

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

Held on Monday, 26 September 2022

At 6.45 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	A Prosser
	L Ashbourne	R Smith
	L Duncan	P Hiles (In place of H Eaglestone)
	V Gwatkin	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	5 members of the public.	

SC463 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor H Eaglestone, he was substituted by Councillor P Hiles.

SC464 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Prosser declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 16 by virtue of knowing the event organiser.

SC465 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 11 July 2022 were received.

SC363 – The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a letter of thanks had been received from Witney Voicebox choir in relation to a recent grant of £100

S365 - The committee considered the potential wording for the legacy project following the recent passing of HM, Queen Elizabeth II.

S368 – The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the plans for Remembrance were at an advanced stage. A Meeting had been held with all interested organisations.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities committee held on 11 July 2022 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the chair.

2. That, the wording for the sundial incorporates the Late Queen's life dates, 1926-2022 and installed by Witney Town Council to honour her Platinum Jubilee, 2022. The final wording to be agreed by officers and the Chair.

SC466 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from Got2B, Home-Start Oxford, Aspire Oxfordshire, APCAM and The Parish of Witney concerning Agenda Item 8.

Further representation was made by Mr E Marshall concerning Agenda Item 16.

The Committee reconvened at 19:41pm

SC467 **YOUTH SERVICES GRANT 2022-23**

The committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members welcomed all the applications which totalled more than £60,000 over the allocated budget. The committee agreed the town council was a small grass roots authority and needed to recognise its limitations. Members discussed what the current youth need was in Witney, ages of those affected and the benefits that each applying group could provide.

The chair suggested apportioning the budget based on the group's membership in Witney. This was agreeable although some members felt that some applicants held sizable reserves in their accounts and therefore consideration should be given to removing these applicants based on scoring against the grants criteria.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted, and
2. That, the decision on distribution of the Youth Services fund be deferred to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at its meeting on 3 October 2022.

Participants for the Youth Services Item left the meeting at 20:10

SC468 **WITNEY MUSIC FESTIVAL**

Following public participation members discussed the proposal put forward in respect of the council providing financial support as part of a wider partnership scheme.

The committee agreed that a partnership would secure the festival for future years and were supportive of measures to ensure this. These included subsidised use of The Leys event field and financial support which would be clarified when the position on finances was clearer.

The members agreed that Witney Town Council branding should be visible on stage to advertise its support and partnership with the festival.

Recommended:

1. That, the council enter a partnership with Witney Music Festival to provide this community event for the future., and
2. That, an official memorandum of understanding be produced to clarify the responsibilities of both parties and,
3. That, subsidised use of The Leys events field be included as part of this agreement and,
4. That, the committee agree in principle for funding towards the 2023 event, the amount being subject to budget setting for the 2023-24 financial year.

Councillor R Smith left the meeting at 20:30 with the remaining public.

SC469 **FINANCE REPORT**

The committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk/CEO.

Members received income and expenditure statements under its remit for period 5, 1 April 2022 – 1 August 2022.

The committee were grateful for the opportunity to consider Capital and Special revenue projects for the 2023-24 budget.

Recommended:

1. That, the report of the Town Clerk/CEO be noted, and
2. That, consideration be given to the financial request made by Witney Music Festival.

SC470 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

Members received updates on a blue plaque for Alice Batt, Citizen of the year Awards, Christmas Light Switch on, a potential charity calendar and In Bloom.

Recommended:

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That, the council facilitates the Blue Plaque reception for Alice Batt in the Corn Exchange on 1 October with the remaining £200 budget.
3. That, the council run Citizen of the Year awards for 2022 and explore the inclusion of a sporting achievement category.
4. That, the Citizen of the Year award ceremony is held separate to the Annual Town Meeting.
5. That, the idea of a charity calendar is supported however further investigation would be required and therefore would not be possible for 2023.
6. That, Christmas light switch on to be held on 2 December at the request of The Rotary Club of Witney.
7. That, the advent fayre to be held on Sunday 27 November.
8. That, the remaining 2022-23 In Bloom budget be earmarked for a more impactful community project. Possibly willow sheep on roundabouts.

SC471 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

Resolved:

That, as the meeting had now reached two hours in length, standing order 48 be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue.

SC472 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

The Committee received the report of the Community Engagement officer.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

SC473 **APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES - WITNEY TOWN CHARITY**

The committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members considered the proposed candidates against the criteria passed on by Witney Town Charity.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted, and
2. That, the Town Council nominated trustees be Barry Beadle and Rachel Crouch.

SC474 **WITNEY FORUM - NOTES**

The committee received the notes of the Witney Forum meeting held 6 July 2022.

Resolved:

That, the updates be noted

SC475 **WITNEY FORUM - FUTURE ADMINISTRATION**

The committee received and considered the report of The Deputy Town Clerk.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted, and
2. That, the administration should remain with West Oxfordshire District Council

SC476 **CYCLE REPAIR STANDS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer.

Members were disappointed the bike stands had been subjected to continued vandalism so discussed their merits and locations. The stands had been initially welcomed by residents but the use of them since was undetermined so it was agreed that the stand at The Leys should be

repaired and re-sited nearer the Coffee Shed where it would be covered by CCTV. The stand in Market Square was still partially useable so its use could be discerned at a later date.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the bike repair stand at The Leys Recreation Ground be repaired and re-sited nearer the Coffee Shed and,
3. That, the bike repair stand in Market Square be left for the time being.

SC477 **DEFIBRILLATOR - KING GEORGE V RECREATION GROUND**

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer.

Officers advised the issue had already been brought before the Council's Parks & Recreation Committee and agreement had been reached to allocate funds in the 2023/24 budget. However, members agreed there should be one last attempt with football clubs and the Football Association to obtain grant funding for the defibrillator.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, officers correspond with football clubs and the Football Association regarding grant funding and,
3. That, if unsuccessful, the funds totalling approximately £1,700.00 are included in the 2023/24 budget.

SC478 **WINTER PREPARATIONS**

The committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members agreed that a salt bin be sited at Rissington Drive. There were no further requests provided at the meeting for any other winter preparations.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted, and
2. That, a salt bin is installed at Rissington Drive at the cost of £250 plus vat

SC479 **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer.

Members were grateful to officers for compiling such a comprehensive review of the Council's infrastructure, including bins, benches, bus shelters etc. It had put the Council in a good position to develop a replacement and upgrade programme in line with its Open Spaces Strategy. Members were asked to contact officers if they noticed anything further which should be included.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, a corporate replacement, and upgrade plan is created in consultation with the Council's Operations team

SC480 **COVID MEMORIAL TASK & FINISH GROUP**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chair concerning a recent meeting of the group and confirmed a further site visit would be taking place the following week. No firm decisions had taken place but there was hope a plan would be formulated in the near future.

Resolved:

That, the update on progress be noted.

The meeting closed at: 9.04 pm

Chair