

## Didcot Town Council

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### Notice of a meeting of the

**Environment and Climate Committee**  
Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7.30pm  
Online at Zoom.us (or via your device app).



**Members of the Environment and Climate Committee are summoned to attend a extraordinary meeting on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 7.30pm.**

#### **Admission of the public and media**

The Council welcomes members of the public to its meetings in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meeting) Act 1960.

**Due to the Covid-19 virus, admission to this meeting will be online.**

If any member of the public wishes to comment on these items please contact the Planning and Environment Officer.

#### **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 Planning and Environment Officer before the start of the meeting.

#### **Public participation – via zoom.us (or via your device app)**

The Council welcomes the public's involvement in meetings, which must be in accordance with our rules (Standing Orders 18-20 on a matter before the Committee).

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 – or to

view without speaking – please email the Planning and Environment Officer for details of how to join the meeting – [GLangton@didcot.gov.uk](mailto:GLangton@didcot.gov.uk) or see the guidance below.

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### How to join the meeting using zoom.us

Should any member of the public wish to join the meeting, please contact the Planning and Environment Officer by email ([GLangton@Didcot.Gov.UK](mailto:GLangton@Didcot.Gov.UK)) to request an invitation.

You will be provided with instructions on how to join the meeting. You will need to sign up to a Zoom account, which is free. You should use your browser to find **zoom.us**, then simply follow the instructions to sign up. Should you wish to make a comment rather than attend, please email the Planning and Environment Officer or any Committee Member prior to the meeting.

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## AGENDA

1. To receive apologies.
2. To receive declarations of interest  
Members should declare any interests they may have on any item on this agenda in accordance with Didcot Town Council's Code of Conduct.
3. To approve the draft minutes of the meeting held via email on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (**attached**).
4. To consider the Scheme of Delegation to Committees.
5. To consider the Environment and Climate Terms of Reference.



Janet Wheeler, **Town Clerk**  
9<sup>th</sup> June 2020

#### **Voting members:**

Cllr P Davies  
Cllr A Hudson  
Cllr A Macdonald  
Cllr D Macdonald  
Cllr D Rouane  
Cllr A Thompson  
Cllr C Wilson

#### **Nominated Substitute Members**

Cllr J Durman  
Cllr M Khan  
Cllr A Sandiford  
Cllr M Walsh

## Didcot Town Council

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## Environment Committee

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 7.30pm  
Online at Zoom.us

## Minutes

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

### PRESENT

#### Councillors:

P Davies.  
A Hudson.  
A Macdonald.  
D Macdonald.  
D Rouane.  
A Thompson.  
C Wilson.

#### Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk).  
Mr T Rudge (Outdoor Services Manager, OSM).  
Mr G Langton (Planning and Environment Officer, PEO).

#### Others:

Two members of the public.  
Four Councillors who were not members of the Committee.

## **1. To Elect the Chair of the Committee.**

Cllr D Macdonald, as the previous Chair of the Committee opened the meeting and, following her nomination, received at the Full Council meeting on the 4th May 2020, was proposed by Cllr Wilson as the Chair of the Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Hudson and unanimously agreed.

## **2. To elect the Vice-Chair of the Committee.**

Following their nominations, received at the Full Council meeting on the 4th May 2020, Cllr D Macdonald proposed Cllr A Macdonald, which was seconded by Cllr Hudson and Cllr Davies nominated himself as vice-chair and was seconded by Cllr Rouane. The Committee voted on the two proposed vice-chairs as follows:

Cllr A Macdonald's proposal received 4 votes in favour,

Cllr Davies' proposal received 2 votes in favour.

Cllr A Macdonald was duly elected as vice-chair of the Committee.

### **Public participation**

Cllr D Macdonald proposed suspending standing orders to allow the attending members of the public to address the Committee, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald.

M Blackman brought the Committee's attention to the problems with litter bin capacity in Edmonds Park and the sorting of litter placed in those bins. She reported concern that much of the litter placed in those bins was recyclable and voiced her concern that the contents were all sent to landfill. M Blackman suggested that the Council investigate the installation of covered bins with separated general waste and recycling sections, such as are installed along the Broadway. She noted that, especially in the current circumstances being mindful of the need to socially distant, she did not like to touch lids of bins.

P Wilson, noting he was a wheelchair user, brought the Committee's attention to the condition of the path that connected Reed Street on Great Western Park (south) to Stubbings Land. He noted it was the most convenient route to the centre of the town and its facilities. Through the winter it had been very muddy and was all but impossible to cross and even though now dry was not a good surface, being rutted and uneven. He asked if the Committee could consider installing a path that enabled all users to traverse it effectively.

The Committee re-entered standing orders and Cllr D Macdonald proposed that the Committee amend the agenda to allow the items to consider the elements of the Outdoor Services Manager's report (15 on the agenda) that were relevant, and to consider the condition of connecting paths at Great Western Park (GWP) and existing amenities (14 on the agenda) to be considered first to enable the members of the public to listen to the deliberations.

**3. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's Report (selected elements).**

The OSM reported that the approximately 70 litter bins across the Town's amenity land and parks were emptied three times a week and that the waste collected was sent to a waste transfer station where he was assured it was sorted, cleaned where necessary and dealt with according to its recyclability. Cllr Rouane confirmed That the non-recyclable waste was incinerated to provide power for households in Oxfordshire. Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr A Macdonald seconded and it was **resolved** to research the cost of replacing litter bins with larger, covered models.

**4. To consider the condition of the land at the connection paths laid at Great Western Park (south) and existing amenities.**

Cllr D Macdonald reported that the developer had approached the Council seek a view on whether the fence should be left open between the public open space developed at Reed Street and Stubbings Land, which the Council had agreed to leave open in anticipation of it becoming a desire path. The path connection was originally intended to be soft-surfaced but the developer amended the plans and the path was now hard-surfaced from Reed Street to the point it meets Stubbings Land. The Committee heard that residents were making use of the path to access the facilities of the Town by foot, bicycle and other non-vehicular means. The Committee noted it had not been the intention of the Council historically to run a path across Stubbings Land. Cllr Rouane proposed, Cllr D Macdonald seconded and it was **resolved** to undertake a project to research the possibility of installing one or more paths from the connection to the existing paths across Stubbings land by:

- a) Possible routes for the paths to be researched.
- b) A consultation exercise to be undertaken with local residents via social media.
- c) Funds be requested from the Community Infrastructure Levy by putting the matter before the Finance and General Purposes Committee for a resolution.

All members agreed.

**5. To receive apologies.**

No member tendered their apologies

**6. To receive declarations of interest**

Cllr Rouane declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 87, reporting that he was a shareholder on the Low Carbon Hub and in item 92, reporting he was a personal friend of the residents seeking permission to keep bees on an allotment at Mereland Road.

Cllr D Macdonald declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 87, reporting that she was a member of Sustainable Didcot.

**7. To note the Scheme of Delegation to Committees.**

**8. To note the Environment and Climate Terms of Reference.**

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr Davies seconded and it was **resolved** to consider items 81 and 82 together. All members agreed.

Cllr Wilson proposed, Cllr D Macdonald seconded and it was **resolved** to postpone the consideration of the Committee's terms of reference, especially in the light of its title change and adoption of climate issues, to an extraordinary meeting of the Committee, to be held in order to present the reviewed terms of reference to Full Council for approval on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

**9. To note the draft minutes of the meeting held via email on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.**

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr A Macdonald seconded and it was **resolved** to approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting.

**10. To confirm the agreed points from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.**

Cllr Macdonald proposed, Cllr Wilson seconded and it was **resolved** to approve the notes as an accurate representation of the decisions made.

**11. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report.**

The Committee noted the report. Cllr Hudson reported that the bus shelter on Barnes Road had been installed.

**12. To consider and note the financial statements and budgets (FY2019-20).**

The Committee noted the statements and budgets.

**13. To note the Letter received from Sustainable Didcot.**

The Committee noted the letter.

**14. To consider if Didcot Town Council should take forward research into a 20mph zone for the town.**

Cllr Davies introduced the item, noting the results of a poll he had carried out on social media, which had reached 4227 people, and received 842 votes, approx. 39% being in favour of the Town becoming a 20mph zone and 61% were in favour of retaining the current speed limits. Cllr Davies suggested that Didcot could be offered as a pilot area to the County Council. And reported that his inspiration was central government's proposals as contained in the Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19, with the expectation that local authorities would make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians. Cllr Davies further noted that the Council could exert pressure on the County Council to complete the pedestrian crossing at Mersey Way.

Cllr Rouane noted his sympathy with the concept of a 20mph limit but considered that congestion already slowed traffic considerably. He considered that non-vehicular transport would have to be promoted and increased at the same time as reducing the speed limit.

Cllr Wilson noted her appreciation of Cllr Davies efforts and considered the number of responses received to be positive. She agreed it appeared to be pro-car use and considered some routes should not be considered for a reduction. She considered a temporary change in response to the government guidance rather than a costly permanent change and thought a Traffic Advisory Group could be called before the Full Council meeting in June.

Cllr Hudson was concerned that in Oxford the police had trouble enforcing the speed limits and that many drivers found driving at 20mph too distracting, thus making it more dangerous. His view was that the 30mph limit should be retained.

Cllr A Macdonald considered a town-wide survey would be needed to consider changing road layouts in order to make walking and cycling easier and considered that Full Council would need to consider the matter, it being one of policy.

Cllr Rouane proposed, Cllr Thompson seconded and it was **resolved** to actively support any action that Oxfordshire County Councillors could undertake on the Town's behalf in this regard. All members agreed.

### **15. To consider the matters raised in the Edmonds Park Pavilion report.**

Cllr Macdonald introduced the item reporting that members of the Council had met via Zoom.is with architects from RPA and that the Committee had to consider the two outstanding items.

a. Regarding the question '*Should there be one club room space, or should there be further lettable community rooms?*', Cllr Macdonald proposed, Cllr Hudson seconded and it was **resolved** to confirm that the facility building should have smaller 'break out' rooms in addition to the main clubroom.

b. Regarding the question '*Should there be lettable office space as part of the building?*', Cllr Macdonald proposed, Cllr Davies seconded and it was **resolved** to confirm that the facility building should not have dedicated lettable office space.

### **16. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's Report (remaining elements).**

The Committee heard that:

- all outdoor staff were now back at work, if available, so maintenance tasks would some return to schedule
- there would be no wildflower planting this year as the window had been missed due to the Coronavirus lock-down
- the Council had worked with SODC regarding the sprayed markings at the entrances to public parks reminding the users of the need to maintain social distancing. The Council had received feedback, both positive and negative regarding the markings
- the tennis courts had been reopened in line with government advice
- the Council cemetery had received 15 burials and 6 interment of cremated remains since January 2020, there had been 4 burials and 1 interment on the previous week and 2 burials had been booked for the coming week. The OSM confirmed that the cemetery had space for 354 further burials and 150 further interments of cremated remains. If needed there was space for approximately 250 further
- all site events had been cancelled unto and including the end of June 2020

- that security measures were required to prevent another temporary encampment of travellers accessing the field. The most recent had resulted in a cost of £11,421 for security and resultant clean-up at Edmonds Park. The carpark gate had remained locked since
- the quote received for the repair of the play equipment at Edmonds Park would be compared with others received
- in line with government advice, Ladygrove Lakes could be reopened for members to fish. There was some indication that the water level had once again begun to drop and that this would be monitored.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr A Macdonald seconded and it was **resolved** to repair the play equipment at Edmonds Park. All members agreed.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr A Macdonald seconded and it was **resolved** to seek quotes for the installation of a suitable barrier at Edmonds Park car park. All members agreed.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr Wilson seconded and it was **resolved** to open Ladygrove Lakes for members to fish at the earliest opportunity. All members agreed.

### **17. To note verbal updates from the Councillors' working group for Tyne Avenue.**

Cllr Roaune reported that he had met with representatives of Didcot Town Football Club and the constituency MP on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 where they discussed the boundary in question and the relationship between the Football Club and the Town Council. He shared a report from this meeting with the members.

At the meeting, the exact location of the boundary was discussed. DTFC believed, from original drawings that the boundary of land and thus responsibility was not at the pavement edge but along the tree line. The Club was willing to work with the Council to jointly agree a boundary line, thus formalising the responsibility for maintenance.

Cllr Rouane reported that the Club had closed a path through its land because dog walkers had not been clearing up after their animals, leading to fines for fouled pitches from the Football Association.

He reported that DTFC were disappointed that the relationship with the Council had not been better over the years but that the Club had felt the meeting was positive and would hopefully will allow more open dialogue in the future.

The Committee noted that the trees along Tyne Avenue had been pollarded by Oxfordshire County Council, that Thames Water had not yet made the drain access cover safe, simply laid a slab over it and that the ground level vegetation and grass would need cutting again soon as the growing season had started.

The OSM noted concern over the insurance of Council staff whilst working on this land and that currently they Council cut the first 2 metres from the pavement boundary.

Cllr Hudson reported that DTFC had no spare money, being a volunteer-run community -based club, so he doubted the Club could afford to maintain it.

The Town Clerk advised that the Council would need a formal agreement with the Club if it was to maintain all the land thus enabling staff to be insured and, the work and land to be covered by the Council's public liability insurance.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr Hudson seconded and it was **resolved** to contact Didcot Town Football Club regarding the possible transfer of the land and its maintenance responsibilities and if necessary to arrange a meeting to agree the details. All members agreed.

**18. To consider the report into beekeeping on allotment sites.**

Cllr Rouane did not take part in the discussion or vote for this item, having declared a personal interest.

The Committee noted the report. Cllr A Macdonald noted that the Council would still be liable under its insurance, even if the beekeeper was also insured. Cllr Thompson considered it important to ascertain the views of the other allotment holders.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr Wilson seconded and it was **resolved** to canvass the views of the other allotment holders at Mereland Road, as advised in the report. Five members were in favour of this course of action.

**19. To note updates on the Edmonds Park Splash Pad project.**

The Committee noted the report.

**20. To consider the installation of Solar Photovoltaic panels at the Civic Hall.**

The Committee welcomed the report and noted its contents.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr A Macdonald seconded and it was **resolved** to pass the report to the Civic Hall Management Committee for full consideration.

**21. To consider the report into a Didcot Tree Planting scheme.**

The Committee noted the report. Cllr Rouane noted that the planting season had been missed for the current year. Cllr A Macdonald considered that planting a tree in commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of VE and VJ days would be a suitable tribute. Cllr Wilson considered that any scheme should be coordinated with the scheme planned by Sustainable Didcot.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr Rouane seconded and it was **resolved** that the item be postponed to the July 2020 meeting of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 21:50 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Date: \_\_\_\_\_