

Notice of a meeting of the

Environment and Climate Committee
Monday 11th September 2023 at 7.30pm
All Saints Room, Civic Hall



Members of the Environment and Climate Committee are summoned to attend a meeting on Monday 11th September 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

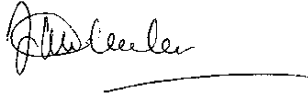
Agenda

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 10th July 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 5th September 2023 **(attached)**
6. To note the Outdoor Services Manager's report and recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**
7. To consider the first round of budget considerations for the 2024-2025 financial year
8. To note that an application for a Fisheries Improvement Programme grant had been submitted
9. To consider the report on bench options for a bus stop on Wantage Road, Didcot, and the recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**
10. To consider the report on Hatwell's Funfair event charges and the recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**
11. To note the draft meeting notes from the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting held on 3rd August 2023, and any recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**
12. To consider the report on the Cemetery charges and the recommendations to the Committee **(attached)**

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 the committee will be asked to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

13. To note the statement from a resident in conjunction to agenda item 12.



Janet Wheeler

Town Clerk

5th September 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

Environment & Climate Committee Monday 10th July 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 (Chair)
Cllr K Morrison (Deputy Chair)
Cllr A Hudson
Cllr S Cole
Cllr A Jones
Cllr J Broadbent
Cllr L Hislop

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 - PAO)

13. To receive apologies

No apologies were tendered.

All members were present.

14. To receive declarations of interest

Cllr L Hislop informed the Committee that he worked for a company who monitors Air Quality and who does have contracts with South Oxfordshire District Council.

No other declarations were received.

15. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 5th June 2023 as a true and correct record

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

All members agreed.

16. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report

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

There were no questions.

Action	Responsible	Rating	Meeting 05.06.2023	Meeting 10.07.2023
Tidying up of the noticeboards	Officers	Amber	Would be carried out throughout the summer, using casual staff.	This was due to be started in the Summer.
Shared cycle path additions to visible desired line in Ladygrove	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Work on this was on-going.	Investigations to this had 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 would have an initial meeting set up.
Millennium Woods signs	Officers	Green	An update on the noticeboards was covered in the OSM's report.	An update on this was 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 would 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 were 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 had agreed that a bench could be located in Wantage Road. Officers were 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, two had agreed to be involved – would make sense to start this project at the start of the next academic year (September 2023).
'Sow & Grow' – Community Planting project at New Road allotments	Officers	Amber	It was resolved to apply for the Active Communities Grant and proceed with this project.	Application was submitted 09.06.2023 – Closing date was 30 th June 2023.
SODC's Deep Cleanse locations	Officers & Councillors	Green	Members suggested areas in Didcot.	Suggested areas were sent to SODC by their deadline.

17. To note the External Income and Expenditure to date for external works, as updated on 19th June 2023

The Committee noted the updated figures, as of 7th July 2023, presented to them at the meeting.

18. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's report

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

Edmonds Park

Cllr A Hudson explained that a bench in Edmonds Park had been graffitied. The OSM confirmed the team would investigate this.

23. The Committee was asked to consider and approve the tree quote for Edmonds Park. Members discussed the need for the work and the OSM explained there could be savings made due to some members of the outdoor team being trained in the felling of smaller trees.

24. The OSM explained that the bark levels needed 'topping up' to ensure the depth remains at the legal required depth. The cost would amount to £1,239.42 (inc VAT) to be taken from cost centre 309/3149 'Bark Top-up'. Members agreed this work was needed.

25. The removal of the dying hedge along the tennis courts and the creation of a wildflower bund, was discussed. The OSM explained this would be a winter project and costs would be minimal as the work would be done 'in house'.

Members enquired whether a tree surgeon could inspect the hedge to ensure that it needed to be removed, prior to any work being carried out. The OSM confirmed this would be done.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to:

- Approve the tree work in Edmonds Park at a cost of £1,950, to be taken from cost centre 310/3158
- Approve the cost of topping up the play bark at a cost of £1,239.42, to be taken from cost centre 309/3149
- Approve the removal of the hedge along the tennis courts and replace with wildflower bunding, in principle, subject to confirmation that the hedge was dying from the tree surgeon

All members agreed.

Ladygrove Mounds

32. The Committee discussed the cutting of the mounds. Some Councillors felt that the mounds should be left as wild areas, with just the walkways cut. Signs could be displayed to state that the Council had intentionally left the areas for wildlife.

The OSM would investigate options of doing this and would feed back to the Committee via email.

The cutting of the mounds was **AGREED** in principle.

Millennium Woods

38. The Committee considered the recommendation to pay a tree surgeon for half a day's work in Millennium Woods, where their expertise would be used by the outdoor team.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to approve the cost of the tree surgeon at £250 plus VAT (to be taken from cost centre 310/3158), for half a day's work, where knowledge and advice would be obtained by the team, regarding the thinning of the woods.

All members agreed.

19. To consider the purchase of new battery-operated equipment report and recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the report and the recommendations.

Members discussed the need to replace ageing equipment and agreed that electric equipment was preferred. The OSM also explained that electric machines did not have the same issues as fuel machines in regard to trigger time (due to vibration).

Cllr K Morrison asked how the old equipment would be disposed of. The OSM confirmed that they would be kept until they were unusable and would investigate environmentally friendly disposal.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to approve the £1,715 cost to replace three hedge cutters with electric machines and extra batteries.

All members agreed.

20. To consider the report on Ladygrove Lakes and the recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the report and recommendations.

The OSM explained that the aerator was due a service on 18th July 2023. All members were welcome to attend.

Cllr S Cole explained that in his opinion, the Council could source cheaper alternatives for the dissolved oxygen meter reader and tests, and Officers should investigate this.

Members approved the Ladygrove Management Working Group terms of reference with an amendment, as shown on appendix 1.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and **RESOLVED** to approve the purchases of a dissolved oxygen meter reader and tests on the lake in principle, subject to receiving more quotes. The quotes would be forwarded to members, via email, for approval.

All members agreed.

21. To consider the South and Vale Air Quality Action Plan

Members discussed the proposed Air Quality Action Plan.

Cllr L Hislop explained that it was difficult for the Town Council to comment as Didcot was not mentioned much within the plan.

It was **AGREED** that members would look again at the plan. If they decided a comment should be submitted, the suggestions would be sent to the PEO by 20th July 2023, so that all comments could be agreed by the Committee prior to being submitted before the deadline on 27th July 2023.

22. To consider the recommendations from the Allotment Liaison Group and note the draft minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2023

The Committee noted the draft minutes of the ALG meeting held on 8th June and considered the recommendations.

- a. Alternative to bonfires

Members discussed the negative impact bonfires have on the environment and to surrounding properties.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr L Hislop, and **RESOLVED** to ban bonfires on the allotment for a trial period and instead, approve the OSM's recommendation of composting and removal with the help from the outdoor team. The Committee approved the hire of a 'green skip' at a cost of £230 plus VAT to be taken from cost centre 302/3244 'Allotment Maintenance'.

- Bonfires would still be allowed in exceptional circumstances, at the Town Council's discretion. The rules would be amended to reflect this change.

b. Wildlife Camera Policy

Members discussed cameras and it was reiterated that allotment holders who had received permission to install a camera, would need to erect a sign on their plot to warn other tenants. Signs would also be secured to the allotment gates to inform visitors that cameras were in operation on each site.

The new camera policy was discussed. It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr L Hislop, and **RESOLVED** to **approve** the Wildlife Camera Policy and additional allotment rule regarding cameras, subject to ratification by Full Council – attached as appendix 2.

All members agreed.

c. Clarification on BBQs on the allotment sites

Although allowing BBQs on the allotments was never formally approved following a successful 12-month trial period, members discussed the types of BBQs which should be allowed on site.

Some members believed that allowing BBQs on the allotment site would be beneficial for the tenants without an outdoor space at home.

Concerns were raised regarding fuel storage and whether gas bottles would be left on site. It was agreed that charcoal would be the safest fuel type.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to allow small kettle type BBQs on legs, to be used on the allotments. Only charcoal types would be permitted.

All members agreed with 1 abstention.

- The amendment to the rules read as follows (as agreed via email with members):

*“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 on legs, and must always be supervised, extinguished, and disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.
Only charcoal/briquette are to be used as a fuel on the BBQs.
The tenant of the plot where the BBQ is being used will be held solely responsible.
The Council will not be held responsible for loss by accident, fire, theft, or damage from the Allotment Site.
All food waste should be taken home and disposed of.
If these rules are not adhered to, the tenants right to hold a BBQ on their plot, will be revoked.
The Council reserves the right to amend this rule at any time.”*

d. Flowers on allotment plots

Discussions were had as to whether wildflowers were classed as cultivation. Some members did agree that certain flowers did act to deter insects.

It was proposed by Cllr J Broadbent, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to amend the rules to state only one third of the plot could be used for flowers.

All members agreed with 1 abstention.

e. Reduction in rent for allotment representatives

Members considered the report but noted that no other Council representative received discounted services.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and **RESOLVED** not to allow discounts on rent for allotment representatives.

All members agreed.

f. Beehives on New Road allotment site

The Committee considered the request regarding installing a beehive on New Road allotment, in conjunction with Restore.

Members were concerned about possible risk implications to visitors of the site, especially as the Town Council was starting a community project on site.

Cllr K Morrison suggested encouraging wild bees with wildflowers would be a better solution and suggested that Restore could carry out surveys on wild bees as an activity.

Cllr A Jones suggested offering Restore alternative locations to investigate (not owned/managed by the Town Council) where hives were already in situ.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to not allow beehives on the allotments, including New Road, but to plant more wildflowers to encourage wild bees, as an alternative.

All members agreed.

The meeting closed at 21.15


Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____

Name of Working Group	Ladygrove Management Working Group
Membership Who should be part of the group, and what rights do they have in decision-making?	Seven 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. 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
Purpose Why does it exist? What does it seek to achieve?	To suggest a strategy to safeguard and improve the area and increase the facilities for the enjoyment of Didcot residents and to create a plan for the future management of the lakes.
Task and finish/ongoing? 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.
Meetings 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.
Reporting How should the business be reported and to whom?	All reports and recommendations will be reported to the Environment and Climate Committee.
Minutes published Are minutes required, and who should they be sent to?	Yes, the notes will be circulated to all members of the group.
Public attendance 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.

Appendix 1

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 11.09.2023
Agenda Item 4- Progress Report

Action	Responsible	Rating	Meeting 10.07.2023	Meeting 11.09.2023
Tidying up of the noticeboards	Officers	Amber	This would be carried out throughout the summer.	Due to staffing issues and holidays, work on tidying up the boards have stalled.
Shared cycle path additions to visible desired line in Ladygrove	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Investigations to this had stalled due to work loads.	The Ladygrove Management Working Group would discuss this during their meetings and therefore be removed from the progress report.
Ladygrove Lake Pump	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Ladygrove Management Group would have their initial meeting.	First meeting was held on 3 rd August 2023. Notes of the meeting are on the agenda for noting. The Ladygrove Management Working Group will discuss this and therefore this item will be removed from the progress report.
Millennium Woods signs	Officers	Green	An update on this was covered in the OSM report.	 <p>All three signs were installed by 24th July 2023.</p>
Reducing the Oak tree and felling the Pine at Cockcroft allotments	Officers	Amber	Work would commence later in the year.	This has been completed.
Graffiti Project at the Skatepark	Officers & Councillors	Amber	Investigations were on going.	This project has stalled due to concerns regarding making the artwork safe to skate on. More investigations are needed and will be taken up by the Ladygrove Management Working Group. Therefore this item will be removed from the progress

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 11.09.2023
Agenda Item 4- Progress Report

				report.
Investigate installing a bench at the bus stop on Wantage Road	Officers	Amber	OCC had agreed that a bench could be located in Wantage Road. Officers were waiting on quotes for this.	This item is on the agenda for consideration.
Smokefree play park signs	Officers	Amber	Six local primary schools were emailed on 12.06.2023, two expressed interest in being involved – would make sense to start the project at the beginning of the next academic year (September 2023).	This project would be re-visited once schools had settled back in after the summer break.
'Sow & Grow' – Community Planting project at New Road allotments	Officers	Amber	Application was submitted 09.06.2023 – Closing date was 30 th June 2023.	Officers were informed that the application was successful on 25 th July 2023. Funds were received on 11 th August 2023. Purchases have been made for some of the equipment. Local companies have been contacted for donations of materials to aid this project. The polytunnel was delivered on 1 st September 2023 and work to construct the site would commence shortly.

Environment and Climate Committee

11th September 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. Some 3-month inspections have taken place unfortunately those who fail will lose their plots. The vacated plots will be offered to the next people on the waiting list.
4. Allotment plots are still very sought after and lists on certain sites are very long.
5. Last year Didcot Town Council approved extra services for allotment holders, these were:

Additional Services for allotment tenants	
Strimming	£45
Spraying (weed killing)	£45

6. Some allotment tenants have enquired as to whether there is a discount for these services for concessions. Currently the rent for a 5-pole plot is £37, and they are £25 for concessions (65 or over at the start of the rent year).

Recommendation

7. It is for the Committee to decide whether to approve a concession charge for these services.

Broadway allotments

8. Maintenance has continued on Broadway allotments. We are starting to see some of the vacant plots being brought back to life.

New Road allotments

9. The 'Sow & Grow' Community Planting project, has had its grant application approved and the Polyunnel has been ordered. We will be breaking ground on this project very soon.

Wantage Road allotment

10. Tree work took place at Wantage Road allotments. All the branches were chipped up and used in the Civic Hall Garden.

Cockcroft allotments

11. 12 plots have failed 1st and 2nd inspections. Final stages are now in place for us to take back these plots.
12. Tree work on the Oak tree has taken place and all the waste was re-used.
13. There is Japanese knotweed on the Cockcroft allotment site, in the far corner. We did have somebody out to look at it and the quote received showed two options for work. The two options were:
 - a. 1 treatment spray a year in September, costing £180 plus VAT for each treatment.
 - b. A treatment plan in which they would treat for the knotweed for 3 years and then monitor for 3 years. This would cost £1800 plus VAT.

Alternatively, as I am PA1 and PA6 qualified, I can personally treat the Knotweed.

14. The Japanese Knotweed is also in the garages adjacent to the allotments, and it is unknown how far along the houses it extends too. All landowners will need to treat the knotweed to effectively manage it. We can not confirm where the weed originated from and as such, work to help the resident whose access to their garage has been affected by concrete 'lifting' can not happen. The Council can not instruct anyone to work on the soil/ground while Japanese Knotweed is in situ.
15. Leaflets had been delivered to the neighbouring properties to inform them of a potential risk of the weed in their properties.
16. The owner of the garages has been contacted about the Japanese Knotweed and asked to treat it on their land, as is their responsibility.

Recommendation

17. It is my recommendation that I personally spray and monitor the Japanese Knotweed. I am qualified, efficient and the Council already has all the equipment needed, but it is for the Committee to decide whether the treatment is done 'in house', or to contract an outside company to carry out the work.

Mereland Road

18. 5 plots have failed 1st and 2nd inspections. Final stages are now in place for us to take back these plots.

Cemetery

19. There have been four cremated remains interments and five burials since the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee.
20. A refund of £200 was authorised by the Town Clerk for an empty grave space to be 'sold back' to the Town Council.
21. Work to construct the new gate pillar has been authorised at a cost of £1,620.01 incl VAT and will be carried out asap.
22. We had reports of rodents in the cemetery. We have had to deal with this as a Health and Safety issue at a cost of £1,392.00 incl VAT, for the treatment.

These works have meant that the cemetery maintenance cost centre is now over budget. This is not surprising considering the budget was extremely low to begin with.

23. All maintenance cost centres for our outdoor spaces will need careful consideration when setting the budget for 2024-2025.

Civic Hall

24. The Civic Hall continues to have fortnightly maintenance. When doing the hedges in the car park it was pointed out some of the shrubs are dying. We need to look at cutting these out in the winter and replanting something over the spring. This will mean that there will be a period where things look 'bare'.

Parks – General

25. Regular Maintenance across all parks is continuing and doesn't seem to be slowing down due to the weather.

26. Work to cut the hedges across all parks will commence as soon as possible.

27. All play areas had their annual RoSPA inspections which didn't come back too bad. We have had a few things highlighted which I have looked into, and I am waiting on the quotes for. The repair team have said they're happy for a few outdoor team members to observe the repairs, so we know how to do it ourselves in future. Unfortunately, the repairs are very repetitive.

- The British and European safety standard BS EN1176 and the Health and Safety Executive strongly recommend that all play areas have at least one inspection every year from an independent suitably qualified body such as RoSPA. Children's playgrounds should be inspected annually by an independent specialist to ensure the long-term safety of the site, equipment, and ancillary items. This will also meet legal and insurance responsibilities as well as complying with the requirements of EN1176 (the European Playground Standard). RoSPA inspections are acceptable for insurance purposes.

Zip wires

28. All zip wires need their annual inspection as they are not covered under a RoSPA inspection. To inspect all five zip wires, DTC have been quoted £2,475 ex VAT. If all zip wire inspections were carried out at the same time, there would be a discount of 30%, taking the total cost down to £1,732.50 ex VAT.

Recommendation

29. The Committee is asked to consider the zip wire inspections at a combined cost of £1,732.50 to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'.

Roundabouts

30. All five roundabouts have been 'flagged' on the recent RoSPA report and will need servicing. This is due to general wear and tear and sand getting into the mechanisms. DTC have been quoted £2,125 ex VAT to have all five serviced. If they were to be done at the same time, DTC would be offered an additional 30% bringing the cost down to £1,487.50 ex VAT.

Recommendation

31. The Committee is asked to consider the roundabout servicing for all five roundabouts, at a combined cost of £1,487.50 ex VAT, to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'.

The playground rep has said our team can watch them do the work so we can inspect and clean the roundabouts, ourselves in the future.

Loyd Rec

32. The repairs to the damaged play equipment have been completed. RoSPA picked up a few more repairs in this park. The cargo nets and rope are showing metal through them which could cause potential risks. The quote for this is £1,823.00 + VAT.

33. Football pitch marking is underway for the beginning of the season.

Recommendation

34. The Committee is asked to consider the quote for the cargo net repair at £1,823.00 + VAT, to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'.

Smallbone Rec

35. A few things were picked up on the report for this area some are just replacing broken caps and springs this came in at £55.00 and will be approved.

36. There is also a potential trip hazard that has been highlighted on the roundabout regarding the original groundwork. The quote to rectify this has come in at £1,015.00 + VAT.

37. There are also tree works that need to be done in this area. I have met with the tree surgeon, and I am waiting for a quote for this work.

Recommendation

38. The Committee is asked to consider the quote for the repairs to the surfacing of the roundabout, at a cost of £1,015 ex VAT to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'.

Edmonds Park

39. Some of the tree work has commenced in Edmonds Park and that will continue with the tree surgeons. I am just awaiting a date to finish off.

40. The junior area was cleared and topped up with fresh play bark at the beginning of August.

41. The Funfair was in at the end of July and left causing minimal damage considering the weather they had over the 2 weeks they were with us.

42. Unfortunately, Ed fest was cancelled despite all the hard work that went into it. The weather was against us.

43. The ROSPA report mainly picked up remedial work which the Outdoor team can tackle during the winter. These included placing topsoil around benches and work on the sand pit which would come under my day-to-day spending powers.

44. We had a demo of GPS pitch line marking at the end of August. This helped us with marking the pitches ready for the start of the new football season.

Ladygrove Park

45. Ladygrove park has had issues picked up on the RoSPA report. The park needs two new gates, which have been vandalised. A quote received for this has come in at a cost of £1,925.50 + VAT each.

46. One of the springy's is loose in the ground and could do with replacing at a cost of £1,780.00 + VAT.

Recommendation

47. The Committee is asked to consider the two quotes to replace the two gates and the springy, totalling £3,705.50, to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'.

Marsh Rec

48. The roundabout safety zone surface needs patching as it could become a potential trip hazard. The quote for this work has come in at £517.00 + VAT.

49. A new gate needs installing and has been quoted at a cost of £1,745.50 – this was flagged up on the RoSPA report.

Recommendation

50. The Committee is asked to consider the two quotes at a combined cost of £2,262.50 ex VAT to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'.

Ladygrove Lakes

51. The aerator was serviced at a cost of £1,666.87 (ex VAT). However, whilst it was being serviced it was noticed that two of the solar panels had been damaged meaning that only two out of the six panels were working at full capacity. The repair has been authorised at a cost of £1,802.54 inc VAT.

52. A new pest control contractor has been appointed for Ladygrove lakes, which was approved under Health and Safety concerns, at a cost of £4,272.00 (inc VAT). This does however give the Town Council 6 new bins with bait stations built in. The Outdoor team will need to install these.

53. One of the Willow trees around the lake needs some work. I have met with a tree surgeon, and I am waiting on a quote for this.

54. It has been noted that the water in the large lake has dropped by approximately a foot since March 2023. Investigations into sourcing a water source will be undertaken by the Ladygrove Management Working Group.

Ladygrove Mounds

55. The hemlock has had the second spray treatment and has been cut with the rest of the mounds on 21st August 2023. The decision was taken to cut the mounds on Health and

safety grounds to try and prevent the spread of hemlock and other potentially dangerous things from growing in unkept land. This work totalled £1,950.00.

Events

Ladygrove Park

56. Hatwells Funfair in Ladygrove had previously been agreed for arrival on 1st October and to leave on 16th October 2023.

This booking will be subject to charges and will be discussed at agenda item 10.

Edmonds Park

57. Hatwells Funfair have applied to hold their event in Edmonds Park in 2024.

- Arrive Monday 29th July 2024
- Leave 12th August 2024

- This event can be discussed further at agenda item 10.

Millenium Woods

58. The new signs for the woods have been installed by the outdoor team.

59. The thinning out process was started on the 21/8/23. We chipped up some of the trees and distributed the chip over the pathways. We did keep a lot of logs for future projects.

60. Sam Mallet and I met with Sustainable Didcot about and discussed holding more bulb planting projects over the winter.

61. There is quite a bit of overhang coming out of the woods. The team will be tackling this over the autumn and any waste generated by this work will be reused.

Staffing

62. One member of the team has passed their six-month probation and is now permanent.

63. Two members of the team completed their first aid courses.

64. We have an apprentice due to start with the Council soon, as approved by the Finance and Administration Committee.

Environment and Climate Committee

11th September 2023

Report Author: Lucy Blake



Fisheries Improvement Grant application submission

Introduction

1. This report updates the Committee on the progress of the Fisheries Improvement Grant application.

Background

2. The Environment and Climate Committee resolved to purchase a dissolved oxygen meter reading machine at their meeting on 5th June 2023.
3. The Ladygrove Management Working Group met on 3rd August where they discussed the Fisheries Improvement Grant scheme and resolved to commit to applying and match funding (to a maximum of £1,000 to be taken from the Ladygrove Lakes cost centre). This was approved by the Environment and Climate Committee members via email (due to the deadline for the grants being before the next Committee meeting).
4. It was agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk (DC) would apply for the grant before the deadline of 1st September 2023.
5. The DC again contacted a representative from the Environment Agency regarding their opinion and recommendations on the dissolved oxygen meter reader. Companies were also contacted regarding 'dip test' kits and generators.
6. The final application was submitted on 31st August 2023 and confirmation was received. Applicants will not be notified of any decisions until the end of October 2023.

The application

7. The final application consisted of the following:
 - a. Oxyguard Dissolved Oxygen Meter (as recommended by the EA and Institute of Fisheries Management) - £780.00
 - b. Oxyguard Handy accessory kit - £27.00
 - c. Loncin LC3500-AS 2.8K Petrol Generator - £366.67
 - d. Dip testing kit - £81.51
 - e. Test refills - £74.23

Total amount = £1329.41 (ex VAT)

Total amount with VAT = £1564.14

8. With DTC paying £800 from the Ladygrove Lakes cost centre, this meant that the grant, if successful, would be for £764.14.
9. The Deputy Town Clerk will update the Committee on the decision of the grant at the end of October 2023.

Environment and Climate Committee

11th September 2023

Report Author: Lucy Blake



Bench options for Wantage Road bus stop

Introduction

1. This report asks the Committee to consider the two options for a bench to be installed at a bus stop on Wantage Road.

Background

1. Didcot Town Council (DTC) was contacted by a resident requesting that the Council install a new bus shelter in one of two suggested locations along Wantage Road.
2. The below location was deemed most suitable by Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) approved contractor, as long as anything installed is set back from the footway.



3. At their meeting on 5th June 2023, the Environment and Climate Committee resolved to investigate installing a bench as an alternative to a full bus shelter in this location, on Wantage Road.

To consider options of benches for the bus stop on Wantage Road

4. The location is owned by OCC and permission would need to be granted prior to the Town Council carrying out any installations.
5. OCC was spoken with, and permission was granted for a bench, as opposed to a shelter at this location.
6. A quote was requested and was finally received on 15th August 2023, giving the Committee two options to consider:

a. Option one – a recycled material bench



This bench is currently in the contractor's possession and can be offered to DTC at a reduced cost of **£610 (ex. VAT)**.

1.8m long, height of 0.74m and a width of 0.54m.

b. Option two – a steel bench



This steel bench is 1.8m long, 0.85m high with a seat height of 0.48m and a width of 0.5m. Can be powder coated in black or 'Oxford green'.

The cost of this bench would be **£885.35 (ex VAT)**.

7. Both benches would need to be bolted to a 2.3m long, 1.5m deep concrete base (total sqm 3.5sqm). Lead time for work would be 6-8 weeks.
8. The quote excludes traffic management as the contractor would get off the carriageway onto the verge. If they cannot get a permit on this basis and need 3-

To consider options of benches for the bus stop on Wantage Road

way traffic lights, this would be an additional cost of £585.00.

9. The cost to construct the concrete base with edging, would be **£1,260.75 (ex VAT)**.

10. Total cost for each bench is as follows:

Type of bench	Total, including base	Total, including traffic lights IF needed
1. Recycled material	£1,870.75 (ex VAT)	£2,455.75
2. Steel bench	£2,146.10 (ex VAT)	£2,731.10

Recommendations

11. The Committee is asked to consider the quotes and decide:

- a. Whether to install a bench and a concrete base on Wantage Road, and
- b. Which type of bench to order

Legal Implications

12. Financial Regulations 4.1 state:

“Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- *The Council for all items over £5,500.*
- *A duly delegated Committee of the Council for items over £1000.*
- *The Clerk in conjunction with the Leader or Chair of the appropriate Committee for any items below £1000.*

13. The 2023-2024 budget for bus shelters is £5,000 (cost centre 325/9059). The budget heading is 325/9059. This will need to cover the maintenance of all existing bus shelters currently owned by Didcot Town Council and any new shelters they adopt.

14. Didcot Town Council would have a duty to ensure the structure is secure and well maintained. The contracted company would need to supply the Council with a copy of their insurance and all RAMS.

15. The legal ownership of the proposed site is Oxfordshire County Council. Written confirmation they are happy for Didcot Town Council to erect a bus shelter would

To consider options of benches for the bus stop on Wantage Road

have to be received prior to work being undertaken.

Financial Implications

16. The cost for this bench would be taken from cost centre 325/9059 'Bus Shelters'.
Total remaining in this cost centre - £5,000.
17. There would be additional costs associated with maintenance and cleaning.

Risk Implications

18. Any new structure would have to be added to the Town Council asset register and insured.
19. A regular inspection and maintenance schedule would be required to prevent a negligence claim arising in the event of an accident involving any structure.

Environment and Climate Committee

11th September 2023

Report Author: Lucy Blake



Hatwell's Funfair

Introduction

1. Two members of the family who own and run Hatwell's Funfair met with the Town Clerk, the Planning and Environment Officer and the Outdoor Services Manager on Friday 28th July 2023, to discuss event dates and park hire charges.
2. They explained how their July event had been affected due to the change of dates, the dismal weather, and the clashing with other local events.
3. They asked that the Town Council consider allowing them specific dates and re-consider the hire charges.
4. Kerry Hatwell provided the Town Council with a statement – attached as appendix 10.1.

Background

5. As of 1st April 2023, Didcot Town Council charge £350 per day for use of their parks for commercial bookings. Historically the funfair only pays for their trading days.
6. Hatwell's Funfair are a member of the Showman's Guild and run their fairs in accordance with their rules and regulations.
7. The Hatwell family established their fairground business in 1840 and has subsequently been supplying the Didcot community with a family orientated funfair for the past 41 years.
8. Hatwell's Funfair routinely supply funfairs to the whole of Oxfordshire, including but

not limited to, Abingdon, Wallingford, and Bicester.

9. Hatwells sublet to other funfair equipment owners, so organising their events must fit in with other owner's commitments.
10. For the past 34 years Hatwells have almost always held their event in Edmonds Park during the first two weeks of August, occasionally having to 'tweak' the days slightly to incorporate other events, such as the Summer Fayre.
11. Hatwells started holding an event in Ladygrove some fifteen years ago. This funfair is on a smaller scale.
12. In 2022, some Town Councillors requested that the Council "block out" the first weekend in August at Edmonds Park, for the summer event for at least 10 years. This event was known as the 'Summer Fayre' but had been renamed 'Edfest' this year. This caused an issue with the funfair wanting their original dates in August.

Hatwells requested to hold their event alongside Edfest but were told it was not possible, so had to re-arrange their dates for this year. This meant that some of the other funfair equipment owners who usually join them, were unable to attend. It also meant that this year's event conflicted with various other events locally, such as Truckfest and the Newbury Summer Fest. Coupled with the wet weather, this meant that Hatwells did not have a hugely successful time this year.

13. Hatwells would be happy to operate their fair at the same time as Edfest in the future. Other bookings do continue while the fair is in operation in the parks (they do not have sole use of the parks).
14. As per the statement provided by Hatwells, a £300 per trading day charge for Edmonds Park and a £260 per trading day (last year's charge) for Ladygrove, due to the size of the fair, was suggested.
15. One option could be that any charges the Council decide upon could be set for a 3-year period and reviewed after this time.

Recommendations

16. The Committee is asked to consider the statement from Kerry Hatwell and the information in this report and decide:
 - a. How much to charge the funfair for hiring the parks:
 - i. Should Edmonds Park and Ladygrove Park be charged at the same rate?
 - ii. As other events could be held at the same time (the funfair does not use

- the whole park), should a totally separate charge be applicable for funfair hire?
- b. Whether to allow Hatwells to run their event on their preferred dates for Edmonds Park each year and ask that they work in conjunction with future Edfest events – *an application for next year's date has already been received (arrive Monday 29th July – leave Monday 12th August 2024).*
 - c. Whether to recommend 'fixing' any agreed prices for a period of 3-years.

Legal Implications

- 17. Didcot Town Council has a duty to ensure all bookings to hold events on Town Council owned/managed land have the appropriate insurance cover and provide the Council with a copy of this. They will also need to supply the Council with the relevant RAMS (risk assessments and method statements).

Financial Implications

- 18. There would obviously be financial implications as the hire charges are income for the Town Council.

Risk Implications

- 19. The main risk to the Council would be the loss of the funfair in both parks, should an agreement with pricing not be reached.
- 20. If the Committee approve the first two weeks in August as the funfairs set dates for the Edmonds Park fair, this could potentially cause some upset with Edfest organisers.

Request submitted to the Town Council on 28th July 2023 by Kerry Hatwell:

The dates we would ideally like for Edmonds park are arrive Monday 29th July, open Thursday 1st- Sunday 4th August, close 3 days, open Thursday 8th- Sunday 11th, leave on Monday 12th August 2024. Our second choice of dates would be arrive Monday 5th August, open Thursday 8th- 11th, close 3 days, open Thursday 15th-Sunday 18th, leave Monday 19th. I did request these dates for this year, but was told the dates had been reserved for Edfest. I did email at the time to see if there was any chance of Edfest being moved or another way we could work together, but received no reply.

We have been running a fair in Didcot for the past 41 years, and during this time we like to think we have become a part of the community, and our fairs are something the residents look forward to. We are always well supported with our events, and have made lifelong friends here over the years. We have a good relationship with the parks teams, and hopefully they would be the first to say how well we look after the parks whenever we are here. We always clear the sites of any litter each day and before we leave, at no extra cost or effort for the council.

For the past 34 years we have always been in Edmonds park for the second weekend in August. This fits in with our run of other established events, and also as we do not own all of the equipment at the fair but sublet to other funfair equipment owners, it fits in with their run of events aswell. They then pay an agreed rent for each piece of equipment, which helps cover the rent for the whole fair. Having to alter the dates this year has meant that 11 different attractions have been unable to attend, leading to a shortfall on the rent. Coupled with this years 35% rent increase, this has meant a very large expense left for us to make up the shortfall.

On top of this the date that we have changed to has meant that our fair has been at the same time as some other large local events, the main two being Truck fest, just 4 miles away at Steventon, and the Newbury Summer fest, which have severely impacted the footfall at our fair. It has also meant that we have had to alter the established dates of the fair we usually attend at this time in Banbury, and we were lucky that they agreed to this, as if they said no we would have been closed for 2 weeks and lost our chance to attend that fair.

In the past we have provided equipment for the Didcot summer Fayre, and the event was once held at the same time as our fair. We would be very happy to operate our fair at the same time as EdFest, if the dates of that coincide with the dates of our fair.

As you are aware we are members of the Showman's guild, and run our fairs in accordance with their rules. One such rule is they do not want us to agree to pay such a large increase in rent at one time as this could affect not only us, but fairs all over the country as a knock on affect. Although we have already paid it this time, we are not able to pass this on to the tenants as business has been so poor, and so will have to make up the large shortfall ourselves. We find a 35% increase to be extreme and not in line with inflation. Something we pride ourselves on is keeping our fairs as affordable as we

can for the local community, which is why we currently have not increased our prices since before the covid lockdowns. With the current cost of living crisis we do not want to pass this cost along to the public at this time, but with the added expense of the toilets we now provide, plus the rising costs of diesel and advertising, we are finding it hard to survive in this business.

I propose a reasonable amount to pay for Edmonds park would be £300 an operating day, which would be an increase of 15% on the previous rent.

Our fair in Ladygrove, where we have 2 visits a year, is a much smaller event. Due to the soft conditions at Ladygrove park we cannot put any heavy attractions on the field itself, so we put the majority of the fair on the small hardstanding area, with some small caravans and a couple of lighter bits of equipment on the edge of the field. The fair itself is around half the size of the fair in Edmonds park, and so we are limited on how much rent we can pay and still make the fair financially viable for us.

The current rent is the limit of what we can afford, and so if the increase does also have to apply to this fair we sadly feel that we would be unable to continue this event.

I hope the council can be understanding about this request.

Didcot Town Council

Ladygrove Management Working Group Thursday 3rd August 2023 7pm All Saints Room, Civic Hall



Meeting notes

Working Group Members Present:

Councillor J Broadbent
Councillor K Morrison
Councillor Olly Glover
Councillor T Worgan
Councillor D Rouane
Councillor C Jennings
Mr P Davies – Ladygrove Resident's Association representative
Mr N Thompson – Ladygrove Fishing Association representative

Officers:

L Blake (Planning and Environment Officer - PEO)
M Blake (Outdoor Services Manager - OSM)
D Furby (Outdoor Services Supervisor – OSS)

1. Apologies

Apologies were tendered from the Environment Agency representative.
Cllr Z Mohammed was absent.

2. To elect the Chair of the Ladygrove Management Working Group

It was proposed by Cllr D Rouane, seconded by Mr N Thompson, and **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr J Broadbent as Chair of the Working Group.

All members agreed.

To note the meeting notes from the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting

3. To elect the Deputy Chair of the Ladygrove Management Working Group

It was proposed by Cllr J Broadbent, seconded by Cllr D Rouane and **RSOLVED** to elect Mr P Davies as Deputy Chair of the Working Group.

All members agreed.

4. To note the terms of reference of the group

Members noted the terms of reference.

5. Introduction – members of the group to introduce themselves

All members of the group introduced themselves.

6. Update from the Outdoor Services Manager/Supervisor on recent progress and issues

Both the Outdoor Services Manager (OSM) and the Outdoor Services Supervisor (OSS) spoke regarding the following items:

a. Mounds

The mounds were due to be cut on 22nd August. The hemlock had been sprayed twice.

The group discussed options to ensure the hemlock was routinely cut back to discourage regrowth. It was **AGREED** that the OSM would gather quotes for different options as well as producing a 'write up' on the intended results, to be presented at the next meeting. The Environment Agency (EA) rep would be consulted for advice on this.

b. Playpark

ROSPA inspections had been carried out and the results sent back, however, as they were received late in the day of the meeting, the OSM had not scrutinised the report.

The group swing in the park was due to be fully replaced but had been slightly delayed due to the wrong part being received by the company. This would be rectified in the coming days.

c. Skatepark

The new sign, which had been in place for almost two months, had been stolen. The police were informed; however, no action would be taken. A new sign was purchased and was due to be fitted w/c 7th August.

SODC had arranged to hold free to attend skate sessions at the park throughout the summer, which had so far been very popular.

d. Lakes

The OSM and the OSS spoke about the oxygen crash in June which resulted in a loss of approximately 90 fish. They explained that water tests confirmed this was not a result of blue green algae in the water.

To note the meeting notes from the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting

They also explained that whilst the aerator was being service, it was noticed that two out of the six solar panels had been damaged. This resulted in the aerator not working at full capacity. Replacement panels had been ordered.

Mr P Davies asked the staff to investigate adding optimisers to the panels to help provide full power even when damaged. This would be investigated.

The subject of adding more water to the lakes, was discussed. It was noted that previous OSM's had obtained unofficial permission from Thames Water to extract water from the adjoining culvert, however, it seemed official permission was never granted. During the oxygen crash, the EA had strongly advised against adding any water from the culvert due to the potential risk of contamination.

The group discussed options and decided on the following steps:

- Attempt to contact Thames Water again to obtain official permission to pump from the culvert
- Purchase testing equipment – TBC with the E&C Committee
- BEFORE pumping, test the water for any abnormalities or potential risks. This would mean testing the water each time the pump was needed
- Evaluate all risks prior to pumping

It was **AGREED** to investigate the cost of purchasing testing equipment, using grants.

The broken drain cover on Tyne Avenue was discussed. It was noted that the ownership was in question. While Land Registry documents show the land to be owned by Didcot Town Football Club, confirmation by the club had not been received.

Cllr D Rouane explained that due to the safety aspect of the issue, SODC had temporarily covered the drain. He also confirmed that he would instruct SODC Officers to investigate this again and look into whether a permanent solution could be reached with the Football Club.

7. Introduction of the Ladygrove Management Plan – Ideas Document 2023

The PEO introduced the document as a starting point for the group to eventually create a long-term management plan of the area in Ladygrove maintained by the Town Council.

Suggestions were made to include the group's aspirations within the document, as well as ways of measuring successes, and a process of making recommendations to the Environment and Climate Committee. The PEO would make these amendments.

Mr P Davies discussed previous plans to refurbish the tennis courts, as the Town Council did not approve a proposal from the NTA and LTA to 'take over' the management of the courts in 2022. The PEO explained that it had been difficult to obtain quotes for this work, but she would continue to investigate. Mr P Davies also discussed the need for more benches in Ladygrove, possibly funded by the s106 Public Art monies, and other items such as a bandstand.

The OSM explained that 'perching' benches would be installed in the area, the same style as the ones recently installed in Smallbone Recreation Grounds.

Cllr D Rouane explained that s106 monies are available to projects in Ladygrove.

To note the meeting notes from the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting Cllr C Jennings suggested that the tennis court facilities be given to the Properties and Facilities Committee to consider in the future. All members agreed.

The PEO explained that recent Didcot Girls School students, whilst carrying out work experience at the Town Council, had worked on ideas of installing teenage shelters in Ladygrove. It was their view that this would discourage some anti-social behaviour within the town and give the youth somewhere safe to 'hang out'.

The PEO also mentioned that creating a Youth Council would be a good idea. By encouraging the youths in Didcot to become involved, to some extent, with decision making within the town, it would potentially give them a sense of pride and ownership, thus reducing vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Cllr J Broadbent explained that the Working Group would need to create:

- A Medium-Term Plan – to include timeframes of goals for the immediate future
- A Long-Term Plan – to include how the Town Council will achieve their aspirations for the area, by setting priorities, aligning resources, and handling any unexpected changes/issues

Cllr T Worgan explained that the trees in the area should be included in the long-term plan.

It was noted that the lease with the Ladygrove Fishing Association would expire in June 2024 and the future of the agreement would need to be considered. It was confirmed that the Council were aware of this, and action would be taken.

8. Discuss the Fisheries Improvement Programme Plan

The group had previously discussed the need to test the water in the culvert adjacent to the lakes, prior to ever pumping from it – as per advice from the EA.

It was **AGREED** to apply for a Fisheries Improvement Programme grant for the purchase of testing equipment to improve the management of prolonged dry weather and/or climate impacts. This grant would need to be match funded. It was agreed to spend £1,000 from the lakes budget (£2,000 including the grant, if successful).

The PEO, the OSM and the OSS would work together to apply.

This action would need to be confirmed by the Environment and Climate Committee via email as the deadline for submission was before the date of the next Committee meeting.

9. Discuss options on deterring Canada Geese

Cllr D Rouane explained that he had been contacted by numerous residents regarding issues with the geese, primarily the aggression they show to the visitors of the area.

To note the meeting notes from the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting Cllr C Jennings proposed that Officers investigate costs to remove the geese and apply for the required license to do so. Cllr T Worgan suggested contacting the EA for advice on deterring the geese in the future.

All members agreed.

Confirm the next meeting date

The next meeting was arranged for Thursday 21st September 2023.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

DRAFT

Environment and Climate Committee

11th September 2023

Report Author: Lucy Blake



Cemetery Charges for non-Didcot Residents

Introduction

1. This report asks the Committee to consider the cemetery charges for 'non-Didcot' residents, specifically the Exclusive Right of Burial (ERoB) and the interment charges.

Background

1. As is the case with most Councils, Didcot Town Council (DTC) have different cemetery fees for Didcot and non-Didcot residents. A non-Didcot resident is currently charged an additional 200% (the fee is tripled).
2. The non-Didcot fee applies to anyone who lived outside of the Didcot Parish boundary. The Didcot resident charge applies to a resident who had lived in Didcot within the last 12 months of their life. If a resident had moved to a care facility outside of the boundary, within the last 5 years of their life, Didcot fees would still apply.
3. Currently, if a Didcot resident had lived in Didcot their whole life, except the last 6 years for example, then their EroB and interment fees are tripled.
4. As you know, DTC receive a financial percentage from Council Tax payments from South Oxfordshire District Council, which enables to the Town Council to maintain the cemetery. This means Didcot residents pay towards the upkeep and maintenance of all Town Council owned areas.
5. Officers had asked the Councillors of the Environment and Climate Committee in the past to review these charges, especially with the expansion of Didcot, and look

To consider the cemetery charges for non-Didcot Residents

to implement a 'banding' system and take into consideration each circumstance. This was not approved in the past.

6. One Didcot resident has provided the Committee with a personal statement regarding the cemetery fees (attached as confidential appendix 12.1).
7. The resident explained that he thought the current pricing was unfair to residents in Didcot who had lived most of their lives in the town but had to move due to health needs and would like the Committee to consider refunding the additional charges his family had to pay. The family paid £720 for the afternoon interment of cremated remains (£225 tripled and £45 late afternoon fee. The refund requested would be for £450).

Recommendations

8. The Committee is asked to consider the cemetery charges and decide:
 - a. Whether to refund the additional charges (£450) to the resident in this report, so that the fees paid were that of a Didcot resident,
 - b. Whether to amend the rules to allow Didcot fees to apply to those who moved out of the area within a certain number of years (to any residence outside of the Didcot Parish boundary) and who had already purchased a reserved space - *DTC no longer allow the reservation of plots*,
 - c. If the above recommendation was approved, whether to expand it to include unreserved spaces also,
 - d. Whether a restructuring or 'banding' of pricing should be introduced for people living just outside of the parish (GWP for example), or.
 - e. Whether to keep the rules as they are
 - f. Or whether to consider each application on a case by case basis

Legal Implications

9. Local authorities are defined as burial authorities and given the power to provide cemeteries by the Local Government Act 1972. There is no statutory duty on a local authority (district, parish, or town) to provide burial facilities, but if they do the management is governed by the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977.

Financial Implications

10. There would obviously be financial implications to amending the cemetery charges.

Risk Implications

11. Should the Committee decide not to change the charges, there could be negative reactions from members of the public.