

## Environment Committee

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at 7.30pm

All Saints Room, Civic Hall



## Minutes

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

### PRESENT

Councillors: Mr A Thompson  
Miss J Billington  
Mr S Connel  
Mr A Dearlove  
Mrs D Macdonald

Officers: Mr T Hudson (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Mr T Rudge (Outdoor Services Manager)

Six members of the public

### Public Participation

Mr M Adams, Joint Chief Executive Officer of RESTORE, addressed the Committee in relation the siting of the RESTORE building (minute 231). Mr Adams informed the Committee of RESTORE's preferred siting, close to the existing building and avoiding having to build on the Oasis garden, and put forward two potential sub-options.

Mrs A Paterson addressed the Committee in relation to the bus shelter report<sup>1</sup>. Mrs Paterson raised a number of questions about the decision-making process for situation of bus shelters and made suggestions as to possible locations and means of identifying suitable locations, and encouraged the bus driver for Whites buses to share the key places. The suggestion provided for the best place was considered to be around Downs Road/Edwin Road. Mrs Paterson also spoke in favour of the petition, stressing that the existing stop was unfit for purpose and bringing to the attention of councillors the challenge of identifying the legal responsibility of the stop in question. In addition, Mrs Paterson

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<sup>1</sup> Minute number 229

requested that the Council help identify the owners of the trees by the football club on Tyne Avenue.

Miss E Bracken addressed the Committee in relation to the allotment liaison report and the siting of the RESTORE building<sup>2</sup>. Regarding the allotments Miss Bracken enquired about the progress of drainage works on New Road, encouraged Councillors to reconsider their policy of dogs on allotments, informed Councillors that New Road allotments had a shed and tools for the 'spares shed' but were simply asking permission, and encouraged the Committee to allow Harwell-based residents of Great Western Park to take on Didcot Town Council allotments. Regarding the RESTORE building site, Miss Bracken reported that the preferred option of allotment holders was that permission be granted to build the new building on the site of the Oasis garden.

### **223. APOLOGIES**

Ms C Augustine tendered her apologies.

### **224. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Mrs D Macdonald declared a pecuniary interest in questions over the proposed 'spares shed' on New Road, and a non-pecuniary interest in other matters relating to the Allotment Working Group and proposed location for the new RESTORE building on the basis of her being a New Road allotment holder.

### **225. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Proposed by Councillor Miss J Billington and seconded by Councillor Mr A Dearlove - **RESOLVED** to agree the minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018<sup>3</sup> as a true and correct record and that the Chairman sign them as such, subject to amending the incorrect date of meeting to state 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

### **226. QUESTIONS REGARDING PROGRESS OF ITEMS IN PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Councillors asked for an update on the multi-unit in Ladygrove Park that had been in danger of becoming unsafe. The Outdoor Services Manager informed the Committee that following safety works, the unit had been deemed safe by a RoSPA inspection.

### **227. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BUDGETS**

The Committee considered a report on the financial statements and budgets to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

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<sup>2</sup> Minute numbers 234 and 231 respectively

<sup>3</sup> Incorrectly labelled as 18<sup>th</sup> June on agenda

Councillors questioned why spending on protective clothing was so low by the current point in the year. The Outdoor Services Manager explained that a number of purchases had been delayed until the move to temporary accommodation during the depot project had taken place.

The report was **NOTED**.

## **228. OUTDOOR SERVICES MANAGER'S REPORT**

The Committee considered the Outdoor Services Manager's report. A verbal update by the Outdoor Services Manager on the depot, with an expected commencement date in early October and, if no holdups were encountered, a completion date of mid-May.

In considering the report Councillors addressed a number of specific issues:

- 1) Tyne Avenue Trees  
Councillors noted the removal of Didcot Town Council trees on Tyne Avenue and requested further information be provided about ownership of the trees referenced during public participation.
- 2) Movement of Edmonds Park bench  
Councillors considered the options regarding the moving of a bench in Edmonds Park that was attracting a high amount of anti-social behaviour. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Thompson, seconded by Councillor Miss J Billington and **RESOLVED** to remove the bench and relocate it elsewhere within Edmonds Park.
- 3) Tikspak  
Councillors discussed a proposal by Tikspak to increase the number of dog bag holders on Town Council land from 22 to 44. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Dearlove, seconded by Councillor Mr A Thompson and **RESOLVED** that the Town Council accept the Tikspak proposal but insist that new dispensers be delivered with posts at Tikspak's expense.
- 4) Bench Request in Smallbone Rec  
Councillors considered a request for a memorial bench to be situated in Smallbone Rec. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Thompson and seconded by Councillor Mr A Dearlove and **RESOLVED** to give permission for a memorial bench to be placed in Smallbone, subject to the same terms as the Council allows benches in Kynaston Road Cemetery.
- 5) Stubbings Land Boundary Fencing  
Councillors discussed whether to fence off an access created by a developer adjacent to Stubbings Land giving the development direct access to Stubbings Land. Councillors discussed the lack of permission, the likelihood of vandalism of any fence and their preference for safe routes for children attending school. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Thompson, seconded by Councillor Mr S Connel and **RESOLVED** to allow the footpath to run into Stubbings Land and take no further action.
- 6) Applications for Events  
Councillors considered the applications for events from Style Acre and Active Women. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Thompson, seconded by

Councillor Mrs D Macdonald and **RESOLVED** that permission be given for both events, but that Active Women be encouraged to avoid holding their events during weekends due to the clash with football matches.

The report was **NOTED**.

## **229. BUS STOPS AND BUS STOP PETITION**

The Committee considered a report inviting it to consider the previously deferred decision of potential sites to consider for a Didcot Town Council-funded bus shelter, and its response to a petition requesting the replacement of a bus shelter on Station Road that had been referred to it from Council.

Councillor Mr A Thompson fed back to the Committee that he had been unable to visit the potential bus shelter sites to identify suitable ones for consideration for personal reasons. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Thompson, seconded by Councillor Mr S Connel and **RESOLVED** to defer consideration until the next meeting.

Councillors considered their response to the bus shelter petition relating to Station Road. Councillors expressed sympathy for the idea and that the Town Council pursue its consideration of the idea independently of its existing bus shelter considerations. It was proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel, seconded by Councillor Mrs D Macdonald and **RESOLVED** to seek further information regarding ownership and costs to inform future consideration.

## **230. COW LANE BRIDGE CCTV**

The Committee considered a report asking it whether it wished to set in motion the process for putting CCTV cameras by Cow Lane Bridge and, if so, to determine how to collate the required information.

In discussing the report Councillors noted that a budget had already been agreed, and the need due to multiple sources of crime and anti-social behaviour. It was proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel, seconded by Councillor Mr A Dearlove and **RESOLVED** to commence the process for putting in CCTV cameras by Cow Lane Bridge, for the Deputy Town Clerk to collect crime statistics and the views of the Police, for Councillor Mr S Connel to collect impact statements, and for the Deputy Town Clerk to draft a questionnaire and that the Councillors present would coordinate collection of the surveys.

## **231. RESTORE APPLICATION FOR NEW BUILDING ON FLEET MEADOW**

Councillors considered a report informing them of the decision of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's refusal to give permission for a lease to be granted to RESTORE on allotment land and inviting the Committee to

consider next steps, with a recommendation that the Committee recommend to Council a specific site within Fleet Meadow, rather than a number of possibles.

In discussion Councillors noted the difference of opinion between representatives of RESTORE and the allotment holders and commented on the difficulties of assessing the points made whilst not being on the allotments. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Thompson, seconded by Councillor Mrs D Macdonald and **RESOLVED** that the decision should be deferred to the next meeting, and that a site visit for members of the Committee be arranged at Fleet Meadow along with representatives from RESTORE and New Road allotments.

### **232. LADYGROVE LAKES UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report informing Councillors of the issues around water and oxygen levels at Ladygrove Lakes and potential future work that may be required. The report was **NOTED**.

### **233. WORLD WAR 1 WORKING GROUP UPDATE AND ISSUES**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the World War 1 Working Group and referring a decision on whether to participate in the Trees of Remembrance project. The update was **NOTED**.

In considering whether to participate in the Trees of Remembrance Project Councillors discussed the Town Council's own World War 1 tree-planting and compared the quality of trees, discussed potential sites and whether to include a plaque as suggested. It was proposed by Councillor Mr A Thompson, seconded by Councillor Mrs D Macdonald and **RESOLVED** for the Town Council to fund its own tree, to be planted in Smallbone Rec subject to a suitable space being identified after potential future works including the redevelopment of the play area and moving of the war memorial. In the event that the Town Council's logo can be added to the plaque, to request a plaque from the Trees of Remembrance Project, otherwise to pay from the World War 1 budget for a plaque with the Town Council's logo and the wording of the Trees of Remembrance plaque instead.

### **234. ALLOTMENT LIAISON GROUP UPDATE AND ISSUES**

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the Allotment Liaison Group and referring a number of issues for decisions.

The update was **NOTED**.

#### **1) Allotment Fencing**

Councillors were asked to endorse the recommendation of the Allotment Liaison Group that requests to fence individual allotments not be allowed. It was proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel and seconded by Councillor Mr A Dearlove and **RESOLVED** to endorse the recommendation of the Allotment Liaison Group and not permit new individual fences on the allotments.

#### **2) Dogs on Allotments**

Councillors discussed the request from the Allotment Liaison Group dogs be allowed on the allotments. Councillors discussed the positive and negative aspects, but considered that the balance between the two was difficult to ascertain in the absence of real-world observation. It was proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel, seconded by Councillor Mr A Thompson and **RESOLVED** that tethered dogs be allowed on allotments on a trial basis from April 2019 to October 2019, with the impacts of the trial to be evaluated after its completion.

3) Spares Shed on New Road

Following the public participation which informed the Committee that a shed and tools had been identified, the Committee were simply asked whether they wished to give permission for a spares shed to be situated subject to a suitable space being found. It was proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel, seconded by Councillor Mr A Dearlove and **RESOLVED** that the Town Council would give permission, subject to a suitable site being agreed, but was not liable for the shed or its contents.

4) Non Didcot-Residents Applying for Allotments

Councillors were asked to consider whether, in light of the length of the waiting list for the to-be-delivered allotment on Great Western Park, to allow non-Didcot parish residents to apply for allotments. In considering the issue Councillors considered the level of demand from inside and outside Didcot, explored whether a different charging level should be applied, and whether a maximum distance could be implemented for those applying. It was proposed by Councillor Mrs D Macdonald, seconded by Councillor Miss J Billington and **RESOLVED** that residents of Great Western Park only could apply for Didcot Town Council allotments, that they would be entitled to take plots on at the same price as residents of Didcot parish, but that they could not go on the waiting list for allotments but would have to choose between allotments with immediately available capacity.

The issue of Broadway security was deferred until further information could be submitted on agreed security proposals.

## 235. FUTURE PROJECTS SUGGESTIONS

No suggestions put forward.

## 236. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel, seconded by Councillor Mr A Thompson 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

## 237. BOWLS CLUB LEASE

Councillors considered a report providing an updated lease with wording agreed by Didcot Bowls Club. The Committee considered the legal advice provided. It was proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel, seconded by Councillor Mr A Thompson and **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that it offer to the Bowls Club a new lease on the terms as written in the appendix to the report.

The meeting ended at 9:10 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_Chairman

Date:\_\_\_\_\_

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