

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

Held on Tuesday, 11 August 2020

At 6.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM*

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman L Ashbourne	M Jones A Prosser
Officers:	Nicky Cayley Sharon Groth Angus Whitburn	Democratic Services Officer Town Clerk Compliance and Environment Officer
Others:	0 members of the public.	

P235 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Bolger and Gwatkin.

P236 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

P237 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee received a presentation from Louise Fox, Ecology Officer at Oxfordshire County and Oxford City Councils, concerning the planting of wildflowers on verges in Witney. County Councillor Laura Price also spoke to the Committee on this subject and what she could do to help.

P238 PRESENTATION FROM LOUISE FOX, BIODIVERSITY OFFICER AT OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.

This item was moved up the agenda with the express permission of the Chair so that Louise Fox could hear the outcome of the debate.

Members were very keen on the concept and one member expressed a hope that it could be started this year if possible. It was recognised that the challenge would be to find uncut verges which would provide the optimum conditions for the flowers.

RESOLVED: that Committee members do some research on unmown verges in the Town and feed back to Louise Fox to start the process of wildflower planting.

P239 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

RESOLVED: that the comments, as per the attached schedule, be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P240 **PLANNING APPEAL NOTIFICATION - 34 WOODFORD MILL, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered an appeal notification for 34 Woodford Mill, Witney.

RESOLVED: that the appeal be noted.

P241 **LAKE AND COUNTRY PARK**

This item was moved up the agenda due to the Chair losing sound on her computer connection.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer. He explained that whilst the original idea had been to commission a management plan, he had spoken to Oxford City Council and now thought that a management Statement might be more appropriate and a good place to start. This could be something that a Park Ranger could work on in future.

A member referred to the Chair's report and expressed concern that a management plan/statement should not be done until the Committee had more information about the funding that the Wychwood project would be applying for.

The Compliance and Environment Officer explained that he had met with the Chair a few days earlier and it has transpired that the funding had now been superseded by the pandemic.

The Chair re-joined the meeting. She felt that a management statement would be a good start and would help officers and members to know what was needed to maintain each area of the Lake and Country Park. She added that the grant that had been discussed with the Wychwood Project may be able to fund a project officer if successful. However, currently the grant funding was being diverted to Covid related projects.

Members also discussed the requirement for bank erosion work which the Compliance and Environment Officer and Operations and Estates Officer felt was urgent. It was agreed to seek quotes for this in order to budget for it in the budget setting process in November.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and:

1. to obtain estimates for the costs of the bank erosion works;
2. to ask members what priorities they had for the lake and country park which would then feed into the creation of a management statement.

P242 **CIL**

The Chair reported that she had received correspondence from Hailey Parish Council which was putting together a letter to protest at the proposal for charging CIL in West Oxfordshire. It was inviting all parishes to sign it. The Chair had not received the letter yet but would circulate it when she had. The Committee agreed it was happy for her to sign this on behalf of the Town Council.

RESOLVED: that the Chair would circulate the letter to members when she received it and would sign it on behalf of the Council.

P243 **CAR FREE DAY**

The Committee discussed how the Council could participate in car free day. It was agreed to stick to the actual date of Tuesday 22nd September as this would encourage people not to make extra journeys but to change how they travelled on the day. Members felt that it was difficult to run organised activities due to Covid-19 and a member proposed that instead the Council could run an on line promotion of car free day, encouraging people to get on their bikes or walk. There were also good resources on Twinkl which could be used to get children involved. This would need the help of the Communications and Events Officer.

RESOLVED: to participate in Car Free Day on Tuesday 22nd September by promoting it on social media to engage the public and encourage them to leave their cars at home.

The meeting closed at: 7.52 pm

Chair