

Didcot Town Council

Environment Committee

Monday 21st September 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 (Chair).

D Macdonald.

D Giesberg (substituting for Cllr D Rouane)

A Thompson.

C Wilson.

Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk).

T Rudge (Outdoor Services Manager)

Mr G Langton (Planning and Environment Officer [minutes]).

Others:

Cllr M Khan (non-committee member)

Cllr A Macdonald opening the meeting reporting that Cllr D Macdonald was not well but wanted to attend the meeting. She did not want to Chair in case she was unable to attend the full meeting, so as Vice-Chair, Cllr A Macdonald would Chair the Committee for this meeting.

42. To receive apologies.

Cllr D Rouane tendered his apologies, he was substituted for by Cllr P Giesberg.

43. To receive declarations of interest

No member declared an interest in any item on the agenda.

44. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th July 2020.

Cllr A Macdonald proposed, Cllr A Hudson seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

45. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report.

The Committee heard the updates for each item as listed on the following 4 pages.

Action	Topic	Responsible	Rating	Progress September 2020	Minute 21.09.2020
Bus Shelters (including petition). ¹	RTI panels in Clear Channel shelters	Councillors	Green	Future publicly owned shelters would be considered for this amenity. The Planning & Development Committee would be asked to consider adding it to any response to a suitable application.	
	Installation of an end panel following petition.	Officers	Amber	The PEO has contacted Clear Channel, whose staff are still on furlough.	The PEO reported that he had received no further detail from Clear Channel and would press them for an outcome.
	Relocation of street furniture to allow (if required).	Officers and Councillors.	Green	The PEO has contacted Clear Channel, whose staff are still on furlough.	The work would only be undertaken if required by the installation of the shelter end (above).
Beekeeping at Mereland Road allotments.		Officers	Green	<p>Following approval of the minute, the allotment holder who made the initial request will written to outlining the Committee's decision.</p> <p>Members may wish to review the purchase of bumble bee colonies for the Council's allotment sites.</p>	

¹ The following petition was considered by Council on 3rd September 2018 and referred to the Environment Committee for consideration:

“We, the undersigned request that the existing bus shelter S1 alongside the Cinema in the Orchard Centre be replaced with a shelter the same standard and size as the S2 shelter situated at the South End of Station Road, Didcot by The Broadway pub.

The current S1 bus shelter is situated at the bottom end of a wind funnel and provides no shelter from the strong winds and rain. There are no side panels and inadequate seating. All bus passengers find it is not fit for purpose.”

Tyne Avenue		Councillors	Amber	Contrary to the report at the previous meeting, the approved minutes of Full Council demonstrate Full Council resolved to not re-instate the working group (ref. minute 17 (d) (iii) of Full Council 29.06.2020). The same minutes requested this Committee carry out further work to draft detailed proposal for the work required. The consideration of the matter is on the agenda.	
Ladygrove Lakes.	Hemlock removal	Councillors	Green	Passed to F&GP 24.08.2020 meeting and approved.	
Edmonds Park Play equipment.		Councillors	Amber	The Company identified and its suppliers are returning from furlough but not yet back at full operation. Detail in the OSM's Play Equipment Report.	
Edmonds Park Pavilion (demolition)		Officers	Amber	The asbestos survey indicated that the building was clear of asbestos.	
Edmonds Park Pavilion (construction)		Officers	Amber	Latest designs to be considered by the Committee.	
Edmonds Park Splash pad.		Councillors	Amber	Officers have met with a utilities company on site to seek an alternative estimate for the installation of services only.	The PEO reported that estimates had not yet been received from the companies that attended and these would be followed up.
Ladygrove Sand Pit.		Officers	Amber	Detail in the OSM's Play Equipment Report.	

Tree planting in Didcot.		Officers	Amber	Cllr Wilson was to update the Committee but this was not done. It was noted that tree planting was best undertaken in November or March.	
Community Transport (Cllr L Price).		Officers and Councillors.	Amber	PEO emailed Cllr Price 13.08.2020	The PEO reported he had not yet heard from Cllr Price and would follow this up.
Bus Shelter adoption.		Officers	Amber	The PEO awaits an update on the legal position from Taylor Wimpey, who have advised it may mean the Council being a signatory to the section 38 agreement but awaited confirmation from their legal team.	
Bee-friendly bus shelters		Councillors	Green	The PEO would include such a quote in any new shelter proposals.	
Metal shelters in Edmonds Park		Councillors	Amber	Youth shelters would be raised as part of any redevelopment of the Council's parks.	
Creation of 'wild' areas in each of the Town Council's parks		Councillors	Red	To be confirmed.	This matter remained to be confirmed.
Installation of height restricting entry barrier at Edmonds Park		Officer	Amber	The OSM reported that the Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee had approved the spending and the work to be planned.	
Changing the colour of the dog bins in the area to green		Officers	Amber	This would be undertaken as the bins were replaced or new ones installed.	

Reports on verge cutting and whether there can be pollinator planting instead		Councillors	Amber	This would be revisited if a new verge management system was to be introduced.
Completing the path on Stubbings Land		Councillors	Amber	The OSM confirmed that the cost would be likely to be in excess of £25,000 and thus would need to go out to public tender.
Paving 'desire lines' and widening footpaths in Ladygrove		Councillors	Amber	The PEO would bring this to the attention of the Planning and Development Committee if any S106 or similar grant money was seen to be forthcoming.
Implementing or improving the knowledge of recycling via Terracycle		Officers	Amber	The provision will be advertised when Covid-19 restrictions sufficiently ease. The collection bin for Fabreze recycling is in the foyer of the Civic Hall. A bin is awaited for Carex recycling.

42. Mr D Reeves to address the Committee regarding volunteer-group tasks.

Mr Reeves did not attend to address the committee.

43. To consider the request to install a bench at Tyne Avenue.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr P Davies seconded and it was **RESOLVED** not to install a bench at the site as it was not land for which the Council had responsibility.

Six members agreed and one abstained.

42. To consider the establishment of a working group to draft a detailed proposal to undertake work at Tyne Avenue for submission to the Finance and General Purposes Committee as requested by Full Council on 29.06.2020.

Cllr A Macdonald proposed, Cllr Hudson seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the reinstatement of the working group and to reconnect with Didcot Town Football Club to Full Council.

All members agreed.

43. To consider macro areas to be included in the 2021-22 budget.

Cllr A Macdonald proposed, Cllr Giesberg seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to postpone this item to an extraordinary meeting of this Committee in week commencing 19th October 2020.

All members agreed.

44. To receive the actual year to date spend against the 2020-21 budget.

The Committee received and noted the paper.

45. To consider an installation and planting to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE and VJ days.

Cllr A Macdonald proposed, Cllr Hudson seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to plant a suitable tree in Smallbones recreation ground, ideally on the 11th November 2020.

All members agreed.

46. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's report.

The Committee noted the contents of the report, including:

That notices had been posted on all allotment sites advising on social spacing and discouraging social gathering on the sites.

That new site representatives were needed at New Road and Cockcroft allotments following the previous reps' resignations. Advertisements had been placed on the site noticeboards for the vacancies and it was hoped elections would soon be held.

All play and outside gym equipment was open for use and was being inspected weekly to ensure equipment was safe. Notices were in place advising social distancing and some swing seats had been removed to allow more space between children.

The repairs to the equipment at Edmonds Park had not been carried out, the contractor had been furloughed.

The play area at Smallbone Rec had proved to be very popular and on occasions had been so crowded that a complaint over social distancing had been received. Signs were in place but it was noted that the Council had to rely on parents to ensure children were abiding by social distancing requirements. The OSM noted that if more complaints were received, it may be necessary to close the play area between 8&9am and 3&4pm to prevent overcrowding before and after school.

It was reported that the Council had still not received a grant from a charitable trust to cover the cost of the installed trampoline. The Trust was still not operating at full capacity as a result of the restrictions placed on work by the Covid-19 pandemic response. The equipment supplier and installer had not been pursuing payment. We have still not received the grant for the trampoline at Smallbone. The remainder of the funding, £50,000 had been paid by the FCC charitable foundation, with the Town Council paid £27,500 towards the cost.

Cllr A Macdonald noted that should the Council have to meet the cost of the trampoline, it may be able to vire the budget to make the payment from another cost centre.

There had been 23 burials to date in 2020, and 16 cremated remains internments. The Council was awaiting guidance from central government on the number that could attend burials.

Litter collection continued at all sites and waste continued to be disposed of into a skip at Edmonds Park, which was then taken to a waste transfer station. During lockdown the parks were in constant use with people taking exercise and during this period more litter was collected from our sites, resulting in a higher skip usage.

The car park entrance at Edmonds Park continued to be kept locked to prevent travellers accessing the site. The agreed installation of the height barrier would happen towards the end of October 2020.

During the recent storms 2 Poplar trees and 1 Oak tree were damaged in Edmonds Park. A branch from one of the Poplar trees went through a single storey roof at a property in Samor Way. The 2 Poplar trees have been reduced to a safe height and would be totally removed during the next few weeks. The Oak lost a large limb but this fell into the park and did not damage any property but required District Councils tree officer approval for permission to reduce the oak tree by 30%.

The football pitches had been marked out and the first games of the season were played 12th & 13th September. To provide toilet facilities, two portaloos had been hired for the football clubs to use.

Work is still ongoing on the refurbishment of the lakes. A new company is now going to put in the solar powered aeration system and it is hoped that this work will be completed within the next 2 months.

The OSM reported that the Ladygrove Lakes fishing association would like to carry out some of the minor works that were required for example clearing around islands, erecting fencing on the islands cutting back around the fishing platforms and helping to keep the lake clean. The Committee agreed that the Association could not undertake such work.

The OSM reported that most events had been cancelled in line with Covid-19 recommendations, although league and club football had resumed following FA recommendations.

The Wildlife trust had a pop up display tent at Ladygrove Lakes on the 12th & 13th September and have asked if they can visit again on the 7th & 8th of November.

Cllr D Macdonald proposed, Cllr Wilson seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to allow the Wildlife trust to erect the pop-up display on the 7th & 8th November 2020.

A request had been made to allow metal detecting on Ladygrove Park. The person making the request is a member of the National Council for Metal Detecting (NCMD) and has insurance through that organisation and would abide by their code of conduct regarding the state in which the land is left.

Councillor A Macdonald proposed, Councillor Davies seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to draft policies for metal detecting on Council owned land to be reviewed by this Committee before considering approval.

47. To consider the playground equipment report.

With no report available, the item was passed over.

48. To consider the pavilion demolition report.

Councillor A Macdonald proposed, Councillor D Macdonald seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to seek the costs of demolition of the building and the cost of a replacement pre-fabricated unit to provide toilet and welfare unit to install on the remaining slab.

49. To consider the revised plans for the new pavilion at Edmonds Park.

The Town Clerk reported that quotes existed for the next step of the process and that the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be asked to delegate the authority to progress the project to this Committee.

Councillor A Macdonald proposed, Councillor Hudson seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to request the architect make the following revisions:

- i. Increase the solar panels on the roof, further PV and hot water panels should be installed on the east and south-facing roofs
- ii. Install screens/stalls for the showers in each changing area
- iii. Remove the toilet accessible from outside unless a requirement to seek suitable funding.

50. To consider the locations for the SODC Deep Clean team to include on their work plan (App 2).

The Committee considered the areas that would best benefit from the deep cleanse were the Ladygrove Loop, Broadway, the market square and Cornerstone frontage

42. To consider the report on path installation at Stubbings Land.

At Stubbings Land, a path had been requested to link the new entrance from Reed Street on Great Western Park south to the existing path network. The shortest route for this path would be to link from the new entrance to the current path at Wheatfields, some 60m in length and up to 1.8m wide. A tarmac surface path was recommended as this will match the existing paths on site.

Councillor A Macdonald proposed, Councillor D Macdonald seconded and it was **RESOLVED** to put the path works out to the public tendering process.

The meeting closed at 20:51.

Signed _____ Chairman

Date: _____