

Didcot Town Council

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



DRAFT Minutes

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

PRESENT

Councillors:

Cllr G Roberts (Chair)
Cllr K Morrison (Deputy Chair)
Cllr A Hudson
Cllr S Cole
Cllr A Jones
Cllr L Hislop
Cllr D Macdonald

Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk)
Mrs L Blake (Deputy Town Clerk [minutes])
Mr M Blake (Outdoor Services Manager - OSM)

One member of the public attended.

23. To receive apologies

Apologies were tendered from Cllr J Broadbent. Cllr D Macdonald substituted.

24. To receive declarations of interest

Cllr D Macdonald informed the Committee that she was part of the Edfest organisation team and would therefore refrain from voting on agenda item 10 – To consider the report on Hatwell's Funfair event charges.

No other declarations were received.

25. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 10th July 2023 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.

26. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report

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


Cllr K Morrison asked that a colour 'key' be added to the progress report. This would be done.

Cllr G Roberts enquired as to the progress of the Sow and Grow project. The OSM informed members that work to construct the polytunnel and access paths would commence during October.

Cllr A Jones asked about the hemlock on the mounds and was informed that this had been treated and cut down. The hemlock would be routinely treated by the Outdoor Team in the coming months in the hope that this would be eradicated.

It was also confirmed that SODC had fixed the drain cover on Tyne Avenue.

There were no other questions.

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

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

27. To note the External Income and Expenditure to date for external works, as updated on 5th September 2023

The Committee noted the updated figures, as of 5th September 2023, presented to them at the meeting.

Cllr G Robert enquired as to why cost centre 301/3154 was over budget. The OSM could not recall why this was the case but agreed to investigate this.

- *It was noted after the meeting that the purchase of the new electric tools had been added incorrectly to this cost centre. This would be amended before the next meeting.*

Members questioned why cost centre 306/3151 (Water charges at Loyd Rec) was over budget. The Town Clerk explained that a lot of utility bills were estimated, and it would be beneficial to only look at utility cost centres six months into the financial year and towards the end, to get a more accurate idea of the spending.

310/3150 'Plants' cost centre was questioned as to why the budget was overspent. It was explained that the cost of the town's hanging baskets had been taken from this cost centre, as it was not previously budgeted for, but would be moved to the 'Community Projects' cost centre.

It was confirmed that the business rates for the cemetery was £848 last financial year.

The OSM explained that the income generated from the sale of the fishing permits had been paid into the Town Council's account and would show on the income and expenditure balance sheet at the next meeting.

- *The amount paid into the Town Council's account, which cleared on 8th September 2023, was £2,625.*

28. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's report

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

Allotments - General

7. The Committee was asked to consider whether to implement a concession charge for the additional strimming and spraying charges for allotment tenants. The OSM explained that offering these ad hoc services was a challenge for the outdoor team.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr A Jones, and **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the next agenda. All members agreed.

The Town Clerk advised that the Committee review the service charges at the end of the current financial year.

17. Treating the Japanese Knotweed at Cockcroft allotment sites was discussed. The OSM and another member of the outdoor team are PA1 and PA6 qualified and could carry out the treatment of the weed without the need of contracting an outside company.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and **RESOLVED** to instruct the OSM and his team to treat the weed on the allotment site.

All members agreed.

The Committee discussed the dismantling annual inspection of all zip wires, the servicing of all roundabouts and the repairs to the cargo net at Loyd Rec. It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to:

- 29. Approve the zip wire inspections at a combined cost of £1,732.50, to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'
- 31. Approve the servicing of all roundabouts at a cost of £1,487.50, to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'
- 34. Approve the cargo net repair at Loyd Rec at a cost of £1,823, to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'

Vita Play would carry out this work.

All members agreed.

Smallbone Rec

38. The Committee discussed the quote to repair the surfacing of the roundabout in Smallbone Rec. Sutcliffe Play, who had installed the equipment, were contacted regarding this but confirmed that the Town Council was out of warranty. They did state that a company representative could meet with the OSM to discuss options.

The decision on this item was deferred until a meeting with Sutcliffe Play could be arranged.

Ladygrove Park

47. The Committee considered the two quotes to replace the gates and the springy.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and **RESOLVED** to accept the £3,851 (£1,925.50 for each gate) quote to replace the two gates at the park, using Vita Play but to defer the replacement of the springy. The Committee wanted the OSM to investigate whether re-setting the springy would be a better alternative to replacement.

All members agreed.

Marsh Rec

50. It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to approve the quotes to fix the safety surfacing around the roundabout and to install a new gate, for a combined total of £2,262.50 – to be taken from cost centre 309/3153 'Play Equipment Maintenance'.

All members agreed.

Events

A late events application had been received following the publication of the agenda. Elite Youth Sports wanted to book football pitches at Edmonds Park for a school tournament on Thursday 12th October 2023 12-3.30pm, and Thursday 7th December 2023 12-3.30pm. They also wanted to hire the toilet block.

The Committee considered the application. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the dates of the event and the use of the toilet block. The toilet block would be charged at £20 per day.

All members agreed.

29. To consider the first round of budget considerations for the 2024-2025 financial year

The Town Clerk explained the process of the first-round considerations; the Committee were to think of future large projects they wanted the Council to consider. Cllr D Macdonald suggested that improvements to the Ladygrove area should be considered, whilst improvements to the play areas in Edmonds Park were also suggested.

Cllr K Morrison suggested teen provisions be considered for both Ladygrove and Edmonds Park. The Town Clerk informed members that s106 monies had been 'put aside' for the Council to use solely on teen play provisions specifically at Edmonds Park.

Any further ideas for future projects were to be received by Cllr G Roberts, ideally before the 26th September 2023 (the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee).

All members agreed.

30. To note that an application for a Fisheries Improvement Programme Grant had been submitted.

The Committee noted that the application was submitted on 31st August 2023. The outcome of this application would be decided on by the end of October 2023.

31. To consider the report on bench options for a bus stop on Wantage Road, Didcot and the recommendations to the Committee

Members discussed the quotes for the two bench options. The fact that traffic management could potentially be needed was a concern, as was the cost.

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to defer the item to the end of the financial year and to investigate funding options.

All members agreed.

32. To consider the report on Hatwell's Funfair event charges and the recommendations to the Committee

The Committee discussed the report and noted the fact that Hatwells had supplied Didcot with a funfair for approximately 41 years. They were keen to support the fair where possible.

Some concerns were raised regarding Hatwells application for dates in 2024 at Edmonds Park, due to the conflict with Edfest. Cllr L Hislop suggested that the Edfest Working Group consider the situation at their next meeting and investigate a potential compromise.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and **RESOLVED** to charge Hatwells £260 per trading day, for the event in Ladygrove in October 2023.

The subject on future charges and the confliction in dates would be discussed by the Environment and Climate Committee after the next Edfest Working Group meeting.

All members agreed.

33. To note the draft meeting notes from the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting held on 3rd August 2023

The Committee noted the draft meeting notes from the Ladygrove Management Working Group meeting. There were no recommendations to the Committee, other

than to approve an application for a Fisheries Improvement Grant, which had been consulted on via email due to the closing date.

The OSM confirmed that repairs to the aerator had been completed and it was working at full capacity.

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

34. To consider the report on the Cemetery charges and the recommendations to the Committee

The Committee considered the report and the confidential statement from a Didcot resident.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and **RESOLVED** to approve a refund of £450 and to consider each enquiry into non-resident charges on a case-by-case basis.

It was also **RESOLVED** to re-instate the Cemetery Working Group to investigate future cemetery rules and charges.

All members agreed.

The meeting closed at 21.10

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____

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