

**Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
23rd January 2023 at 7.30pm  
All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



## Minutes

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

### Present:

Councillor J Moody (Chair)  
Councillor V Haval  
Councillor A Thompson  
Councillor A Dearlove  
Councillor M Khan (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor D Chandran  
Councillor M Walsh

**Officer:** Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk

Four members of the public.

### 130. Apologies

All members were present.

### 131. Declarations of interests

No declarations were made.

### 132. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record. There were no amendments.

### 133. Questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

There were no questions.

### 134. To note two grant reports

The Committee noted the successful Christmas Day Lunch and the report from the Oxfordshire Play Association.

### **135. To consider three grant applications**

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow for public participation.

#### **Public participation**

Martin Gillett from the Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA) spoke in support of his grant application for the sum of £1,000. The family funday is held in June in Edmonds Park. The event is free to everyone and well supported by other stakeholders including the army. The event costs around £4.5k to put on and this grant will help the OPA to ensure that free entry remains for all.

Brian Mcnamee from TRAIN spoke to his grant application for the sum of £10,000 to help the charity afford the rent and service charges for their new rooms. The young people have named the space "The Base" and it is located centrally in the Orchard Centre where much of TRAIN's work is done. The current annual costs of the building is around £33,000.

The third grant application was for the sum of £2,000 from the Didcot Barramundi Swimming Club. Paul Sexton and Nick Baum explained the rising costs of running the club. The Club has seen success at county level and also offers training for disabled members. The grant will help cover the increasing costs of swimming pool lane hire and competition costs.

The Councillors then took some time to ask questions on all three grant applications.

Standing orders were reinstated.

#### **Oxford Play Association**

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and RESOLVED to award the full amount of £1,000 to Oxfordshire Play Association. The vote was unanimous.

#### **TRAIN**

After some discussion on the affordability of larger loans, it was proposed by Cllr M Walsh and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED to award the full sum of £10,000 to TRAIN. The vote was unanimous.

#### **Didcot Barramundi Swimming Club**

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Chandran and RESOLVED to award the full sum of £2,000 to the Didcot Barramundi Swimming Club. The vote was unanimous.

### **136. To approve the monthly accounts for November 2022 and to note the draft accounts for December 2022**

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED to approve the monthly accounts for November 2022. The vote was unanimous. It was clarified that ten additional Poppy Wreaths had been purchased from the Royal British Legion for future Remembrance Day occasions. Sandwich lunches

were offered at meetings with the building contractors – LIFE – as they had long journeys to the Civic Hall. Most meetings were remotely on Teams.

The draft figures for December 2022 were discussed by the Committee. The additional spend on the insurance was explained due to the previous insurance company exercising their right to opt out of the final year of a three year agreement. Insurance premiums have risen across the sector and the Clerk tested the market before bringing the renewal back to Council.

**137. To note the CCTV six monthly report**

The Committee noted the report.

**138. To consider the costings of two new CCTV cameras**

The long awaited costs of the two new CCTV cameras had now been received. The Committee has been trying to install a new camera at the Cow Lane bridge and another at the Aldi underpass. The quoted cost was £5,484 per camera plus an annual data (SIM Card) at a cost of £625 per camera per year.

There would also be a one off cost of an onsite survey and an industrial grade router – this cost including the installation would be £1,120. The control room would add these cameras to their monitoring programme at an additional cost to the Council.

It was noted that there may be some funding available for this project but this would not be clarified until March.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** approval of the purchase of two CCTV cameras at £5,484 each; the new SIM cards at an annual cost of £625 per camera and the installation costs of £1,120. One member abstained from the vote.

**139. To consider getting costings to reposition a camera**

One of the cameras in the Broadway was obscured by a tree. SODC was working with OCC to prune the tree but this may not resolve the issue as the foliage is quite dense.

The other option was to consider a relocation of the camera to a nearby fixture. There would be cost implications of hiring an engineer; the supply and installation of additional equipment; the costs of connecting the camera to the power supply, and obtaining approval to install the camera in that location. It was not clear who would meet this cost.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody, seconded by Cllr A Thompson, and **RESOLVED** to further explore the costs, feasibility and potential funding for the reposition of the camera.

**140. To approve plans to improve the security of the area around the War Memorial and Smallbones Recreation Ground.**

The Committee considered several projects relating to improving the security of this area.

- The fencing to the Smallbones Play area needed replacement as the wire fence was damaged and dangerous.

- The area around the war memorial needed a re-design to make it more accessible to more residents – especially for Remembrance Sunday.
- Vehicle access needed to be restricted to discourage unauthorized access.

Quotes had been gathered relating to the play area fencing. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Council that either quote two or quote three be accepted at a cost of £10,563.20 or £11,545.17. The final decision would be delegated to the officers with a recommendation that the fence be green and with bow top style and self-closing gates. The vote was unanimous.

It was AGREED that the current location of the War Memorial was in the best area but improvements could be made to the surroundings. It was also noted that a future project could be to look at ways to make the war memorial a more prestigious monument.

Cllr J Moody explained some of the practical solutions agreed with the outdoor team such as:

- Additional benches and bins
- Grass bunding sown with wildflowers
- Relocation of a flower bed
- Some additional pathways
- Bird's mouth fencing to safeguard from unauthorized parking
- Access gates for the outside team to service the area.

Cllr A Dearlove proposed using sustainable materials, such as recycled plastic for the birds mouth fencing. Cllr V Haval expressed her concern regarding the overall accessibility of the recreation area, as the bunding and fencing could impede the accessibility and overall appeal. Cllr J Moody explained that the bunding will not be continuous, and there will be sufficient gaps for pedestrians.

Although costs were still being gathered, the likely expenditure would be:

- Pathways - £7,854
- Replacement manhole cover - £375.00
- Bird's mouth fencing - £3,500
- Soil bunds and 5 bar timber gate - £3,940

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Council to undertake the work as detailed in the proposal.

**141. To note the letter from OCC regarding the grass cutting and to approve a statement of explanation to residents.**

The Committee noted the letter from OCC legal which formally brings our service level agreement to an end as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The Town Clerk had drafted a statement of explanation to be posted on the DTC website along with the affected roads. The intention was to explain to the residents why their grass was no longer being cut.

It was AGREED to defer this item as the Committee did not wish to apologise for something which was the responsibility of Oxford County Council.

**142. To consider the proposed expenditure on safety grounds for Loyd Pavilion.**

The Loyd Pavilion was no longer considered safe to use. The proposal from the Property & Facilities Manager was to make the building safe without the expense of a replacement. These essential repairs and refurbishment would increase the safety and use of the building for a further ten years giving the Council time to put reserves away for an eventual replacement.

The proposed funding source would be from EMR reserve 320 'Building repair fund'. A separate container will be provided for the Football Club to rent for storage of their equipment. Once the building was refurbished – it would be available to anyone to hire and the football club would not be allowed to use the building for storage.

It was proposed by Cllr V Haval and seconded by Cllr M Walsh and **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed expenditure for up to £20,000. The vote was unanimous. This item would not go to full Council as this was a health and safety priority.

**143. To consider the membership of the Open Space Society.**

The Town Clerk outlined the benefits of the Open Spaces Society, such as protection of green spaces and paths. It was proposed by Cllr A Thompson and seconded by Cllr D Chandran and **RESOLVED** to apply for membership at a cost of £45 per annum.

**144. To review the progress report**

The Committee noted the progress report. Cllr J Moody enquired about the progress of the new Edmonds Park Pavilion. The Town Clerk stated that tenders had been sent prior to the Christmas break and responses were now being received and evaluated by the builders. The costs of the build may be less than the original application however no accurate overall estimates can yet be confirmed.

Cllr J Moody asked for the Restore project to be looked into as the charity was claiming a significant portion of land and allotment space which did not seem to be worked to their full potential. These spaces should be available to the residents due to the long waiting list.

**Exclusion of the press and public**

**RESOLVED:** pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 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.

**145. To review the legal papers for Ladygrove North Community Centre**

The Town Clerk gave an update on this new building stating that the Council had received a legal agreement for transfer of freehold of 'Willowbrook Park Community Centre'. The building would be unfurnished. A clerical error had been noted on the legal documents which needed to be amended.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Council to sign the transfer documents as necessary. The vote was unanimous.

**146. To note the CCTV meeting confidential minutes.**

The Committee noted the meeting minutes.

Meeting closed at 9.31pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair      Date \_\_\_\_\_