

Didcot Town Council

Environment & Climate Committee Monday 15th March 2021 at 7.30pm Online at Zoom.us



Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this committee.

PRESENT

Councillors:

P Davies.

A Hudson.

A Macdonald.

D Macdonald (Chair).

D Rouane.

A Thompson.

C Wilson.

Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk)

Mr R Harris (Outdoor Services Manager - OSM)

Mrs L Blake (Planning and Environment Officer – PEO [minutes])

Others:

Cllr J Moody (non-committee member)

Cllr P Siggers (non-committee member)

One member of the public.

Cllr D Macdonald started the meeting by congratulating the PEO on her new role and welcoming the new OSM once again.

92. To receive apologies.

No member tendered their apologies for the meeting.

93. To receive declarations of interest.

No declarations were made.

94. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th January 2021 as a true and correct record.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr A Hudson seconded, and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, subject to the following amendments:

- Item 80 - Cllr Wilson clarified that it was in fact the local Co-operative store who were willing to supply duck food for residents to purchase and not her.

Cllr Hudson wanted confirmation that he was included in the Tyne Avenue/Didcot Football Club working group. It was confirmed that he was.

All members agreed.

95. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report.

- a. Item 80 – Cllr Wilson explained that the Co-op store are willing to supply duck food for residents to purchase, but she is waiting on a response to her email, from their head office.
- b. Cllr Rouane suggested that at the next meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee, discussions should be had about the Committee's priorities and the fact that some projects should be listed on future agendas as separate items.
- c. Cllr Wilson asked about the Solar Streets Initiative. Cllr D Macdonald explained that a meeting has been advertised on Sustainable Didcot's Facebook page (for the 8th April 2021) and encouraged the Councillors to register and attend.

Cllr Wilson explained that the Solar Streets Didcot website is up and running and volunteers are needed for leaflet drops for the initiative. It was **AGREED** that this could be advertised on Didcot Town Council's website.

Cllr Wilson will forward the details to the PEO.

- d. Cllr Rouane wanted to clarify that the Tyne Avenue/Didcot Town Football Club working group, had not progressed due to the OSM waiting to hear from companies regarding the quotes for work to the footpath and drain cover.

- e. Cllr Davies enquired as to the progress of the Ladygrove Lake Diffuser. The OSM explained that there had been issues with the company as they are waiting for a pump to be delivered from Japan, but that a deposit had been paid and work will commence shortly.

An update will be made available by the end of the month.

The Committee heard the updates for each item as listed on the following 2 pages.

Action	Topic	Responsible	Rating	Minute 18.01.2021	Meeting 15.03.2021
Bus shelters	Installation of an end panel following petition	Officers	Amber	The Town Clerk and Planning & Environment Officer reported that pressure had been maintained on Clear Channel, the owners of the shelter.	The end panel has been promised to happen very shortly, although a date has not yet been set.
Tyne Avenue		Councillors	Amber	The terms of reference were adopted for the Tyne Avenue/Didcot Town Football Club working group.	The OSM is waiting for quotes for the work needed to the handrails, drain cover and footpath. Cllr Hudson confirmed as a member of the working group.
Edmonds Park Play equipment		Councillors	Amber	The matter was addressed in the Outdoor Services Manager's Report.	The matter was on the Outdoor Services Manager's report for consideration.
Edmonds Park Pavilion (demolition)		Officers	Amber	The item was addressed in the Outdoor Services Manager's report.	The matter was on the agenda for consideration.
Edmonds Park Pavilion (construction)		Officers	Amber	The Planning & Environment Officer reported that a topographical survey had been undertaken in early December 2020 and that the Officers awaited revised detailed drawings.	The matter was on the agenda for consideration.
Edmonds Park Splash Pad		Officers	Amber	There was no further progress to report.	The matter was on the agenda for consideration.
Ladygrove		Officers	Amber	There was no further progress to	The matter was addressed in the

Sandpit				report.	Outdoor Services Manager's report.
Community Transport (Cllr L Price)		Officers and Councillors	Amber	There was no further progress to report.	There was no progress to report.
Bus Shelter adoption		Officers	Amber	No progress to report.	There was no further progress to report.
Metal Shelters in Edmonds Park		Councillors	Amber	No progress to report.	There was no further progress to report.
Creation of 'wild' areas of the Town Council's parks		Councillors	Amber	This matter was on the agenda for consideration.	The matter was addressed in the Outdoor Services Manager's report.
Changing colour of the dog bins in the area, to green		Officers	Amber	No progress to report.	There was no further progress to report.
Completing the path on Stubbings Land		Councillors	Amber	The matter was on the agenda.	This matter was on the agenda for consideration.
Ladygrove Lakes		Officers	Amber		Deposit has been paid. Date will be confirmed shortly, but an update will be available by the end of the month.

96. To note the transferring of funds to the next financial year

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Committee would need to decide whether to agree to the suggested transfer of funds in some cost centres to ear marked reserves, for the next financial year.

Cllr Wilson queried that the Ladygrove Lakes Diffuser was not listed. The Town Clerk confirmed that cost centres had been vired to afford this project, so it was not included.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr Thompson and **RESOLVED** to transfer the funds as mentioned in the report, to ear marked reserves for the next financial year.

97. To note the Outdoor Services Manager's Report

The committee noted the contents of the report, as follows:

Allotments

Car parking is being restricted on New Road, Mereland Road & Cockcroft sites due to wet ground conditions, notices have been erected to notify plot holders not to drive onto the sites.

Damage has been caused at Cockcroft where a vehicle delivering manure has left large ruts in the grass roadway. Once weather improves this will need to be filled in and made safe.

The damage created at Cockcroft Allotments has been rectified using turf taken from elsewhere, without incurring any cost to the Council. We have received an email from the Chair of the Didcot Allotment Society with a complaint regarding these works, and we have been asked to remove the soil and turf and to repair with gravel. The OSM will suggest to the Allotment Liaison group that Didcot Town Council can cover the cost of the labour if allotment holders cover the costs of the materials.

Play Areas

Play Areas are currently open, but this may change again if the Government changes its advice. Signs are in place advising compliance with 2 metre spacing. Outside gyms and Tennis Courts remained closed.

There are lots of outstanding repairs required to virtually all the play areas. and these have been repairs that have never been carried out. All five Zip wires are in need of maintenance. The zip wire quotes are between **£480.00** plus vat for inspection without any repairs, to **£780.00** plus vat per inspection including some repairs.

A quote has been received from a ROSPA registered company to inspect the play areas. This is for **£1,475.12** plus vat. This appears to be a lot cheaper than using a

manufacturing play equipment company and they can also carry out the repairs far cheaper. They may also have a solution to some of the gym repairs as they carry lots of stock alternatives for the outdoor play and gym equipment.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr Davies and **RESOLVED** to commit to the Zip wire repairs and to arrange for the play areas to be inspected, at a cost of £1,475.12 plus vat and £480-£780.00 plus vat, per zip wire.

NB – Town Clerk post meeting note – ROSPA inspections were carried out in July 2020 as an annual inspection.

Cemetery

Currently a maximum of 30 mourners (plus Undertakers and Bearers) can attend graveside funerals.

Trees have been pruned and flower beds are being prepared for planting.

Two Memorial Bench Applications have been received for Didcot Residents buried in the Kynaston Road cemetery. One is a white painted wooden bench which is 150cm long and the second is a natural wooden teak bench 123cm long.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllrs Hudson, Rouane, Davies and Wilson, and **RESOLVED** to approve these applications.

Edmonds & Loyd Parks

There is currently no football taking place in the park. The first cut of the season has been carried out in preparation of the football restarting. Both lining equipment should be up and running by the end of March.

Cllr Davies suggested not marking football pitches until at least 29th March, as that is when restrictions on grassroots football and organised outdoor sports, is due to be lifted.

The OSM wanted the team to be prepared.

It was **AGREED** to mark the football pitches at Edmonds and Loyds Park, from 29th March 2021, if restrictions are lifted as planned.

Edmonds Park pavilion

The old pavilion is currently fenced off for safety reasons. Demolition has been delayed in order to determine the need for permission for the demolition and installation of temporary changing facilities on site. We had previously been informed permission was not necessary. We may also need to carry out a bat survey due to the location of the pavilion. The OSM has been in contact with Oxfordshire County Council's Innovation and Research department who are keen to lend Didcot Town

Council the monitoring equipment and to help set this up to record any activity for bats in, or near the pavilion at Edmonds Park.

This will form the basis of the activity report if required for the demolition planning application and this should hopefully be free of charge. These works can only be carried out nearer to the Spring, at the end of April, beginning of May. It is not clear that a bat survey will be needed.

The electricity supply has still not been removed due to issues with Opus Energy who must remove the meter before SSE can disconnect the supply. The OSM has been in contact with Opus energy. Disconnection has been delayed until a decision has been made on which company will be used for the demolition (Didcot Town Council may not need to have the meters disconnected, depending on the company used).

The OSM has received a quote to demolish the Pavilion, which would include boxing in the power supply into a secure external electrical cabinet to contain the power cables and the meters and relocating the water source to a below surface level. This would allow reconnection to be carried out when the welfare units go into place. This would avoid all dealings with all the power companies.

The quote for this work is **£18,822.57** plus vat. This total does not include the resurfacing or creation of a new pad for the welfare units to sit on.

The quote for the new pad would be a further **£13,194.08** plus vat. The ground will be left uneven once demolition has been done and the site will require work to it before the welfare units can be put into place.

The PEO explained that an update had been received from a Planning Officer at SODC to state that prior approval for the pavilion demolition, will cost **£48** (this includes a reduction of 50%) and a site plan will be needed. SODC can draw up the plan for a cost of roughly **£25**. The Committee agreed to this.

It was **AGREED** to progress with the demolition by paying for the site plan and prior approval from SODC, and to use the company who had quoted for the work for both the demolition and the resurfacing or creation of the new pad.

Ladygrove Park Pitches

The previous OSM had informed the Committee that work had been carried out on the field between the Tennis Courts and the Skate Park and that it should have been possible to mark out 2 junior football pitches.

The new OSM has contacted the FA Representative for the area and has requested an inspection. This will hopefully produce a report on the condition of the grass, the subsoil structure and will advise Didcot Town Council of the options and how best to approach any works. His advice is, to save money in

the future, some of the Outdoor Team be trained on how to prepare the sports surfaces.

The cost for the consultant's charges is **£1,818.00** plus vat.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to go ahead with this initial inspection at a cost of £1,818.

The OSM is awaiting quotes for the repositioning of play equipment in Ladygrove Park, due to the ongoing issues with flooding.

Ladygrove Lakes

Actions have been taken to restrict breeding sites of the Canadian geese, by placing chicken wire around the islands. Work has been completed on cutting back the foliage around the lakes. This should be sufficient until the winter of 2021.

Broadway flower beds and Civic Hall

The wildflower flower beds have been prepared ready for the seeds to be spread, which will take place in April/May. Turf has been removed and the soil turned over. The roses have been repositioned to nearer the Civic Hall and all the beds around the Hall have been revamped and made ready for new planting, which will be ordered in the next few weeks.

Stubbings Land Footpath

Work will commence on the footpath very soon, at a cost of £18,392.38 plus vat.

Sustainable Didcot

A plan for planting trees on Council owned land has been forwarded to Cllr Wilson from the OSM. It is hoped that the required trees/hedging can be ordered for this coming Autumn and will improve biodiversity and air quality in Didcot. The OSM has contacted Earthwatch who part funded Witney's Miyanki Forest to investigate if there is any funding available to Didcot Town Council so that a 'Micro Forest' project could be considered. Cllr Davies recommended the OSM try to visit West Witney Sports and Social Club.

Tree Policy

Didcot Town Council does not currently have a Tree Policy. Cllr D Macdonald had discussed tree policies with a knowledgeable resident who could help with drafting up a policy. Cllr Rouane suggested looking at the work SODC are currently doing on the same idea and to contact them for advice.

Any policy would need to be taken to Full Council to be agreed and adopted. It could then be displayed on the Town Council's website.

The Town Clerk could get samples of Tree policies from the SLCC forum, to compare. Cllr Rouane suggested this should be Councillor lead and it was AGREED the Town Clerk would gather information which will then be passed to the OSM and the Committee Members.

Staffing

Two members of the Outdoor Team have had negative covid test results.

The team are currently operating at full strength, one member of staff is back to work after a long illness. One member of staff is suffering a repetitive strain injury on his elbow.

The Outdoor Team have undergone some urgent training in February 2021, on Health and Safety at work and Manual lifting and Working at Heights. They will be attending a First Aid course at the Civic Hall, under social distancing requirements and guidance, in March 2021.

Three Life vests have been purchased for staff to be able to work safely in and around the Ladygrove Lakes and in the boat.

All the team have been provided with uniforms and hi vis wet weather clothing. They have been supplied with the correct groundworkers safety helmets (which include ear defenders and face visor) and new gloves.

Tools

The OSM provided a list of tools which have been purchased for the 2021 season:

- Pitch Forks x2
- Branch Loppers x2
- Secateurs x2
- Lawn Edging Shears x2
- Hand Trowels x3
- Boot Cleaner x1
- Yard Door/Dust Mats (Agreed by Cllr Moody, have not been ordered yet)

Events

Hatwell Funfair had requested the following dates for 2021:

- Ladygrove Park:
12th – 26th April (Income to DTC £1,750.00)
May dates have previously been cancelled.
- Edmonds Park:
5th – 19th July (Income to DTC £2,000)

It was **AGREED** to cancel the dates in April.

The Committee decided to consider the July dates at the next meeting, depending on Government's advice nearer the time.

98. To note the Vehicle Replacement Report and to consider recommendations to the Committee

The Committee noted the OSM's report.

There is still one vehicle to trial, which is due to happen at the end of the month.

99. To note the Equipment Replacement Report and to consider recommendations to the Committee

The Committee noted the paper.

OSM explained that the Iseki TG5470 is under-utilised and is primarily used for towing. Additional equipment can be purchased to utilise this machine. Cllr D Macdonald noted this would be very expensive.

Cllr Davies suggested trading in items 6&7 (the Iseki SX622 and the Iseki TG5470) for more substantial equipment and 'start fresh' with what the team needs. The OSM agreed to investigate this option and to weigh up the pros and cons.

It was AGREED to repair the Ransoms and the Ford/New Holland Tractor. The cost for repairing the tractor would be £569 and this could then potentially be traded in.

Cllr Davies asked the OSM if PA Turneys is used a lot by Didcot Town Council, could he investigate to see if we could trade in the equipment for credit notes to be used later, for repairs or equipment. The OSM agreed to investigate this.

It was proposed by Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr D Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to commit to repair the TG540 Tractor at a cost of **£589**.

Cllr Davies proposed, Cllr A Macdonald seconded, and it was **RESOLVED** to commit to purchase the Pellenc Strimmer from RT machines, which was quoted at **£4,170.00**, which included a replacement hand blower, harness, and battery pack.

100. To note updates from the Allotment Liaison Working Group and to consider recommendations to the Committee

The Allotment Liaison Group had made suggested changes for all documents relating to the allotments and asked the Committee to approve the changes.

All documents were approved except for 2 alterations to the 'Allotment rules.'

1. Cllr Davies explained that there should be something added to the rules regarding vehicles on the allotments (appendix 1, item2) to say that any driver and/or owner will be held responsible for any damage which is caused to the grounds by their vehicle, it may mean incidents such as what happened at Cockcroft allotment, may not happen again.

Cllrs A and D Macdonald agreed with stating that owners/drivers will be liable for any damage they have caused.

It was **AGREED** that the PEO will re-word item 2 on the allotment rules, to include this and forward the change to the Committee Members for their approval.

2. BBQs. Discussions were had as whether to allow BBQs on the allotment sites. Gas cannisters were a great concern, whilst disposable, small BBQs were preferred. It was agreed to remove the suggested sentence regarding BBQs from the rules (appendix 1, item 20).

It was **AGREED** to put notices on the allotment notice boards to inform allotment holders that Didcot Town Council will allow small, occasional, family BBQs on the allotment sites, for a trial period of 12 months.

The ALG had asked the Committee to ban the use of industrial weedkiller by allotment holders, on the allotment sites.

Cllr A Macdonald suggested supporting this rule with the intention of reviewing next year.

It was **AGREED** to approve the ban, with the decision to review the situation in the future.

It was **AGREED** to not allow the 3rd burn date in August 2021.

All documents were **APPROVED** by the Committee, subject to the 2 small changes to the Allotment Rules.

101. To consider the Allotment request from the Active Communities Officer at South Oxfordshire District Council and to consider recommendations to the Committee

The Committee discussed the request. There were concerns over the length of the queue and Didcot residents who may not wish to miss out.

Cllr A Macdonald suggested that the Restore charity maybe able to help with their vacant space.

It was **AGREED** to allow the charity to join a waiting list, but to contact them and tell them to liaise with Restore.

102. To note the update on the Planning Application for the Pavilion

The Planning Application for the new Pavilion is almost ready.

The next stage is to agree the technical quotes. It was suggested that a small working group is set up to review the quotes. The group would consist of two

Members from the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Environment and Climate Committee and the new Property and Facilities Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllrs A Macdonald and A Hudson and it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the setting up of the working group to carry out the review whilst the Planning Application was being determined.

103. To note the update on the Table Tennis Tables

The Town Clerk explained that Didcot Town Council will receive part funding for three table tennis tables, from SODC in conjunction with Table Tennis England, as well as the two tables the Town Council currently have – one at the Civic Hall and one at Willowbrook.

SODC are running a program to promote table tennis over Easter.

The Committee noted the paper.

104. To note the Splash Park update and to consider recommendations to the Committee

The Committee discussed the suggested location options in the paper.

There was a discussion on the Willowbrook building but that was going out to tender.

Cllr D Macdonald explained the Splash Park had already been budgeted for and has been requested from residents in consultations.

Cllr Rouane agreed that Willowbrook is the priority, but the Splash Park would not impede on it. Cllr Rouane did have a concern with the suggested new locations being between the pavilion and the playing fields.

Cllr Thompson suggested asking the Working Group recommended for the Pavilion, to help with the Splash Park, to see if these works could also help landscape the Splash Park in the alternative location near to the new Pavilion. This could help save money on both projects.

It was proposed by Cllr Rouane, seconded by Cllrs Hudson and A Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to agree to moving the location of the Splash Park to the vicinity of the pavilion, subject to the recommendations of the Working Group.

105. To note the Bus Shelter report for Ladygrove and to consider the recommendations to Committee

The Committee discussed the paper.

Cllr Davies explained that there is a growing need for another bus shelter on Avon Way, and in his opinion, there is room.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to contact the Oxfordshire County Council officer and ask them to visit the suggested locations on Avon Way, to investigate if they are suitable for a bus shelter.

The meeting closed at 21:20.

Signed _____ Chairman

Date: _____