

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

Held on Monday, 7 June 2021

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne J Aitman D Butterfield H Eaglestone	V Gwatkin A Prosser R Smith
Officers:	Sharon Groth Simon Wright	Town Clerk Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	no 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 Stronger Communities 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.

SC271 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr R Bolger who was being substituted by Cllr R Smith.

SC272 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members.

SC273 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Luci Ashbourne be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor Luci Ashbourne be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2021/2022 municipal year.

SC274 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2021.

In response to a query regarding Min No. SC137 it was advised that there was no update in respect of trees at Pensclose but further information would be sought from the Operations & Estates Advisor.

A member sought clarification regarding a policy for the provision of bins (Min No. SC138 refers). In response it was explained that any policy would be included as part of the developing Open Space Strategy.

It was noted that a meeting of the Platinum Jubilee Working Party would be convened to start work on the project.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 15 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

SC275 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

SC276 **COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Communications and Community Engagement Officer updating on a number of projects.

Consideration was given to a recommendation from the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee to implement a 'Wild Witney' competition. Members agreed it was important to build on the success of 'No Mow May'.

Discussion ensued and it was agreed that residents would be asked to submit photographs of their 'wild gardens' which could then be shown and promoted through social media channels. It was decided that winners would be selected in each electoral ward with an overall winner being chosen after that.

In respect of prizes it was noted that there no budgetary provision and it was suggested that the Council's grounds contractor be contacted to see if they could provide some seeds as prizes. In respect of the overall winner it was suggested that the Wychwood Project be approached to see if they could provide a woodland visit.

Consideration was given to the results of the resident survey that had been circulated to members and how that information could be used by the council.

It was agreed that the main outcomes could be used in an information leaflet as had been the case in previous years. It was noted that some of the feedback was useful in helping to inform the draft strategies that were being developed.

There was a consensus that the Council needed to promote what it does and respond to issues raised in the survey. It was suggested that this could be done through social media channels and video clips. Councillors agreed that it would be good if they did direct video responses to concerns and also show what the Town Council is doing.

In respect of the survey it was noted that the responses were mainly from older residents and, whilst it was challenging, there was a need to gain the views of younger people. It was suggested that maybe offering the opportunity to 'shadow' officers could help in raising awareness.

Members noted that there was still some confusion about the responsibilities of the three tiers of local government in Oxfordshire and it was important that residents were aware of what each one did.

Resolved:

1. That, a 'Wild Witney' competition be supported with residents being requested to submit photographs of their wild gardens with winners being chosen in each Town Council Ward and an overall winner being selected thereafter;
2. That, in respect of the resident survey delegation be given to officers to assess the data further and produce an information document as in previous years;
3. That, the resolution above be supported by a campaign to promote what the council does via media channels including video responses, by Councillors, to issues raised in the survey; and
4. That, a document be produced outlining the responsibilities of the various tiers of local government in Oxfordshire.

SC277 **EVENTS REPORT**

The Committee was advised that the replacement event for Witney Carnival was progressing and the grant funding would be forwarded to the organisers soon. It was noted that the event may involve some machinery accessing The Leys so there was an element of a damage deposit in the funding.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

SC278 **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Operations & Estates Adviser advising of the outcome of the tender process for the Christmas lights.

It was noted that meetings were ongoing with the contractor and members were pleased that LED lights were to be used. It was advised that the contract was within the agreed budget.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

SC279 **BUS SHELTERS UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer, including an exempt appendix, outlining options for the replacement of a bus shelter at the Burwell shops.

Consideration was given to the three designs including the proposed seating options. Members expressed a preference for Option 3 and in particular because it used a sedum roof but asked

that the contractor be contacted to see if bench seating could be provided instead of the perch seats. The budgetary provision was also clarified.

It was resolved that, subject to clarification on the seating, delegation be given to officers in consultation with the Chair to approve Option 3.

Resolved:

That, delegation be given to officers, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to approve option 3 as outlined in the report for the replacement of a bus shelter outside the Burwell shops subject to clarification as to whether bench seating can be provided.

The meeting closed at: 7.12 pm

Chair