

Notice of a meeting of the

Environment and Climate Committee
Monday 18th November 2024 at 7.30pm
All Saints Room, Civic Hall



Members of the Environment and Climate Committee are summoned to attend a meeting on Monday 18th November 2024 at 7.30pm, in the All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall.

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 Deputy 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 Lucy Blake, the Deputy Town Clerk, 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 16th September 2024 as a true and correct record (**attached**)
4. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report (**attached**)

Standing Orders 30 and 31 will be suspended to allow representatives from Restore time to address and update the Committee on their plans for their area at New Road allotments. Councillors will be able to ask questions at the end of the presentation. The whole process will take no longer than 20 minutes.

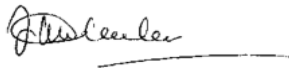
Standing Orders will be fully reinstated and the representatives from Restore are welcome to stay for the remainder of the meeting, excluding the confidential section.

5. To note the Income and Expenditure to date for the Environment and Climate Committee report, as updated on 4th November 2024 (**attached**)
6. To note the Outdoor Services Manager's report and recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
7. To consider the report on the applications received to hold events on Town Council owned/managed land, and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
8. To consider the report on the suggested annual charges for Didcot Town Council's services for the 2025-2026 financial year and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
9. To consider the report on the future of the electric vehicle (**attached**)
10. To receive the update on the investigations into a potential new skatepark and consider the recommendation to the Committee (**attached**)
11. To consider the report on the draft guidance on discouraging rats on the allotment sites document, and the recommendation to the Committee (**attached**)
12. To note the update on the Smokefree Playground signs and consider the recommendation to the Committee (**attached**)
13. To note the update on the Community Planting area (**attached**)
14. To consider the second round of budget considerations for the 2025-2026 financial year

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

15. To consider proposals from two parties regarding an allotment plot on the Broadway site (**attached**)



Janet Wheeler
Town Clerk

12th November 2024

Voting members:

Cllr Gavin Roberts (Chair)
Cllr Kelly Morrison (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Stephen Cole
Cllr Zia Mohammed
Cllr Anthony Hudson
Cllr James Broadbent
Cllr Axel Macdonald

Substitute members:

Cllr Chris Jennings
Cllr David Aragao
Cllr Hugh Macdonald
Cllr David Rouane
Cllr Denise Macdonald
Cllr Luke Hislop
Cllr George Ryall

Didcot Town Council

Environment & Climate Committee
Monday 16th September 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 S Cole
Cllr J Broadbent

Officers:

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

Non-voting Councillors:

Cllr A Jones

20. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A Hudson and Cllr Z Mohammed.

21. To receive declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

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

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

23. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report

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

Progress report			
Meeting	Item	Comments	Review date/meeting
-	Smokefree play park signs	To be 'picked back up' in September	New Estate Administrator to pick this up
-	Investigate chicanes/bollards at Stubbings Land	Taylor Wimpey will not pay for the work but may allow DTC to install at their cost (to include associated drawing costs). Should DTC consider putting something on DTC land or wait for the land to be transferred and work with the landowner?	No update received
-	Dog signs for the open green spaces/parks	Signs have been installed	N/A
-	CIL Grant Fun application	Application submitted on 28 th June 2024	When decision has been made
15.07.2024 – min 15 (17)	Hiring the robotic mower to cut the mounds	Delayed due to the outdoor team taking on the cutting of some of the verges	Due to commence mid-September
15.07.2024 – min 17	Recommend the potential relocation, replacement and investigations into the skate park and adjacent area in Ladygrove, to Full Council	Will be discussed at Full Council on 2 nd September 2024	At FC meeting 2 nd September 2024
15.07.2024 – min 18	Repair to the aerator due 31 st July 2024	This work has now been completed	N/A
Future Projects			
	Investigate water supply at the lakes	The Council investigated this in the past and many ideas were looked into	On-going
	'Do not feed ducks/geese' signs	The OSM will investigate the costs	
	Art grants to potentially create a lake feature and/or literary trail for children		

	Hedges – to be cut back at the lakes and skate park	Already part of the outdoor team’s work – will be done in the winter months	
	Investigate specific Ladygrove events, or events that can ‘travel around’ other parks		
	Walking Trail to Wittenham Clumps	Been confirmed there is already a trail but maybe this could be improved?	
	Pears Mapping	Staff to investigate when this will become ‘live’ – additional training will be needed	New Estate Administrator to take on?
	Clearing the vegetation at the community polytunnel	Long term idea. This area could be cleared to create ‘community planting’ areas as per the motion approved by Full Council 24 th June 2024	16.09.2024 – agenda item

Cllr K Morrison asked if progress had been made regarding investigating options for the potential relocation and replacement of the skate park. The OSM confirmed that he had visited Henley Town Council, alongside the Outdoor Services Supervisor and looked at their skate park. The Henley skate park is well used and extremely popular and cost in the region of £300,000 in 2017. Officers will continue to investigate options for the skate park.

24. To note the Income and Expenditure to date for the Environment and Climate Committee report, as updated on 5th September 2024

Cllr J Broadbent queried the grass verge cutting cost centre, as it was in brackets. The Town Clerk (TC) confirmed that this was because the funds are being transferred from the ear marked reserves.

Cllr A Macdonald was impressed with the cost of the hanging baskets in the town as this included watering. The TC confirmed that she would investigate options for the future.

25. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's report

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

7. Broadway allotments

Members considered the recommendation to approve the cost of installing new gates at the Broadway allotment site to help with security, unauthorised vehicular access and limit the risk of vandalism.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to approve the £1,936 cost to install gates from C & B Brickworks and Fencing, at the site. This would come from cost centre 311/4041. All members agreed.

21. Initial marking of the football pitches

The OSM explained how it usually takes two members of the outdoor team one whole week to initially mark all the football pitches at both Edmonds Park and Loyd Recreation Ground. However, the recent marking was undertaken by a GPS robotic machine and was completed in four hours. This freed up the staff so that their everyday asks could be completed even when staff were away on annual leave.

Members agreed with the OSM that the initial marking of the pitches should be undertaken by the GPS robot in future and would consider the quotes for next year, when available.

27. Ladygrove Lakes

The emergency aerator used to help aerate the lakes in urgent situations needs replacing. It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and RESOLVED to approve the purchase of a new, emergency aerator at a cost of £749 (+ VAT) with an additional £30 delivery charge, from Solar Aerations Systems. All members agreed.

29. Millennium Woods

It was confirmed by the OSM that the application for 420 tree saplings from the Earth Trust had been successful. Cllr A Macdonald asked the Committee to consider a planting scheme, which would be done. The saplings would, in the first instance, be planted at the polytunnel to allow them time to establish.

34. Staffing

It was confirmed that the Horticultural Apprentice had recently passed both his PA1 and PA6 qualifications.

26. To consider the purchase of a Playground App to aid the outdoor team with inspections report and the recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the report, and the additional brochure provided by the OSM. The OSM had spoken with the staff at Henley Town Council on his recent visit, and they confirmed how easy the app is to use and how efficient it makes the playground inspection process. All inspections are kept securely within the app and any urgent, dangerous or emergency works can be sent directly to the OSM by the officer on site.

It was proposed by Cllr J Broadbent, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to purchase the Playground Inspection App from The Play Inspection Company at a cost of £1500 (+ VAT) for one year. All members agreed.

The £895 initial in-person set up training quote to train the staff in how to use and set up the app could be lowered by using the staff at Henley. This will be investigated.

27. To consider the report on a potential 'Community Planting' area at New Road allotments and the recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the report and noted the previously passed motion to investigate areas which could be suitable for community planting.

All members expressed their support for this project. It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to dedicate the area adjacent to the polytunnel at the New Road allotments as a Community Planting area and allow Officers to start clearing the site. All members agreed.

The Earth Trust and Sustainable Didcot were two groups suggested to contact.

28. To consider the report to permanently ban the use of chemicals by tenants, on all allotment sites, and the recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the report, and the potential severity of the incident mentioned.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to permanently ban the use of chemicals that require a PA1 and PA6 qualification to be sprayed, by all allotment tenants across all allotment sites. The vote was unanimous.

The current allotment rules would be amended to reflect this change.

29. To consider the first round of budget considerations for the 2025-2026 financial year (*dates amended as incorrect dates included on agenda*)

The Committee considered capital projects for the first round of budget considerations for the 2025-2026 financial year. The potential relocation and replacement of the skate park, along with relocating some of the play equipment due to flooding was the main project ideas from members. Public consultation will be needed, and funding will need to be investigated. Officers would start to investigate this further.

Cllr J Broadbent explained that land ownership needs to be made clear, and it would be a good idea to encourage families to enjoy the lakes and the local walking trails.

30. To note the draft Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting notes from the meeting held on 11th July 2024

The Committee noted the draft meeting notes.

31. To note the draft meetings notes from the Allotment Liaison Group meeting on 22nd August (item 12) and the recommendations to the Committee (item 12a) and to approve the proposed 2024-2025 Rent letter (item 12b) to accompany this year's invoices

The Committee noted the draft meeting notes, considered the recommendations and considered the draft allotment rent letter.

Minute 5, recommendation 1:

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to increase the allotment rent to £50 for a 5-pole allotment plot, for the 2026/2027 season. All members agreed – *this will need to be approved by Full Council.*

Minute 6, recommendation 1:

The OSM was asked to identify which sites needed extra water troughs and bring this information back to the Committee along with costings to enable members to make an informed decision on whether to install more water troughs across the sites.

Minute 10, recommendation 1:

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to number all allotment plots with a wooden, numbered peg, once they are vacated and before they are re-let. All members agreed.

Minute 10, recommendation 2:

Officers will draft a 'Rat Guidance Policy' for members to consider at a future meeting.

Minute 10, recommendation 3:

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to allow Community groups to pick the surplus fruit from trees on allotment plots which are vacant, provided they are either accompanied by a site representative, or an Officer of the Council.

Members discussed the draft allotment rent letter. It was agreed to add a sentence informing tenants that if they need help on their plot, due to injury or ill health, a temporary co-tenant may be found (from applicants on the waiting list).

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and RESOLVED to approve the 2024-2025 allotment rent letter, subject to this amendment. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting closed at 8.37pm

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 18.11.2024
Agenda Item 4 - Progress Report

Progress report			
Meeting	Item	Comments	Review date/meeting
-	Smokefree play park signs.	New Estate Administrator has taken on this project.	On agenda for consideration 18.11.2024
-	Investigate chicanes/bollards at Stubbings Land.	Taylor Wimpey will not pay for the work but may allow DTC to install at their cost (to include associated drawing costs). Should DTC consider putting something on DTC land or wait for the land to be transferred and work with the landowner?	No further progress made.
-	CIL Grant Fund application.	Application submitted on 28 th June 2024. Update circulated to Cllrs 18 th October 24 to state a decision may be received w/c 18 th November 2024.	When decision has been made.
15.07.2024 – min 15 (17)	Hiring the robotic mower to cut the mounds	Due to commence mid-September.	Completed.
15.07.2024 – min 17	Recommend the potential relocation, replacement and investigations into the skate park and adjacent area in Ladygrove, to Full Council.	Will be discussed at Full Council on 2 nd September 2024.	At FC meeting 2 nd September 2024. Update on agenda 18.11.2024.
16.09.2024 – min 26	Purchase the Playground Inspection app.	PO number has been given. Training has been arranged and all sites will be set up at the start of next year.	Update covered in OSM report.
16.09.2024 – min 27	Clearing the vegetation at the community polytunnel.	Agreed to clear at 16 th September meeting. Progress has been started and companies have been contacted requesting donations of materials.	Update on agenda 18.11.2024.
16.09.2024 – min 28	Permanently ban the use of chemicals by the allotment tenants on all sites.	Signs have been put up across all sites and allotment tenants were advised of this new rule with all invoices 1 st October 2024.	Completed. Posters have been put up and tenants informed in the rent letters

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 18.11.2024
Agenda Item 4 - Progress Report

Future Projects			
	Investigate water supply at the lakes.	The Council investigated this in the past and many ideas were looked into.	On-going
	'Do not feed ducks/geese' signs.	The OSM will investigate the costs.	On-going
	Art grants to potentially create a lake feature and/or literary trail for children.		On-going
	Hedges – to be cut back at the lakes and skate park.	Already part of the outdoor team's work – will be done in the winter months. Work has started.	
	Investigate specific Ladygrove events, or events that can 'travel around' other parks.		On-going
	Walking Trail to Wittenham Clumps.	Been confirmed there is already a trail but maybe this could be improved?	On-going
	Pears Mapping.	Staff to investigate when this will become 'live' – additional training will be needed. New Estate Administrator will be arranging to learn this software.	Training confirmed for 11 th December 2024

05/11/2024

Didcot Town Council

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/11/2024

Month No: 7

Committee Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
Environment and Climate							
300 Outside Services							
4000 Staff Costs (Re-allocated)	24,789	177,453	328,021	150,568		150,568	54.1%
4008 Travel & Expenses	137	1,044	1,500	456		456	69.6%
4014 Light and Heat	142	(841)	0	841		841	0.0%
4015 Cleaning and Hygiene	550	687	0	(687)		(687)	0.0%
4016 Uniform/Protective Clothing	198	1,920	2,000	80		80	96.0%
4018 Waste Disposal	0	225	0	(225)		(225)	0.0%
4020 Equipment Purchase (Minor)	151	118	0	(118)		(118)	0.0%
4025 Subscriptions	0	0	150	150		150	0.0%
4042 Equipment/Vehicle Hire	666	2,985	0	(2,985)		(2,985)	0.0%
4043 Property Repairs & Maintenance	134	1,097	0	(1,097)		(1,097)	0.0%
4044 Maintenance Contracts	1,090	4,395	0	(4,395)		(4,395)	0.0%
4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance	1,079	12,700	32,000	19,300		19,300	39.7%
4047 Vehicle Fuel	892	3,820	6,000	2,180		2,180	63.7%
4048 Vehicle Insurance/Licence	0	0	2,800	2,800		2,800	0.0%
Outside Services :- Indirect Expenditure	29,827	205,605	372,471	166,866	0	166,866	55.2%
Net Expenditure	(29,827)	(205,605)	(372,471)	(166,866)			
307 Environmental Services							
1061 Ground Hire Income	0	0	2,000	2,000			0.0%
1063 Sports Pitch Hire	0	5,000	5,000	0			100.0%
1180 Grass Cutting Income (OCC)	0	13,424	0	(13,424)			0.0%
1183 Bowls Club Rent	0	0	50	50			0.0%
1192 Bus Shelter Income	10,000	10,000	10,000	0			100.0%
Environmental Services :- Income	10,000	28,424	17,050	(11,374)			166.7%
4036 Grass Cutting	0	17,604	0	(17,604)		(17,604)	0.0%
4038 Hanging Baskets	0	5,248	0	(5,248)		(5,248)	0.0%
4040 Tree Management Contract	0	550	5,000	4,450		4,450	11.0%
4041 Grounds Maintenance	377	673	22,500	21,827		21,827	3.0%
4192 Bus Shelter Contract	10,000	10,000	10,000	0		0	100.0%
4193 Dog Fouling Services	354	2,261	3,200	939		939	70.7%
4194 Street Furniture Maintenance	354	1,168	7,000	5,832		5,832	16.7%
4195 CCTV Contributions	1,777	3,554	10,000	6,446		6,446	35.5%
99156 Tfr from EMR Grass Cutting	0	(17,600)	0	17,600		17,600	0.0%
Environmental Services :- Indirect Expenditure	12,862	23,458	57,700	34,242	0	34,242	40.7%
Net Income over Expenditure	(2,862)	4,967	(40,650)	(45,617)			

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/11/2024

Month No: 7

Committee Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
311 Allotments							
1181 Allotment Rents	7,864	9,845	15,500	5,655			63.5%
Allotments :- Income	7,864	9,845	15,500	5,655			63.5%
4012 Water Charges	37	(31)	2,500	2,531		2,531	(1.2%)
4018 Waste Disposal	448	684	0	(684)		(684)	0.0%
4020 Equipment Purchase (Minor)	0	23	0	(23)		(23)	0.0%
4041 Grounds Maintenance	1,936	2,884	6,000	3,116		3,116	48.1%
4043 Property Repairs & Maintenance	0	2,877	0	(2,877)		(2,877)	0.0%
4411 Allotment Competition	0	0	350	350		350	0.0%
99120 Tfr from EMR Building Repair	0	(2,877)	0	2,877		2,877	0.0%
Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure	2,421	3,560	8,850	5,290	0	5,290	40.2%
Net Income over Expenditure	5,442	6,285	6,650	365			
321 Cemetery							
1182 Cemetery Income	2,307	20,767	18,000	(2,767)			115.4%
Cemetery :- Income	2,307	20,767	18,000	(2,767)			115.4%
4011 Business Rates	190	1,326	1,950	624		624	68.0%
4012 Water Charges	0	12	1,000	988		988	1.2%
4041 Grounds Maintenance	608	1,132	5,000	3,868		3,868	22.6%
Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure	798	2,470	7,950	5,480	0	5,480	31.1%
Net Income over Expenditure	1,509	18,296	10,050	(8,246)			
330 Edmonds Park							
1061 Ground Hire Income	0	4,560	0	(4,560)			0.0%
Edmonds Park :- Income	0	4,560	0	(4,560)			
4012 Water Charges	5	267	1,200	933		933	22.3%
4014 Light and Heat	52	(1,404)	1,800	3,204		3,204	(78.0%)
4018 Waste Disposal	236	6,392	9,500	3,108		3,108	67.3%
4041 Grounds Maintenance	0	8,920	10,000	1,080		1,080	89.2%
4042 Equipment/Vehicle Hire	0	70	0	(70)		(70)	0.0%
4043 Property Repairs & Maintenance	11	310	0	(310)		(310)	0.0%
4044 Maintenance Contracts	900	900	0	(900)		(900)	0.0%
4049 Security	0	0	6,000	6,000		6,000	0.0%
99138 Tfr from EMR Play Areas	0	(2,919)	0	2,919		2,919	0.0%
Edmonds Park :- Indirect Expenditure	1,204	12,536	28,500	15,964	0	15,964	44.0%
Net Income over Expenditure	(1,204)	(7,976)	(28,500)	(20,524)			

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/11/2024

Month No: 7

Committee Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
331 Splash Park							
4009 Training & Conferences	0	2,013	0	(2,013)		(2,013)	0.0%
4012 Water Charges	169	169	0	(169)		(169)	0.0%
4015 Cleaning and Hygiene	0	269	0	(269)		(269)	0.0%
4016 Uniform/Protective Clothing	0	223	0	(223)		(223)	0.0%
4020 Equipment Purchase (Minor)	0	431	0	(431)		(431)	0.0%
4044 Maintenance Contracts	0	180	0	(180)		(180)	0.0%
4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance	267	917	0	(917)		(917)	0.0%
Splash Park :- Indirect Expenditure	437	4,202	0	(4,202)	0	(4,202)	
Net Expenditure	(437)	(4,202)	0	4,202			
332 Ladygrove Park							
1061 Ground Hire Income	0	0	3,000	3,000			0.0%
1062 Fishing/Lakes Income	0	2,231	2,500	269			89.2%
Ladygrove Park :- Income	0	2,231	5,500	3,269			40.6%
4041 Grounds Maintenance	779	5,088	12,000	6,912		6,912	42.4%
4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance	0	13,300	0	(13,300)		(13,300)	0.0%
4058 Legal Fees	0	300	0	(300)		(300)	0.0%
99123 Tfr from EMR Skatepark	0	(13,300)	0	13,300		13,300	0.0%
Ladygrove Park :- Indirect Expenditure	779	5,388	12,000	6,612	0	6,612	44.9%
Net Income over Expenditure	(779)	(3,158)	(6,500)	(3,342)			
333 Loyd Park							
1063 Sports Pitch Hire	0	1,500	0	(1,500)			0.0%
Loyd Park :- Income	0	1,500	0	(1,500)			
4012 Water Charges	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%
4014 Light and Heat	52	174	150	(24)		(24)	115.8%
4044 Maintenance Contracts	0	311	0	(311)		(311)	0.0%
Loyd Park :- Indirect Expenditure	52	485	650	165	0	165	74.6%
Net Income over Expenditure	(52)	1,015	(650)	(1,665)			
338 Other Parks & Recreation Areas							
4040 Tree Management Contract	0	2,600	0	(2,600)		(2,600)	0.0%
4041 Grounds Maintenance	4	731	12,000	11,269		11,269	6.1%
Other Parks & Recreation Areas :- Indirect Expenditure	4	3,331	12,000	8,669	0	8,669	27.8%
Net Expenditure	(4)	(3,331)	(12,000)	(8,669)			

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/11/2024

Month No: 7

Committee Report

	Actual Current Mth	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
341 Play Areas							
4041 Grounds Maintenance	0	54	4,000	3,946		3,946	1.4%
4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance	4,175	7,705	30,000	22,295		22,295	25.7%
Play Areas :- Indirect Expenditure	<u>4,175</u>	<u>7,759</u>	<u>34,000</u>	<u>26,241</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>26,241</u>	<u>22.8%</u>
Net Expenditure	<u>(4,175)</u>	<u>(7,759)</u>	<u>(34,000)</u>	<u>(26,241)</u>			
Environment and Climate :- Income	20,170	67,327	56,050	(11,277)			120.1%
Expenditure	52,559	268,795	534,121	265,326	0	265,326	50.3%
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(32,389)</u>	<u>(201,468)</u>					
Grand Totals:- Income	20,170	67,327	56,050	(11,277)			120.1%
Expenditure	52,559	268,795	534,121	265,326	0	265,326	50.3%
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>(32,389)</u>	<u>(201,468)</u>	<u>(478,071)</u>	<u>(276,603)</u>			
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(32,389)</u>	<u>(201,468)</u>					

Environment and Climate Committee 18th November 2024 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. All allotment sites are currently having their annual green waste clearance days. So far Wantage Road, Broadway and Mereland Road have had theirs completed. Not only do we collect the non-compostable waste it gives the team a chance to tidy up the sites in time for the winter. I do feel with the ongoing cost of running the allotment sites that consideration be given to start charging for this service in the future.
4. The water has been turned off on all sites, we do this in late Autumn/Winter. This will be turned back on mid-March depending on the weather conditions.

New Road allotments

5. The compost bay on the New Road allotment site is in a real mess. This is because tenants have continued to dump on there despite signs being put up asking them not to. With there being plans for a community planting area near to the polytunnel, I would like to hire a green waste shredder. This machine will shred up everything that is there and start the composting process. We can then put this back into the bays and cover for 6 months regularly turning it, to provide compost. This would then be used on our projects and sites. The cost of the shredder for 1 days hire with an operator is £940.00 + VAT , which could be taken from cost centre 'EMR 334 Community projects' or cost centre 199/4906 'Capital Green Projects'. I would also like to fence off the front of this

area to try and prevent any tenants from continuing to dump there, this work would come under the OSM's spending power.

Recommendation

6. It is my recommendation that the Committee consider approving the hire of the shredder for one day, at a cost of £940 + VAT, so that the area near to the community planting area can be cleared, and fresh compost can be created.

Polytunnel

7. All 400 tree saplings have arrived from the Earth Trust and are being potted up and looked after by our volunteer Dave, who is happy to help us with planting these. He is also very keen to help out with growing and making hanging baskets for our buildings for the spring/summer of 2025.

Broadway allotments

8. The two new gates have been installed on Broadway allotments, and tenants have been given the access codes. These gates are for vehicles and pedestrian access. Although this does not make the site 100% secure it does limit the appeal to unauthorised access. Having a separate vehicle gate means DTC can lock the vehicle access if needed, which would still allow allotment holders access to the site.

Cemetery

9. There have been six full coffin burials and one ashes interment since the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee.
10. The flower beds at the cemetery have been tidied up ready for winter and some new bedding and shrubs have been planted.
11. Some of the new graves sank with all the heavy rain we had during September. This was rectified by the outdoor team as soon as we were made aware of it.
12. The outdoor team had to fell 4 Prunus Avium trees. This work was done in line with the tree report that we are making our way through. The four lost trees were extremely old, but the team have replaced them with four new ones and planted them not far from their original locations.
13. All essential tree work that the team can safely carry out has been completed in the cemetery. We will need to bring in an outside contractor to finish of the remaining tree work. I will be obtaining quotes for this work, along with quotes for other sites.

Ladygrove mounds

14. The Outdoor team spent a week cutting the mounds at the beginning of October. Not only did we use the robot for the mounds, but we also used it for some other troublesome areas making sure we got the most out of the machine.

Smallbone Recreation Park

15. The roundabout in Smallbone Park has become loose in its foundations. This had to be fixed for health and safety reasons and the cost for this was £1,140.00 + VAT.
16. The flower beds at the memorial have had a big tidy up with some new shrubs and seasonal plants being planted which was completed in time for the Remembrance Parade.

Edmonds Park

17. The newly laid turf linking the Splash Pad to the field and around the building, has had to be dug up so that Life can redo the water connection for the Splash Pad. Unfortunately, this has created a bit of a mess which Life will hopefully rectify.
18. The front of the pavilion has been seeded and is starting to look a lot more visually pleasing. We have over seeded this area to try and get maximum coverage.
19. The teen Ninja Trail was vandalised on the weekend of 19th October and was fixed by the outdoor team. Hopefully the damage to this equipment will stop, as it seems to be targeted often.
20. There is a lot of tree work that is needed to be undertaken over the winter in Edmonds Park. Some of the work can be carried out by the outdoor team however, some of the work will require quotes from outside companies.
21. I have met with a local grounds care company regarding the spraying of the football pitches at Edmonds Park and Lloyd Rec. It is my plan to arrange for work to be undertaken on the pitches, to help with drainage (spraying the weeds in spring etc). I have asked for quotes for this work.

Whilst I was with this gentleman, I asked for advice on the pitches, how wet they were and what the company would recommend. They said that ideally the pitches need to be vertidrain, which they provided a quote for both parks. The quotes received are for £7,500 for Edmonds Park, and £2,500 for Lloyd Rec. When looking into this we realised that we could buy an attachment for our tractor. I am still waiting on a price for this.

22. We have met with companies regarding an automatic gate for the car park. This would solve a lot of issues we have with people getting locked in the park after closing and with the opening and closing of the building. A separate report has been sent to the Properties and Facilities Committee.
23. A lot of the carpark users, especially when the football is on, park in front of all our access gates. I have been looking into installing bollards and I did receive a quote for 3 telescopic bollards with installation, at a cost of £950.00.

However I have since looked into doing this ourselves and can purchase 5 for around £500. We would also need sand cement and to hire a breaker. I believe we could install five telescopic bollards for approximately £700.00 + VAT, using cost centre 307/4041 'Grounds Maintenance'.

Recommendation

24. The Committee should consider allowing the outdoor services team to install five telescopic bollards at the DTC access points at Edmonds Park, to deter vehicles from blocking them, at a cost of £700 – to be taken from cost centre 307/4041.

Ladygrove Park

25. Some meetings have taken place regarding the relocation of the skate park. I have been advised that if we went ahead with the location within the play park, DTC would have more chance of obtaining lottery funding. I was told that this area is ideal as it will bring more children in to use it, rather than being secluded where it originally stands.
26. The work on the bramble area is still on going and it is proving rather tricky to get rid of the piles of rubbish. The issue is that there is so much litter contaminating the piles of brambles that it can't just go in a green waste skip. The general waste skip costs a lot more. There's also issues trying to bring the rubbish across the field without causing damage whilst the field is still wet.
27. Reports were received on 11th November from a resident, to say the zip wire in Ladygrove Park had been vandalised. Staff inspected it the same day and found it needed repairing. Quotes have been requested.

Ladygrove Lakes

28. Our new emergency aerator has arrived which means that we are prepared in case the oxygen drops again.
29. A new floating duck house and 3 new duck boxes have been installed on the small lake. These were all purchased by the Ladygrove Fishing Association and installed by the outdoor team.
30. Some tree work around the lake was undertaken by the outdoor team this was along the Brunstock Beck boundary. We will look to tidy the ditch up over the winter.

Millenium woods

31. As already mentioned, we have received delivery of 400 trees which will be brought on at the poly tunnel. The plan is for a lot of these trees to replace the trees affected by the ash dieback in the woods, once established.

Other parks

- 32. The Play inspection app has been ordered and training will take place in January.
- 33. Grass cutting is due to stop on all sites mid-November (weather depending).
- 34. Leaf clearing and tree work across all sites will be done throughout the Autumn and into the winter.

Vehicles and machinery

- 35. The new Flail Mower has been ordered which will enable the outdoor team to cut the verges in Ladygrove and more troubled areas if/when needed.
- 36. The Alke has more issues which is highlighted in a separate report – agenda item 9.
- 37. The Iseki Tractor, Ransom Rotary Ride on and 2 push mowers have all had an annual service. I will look to send all the trimmers for an annual service in early January.
- 38. As the team are doing a lot more on the allotments these days, I would like to purchase a rotavator to help us with the clearing of the plots. Currently we use the tractor to do this but as the tractor is nearing the end of life, we are restricted to being able to use it on certain plots. It would be helpful to have a rotavator we can use anywhere. The cost for this would be no more than £700.00. We could potentially bring back the chargeable services on the allotments meaning eventually it will pay for itself.

Recommendation

- 39. Is for the committee to approve the cost of £700.00 for the purchase of a new rotavator for use on allotments and flower beds using cost centre 300/4045 'Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance'.

Staffing

- 40. We have had a new full-time member join the team, who is fitting in well.
- 41. All members of the outdoor team will be training in mid-January for the playground app.

Environment and Climate Committee

18th November 2024

Report Author: Lucy Blake



Applications to hold events on Town Council owned/managed land

Introduction

1. This report informs the Committee on the applications received to hold events on Town Council owned and managed land.
2. The Committee is asked to consider each application and decide whether to approve them and what charge, if any, may apply.

Background

3. Didcot Town Council hire out the park open spaces for events and charge a hire fee. These charges are set annually.
4. The parks usually hired for events include Edmonds Park, Ladygrove Park, Loyd Recreation Ground, Smallbone Rec and the Ladygrove Skate Park.

Applications

5. Edmonds Park

a. Event Name	Interschool Football competition - APPROVED
Organiser(s)	Elite Youth Sports Ltd
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	No
Date	Thursday 10 th October 2024
Time	11am-4pm
Details	Interschool friendly competition to introduce competitive sports to primary school children. It also helps local College and Sixth

To consider applications to hold events on Town Council owned and managed land

	form students develop coaching experience for their qualifications.
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- Members were consulted on this application via email due to the date in which the event was taking place (before the Committee meeting). Members **RESOLVED** to **approve** this event with no charge.

b. Event Name	Funfair – sent in via email August 2024 and has been provisionally approved
Organiser(s)	Hatwell's Funfair
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	No
Date	28 th July 2025 – 11 th August 2025
Details	Funfair for all the community – 8 trading days
Charge as per agreement	£300 per trading day at Edmonds Park. Total = £2400

6. Ladygrove Park

a. Event Name	Funfair – sent in via email August 2024 and has been provisionally approved
Organiser(s)	Hatwell's Funfair
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	No
Date	24 th March 2025 – 7 th April 2025
Details	Funfair for all the community – 8 trading days
Charge as per agreement	£260 per trading day at Ladygrove Park. Total = £2080

- Members are reminded that Hatwells have a 3 year agreement with DTC on the charges for these events.

b. Event Name	Didcot 5 mile road race and 2 mile fun run
Organiser(s)	Didcot Runners
Charity or not-for-profit organisation?	Yes
Date	Sunday 6 th July 2025
Time	From 7am until approximately 12 noon
Details	Annual 5 mile road race and 2 mile fun run in Ladygrove
Charge	TBC

To consider applications to hold events on Town Council owned and managed land

- This event attracted a £200 hire fee in 2024 provided a statement was issued to the Council to confirm where the proceeds of the event go to. Organisers were encouraged to apply for Grant Aid; however, they did not apply last year.

7. Didcot Runners will be holding a Park Run on Christmas Day 2024. This happens most years and there is no charge, however, risk assessment and insurance details have been supplied – *this is for noting*.

Legal Implications

8. Didcot Town Council has the power to manage and control recreation grounds, public walks, pleasure grounds and open spaces – Local Government Act 1972, Sched 14, para 27 and the Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9 and 10.

Financial Implications

9. The hire of the park for events are set annually, with Hatwells having a set charge of £300 per trading day for Edmonds Park and £260 per trading day for Ladygrove. There is a separate charging band for charities. This will obviously provide an income for the Town Council.
10. There are financial implications with the maintenance of these spaces which is budgeted for annually.

Risk Implications

11. Once approved, hirers need to provide the Town Council with all the relevant documentation for their event. This includes, but is not limited to, risk assessments, method statements, insurance certificates, qualifications, and payment.

Recommendation

12. The Committee is asked to consider and approve each application and what, if any charges, will apply to them.

Environment & Climate Committee

18th November 2024

Report author: Lucy Blake



Suggested annual charges 2025-2026

Introduction

1. As part of the budget review process, the Committee is asked to review the charges the Town Council makes for services it provides to the residents of Didcot.
2. Allotment rents are usually set two years in advance, meaning any increase would come into effect for the 2026-2027 financial year (due from 1st October 2026) – charges from 1st October 2025 have already been agreed.
3. Officers have reviewed the current charges and applied the nominal 3% applied to the budget more generally. The tables shown show the item charged for, the current charge, a 3% uplift and the recommended charge on the Town Councils outdoor services.

Background

4. Officers are spending many administrative hours chasing allotment rents and inspecting and reinspecting allotment plots. It is hoped an increase in the deposit and late payment fee, will deter allotment holders from doing this in the future.
5. Transferring the Exclusive Right of Burial for graves at the cemetery can be a long and complicated task, which involves Officer's drawing up Statutory Declarations and abiding by specific legislation. Many Town and Parish Councils charge between £50-£100 for this service.
6. Any increase in charges will be applied from 1st April 2025, excluding the allotment charges.

Recommendation

7. The Environment and Climate Committee have already approved the allotment rent charge for a 5-pole plot, from 1st October 2026. However, the concession

Suggested annual charges for 2025-2026

charge, deposit and late payment fees need to be approved. The Officer's recommendations for these increases for the 2026-2027 financial year, is shown below:

Allotments	From 1 st October 2025	From 1 st October 2026
Non-Concessions	£41	£50 (£25 part) – <i>already approved by Full Council</i>
Concessions (65 or over at start of rent year)	£28	£37 (£18.50 part)
Cultivation deposit (for new plots)	£95	£100
Late Payment Fee	£16	£18

8. The suggested increases to the rest of the annual charges can be seen below:

Cemetery fees – for all non-Didcot residents there is a 200% additional payment on EROB and interment fees	Current fees	3%	Recommendation
Exclusive right of burial			
Person whose age at time of death exceeded 16 years	£320	£9.30	£330
Person whose age at time of death did not exceed 16 years	No Charge	-	No Charge
Cremated remains plot	£135	£3.90	£140
Interments			
In a grave (in respect of which an EroB has been granted)	£445	£13.05	£455
Cremated remains (in respect of which an EroB has been granted)	£230	£6.90	£235
Person whose age at time of death did not exceed 16 years	No Charge	-	No Charge
Late afternoon burial fee (applies for bookings 14:30 or later Mon-Thurs and 14:00 Fri)	£50	£1.35	£55
Private burial fee (for burials and cremations without a funeral director)	£110	£3.15	£115
Headstones and Memorials			
Headstones and Memorials including first inscription	£130	£3.75	£135
Additional Inscription	£65	£1.80	£70
Memorial Bench application (not including bench costs)	£110	£3.15	£115
Kerbing fee (in addition to headstone fee)	£425	£12.45	£435
Other			
Late/incomplete paperwork	£70	£1.95	£75
Cancellations/amendment/administration fee for reserved plot	£80	£2.25	£85
New addition - Exclusive Right of Burial Transfer/amendment/additions	-	-	£80
Remembrance Garden Planting			
Rose bush – lease/maintenance 10 years	£185	£5.40	£190
Tree – lease/maintenance 10 years	£255	£7.50	£260
Additional 5-year lease	£80	£2.25	£85
Plant in Remembrance			
Tree – lease/maintenance 20 years	£355	£10.50	£360
Additional 10-year lease	£130	£3.75	£135

Suggested annual charges for 2025-2026

Fishing Permits	Current	3%	Recommendation
Adults	£31	£0.90	£32
Adult Concessions	£15.50	£0.45	£16
Juniors (12-16 years)	£15.50	£0.45	£16
Juniors Concession	£6.50	£0.18	<i>£7 – what qualifies as a Junior concession? Remove this charge?</i>
Pitches	Current	3%	Recommendation
Adults	£72	£2.10	£72
Juniors	£31	£0.90	£31
Park Events	Current	3%	Recommendation
Commercial Hire Per Day	£360	£10.50	£370
Hire Per Day - Charities	Up to £300	£30.00	Up to £310
Didcot Town and Didcot Casuals Football Clubs Hire	-	-	FIXED IN A 3YR AGREEMENT
Fun Fair Hire	-	-	FIXED IN A 3 YR AGREEMENT

- *Charity Hire charges would be agreed by the Environment and Climate Committee on a case-by-case basis.*
- *Committee members are asked to consider what clarifies as a ‘Junior Concession’ and whether this charge is needed.*

8. Officers may spend several hours processing the transfer of an Exclusive Right of Burial (deed) for graves at Kynaston Road Cemetery, or making amendments to the deeds, for example, adding additional co-owners. The number of legal documents staff must prepare is determined by the number of family members entitled to ownership.

It is the Officer’s recommendation that DTC follow other Town Councils and implement a charge of £80 for this service.

9. Members are asked to consider and approve the suggested price increase for services for the 2025-2026 financial year and 2026-2027 for the new allotment charges.

Legal Implications

10. Local Councils may receive rent from tenants of their property or for herbage on their land, and charges and fees for the use of common pasture, for burials and for admission to playing fields.
11. Under the Allotment Act 1950 s.10, “Land let by a Council under the Allotment Acts 1908-1931 for use as an allotment shall be let at such rent as a tenant may reasonably be expected to pay for the land.”
12. Section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 permits charging for the use of leisure and recreational facilities.

Financial Implications

13. For 2024-2025 the income from allotments was budgeted at £15,500. As of 24th October 2024, the actual YTD income for 2024-25 was £8,105. This is due to DTC changing the due date of the rents. There is also a delay in the income being registered to this system due to using an outside finance company.
14. Cemetery: the number of requests for burials, interments, and memorials, are unknown and unpredictable.
15. The income generated by the sale of Fishing Permits will be given to the Ladygrove Lakes Fishing Association to help with the costs of running the club, as of April 2025.

Risk Implications

16. As with any price increase for services, there may be some negativity received.
17. All new charges will need to be advertised so residents and users, are made aware. Once agreed, the annual charges will be added to the Town Council's website.

Environment and Climate Committee

18th November 2024

Report Author: Mike Blake



To consider the future of the electric vehicle

Introduction

1. This report asks the Committee to consider the future of the of the electric vehicle (ALKE).



Background

2. In 2021 Didcot Town Council looked into the purchase of an electric vehicle and the decision to purchase the Alke was made at the Full Council meeting on 28th June 2021. Although the outdoor team were consulted and one of the team went to Manchester with the OSM at the time, the vehicle they saw was not the vehicle the Town Council purchased. The vehicle they went to look at was the ET Lander which we have since had a demo of. However, the council at the time opted to buy the Alke vehicle at a cost of £37,000.00.
3. Although this vehicle ticks the environmental box, in my opinion it has never been suitable for the outdoor teams needs. This shows in the long list of repairs it has needed since DTC purchased the vehicle.

4. In the last two years Didcot Town Council have spent a total of £9,014.01 on maintenance and repairs to the Alke. This is mainly due to the braking system. The system is designed so that you don't have to break whilst using this vehicle. The system kicks in when you lift your foot of the accelerator. This is not easy to do while you're driving from site to site on main roads of Didcot. People, bikes and vehicles see us coming and walk/pull out meaning we have to put our foot on the breaks to stop the vehicle.

When I recently spoke to the company that sold us the Alke, they were surprised that we had taken this vehicle off site and on to roads. Apparently if this vehicle had been left on site (site being Edmonds Park) we wouldn't have the braking issue. There are also health and safety issues that need addressing with this vehicle; there isn't a heater so when you drive in the winter the vehicle steams up; the mirrors move whilst driving meaning you can't see behind you; there also isn't any interior mirrors either which makes the vehicle hard to reverse.

I have been in talks with Liftsafe the company who provided the Alke and they have offered £7,000 to 'buy back' the vehicle. This is obviously a loss, but we can't keep paying these astronomical repair bills for something that isn't entirely suitable to the teams needs.

I have been looking at different vans that we could get to replace the Alke, and the outdoor team feel that for what the Alke actually does, a small box van would be more suitable. Examples below:



These vans are all preowned and have decent millage. The prices range from £6,990 + VAT, to £9,990 + VAT. These are only examples as they may not be available if we decide to go ahead with a new vehicle purchase. I just wanted you to see what our money could buy as a replacement rather than continue with a vehicle that doesn't work for us.

Legal Implications

5. Didcot Town Council have a responsibility to ensure that all vehicles are in good, road worthy condition. Although we have our vehicles serviced and mot'd when needed, the fact we have the Alke on the road with these minor issues is puzzling, especially when the vehicle has a long history of brake failure. Having a small van that can be mot'd and fixed locally if needed would be a far better solution.

Financial Implications

6. The original cost of the Alke was £37,000. With all the repairs the total cost on the vehicle has been over £45,000.00. Obviously selling this for £7,000.00 is a negative but for this amount of money, DTC could purchase another van. If we stick with the Alke the minimum annual cost is £550.00 for servicing and £325.00 just to be called out when something goes wrong with it - this is without any repair costs.
7. When you weigh up the average mot and service on a van the cost is around £500 per annum. The difference really is in the ongoing maintenance cost. The Alke is a specialist vehicle and with a specialist vehicle you pay a higher price especially when there is only one company who can service it. At least with a van any local garage can fix it and parts are relatively easy to get.
8. The cost of a new van would be covered by the 'buy back' cost of the ALKE from Lift Safe.
9. There may be an additional charge to amend the vehicle insurance.

Risk Implications

10. When it comes to vehicles and machinery there is always a risk, but I believe keeping the Alke is a risk. With the issues raised and the fact we are on the road with it I do find it unsettling to drive as do the outdoor team. This vehicle is always the last one to be chosen every morning.

Recommendation

11. The Committee is asked to consider how they would like to proceed with this vehicle; do we take Lift Safe up on the offer of the 'buy back' of £7,000 and use the money to purchase a small vehicle with the proceeds, or do we keep it and continue with the issues and paying ridiculous repairs and servicing fees.

Environment and Climate Committee

18th November 2024

Report Author: Lucy Blake

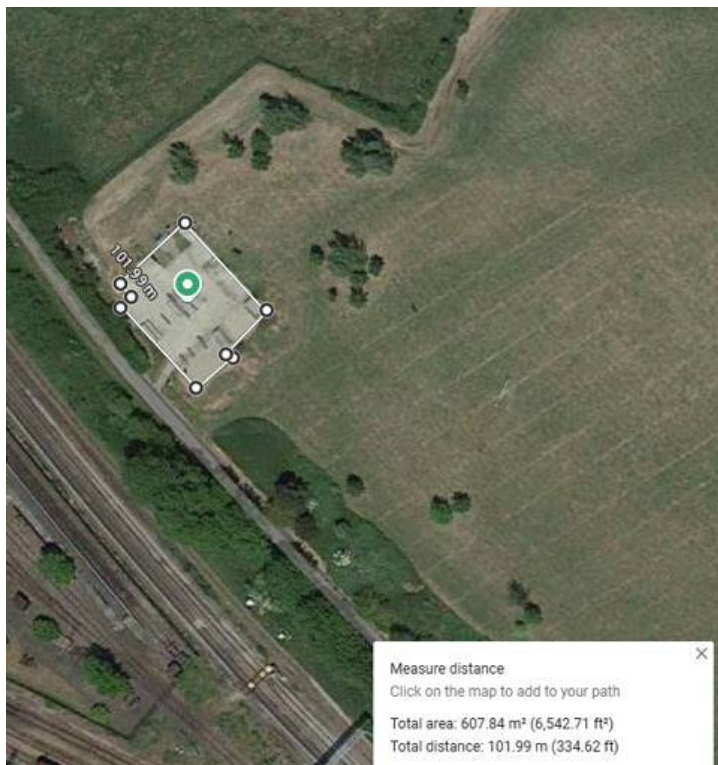


Potential new Skatepark- update and recommendation

1. This report updates the Committee on the progress of obtaining information to potential replace and relocate a Skatepark in Ladygrove.

Background

2. DTC's current skatepark was originally installed in 2002 and upgraded in 2011. This year the skatepark underwent some emergency repairs so that it was safe for use over the summer. The Council were advised that these repairs would last at least one year.



The skatepark is roughly 607.84m² and is located in the open green space in Ladygrove.

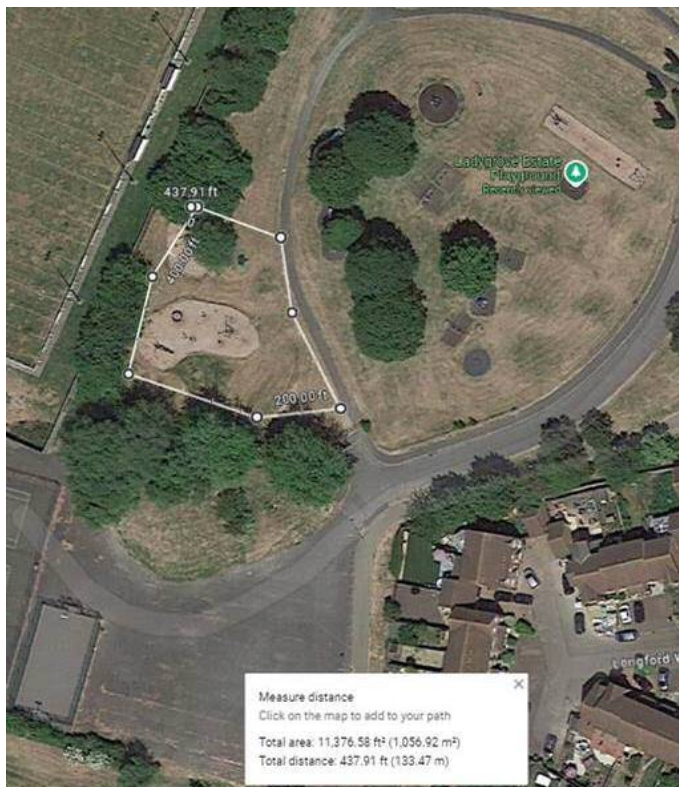
It is well used but often vandalised with graffiti. The sign has been 'stolen' numerous times.

3. Full Council resolved to investigate options for a possible relocation and replacement of the skatepark at the meeting held on 2nd September 2024.

Update

4. The Outdoor Services Manager (OSM) met with a representative from a skatepark installation company on 18th October 2024. During the meeting, he explained that the potential project is currently in the early stages of information gathering, with the aim of providing a new, improved, and engaging facility for the community.
5. The company representative assessed both the current and proposed locations and expressed the opinion that installing the new skatepark within the enclosed play area would be the best option. He also highlighted that when applying for funding, grant providers typically consider several factors, such as footfall, visibility, and other key elements of the location.

The proposed area is shown below:



In this location you could potentially install a skatepark of up to approximately 1056.92m², making it larger than the current skatepark.

This would involve relocating a very small 'teen area' which could be done at the same time but a playground installation company – quotes would need to be obtained.

Members will also need to consider the replacement of the large, wooden climbing frame.

6. The representative presented the OSM with a design for an integrated skatepark and junior pump track, which is soon to be installed elsewhere. The inclusive nature of the design was particularly appealing to the OSM, and the cost of this specific park was in the range of £500,000. Currently, the existing skatepark has only one wheelchair-accessible route via the pathway from Cow Lane bridge alongside the

railway track. The proposed new location, however, offers improved accessibility with entry points from at least three different areas. A larger skatepark will offer greater benefits to the community, particularly if efforts are made to ensure it is inclusive and accessible to all.

7. Two additional skatepark companies have been contacted and site visits requested.
8. Some Councillors have previously expressed concerns about the proposed location, as it is closer to residential properties. However, it is believed that positioning the new skatepark in this area could enhance safety, as it benefits from a certain level of visibility and the adjacent play park is frequently used. The increased exposure is likely to raise awareness of the facility, contributing to its popularity.
9. Additionally, it is hoped that the skatepark will be less prone to graffiti due to the higher foot traffic and proximity of people to the site and have a positive impact on any future grant application.
10. An email has been sent to SkateboardGB for advice on funding options.
11. If the skatepark was relocated to the play area, the original location could be used for a bike track.
12. The new Estate Administrator will work on this project with the OSM.
13. A rough estimate for a new, inclusive skatepark would be between £350,000 and £500,000, depending on size, and features. Funding can be applied for from various organisations, such as the National Lottery fund, and from crowdfunding.

Recommendation

14. It is recommended that Didcot residents be consulted on potential locations through DTC's social media channels. Officers require direction on the location in order to obtain preliminary quotes from installation companies.

It is suggested that Didcot Town Council post on its social media accounts to ask residents whether they would prefer the potential new skatepark to remain in its current location or be relocated to the fenced-in play area, as illustrated on the previous page. This feedback will allow Officers to focus on solutions that best suit the landscape and available space.

Environment and Climate Committee

18th November 2024

Report Author: Lucy Blake



To consider the draft DTC 'Guidance on discouraging rats on the allotments' document

Introduction

1. This report asks the Committee to consider the draft document on discouraging rats on the allotment sites and decide whether to recommend adoption to Full Council.

Background

2. At their meeting on 22nd August 2024, the Allotment Liaison Group asked for the Environment and Climate Committee to 'discuss and agree a draft version of a Rat Guidance Policy'.
3. Members of the Committee agreed for officers to draft this policy at their meeting on 16th September and bring it back to a future meeting for discussion.
4. Dogs are allowed on the allotment sites, if they are kept on a lead. However, the use of rat poison on these sites would pose a significant risk to them.

Legal Implications

5. Under the Smallholdings & Allotments Act 1908, s.23, DTC has the power to provide allotments and a duty to provide allotment gardens if demand unsatisfied.
6. Under s.40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, DTC has a duty to consider biodiversity in decision-making.

Financial Implications

7. There will be costs associated with implementing the items listed in the policy, however, the Town Council has an allotment maintenance budget (311/4041) and a planting budget (incorporated into cost centre 307/4041).

To consider the draft guidance on discouraging rats at the allotments

Risk Implications

8. There is a risk that tenants do not follow the advice, and rodents continue to be an issue. There is also a risk that the natural deterrents do not work.

Recommendation

9. The Committee is asked to consider the draft guidance on discouraging rats on the allotments and recommend approval and adoption to Full Council.
Once approved, this document will be placed in the noticeboards at the allotments and on the Council's website.



Didcot Town Council's guidance on discouraging rats on the allotments

It is everyone's responsibility to help deter rats on the allotments. Please follow the guidelines below to prevent them from settling on your plot.

What can allotment tenants do?

1. Regularly turn the contents of your compost bin, at least twice a year. This practice disrupts any rats that may have taken shelter and helps aerate the compost, speeding up the decomposition process while reducing methane emissions, a harmful greenhouse gas.
2. To prevent rats from burrowing underneath, line the base of plastic compost bins with small-gauge wire mesh or place the bins on paving slabs.
3. Periodically kick your compost bin to ensure it remains an unwelcoming environment for rats, and regularly check that they are not nesting in your greenhouse or shed.
4. Avoid placing household waste in your compost bin. Never add meat, dairy, bones, cooked food, or other unsuitable items, as these will attract rats and produce unpleasant odours.
5. Harvest ripe fruit and vegetables promptly and take them home for consumption.
6. Do not leave discarded fruit and vegetables on the ground. Clear them away into your compost bin, as they serve as a food source for rats and other pests.
7. Do not feed birds or other animals on your plot. If you have chickens clear up any left-over food as soon as possible.
8. Keep your plot well-maintained, ensuring that allotment gardens do not become overgrown or cluttered with rubbish, such as timber or stockpiled materials, as these can provide shelter for rats.
9. Always thoroughly wash (and peel, if necessary) any food you harvest. Vegetables showing signs of rat damage should be discarded. Rats can carry diseases such as Weil's disease, Salmonella, and Leptospirosis.
10. Ensure sheds are kept secure and inaccessible to rats and mice. Tenants should regularly inspect to confirm that rats are not nesting underneath.
11. Consider storing seeds, bulbs, and similar items in rodent-proof containers.

What can Didcot Town Council do?

Didcot Town Council has never used chemicals or poisons to control rats on the allotment sites and has no plans to implement such measures in the future. However, to discourage rats from the allotment sites, Didcot Town Council will:

1. Consider installing 'herb gardens' on the allotment sites

Rats have an exceptionally sensitive sense of smell, which they use to locate food sources. Strongly scented herbs like mint (particularly peppermint), lemongrass, rosemary, and sage can act as natural deterrents due to their potent aromas.

The Outdoor Team will explore potential locations across all allotment sites for planting 'Herb Gardens.' These gardens will serve as a natural deterrent to rats and provide additional benefits to all tenants. The herbs will be available for everyone on site to pick and use.

2. Plant Lavender sporadically along boundaries

Due to their sensitive sense of smell, rats are also averse to the scent of lavender. Lavender will be planted at various points along the boundaries of the allotments to serve as a natural deterrent. Additionally, lavender is beneficial to wildlife, providing a valuable source of nectar for butterflies and bees, particularly bumblebees, thereby enhancing biodiversity within the allotment sites.

3. Plant Daffodils and Chrysanthemums at the allotment sites

Both daffodils and chrysanthemums emit a strong scent that deters rats, making them effective natural repellents. Like the lavender, the Outdoor Team will intermittently plant these flowers along the allotment boundaries to enhance biodiversity while further discouraging rodents. The allotment sites could also serve as an additional location for the annual 'Community Planting' sessions organised and arranged by the Events and Communications Officer.

Moreover, the strong odours of garlic and onions are effective repellents against these pests and should be encouraged for planting. Allotment tenants are encouraged to plant any of the previously mentioned herbs and flowers on their plots to help deter rats.

4. Regularly inspect the allotment sites

In accordance with the tenancy agreements, every allotment plot is inspected throughout the year to ensure proper maintenance. Staff will also continue to monitor any debris left on site, especially along the borders, and will promptly clear it away.

These measures are inexpensive and easily implemented.

While rats may visit allotment sites and other open spaces, it is hoped that by working together, we can discourage them from settling and causing damage and nuisance across our five allotment sites.

November 2024.

Environment and Climate Committee

18th November 2024

Report Author: Pierce Bint



Smokefree Community Fund - update and recommendation

1. This report updates the Committee on the progress of getting the local primary schools to design Smokefree signs for the parks.

Background

2. In 2023 DTC's was contacted by the Smokefree Project Officer at OCC regarding installing smokefree signs at our parks.
3. Information on the fund is attached for your records.
4. Initial emails were sent to the following schools:
 - Willowcroft School
 - Ladygrove Park Primary School
 - Stephen Freeman School
 - Northbourne C of E Primary School
 - Manor Primary School and All Saints C of E Primary School.

Update

5. Contact was once again made with the schools to see if they are still interested in participating, to which only Ladygrove Park Primary School responded and expressed interest.

Recommendation

6. It is recommended that due to the lack of interest from other parties, we offer Ladygrove Park Primary School the option to design all the smokefree signs for all the sites.

Next steps

7. On approval of the recommendation, the school will design the signs. These will then be passed onto OCC who will print the signs in house.
8. As the signs are completed in house by OCC, no funding is sent directly to DTC however the cost for the signs is taken out of OCC's budget for the Smokefree Community Fund.

Oxfordshire County Council

Smokefree Community Fund

Financial support for voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to create smokefree places and/or hold smokefree events



The Four Pillars

Reduction in tobacco use



#SmokefreeOxon

Smokefree Community Fund

Would your organisation like to help play a part in creating a Smokefree Oxfordshire?

Financial support is available to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations who want to create smokefree spaces and/or hold smokefree events

The Smokefree Fund is here to recruit VCSE organisations and local people to help Oxfordshire quit smoking. In addition to establishing smokefree places and/or holding smokefree events, all applicants are encouraged to recruit a number of 'Smokefree Champions'.

What are Smokefree Champions?

Smokefree Champions are asked to:

- Be trained in Very Brief Advice (VBA) on smoking. This training will be supplied by Oxfordshire County Council for free - register for your place on our [Eventbrite page](#).
- Join the Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Alliance. Email smokefreeoxon@oxfordshire.gov.uk for more information.
- Keep up with the latest developments in creating a smokefree Oxfordshire, such as watching recordings of the presentations from our Oxfordshire Tobacco Control Alliance.
- Optional: Complete free online training provided by the NCSCT, including the theory behind becoming a smoking cessation practitioner.



In 2017-2019, in Oxfordshire there were over **3,500 deaths** in those aged under 75, from cancers, cardiovascular disease, liver disease and respiratory disease – **all diseases exacerbated by smoking***

There is a higher smoking prevalence in routine and manual occupations, and those with long-term mental health conditions and serious mental illness.

The SmokefreeOxon initiative aims to help support a culture shift away from smoking. This includes reducing the visibility and acceptability of smoking in public and private spaces, therefore denormalising smoking.

This in turn helps to reduce the impact on children and young people who are greatly influenced by parents, older siblings and peers who smoke in their presence. Children of parents who smoke are 4 times more likely to take up smoking than children of parents who don't smoke.

Inequalities

Smoking prevalence is more concentrated among disadvantaged communities

Giving up smoking is one of the most beneficial things a pregnant woman can do to improve her baby's health, growth and development. However there are 420 women who smoke at the time of delivery in Oxfordshire each year



Pregnancy

The number of women in Oxfordshire who smoke while pregnant is currently:

420

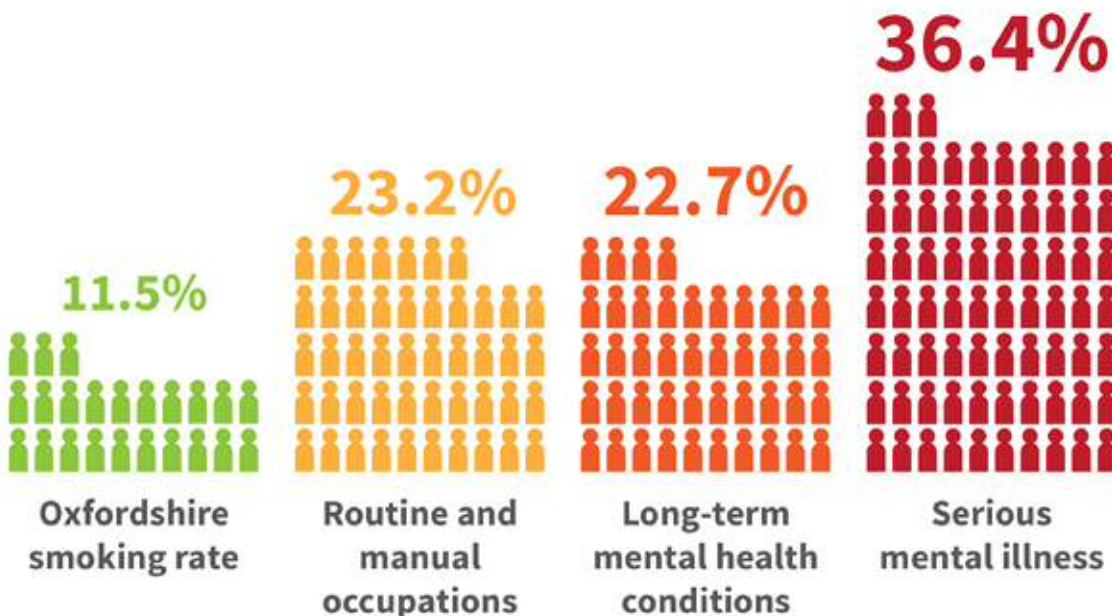


6.8%

Source: OHID, Public Health Profiles, Local Tobacco Control Profiles, 2021

#SmokefreeOxon

While the overall smoking levels in Oxfordshire are encouraging, there are inequalities in those who smoke



Ways of taking part in the Smokefree Community Fund

Funding of £150-£1000 is available to organisations that are enthusiastic about creating smokefree places or holding a smokefree event.

What is a smokefree space?

Smokefree Spaces are defined as buildings and external areas that are 100% smokefree. This means they do not have designated or informal smoking areas on their land and have a smokefree policy.

All smokefree spaces must be clearly branded as smokefree using signage. They must also be marketed and promoted as smokefree to staff, volunteers and visitors.

Oxfordshire's Smokefree Sidelines initiative is an example of Smokefree Spaces.

Other examples of eligible spaces: schools, leisure centres, playgrounds, outdoor/indoor sports clubs, outdoor benches/seating areas, restaurants/cafes

What is a smokefree event?

Smokefree Events can take place in buildings and/or outdoor spaces which are branded and marketed as smokefree for the duration of the event. These can be events you already have planned; as such they don't have to be exclusively focused on stopping smoking. #SmokefreeOxon must be included in marketing materials

Other examples of eligible events: local festivals, sporting events, charity events etc.

Ideas for potential Smokefree Community Fund projects:

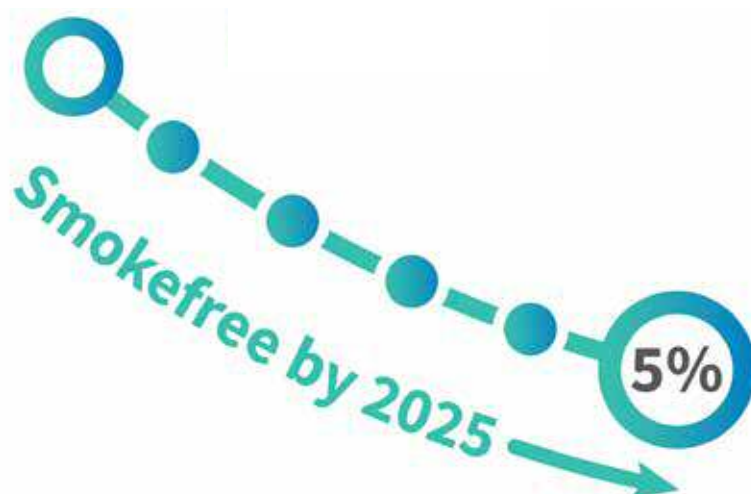
- Staff time to be trained in Very Brief Advice
- Design, purchase and placement of smokefree signage
- Physical removal of ashtrays and designated smoking areas
- Staff time to create a smokefree policy for your organisation
- Raising awareness/marketing campaign of the benefits of quitting and the local stop smoking service, Stop for Life Oxon
- A community art project about being smokefree (e.g., a mural)
- Holding a smokefree community event
- Host a drop-in session about quitting smoking
- Providing 1:1 support to those who use your services

This list isn't exhaustive, and we would like to hear your new and exciting ideas to reduce smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke in your community.

#SmokefreeOxon

The Vision

Create a smokefree Oxfordshire by 2025 which is achieved when the prevalence is at 5%



Example of Smokefree Spaces



Please email smokefreeoxon@oxfordshire.gov.uk before sending an application as we would like to work with your organisation to ensure the project can reach its full potential. After having a discussion with our team, please fill in our application form at: <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/smokefree-fund-application-form-2022>

Frequently asked questions

What can the fund be spent on?

Funding can be used as the organisation wishes in the creation of smokefree places and/or putting on smokefree events. It can also be used to help recruit Smokefree Champions including running local level awareness-raising and recruitment activities. Any costs associated with putting on smokefree events (room hire, refreshments, marketing, volunteer expenses, transport, etc.) are eligible.

When planning your activities think about how you can maximise the social benefit – see the **‘Go Social’** section on the following page.

Do you need any particular knowledge or expertise on the topic of smoking?

No. We will provide materials which will guide the conversation every step of the way. We just ask that you have an interest in helping create a smokefree Oxfordshire.

Does smoke-free also mean vape-free?

No. Vaping is seen by many medical professionals as a valuable tool to help people quit smoking. Therefore smoke-free places and events do not have to be vape-free, but this is your choice.

How will applications be assessed?

Limited funds are available. Therefore, financial support will be allocated in a ways to ensure we focus our funds in areas where there is greatest need.

What happens next?

Applications will be assessed on a rolling basis. The Public Health staff will assess the application against criteria and decide which applications will receive the funding. All applicants will be informed of the outcome within 3 weeks of sending the application. Successful applicants will be provided with additional guidance and examples of smokefree signage (sent by email).

How will organisations be paid?

Successful applicants will be paid in advance by bank transfer on supply of an invoice AND an original bank statement or paying-in slip.

Application form

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/smokefree-fund-application-form-2022>

Need any help?

Email smokefreeoxon@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Scan the QR code for the application form

#SmokefreeOxon

Unleash your creativity and GO SOCIAL

When planning your project, have a think about how you can deliver your activities for the benefit of local people

You could support other community/voluntary organisations and independent local businesses by shopping locally and keeping the money in Oxfordshire!

You can also do your bit for the environment by choosing greener products as well as reusing, recycling, or composting any waste.

As you already support volunteering, you're doing great things for local people. However, you might be able to involve new groups in the project or help people develop new skills.

One way of describing these added benefits is 'social value'.

Spending for Social Value



Venue Hire

Hiring community owned or managed venues helps maintain Oxfordshire's important community assets.



Refreshments

Will refreshments be healthy? Will you include vegetarian, vegan, kosher and halal options? Will you be supporting local, independent shops or business? Information on reducing sugar content can be **found here** and a catering guide can be **found here**



Marketing and Publicity

Have a think how you can support local printers or suppliers. Will you be using recycled paper, card, or other materials?



T-shirts and other merchandise

Whilst the vast majority of merchandise is manufactured in the far east, you can still do your bit for Oxfordshire and support local suppliers and shops. Organic cotton t-shirts are now more readily available.



Entertainment/activity costs

Help keep your money within your district and use local, independent business and suppliers where possible.



Awards and Certificates

These could be handmade by local people and reflect the culture of your area.

...plus lots of other amazingly creative ideas from your project team!



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Environment and Climate Committee 18th November 2024



Report Author: Lucy Blake

Community Planting area update

Update

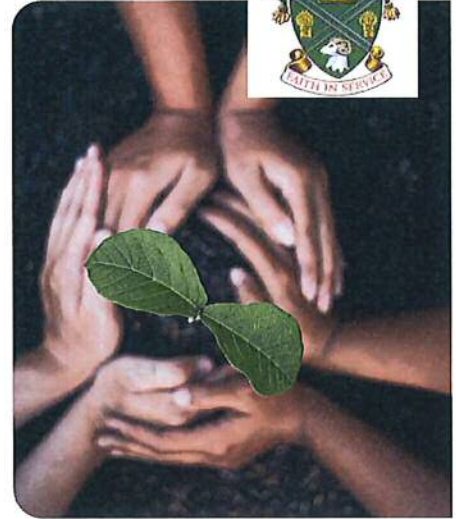
1. At the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee, members resolved to dedicate the area adjacent to the Polytunnel, for Community Planting.
2. A poster was created and was displayed on all allotment sites and in the Civic Hall, asking for interested charities and community groups to get in contact. The poster also asked businesses whether they would be interested in donating items, such as seeds, compost, wood for the raised planters or even their time to help clear the area. The poster is attached to this report for your information.
3. Some local stores have been contacted requesting donations of seeds, compost and materials for making the raised bed. One response has been received - Chilton Garden Centre supplied some seeds which will be used to give to the community groups who take on these planting spaces.
4. The following charities and community groups have been contacted to see if they would be interested in these planting spaces:
 - Didcot Foodbank
 - Sofea
 - Earth Trust
 - Home Start
 - Oxfordshire Mind
 - Riverside

Next steps

5. Ask for volunteers and arrange some clearance days.
6. Persevere asking for donations of materials, soil and compost to create the planters – if no donations of materials are forthcoming, DTC will need to purchase them.

7. Draft up agreements and rules for the Council to consider.
8. Consider the sizes and amount of planters for the space.
9. Once sizes have been agreed, consider the rental charges per planter.

Didcot Town Council's



COMMUNITY PLANTING PROJECT

Didcot Town Council is excited to announce that the creation of a Community Planting Area at the New Road allotment site is due to commence, with the hope to be ready in time for Spring 2025!

We invite local charities, and community groups to express their interest in participating in this initiative

**"To plant a garden
is to dream of
tomorrow"**

Audrey Hepburn

To register your interest in this project, please email:
council@didcot.gov.uk

Aims & Objectives:

- Improve Public Health & Well-being
- Enhance Community Engagement
- Promote Environmental Sustainability
- Provide Accessible Growing Spaces
- Foster Social Inclusion
- Promote Healthy Lifestyles

IF YOU ARE A BUSINESS OR AN ORGANISATION WHO COULD OFFER DONATIONS OF SEEDS, COMPOST, WOOD FOR RAISED PLANTERS, OR EVEN YOUR TIME TO HELP PREPARE THE AREA, PLEASE FEEL TO GET IN TOUCH!