

Didcot Town Council

**Environment & Climate Committee
(acting as a Working Group)**
Monday 19th July 2021 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:

A Macdonald (Chair)
C Wilson (Vice Chair)
P Davies
A Hudson

M Walsh
A Thompson
P Giesberg

Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk)
Mr R Harris (Outdoor Services Manager)
Mrs L Blake (Planning and Environment Officer [minutes])

18. To receive apologies.

No member tendered their apologies for the meeting. All were present.

19. To receive declarations of interest.

No declarations of interest were received.

20. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th May 2021.

Cllr C Wilson asked about the proposed changes to the Environment and Climate Committee Terms of Reference. Cllr A Macdonald explained no suggested amendments had been received yet and they will be discussed at a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting and note them as such.

All members agreed.

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

The Committee heard the updates for each item as listed on the following 2 pages.

Action	Topic	Responsible	Rating	Meeting 17.05.2021	Meeting 19.07.2021
Tyne Avenue		Councillors	Amber	There had been no further progress to report.	It was decided to liaise with the Football Club to see if DTC can maintain the first 2m on a temporary basis.
Bus Shelter on Avon Way		Officers	Amber	The matter was on the agenda for consideration.	The PEO will be meeting a representative from Externiture 13 th May – an update will be available prior to the meeting.
Edmonds Park Play equipment		Councillors	Amber	The matter was addressed in the Outdoor Services Manager's Report.	The Park is being monitored.
Edmonds Park Pavilion (demolition)		Officers	Amber	The matter was on the agenda for information. Approval had been granted and work was due to start from 1 st June 2021.	The matter was on the agenda for information.
Edmonds Park Pavilion (construction) & Splash Park		Officers	Amber	The Working Group was agreed to be set up, to include the installation of the Splash Park.	Planning application had been submitted for the Pavilion. The Pavilion and Splash Park Working Group had been agreed. The members of the group were confirmed to be: Cllr P Siggers, Cllr A Hudson, Cllr J Moody, Cllr D Chandran, Cllr A Macdonald, Cllr P Davies and Cllr A Dearlove.
Ladygrove Sandpit		Officers	Amber	The matter was addressed in the Outdoor Services Manager's report.	The OSM and PEO are meeting with a company to discuss funding options for park improvements.

Bus Shelter adoption		Officers	Amber	There had been no progress to report.	The PEO was awaiting an update from Taylor Wimpey.
Metal Shelters in Edmonds Park		Councillors	Amber	There had been no further progress to report.	It had been agreed at the meeting on 21.09.2020 that youth shelters be raised as part of any redevelopment of the Council's parks.
Creation of 'wild' areas of the Town Council's parks		Councillors	Amber	The matter was addressed in the Outdoor Services Manager's report.	The wildflower bed on the Broadway was growing well.
Changing colour of the dog bins in the area, to green		Officers	Amber	No progress to report.	It was agreed at the meeting on 21.09.2020 that this would be undertaken as the bins were replaced or new ones installed.
Installation of Notice board at Cornber Stone		Officers and Councillors	Amber	License had been granted to fix the notice board to the wall.	The PEO had contacted Sustainable Didcot for an update. The noticeboard had been ordered and the planning permission was due to be applied for.
Wildflower Meadow, Mowbray Fields		Officers	Amber	It was agreed to support Sustainable Didcot's request to ask SODC to consider extending their Wild Meadow area.	The PEO contacted Sustainable Didcot and informed them that once they are ready to contact SODC, DTC will show their support.
Relocating and installing new bins in Ladygrove		Officers	Amber	It was agreed that DTC request that SODC/OCC consider relocating the bin on Mersey Way and installing a new bin on Plym Drive.	SODC needed to conclude their mapping project first, to assess the need. It was confirmed that the bin on Mersey Way could be relocated.

Tyne Avenue

Cllr P Davies expressed concern as to why the proposal to maintain the area at Tyne Avenue was moved in a negative way at Full Council.

Cllr A Macdonald explained that although there had been two recorded votes on the item at the Full Council Committee meeting, no resolutions had been reached.

There were questions as to whether this item could be discussed again at Committee level within the next 6 months. As no decisions were made, it was decided it could be.

The area now had bark to suppress the vegetation. It was **AGREED** that the OSM investigate the feasibility of the maintaining the 2m strip of land. This could be either a formal arrangement or a temporary solution so that DTC can maintain it in the future.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr A Thompson and **RESOLVED** to liaise with the landowners and DTC's insurance providers to allow DTC to maintain the first 2m of the land, on a temporary basis.

This item will remain on the progress report to be monitored.

Pavilion demolition

It was confirmed that the demolition of the old pavilion at Edmonds Park will commence from 26th July 2021.

22. To receive the actual year to date, spend against the 2021-22 budget.

The Committee noted the budget report.

Cllr P Davies queried the negative internal and external audit cost centres. The Town Clerk explained that these sums were accruals from one financial year to another.

Cllr P Davies queried the 3388-cost centre 'Concrete Slab Improvements' £48 spend. The Town Clerk confirmed that this was for the Herras fencing used to fence off the pavilion prior to demolition. The 'Concrete Slab Improvement' budget is for the 'slab' which will replace the old pavilion.

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

The Committee noted the Outdoor Services Manager's report.

Allotments

Allotment inspections are ongoing.

The Cockcroft site has issues with Japanese Knotweed, which appears to have originated from a neighbouring property. The outbreak has been contained for now, but further treatment will be needed.

The Committee **AGREED** to carry on treating the Japanese Knotweed on the allotment land and to continue to offer advice and support to the resident.

A quote has been received to purchase the materials required to carry out the construction of the compost bays on the New Road allotment site, totalling **£925.32** plus **£185.06 VAT**. This order will be placed.

Play Areas update

A meeting has been arranged for 9th August so that the OSM and PEO can explore funding options for replacement/improvements to the Ladygrove play area.

Cemetery update

There has been four cremated remains burials since the last Environment and Climate Committee meeting.

The memorial bench approved at the last Committee meeting, has been installed.

Marsh Rec

DTC was contacted by a member of the public regarding the fence between the play park and his property, as the ownership of the fence is unclear.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Council would be unable to help with any costs.

Ladygrove Park

District Cllr A Warren had contacted DTC after receiving a request for a secure dog run area to be installed in Ladygrove Park, near to the tennis courts.

It was **AGREED** to contact District Cllr A Warren and explain that the Council will not be pursuing this idea as they did not want to 'fence off' any open green space area, when it is widely used by all. The area is also used by the Park Runners.

Ladygrove Mounds

Spraying of the hemlock on the mounds, is ongoing.

Cllr C Wilson explained there are more areas within Didcot that seem to have hemlock growing on them. These areas do not belong to DTC so can be reported on www.fixmystreet.com and directly to SODC.

Ladygrove Lakes

The Diffused Aeration System has been installed. All the signs suggest that the system is working effectively, and the quality and oxygenation of the water is good.

Decisions will need to be made regarding the smaller lake, although the fish will have to be moved from the small lake to the larger lake.

Broadway flower beds and Civic Hall

The wildflower beds on the Broadway are in flower and DTC have received lots of positive comments on them on social media.

The OSM has been liaising with Sustainable Didcot regarding planting native varieties of fruit trees and edible hedgerows along the wall of the Broadway allotment.

Suggested areas for further wildflower sites included:

- The strip of land in the Civic Hall carpark, as it is hard to strim without damaging vehicles parked against it.
- The bank by the basketball court in Marsh Rec.
- The verge at the end of the current wildflower bed, which had previously been treated for bind weed infestation.

Cllr P Davies requested that the hedgerows next to the disabled bays at the Civic Hall car park be cut back.

Sustainable Didcot

The OSM confirmed that SODC had carried out a site survey and deemed the area on Great Western Park (owned by SODC) a good location for the initial forest (tiny forest/woodlands).

Areas owned by DTC will be investigated in the future.

Stubbings Land Footpath

Quotes have been requested for the signs for Stubbings Land (no motorcycles allowed).

Cllr P Davies suggested using Therma Plastic signs that stick onto tarmac, as they are more cost effective. Cllr P Davies will forward the details of companies who could supply this, to the OSM.

Willowbrook Leisure Centre

The Outdoor Team have been removing rubbish from the site and have cut back vegetation and trees, which were causing issues.

The redecorating of the building was confirmed to start in August 2021.

Events

Ladygrove Events:

- Park runs will restart in July.

The OSM confirmed that his team will cut back the vegetation on DTC owned land.

- Tim Jolly Locations (SDTA Productions) will be filming at Ladygrove park from 21st July to 23rd July 2021.

Edmonds Park Events:

- Play in the Park:

Open Friday 16th July 2021

Close Sunday 18th July 2021

- Hatwell Fun Fair:

Arrive Monday 9th August 2021

Open Friday 13th August – Monday 16th August **income £1000.**

Close Tuesday & Wednesday for deep cleaning and assessment of measures.

Open Thursday 19th – Sunday 22nd August 2021 **income £1000.**

Leave Monday 23rd August 2021.

Total trading days = 8.

Total income to DTC = £2000.

Oxfordshire Play Association:

Didcot Play & Activity Day Saturday 7th August 2021.

Christmas Lights

All dates supplied by the OSM were approved.

Tree Works

A limb from a Horse Chestnut tree has been removed in Edmonds Park.

A dangerous tree in the cemetery has been felled and cleared, leaving just a tree in Mereland Road allotments to remove. This will be done once DTC can carry out a visual inspection for nesting birds/ecology inspection.

Cllr M Walsh enquired about the 2-3 large trees which had previously been removed from Edmonds Park. The initial intention was to replace these but as the weather was not suitable at the time, the planting had been delayed. The OSM did not know about this but would investigate.

Cllr C Wilson enquired if the tree at the cemetery would be replaced and suggested that the Town Council have a policy put in place to ensure any tree felled, is replaced.

Cllr A Macdonald explained that planting trees in Edmonds Park will be addressed once the new pavilion had been constructed.

The OSM explained that the planting budget had been cut. This would need to be reviewed to enable DTC to replace trees.

It was **AGREED** that the Tree Replacement procedure be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

Staffing

All appraisals have been carried out.

The Committee **AGREED** to the ROSPRA training costs of **£1590 plus VAT** (2 staff members to do level 1 and 2 different staff members to do level 2). There will be an additional cost of **£630** for the examinations.

The previous OSM will act as a consultant on the Remembrance Parade, so no highway training for the road closures will be needed.

Tools

A new backpack blower had been purchased.

The new electric Pellenc Strimmer and hand blower was delivered on 7th July 2021 and is in use.

Vehicles

The Alke vehicle had been ordered.

The Committee noted the report explaining that the Nissan Cabstar could be purchased for £16,400 (plus VAT).

The Committee **RESOLVED** to return the vehicle at the beginning of August.

The ride on Ransome grass cutting vehicles have continued to have problems. The Ransome Parkway requires new cylinders as they cannot be regraded. The quote for this is **£1610.42**.

Cllr A Macdonald asked the OSM the alternative to not replacing the blades. The OSM confirmed that the team would be down to only one vehicle if the Ransome Parkway did not have the blades replaced when needed.

The Ransome HR300 had been causing concern with overheating issues.

The OSM had started looking at alternative solutions, including robotic commercial grass cutting equipment. A quote had been received for **£5996.67** (ex VAT).

The Committee discussed the quotes and **RESOLVED** to instruct the OSM to obtain quotes from other companies for the repairs to the Ransome Parkway vehicle.

Ladygrove Park equipment

Cllrs C Wilson and M Walsh enquired as to the replacement and relocation of the equipment in Ladygrove Park.

The OSM confirmed that a meeting was due to be held in the coming weeks, to discuss funding options for the projects. The improvements, the relocation and replacements are hoped to be combined as one project.

24. To note the progress report on the planning application for the new pavilion at Edmonds Park

The Town Clerk confirmed that the planning application (P21/S2646/FUL) had been received from South Oxfordshire District Council and is currently under consultation.

The Town Council staff, and the Architect had been reviewing responses to the application on the SODC Planning Portal. Eight responses from residents had been received – four objections and four supportive. There were also a number of responses from consultancy bodies.

From April 2021, SODC are wanting the requirements of Policy DES10 to be strictly adhered to and met prior to planning permission being granted.

A quote had been received for consideration by the Pavilion and Splash Park Working Group for a BREEAM assessor.

Contaminated Land – preliminary risk assessment:

A quote had been received for a risk assessment of **£850 plus VAT**. The study would take approximately ten days to complete.

The Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee had previously approved the £850 plus VAT quote for the preliminary risk assessment.

Cllr C Wilson asked the Committee if the carbon footprint of the construction was being considered alongside the 'in use'. The Town Clerk explained that all consultant reports and procedures will be looked at the Pavilion and Splash Park Working Group.

Cllr A Thompson left the meeting at 20:47.

25. To note the update of the demolition of the pavilion in Edmonds Park.

The Committee noted the report which confirmed that demolition was due to commence from 26th July 2021.

26. To note the Ladygrove Lake update, from the Ladygrove Lake Working Group.

The Committee noted the update.

Cllr P Davies suggested disbanding the Ladygrove Lake Working Group and form a new Management Committee in May 2022. A decision on the smaller lake would need to be made, after seeking proper advice.

Removing the land in the middle of the lake could cause issues as it could have some form of liner or puddle clay in it, which could cause issues and result loss of water.

Cllr M Walsh insisted that the Town Council did not need to investigate clearing the land in the middle of the lake and instead investigate other options, such as allowing the smaller lake to infill, turning it into a reeded pond, with vegetation.

Cllr P Davies explained that signs are the newly installed Aeration system is working effectively, and the quality and oxygenation of the water is good. The only thing the system is missing is a pump.

Cllr M Walsh explained that there was no need for further consultants to be involved as DTC had previously been informed that it was possible to take water from a culvert. Cllr P Davies explained that DTC had in fact been doing so in the past, until the mobile generator was stolen.

The Committee **AGREED** that this issue would be discussed by members and the OSM at the next Ladygrove Lake Working Group meeting.

27. To consider the Beekeeping and Insect Hotels on Allotments and other Council owned land, report.

At the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee, it was agreed for Officers to investigate allowing bees on the allotments, further.

Cllr P Davies recommended Officers contact the insurance providers to confirm what additional charge there could be to DTC's insurance, before committing to a trial.

Officers would need to ensure all documents and policies are in place prior to any trial period. The most suitable allotment site for a trial period, was deemed to be the New Road allotments.

It was **AGREED** that bees could be trialled on an allotment site for a period of time next year, subject to extra insurance costs.

The Committee discussed insect hotels and **AGREED** these could be placed in the allotments, but suggested Schools and Sustainable Didcot could get involved in making them, with help from the Outdoor Team.

The Committee discussed introducing bumble bee pods on Council owned land.

It was **AGREED** that bumble bee pods could be purchased, the quantity of which would be decided by the OSM.

28. To consider the Didcot Town Council owned Noticeboard report.

The Committee noted the report and decided that they did not need replacing but did warrant refurbishing.

It was **AGREED** that DTC would 'tidy up' the noticeboards with fresh green paint and remove the old pins.

Cllr A Macdonald explained a future project could be to install interactive boards in Didcot.

Cllr P Davies explained that Chinnor Town Council use vinyl posters on empty shop windows to promote what the Council has achieved. It gives residents information on numerous things, such as the number of volunteer Councillors, number of staff members and projects which have been completed. He suggested DTC take advantage of the promotional space on the noticeboards, especially one of the lockable ones opposite the Health Centre. Cllr P Davies confirmed he would circulate pictures of the vinyl poster to members and Officers.

The Committee **AGREED** that the idea can be discussed at a future meeting.

29. To consider the request from Oxfordshire County Council to reposition a public footpath in Loyd Recreation Ground.

OCC had contacted DTC requesting permission to legally divert public footpath 189/1/10 heading north, from running through the pavilion, onto the already installed tarmac path. A second project would be to legally divert public footpath 189/14/10 from through the Didcot Girls School playing field, onto the southern boundary of the recreation ground.

The Committee noted the future path project and considered the request for path 189/1/10.

It was proposed by Cllr P Davies, seconded by Cllr A Hudson and **RESOLVED** to inform OCC that they could legally divert the footpath, if all costs were covered by them.

Cllr A Macdonald updated the Committee on the repositioning of a bin on Mersey Way, which had been requested after Cllr P Davies made the Committee aware. OCC had agreed to reposition it nearer to the bus shelter.

30. To note the update of the Bus Shelter on Avon Way

The Committee considered the update.

It was proposed by Cllr M Walsh, seconded by Cllr P Davies, and **RESOLVED** to order the sedum 'green' roof for the bus shelter, once the location is finalised. The cost of this would be **£735.75** plus VAT and would be taken from the 'Green Projects' budget.

All members agreed.

Cllr P Davies queried the legal costs involved with the location on SODC owned land. He asked if the other location would incur these costs and would therefore be less problematic.

The PEO would contact OCC and investigate.

31. To note the update for the Remembrance Parade.

The Committee noted the update.

The meeting closed at 21:25

Signed _____ Chair

Date: _____

