

Didcot Town Council

Environment & Climate Committee Monday 15th July 2024 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 Macdonald
Cllr A Hudson
Cllr S Cole

Officers:

Mrs L Blake (Deputy Town Clerk - DC)
Mr M Blake (Outdoor Services Manager - OSM)

Four members of the public attended.

11. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr J Broadbent. Cllr Z Mohammed was absent.

12. To receive declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

13. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2024 as a true and correct record

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, and note them as such. All members agreed.

14. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report

The Committee noted the progress report – shown on the next page.

There were no questions.

Action	Responsible	Rating	Meeting 15.05.2024	Meeting 15.07.2024
Smokefree play park signs	Officers	Amber	OCC had been contacted again at the beginning of January 2024. Schools would be contacted again to see if there was any more interest.	No more interest had been received.
Investigate costs to install chicanes/bollards at Stubbings Land	Officers	Amber	The developer confirmed in an email dated 08.05.2024 that their "Adoptions Team will need to check this with the Council due to adopt the land as we would like to help but unfortunately it is not as simple as installing something on land that won't belong to us long term". Further updates would be available in the next few weeks.	It was further confirmed by email on 4 th July 2024, that Taylor Wimpey's Technical Team would "open a discussion" if DTC's proposal "included covering all costs associated with drawing changes and ensuring areas are put back to OCC highways adoptable standards". Costings for the 'changes' would need to be factored in to any decision - these are unknown. However, it would probably be a more financially viable option to look at installing bollards on the DTC owned path, and signs on the perimeter fence – no response on this has been received yet.
CIL Grant Fund application	Officers	Amber	The Deputy Clerk received an email on 23.04.2024 to inform her that DTC had been invited to submit a full application for the sum of £175,000. The application would be sent in the near future.	The application was submitted on 28 th June 2024, before the deadline.
Fence installation by DTYFC	DTYFC	Green	No further update had been received.	This had been completed.
Dog signs for the open green spaces/parks	Officers	Amber	It was agreed to purchase signs to remind dog owners that their dogs need to be kept under control.	Signs had been ordered.

The progress report was omitted from the agenda, but the DC gave a verbal update on most items as listed.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow a member of the public to address the Committee. All members agreed.

The member of the public addressed the Committee on their decision-making process. They wanted to ensure that members considered environmental and mental health impacts when making decisions, as opposed to just financial.

Members responded to this and confirmed that many factors are considered when decisions are made. This could be made clearer in the minutes of each meeting.

The Chair thanked the member of the public for their participation and Standing Orders were re-instated.

15. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's report

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

Parks – General

The OSM updated the Committee on the progress of the new teen area in Edmonds Park – this is ahead of schedule and is due to be completed and signed off by w/c 22nd July 2024.

The newly installed sandpit and castle is already very popular and being well used. The outdoor team will continue to inspect the sand, as they do with the other sandpits, to ensure that it poses no risks to visitors.

14. Cemetery

The Committee considered the memorial bench application for the Kynaston Road cemetery. Although the bench is very different to the usual wooden style benches already in place at the cemetery, members would approve it on the condition that suitable anchors could be found.

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr S Cole and RESOLVED to approve the wood and iron bench, provided it could be securely installed at the cemetery. All members agreed.

17. Ladygrove Mounds

The OSM asked the Committee to consider hiring a robotic grass cutting machine to cut the grass on the mounds in Ladygrove. This would cost £950 (+ VAT) per week, as opposed to £1,950 (+ VAT) to hire a contractor to carry out the work.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and RESOLVED to approve the hire of the robotic grass cutting machine at £950 (+ VAT) per week – to be taken from cost centre 332/4041 ‘Grounds Maintenance’. All members agreed.

18. Marsh Rec

The OSM confirmed that the roundabout in Marsh Recreation Ground had stopped working and needed to be repaired.

It was proposed by Cllr A Hudson, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to approve the £1,876 (+ VAT) cost to carry out these repairs. All members agreed.

This cost will come from cost centre 341/4045 ‘Grounds Maintenance’.

The OSM informed the Committee that the urgent remedial works taking place at the Skate Park, had been completed.

16. To consider the applications to hold events on Town Council owned and managed land report, and the recommendations to the Committee

The Committee noted the pre-approved applications and considered one application for Ladygrove Lakes.

Smallbone Rec:

a. Event Name	Ladybird Pre-School Summer Fete - APPROVED
Organiser(s)	Ladybird Pre-School
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	Yes
Date	Saturday 13 th July 2024
Time	11am-5pm
Details	Summer fete to raise funds for the preschool to support low income and disadvantaged children.
Decision	It was RESOLVED to APPROVE this event application via email, prior to the meeting. There would be no charge.
b. Event Name	Picnic - APPROVED
Organiser(s)	Sustainable Didcot
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	Yes
Date	Tuesday 23 rd July 2024
Time	12.30pm – 2.00pm (time on site – 90 minutes)
Details	Small picnic in Smallbone Park with a focus of being plastic free and environmentally sustainable. All participants will bring their own food.
Decision	It was RESOLVED to APPROVE this event application via email, prior to the meeting. There would be no charge.

Ladygrove Park:

a. Event Name	Litter bug trail - APPROVED
Organiser(s)	SODC's waste team
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	
Date	20 th July – 11 th August 2024
Time	Anytime
Details	Open to anyone – A trail of 13 posters with waste themed questions, the answers spell out a special word that can be emailed to the waste team and the participant receives a certificate.
Decision	It was RESOLVED to APPROVE this event application via email, prior to the meeting. There would be no charge.

Ladygrove Lakes:

a. Event Name	Wildlife Trusts educational display
Organiser(s)	The Wildlife Trusts
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	Yes
Date	Saturday 3 rd – Sunday 4 th August 2024
Time	10am – 4pm
Details	Will use display boards to promote Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust. This will include advice on wildlife gardening, volunteering and membership with the Trust. They will also have information on their Childrens Wildlife Watch Club.
Decision	It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve this event. All members agreed. There would be no charged.

17. To consider future options for the Ladygrove Skate Park report and recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the options for the Skate Park.

Every member agreed that the Skate Park was a wonderful asset for the town and is very popular with Didcot residents, as well as those from the surrounding areas and felt that the facility should be replaced in the coming years.

The OSM suggested a long-term option: relocating and replacing the play equipment in the park (due to flooding in the winter months), relocating and replacing the skate park to within the play area, whilst at the same time fixing any drainage issues, then potentially look at constructing a bike track in the open green space. This work would be subject to agreement by Full Council, successful funding, planning permissions and agreement with SODC as the land is leased from the District Council.

Cllr A Macdonald suggested that any new facility should be made inclusive.

It was proposed by Cllr A Hudson, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to recommend that Full Council consider a replacement of the skate park and investigate options for the area in more detail. This will include location options, consultations, costs, and funding opportunities. Cllr K Morrison was happy to provide support on this.

All members agreed.

18. To note the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting notes from the meeting held on 18th April 2024

The Committee noted the meeting notes.

The OSM confirmed that the outdoor team had already carried out a lot of work cutting back vegetation at the lakes, which, in his opinion, has helped the lake maintain its own oxygen levels.

The repairs to the aerator will be carried out on 31st July 2024.

19. To discuss what the Committee might wish to achieve this year and suggest ideas for future projects – *deferred from last meeting*

The Committee considered future project ideas:

- Bumble Bee Pods

Cllr A Macdonald asked the Committee to consider installing these on the allotment sites to encourage biodiversity.

- Investigate water for the Ladygrove Lakes

Cllr A Macdonald explained that additional water at the lakes had been an issue in the past and it was important that this continued to be investigated.

- Do not feed Geese signs for the lakes

Cllr S Cole explained that he has witnessed families feeding bread to the geese, between the lakes and this should be discouraged.

It was confirmed that there already 'do not feed the duck' signs installed at the lake, but more could be placed.

- Ideas brought forward from the Ladygrove Management Working Group
 - Art Grants – to create a lake feature and/or literary trail for children
 - Hedges – cut back the trees to hedge height
 - Skate Park – cut back the hedges in the top corner
 - Specific Ladygrove events, or events which can 'travel around' other parks

- Walking Trail to Wittenham Clumps

Cllr J Broadbent had asked for this trail to be enhanced and made clearer, at the last meeting of the Ladygrove Management Working Group.

- Pears Mapping

Ensure the software is up and running so that land ownership is clear. The Council will need to consider how to make this information readily available to residents (Long Term Plan).

- Clearing the vegetation at the polytunnel

The group discussed this and felt it could be a suitable area for community planting but would require a lot of work. Cllr K Morrison suggested asking for volunteers on social media, when the outdoor team is read to commence work.

All future projects would be tracked using the 'progress report'.

The meeting closed at 8.23pm

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____

