

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

Held on Tuesday, 10 August 2021

At 6.00 pm in the Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

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| Councillors: | A Prosser | V Gwatkin |
| | J Aitman | M Jones |
| | L Duncan | |
| Officers: | Adam Clapton | Deputy Town Clerk |
| | Claire Green | Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities |
| Others: | 3 members of the public. | |

P426 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs O Collins and A McMahon.

P427 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared, at this juncture, by members at the meeting.

P428 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Mrs E Green and Mrs C Mckinley of U3A addressed the Committee on each of their respective treen planting requests, covered under agenda item 12.

Mr P Wilkinson of the Rotary Club of Witney addressed the Committee on a prospective Forest School at the Country Park, covered under agenda item 13.

The Committee reconvened following public participation.

P429 TREE PLANTING REQUESTS

With the permission of the Chair this item was moved up the agenda.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer concerning tree planting requests from U3A and a resident.

Members were sympathetic to both requests but agreed the Lake & Country Park was not suitable for the planting of trees; advice on this had previously been supplied by the Wychwood Project and was helping shape a land management plan for these areas.

The Committee was supportive on the creation of a tree planting policy and hoped appropriate locations would be included. There was agreement that further requests should be deferred until after the policy had been adopted, taking them into the 2022 planting season. There was definite scope for commemorative Covid-19 trees and members suggested this should be considered by a task and finish group established to discuss a potential memorial in the town.

Resolved:

1. That, a policy be created to encompass all tree planting requests on Town Council owned land, to be referenced in the developing street furniture policy,
2. That, the request for a tree to be planted at Witney Lake & Country Park be declined but that Officers explore any other potential locations as part of the tree planting policy,
3. That, the request to plant a tree or trees by the U3A group be deferred until after the tree policy has been created, and
4. That, U3A be invited to join the Covid-19 Commemoration task and finish group established by the Council.

P430 **FOREST SCHOOL**

With the permission of the Chair this item was moved up the agenda.

Members considered an offer from the Rotary Club of Witney to help establish a Forest School at the Lake & Country Park.

The Committee agreed this was a good idea in principle, but further detailed information was required before the Council committed to the project. Members noted a forest school was already provided by one of the pre-schools so further demand should be sought, along with information from stakeholders such as the Forest School Association. The exact parameters on involvement of the two parties would be key to its progression.

Resolved:

1. That, Officers explore the viability of a joint Forest School project with the Rotary Club of Witney and bring a report back to the next meeting of this committee.

P431 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

Resolved:

That the comments, as per the attached schedule, be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P432 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS MW.0081/21 AND MW.0083/21**

The Committee received and considered two planning applications received from Oxfordshire County Council.

Resolved:

That the comments, as below, be forwarded to Oxfordshire County Council;

Witney Town Council have no objections to these applications and support all efforts to continue excellent recycling in West Oxfordshire.

P433 **APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE - W/21/00532/PRMV**

The Committee received and considered an application for a premises licence variation at Pizza Express, 6 Market Square, Witney.

Resolved:

That, no objection be raised to the application for a premises licence variation at Pizza Express, 6 Market Square, Witney.

P434 **LICENSING APPLICATION W/21/00563/PRMA - LITTLE MAHAM'S LTD, 9 MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY**

At this juncture Cllr A Prosser declared a non-prejudicial interest in the application due to a family member being an employee of the applicant.

The Committee received and considered an application for a premises licence at Little Maham's Ltd, 9 Market Square, Witney.

Resolved:

That, no objection be raised to the application for a premises licence at Little Maham's Ltd, 9 Market Square, Witney.

P435 **LICENSING APPLICATION W/21/00487/PRMA - NEWZLINK, 24 CORN STREET, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered an application for a premises licence at Newzlink, 24 Corn Street, Witney.

Resolved:

That, no objection be raised to the application for a premises licence at Newzlink, 24 Corn Street, Witney.

P436 **APPLICATION FOR A MINOR VARIATION TO A PREMISES LICENCE - W/21/00609/PRMMV UNIT 2-4 EAGLE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE**

The Committee received and considered an application for a minor variation of premises licence at Unit 2-4 Eagle Industrial Estate, Witney.

The committee discussed the implications of an extension to the opening times to allow extra drinking up time. Members were concerned that by extending the closing time, the potential for noise disturbance would be increased.

Resolved:

Witney Town Council object to this application. The extension to the opening hours will prolong the leaving time of customers, which could protract noise nuisance for neighbouring residents.

P437 **COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk outlining the priorities for Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee from the recently approved Open Spaces Strategy.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the later report on wildflower planting should be considered separately to priority PO4, this would be a wider issue considered as part of the Grounds Maintenance contract. It was also advised that a mapping project concerning Town Council land was underway.

Resolved:

That, the priorities be noted.

P438 **THERMAL IMAGING CAMERA**

The committee received and considered the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer concerning the purchase and use of a thermal imaging camera.

Members were supportive of the camera, having already agreed its purchase at a previous meeting. There was discussion on how best hire of the equipment could be administered by the Council and potential pitfalls on charges and a deposit-based scheme. There was agreement that the Council could promote the camera and ask if any community groups would like to come forward to help work with the Council in rolling out its use.

Resolved:

1. That, the use of the thermal imaging camera be offered to community group(s) to work with the Council in helping residents make their homes more energy efficient.
2. That, a FLIR camera unit be purchased, the decision on the most appropriate in budget being delegated to the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer based on feedback and professional advice.

P439 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO 48(A)**

Resolved:

That, Standing Order 48 (a) be suspended to allow the meeting to continue as it had now passed two hours in length.

P440 **GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK - 18-26 SEPTEMBER 2021**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer concerning the Great Big Green Week 2021.

Members were supportive of the proposed events for the week 18 – 26 September which were in budget and the capacity of officers. The week would help promote and encourage the Council's climate objectives.

Resolved:

That, the Council supports the Great Big Green Week in September 2021 with a programme of proposed events throughout the week and a social media campaign.

P441 **WILDFLOWER PLANTING AT RECREATION GROUNDS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer concerning wildflower planting at the Town Council's recreation areas.

This item had been referred from the Council's Parks & Recreation Committee and members were supportive of further wildflower planting. There was some concern on the biodiverse benefits of the proposed method, compared to previous projects but agreement that clear, small areas sometimes had more impact than larger swathes. Advice on wildflower planting had previously been supplied by the Wychwood Project so members asked if they could be involved in these discussions to aid its progression.

Resolved:

1. That, confirmed locations for wildflower planting be agreed as Burwell field, Eton Close and Oxlease,
2. That, Officers explore the method of wildflower planting at these locations with the Wychwood Project,
3. That, volunteer groups be asked to assist with planting once the method and dates are known.

The meeting closed at: 8.25 pm

Chair