

Didcot Town Council

Environment & Climate Committee Monday 21st November 2022 at 7.30pm All Saints Room, Civic Hall



Minutes

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

PRESENT

Councillors:

A Macdonald (Chair)
C Wilson (Vice Chair)
A Hudson
P Giesberg
M Walsh
V Haval

Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk)
Mr F Lamb (Outdoor Services Manager)

Others present:

Mike Piggford – Representative from the Lawn Tennis Association
2 members of the Fishing Association

27. To receive apologies.

Apologies were tendered from Cllrs A Thompson and P Davies.
Cllr V Haval substituted for Cllr P Davies.

28. To receive declarations of interests.

No declarations of interest were received.

29. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th May 2022.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, and note them as such.

All members agreed.

Cllr A Macdonald proposed suspending standing orders to allow the attending representative from the LTA to address the Committee and to discuss agenda item 10 at this point.

All members agreed.

Mike Piggford, the representative from the LTA, addressed the Committee on the revised proposal for the tennis courts in Ladygrove. Two options were discussed which can be found below (taken from the Didcot Parks Tennis – investment proposal’ document which was made available to Committee members at the meeting):

“Option 1 - Partnership model

- *NTA provide complete venue management, including customer support, marketing and administration, while driving participation through a dual offer of coaching and venue hire.*
- *The Council receives all revenues from whatever venue access scheme it chooses (free access, pay & play and/or annual pass income).*
- *In return for operational venue management responsibilities, NTA would deliver a professional and community coaching programme, rent-free.*
- *The Council commits to ensuring the long-term maintenance and upkeep of the courts*
 - *General cleaning including power washing and moss killing when needed.*
 - *Resurface of the courts within 15 years of the completion of the funded works.*

Option 2 - Operator model

This was the previously proposed option which is still available should the council choose.

- *An Annual license fee is paid by NTA to the council, to cover the full sinking fund to make courts fully sustainable*
- *NTA provide complete venue management, including customer support, marketing, and administration, while driving participation through a dual offer of coaching and venue hire.*
- *Court bookings are available to players at an hourly pay and play rate (approx. £6/hr), with the option of a fixed price annual household pass for regular players which gives the household free bookings for the year (approx. £45 per annum).*
- *Specific times for reduced or free access can be provided.”*

The proposed funding for the courts in Ladygrove would be approximately £41,000 which would include resurfacing the three courts, replacing the nets and posts and the installation of a new 'smart' gate with online booking system.

When asked how people could 'book' a court if they did not have access to the internet, the representative informed the Committee that the NTA, who would be operating the courts, have a dedicated customer support team who would be contactable via telephone. Courts could be booked this way.

There were also questions regarding the VAT on the project as the funding would not cover this (approximately £8,000). The Town Clerk informed members that expert advice would need to be sought to clarify if the VAT claim could be dispersed over several years.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

30. To consider the revised proposal from the LTA and NTA for the tennis courts in Ladygrove

The Committee discussed the options in depth and considered them both, as well as whether Didcot Town Council could manage the courts 'in house' at Willowbrook.

Although some members were supportive in principle, some were also concerned over a long-term commitment and mentioned having a 'break clause' at 3-5 years should be considered.



The funding would be provided by the LTA as a national organisation whilst the NTA (a private company) would provide the coaching.


It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr P Giesberg, and **RESOLVED** to instruct Officers to gather more information on the options (to include costs to resurface the courts and manage in house and information on the VAT) and to arrange an Extra Ordinary meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee.

All members agreed.

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

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

Action	Responsible	Rating	Meeting 03.10.2022	Meeting 21.11.2022
Ladygrove Sandpit	Officers	Amber	<p>Work on the construction of the sandpit in Ladygrove started w/c 26th September 2022.</p> <p>The Huck Rotator Basket in Ladygrove had been repaired.</p>	<p>The Sandpit in Ladygrove had been completed:</p> 
Tidying up of the noticeboards	Officers	Amber	Due to staff shortages this had not been possible, but it was hoped this could be done in the coming months.	This was ongoing.
Wheelchair Inclusive Swing	Councillors & Officers	Green	<p>The matter was addressed in the Outdoor Services Manager's report.</p> <p>Work was due to start at the beginning of November.</p>	<p>The swing has been installed.</p>  <p>Signs would be installed, and the relevant RA written before the swing was officially opened.</p>
Jubilee- Trees	Councillors & Officers	Amber	TOE funding application had been approved, on the condition that SODC gave permission for the	SODC supplied DTC with an agreement which went before Full Council on 7 th November 2022. The trees had been ordered and would be planted asap.

			planting to proceed. Officers were still waiting on updates from SODC.	
Replacement trees in Edmonds Park	Officers	Amber	Investigations are on-going but a new order may be needed.	These had been ordered with the TOE application trees.
Shared cycle path additions to visible desired line in Ladygrove	Officers & Councillors	Amber	The OSM would investigate costings for the work at location 3 (E&C Minutes 21.03.2022).	This would be re-visited again in 2023 due to the departure of the OSM.
Wall at Broadway Allotments	Officers	Amber	Min.19 (9) it was agreed to repoint the roadside of the wall at a cost of £1,255.	The roadside wall along the Broadway allotments would be repointed 26 th -27 th November 2022.
Cableway Dismantling Inspections	Officers	Green		Dismantling Inspections were carried out and issues found, were fixed.
				The new zipwire in Ladygrove had been damaged, therefore the seat had been removed until the company could rectify it.
Cemetery Soil Box	St Birinus School	Green		Technology Technicians at St Birinus School made a beautiful wooden soil box for DTC to use when overseeing interments in the cemetery. 
St Annes Playground refurbishment	Officers & Councillors	Amber		The refurbishment to St Annes Playground was due to commence before Christmas.

32. To consider the Outdoor Services report

The Committee noted the Outdoor Services report.

4. New Road Allotments

The Committee noted the concerns regarding the burn dates at all sites and considered alternative options.

Although 'mulching' in future would be create an additional cost to the Council, it should be investigated.

It was **AGREED** to pass this to the Allotment Liaison Group to discuss at their next meeting.

11. 'Eat the Rainbow Border'

The Committee considered the proposal to construct a small, healthy eating border with raised beds and hanging baskets at the Civic Hall.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the proposal in principle.

12. Playgrounds

The Committee considered the OSM's recommendation to commit to annual disassembling inspections of the zip wires and the inspection schedule for the play areas, as listed below:

Site	Inspected	Annual Cost
Edmonds Park Junior	Quarterly	£320
Edmonds Park Northeast corner Gym	Biannually	£160
Edmonds Park Northwest corner Gym	Biannually	£160
Edmonds Park Teen Zone Outdoor Gym	Biannually	£160
Edmonds Park Teen Zone	Biennial cableway inspection and biannual operational	£311
Great Western Drive	Quarterly operational and biennial cableway disassembly inspection	£480
Ladygrove Park	Quarterly operational and biennial cableway disassembly inspection	£480
Ladygrove Skate Park	Biannually	£160
Loyd Recreation Ground	Quarterly operational and biennial cableway disassembly inspection	£480
Marsh Recreation Ground	Quarterly operational and biannual cableway disassembly inspection	£480
Smallbone Recreation Ground	Quarterly	£320
St Annes Playground	Quarterly	£320
Total		£3,391

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and **RESOLVED** to accept the costs and instruct Active Play to progress with the inspections across all the sites, at a cost of £3,391.

All members agreed.

16. It was agreed to remove the red net from the teen zone in the new year.

19. Proposal from Style Acre

The Committee noted the proposal from Style Acre to position a container on Ladygrove that could house specially adapted bikes and trikes.

The Committee agreed the proposal in principle; however, they requested further investigations into the type of unit which would be required. The Committee considered possibly purchasing a unit and 'renting' it to Style Acre so it could be available to all residents to hire.

It was **AGREED** that once costings had been found for this project they would be sent to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to consider.

20. Boulders for Ladygrove and the Cricket Wicket

The Committee discussed the projects and the estimated costings of £40,000 for the boulders and £12,000 for the Cricket Wicket. They noted the boulders would be fairly vandal proof.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend these projects as a larger project for the development of Ladygrove to the Ladygrove Liaison Working Group to progress.

All members agreed.

23. Smallbones Recreation Ground fencing

The Committee decided to ask Officers to investigate various options of fencing for the recreation ground.

24. Ladygrove Lakes

The Committee heard that a lot of different types of fish were found in the lakes when they were 'netted' on 12th October 2022.

Progress on the purchase of a pump had stalled due to the legalities with permission to abstract the water. Initial talks with Thames Water had been positive. Planning permission would need to be applied for to install a pump at the lakes.

The OSM explained the next step would be consulting with an expert for quotes on installing a pump and progressing with the planning. He also mentioned the main priority would be the setting up the Ladygrove Lakes Working Group/Ladygrove Liaison Working Group to progress the project.

Cllr A Macdonald proposed suspending standing orders to allow the attending representatives from the Fishing Club to address the Committee.

All members agreed.

The representatives spoke of the urgent need to have the pump installed and the issue with the silt in the lakes. They suggested that local farmers may make use of the silt. The representatives also spoke of the need for toilets at the lake and they asked the Committee to consider allowing the bailiffs to sell day tickets at the lakes.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

The OSM explained he had received the toilet proposal and would forward to the Planning and Environment Officer.

The Chair asked the representatives to put the day ticket request into a proposal for the Committee to consider at a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the pump and the setting up of the Ladygrove Liaison Group.

All members agreed.

30. Queen's Green Canopy

The Committee noted that the trees ordered for the Queen's Green Canopy project would be delivered by 16th December.

33. Beech tree at the front of the Civic Hall

The OSM recommended ordering an established Red Oak tree to be planted alongside the Chestnut tree, so it would have time to mature before the Chestnut needed removing in the coming years.

All members agreed.

33. To consider the suggested budget for 2023-2024

The Committee discussed the suggested budget for 2023-2024.

It was noted that OCC land would only be cut once a year if DTC did not continue cutting it.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the suggested budget but to remove cost centre 3163 ('Sandpit and Train') as the maintenance could be incorporated into the general maintenance cost centre, 3154.

**34. To consider the vehicle access deterrents for Smallbone Recreation
Ground report and recommendations to the Committee**

The Committee considered the report and agreed that a combination of bunding and bollards should be considered.

Members also discussed the War Memorial and the option of improving and relocating it further onto the open green area to create more space, especially for Remembrance Day.

It was **AGREED** to allow Officers to investigate the improvement of the area as a bigger project and feedback to the Committee once more information had been obtained.

35. To consider applying to 'drop the kerb' on Park Road, to create a staff only access to the Outdoor Services Depot report and recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to progress with the dropped kerb application for Park Road to create a 'works vehicle only' access.

All members agreed.

36. To note the Edmonds Park Noticeboard update

The Committee noted the update.

The meeting closed at 21:30

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____

