

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 16 March 2020**

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

**Present:**

Councillor L Ashbourne (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	A McMahon
	O Collins	R Smith
	D Enright	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Officer
	Polly Inness	Communications & Events Officer
Others:	none	

SC95 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Bolger and King.

SC96 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

SC97 **MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Mayor said that he had had no update from the SOTA Gallery on a bespoke piano trolley and had not had an answer from the college on decoration of the piano.

SC98 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**RECOMMENDED:** there were no members of the public present for this item.

SC99 **OPERATIONAL REPORT**

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, which included an update on lightbulbs stored in the Buttercross roof being smashed as well as the

mechanism being broken. He cautioned that now the nights were lighter, vandalism would increase.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

SC100 **BIN AUDIT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Office manager alongside the bin audit from WODC, a specific request for a dog waste bin and a list of outstanding bin requests.

If the Town Council wanted to install additional bins across the parish, it would need to bear the costs from now on.

Members noted the request for an additional dog waste bin but as dog waste could be put into a normal litter bin, it was decided that this would be a better option. A member asked if the college might pay for this bin. The Officer Manager said that this would be unlikely, but the question could be asked.

The Town Clerk highlighted the Community Clean Up grant that was yet to be spent. The Chair proposed that a substantial amount of this could be used for new bin installations and members agreed, setting the figure at £7,000.

A member commented that she was sure that commercial waste charges were less than the costs paid by the Town Council to the District Council. Cllr Enright would speak to the CEO of Ubico about this, and Officers should ask the question.

Another member queried what would happen on new estates. The Office Manager explained that the bins would be arranged by management companies such as Green Square.

Officers were asked to draw up a bin policy/management plan. Bin requests should be prioritised.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that Witney Town Council covers the cost of installing new or additional bins and their ongoing emptying costs;
3. that the residents request for a dog waste bin between West End/Crawley Road and Woodford Mill be agreed but that a litter bin/general waste bin be installed rather than a dog bin, as dog waste could be put in a litter bin;
4. that £7,000 of the Community Clean Up Grant be ringfenced for provision of new litter/recycling bins;
5. that Officers formulate a bin policy with a medium to long term plan on new requests;
6. that Officers ask WODC how much the charge for emptying is for corporate clients;
7. that the costs of emptying bins be included in the budget setting for 2021 – 22.

SC101 **BUTTERCROSS CLOCK**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, concerning the Buttercross Clock which had stopped working. The receiver had stopped working and needed to be replaced. The expert had advised that the mechanism needed servicing and some cosmetic work was needed to the face and hands. As the latter two items were not absolutely necessary, the Operations and Estates Officer recommended that they should be left until the roof tiles were replaced in a few years' time, and members agreed. This should be budgeted for.

The Town Clerk advised that there was no budget for this and she would write to the Town Hall Charity to see if it could contribute. The money would currently need to come out of the Council's General reserve.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the fitting of a good quality radio-controlled clock movement which gets a signal from France to enable the clock to work again, be commissioned, at a cost of £2, 300 plus VAT;
3. that the dial mechanism overhaul and the restoration of the dial frame, dial surround and hands are done when the work to replace the roof tiles is done in a few years' time.

SC102 **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered a verbal update from the Events and Communications Officer. This covered the embedding of Modern Gov into the website, the satisfaction survey which would be online until 30 April, and the planting of the Tiny Forest. Newsletters should be physically delivered by the end of March.

**RESOLVED:** that the verbal update be noted.

SC103 **COUNCIL AND CIVIC EVENTS REPORT**

The Communications & Events Officer gave a verbal update covering the Commonwealth Flag raising, the postponement of the Citizen of the Year Awards and the Civic reception due to the current pandemic situation. She also advised that the V E Day celebration would be postponed until August to coincide with V J Day.

The Communications & Events Officer added that during the current climate she would be looking at running community activities on the Council's social media whilst people were socially distancing.

**RESOLVED:** that the verbal update be noted.

SC104 **WITNEY CARNIVAL 2020**

The Committee discussed ideas for the Councillor's stall at Witney Carnival.

**RESOLVED:** to defer the final decision to the next meeting, but in the meantime Cllrs Gwatkin and Aitman to work on the idea of the history of The Leys.

SC105 **THIRD PARTY EVENTS**

The Committee received and considered an extensive report from the Operations and Estates Officer concerning third party events. Members discussed matters in the lights of various complaints from the public after the Pitch 1 area at The Leys had been designated an events field. There followed a debate on whether to engage an expert in Event Noise Planning and also on how much the District Council's Environmental Health Department might help.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Council get quotes from Event Noise Planning Consultants to draw up an advisory plan, which should include advice on the position of the stage;
3. that the Town Clerk speaks to Service Leader of Operational, Technical & Pollution Services at the District Council to see if the Environmental Services could assist the Town Council in noise planning management;
4. that both organisers of large third-party events and the Town Council continue to send separate letters to nearby residents;
5. that the end time for all events be 11pm, with the site cleared by 11.30pm.

SC106 **WITNEY & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Twinning Association held on 29<sup>th</sup> January and information on the Witney Twinning Anniversary Schedule – this event had now been cancelled due to COVID-19.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes be noted and the cancellation of the Twinning Event be noted.

SC107 **VE DAY 75 WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and considered the verbal update of the meeting held earlier that evening, at which the VE Day celebrations had been put on hold until VJ Day in August.

**RESOLVED:** that the verbal update of the meeting held earlier be noted.

SC108 **CHRISTMAS SUB COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Christmas Sub Committee held on 27 February 2020.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the minutes of the meeting be noted;

2. that members available to run stalls at the Advent Fayre contact Officers as soon as possible to sign up.

SC109 **YOUTH SERVICES WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2020.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

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Chair