

## Notice of a meeting of the

### **Environment and Climate Committee**

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7.30pm

All Saints Room, Civic Hall



**Members of the Environment and Climate Committee are summoned to attend a meeting on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7.30pm.**

### **Admission of the public and media**

The Council welcomes members of the public to its meetings in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960.

### **Reports and minutes**

We add reports and minutes to our website.

### **Recording, photographs, and filming**

The press or public may audio-record, photograph or film meetings, or report from the meeting using social media. As such members of the public may be recorded or photographed during the meeting.

We ask that anyone wishing to record or photograph the meeting notifies the Town Clerk before the start of the meeting.

### **Public participation**

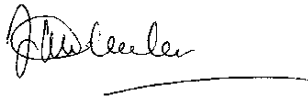
The Council welcomes the public's involvement in meetings, which must be in accordance with our rules (Standing Orders 30 - 32 on a matter before the Council).

At the relevant time during the meeting, the Chair will invite members of the public to present their questions, statements, or petitions.

To find out about participation, please email the Planning and Environment Officer at [lblake@didcot.gov.uk](mailto:lblake@didcot.gov.uk)

# Agenda

1. To receive apologies
2. To receive declarations of interests  
Members are reminded to declare any interests they may have on any item on this agenda in accordance with Didcot Town Council's Code of Conduct
3. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 as a true and correct record **(attached)**
4. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report **(attached)**
5. To note the External Income and Expenditure to date for external works, as updated on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023 **(attached)**
6. To note the Outdoor Services Manager's report and recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**
7. To consider the purchase of new battery-operated equipment report and recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**
8. To consider the report on Ladygrove Lakes and the recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**
9. To consider the South and Vale Air Quality Action Plan **(attached)**
10. To consider the recommendations from the Allotment Liaison Group and note the draft minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 **(attached)**



Janet Wheeler  
**Town Clerk**  
4<sup>th</sup> July 2023

## **Voting members:**

Cllr Gavin Roberts (Chair)  
Cllr Kelly Morrison (Deputy Chair)  
Cllr Stephen Cole  
Cllr Andrew Jones  
Cllr Anthony Hudson  
Cllr James Broadbent  
Cllr Luke Hislop

## **Nominated Substitute Members:**

Cllr Chris Jennings  
Cllr David Aragao  
Cllr Hugh Macdonald  
Cllr Zia Mohammed  
Cllr Denise Macdonald  
Cllr Mocky Khan  
Cllr George Ryall

## Didcot Town Council

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### **Environment & Climate Committee** Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7.30pm All Saints Room, Civic Hall



### **DRAFT Minutes**

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

#### **PRESENT**

##### **Councillors:**

Cllr G Roberts (Acting Chair)  
Cllr K Morrison (Acting Deputy Chair)  
Cllr A Hudson  
Cllr S Cole  
Cllr A Jones  
Cllr J Broadbent  
Cllr D Macdonald

##### **Non-voting Councillors:**

Cllr C Jennings  
Cllr H Macdonald

##### **Officers:**

Mrs L Blake (Planning and Environment Officer – PEO [minutes])  
Mr M Blake (Interim Outdoor Services Manager - OSM)  
Mr A Guzinski (Planning and Allotment Officer)

#### **1. To elect the Chair of the Committee**

The Acting Chair, Cllr G Roberts opened the meeting and called for nominations. It was proposed by Cllr A Jones, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr G Roberts as the Chair of the Environment and Climate Committee.

The vote was unanimous.

## **2. To elect the Vice Chair of the Committee**

Cllr S Cole proposed Cllr K Morrison as the Deputy Chair. This was seconded by Cllr G Roberts and **RESOLVED**. There were no other nominations, and the vote was unanimous.

## **3. To receive apologies**

Cllr L Hislop tendered his apologies. Cllr D Macdonald substituted.

## **4. To receive declarations of interest**

No declarations were made.

## **5. To review the Environment and Climate Committee Terms of Reference**

The Committee reviewed the terms of reference, and no changes were made. It was **RESOLVED** to accept the terms of reference.

All members agreed.


## **6. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 as a true and correct record**

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

All members agreed.

## **7. 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 16.01.2023	Meeting 05.06.2023
Tidying up of the noticeboards	Officers	Amber	Work on this was on going.	Would be carried out throughout the summer, using casual staff.
Shared cycle path additions to visible desired line in Ladygrove	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Price per metre was to be found for various types of pathways.	Work on-going.
Ladygrove Zip wire	Officers	Green	All sites had had their cableway dismantling inspections, except Ladygrove.	The Zip wire had been fixed.
Ladygrove Lake Pump	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Work on this was on-going.	Work on this was on-going and meetings would be arranged with the Fishing Association and the newly formed Ladygrove Management Group.
Millennium Woods signs	Officers	Amber		An update on the noticeboards was covered in the OSM's report.
New bench location in Edmonds Park	Officers & Councillors	Amber	The OSM's recommended location was detailed in the OSM report and approved.	<p>The bench had been purchased and installed in Edmonds Park. Unfortunately it had already been damaged:</p>  <p>The outdoor team had said this is unfixable (the bottom has been badly damaged too, so they replaced it with an older recycled plastic one, for the time being.</p>
Vehicle stickers	Officers	Green		Town Council logo stickers for the outdoor vehicles were delivered 30/05/23.

Skate Park and other park signs	Officers	Green		The signs for the Skate Park, Smallbone Rec and St Annes Park were delivered 30/05/23 and would be attached to the posts/gates as soon as possible.
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Cllr K Morrison requested that the Environment and Climate Committee budgets be added to the Committee's agenda as a standard item. The PEO confirmed this would be done.

Cllr A Jones enquired about the Ladygrove Pump and how often it was used. The OSM confirmed that last year it ran for four weeks straight, (four hours a day) and that members of the Fishing Association aided the outdoor team with this work. The PEO confirmed that the Ladygrove Management Working Group would take on the issues with the lakes in their meetings, which would feed directly back to the Environment and Climate Committee.

Both Cllrs J Broadbent and C Jennings suggested meeting with the OSM on site to discuss what further actions could be taken. Any Councillor would be welcome to attend.

## **8. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's report**

The Committee noted the Outdoor Services Manager's report and considered the recommendations.

### 13. Cockcroft allotments

The OSM updated the Committee on the history of the trees. Members were informed that ownership of the land where the garage was located had changed, and the new owner had been written to, to request permission to work on their land. No response had been received at the time of the meeting.

It was recommended that the crown of the Oak tree be reduced, and the Pine tree removed, as it was struggling, at a cost of **£1,250**. This would be taken from cost centre 310/3158 'Trees'.

It was proposed by Cllr A Jones, seconded by S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to accept this quote for the work.

All members agreed.

### 18. Cemetery

The Committee considered the OSM's recommendation to amend the cemetery rules to include:

*"All Christmas decorations must be removed from the cemetery by 1<sup>st</sup> February each year. Any ornaments and vases are to be kept well within the parameters of the grave space. Failure to abide by these rules will result in the immediate removal of the items by the Council."*

It was proposed by Cllr A Jones, and **RESOLVED** to accept the amendments to the cemetery rules and regulations.

All members agreed.

19. Edmonds and Great Western Drive Park – seesaws

The Committee considered the recommendations and the quotes from various companies to replace the two seesaws. These arrived after the agenda was sent out but was given to the members at the start of the meeting – attached as appendix 1.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to accept the quote from company One, option one, at a cost of **£6,750.00** +VAT.

All members agreed.

30. Ladygrove Park

The Committee discussed the increasing costs involved with repairs needed to equipment which had been vandalised in the park. Cllr D Macdonald suggested that these figures be relayed to residents to show how much money the Town Council is spending on rectifying issues resulting from vandalism.

The PEO would draft a 'poster' to be displayed on the Town Council's website/social media accounts, which could also be displayed at the parks, and would send it to the Committee via email, for approval.

Cllr C Jennings informed the Committee that he would be happy to talk with the local shop owners about displaying the posters in their windows. Local schools could be asked to add this to their correspondence to students.

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to approve the quote of **£2,790.00** +VAT to repair the multi swing in Ladygrove Park, to be taken from cost centre 309/3153.

All members agreed.

**9. To consider the Ladygrove Skate Park report and recommendations to the Committee**

The Committee considered report.

Although the Committee were keen to support the proposed project, more details were needed before a decision could be made.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the project in principle, subject to further details, including costs of the project, being presented to the Committee at a future meeting.



All members agreed.

**10. To consider the report on purchasing polytunnels for Town Council use and the recommendations to the Committee**

The Committee considered the report and expressed their backing of this project. It would create good relationships with the community and enable the Town Council to 'grow their own' plants which would, in the long term, save the Council money.

Cllr C Jennings mentioned that wheelchair access would be a must and work would be needed to ensure the site was accessible.

Cllr D Macdonald suggested that the OSM look at spending slightly more money on a more durable and steadier polytunnel.

Cllr A Jones queried who would take responsibility of watering the polytunnels at weekends and suggested approaching volunteers.

The PEO explained that she would be attending a meeting with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) the following day to discuss funding opportunities and stated that this project could be eligible for an Active Community Grant (up to £1,000).

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and **RESOLVED** to purchase the polytunnels and materials at an approximate cost of **£2,000** and to apply for an SODC grant to contribute to the cost, is eligible. The remaining cost would be taken from cost centre 101/1173 'Green Projects'.

The OSM would investigate sturdy polytunnels and access to the site, while the PEO would look into obtaining additional funds.

**11. To consider areas in Didcot which the Committee believe would benefit from SODC's 'Deep Cleanse' service**

The Committee discussed various areas in Didcot which would benefit from this service. Whilst the request did not include 'cutting back vegetation' the Committee noted numerous areas which would benefit from that. This included the 'yellow brick road' in Ladygrove and the Route 5 cycle and footpath between Ladygrove and Abingdon Road.

Alleyways, including Baden Powell Way and the alley next to Stubbings Land were also mentioned as areas in need of litter clearing.

The Committee asked the PEO to email members suggestions to be agreed before sending back to SODC.

All members agreed this action.

### **12. To consider a resident's request to install a bus shelter along Wantage Road and the recommendations to the Committee**

Whilst the Committee noted the residents request for a bus shelter on Wantage Road, concerns were raised due to the costs. Quotes had been received after the agenda was sent out and were presented to members at the start of the meeting. They were as follows:

1. Option 1

To supply and install a Mono 2 bay shelter (footprint of 2.5 x 1.42m)

**£5,153.83**

Concrete base of 3m x 0.8m **£924.00**

Total **£6,077.83 (ex VAT)**

2. Option 2

To supply and install a Mono 3 bay shelter – seat will still be 2 bays, allowing room for standing passengers (3.673m x 1.42m) **£5,923.74**

Concrete base of 4m x 0.8m **£1,160.00**

Total **£7,083.74 (ex VAT)**

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to not install a bus shelter at this location, but instead investigate installing a bench as an alternative.

All members agreed.

The PEO had emailed the Bus Infrastructure Officer at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) regarding this, but no response had been received prior to the meeting. Members would be kept informed of any information received via email.

### **13. To consider the report on whether Didcot Town Council should apply for a Smokefree Community Fund for playpark signage and the recommendations to the Committee**

The Committee considered the report and recommendations. Whilst members agreed that 'no smoking signs' would be good for the parks, concerns were raised as to how they would be perceived by residents.

It was agreed that the PEO would contact local schools in the first instance to see if this project was something they would be willing to be a part of.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts and **RESOLVED** to approve applying for a Smokefree Community Fund for playpark signage, subject to school participation and support.

Six members agreed with one abstention.

**The meeting closed at 20:50**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Environment & Climate Committee 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023



Report author: Lucy Blake and Mike Blake


### See saw quotes for Edmonds and Great Western Drive Park

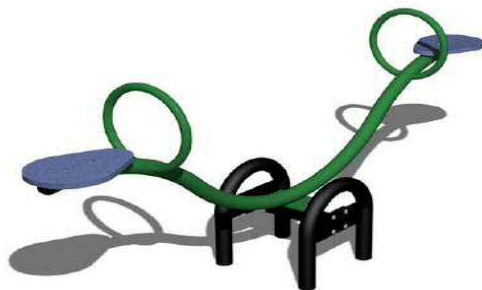
Three companies have supplied quotes for removing and replacing the spring seesaws at Edmonds and Great Western Drive Park.

#### Company 1:

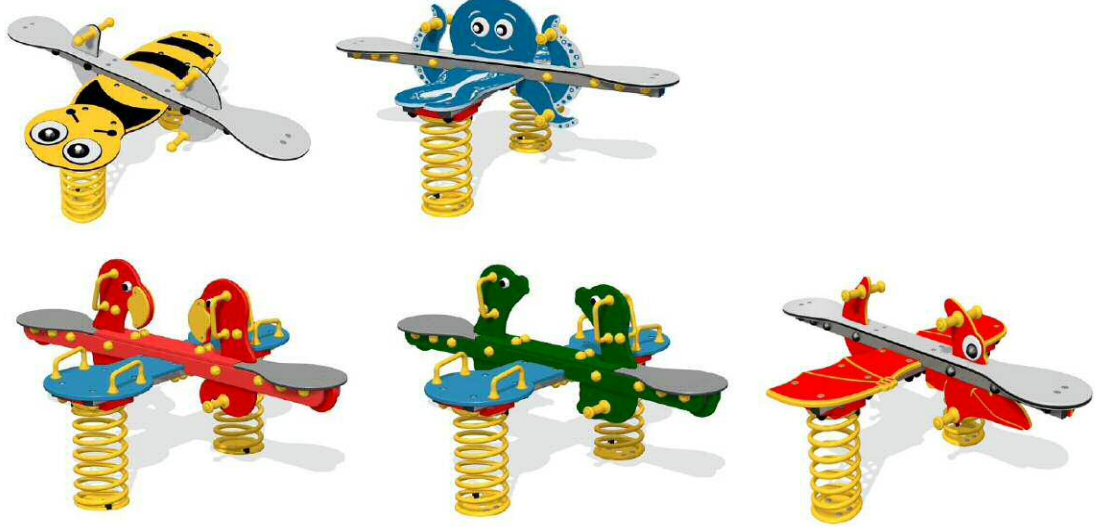
Two options were supplied by this company.

Option 1:


Remove and dispose of 2no seesaws across 2 sites
Supply and install 2no Delta Seesaw, made in UK with easy maintenance and parts
Repair black EPDM damaged by installs
Provisions including HERAS security fencing

<b>Total £6,750.00 + VAT</b>



Option 2:


Remove and dispose of 2no seesaws across 2 sites
Supply and install 2no Spring seesaws from the selection below
Repair black EPDM damaged by installs
Provisions including HERAS security fencing

<b>Total £, 4,650.00 + VAT</b>

**Company 2:**

Description	Total
Careful removal the existing seesaws	£1,833.00
4Saw Seesaw	£2,820.00
Minimum installation charge	£1,250.00
Wetpour repair kit – base layer	£106.48
Wetpour repair kit – top layer (black 0.6sqm)	£145.20
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>£6,154.68</b>
<b>Carriage</b>	<b>£184.30</b>
<b>Preliminaries</b>	
Heras fencing hire, secure storage on/off site, waste management, welfare facilities	£1,685.60
	<b>Total £8,024.58 + VAT for one</b> <b>£16,049.16 + VAT for two</b>

### Company 3:


This company supplied 4 different options.  
Option 1:

Description	Total
<p>Removal of 2 existing spring rockers, supply and install 2 new single spring rocker seesaws and patch around new foundation with blue wet pour in a splash detail. Includes orange mesh fencing</p> 	<p><b>£4,491.43 ex VAT</b></p>

Option 2:

Description	Total
<p>Removal of 2 existing spring rockers, supply and install 2 new double spring seesaws and patch around new foundation with blue wet pour in a splash detail. Includes orange mesh fencing</p> 	<p><b>£5,041.41 ex VAT</b></p>

Option 3:

Description	Total
<p>Removal of 2 existing spring rockers, supply and install 2 new traditional seesaws and patch around new foundation with blue wet pour in a splash detail. Includes orange mesh fencing</p> 	<p><b>£8,201.43 ex VAT</b></p>

Option 4:

<b>Description</b>	<b>Total</b>
<p>Removal of 2 existing spring rockers, supply and install 2 new Vinci steel seesaws including wet pour repairs to foundation holes in black. Includes orange mesh fencing</p> 	<p><b>£5,935.51 ex VAT</b></p>

Company 3 require 50% deposit paid within 7 days of order.

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 10.07.2023  
Agenda Item 4- Progress Report

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Meeting 05.06.2023</b>	<b>Meeting 10.07.2023</b>
Tidying up of the noticeboards	Officers	Amber	Would be carried out throughout the summer, using casual staff.	This is due to be started this Summer.
Shared cycle path additions to visible desired line in Ladygrove	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Work on this was on-going.	Investigations to this have stalled due to work loads.
Ladygrove Lake Pump	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Work on this is on-going and meetings will be arranged with the Fishing Association and the newly formed Ladygrove Management Group.	Ladygrove Management Group to have initial meeting.
Millennium Woods signs	Officers	Green	An update on the noticeboards was covered in the OSM's report.	An update on this is covered in the OSM report.
Reducing the Oak tree and felling the Pine at Cockcroft allotments	Officers	Amber	It was resolved to carry out this work.	Work will commence in August.
Graffiti Project at the Skatepark	Officers & Councillors	Amber	It was resolved to approve this project in principle, subject to more information being obtained.	Investigations still on going.
Investigate installing a bench at the bus stop on Wantage Road	Officers	Amber	It was resolved to not install a bus shelter on Wantage Road, but to investigate installing a bench instead.	OCC has agreed that a bench could be located in Wantage Road. Officers are waiting on quotes for this.
Smokefree play park signs	Officers	Amber	It was resolved to investigate whether local primary schools would be interested.	Six local primary schools were emailed on 12.06.2023, one agreed that they would like to be involved – would make sense to start this project at the start of the next academic year (September 2023).
'Sow & Grow' – Community	Officers	Amber	It was resolved to apply for the	Application was submitted 09.06.2023 – Closing date



Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 10.07.2023  
 Agenda Item 4- Progress Report

Planting project at New Road allotments			Active Communities Grant and proceed with this project.	is 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2023.
SODC's Deep Cleanse locations	Officers & Councillors	Green	Members suggested areas in Didcot.	Suggested areas were sent to SODC by their deadline.

29/06/2023

## Didcot Town Council

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## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 29/06/2023

Month No: 3

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<b>301 External Works-Central Costs</b>							
3101 Salaries - Works	0	34,287	232,000	197,713		197,713	14.8%
3102 Salaries - Works Er's NI	0	3,131	16,800	13,669		13,669	18.6%
3103 Salaries - Works Er's Superann	0	7,440	36,100	28,660		28,660	20.6%
3104 Events Staffing	0	0	2,200	2,200		2,200	0.0%
3105 Agency Staffing	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%
3108 Staff Travel	0	252	2,370	2,119		2,119	10.6%
3120 Protective Clothing	0	383	2,000	1,617		1,617	19.2%
3124 Telephone-Works	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%
3127 Subscriptions	0	0	150	150		150	0.0%
3140 Vehicle Insurance	0	0	2,932	2,932		2,932	0.0%
3141 Vehicle Fuel	0	80	6,000	5,920		5,920	1.3%
3145 Machinery Costs	440	1,272	10,000	8,728		8,728	12.7%
3154 Maintenance	129	509	2,000	1,491		1,491	25.5%
9034 Ford Ranger Pick Up	0	797	3,863	3,066		3,066	20.6%
9039 Ransomes HR300 Rotary	114	965	5,110	4,145		4,145	18.9%
9045 Ransomes Parkway 3	356	1,342	1,200	(142)		(142)	111.8%
9062 John Deere Gator	0	656	2,000	1,344		1,344	32.8%
9063 ALKE ATX 340 ED	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%
External Works-Central Costs :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>1,039</b>	<b>51,115</b>	<b>327,725</b>	<b>276,610</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>276,610</b>	<b>15.6%</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>(1,039)</b>	<b>(51,115)</b>	<b>(327,725)</b>	<b>(276,610)</b>			
<b>302 Allotments</b>							
3282 Allotment Rents	19	7,810	14,500	6,690			53.9%
Allotments :- Income	<b>19</b>	<b>7,810</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>6,690</b>			<b>53.9%</b>
3151 Water Charges	265	1,184	2,500	1,316		1,316	47.3%
3233 Allotment Competition	0	0	350	350		350	0.0%
3244 Allotment Maintenance	0	173	4,000	3,827		3,827	4.3%
Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>265</b>	<b>1,357</b>	<b>6,850</b>	<b>5,493</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,493</b>	<b>19.8%</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(246)</b>	<b>6,453</b>	<b>7,650</b>	<b>1,197</b>			
<b>303 Cemetery</b>							
3383 Cemetery Fees	480	5,270	18,000	12,730			29.3%
Cemetery :- Income	<b>480</b>	<b>5,270</b>	<b>18,000</b>	<b>12,730</b>			<b>29.3%</b>
3151 Water Charges	9	9	1,000	991		991	0.9%
3154 Maintenance	0	60	0	(60)		(60)	0.0%
3340 Rates - Cemetery	0	0	600	600		600	0.0%
Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>9</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,532</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>5,202</b>	<b>16,400</b>	<b>11,198</b>			

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## Didcot Town Council

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## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 29/06/2023

Month No: 3

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<b>304 Edmonds Park</b>							
3151 Water Charges	317	732	1,200	468		468	61.0%
3152 Electricity	0	43	1,800	1,757		1,757	2.4%
3154 Maintenance	315	1,563	10,000	8,437		8,437	15.6%
3155 Security	0	76	6,000	5,924		5,924	1.3%
3170 Waste Recycling	0	1,071	9,500	8,429		8,429	11.3%
Edmonds Park :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>632</b>	<b>3,485</b>	<b>28,500</b>	<b>25,015</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,015</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>(632)</b>	<b>(3,485)</b>	<b>(28,500)</b>	<b>(25,015)</b>			
<b>305 Ladygrove Park</b>							
3183 Lady Grove Park Income	0	200	3,000	2,800			6.7%
3185 Ladygrove Lakes Income	0	0	3,000	3,000			0.0%
Ladygrove Park :- Income	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>5,800</b>			<b>3.3%</b>
3152 Electricity	0	(43)	0	43		43	0.0%
3154 Maintenance	0	3,279	7,000	3,721		3,721	46.8%
Ladygrove Park :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>0</b>	<b>3,235</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>3,765</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,765</b>	<b>46.2%</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,035)</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>	<b>2,035</b>			
<b>306 Loyd Park</b>							
3151 Water Charges	0	0	550	550		550	0.0%
3152 Electricity	0	(0)	350	350		350	(0.1%)
3154 Maintenance	25	19,313	0	(19,313)		(19,313)	0.0%
99120 Tfr from EMR Building Repair	0	(19,160)	0	19,160		19,160	0.0%
Loyd Park :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>25</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>17.0%</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>(153)</b>	<b>(900)</b>	<b>(747)</b>			
<b>308 Other Parks &amp; Recreation Areas</b>							
3179 Carbon Return Income	0	2	0	(2)			0.0%
Other Parks & Recreation Areas :- Income	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2)</b>			
3154 Maintenance	110	468	5,500	5,032		5,032	8.5%
3166 Millennium Wood Upkeep	345	2,985	3,000	15		15	99.5%
Other Parks & Recreation Areas :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>455</b>	<b>3,453</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>5,047</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,047</b>	<b>40.6%</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(455)</b>	<b>(3,450)</b>	<b>(8,500)</b>	<b>(5,050)</b>			

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## Didcot Town Council

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## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 29/06/2023

Month No: 3

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<u>309 Play Areas</u>							
3149 Bark Top-up	0	0	3,000	3,000		3,000	0.0%
3153 Play Equipment Maintenance	0	2,648	25,000	22,352		22,352	10.6%
Play Areas :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>0</u>	<u>2,648</u>	<u>28,000</u>	<u>25,352</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>25,352</u>	<u>9.5%</u>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<u>0</u>	<u>(2,648)</u>	<u>(28,000)</u>	<u>(25,352)</u>			
<u>310 Environmental Services</u>							
1183 Bowls Club Rent	0	0	50	50			0.0%
3180 Sports Hire	50	(90)	4,000	4,090			(2.3%)
3184 Funfair Hires	0	0	4,000	4,000			0.0%
3198 Bus Shelter Advertising Income	0	0	10,000	10,000			0.0%
Environmental Services :- Income	<u>50</u>	<u>(90)</u>	<u>18,050</u>	<u>18,140</u>			<u>(0.5%)</u>
3148 Bus Shelter Contract	0	0	10,000	10,000		10,000	0.0%
3150 Plants	0	5,148	1,000	(4,148)		(4,148)	514.8%
3157 Dog Fouling Clean-up Service	0	728	3,100	2,372		2,372	23.5%
3158 Trees	0	0	8,500	8,500		8,500	0.0%
3162 Football pitch maintenance	60	1,090	8,000	6,910		6,910	13.6%
3168 Street Furniture Maintenance	0	1,863	3,000	1,137		1,137	62.1%
99134 Tfr from EMR Community Project	0	(7,000)	0	7,000		7,000	0.0%
Environmental Services :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>60</u>	<u>1,829</u>	<u>33,600</u>	<u>31,771</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>31,771</u>	<u>5.4%</u>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<u>(10)</u>	<u>(1,919)</u>	<u>(15,550)</u>	<u>(13,631)</u>			
<hr/>							
Grand Totals:- Income	549	13,192	56,550	43,358			23.3%
Expenditure	2,484	67,343	442,675	375,332	0	375,332	15.2%
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<u>(1,935)</u>	<u>(54,151)</u>	<u>(386,125)</u>	<u>(331,974)</u>			
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<u>(1,935)</u>	<u>(54,151)</u>					

Didcot Town Council

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## **Environment and Climate Committee**

5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7.30pm

Report author: Mike Blake



## **Outdoor Services Manager's Report**

### **Introduction**

1. This report updates the Committee on all matters regarding the Outdoor Services.

### **Recommendation**

2. The Committee is asked to review the report, note any updates, and consider decisions and actions to be made, where required.

### **Allotments – General**

3. The Allotment Liaison Group considered my recommendation to an alternative to burning on the allotments. This will be covered in the ALG recommendations – agenda item 10.
4. Every allotment site will eventually have communal compost bays installed. These will be made from recycled pallets that the outdoor team have been collecting at the depot. This is part of our recycling plan.

### **Broadway allotments**

5. 3 plots have failed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> inspections. Final stages are now in place for us to take back these plots.

## **New Road allotments**

6. The 'Sow & Grow' Community Planting project, is waiting on confirmation from the SODC grant – closing date for the scheme is 30<sup>th</sup> June. The grant cannot fund projects retrospectively so the polytunnel and all other materials needed, will be purchased once confirmation of the grant has been received.
7. 2 plots have failed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> inspections. Final stages are now in place for us to take back these plots.

## **Wantage Road allotment**

8. We have 1 plot which is currently spread over 2 locations. This will need looking at and we will decide what to do with it.

## **Cockcroft allotments**

9. 12 plots have failed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> inspections. Final stages are now in place for us to take back these plots.

## **Mereland Road**

- 10.5 plots have failed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> inspections. Final stages are now in place for us to take back these plots.

## **Cemetery**

11. There have been three cremated remains interments since the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee.
12. The Hedges in the cemetery are awaiting a cut, they will be done as soon as bird nesting season is over.
13. The gate pillar was knocked over I believe it was driven into. This is due to be rebuilt in the coming weeks. We are also looking at having the gates reset this means that we could potentially lock the cemetery at night instead of people using it as their own private car park.

## **Civic Hall**

14. The Civic Hall gardens and flowerbeds continue to bloom, we are always getting positive feedback on how good it looks this year. We have added 2 hanging baskets to the back patio area which unfortunately couldn't be used in town. We have also added a bench under the front window which was made by the Outdoor team. There are also some new fibre glass throughs which will put around the building.

## **Parks – General**

15. Regular Maintenance across all parks is continuing.

## **Loyd Rec**

16. Damage had been caused to the Toddler multi-unit at Loyd Rec and would cost £1,748.00 to repair. Remedial works were also needed on the Junior Play unit, costing £940.00, and some surfacing repairs were needed around the seesaw quoted at £358.20.

As this was classed a health and safety issue, the Town Clerk approved this work. The Committee is asked to note this spend which will be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play equipment Maintenance'.

## **Smallbone Rec**

17. The wildflowers are in bloom, and we have received lots of positive comments regarding them. We have also planted 4 trees along the bund which were left over from the Queen's Green Canopy project last year and kept outside the depot.

18. With the success of the sleeper bench installed outside of the Civic Hall, 3 new sleeper benches will be installed along the edge of the memorial. These will be constructed and installed by the outdoor team.

## **Edmonds Park**

19. Tree work is needed at Edmonds Park. 3 trees need to be felled unfortunately and dead wood on some of the others need cutting out. The quote received for this work is £1,950 + VAT.

20. The loose fill in the Toddler play area needs topping up this will require scraping away at least 6 to 10 inches of the old bark. It is very expensive to get rid of the old bark as

its classed as contaminated waste however there is nothing stopping us spreading it on the pathways at Millennium Woods.

21. The Bench that was damaged has been removed and replaced with one that has been recycled from the pavilion area. The team has also installed a new bin which was also recycled from the pavilion build area.
22. The hedge that runs alongside the tennis court is dying off. I personally think that the Council should take it out and plant a wildflower bund along there.

The Team can carry out this work and hopefully the costs to the Council will be minimal. By removing the large hedge, it should stop the tennis court being covered in moss during the winter months and it will also help the team see hazards when driving back and forth along the access route, to the depot.

### **Recommendation**

23. The Committee is asked to consider and approve the tree work quote for Edmonds Park, at a cost of £1,950 (to be taken from cost centre 310 3148. Savings may be made as one of the outdoor team can fell bigger trees. I also recommend that we plant 3 new trees in place of these.
24. The Committee should consider approving the purchase of new play bark to 'top up' the toddler play area at Edmonds Park, at a cost of £1,239.42 (inc VAT). This will ensure the legal depth requirements of the surface are adhered too. This cost can be taken from cost centre 309/3149 'Bark Top-up'.
25. The Committee should also consider approving the removal of the hedge for later in the year, and the creation of wildflower bunds, like those in Smallbone Recreation ground. I'm hoping we won't need to pay for any other materials other than the wildflower seeds as we can get the soil from the building site when they start the landscaping phase.

### **Ladygrove Park**

26. Work to repair the multi-unit and the multi swing have been completed.
27. The hemlock on the mounds have been sprayed and will need a 2<sup>nd</sup> treatment later this month.

### **Ladygrove Lakes**

28. A sudden drop in the oxygen levels in the lakes resulted in the loss of a lot of fish recently, therefore a decision was made to close the lakes temporarily. The



Environment Agency was contacted, and the Council was informed that it is a nation-wide problem, probably due to the rising temperatures.

The Town Council does not have the equipment to test the oxygen levels 'in house'.

The aerator was thoroughly cleaned and is due a service on 18<sup>th</sup> July due to what's happened this date may be brought forward if possible. I have spoken to company representative who is happy to meet any of the councillors or staff on this day to run through the workings of this if anyone is interested.

This issue of testing the oxygen can be discussed further at agenda item 9.

Water testing was carried out on the lakes and samples were sent off on 28<sup>th</sup> June. Results will be made available to the Committee members as soon as they are received.

29. The Team took out emergency repairs on one of the swims which at the time received a lot of positive feedback. The ongoing plan is for us to make our way around the lake and replace all the swims like this.

## **Ladygrove Mounds**

30. The mounds in Ladygrove are due to be cut in September and will need to be booked in.

31. A quote of £1,950 has been received to 'flail down Ladygrove mounds'. In previous years it has taken two members of the outdoor team, two weeks to cut the mounds using a robot cutting machine, at an approximate cost of £11,000 for the hire. The company will take one week.

## **Recommendation**

32. The Committee is asked to consider and approve the cost of contracting the company to cut Ladygrove mounds, at a cost of £1,950, which can be taken from cost centre 305/3154 'Ladygrove Park Maintenance'.

## **Events**

33. No new applications to hold events on Town Council land have been received since the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee.

## **Millenium Woods**

34. The new signs for the woods were delivered with the wrong legs, which was noticed when the team received the graphics boards and put the noticeboards together. The company was contacted and will be sending out replacement legs. Once received, the signs will be installed.
35. Ermine Moth Caterpillars took up residence at the woods at the beginning of June. A Ranger at the Earth Trust was contacted regarding the 'scary' sight and huge number of them, and the Council was informed that they are harmless and will disperse in due course. Apparently, it is a good sign of an established ecosystem.
36. I have had a walk around the woods with a tree surgeon discussing a long-term thinning out process. He has offered to work alongside the outdoor team for half a day to help make this happen. We are allowed to fell a certain number of trees per quarter and can fell any amount of dead or diseased trees that we see necessary. This seems quite daunting but by thinning out the woods it gives the trees chance to establish into a mature wood.
- Having the tree surgeon work along side members of the outdoor team will give them valuable knowledge.
37. Since this meeting with him one of the Outdoor Supervisors has started work on a Millennium Wood Management Plan.

## **Recommendation**

38. The Committee is asked to consider the quote for the tree surgeon's expertise for a half a day and approve it, at a cost of £250 plus VAT. This can be taken from cost centre 310/3158 'Trees'.

## **Staffing**

39. One of the Outdoor Services Supervisors have attended a one-day visual playground inspection course, along with the Planning and Allotment Officer, while another member of the Outdoor Team attended the two-day ROSPA playground course.

## Environment and Climate Committee

### 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Report Author: Mike Blake



## To consider the purchase of new battery-operated equipment

### Introduction

1. This report asks the Committee to consider the purchase of new battery-operated equipment.

### Background

1. The Town Council have previously purchased battery-operated equipment in the past which have not been the best. The team currently have a backpack Pellenc Brush Cutter/Strimmer, and a Leaf Blower. These pieces of equipment are very heavy to use and need to be used on full power to have any effect. However, on this setting the machine only has one hour running time.
2. The Council did have a Husqvarna Brush Cutter/Strimmer and Leaf Blower, but these were sent back to the supplier as we waited nearly a year for the batteries, which meant the equipment was never used. The Husqvarna batteries will only last 45 minutes to an hour's work, however, if we were to replace these with Stihl machinery the batteries will last up to 144 minutes.
3. My plan is to replace the three Hedge cutters this year and the Leaf blowers next year. We could even replace the push mowers with lightweight push mowers the year after.

This would only leave us using petrol Brush cutters/Strimmer's by 2025. Unfortunately for what we use the Strimmer's for, battery-operated strimmer's are just not up to where we need them to be with the battery life.

4. My suggestion is to replace the three hedge cutters with one long reach cutter and 2 short arm cutters. The team already have one long reach cutter which is more than capable of carrying out the work needed by the outdoor team. The total cost of for the three hedge cutters would be £948.33.

To consider the purchase of new battery-operated equipment

As well as purchasing the hedge cutters, the team will require four new batteries (to allow optimal usage) and a fast charger at a cost of £516.68 and £250 respectively.

5. With the petrol Hedge Cutters being over 5 years old this is the ideal time to change them for battery-operated ones. This plan will also help the Town Council to become Carbon Free by 2030.

## Recommendations

6. The Committee should consider and decide:
  - a. Whether to replace the ageing equipment, which, ideally should be done every 3 years and if so,
  - b. Whether to replace the hedge cutting equipment with battery operated machinery at a cost of £1,715, or,
  - c. to replace 'like for like' (with petrol equipment) at a cost of £1,837 – there will be on-going costs with fuel with this equipment).

The cost of this equipment can be taken from cost centre 301/3145 'Machinery costs'.

## Legal Implications

7. Legal Implications being the climate emergency.
8. Didcot Town Council has a legal duty to its employees to ensure safe and adequate equipment and machinery is supplied.

## Financial Implications

9. Although there would be an upfront cost initially of £1,715.00 the long-term savings will far outweigh this.  
The fuel cost would decrease dramatically, and the batteries would essentially become free to charge as they would eventually be charged using the solar panels at the Outdoor Services Depot.

## Risk Implications

10. There is always a risk when using any machinery, however, when using these machines, the risk is not as high due to them being light weight (can be used for longer periods) and there will not be any potential risks with using fuel.
11. They will not be affected by trigger time limitations. There are no limits on trigger times with this equipment, which means with the right number of batteries, they can

To consider the purchase of new battery-operated equipment

be used all day. They are also quiet whilst running which means there will be no noise pollution.

12. If we were to purchase the four batteries it will ensure that they can be used all day without having to worry about running out of power.

## Environment and Climate Committee

10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Report Author: Lucy Blake



## Ladygrove Lakes

### Introduction

1. This report details a recent incident at Ladygrove Lakes involving the loss of fish and the temporary closure of the lakes for fishing.

### Background

1. In the evening of Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Officers were made aware of loss of fish at Ladygrove Lakes.
2. Three members of the outdoor team started work early on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June, and spent the day removing dead fish from the main lake. The lake was temporarily closed at this point.
3. The OSM spoke with the Environment Agency (EA) who explained that this was a nation-wide problem at that time, due to the weather and recent storms. The representative explained that the Town Council would continue to lose fish for a couple of days but if the situation was to worsen the following morning, to call early and they would try to attend the site.
4. Officers arranged incineration bins to be delivered to the Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> June and picked up on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Before the bins were delivered, the fish were placed into a large waste bin and placed on the island in the lake.
5. The fish were transported to the bins and collected on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June to be incinerated. The total number of fish lost was not as high as first thought. It is estimated the Council lost approximately 90-100 fish (of all types and sizes).
6. The OSM spoke to the EA again on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023, who again confirmed that the

loss of more fish was inevitable and that if they were able to attend the site the following day to pump the water (not pumping water into the lake, just circulating the water already there) they would do so.

7. A member of the public had stated they would happily loan the Council their pump to help oxygenate the lake.
8. Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) testing was arranged on 21<sup>st</sup> June at a cost of £210 (to be taken from EMR 324 'Ladygrove Lakes'). Results would take approximately 10-14 days but would give the Council an idea of the state of the water and a baseline of where to start from, in terms of whether there is blue/green algae present. The analysis would provide a count of cyanobacteria but will not indicate the types of cyanobacteria present.
  - *Cyanobacteria are aquatic and photosynthetic and hence live in water. They are also called blue-green algae, but they are bacterium not algae. They are one of the largest groups of bacteria on earth. Cyanobacteria reproduce explosively under certain conditions. This results in algal blooms, which can become harmful and pose a danger to humans and animals, if the cyanobacteria involved produce toxins.*
9. Ladygrove Fishing Association had apparently been carrying out oxygen tests on the lakes. The Town Council has never received any results from the club; therefore, Officers believe it would be of benefit for the Council to purchase their own equipment and carry out routine checks. Having oxygen level results would not prevent a natural phenomenon like this occurring, but it could give the Council a pre-warning should it happen again. It would also inform the Council of when extra aeration is needed.
10. The IFM was contacted and asked if they could recommend a piece of equipment that was easy to use and durable that the Council could purchase to give us accurate oxygen readings. The representative recommended one he had used for 10+ years, the Oxyguard Polaris C (dissolved oxygen meter) which retails at £940.

Specifications:

*"The Polaris C meter is a high-performance and almost maintenance-free meter for measuring dissolved oxygen and temperature.*

*Oxyguard products have a fantastic reputation for their longevity, sturdiness and ease of use.*

*This latest Oxygen meter from Oxyguard replaces the legendary 'Oxyguard Handy Polaris'. The new Polaris C can store up to 2500 complete sets of data, including time and date stamps.*

*The meter has a built-in self-check of all hardware, it compensates automatically for barometric pressure, and it has a notably short response time. With this meter, you get the high quality associated with OxyGuard technology and a product that will serve you*

*well for many years.*

*Portable oxygen and temperature meter complete with carry case and spares. The backlit display quickly and accurately measures water temperature and dissolved oxygen in mg/l and % saturation.*

*The most reliable, robust and fool-proof oxygen meter on the market used by the most reputable fish farmers in the country. This is the only oxygen meter that we're happy to recommend at BP Milling due to its reputation and reliability.*

*Simple on/off button, check that the probe is reading within 2% of 100% and you're ready to test (quick and simple on-screen calibration if your handset isn't reading close to 100% saturation when dry). Not the cheapest oxygen meter on the market, but the best... and built to last! (I've had mine for 10 years this year and it still takes the same reading as a new model!)*

- *3 meter probe cable as standard.*
- *Compensation of salinity, temperature and barometric pressure*
- *Backlit digital display*
- *Automatic calibration and hardware check.*
- *Water resistant*
- *High accuracy*
- *Automatic and manual data logging*
- *Low power consumption (approximately 1000 hours per battery)*
- *Self-polarising and temperature compensating electrochemical probe"*

11. Although testing the oxygen in the lake will not prevent sudden oxygen loss, it could give the Council warnings and enable the team to attempt to add more aeration sooner. The Council will be able to keep a record of checks.

The solar aerator on the lakes is working and is due a service on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

12. There are also other pieces of equipment which could be of benefit to the Town Council in regard to testing the health of the lake, such as an Algae Torch. This device can be used anywhere where an assessment of water quality is required in association with algae. Quotes have been requested for this product.

13. It is worth noting that with the climate changing as dramatically as it is, situations like this are inevitable. It was reported that w/c 19<sup>th</sup> June, the Environment Agency Fisheries Officers had responded to 27 significant incidents in the Southeast which were caused by hot weather<sup>1</sup> in comparison to 88 serious incidents which were directly related to hot weather impacts last summer.

14. The Ladygrove Management Group's first priority will be to discuss and investigate ways to future proof the lake – terms of reference for the new group is attached as appendix 9.1.

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<sup>1</sup>[Article from the Herald Series](#)

15. Water sample and sediment surveys were carried out in June 2022 at an



approximate cost of £2500 plus VAT. To re-sample the water in both lakes again, would cost approximately £1,254 plus VAT. This could be done at the same time as when the aerator is serviced on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and would give the Town Council an up-to-date record of the levels of the following:

- Dissolved Oxygen
- Phosphate
- Calcium
- Hardness
- Acidity
- Nitrate
- Nitrite
- Iron
- Ammonia
- Alkalinity
- Temperature

## Recommendations

16. The Committee is asked to consider this report and decide whether to purchase a Polaris C meter at a cost of £940 - to be taken from cost centre EMR 324 'Ladygrove Lakes', to enable the Town Council to take accurate dissolved oxygen readings.
17. The Committee should also consider carrying out another water sampling survey on both lakes, at an approximate cost of £1,254, which could also be taken from cost centre EMR 324 'Ladygrove Lakes'.

## Legal Implications

18. Didcot Town Council has a duty to ensure the lakes are safe and are kept as healthy as possible.

## Financial Implications

19. The cost of the oxygen testing equipment is £940 and can be taken from cost centre EMR 324 'Ladygrove Lakes' as can the water sampling cost.
20. There would potentially be more costs involved in purchasing more equipment for the lakes, for example an Algae Torch, but this would be a future purchase. As would be any treatment needed following the cyanobacteria test results and any other results ordered.

## **Risk Implications**

21. The equipment would need to be added to both the asset register and the Town Council's insurance.
22. Any users of the equipment would need to ensure they followed manufacturer's instructions.
23. Any urgent issues found after testing, would need to be addressed.

## Suggested Terms of Reference for the Ladygrove Management Working Group

### Appendix 1

<b>Name of Working Group</b>	Ladygrove Management Working Group
<b>Membership</b> Who should be part of the group, and what rights do they have in decision-making?	<p>Three Didcot Town Council Members - voting. If membership would otherwise have no Ladygrove-representing member, any nominees for membership representing Ladygrove shall have priority over non-Ladygrove representatives – a Chair will need to be appointed at the first meeting.</p> <p>Environment Agency rep (1) - voting Fishing Club rep (1) - voting Earth Trust (1) – voting Ladygrove Residents Association (1) - voting Outdoor Services Manager – no voting rights Outdoor Services Supervisor – no voting rights Other Industry Specialists when required</p>
<b>Purpose</b> Why does it exist? What does it seek to achieve?	To suggest a strategy for the future management of the lakes. To suggest works to safeguard the area and increase the facilities for the enjoyment of Didcot residents.
<b>Task and finish/ongoing?</b> If task and finish, please define the date or output that marks the groups closure	This group is NOT a task and finish working group.
<b>Meetings</b> Does the group meet in person or virtually?	The meetings can either be in person, and/or virtual.
How often should it meet, and should it meet in the day time or evening?	To meet at least three times a year and in emergency situations.
<b>Reporting</b> How should the business be reported and to whom?	All reports and recommendations will be reported to the Environment and Climate Committee.
<b>Minutes published</b> Are minutes required, and who should they be sent to?	Yes, the notes will be circulated to all members of the group.
<b>Public attendance</b> Can the public attend, can they participate and are there any rules around this?	Not at regular meetings without prior agreement of the working group Councillors.

## Didcot Town Council

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### Environment and Climate Committee

10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Report author: Lucy Blake



## To consider the South and Vale Air Quality Plan

### Introduction

1. South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse District Council have invited members to have their say on the Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2023-27.
2. The action plan includes both area wide actions, which apply to the whole of both districts, as well as actions targeted at specific Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's).
3. There are currently six AQMA's in South and Vale: Abingdon, Botley, Marcham, Henley-on-Thames, Wallingford and Watlington.
4. The six-week consultation runs from Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June to 11.59pm on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
5. The public link to the survey can be found here:

<https://survey.southandvale.gov.uk/s/AirQualityActionPlan/>

### Recommendation

6. The Committee is asked to consider the draft plan and decide whether they wish to comment as a Committee – *Councillors are more than welcome to comment as individual residents of Didcot, separately to the Town Council.*

## Didcot Town Council

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### Environment and Climate Committee

10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Report author: Lucy Blake



## Recommendations from the Allotment Liaison Group

### Introduction

1. The Allotment Liaison Group (ALG) met on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 – draft minutes attached (appendix 1).
2. Points regarding an alternative to bonfires, wildlife cameras, clarification on bbqs, flowers, potential rent discounts and beehives, were discussed.

### Recommendation's from ALG

3. The Committee is asked to consider the following:

#### a. Alternative to bonfires

On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019 Didcot Town Council declared support for the climate emergency, however, the Council currently allows two sets of burn dates a year on the allotment sites, lasting approximately two weeks.

- Bonfires cause air pollution. Burning garden waste produces smoke – especially if the waste is green or damp. This can emit harmful pollutant particles and dioxins.
- Air pollution can have damaging health effects and people with existing health problems are especially vulnerable.
- Smoke and smells from bonfires also cause annoyance.
- Safety – fire can spread to fences and/or buildings and scorch trees and plants if left unsupervised.

The OSM recommended an alternative to bonfires for the allotment sites – composting and removal with help from the outdoor team.

He explained that the team would be available on each site for two days from the end of October and make the chipper available. Chippings would then be available

To consider the recommendations from the ALG

for tenants to use. Anything that can be composted, will be. Anything that can't be composted will be transported to the depot and disposed of in a 'green waste' skip. The cost of this skip is £230 plus VAT.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to agree the ban on bonfires on the allotment sites, due to the environmental concerns, and approve the cost of the green waste skip. Communal burns may be permitted under exceptional circumstances at the Town Council's discretion – the rules would be amended to show this. The cost of this skip can be taken from cost centre 302/3244 'Allotment Maintenance'.

### **b. Wildlife Camera Policy**

The Environment and Climate Committee resolved to allow the use of wildlife cameras on the allotments at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The ALG discussed the draft Wildlife Camera Policy (attached – appendix 2) and recommended the policy and the rule amendment to the Environment and Climate Committee to approve.

The group recommended the following text be added to the Allotment Rules:

***“Wildlife/Trail cameras are permitted on the Allotment plots, subject to Council written approval. Cameras must only cover the area of the tenant's plot, with minimal intrusion onto the shared paths. Any privacy concerns must be respected. The Council's 'Wildlife Cameras Policy' Applies. The Council reserves the right to retract this, should these rules not be adhered to. The Council reserves the right to request any footage recorded or saved for any purpose deemed necessary. Signs must be displayed on every plot with cameras informing visitors that cameras are present ”***

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to approve the additional rule for the allotments and the Wildlife Camera Policy.

### **c. Clarification on BBQs on the allotment sites**

The Environment and Climate Committee approved the use of 'small, occasional, family BBQs' on the allotment sites. The current rules state:

***“Small, occasional, family (or close friends) BBQs are allowed on the plot provided they take place within the plot boundary. They must be always supervised, extinguished, and disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.”***

The group asked for clarification and requested that the rules be amended to clearly outline the type of BBQs allowed and what fuel would be permitted – disposable BBQs are due to be banned.

To consider the recommendations from the ALG

BBQs were originally put in place on a 12-month trial from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. As far as the Planning and Environment Officer is aware, the rule on allowing BBQs on allotments was not formally approved following the 12-month trial.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Committee is asked to formally approve the use of BBQs on the allotment sites.
2. Should BBQs be approved, the Committee is asked to consider what type of BBQ should be permitted on the allotment sites, gas, oil, or charcoal.

***“Small, occasional, family (or close friends) BBQs are allowed on the plot provided they take place within the plot boundary. BBQs should be small in size, similar to a small kettle BBQ, and must always be supervised, extinguished, and disposed of in an environmentally friendly way. Only XXX types of BBQs are permitted.”***

#### **d. Flowers on allotment plots**

The primary use of an allotment is for production and consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Didcot Town Council’s current rules specify a tenant shall cultivate the allotment plot to produce fruit, vegetables, flowers, and livestock (chickens and rabbits).

The current rules state that 2/3rds of a plot must be cultivated, so assumptions of the Officers were that any flower area should not exceed 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the plot. A site representative questioned this as flowers could be classed as cultivation and asked for clarification from the Environment and Climate Committee.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to consider an amendment to the allotment rules to specify how much of the allotment plot could be dedicated to flowers.

It is Officer’s recommendation to suggest one third – rules will be amended should any changes be approved.

#### **e. Reduction in rent for allotment representatives**

An allotment representative asked the group to consider giving reps a reduction in their annual rent.

The OSM explained that no other representative of the Council benefitted from discounts (Water Bailiffs, Council staff etc) and the income generated from the allotments doesn’t cover maintenance costs as it is. Not only that, but issues could also arise with plots that have additional tenants, how would a discount apply in that situation?

It is the OSM’s recommendation to not give discounts to any allotment tenants, other than those already in place (senior citizen discounts) in line with all other Council representative roles.

**Recommendation**

The Committee should consider whether allotment representatives should be offered a discount in their annual allotment rent, and if so:

- how much the discount should be
- will the discount be applied to all plots, or just one
- how it would work if the rep shared a plot with a tenant who was not a rep. Would they still benefit from a discount?

**f. Beehives on New Road allotment site**

The idea of allowing beehives on the allotment sites has been discussed in the past. The Town Council decided against them due to the potential issues with not having qualified staff to deal with them, not having staff on call 24/7 to deal with potential swarms, and issues with liaising with all allotment tenants, surrounding properties and insurance concerns. If someone on one of the sites is allergic to bees, their medical needs would need serious consideration.

An allotment site representative had suggested to the ALG about potentially 'sharing' a beehive with Restore on the New Road site as bee numbers on site have diminished.

It was suggested to plant more wildflower areas at each allotment site as an alternative, this would also improve biodiversity across the sites.

**Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to consider whether they wish Officer's to investigate 'sharing' a beehive with Restore as a potential project. This will involve a lot of work, gathering up all up-to-date information regarding legislation and qualifications, contacting the insurance company for their views again, consultation with all allotment tenants, surrounding properties etc. Policies would need to be drafted as would risk assessments specifically for keeping bees on the sites.

Or the Committee could approve the planting of more wildflower areas across all sites to encourage more bees. The cost of the planting would be taken from cost centre 310/3150 'Plants'.

**g. Biodiversity improvements**

As well as wildflower planting across all sites to improve biodiversity, the ALG had previously discussed other opportunities, which included insect hotels made with local schools.

- Local schools were contacted some time ago, to gauge their interest in making insect hotels on the allotment sites. This can be re-visited once the community polytunnel is in situ.



## Legal Implications

4. Didcot Town Council has a legal duty to provide allotments under Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908.
5. The Council will need to ensure policies and extensive rules are put in place if bees were ever allowed on the allotment sites. Checks for qualifications, experience and insurance would need to be made on every bee keeping applicant. Every applicant would need to agree to have their contact details displayed on their plots in case of emergencies, as a minimum.
6. The Town Council would need to ensure they had the relevant qualified staff to look after beehives and manage swarms, who would need to be on call 24/7 - Current staff may not want to work with bees directly.

## Risk Implications

7. Minimal risks would be involved with amending the allotment rules. As per section 7 of the tenancy agreement:

*“The Tenant shall observe the Council’s Allotment Rules (**Appendix 1** attached to this Agreement) and any additional Rules the Council may make or revise for the regulation and management of the Allotment Garden let by the Council”.*

8. There could be potential risks with keeping bees on the allotment site, as would be made clear in risk assessments. Consultation with allotment tenants and nearby properties would be a must.

## Financial Implications

9. There will be no financial implications to Didcot Town Council for amending and adding any of the allotment rules.
10. There are financial implications to hiring a green waste skip, as stated at item 3a - £230 plus VAT.
11. The Town Council will have a reduction in income should any discounts in rent be approved – each site has two allotment representatives, most with more than one allotment.
12. Should bees be approved for the allotments, there would be costs associated with training staff members and additional staffing costs would apply should the staff members be needed out of hours to deal with emergencies such as swarms. Costs would also include all equipment needed.
13. There may be additional costs associated with the insurance, if the keeping of bees were to be allowed on Council owned land.

## Didcot Town Council

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### Allotment Liaison Group

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7pm  
All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



### Minutes

#### PRESENT

Councillors:

Cllr A Jones (Chair)

Cllr G Roberts (Environment and Climate Committee Chair)

Allotment Representatives:

Mr A Feest	(Broadway)
Ms N Lyons	(Wantage Road)
Ms R Butcher	(Mereland Road)
Ms A Pitts	(Mereland Road)
Mt T Morey	(New Road)

Officers:

Mr M Blake	(Outdoor Services Manager)
Mr J Sparks	(Outdoor Team Supervisor)
Mr A Guzinski	(Planning and Allotments Officer [minutes])

## 1. Apologies

Apologies were tendered from: -

Mr M Bartlett (Cockcroft Road), Ms T Feest (Broadway), Ms M Samuels (WR)

No other apologies were received.

Mr T Bray (Cockcroft Road) and Ms P Ramsbottom (New Road) were absent.

## 2. Review Terms of Reference

It was **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the Terms of Reference with no amendments.

## 3. Agree the minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023

It was **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting and note them as such.

## 4. Progress report and minutes

The group noted the progress report.

The Planning and Allotments Officer read through the progress report and explained each item.

The Outdoor Services Manager explained that the composting bins at New Road will be opened for use to tenants once the bays have been cleared.

Mr T Morey explained that some tenants still use the bays, which caused delays in the process.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that the improvements of biodiversity schemes and school bug hotels will need to be presented to the new Environment and Climate Committee for comments and suggestions.

Ms N Lyons has requested for a path on Wantage Road to be inspected as it may be deemed dangerous.

The Outdoor Services Manager clarified the time scales of the hedgerow maintenance at Mereland Road. The estimated time is July/August.

The wildflower areas will be reconsidered on New Road as there has been a resolution of the boundary dispute with Restore, granting us more land.

A Feest had queried the dates on the progress report regarding the information poster for people tending to their plots.

The Planning and Allotments Officer has explained that the dates are an error and will be corrected for the next meeting.

## **5. Questions from the minutes**

There were no other questions from the previous minutes.

## **6. Outdoor services managers' report**

The Outdoor Services Manager gave a brief update on the current team and gave a brief update on the current projects and key tasks of the Outdoor Team.

The Planning and Allotments Officer updated the group on the current situation regarding the plots: -

At present this year we have welcomed 17 new tenants since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023.

Broadway – 3 previously 18

Mereland Road – 5 previously 8

Cockcroft – 5 previously 16

New Road – 2 previously 15

Wantage Road – 2 previously 1

The following plots were available: -

Broadway – 3 – being prepared for new tenants.

Mereland Road – 3 – 2 need treatment for Horse Tail, 1 being prepared.

Cockcroft – 0

New Road – 3 – 3 being prepared, NR38/39 yet to be resolved.

Wantage Road – 2 – 2 being prepared.

We have the following people on the waiting list: -

Broadway – 46

Mereland Road – 12

Cockcroft – 17  
New Road – 42  
Wantage Road - 48

The Planning and Allotments Officer informed the group that those numbers have already changes since the report has been prepared.

Ms N Lyons queried the vast increase in people on the waiting list.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that Wantage Road is the most popular site for applicants, as well as the tenants having the longest average plot ownership time. The area is also closest to the Great Western Park development.

Ms N Lyons also queried the progress of allocation of plot WR24.

The Outdoor Services Manager explained that solutions are still investigated, however it could be possible to allocate the smaller part of the split plot to the neighbouring plot to resolve a path dispute.

Ms N Lyons had suggested that the remaining part of the plot be allocated to the tenant of plot WR35a, as the existing plot is below the 2.5 pole size.

Ms R Butcher queried some of the vacant plots on Mereland Road

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained the situation with the plots and the progress of taking one of the plots out of the register to allow for Horse Tail treatment.

The Outdoor Services Manager explained that some of the plots are purposely left untreated before the deadlines to prevent tenants from paying after the work had already been completed.

Currently, Wantage Road is the only allotment site without any known cases of Horse Tail.

## **7. To discuss alternatives to bonfires**

The group noted the report.

The Outdoor Services Manager further explained the processes and procedures.

Ms R Butcher queried the timings of the waste being taken away, as some tenants have day jobs and would be unable to bring their allotment waste to the allocated drop off point.

The Outdoor Services Manager explained that the Outdoor Team would be able to walk around the sites and collect any waste if it is clearly marked and separated.

The Outdoor Services Manager also explained that any items which were inherited by the tenants with their agreement will not be disposed of by the Outdoor Team. A Feast suggested an amendment to the alternative, which stated that bonfires might be permitted with Council discretion under exceptional circumstances.

It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** the alternative to the annual burn to the Environment and Climate Committee, subject to amendments.

#### **8. To discuss the Water Through report.**

As the Cockcroft Road Allotment Representatives were not present during the meeting, this item will be revisited at a later date if a solution is not found.

The group had discussed the report.

It was suggested that the five affected plots utilise a water collection tank, and that a letter is sent to the tenant which is claimed to be restricting access to the water source.

The group still favoured the use of bigger water throughs as opposed to taps.

#### **9. To discuss and review the Wildlife Camera Policy**

The group read through the proposed policy.

Ms R Butcher recommended to add a policy point regarding signage, requesting that each plot with a camera must have adequate signage to inform other tenants of the camera's presence. This comes from a recommendation from the Information Commissioner's Office, to cover for any GDPR breaches.

The Outdoor Services Manager had stated that signs will be displayed on the entrances to the allotment sites, and tenants will be informed that they are strongly encouraged to use additional signage.

It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** this policy to the Environment and Climate Committee, pending the amendments.

## **10. To note the GWP Allotments report.**

The group noted the report and enquired about the timings regarding their opening.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that the development is not finished and signed off yet, and reassured the group that the allotment land will not be built on.

The group asked if the developers could be contacted on the resident's behalf and queried on the schedules and progress of the allotments.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that the developers had recently closed their Oxfordshire offices.

## **11. AOB**

### **WANTAGE ROAD:**

Ms N Lyons had asked for a clarification of the rules regarding flowers on the plot, and the percentage of the plot which is permitted to be flowered.

The Planning and Allotments Officer stated that he was unsure of the exact rules and policies and would investigate and follow up in an email. The rule was believed to state a minimum of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the plot be cultivated, and therefore allow for the remained of the plot to be flowered.

Ms N Lyons stated that flowers should be allowed as cultivation, as they can be used to prepare the ground, and flowers could be classed as vegetation.

The Outdoor Team Supervisor explained that the original purpose of the allotments was to grow fruit and vegetation for consumption and was unsure if this rule would still apply.

The Planning and Allotments Officer will consult the National Allotments Society for clarification and forward the findings to the group.

Should the rules or policies need changing, they would be brought forward to the Allotment Liaison Group and the Environment and Climate Committee.

Ms N Lyons enquired about the restrictions on applications for a plot regarding the number of applicants per household or per person.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that there was only a restriction in applications per person, as there would be circumstances where a shared household could all apply for a plot.

The Planning and Allotments Officer also explained that new applicants are limited to one plot per tenant, and any existing plot holders would not be allocated a new plot unless no waiting list existed.

**NEW ROAD:**

Mr T More requested a clarification regarding the BBQ's and fire pits on the allotment sites.

The Outdoor Services Manager stated that fire pits would not be allowed, as they encourage burning of allotment waste and other waste, and only BBQs should be permitted.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that the current rules allow for 'small, disposable BBQs' on the site, as long as they are extinguished and disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.

Ms N Lyons had stated that disposable BBQs are due to be banned, and a reconsideration of the rules should be made to clearly outline what is permitted within the allotments, such as type of fuel and size.

The Planning and Allotments Officer stated that the matter will be presented to the Environment and Climate Committee for discussion and clarification.

Mr T Morey had asked about a possible reduction of rent for the Allotment Reps, as they do a lot of work for the Council.

The Outdoor Services Manager had stated that no other area of Council gets discounts, such as bailiffs and Council staff. This matter will be forwarded to the Environment and Climate Committee.

The Planning and Allotments Officer added that should this be allowed, more people will apply to become an allotment representative only because of an incentive as well as the potential issues regarding shared plots and the number of plots.

Mr T More also enquired if it was possible to obtain a list of email addresses of tenants of the New Road allotment site for ease of distribution of information and materials.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that this would be a breach of the Data Protection Act unless the allotment rep had obtained that information through the tenants themselves.

Ms N Lyons stated that Wantage Road uses a one-on-one text solution, where the Allotment Reps asked the tenants if they would be willing to share their phone number



for ease of communication. The numbers are used on a one-to-one basis, so that people would not have access to other phone numbers.

Ms R Butcher recommended the use of a social media platform group, such as Facebook. This could be tricky as not all tenants would have an account on the sites, but it has proven useful on other allotment sites.

The Planning and Allotments Officer also explained that the Allotment Reps who have obtained any personal data are solely responsible for the data, and any breaches of the Data Protection Act would be their responsibilities.

Mr T Morey had also enquired about the possible use of a beehive on the New Road site, which would be shared with the Restore organisation, who share the land.

Mr T Morey had explained that there had been fewer bees present on the site over the past years.

The Planning and Allotments Officer explained that the request for beehives had been brought forward to the Council before, however it was decided to decline the request, as there were no trained staff within the Council, and there were various issues regarding consent within the allotment site, as well as insurance policies. Didcot Town Council would also be liable for any accidents or claims made regarding the beehives, as we are the landowners.

The Planning and Allotments Officer had also explained that Restore had the relevant training and were offering to provide training to Council staff, however, they are not always on call and are not Council staff.

Ms R Butcher suggested that utilising wildflower areas on all plots could encourage more bees to be present on the site, while also not housing them on the site directly.

The Outdoor Team Supervisor suggested that it could be beneficial to spread wildflower seeds along any unused areas at the edge of the sites and in shrublands.

This item will be brought forward to the Environment and Climate Committee for discussion.

### **BROADWAY:**

Mr A Feest enquired about the Asset of Community Value scheme and if it would be applicable to allotment sites, especially considering local developments.

The Planning and Allotments Officer gave a brief overview of the ACV status and explained that allotment land receives a higher protection status and does not require an ACV status.

Cllr A Jones also reassured the group that should any allotment land be enquired about by developers, the decision would have to be approved by the Secretary of State, in return for more allotment land to be provided elsewhere.

**NO OTHER BUSINESS WAS STATED.**

The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

# Didcot Town Council



## Didcot Town Council's Wildlife Cameras Policy

As per section **x** of the rules, whereby:

***“Wildlife/Trail cameras are permitted on the Allotment plots, subject to Council written approval. Cameras must only cover the area of the tenant’s plot, with minimal intrusion onto the shared paths. Any privacy concerns must be respected. The Council’s ‘Wildlife Cameras Policy’ Applies. The Council reserves the right to retract this, should these rules not be adhered to. The Council reserves the right to request any footage recorded or saved for any purpose deemed necessary. Signs must be displayed on every plot with cameras informing visitors that cameras are present”***

### Didcot Town Council requirements for wildlife cameras on Allotment plots

Tenants shall not, without written consent from the Council, install a wildlife camera on their plot.

When applying for permission to install a wildlife camera, the tenant must provide:

- Details of the proposed type of camera,
- The exact position of where the camera will be installed,
- The details of the area the camera will be recording,
- Proof of the covered area, such as a still picture.

The tenant will also be requested to provide any/all footage taken and/or stored by the cameras whenever the Council requests it.

Tenants must display signage and/or stickers informing visitors to the site about the camera being present on the plot.

The Council is not liable for any damage and/or theft of any camera and equipment. Cameras will be installed at the tenant’s own risk.

The privacy of other tenants **MUST** be respected. The cameras should not be used to monitor any other allotment plots, or the shared paths and must only capture the tenant’s own plot.

If you have any concerns regarding privacy, Protection Orders, or Safeguarding, please inform the Council and provide any details which might be relevant.

**Failure to comply with this policy will result in the permission for cameras being withdrawn for that tenant. Any subsequent use of cameras after this time could lead to termination of the tenancy.**