

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

Held on Monday, 6 September 2021

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

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	O Collins
	L Ashbourne	L Duncan
	T Ashby	D Enright
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	3 members of the public.	

PR449 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Butterfield who was replaced at the meeting by Councillor O Collins.

PR450 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

PR451 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee held on 5 July 2021 were received as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

PR452 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Miss. Olivia Tollerson addressed the Committee in respect of Agenda Item No. 5 – Request for a Lido.

The Committee reconvened following public participation.

PR453 **REQUEST FOR A LIDO**

The Committee gave consideration to a request for the provision of an open-air lido facility in Witney.

Members indicated their support for exploring the feasibility of a facility being provided in the town. It was noted that leisure facilities and strategy fell within the remit of West Oxfordshire District Council and discussions with relevant officers at the district council could be undertaken.

Discussion ensued around funding issues and whether developer funding could be accessed and also whether grants could be available from sporting bodies or legacy funding from the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

The Council emphasised the need for education of residents about the dangers of open water swimming and that there should be an ambition that every child in Witney was able to swim.

Resolved:

1. That the feasibility of an open-air lido facility in Witney be scoped in conjunction with partner organisations;
2. That the council supports the provision of an education programme on safety issues associated with open water areas and supports the ambition that all children in Witney should be able to swim.

PR454 **FOOTBALL, CRICKET, BOWLS & PARK RUN UPDATE**

The Committee considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor updating on the current position of sports provision provided by Witney Town Council.

It was reported that a positive meeting had been held with the football clubs that hired pitches from the council. Members noted that some funding was available from the Football Association to a maximum of £25,000 and the clubs had been encouraged to apply if appropriate. A playing pitch strategy was being developed by West Oxfordshire District Council and when this was complete a number of matters such as capacity to meet demand would need consideration. It was suggested and agreed that the relevant portfolio holder be invited to attend a future meeting.

An update was given on discussions with the District Council regarding possible transfer of facilities to the Town Council and the funding and governance issues that may arise. Members expressed their support for being able to offer facilities to a diverse range of users.

Consideration was given to recommendation in the report regarding drainage and irrigation.

Resolved:

1. To approve Increasing verti-draining verti-quake alternate years to verti-quake annually at football pitch renovations within the new grounds contract specification currently being drawn up;
2. To approve moving Witney Town Bowls irrigation controller from inside the club house to an external wall inside a secure cabinet on that wall; and

3. That the relevant portfolio holder at West Oxfordshire District Council be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss pitch issues.

PR455 **COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

The report of the Town Clerk providing an update Committee's work plan which included projects identified as part of the Council's Draft Strategic Plan and Budget Setting agreed in February 2021, as well as the Open Spaces Strategy adopted in June 2021 was received and considered. The report also requested any future/additional projects to be put forward for the budget setting cycle.

Members noted that the works at Park Road play area would not be undertaken until October at the earliest. It was suggested and agreed that an opening ceremony should be held once the facility was complete.

An update was given on the Skate Park and that Ramp Up the Leys were looking at grant funding opportunities. It was noted that council officers had also met with the group to look at a design brief for a tender process and that there may be some funding implications.

It was noted that proposals for the tennis courts and multi-use games areas would be considered as part of the budget setting process.

In respect of budget requests the committee suggested that an allocation £75,000 to complete works to the changing rooms at Burwell Hall should be included together with contingency funding for the Skate Park project. The committee suggested that use of Section 106 developer funding could be considered.

Resolved:

1. That the report and the status of the various agreed projects be noted; and
2. That Council be requested to consider an allocation £75,000 to complete works to the changing rooms at Burwell Hall together with contingency funding for the Skate Park project as part of the budget setting process.

The meeting closed at: 6.40 pm

Chair