

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 17 May 2021

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

| | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Councillors: | J Aitman | O Collins |
| | T Ashby | R Smith |
| | D Butterfield | D Temple |
| | L Duncan | |
| Officers: | Sharon Groth | Town Clerk |
| | Adam Clapton | Deputy Town Clerk |
| Others: | 2 members of the public. | |

As there was no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Parks & Recreation Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work's programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 28th June 2021.

PR239 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Luci Ashbourne and Duncan Enright.

Councillor Owen Collins attended in place of Cllr Ashbourne and Councillor Ruth Smith attended for Councillor Enright.

PR240 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

PR241 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Daniel Butterfield be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved: That, Councillor Daniel Butterfield be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for 2021/2022 municipal year.

PR242 **MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting of the Sport & Play Committee, the predecessor committee, held on 1 March 2021. There were no matters arising.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Sport and Play Committee held on 1 March 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PR243 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Mr Bloomfield addressed the committee regarding signage for Witney Town Bowls Club
Mr Gentles addressed the committee regarding the application for a doughnut stall on The Leys.

The Committee reconvened following public participation.

Note: Councillor Temple left the meeting at this juncture.

PR244 **OXLEASE PLAY AREA - MEMORIAL PICNIC BENCH**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer.

Clarification was given on the type of bench to be installed and the proposed location. Councillors expressed their support for the proposal.

It was noted that there were no financial implications as it would be funded by the applicant, so the Town Clerk, under her delegations would implement the recommendation accordingly.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the request for a memorial picnic bench in memory of Stephanie Ormonde be supported.

PR245 **MADLEY PARK PLAYING FIELDS & PLAY AREA**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Town Clerk. An update was given on discussions that had been held regarding the freehold of the area and legal agreements that are in place. It was emphasised that further legal advice was needed.

Issues regarding the use of the sports pitches and associated changing facilities were outlined. Councillors considered the freehold purchase of the area in the future for leisure use. It was advised that drainage works had been undertaken in the area and so the Council needed to be cognisant of such issues during future discussions.

It was proposed that the matter be delegated to the Town Clerk to seek further advice and clarify issues with other parties involved.

Resolved: That, delegation be given to the Town Clerk to continue discussions with relevant parties, and obtain further legal advice, to establish details around the possible transfer of the Madley Park Playing Field to the Town Council. The transfer of the Play Area would be considered at a later date, when appropriate.

PR246 PARK ROAD PLAY AREA - UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report of the Projects Officer.

Clarification was given on the ownership of the land and discussions had been held regarding the implementation of a lease with Cottsway Housing including break clauses. The possibility of residents being able to apply for grant funding for equipment was highlighted.

The Committee considered the provision of bins at the site and at the Splash Pad and emphasised that enough bins were required.

The Town Clerk clarified that equipment was available at the depot and whilst some equipment could be refurbished new equipment may be needed. The issue of local residents raising funds for the play area was highlighted. It was noted that the agreed budget was sufficient to open the park and any additional facilities would follow on subject to funds being available. Discussion ensued regarding landscaping of the site and the need to be aware of community safety issues such as anti-social behaviour.

Resolved:

1. That, new swings be installed, replacing the old, non-compliant set;
2. That, the bear bin from the Leys be moved to Park Road Play area and the Town Clerk be delegated to finalise bin provision at the Splash Pad;
3. That, in view of the short time frame for project completion, the decision of which company to proceed with is delegated to Officers, in consultation with the local ward Councillors – these being Cllrs Ashbourne, Duncan and Smith with the main deciding factor being price; and.
4. That, delegation be given to Officers, in consultation with the local ward Councillors to engage with local residents in respect of future funding and grant opportunities for further development of the play area in the future.

PR247 SKATE PARK - UPDATE

The report of the Project Officer was received and considered.

Councillor Butterfield updated the committee and explained that the group had now agreed a constitution and setting up of a bank account. It was now hoped to drive the project forward through social media. There would be a need for power on site which the council would need to consider in the future.

Resolved: That, the update report be noted.

Note: Councillor Aitman joined the meeting at this juncture.

PR248 LEYS RECREATION GROUND - REQUEST TO RUN A DOUGHNUT STALL

The report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer was received and considered.

In response to a question, it was clarified that the generator unit ran on recycled cooking oil and not diesel and emissions were reduced, and the doughnuts were cooked on a gas unit. During the daytime, the generator was not required as it just powered the unit lights. It was confirmed that only cold drinks were sold from the unit and not tea and coffee. The type of unit was outlined.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential impact on the Coffee Shed and previous concerns about pressure selling from traders on The Leys. It was noted that the applicant had been positive in not selling hot drinks and it was not the role of the council to prevent competition. The possible location for the unit was discussed as there were concerns about those suggested. Clarification was given that the unit could be placed on the hardstanding near the entrance to The Leys. After further discussion it was agreed that delegation should be given to agree a location.

It was noted that the application was for Saturday and Sunday only and it would be sensible to limit additional traders to those days.

Recommended:

That, agreement in principle be given for Bakers Sweet to run a doughnut stall on the Leys Recreation Ground, subject to the following:

1. A fixed term period for operating along with clear terms and conditions which will be reviewed and monitored by officers;
2. Delegation be given to the Officers to agree the location of the stall; and
3. Delegation to officers to handle all the legalities and charges associated.

PR249 LEYS RECREATION GROUND - SPLASH PAD RE-OPENING

The Committee was advised that the facility needed to be professionally commissioned, which will cost in the region of £2,400 and depending on their availability could be open when the roadmap dictates (21 June). The Committee was requested to decide whether this facility should reopen, and close in line with current Council policy when Witney Feast fair arrives on site at the beginning of September. The contactor could do the commissioning on 15 June.

The current restrictions were explained and that due to the potential number of people it was difficult to monitor as there was unhindered access.

The committee expressed support for re-opening the facility.

Resolved:

That, the facility should reopen, consistent with the relaxation of Covid restrictions, and close in line with current Council policy when Witney Feast fair arrives on site at the beginning of September.

PR250 LEYS RECREATION GROUND - WITNEY TOWN BOWLS CLUB REQUEST TO ERECT A SIGN

The committee gave consideration to a request from Witney Town Bowls Club to erect new signage for the facility. In addition, it was reported that Oxfordshire County Council had advised that new directional signage was to be provided on Station Lane.

Councillors expressed their support for new signage, and it was acknowledged that details such as location needed further clarification. It was proposed that the matter be delegated for approval subject to a site visit and details of the signage being agreed.

Resolved:

1. That Officers be delegated, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to undertake a site visit and approve the type of signage and agree a location on Town council land; and
2. That the current position with regard to signage on Station Lane, to be provided by Oxfordshire County Council, be noted.

PR251 WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND - CYCLING SPEED AWARENESS

The Committee received the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer.

There was support for the proposal, but concerns remained about vehicles adhering to the speed limit. The cycle crossing sign was also considered to be a positive step. Discussion ensued about the positive impact of signage, and it was up to the council to ensure that it had met its responsibility as landowner and from a health & safety perspective.

Resolved:

1. To approve the purchase and installation of two “5mph” signs and posts.
2. To approve the additional installation of a warning sign for “Cycle Route Ahead”; and
3. To Delegate to officers the responsibility of assessing and possibly removing part of the hedge to the right side of the junction exiting West Witney.

PR252 WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND - COMPLIANCE & PROJECT UPDATE

The Town Clerk advised that officers had been working towards compliance by 17 May to allow public access. The Council had undertaken the works it had agreed to undertake. A meeting to check compliance of works undertaken by the sports and social club had also been arranged but was cancelled. When the meeting was held paperwork was not compliant and a list of works was provided to the club for them to undertake. At present the building was not compliant and therefore should not be opening to the public. Council Officers had sought to engage with the sports club committee on the issues.

The Committee expressed their concern at the situation and questioned what powers the council had to ensure the club did not open until compliance was achieved. The Town Clerk explained the role of the various authorities and action which would be taken. However, she pointed out that the Council’s insurance could be invalidated, and this was being clarified the insurers. It was suggested that contact be made with the HSE.

In respect of the lease, it was not possible to simply cancel it and a process was in place if the situation changed in the future. Concern was expressed that if there was an incident the Town Council could be held liable, particularly as the sports & social club had been premature in announcing the re-opening.

Resolved:

1. That, delegation be given to the Town Clerk to explore options with the HSE to see what action can be taken with regard to the building being compliant; and

2. To note that consultants Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP) have been appointed to undertake the feasibility study of the Sports Ground and assist with the master planning of new facilities.

The meeting closed at: 7.20 pm

Chair