

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 10 February 2020

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor D Enright (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	A D Harvey
	R Bolger	J King
	D Butterfield	A McMahon
	O Collins	A Prosser
	L Duncan	R Smith
	H Eaglestone	D Temple
Officers:	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Officer
Others:	3 members of the public.	

54 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Aitman, Eaglestone, and Jones.

55 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

56 **MINUTES**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the meetings held on 9 and 16 December 2019. There were no matters arising.

RESOLVED: to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 9 December and 16 December respectively with the following correction to the minutes of the meeting of 9 December:

Minute no. 495 – Cllr Luci Ashbourne – “Brexit” be changed to “European Settlement Scheme”.

57 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Council adjourned in order for Fiona Rodden to address the Council about Park Road play area and for Rick Mellis to address the Council about a councillor becoming a governor at Springfield School. Following this the Council reconvened.

58 **MOTION**

This item was moved up the agenda with the express permission of the Chair so that the members of the public present could hear the discussion.

The motion was introduced by Cllr Duncan, who explained that since the publication of the agenda, further correspondence had been received from the Council's solicitor, including some earlier that day. There were still legal issues outstanding which needed to be investigated and followed up but if this was not resolved in the Council's favour, consideration should be given to the lease offer provided by Cottsway Housing.

Members agreed that it would be sensible to wait for the legal advice and represent the motion at the next Full Council meeting.

RESOLVED: that to enable further legal advice to be sought, consideration of the motion be deferred until the next meeting of the Full Council on 6 April.

59 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

There were no police available to attend the meeting.

60 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Cllr David Harvey – WODC

Cllr Harvey reported that there was a lot of work going on at the District Council in Climate Change, Forestry and other areas.

Cllr Owen Collins – WODC

Cllr Collins reported that the last Full Council meeting had been awash with environmental considerations.

Cllr Ashbourne – WODC

Cllr Ashbourne advised that the European Settlement motion had been amended and accepted. WODC would put together a list of who to contact and distribute this to parishes.

Cllr Enright – WODC

Cllr Enright updated members on a Planning case that had come before the Committee, involving a fence that had been removed without permission. An appeal had found the Planning Inspector upholding the District Council's decision that it should be reinstated and the Council was now enforcing that decision.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

61 **REPORT BACK FROM THE COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

Cllr Liz Duncan

Cllr Duncan explained that she was the Council's representative for The Henry Box Collection who now wanted to make the books much more accessible to the public. They would also like to be involved in Heritage Open Day.

Cllr Duncan Enright

Cllr Enright advised that one of the Poppy Blankets from West Witney W.I had now been donated to the town's museum.

He also advised that the once lost Witney Workers Union Banner – now 100 years old – had been found and was at the People's History Museum in Manchester. Sadly, there was no question of it being returned at present as it needed £8, 500 worth of restoration before it could be moved.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

62 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) Planning and Development Committee – 17 December 2019 and 14 January 2020

The Chair presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

b) Halls and Green Spaces Committee -13 January 2020

The Chair presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

A member asked for a recommendation to be added to write to the County Council about having separate changing facilities from the school for the new West Witney pitch if the pavilion was not built. The Office Manager said that this would be a matter arising from the minutes which could be brought up and agreed at the next meeting of this Committee.

c) Stronger Communities Committee – 20 January 2020

The Chair presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

d) Policy, Governance and Finance Committee – 27 January 2020

The Chair presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

e) Youth Services Working Party – 20 January 2020

The Chair presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

f) Skate Park Working Party – 27 January 2020

The Chair presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED:

- a) Planning and Development Committee - that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 17 December 2019 and 14 January 2020 be received and any recommendations therein be approved;
- b) Halls and Green Spaces Committee – that the minutes of the Halls and Green Spaces Committee of 13 January 2020 be received and any recommendations therein be approved;
- c) Stronger Communities Committee – that the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee of 20 January 2020 be received and any recommendations therein be approved;
- d) Policy, Governance and Finance Committee - that the minutes of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee of 27 January 2020 be received and any recommendations therein be approved;
- e) Youth Services Working Party - that the minutes of the Youth Services Working Party of 20 January 2020 be received and any recommendations therein be approved;
- f) Skate Park Working Party – that the minutes of the Skate Park Working Party of 27 January 2020 be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

63 **TINY FORESTS**

Members received an update on the progress of the Tiny Forests Programme from Cllrs Gwatkin and the Operations and Estates Officer.

The two areas felt best for the project were Eton Close Playing field or area 23F at Burwell. The Operations and Estates Officer was waiting for confirmation of what underground services may be present at both locations, but Eton Close was preferable as it was not too near to any housing and was close to the A40. Members agreed that Eton Close should be the first choice subject to soil tests by Earthwatch.

RESOLVED: that the project be approved to go ahead with the first choice location being Eton Close Playing Field and the area at Burwell being held in reserve in the event that the soil was not appropriate at Eton Close.

64 **COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES & MEMBERSHIP**

The Council considered extending the membership of the Skate Working Party to include Cllr Butterfield who had a specific interest in this subject. Members all agreed.

Also under consideration was a request to change the name of the Skate Working Party to widen its remit. As it was not far until the end of the municipal year, it was agreed to rename it as the “Wheeled Sports and Play Area Working Party” until the beginning of the next Council year and it be delegated to the Officers to look into the possibility of the Working Party becoming a Sub Committee.

Members also agreed to rename the West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee as the Witney Sports Grounds Sub Committee.

RESOLVED:

- a) i) that the membership of the Skate Working Party be extended to include Cllr Butterfield,
 - ii) that the Working Party be renamed as the “Wheeled Sports and Play Area Working Party” until the beginning of the next Council year,
 - iii) that it be delegated to Officers to investigate the possibility of the Working Party becoming a Sub Committee.
- b) that the “West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee” be renamed “Witney Sports Grounds Sub Committee”.

65 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor on the events they had attended.

There was also an invitation from Rotary to have a stand at their showcase on 24 April.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and that whether to accept Rotary’s invitation to have a stand at their showcase event on 24 April be delegated to the Mayor and the Office Manager.

66 **VANDALISM**

There had been no vandalism to report.

67 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader informed the Council that a letter had been received from Fairtrade Witney thanking the Council for its support and requesting a Fairtrade Champion to be nominated.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the communication from the Leader be noted;
- b) that Cllr Enright be nominated as the “Fairtrade Champion”.

68 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council received and considered correspondence from Springfield School concerning a request for a governor, a Brexit briefing from Oxfordshire County Council, and correspondence from Cottsway Housing and Mr A Beames.

Members also considered a Parish Survey.

RESOLVED:

- a) that Cllr King takes on the position of a governor to Springfield School;
- b) that the Brexit Briefing from Oxfordshire County Council be noted;
- c) that the correspondence from Cottsway be noted;
- d) that the complaint from Mr Beames be noted;
- e) that the Parish Survey 2020 be completed at the next Planning and Development Committee meeting.

69 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Cllr King asked the Leader for help with complaints about the condition of the grass land between the road and the wooded area at West Witney, an area which was made worse with the use by Park Run.

A member commented that as this was not Witney Town Council's land she felt it was the owner's job to take action.

RESOLVED: that although the Town Council did not own the land referred to, the Leader would speak to Park Run about the situation.

Cllr Collins left the meeting at 8.25pm.

70 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

The meeting closed at: 8.28 pm

Chair