillor Jane Doughty	

P51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Temple, Councillor G Doughty attended as a substitute.

P52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Robertshaw declared a Pecuniary interest in Planning Application 23/03208/FUL as he was one of the applicants.

Councillors J Aitman and O Collins declared personal, non-prejudicial interests in the Licensing Application for The Venue, Green Room Studios, Avenue Three, Witney by virtue of knowing the applicant.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers.

P53 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representation from a resident of Riverside Gardens concerning Agenda Item 15.

Further representation was made by the spokesperson for the Witney Flood Group also concerning Agenda Item 15.

The Committee reconvened.

P54 **RIPARIAN AND WATERCOURSE WORKS**

During Public Participation the Committee heard from the resident of Riverside Garden who expressed the concerns of residents of Riverside Gardens if action was not taken to help improve the flow of the river; she expressed her thanks to the Council, and in particular the Works Team who had provided their support and acknowledged the willingness for the one-off de-silting of the area around Bridge Street bridge to be considered, even though it was not the Town Council's responsibility.

The spokesperson for the Witney Flood Group (WFG) explained that the WFG wrote in 2023, a joint letter with the Environment Agency to all Riparian owners along the stretch of river from The Bathing Place to the Old Railway Bridge just north of the A40 to request their support, however nothing had happened and therefore he confirmed that the group fully supported the proposal in the Operation Manager's report to carry out the proactive action of de-silting in order to attempt to prevent further flooding and financial loss to business and residents of the area. It was estimated that business alone suffered over £300,000 of damages in the 2020 floods.

Members then heard from the Operations Manager who summarised his report.

Members were disappointed that the Environment Agency was not prepared to carry out the work, however they welcomed any assistance they could provide in expediting the permit for the Town Council to take action and hoped that it would be a catalyst for them to continue to monitor and maintain the area once the main de-silting had taken place.

The Operations Manager explained that the work was expected to cost £4,000 however, asked that Members considered a contingency of an additional £4,000. Officers would seek to reduce the amount by requesting grant assistance from Oxfordshire County Councillor's priority funds and from Grange, the landlord of Riverside Gardens.

The Town Clerk confirmed that any monies would need to be taken from the General Reserve as this project was not included in the 2024/25 budget.

It was proposed by Cllr Collins and seconded by Cllr Aitman that the sum of £8,000 be allocated to the de-silting works. All members were in agreement.

There was a further proposal by Cllr Bailey and seconded by Cllr Smith that the Council write to both the Environment Agency and the parliamentary Minister responsible requesting a long-term maintenance plan to be put in place for the river through the town. All Members were in agreement.

Members also discussed the purchase of a portable winch to enable trees and debris to be removed by the council's own works team, all members were in favour.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,

2. That, the Council writes to the Environment Agency and responsible parliamentary Minister to ask for a long-term plan and,
3. That, £8,000 be allocated from the council's General Reserve to fund the de-silting of the river around the Bridge Street bridge and,
4. That, Officers proceed with obtaining the relevant permits for the de-silting work and,
5. That, the acquisition of a portable winch at a cost of £2,049 be approved.

All four members of the public, Operations Manager and the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer left at 7:45pm

P55 **THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager along with a verbal update explaining the historical reasons for the cameras purchase.

Members were very keen to ensure that the camera was used and for the scheme to be free to access with one Member remarking that, "by the camera not being used for the fear of loss it is effectively, lost".

Members were encouraged to promote the free use of the camera and the Chair asked that every member of the Climate, Biodiversity & Climate Committee do a test, promote the results and report back to the Committee.

It was also suggested that West Oxfordshire District Council be advised of the scheme so that they may include it within the Energy Grant Information they produce.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers design and promote a free use scheme for the thermal imaging camera and,
3. That, all members of the CBP committee carry out an assessment to help promote the scheme.

P56 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 18 November 2023, 19 December 2023 and 9 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 18 November 2023, 19 December 2023 and 9 January 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

P57 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

Cllr Robershaw left the meeting room from 7:38pm to 7:46pm whilst application 23/03208/FUL was considered due to his declared Pecuniary interest.

Resolved:

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

Councillor J Robertshaw left the meeting at 7:48pm

P58 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

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

Resolved:

That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted.

P59 **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.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

P60 **WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES - 16TH JANUARY 2024**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee (WTAC) meeting held on 16 January 2024.

Councillor Aitman attended the meeting and asked that the attendees be updated to reflect this.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the WTAC meeting held on 16 January 2024 be noted and,
2. That, the list of attendees be updated to include Cllr Aitman.

P61 **PLANNING APPEAL DECISION NOTIFICATION - 180 FARMERS CLOSE, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered correspondence concerning the appeal decision APP/D3125/D/23/3320768 for 180 Farmers Close, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the appeal decision be noted.

P62 **APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE - THE VENUE, GREEN ROOM STUDIOS, AVENUE THREE, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered the application for a Premises Licence for The Venue, Green Room Studios, Avenue Three, Witney under the Licensing Act 2003.

Members welcomed the application and the support it would bring to the night-time economy of Witney.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P63 **APPLICATION FOR MINOR VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE - SAINSBURYS SUPERMARKET, WITAN WAY, WITNEY**

The Committee noted the Application for Minor Variation from Sainsburys Supermarket, Witan Way, Witney under the Licencing Act 2003.

Members acknowledged that the amendments were minor and only related to the layout of the store and there was no change to the licencing hours.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P64 **APPLICATION FOR STREET TRADING CONSENT - WITNEY HIGH STREET & MARKET SQUARE**

The Committee received and considered the application for a Street Trading Consent for Witney High Street and Market Square from West Oxfordshire District Councils (WODC) Licencing Team

Members were supportive of this event and acknowledged the benefits of this event to the town. However, Members raised concerns including:

- Access to the High Street for emergency services which could be compromised by event vehicles, and stalls/stands positioned within the road.
- The functioning of Bus stops, bus routes and blue badge parking during the period of setting up/take down and running of the event.
- Assurance that security vehicles would not affect vision splays and that road junctions would not be adversely affected.

- That the licencing team ensure that a full medical incident plan is provided by the event organiser.

Members also asked for an opportunity to review further documents including any revised or more detailed plans ahead of the consent being granted.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council with a request to receive updated information prior to the consent being granted.

P65 **WOOLGATE PARKING ORDER**

The Committee received and considered the correspondence received from West Oxfordshire District Council Parking Services team.

Members welcomed the proposal to amend the parking conditions which would benefit individuals who worked in the town.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

P66 **THAMES WATER CORRESPONDENCE - MR R COURTS MP**

The Committee received and considered the correspondence from the office of Robert Courts, Member of Parliament.

Members welcomed the chance to discuss the actions of Thames Water with their local MP. It was mentioned that he had previously offered to attend a meeting of the Council during parliamentary recess. Members believed that a face-to-face meeting would be more beneficial than a response by letter.

It was proposed by Cllr Bailey and seconded by Cllr Smith that an invitation be extended to Robert Courts MP to attend a meeting of the Council during Parliamentary Recess. Members agreed unanimously.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, the council extend an invitation for Robert Courts MP to attend a council meeting.

The meeting closed at: 8.07 pm

Chair

Witney Town Council

Planning Minutes - 30th January 2024

P57 Planning Applications

P57- 1 WTC/005/24 Plot Ref :- 23/03288/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 03/01/2024
 Location :- 34 CORN STREET Date Returned :- 31/01/2024
 CORN STREET

Proposal : Alterations to include insertion of two new roof lights to South roof slope, replacement of existing roof lights on North elevation and insertion of folding doors to front elevation.

Observations : Whilst Witney Town Council do not object to this application, Members discussed the proposed removal of gas fires and re-opening of fireplaces. Concern was expressed that the proposal was taking steps in the wrong direction in terms of air quality - If the re-opening of the fireplaces is intended for the fires to be in use and not just aesthetics, then Members ask that any available mitigation measures are encouraged to minimise air pollutants, and that Planning Officers are mindful of the West Oxfordshire District Council 2023 Air Quality Report.

P57- 2 WTC/006/24 Plot Ref :- 23/03289/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 03/01/2024
 Location :- 34 CORN STREET Date Returned :- 31/01/2024
 CORN STREET

Proposal : Internal and external alterations to include changes to floor layouts, insertion of two new roof lights to South roof slope and replacement and alterations of existing roof lights on North elevation, changes to conservatory French doors and installation of folding doors to front elevation, along with removal of ramps. Internal alterations to include changes to first and second floor bathrooms, removal of gas fires and reopening of fireplaces to second floor. Exterior works to include re-pointing and masonry repairs to elevations.

Observations : Whilst Witney Town Council do not object to this application, Members discussed the proposed removal of gas fires and re-opening of fireplaces. Concern was expressed that the proposal was taking steps in the wrong direction in terms of air quality - If the re-opening of the fireplaces is intended for the fires to be in use and not just aesthetics, then Members ask that any available mitigation measures are encouraged to minimise air pollutants, and that Planning Officers are mindful of the West Oxfordshire District Council 2023 Air Quality Report.

P57- 3 WTC/007/24 Plot Ref :- 23/02730/FUL Type :- AMENDED
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 03/01/2024
 Location :- CAR PARK REAR OF 58 WEST Date Returned :- 31/01/2024
 END
 WEST END

Proposal : Redevelopment of existing vehicle dismantling yard including part demolition and part reconstruction of existing single storey building, erection of ten dwellings along with new access from Farmers Close and the provision of parking and landscaping.

Observations : Witney Town Council support the principle of redevelopment at this site. However, as raised in a previous response, Witney Town Council continue to have concerns about land, air and water contamination during any construction works as well as when homes are occupied. These concerns are for residents of the new dwellings as well as residents in the neighbouring area, to ensure a clean and safe environment for all in Witney. Members acknowledge the updated documents submitted by the applicant, including the Phase II Desk Study, however Witney Town Council are unable to support the application whilst identified issues are outstanding. Consistent and complete sampling is still to be carried out and objections from technical consultees need to be resolved.

Given the pollution risks the Local Planning Authority must ensure that the applicant addresses and can mitigate against all and any risk from contaminants to ensure no harm to human health, the environment or Witney waterways - Witney Town Council support brownfield development and would welcome an application that meets this scrutiny.

Further, Witney Town Council would like to see provision for safe access for cyclists and pedestrians with cycling and walking entry and exit points at the North and South of the site.

P57- 4	WTC/008/24	Plot Ref :- 23/03267/ADV	Type :-	ADVERTISIN
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	03/01/2024
	Location :-	UNIT R2 MARRIOTTS WALK MARRIOTTS WALK	Date Returned :-	31/01/2024
	Proposal :	Erection of 2 internally illuminated and non-illuminated fascia signage and internally illuminated menu sign.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

P57- 5	WTC/009/24	Plot Ref :- 23/03239/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	03/01/2024
	Location :-	UNIT 1 CRANBROOK COURT AVENUE TWO	Date Returned :-	31/01/2024
	Proposal :	Change of use from planning class light industrial use to community and cultural centre.		
	Observations :	Whilst Witney Town Council do not object to this application, Members ask that given the proposed community use and limited on-site parking, bike racks be installed, and an active travel strategy be submitted by the applicant.		

P57- 6	WTC/010/24	Plot Ref :- 23/03303/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	.	Date Received :-	03/01/2024
	Location :-	30 BUTTERCROSS LANE BUTTERCROSS LANE	Date Returned :-	31/01/2024
	Proposal :	Remedial works to waterproof roof of building comprising of 6 flats, including raising height of parapet. (Retrospective).		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

P57- 7 WTC/011/24 Plot Ref :- 23/03351/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 15/01/2024
Location :- 11 CURBRIDGE ROAD Date Returned :- 31/01/2024
CURBRIDGE ROAD
Proposal : Erection of two storey and single storey rear extensions and construction of a replacement front porch.
Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

P57- 8 WTC/012/24 Plot Ref :- 23/03354/S73 Type :- VARIATION
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 15/01/2024
Location :- 90 RALEGH CRESCENT Date Returned :- 31/01/2024
RALEGH CRESCENT
Proposal : Removal of condition 1 (to allow continued flexible use of part of the dwelling as a gym/personal training space and residential accommodation in association with the main dwelling) and variation of condition 4 (to allow changes to the opening times for clients) of planning permission 23/00286/FUL.
Observations : Witney Town Council object to this application.

The time limited consent refers to 'special circumstances' and 'particular circumstances', these circumstances are not put forward or justified within the application documents and therefore Members are not able to support this proposal on those grounds and object to consent being granted beyond the extant permission.

Members raised objections around noise and disturbance caused by the operation of this commercial gym in a residential setting, including:

- The noise of gym equipment (especially weights), music and cars/car doors.
- Parking issues and noise disruption caused by clients visiting by car, including at unsociable hours.
- The intensity is above and beyond what would be expected in a residential area, with neighbouring houses in such close proximity.

The documents suggest that there have not been any complaints about the operation, however Witney Town Council Members state that this is not true and residents have contacted ward members on multiple occasions.

Witney Town Council object to the removal of Condition 1 and Condition 4. This application does not comply with Local Plan Policy - Policy OS2 requires that development should be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact on the amenity of existing occupants. Further, Policy OS4 requires that development not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties.

P57- 9 WTC/013/24 Plot Ref :- 23/03381/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 15/01/2024
Location :- 12 HARVEST WAY Date Returned :- 31/01/2024
HARVEST WAY

