

## Notice of a meeting of the

### **Environment and Climate Committee**

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.30pm

All Saints Room, Civic Hall



**Members of the Environment and Climate Committee are summoned to attend a meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.30pm, in the All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall.**

#### **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.

#### **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 Deputy Town Clerk before the start of the meeting.

#### **Public participation**

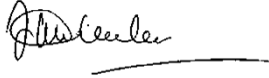
The Council welcomes the public's involvement in meetings, which must be in accordance with our rules (Standing Orders 30 - 32 on a matter before the Council).

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, please email Pierce Bint, the Estate Administrator, at [pbint@didcot.gov.uk](mailto:pbint@didcot.gov.uk)

# Agenda

1. To receive apologies
2. To receive declarations of interests  
Members are reminded to declare any interests they may have on any item on this agenda in accordance with Didcot Town Council's Code of Conduct
3. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 as a true and correct record (**attached**)
4. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report (**attached**)
5. To note the Income and Expenditure to date for the Environment and Climate Committee report, as updated on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (**attached**)
6. To review the Outdoor Services Manager's report and recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
7. To consider the report on the applications received to hold events on Town Council owned/managed land, and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**):
  - 7.1 To approve the Festival event in Edmonds Park on the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June 2025, after considering the additional information supplied by the applicant regarding a later finishing time
8. To discuss the report on the cremated remains sections in the Kynaston Road cemetery and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
9. To approve the updated and amended policies and applications relating to the Kynaston Road cemetery and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached** – documents previously circulated to members)
10. To approve the draft Community Planting Bed Agreement and applicable draft rules report and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
11. To discuss and approve the report on a climbing and kick walls for Edmonds Park, and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
12. To approve the replacement of the Civic Hall fence, and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)
13. To receive an update on the Restore Planning application following a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (**attached**)
14. To review the draft meeting notes from the Allotment Liaison Group meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 and the recommendations to the Committee (**attached**)



Janet Wheeler  
**Town Clerk**  
11<sup>th</sup> March 2025

**Voting members:**

Cllr Gavin Roberts (Chair)  
Cllr Kelly Morrison (Deputy Chair)  
Cllr Stephen Cole  
Cllr Zia Mohammed  
Cllr Anthony Hudson  
Cllr James Broadbent  
Cllr Axel Macdonald

**Nominated Substitute Members:**

Cllr Chris Jennings  
Cllr David Aragao  
Cllr Hugh Macdonald  
Cllr David Rouane  
Cllr Denise Macdonald  
Cllr Luke Hislop  
Cllr George Ryall

## Didcot Town Council

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**Environment & Climate Committee**  
Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 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 Macdonald  
Cllr S Cole  
Cllr J Broadbent  
Cllr A Hudson

##### **Officers:**

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk – TC)  
Mrs L Blake (Deputy Town Clerk - DC)  
Mr M Blake (Outdoor Services Manager - OSM)  
Mr P Bint (Estate Administrator – EA)

#### **47. To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Z Mohammed and Cllr J Broadbent.

#### **48. To receive declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

#### **49. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 as a true and correct record**

It was proposed by Cllr A Hudson, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting, and note them as such. All members agreed.

#### **50. Questions on the minutes and review the progress report**

The Committee noted the progress report – shown on the next page.

| <b>Progress report</b> |   |   |                               |
|------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Meeting</b>         | <b>Item</b>   | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Review date/meeting</b>    |
| 18.11.2024 – min 43    | Smokefree play park signs.  | New Estate Administrator has taken on this project. Ladygrove Park Primary approved to design all signs.  | On-going.                     |
| -                      | Investigate chicanes/bollards at Stubbings Land.  | Taylor Wimpey will not pay for the work but may allow DTC to install at their cost (to include associated drawing costs). Should DTC consider putting something on DTC land or wait for the land to be transferred and work with the landowner?                       | No further progress made.     |
| -                      | CIL Grant Fund application.   | Application submitted on 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024. Update circulated to Cllrs 18 <sup>th</sup> October 24 to state a decision may be received w/c 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024. Will be considered at an individual Cabinet member meeting in early January 2025. | When decision has been made.  |
| 15.07.2024 – min 17    | Recommend the potential relocation, replacement and investigations into the skate park and adjacent area in Ladygrove, to Full Council. | Will be discussed at Full Council on 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024. Questions will be posted on social media platforms regarding a potential relocation in January 2025. OSM to carry out site visits and speak with other Town Councils.                            |                               |
| 16.09.2024 – min 26    | Purchase the Playground Inspection app.   | PO number has been given. Training has been arranged and all sites will be set up at the start of next year. Training to be held at the end of January 2025.  | Update covered in OSM report. |
| 16.09.2024 – min 27    | Clearing the vegetation at the community polytunnel.  | Agreed to clear at 16 <sup>th</sup> September meeting. Progress has been started and companies have been contacted requesting donations of materials.   | On-going.                     |
| 18.11.2024 – min 37(6) | Hiring shredder for vegetation at NR allotments   | Resolved to approve cost of £940 + VAT.   | Covered in OSM report.        |

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting  
DRAFT Minutes 13.01.2025

|                         |  |   |  |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|
| 18.11.2024 – min 37(24) | Installation of bollards at Edmonds Park   | Resolved to approve cost to install bollards by outdoor team at a cost of £700.   | To be started.                               |
| 18.11.2024 – min 37(39) | Purchase of a new rotovator  | Approved at a cost of £700  | Purchased.                                   |
| 18.11.2024 – min 40     | To ‘sell’ the Alke back to the supplier and purchase a box van                         | This was resolved at the 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 meeting.  | On-going.                                    |
| 18.11.2024 – min 44     | Community Planting   | To consider rental charges and agreements – DC to draft.  | March meeting.                               |
| 18.11.2024 – min 46     | Broadway allotment plots – 2 requests to take on one plot                              | Additional information was requested by members regarding what events the charity would hold on the plot.   | On-going – will come back to future meeting. |
| <b>Future Projects</b>  |  |   |  |
|                         | Investigate water supply at the lakes.   | The Council investigated this in the past and many ideas were looked into.  | On-going.                                    |
|                         | ‘Do not feed ducks/geese’ signs.   | The OSM will investigate the costs.   | On-going.                                    |
|                         | Art grants to potentially create a lake feature and/or literary trail for children.    |   | On-going.                                    |
|                         | Hedges – to be cut back at the lakes and skate park.                                   | Already part of the outdoor team’s work – will be done in the winter months. Work has started.  |  |
|                         | Investigate specific Ladygrove events, or events that can ‘travel around’ other parks. |   | On-going.                                    |
|                         | Walking Trail to Wittenham Clumps.   | Been confirmed there is already a trail but maybe this could be improved?   | On-going.                                    |
|                         | Pears Mapping.   | Staff to investigate when this will become ‘live’ – additional training will be needed.<br>New Estate Administrator will be arranging to learn this software. | Completed.                                   |

The OSM noted that the Alke has been sold as of this meeting.

Cllr A Hudson queried about the progress on implementing bollards at Stubbings Land and expressed concern for safety as there have been near misses there already. The DC explained that as the track where the bollards would be placed is on a decline, there is the potential for further hazards as cyclists can experience a vast increase in speed only to be met by a sudden stop. The Deputy Town Clerk (DC) also conveyed the issue of ownership of the path joining Stubbings Land as the land will be adopted by a District Council in future and the developer is reluctant to make any changes. This will be further investigated. The OSM suggested an implementation of a traffic mirror as a short-term solution. A meeting will be arranged at Stubbings Land, with Cllrs – *this was held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January with the OSM, Cllrs G Roberts and A Hudson in attendance.*

**51. To note the Income and Expenditure to date for the Environment and Climate Committee report, as updated on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

The Committee noted the income and expenditure as updated on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**52. To consider the Outdoor Services Manager's report**

The Committee noted the Outdoor Services Manager's (OSM) report, noted the updates, and considered the recommendations.

3. Reparations of Cockroft allotments entranceway

Members considered the recommendation to approve the cost of installing a pedestrian access point. This would mean the gates can be locked throughout the winter months when needed to prevent vehicular damage, whilst still allowing pedestrian access.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to approve the £790 +VAT cost to install pedestrian access. This would come from cost centre 311/4041. All members agreed.

6. New Road allotment topsoil for raised planters

The OSM explained that x10 bulk bags of topsoil is required for the raised planters in the Community Planting area at New Road allotments.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to approve the purchase of x10 bulk bags of topsoil at £765.90 +VAT. This would come from cost centre 199/4906 'Green Projects'. All members agreed.

11. Small fence at the cemetery

Whilst the entrance to the cemetery has two brick pillars which look aesthetically pleasing, it requires a small fence and a tidy up to complete the project. The Committee considered the work to secure the entrance of the cemetery and the tidy up at a cost of £650. The work to construct the fence would be carried out by the outdoor team.

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and RESOLVED to approve the installation of a new fence at a cost of £650. This would come from cost centre 321/4041. All members agreed.

13. Resurfacing the cemetery cremated remains area

It was expressed by the OSM that the maintenance of the cremated remains area is a continued issue as the graves are close together. It was recommended by the OSM that decorative stones or gravel replaces the current grass in situ, to allow for easier access for maintenance.



It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr G Roberts that a detailed report consisting of images, and an estimation of cost be presented at the next meeting.

The OSM reported to the Committee an incident of significant concern at the cemetery, where several memorials had been vandalised. The matter was reported to Thames Valley Police, who advised that, in the absence of CCTV footage, there are currently no viable lines of enquiry. However, the Neighbourhood Policing Team has offered to conduct additional patrols in the area. The installation of CCTV cameras at the cemetery will be investigated.

#### 22. Ladygrove Park top up bark for the zip wire

The Committee considered the purchase of more bark mulch to top up the zip wire. The OSM explained that whilst not all the bark would be used at the zip wire, it can be used elsewhere.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of more bark mulch for the cost of £1,233 +VAT. This would come from cost centre 241/4045. All members agreed.

### **53. To consider the report on applications received to hold events on Town Council owned/managed land, and the recommendations to the Committee**

All applications discussed at this meeting are for Edmonds Park.

#### 5a. Festival – 8<sup>th</sup> May – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Set up on 8<sup>th</sup> May, event to run from 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (3 trading days). Members discussed the application. As this event may clash with potential rescheduling of football matches due to many matches being postponed and rescheduled due to poor weather, it was recommended by Cllr A Macdonald that the organisers are asked to consider moving the event to the May bank holiday. If this is not possible, then Officers will need to make Didcot Town Youth Football Club (DTYFC) aware that games cannot take place between 8<sup>th</sup> May – 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

It was proposed by Councillor K Morrison, seconded by Councillor A Hudson, and **RESOLVED** to approve the Festival event, subject to the condition that the organisers be requested to consider moving the event to the bank holiday or, alternatively, that DTYFC be notified in advance of the scheduled dates. The total anticipated income from the event is £1,110. All members agreed.

#### 5b. Annual 6 a side Football Tournament– 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025

It was proposed by Cllr A Hudson, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and **RESOLVED** to approve of the Annual 6 a side Football Tournament with a total income of £740. All members agreed.

#### 5c. Inflatable Fun Day– 27<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025

Set up on 27<sup>th</sup> August, event to run 28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> August 2025 (4 trading days). It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and RESOLVED to approve the Inflatable Fun Day with a total anticipated income of £1,480. All members agreed.

5d. Circus– 8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Set up from 8<sup>th</sup> July, event to run 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> July, leaving on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025 (5 trading days).

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve the Circus with a total anticipated income of £1,850. All members agreed.

5e. Didcot/Vauxhall Barracks Play & Activity Day– 21<sup>st</sup> June 2025

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve the Didcot/Vauxhall Barracks Play & Activity. There would be no charge for this free to attend event. All members agreed.

**54. To consider the report on the potential replacement of play equipment at Great Western Drive Park**

The Committee Considered the report asking them to consider play equipment options to replace the wooden climbing frame at Great Western Drive Park. The Committee discussed the potential need for public consultation. However, as the report pertains to only a single piece of equipment, it was concluded that consultation would not be necessary.

Wooden equipment was deemed unsuitable due to its shorter lifespan and was not included as an option.

It was explained by the OSM that the quote from Company Two included the disposal of the current equipment and was reiterated that if the Outdoor Team were able to dispose of the equipment in house, then the cost of the quotes would be less. The OSM proposed allocating a proportion of this year's play equipment budget, with the intention of supplementing it with funds from next year's budget. It was recommended by the OSM to put the order in sooner rather than later to ensure the quote is honoured and the equipment is installed before the summer. Cllr K Morrison queried if the replacement of the springies were included in the quote from Company Three. The OSM would clarify.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cole, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and RESOLVED to proceed with Company Three, Kompan, at a full cost of £14,792.17 for the equipment and a further £6,285.81 for disposal and machinery. The cost could further be reduced with the possibility that the Outdoor Team can dispose of the equipment currently in situ. Available funds from this financial year would be earmarked for the project. All members agreed – *this will need to be approved by Full Council.*

**55. To consider the report of the potential relocation of the War Memorial**

The Committee considered the report on the potential relocation of the War Memorial in Smallbone Park. Due to the increasing number of attendees at the Remembrance Day Parade and Service, it has become apparent that the current location may not be suitable. The EA also explained that any potential relocation could include hardstanding, which would benefit visitors when standing and sitting. The Committee was asked to consider the recommendation that the community is consulted throughout a design phase for any new War Memorial layout.

The EA confirmed that during a site visit with the OSM, one suggested area was deemed suitable, but that consultation would help determine the most suited location. The Town Clerk suggested members consider raising the War Memorial to improve visibility. This would be considered at the design phase should relocation be approved.

Cllr A Macdonald recommended that the Royal British Legion and the 11 Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Search Regiment (11EOD&S Regt) be consulted in the first instance, prior to public consultation.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to consult the RBL and 11EOD&S Regt for their views. Potential relocation was approved in principle, but consultation with various stakeholders would be needed before pursuing. All members agreed.

#### **56. To consider the report of applying for S106 Public Art funds to create a garden of remembering**

The Committee considered the report to apply for S106 Public Art funds to turn the northeast corner of Edmonds Park into a garden of remembering.

The OSM explained the notion of installing custom made benches to reflect various periods of Didcot's history, these being: Job's Dairy, William's Formula One, Great Western Railway and Didcot Power Station. These benches would be decorative, similar to those at the War memorial. It was also suggested that a plaque be placed at the front of the cross, providing an explanation of its significance. Additionally, the plaque could include a QR code linking to a webpage with further information about the history of Didcot.

Further details were given by the OSM regarding the planting of a tree in the centre of the cross which was discussed at the Environment and Climate Committee meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024, to which concerns were expressed on how this would appear visually and how this could impact the overall visual experience of the cross. Cllr A Hudson also expressed concern regarding potential issues with the tree on the paving. The EA mentioned that Officers are still looking for specialists to repair the damaged paving stones, funding for this is being investigated.

It was also suggested by the OSM to contact companies regarding potential sponsorship to aid in funding these benches. The EA stated that a power point presentation is in progress to send out to potential sponsors. A meeting has been arranged for 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 with the Arts Officer at the District Council, to discuss the s106 application. An update from this meeting would be circulated to members.

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and RESOLVED to approve this project and to proceed with the application for funding. All members agreed.

## **57. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 the committee will be asked to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted**

### **58. To consider the two quotes received for the cutting of some of the grass verges in Didcot**

The Committee considered the report on the two quotes received for the cutting of some of the verges in Didcot.

The EA explained new maps have been received from OCC which will impact the total area the companies quoted for.

The TC confirmed that an agreement for this work is currently with solicitors and would ensure both parties are protected, with the ability to terminate if needed.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to recommend that Full Council accept the quote of £22,522.14 from Company One for six cuts per year. This is based on the current cost of £22,522.14 annually, although the overall cost may decrease due to the reduction in the total area following new mapping. All members agreed. This will require ratification at the Full Council meeting in March 2025.

**The meeting closed at 8.31pm**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)                      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 17.03.2025  
Agenda Item 4 - Progress Report

| <b>Progress report</b> |   |   |  |
|------------------------|---|---|--|
| <b>Meeting</b>         | <b>Item</b>   | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Review date/meeting</b>   |
| 18.11.2024 – min 43    | Smokefree play park signs.  | New Estate Administrator has taken on this project. Ladygrove Park Primary approved to design all signs.  | Completed - Signs installed at all parks.  |
| 13.01.2025             | Investigate chicanes/bollards at Stubbings Land.<br><br>Progress update   | Taylor Wimpey will not pay for the work but may allow DTC to install at their cost (to include associated drawing costs). Should DTC consider putting something on DTC land or wait for the land to be transferred and work with the landowner.<br><br>Deputy Town Clerk emailed Taylor Wimpey for progress update on adoption and on suggestions on ways to progress this matter – 14.01.25. | Hedges cut back by developer.<br><br>Are chicanes needed now?  |
| -                      | CIL Grant Fund application.   | Application submitted on 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024. Update circulated to Cllrs 18 <sup>th</sup> October 24 to state a decision may be received w/c 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024. Will be considered at an individual Cabinet member meeting in early January 2025.   | Still no official outcome received.  |
| 15.07.2024 – min 17    | Recommend the potential relocation, replacement and investigations into the skate park and adjacent area in Ladygrove, to Full Council. | Will be discussed at Full Council on 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024.<br>Questions will be posted on social media platforms regarding a potential relocation in January 2025. OSM to carry out site visits and speak with other Town Councils.<br>Investigations on-going, consultations with SOFEA and TRAIN to be arranged.  | Youth groups to be invited to the Annual Town meeting to discuss option.<br>Youth Council to help with consultation. |
| 16.09.2024 – min 27    | Clearing the vegetation at the community polytunnel.  | Agreed to clear at 16 <sup>th</sup> September meeting. Progress has been started, and companies have been contacted requesting donations of materials.  | On-going.  |

Environment & Climate Committee Meeting 17.03.2025  
Agenda Item 4 - Progress Report

|                         |  |   |                 |
|-------------------------|--|---|-----------------|
|                         |  | 14.01.25 the outdoor team have created 6, 3mx2m beds. A couple will be built higher to accommodate wheelchair users. Potential to increase bed numbers in future. |                 |
| 18.11.2024 – min 37(24) | Installation of bollards at Edmonds Park   | Resolved to approve cost to install bollards by outdoor team at a cost of £700.<br>Bollards delivered 16.01.25.   | Completed.      |
| 18.11.2024 – min 44     | Community Planting   | To consider rental charges and agreements – DC to draft.  | An agenda item. |
| <b>Future Projects</b>  |  |   |                 |
|                         | Investigate water supply at the lakes.   | The Council investigated this in the past and many ideas were looked into.  | On-going.       |
|                         | ‘Do not feed ducks/geese’ signs.   | The OSM will investigate the costs.   | On-going.       |
|                         | Art grants to potentially create a lake feature and/or literary trail for children.    |   | On-going.       |
|                         | Investigate specific Ladygrove events, or events that can ‘travel around’ other parks. |   | On-going.       |
|                         | Walking Trail to Wittenham Clumps.   | Been confirmed there is already a trail but maybe this could be improved?   | On-going.       |

05/03/2025

Didcot Town Council

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/03/2025

Month No: 11

Committee Report

|  | Actual<br>Current Mth | Actual Year<br>To Date | Current<br>Annual Bud | Variance<br>Annual Total | Committed<br>Expenditure | Funds<br>Available | % Spent       |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <b><u>Environment and Climate</u></b>          |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |               |
| <b><u>300 Outside Services</u></b>             |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |               |
| 4000 Staff Costs (Re-allocated)                | 26,101                | 293,791                | 328,021               | 34,230                   |                          | 34,230             | 89.6%         |
| 4008 Travel & Expenses                         | 103                   | 1,538                  | 1,500                 | (38)                     |                          | (38)               | 102.5%        |
| 4012 Water Charges                             | 10                    | 17                     | 0                     | (17)                     |                          | (17)               | 0.0%          |
| 4014 Light and Heat                            | 274                   | 210                    | 0                     | (210)                    |                          | (210)              | 0.0%          |
| 4015 Cleaning and Hygiene                      | 98                    | 1,367                  | 0                     | (1,367)                  |                          | (1,367)            | 0.0%          |
| 4016 Uniform/Protective Clothing               | 30                    | 2,113                  | 2,000                 | (113)                    |                          | (113)              | 105.7%        |
| 4018 Waste Disposal                            | 970                   | 4,135                  | 0                     | (4,135)                  |                          | (4,135)            | 0.0%          |
| 4020 Equipment Purchase (Minor)                | 0                     | 118                    | 0                     | (118)                    |                          | (118)              | 0.0%          |
| 4025 Subscriptions                             | 0                     | 0                      | 150                   | 150                      |                          | 150                | 0.0%          |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance                       | 162                   | 677                    | 0                     | (677)                    |                          | (677)              | 0.0%          |
| 4042 Equipment/Vehicle Hire                    | 1,160                 | 4,898                  | 0                     | (4,898)                  |                          | (4,898)            | 0.0%          |
| 4043 Property Repairs & Maintenance            | 0                     | 2,141                  | 0                     | (2,141)                  |                          | (2,141)            | 0.0%          |
| 4044 Maintenance Contracts                     | 0                     | 4,600                  | 0                     | (4,600)                  |                          | (4,600)            | 0.0%          |
| 4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance             | 2,033                 | 20,498                 | 32,000                | 11,502                   |                          | 11,502             | 64.1%         |
| 4047 Vehicle Fuel                              | 752                   | 6,709                  | 6,000                 | (709)                    |                          | (709)              | 111.8%        |
| 4048 Vehicle Insurance/Licence                 | 0                     | 2,855                  | 2,800                 | (55)                     |                          | (55)               | 102.0%        |
| Outside Services :- Indirect Expenditure       | <b>31,691</b>         | <b>345,668</b>         | <b>372,471</b>        | <b>26,803</b>            | <b>0</b>                 | <b>26,803</b>      | <b>92.8%</b>  |
| <b>Net Expenditure</b>                         | <b>(31,691)</b>       | <b>(345,668)</b>       | <b>(372,471)</b>      | <b>(26,803)</b>          |                          |                    |               |
| <b><u>307 Environmental Services</u></b>       |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |               |
| 1061 Ground Hire Income                        | 2,080                 | 2,080                  | 2,000                 | (80)                     |                          |                    | 104.0%        |
| 1063 Sports Pitch Hire                         | 0                     | 6,500                  | 5,000                 | (1,500)                  |                          |                    | 130.0%        |
| 1180 Grass Cutting Income (OCC)                | 0                     | 13,424                 | 0                     | (13,424)                 |                          |                    | 0.0%          |
| 1183 Bowls Club Rent                           | 0                     | 0                      | 50                    | 50                       |                          |                    | 0.0%          |
| 1192 Bus Shelter Income                        | 0                     | 10,000                 | 10,000                | 0                        |                          |                    | 100.0%        |
| Environmental Services :- Income               | <b>2,080</b>          | <b>32,004</b>          | <b>17,050</b>         | <b>(14,954)</b>          |                          |                    | <b>187.7%</b> |
| 4036 Grass Cutting                             | 0                     | 27,504                 | 0                     | (27,504)                 |                          | (27,504)           | 0.0%          |
| 4038 Hanging Baskets                           | 0                     | 5,248                  | 0                     | (5,248)                  |                          | (5,248)            | 0.0%          |
| 4040 Tree Management Contract                  | 0                     | 550                    | 5,000                 | 4,450                    |                          | 4,450              | 11.0%         |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance                       | 0                     | 1,689                  | 22,500                | 20,811                   |                          | 20,811             | 7.5%          |
| 4192 Bus Shelter Contract                      | 0                     | 10,000                 | 10,000                | 0                        |                          | 0                  | 100.0%        |
| 4193 Dog Fouling Services                      | 354                   | 3,675                  | 3,200                 | (475)                    |                          | (475)              | 114.9%        |
| 4194 Street Furniture Maintenance              | 0                     | 1,168                  | 7,000                 | 5,832                    |                          | 5,832              | 16.7%         |
| 4195 CCTV Contributions                        | 0                     | 4,887                  | 10,000                | 5,113                    |                          | 5,113              | 48.9%         |
| 99156 Tfr from EMR Grass Cutting               | 0                     | (27,500)               | 0                     | 27,500                   |                          | 27,500             | 0.0%          |
| Environmental Services :- Indirect Expenditure | <b>354</b>            | <b>27,221</b>          | <b>57,700</b>         | <b>30,479</b>            | <b>0</b>                 | <b>30,479</b>      | <b>47.2%</b>  |
| <b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>             | <b>1,726</b>          | <b>4,783</b>           | <b>(40,650)</b>       | <b>(45,433)</b>          |                          |                    |               |

Continued over page

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/03/2025

Month No: 11

Committee Report

|                                      | Actual<br>Current Mth | Actual Year<br>To Date | Current<br>Annual Bud | Variance<br>Annual Total | Committed<br>Expenditure | Funds<br>Available | % Spent       |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| <b>311 Allotments</b>                |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |               |
| 1181 Allotment Rents                 | 355                   | 16,200                 | 15,500                | (700)                    |                          |                    | 104.5%        |
| Allotments :- Income                 | <b>355</b>            | <b>16,200</b>          | <b>15,500</b>         | <b>(700)</b>             |                          |                    | <b>104.5%</b> |
| 4012 Water Charges                   | (142)                 | 1,935                  | 2,500                 | 565                      |                          | 565                | 77.4%         |
| 4018 Waste Disposal                  | 0                     | 684                    | 0                     | (684)                    |                          | (684)              | 0.0%          |
| 4020 Equipment Purchase (Minor)      | 0                     | 23                     | 0                     | (23)                     |                          | (23)               | 0.0%          |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance             | 989                   | 4,155                  | 6,000                 | 1,845                    |                          | 1,845              | 69.2%         |
| 4043 Property Repairs & Maintenance  | 6                     | 2,883                  | 0                     | (2,883)                  |                          | (2,883)            | 0.0%          |
| 4411 Allotment Competition           | 0                     | 0                      | 350                   | 350                      |                          | 350                | 0.0%          |
| 99120 Tfr from EMR Building Repair   | 0                     | (2,877)                | 0                     | 2,877                    |                          | 2,877              | 0.0%          |
| Allotments :- Indirect Expenditure   | <b>853</b>            | <b>6,803</b>           | <b>8,850</b>          | <b>2,047</b>             | <b>0</b>                 | <b>2,047</b>       | <b>76.9%</b>  |
| <b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>   | <b>(499)</b>          | <b>9,397</b>           | <b>6,650</b>          | <b>(2,747)</b>           |                          |                    |               |
| <b>321 Cemetery</b>                  |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |               |
| 1182 Cemetery Income                 | 1,030                 | 28,247                 | 18,000                | (10,247)                 |                          |                    | 156.9%        |
| Cemetery :- Income                   | <b>1,030</b>          | <b>28,247</b>          | <b>18,000</b>         | <b>(10,247)</b>          |                          |                    | <b>156.9%</b> |
| 4011 Business Rates                  | 0                     | 1,896                  | 1,950                 | 54                       |                          | 54                 | 97.2%         |
| 4012 Water Charges                   | 6                     | 74                     | 1,000                 | 926                      |                          | 926                | 7.4%          |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance             | 224                   | 2,416                  | 5,000                 | 2,584                    |                          | 2,584              | 48.3%         |
| Cemetery :- Indirect Expenditure     | <b>229</b>            | <b>4,386</b>           | <b>7,950</b>          | <b>3,564</b>             | <b>0</b>                 | <b>3,564</b>       | <b>55.2%</b>  |
| <b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>   | <b>801</b>            | <b>23,861</b>          | <b>10,050</b>         | <b>(13,811)</b>          |                          |                    |               |
| <b>330 Edmonds Park</b>              |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |               |
| 1020 Other Bookings Income           | 30                    | 30                     | 0                     | (30)                     |                          |                    | 0.0%          |
| 1061 Ground Hire Income              | 0                     | 4,560                  | 0                     | (4,560)                  |                          |                    | 0.0%          |
| Edmonds Park :- Income               | <b>30</b>             | <b>4,590</b>           | <b>0</b>              | <b>(4,590)</b>           |                          |                    |               |
| 4012 Water Charges                   | 89                    | 718                    | 1,200                 | 482                      |                          | 482                | 59.8%         |
| 4014 Light and Heat                  | 4                     | (1,121)                | 1,800                 | 2,921                    |                          | 2,921              | (62.3%)       |
| 4018 Waste Disposal                  | 0                     | 6,628                  | 9,500                 | 2,872                    |                          | 2,872              | 69.8%         |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance             | 0                     | 9,476                  | 10,000                | 524                      |                          | 524                | 94.8%         |
| 4042 Equipment/Vehicle Hire          | 0                     | 70                     | 0                     | (70)                     |                          | (70)               | 0.0%          |
| 4043 Property Repairs & Maintenance  | 0                     | 310                    | 0                     | (310)                    |                          | (310)              | 0.0%          |
| 4044 Maintenance Contracts           | 0                     | 900                    | 0                     | (900)                    |                          | (900)              | 0.0%          |
| 4049 Security                        | 35                    | 35                     | 6,000                 | 5,965                    |                          | 5,965              | 0.6%          |
| 99138 Tfr from EMR Play Areas        | 0                     | (2,919)                | 0                     | 2,919                    |                          | 2,919              | 0.0%          |
| Edmonds Park :- Indirect Expenditure | <b>128</b>            | <b>14,097</b>          | <b>28,500</b>         | <b>14,404</b>            | <b>0</b>                 | <b>14,404</b>      | <b>49.5%</b>  |
| <b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>   | <b>(98)</b>           | <b>(9,507)</b>         | <b>(28,500)</b>       | <b>(18,994)</b>          |                          |                    |               |



## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/03/2025

Month No: 11

Committee Report

|  | Actual<br>Current Mth | Actual Year<br>To Date | Current<br>Annual Bud | Variance<br>Annual Total | Committed<br>Expenditure | Funds<br>Available | % Spent |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| <b>331 Splash Park</b>                                 |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |         |
| 4009 Training & Conferences                            | 0                     | 2,013                  | 0                     | (2,013)                  |                          | (2,013)            | 0.0%    |
| 4012 Water Charges                                     | 0                     | 580                    | 0                     | (580)                    |                          | (580)              | 0.0%    |
| 4015 Cleaning and Hygiene                              | 0                     | 269                    | 0                     | (269)                    |                          | (269)              | 0.0%    |
| 4016 Uniform/Protective Clothing                       | 0                     | 223                    | 0                     | (223)                    |                          | (223)              | 0.0%    |
| 4020 Equipment Purchase (Minor)                        | 0                     | 431                    | 0                     | (431)                    |                          | (431)              | 0.0%    |
| 4044 Maintenance Contracts                             | 0                     | 180                    | 0                     | (180)                    |                          | (180)              | 0.0%    |
| 4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance                     | 0                     | 1,555                  | 0                     | (1,555)                  |                          | (1,555)            | 0.0%    |
| Splash Park :- Indirect Expenditure                    | 0                     | 5,251                  | 0                     | (5,251)                  | 0                        | (5,251)            |         |
| <b>Net Expenditure</b>                                 | <b>0</b>              | <b>(5,251)</b>         | <b>0</b>              | <b>5,251</b>             |                          |                    |         |
| <b>332 Ladygrove Park</b>                              |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |         |
| 1061 Ground Hire Income                                | 0                     | 0                      | 3,000                 | 3,000                    |                          |                    | 0.0%    |
| 1062 Fishing/Lakes Income                              | 0                     | 2,231                  | 2,500                 | 269                      |                          |                    | 89.2%   |
| Ladygrove Park :- Income                               | 0                     | 2,231                  | 5,500                 | 3,269                    |                          |                    | 40.6%   |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance                               | 233                   | 6,136                  | 12,000                | 5,864                    |                          | 5,864              | 51.1%   |
| 4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance                     | 0                     | 13,300                 | 0                     | (13,300)                 |                          | (13,300)           | 0.0%    |
| 4058 Legal Fees  | 0                     | 300                    | 0                     | (300)                    |                          | (300)              | 0.0%    |
| 99123 Tfr from EMR Skatepark                           | 0                     | (13,300)               | 0                     | 13,300                   |                          | 13,300             | 0.0%    |
| Ladygrove Park :- Indirect Expenditure                 | 233                   | 6,436                  | 12,000                | 5,564                    | 0                        | 5,564              | 53.6%   |
| <b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>                     | <b>(233)</b>          | <b>(4,206)</b>         | <b>(6,500)</b>        | <b>(2,294)</b>           |                          |                    |         |
| <b>333 Loyd Park</b>                                   |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |         |
| 1063 Sports Pitch Hire                                 | 0                     | 1,500                  | 0                     | (1,500)                  |                          |                    | 0.0%    |
| Loyd Park :- Income                                    | 0                     | 1,500                  | 0                     | (1,500)                  |                          |                    |         |
| 4012 Water Charges                                     | 0                     | 0                      | 500                   | 500                      |                          | 500                | 0.0%    |
| 4014 Light and Heat                                    | 50                    | 365                    | 150                   | (215)                    |                          | (215)              | 243.1%  |
| 4043 Property Repairs & Maintenance                    | 0                     | 2                      | 0                     | (2)                      |                          | (2)                | 0.0%    |
| 4044 Maintenance Contracts                             | 0                     | 311                    | 0                     | (311)                    |                          | (311)              | 0.0%    |
| Loyd Park :- Indirect Expenditure                      | 50                    | 678                    | 650                   | (28)                     | 0                        | (28)               | 104.3%  |
| <b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>                     | <b>(50)</b>           | <b>822</b>             | <b>(650)</b>          | <b>(1,472)</b>           |                          |                    |         |
| <b>338 Other Parks &amp; Recreation Areas</b>          |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |         |
| 4040 Tree Management Contract                          | 0                     | 2,600                  | 0                     | (2,600)                  |                          | (2,600)            | 0.0%    |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance                               | 233                   | 1,013                  | 12,000                | 10,987                   |                          | 10,987             | 8.4%    |
| Other Parks & Recreation Areas :- Indirect Expenditure | 233                   | 3,613                  | 12,000                | 8,387                    | 0                        | 8,387              | 30.1%   |
| <b>Net Expenditure</b>                                 | <b>(233)</b>          | <b>(3,613)</b>         | <b>(12,000)</b>       | <b>(8,387)</b>           |                          |                    |         |

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 05/03/2025

Month No: 11

Committee Report

|                                       | Actual<br>Current Mth | Actual Year<br>To Date | Current<br>Annual Bud | Variance<br>Annual Total | Committed<br>Expenditure | Funds<br>Available | % Spent      |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| <u>341 Play Areas</u>                 |                       |                        |                       |                          |                          |                    |              |
| 4041 Grounds Maintenance              | 1,233                 | 1,999                  | 4,000                 | 2,001                    |                          | 2,001              | 50.0%        |
| 4045 Equipment/Vehicle Maintenance    | 204                   | 11,162                 | 30,000                | 18,838                   |                          | 18,838             | 37.2%        |
| Play Areas :- Indirect Expenditure    | <u>1,437</u>          | <u>13,160</u>          | <u>34,000</u>         | <u>20,840</u>            | <u>0</u>                 | <u>20,840</u>      | <u>38.7%</u> |
| <b>Net Expenditure</b>                | <u>(1,437)</u>        | <u>(13,160)</u>        | <u>(34,000)</u>       | <u>(20,840)</u>          |                          |                    |              |
| Environment and Climate :- Income     | 3,495                 | 84,772                 | 56,050                | (28,722)                 |                          |                    | 151.2%       |
| Expenditure                           | 35,209                | 427,312                | 534,121               | 106,809                  | 0                        | 106,809            | 80.0%        |
| <b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b> | <u>(31,714)</u>       | <u>(342,540)</u>       | <u>(478,071)</u>      | <u>(135,531)</u>         |                          |                    |              |
| Grand Totals:- Income                 | 3,495                 | 84,772                 | 56,050                | (28,722)                 |                          |                    | 151.2%       |
| Expenditure                           | 35,209                | 427,312                | 534,121               | 106,809                  | 0                        | 106,809            | 80.0%        |
| <b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>    | <u>(31,714)</u>       | <u>(342,540)</u>       | <u>(478,071)</u>      | <u>(135,531)</u>         |                          |                    |              |
| <b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b> | <u>(31,714)</u>       | <u>(342,540)</u>       | <u>(478,071)</u>      | <u>(135,531)</u>         |                          |                    |              |

## **Environment and Climate Committee 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7.30pm**



Report author: Mike Blake

## **Outdoor Services Manager's Report**

### **Introduction**

1. This report updates the Committee on all matters regarding the Outdoor Services.

### **Recommendation**

2. The Committee is asked to review the report, note any updates, and consider decisions and actions to be made, where required.

### **Cockcroft Allotments**

3. The new pedestrian gate has been installed on this site and was completed mid-February; we have received a mixed response from tenants.
4. Several break ins were reported on this site at the end of January, both fences were damaged in order for the trespassers to gain access to the site. The outdoor team have patched these up best they can. A new fence along this area will cost around £3,000.00. We have decided to plant some defensive planting instead (Black thorn hedge). Not only will it eventually cover the fence line, but it will also create an animal habitat. The total cost of this came to £715.00 + VAT

### **New Road allotments**

5. Work for the community planting project is underway. So far, the team have built 2 raised accessible beds and a larger bed. The team are just waiting for some dry weather so we can fill these beds ready for planting.

6. The overgrown corner that links on to Fleet meadow community centre has been cleared and some trees from the poly tunnel have been planted. In addition, ground had been prepped, and some wildflower seed has been sown.
7. A couple of the plots were suffering from standing surface water. A French drain has been installed draining this water away from the plots and into the ditch.
8. Work will commence on the 6 extra plots that were handed back to us from Restore. This will be done once the rest of the outstanding plots have been turned over and handed out.

### **Millenium woods**

9. SSE will be cutting some of the trees that are encroaching the power lines. I am awaiting a date for this work. This is something SSE do every other year, and there is no cost to Didcot Town Council.

### **Broadway allotments**

10. This site was also targeted by antisocial behaviour who have broken into sheds on site. Unfortunately, without any evidence nothing can be done. Sheds, greenhouses and poly tunnels are put on these plots at the tenancy holder's own risk.

### **Cemetery**

11. There have been three full coffin burials and one ashes interment since the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee.
12. The Cemetery has had a huge tidy up over the last few months, Hedges have been reduced, All the headstones are free from ivy and foliage, the new fence at the entrance way has been done and a camera has been installed.

### **Memorial Bench applications**

13. DTC has received two applications for memorial benches for the cemetery.

- a. Application 1

Wooden, Eucalyptus hard wood bench in memory of a Didcot resident buried in the cemetery. H86.4 x W121.9 x D71.1cm. Picture of bench supplied.

- b. Application 2

Wooden bench painted pink in memory of a Didcot resident buried in the cemetery. H960mm x W1518mm x D526mm. Specific location requested, picture of bench and paint supplied.

Whilst the Council has previously asked for any benches in the cemetery to be of a natural colour, historically coloured benches have been installed. There are purple, red and green benches in the cemetery which do enhance the visual aesthetics of the cemetery.

Agenda item 8 asks the Committee to consider the amended memorial policy which would allow colourful benches to be installed at the cemetery.

### **Recommendation**

14. The Committee is asked to consider approving these applications. The exact location in the cemetery for any approved bench will be chosen by the OSM to ensure suitability and to limit overcrowding in any one area.

### **Playground app**

15. The Playground app is up and running and is a game changer, it makes checking the playgrounds so much easier

### **Edmonds Park**

16. I have walked around this site with a tree surgeon to look at the outstanding work that needs doing. One of the quotes for this work has come in at £32,691.76 + VAT. Some of it must be done. I am obtaining more quotes and trying to break some of this work down. It is recommended that some of the trees have a radiograph. I do agree with this but depending on the results we could lose some of the large poplars on this site. This is our biggest site hence why the price is so high.
17. We have made the decision to keep on locking the park. From October to March the park will open at 8am and close at 6pm and from April to September the park will open at 7am and close at 10pm. New signs have been ordered displaying this information with a larger sign displayed at the entrance. We have added a QR code to this sign which when scanned will take you to the website to see any upcoming events and opening times to splash pad etc.
18. The outdoor team have replaced 3 old perching benches with ones made from sleepers.
19. I have met with 2 companies regarding some repairs that need to be done to the tennis courts. This is to replace 2 basketball hoops, clean the court and do some fence repairs. One company has quoted £2,200 + VAT, for the items listed, plus £1,700 to remark the courts, The second company has quoted £3,300 for the cleaning and line marking, but didn't include the fence repairs and the replacement of the hoops. Realistically I was looking at remarking the tennis courts and protecting the surface, but this has come is at around £12,000.

### **Recommendation**

20. It is my recommendation that members approve the quote of £3,900 + VAT to do the minor repairs to the fence, replacement of hoops and remarking of the courts from company one. This can be taken from cost centre 341/4045 and we can look

into additional funding in the future to bring our tennis courts and MUGAs up to date.

## **Ladygrove Park**

21. The bark at the zip wire in Ladygrove Park has been topped up and some minor repairs to some play equipment have been done.
22. New wooden surrounds have been added to some of the play items, this is done to ensure the bark mulch remains in place.
23. The tennis courts and football MUGA also need remarking. I have met with 2 companies regarding this. One company came back with £1,250.00 + VAT and another company came back with £1,250.00 + VAT this did not include the football muga. Both companies have quoted £1,250 for the tennis courts, but one of the companies quote included the MUGA.

## **Recommendation**

24. It is my recommendation that members approve the quote of £1,250.00 which include the football muga £1,250 to get these marked up and to look at ways to upgrade these along with the tennis courts at Edmonds Park.

## **Ladygrove Lakes**

25. The water levels on both lakes are the highest we've ever seen. We are concerned that it could burst its banks. We are continuing to look at ways to try to prevent any flooding.
26. Bank repair work was completed before the water levels got high.
27. The Ladygrove Fishing Association are planning to hold their monthly competitions on the following dates:
  - 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025
  - 6<sup>th</sup> April 2025
  - 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025
  - 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025
  - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2025
  - 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025
  - 28<sup>th</sup> September 2025
  - 12<sup>th</sup> October 2025
  - 9<sup>th</sup> November 2025
  - 7<sup>th</sup> December 2025
  - 4<sup>th</sup> January 2026
  - 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026

- 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026

28. There is a tree that backs onto Brunstock Beck that is causing the resident some issues. Unfortunately, it is just beyond the outdoor teams reach and as it is about 15 to 20 meters away from the property, it isn't urgent. However, the resident has asked for the work to be done, and he would happily pay for it.

### **Recommendation**

29. It is for the Committee to decide whether they allow the resident to carry out this work and cover all costs. The Council would need to know who the contractor would be, and see all relevant RAMS. They would need to ensure there are no birds nesting. As this tree isn't damaged, I don't believe this should come out of Didcot Town Councils vital tree budget.

### **Other parks**

30. All hedge cutting has been completed across all sites. We are now finishing off odd jobs then we will start grass cutting for the season some sites have already had a first cut. This season we will be taking on some of the verges in Ladygrove and will try and do as much cutting to the mounds as possible throughout the year.

### **Vehicles and Machinery**

31. All the repairs to the gator have been completed this is now on the road.

32. As you are all aware the Alke was sold, and we have purchased a Vauxhall combo sportive. This van is so much safer and warmer to drive.

33. We still haven't received our new flail mower. When we get this, it will help us tackle the verges, mounds and some of the tougher areas we must deal with. Until our mower arrives Turney's have sent us a demo machine so we can start cutting.

34. Our 1997 New holland tractor is on its very last's legs. The rotavator which we use for some of the allotment plots has stopped working. This tractor is well used as it has a front-loading bucket. It may be time to start looking at a replacement.

### **Staffing**

35. All members of the outdoor team have completed their playground app training.

36. Two of the outdoor team will be attending the pool plant course with two of the office staff mid-March.

37. Two of the outdoor team will be completing their chainsaw course mid-March. This means they will now be qualified to fell small trees.



# Environment and Climate Committee

## 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025



Report Author: Pierce Bint

# Applications to hold events on Town Council owned/managed land

## Introduction

1. This report informs the Committee on the applications received to hold events on Town Council owned and managed land.
2. The Committee is asked to consider each application and decide whether to approve them and what charge, if any, may apply.

## Background

3. Didcot Town Council hire out the park open spaces for events and charge a hire fee. These charges are set annually.
4. The parks usually hired for events include Edmonds Park, Ladygrove Park, Loyd Recreation Ground, Smallbone Rec and the Ladygrove Skate Park.

## Applications

### 5. Edmonds Park

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>a. Event Name</b>                           | Feastival   |
| <b>Organiser(s)</b>                            | Market Square Group Ltd   |
| <b>Charity or not-for-profit organisation?</b> | No  |
| <b>Date</b>                                    | Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2025            |
| <b>Details</b>                                 | Previously approved but additional information has been received. |

To consider applications to hold events on Town Council  
owned and managed land

The hirers are wanting to have a beer festival including a 'pub quiz' on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June between 16:00 - 22:00 and Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June with a 'Comedy Night' instead of a quiz between 16:00 – 22:00 with the 'Comedy night' running from 20:00 – 22:00. A closure time is set to a time of 22:00 for all guests being off site by 22:30.

This event would be operated under TENs which the hirers are mindful only allows 499 persons including staff. Therefore, they would allow for 484 guests and 15 staff. It has been confirmed that this would take place inside a marquee brought by the hirers.

Their usual practice includes being given keys/codes for full access to the site during their period of hire. Any keys/codes would be treated in the strictest confidence and will have their own security on site at all times.

## **Legal Implications**

6. Didcot Town Council has the power to manage and control recreation grounds, public walks, pleasure grounds and open spaces – Local Government Act 1972, Sched 14, para 27 and the Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9 and 10.

## **Financial Implications**

7. The hire of the park for events are set annually. There is a separate charging band for charities. This will obviously provide an income for the Town Council. As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025, the charge for one days Park Hire is £370, and up to £310 for charities.
8. There are financial implications with the maintenance of these spaces which is budgeted for annually.

## **Risk Implications**

9. Once approved, hirers need to provide the Town Council with all the relevant documentation for their event. This includes, but is not limited to, risk assessments, method statements, insurance certificates, qualifications, and payment.
10. The park is locked in the evenings. Special arrangements would need to be implemented if this event with the later finishing time was approved.

## **Recommendation**

11. The Committee is asked to consider the additional information supplied by the applicant and decide whether to approve this application.

## Environment and Climate Committee

17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Report Author: Mike Blake



# Stoning of the Cremated remains area in the Kynaston Road Cemetery

## Introduction

1. This report requests the Committee to consider approving the installation of stone between the cremated remains plots at the cemetery by the Outdoor Services Team. This improvement aims to enhance maintenance efficiency and improve safety in the area.

## Background

2. The cremated remains sections in the cemetery are challenging to maintain due to the close proximity of the plots and at times, insufficient spacing between them. Additionally, some grave owners have used more space than allocated.

Maintenance is further complicated by various items left on the graves, including solar lights, glass jars, candles, fresh and artificial flowers, and ornaments.



3. During the peak cutting season, the Outdoor Services Team mows the cemetery every 2–3 weeks, depending on grass growth. While maintaining the entire

To consider the stoning of the cremated remains areas in the  
Kynaston Road Cemetery

cemetery presents challenges, the cremated remains section is particularly difficult. As shown in the accompanying images, the narrow spacing between memorial stones, combined with personal belongings left on the plots, makes it nearly impossible to fit a strimmer between them.

As a result, maintaining this area often creates unavoidable mess, leading to frequent complaints from grave owners. These concerns are regularly voiced on social media, where the team's work is criticised, and they are sometimes accused of damaging flowers and ornaments. This ongoing issue has made the Outdoor Services Team increasingly uncomfortable carrying out maintenance in this section.

4. We believe that laying stone in these areas would provide an effective solution, significantly reducing maintenance requirements while also minimizing mess, potential damage, and the number of complaints received. The example image below illustrates how we envision the finished area could look.



We do not need to use the same type of stone for each section; incorporating a variety of decorative stones could create a visually appealing contrast. This approach would result in a tidier appearance compared to the current layout and make the area significantly easier to maintain.

## Legal Implications

5. Didcot Town Council owns the land and would be responsible for notifying grave owners of any planned changes. This could be achieved by displaying signage for one to two months before any work begins, ensuring adequate notice is given.

## Financial Implications

6. Realistically, this would be an ongoing cost covered under the Outdoor Services Manager's spending authority and would be funded through the cemetery maintenance budget. Initial costs would be taken from EMR 321 – Cemetery Fund (current balance of £2,245.10).

## Risk Implications

To consider the stoning of the cremated remains areas in the  
Kynaston Road Cemetery

7. Some initial backlash from grave owners is expected; however, by using this season to communicate and advertise the planned changes, we can help mitigate negative feedback. In the long term, this approach will reduce the risk of damage, as the Outdoor Services Team will no longer need to trim these areas.

## **Recommendation**

8. The Committee is asked to consider approving this work, beginning with Section D of the cemetery. Implementation would take place later in the season, with advance notice provided to grave owners through signage displayed near the existing cremation areas. Once Section D is completed, the project could then be expanded to other cremation sections.

The initial cost to begin this work is estimated at approximately £500, which falls within the Outdoor Services Manager's spending authority. The project would continue as an ongoing expense covered by the cemetery maintenance budget until all cremated remains areas are completed.

## Didcot Town Council

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# Environment and Climate Committee

## 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Report Author: Lucy Blake



## To review and approve the amended Cemetery policies, procedures and documents

### Introduction

1. Didcot Town Council currently owns and manages one cemetery in Didcot. This is known as the Kynaston Road Cemetery.
2. This report asks members to consider and approve the amended and newly created documents and policies for the management of the cemetery, to ensure clarity and consistency.

### Background

3. Didcot Town Council's current cemetery documentation can be seen on the Council's website, here:

<https://www.didcot.gov.uk/kynaston-road-cemetery1>

4. The Council must adhere to various laws and regulations governing the management of the cemetery. Additionally, the Council follows the advice and recommendations of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) to ensure best practices are maintained.
5. Certain clerical procedures related to cemetery management can be complex for residents. It is hoped that the newly created and amended documents will help clarify processes and ensure a smoother experience at a very emotional time.

### Legal Implications

6. Local Government Act 1972 gives Didcot Town Council the power to provide and maintain the cemetery.

To consider the updated and newly written policies for the  
Kynaston Road Cemetery

7. Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO 1977) is the primary legislation governing the management, maintenance, and operation of cemeteries in England and Wales. It covers:
  - Burial rights and regulations
  - Maintenance of burial records
  - Grave digging and management
  - Rules on memorials and headstones
8. Burial Act 1852 – 1906 – Governs the provision and regulation of burial grounds, closure of cemeteries, and burial procedures.

## **Financial Implications**

9. There are no financial implications with approving these documents.

## **Risk Implications**

10. There is a possibility that the documents may cause some confusion to residents, Stonemasons and Funeral Directors, but it is hoped that by approving these amendments, the process is made more clear and easier to understand.
11. Any approved documents will be displayed on the website and forwarded to the funeral directors and stonemasons DTC regularly deal with.
12. The rules can be displayed at the cemetery in the noticeboard.

## **Recommendation**

13. The Committee is asked to review the newly created and amended documents and policies and recommend their approval to Full Council.

The documents circulated to members prior to the publication of the agenda, are as follows:

1. Exclusive Right of Burial application
2. Interment Booking Form
3. Private Burial application form
4. Memorial Application form
5. Additional Inscription application form
6. Remedial work application form
7. Memorial Bench application form
8. Cemetery Rules and Regulations
9. Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial Policy
10. Memorial Policy
11. Memorial Testing Policy
12. Memorial Bench Policy
13. Shallow Grave Policy
14. Agreement with Grave Digger

## **Environment and Climate Committee**

### **17<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Report Author: Pierce Bint



## **To consider the draft agreement and rules on the Community Planting Beds project**

### **Introduction**

1. This report asks the Committee to consider the drafts documents on the agreement and rules of the Community Planting Bed project.

### **Background**

2. Members of the Committee agreed for officers to draft the rental charges and agreements at their meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and bring it back to a future meeting for discussion.
3. Documents have been emailed to Councillors.

### **Legal Implications**

4. DTC has the power to provide allotments and a duty to provide allotment gardens if demand unsatisfied under the Smallholdings & Allotments Act 1908, s23.
5. DTC has a duty to consider biodiversity in decision-making under s.40 if the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

### **Financial Implications**

6. There will be a low charge for annual rent.

### **Risk Implications**



7. There is a risk that groups don't adhere to the rules and agreements.

## **Recommendation**

8. The Committee is asked to consider the agreement and rules as well as the rental charges for the Community Planting Bed project.
9. Due to the funding application that DTC is submitting, it is recommended that any rent charged is minimal. Therefore a £10.00 annual charge is recommended.

# Didcot Town Council

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THIS **COMMUNITY PLANTING BED** AGREEMENT made on the (insert date) day of (Insert Month) (Insert Year)

Between

Didcot Town Council of Britwell Road, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 7HN  
(The Council)

and

Charity/Community Group (name)

Of (address)



The purpose of this Agreement is to set out the terms and conditions under which Didcot Town Council will lease a designated planting bed ("Community Planting Bed") at the Community Planting Area, on the New Road allotment site, to the Tenant.

1. The Council shall let to the Tenant the Community Planting Bed referenced as Plot (Plot REF) in the Council's Community Planting bed Register.
2. The Council shall let the Community Planting Bed to the Tenant for a term of one year commencing from the date of this Agreement and thereafter from year to year, unless terminated earlier in accordance with this Agreement.
3. The Tenant agrees to pay an annual rent of £XX to Didcot Town Council, regardless of whether a demand is made. This payment shall be made in full at the start of the Agreement and on the 1st day of October each year, commencing from the first year of the tenancy.
4. The Tenant shall pay a returnable deposit as set by the Council, at the time of accepting the Community Planting Bed and the Council will take a photograph of the bed's condition for record purposes. The Town Council's Community Planting bed deposit return policy will apply.
5. The Tenant will be subject to a late fee, as determined by the Council, if the Community Planting Bed rent is not paid within 28 days of the invoice being issued. Invoices will be sent to the Tenant via email.
6. Any increase in rent will be notified in writing and displayed on the notice boards, in the financial year preceding the increase.
7. The Tenant shall use the Community Planting Bed for the production and cultivation of fruit, vegetables, flowers, and herbs for use and consumption by themselves, their family, and their friends. All activities arranged by the Tenant must comply with relevant health and safety regulations and must not cause a nuisance to other Community Planting Bed tenants, other allotment tenants, or the surrounding community.

8. The Tenant shall not sell or undertake a business in respect of the cultivation and production of fruit, vegetables, flowers and other items produced in the Community Planting area.
9. The work undertaken by the Tenant must be for the benefit of and to support, the people of Didcot.
10. The Tenant shall observe the Council's Community Planting Bed Rules (**Appendix 1** attached to this Agreement) and any additional Rules the Council may make or revise for the regulation and management of the Community Planting Area and Allotment Gardens let by the Council.
11. The Council shall pay all rates, taxes, dues and other assessments which may at any time be levied or charged upon the Allotment sites.
12. The Tenant is responsible for maintaining the Community Planting bed in a good, cultivated condition and ensuring it is kept tidy and free of weeds.
13. The Tenant is required to maintain public liability insurance to cover activities within the Community Planting Area. Proof of insurance along with copies of the Tenant's risk and assessments and method statements, must be submitted to the Council at the commencement of the Agreement. The Council accepts no responsibility for any loss, damage, or injury arising from the Tenant's use of the Community Planting Bed.
14. Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving one month's written notice to the other. The Council may terminate this Agreement immediately if the Tenant breaches any of the terms and conditions.
15. Upon termination of this Agreement, the Tenant must return the Community Planting Bed to the Council in a clean and tidy condition, ensuring the removal of all personal property and equipment. The deposit will be refunded if the Bed is returned in an acceptable condition. However, if the Bed is found to be in a poorer state than when initially provided, a portion of the deposit will be deducted accordingly.
16. Any disputes arising under this Agreement will be resolved through the Town Council's Allotment Appeals Procedure.

Signed by

.....  
**The Tenant**

And

.....  
**Allotments Administrator - For and on behalf of Didcot Town Council**

Dated: .....

Town Clerk  
Council Offices, Britwell Road  
Didcot  
Oxon  
OX11 7HN

Phone: 01235 812637  
Fax: 01235 512837  
E-mail: [council@didcot.gov.uk](mailto:council@didcot.gov.uk)  
[www.didcot.gov.uk](http://www.didcot.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1: DIDCOT TOWN COUNCIL COMMUNITY PLANTING BED RULES AND PROCEDURES



The aim of this Appendix attached to the Community Planting Bed Tenancy Agreement is:

- To set out the responsibilities of both the Council and Tenant in relation to the provision and renting of the Community Planting Beds.
- To ensure the appropriate use of Community Planting Beds by the Tenant.
- To ensure it is clear the standards expected for maintaining the Community Planting Beds and what is prohibited to take place on allotment sites.
- To make clear the processes for Council and Tenants' responsibilities.

### **In accordance with Clause 10 of the Community Planting Bed Agreement, Tenants are required to comply with the following Rules and Procedures**

1. Security arrangements relating to each Council Allotment Site must be strictly observed. The gate at the New Road allotment site must be **kept locked at all times, when allotment holders and Community Planting bed tenants are on site as well as when they leave.** The gates to the Community Planting Area must also be locked.
2. Community Planting bed tenants are only permitted to access and work their Community Planting beds between dawn and dusk. Vehicle parking is permitted in designated areas but is not allowed either for long periods, or overnight. Drivers and/or owners will be held responsible for any damage caused to the grounds, whilst using their vehicles on the allotment sites. Entering the site with vehicles is at the driver's and/or owner's risk.
3. Tenants are responsible for ensuring that their Community Planting beds are kept tidy, free from weeds and in a good state of cultivation and fertility. At least 2 thirds of the bed should always be cultivated during the growing season. If a bed is seen not being actively cultivated at a Council inspection, the Council's Inspection Procedure will apply.
4. Part of a Community Planting bed may be part-covered in cardboard or polythene sheeting for a selected period, provided it is combined with active cultivation. The polythene sheeting should be black to stop sunlight penetrating the soil and should be porous to allow water and nutrients through. The use of carpeting and tyres is prohibited for environmental reasons.
5. The Tenant shall cultivate the Community Planting bed for the production of fruit, vegetables, flowers, and livestock for domestic consumption by the Tenant and their immediate family and friends. Sale of produce for business purposes is prohibited.
6. The 1.2-metre width of paths around each allotment plot, set out by the Council, must not be obstructed, diverted, or reduced in size. Paths must be kept clear of obstructions and available for access at all times by other tenants and to enable the Council to carry out periodic strimming.

7. Dogs are allowed on the allotment sites, if they are well behaved and always remain on a lead. The plot holder and Community Planting Bed tenant is responsible for their dog and will need to make sure that any dog mess is picked up and disposed of accordingly. Dogs are not to become a nuisance to any other plot holders. The Council's 'Dogs on Allotments Policy' applies.
  - The Council reserves the right to retract this, should these rules not be adhered too.
8. No bonfires are permitted on the allotment sites – occasional burns may be permitted under exceptional circumstances at the Town Council's discretion.
9. The Council will be responsible for maintaining a water supply to all allotment sites.
10. No dumping on site or importing of any garden waste/waste soil onto allotment sites is permitted.
11. Tenants are not to cause a nuisance or annoyance to the occupier of any other Community Planting bed or allotment plot. Any nuisance behaviour should be reported to the Town Council.
12. Children and young people, whether individually or in family groups, whilst visiting the Community Planting beds must be fully supervised in the interests of their own safety and the safety of others and should not be permitted to wander the site unsupervised.
13. Action will be taken against any person causing malicious damage to Council property.
14. Although Community Planting bed tenants are not required to use totally organic methods on their plots, they are to note that the use of chemicals (pesticides and herbicides that require a PA1 and PA6 qualification to be sprayed) **are banned** on all allotment sites – *this does not include shop brought weedkiller.*  
**If anyone is found to be in breach of this rule, their tenancy may be terminated with immediate effect.**
15. Should an existing Community Planting bed tenant request an additional bed, the Outdoor Services Manager will carry out an inspection of their existing bed to ensure it is being worked properly before agreeing to allow the tenant to take on a further plot.
16. Any tenant found to be growing illegal substances on an allotment site will have their allotment tenancy terminated immediately, and the Police informed. Anti-social behaviour is strictly prohibited. All reports of anti-social behaviour will be investigated and could result in the immediate termination of the tenancy agreement.
17. Tenants are required to observe any special conditions which the Council consider necessary to comply with conditions and/or covenants under which the Council holds the land together with any conditions the Council may consider it necessary to introduce for any other reason. (Community Planting Bed and Allotment tenants will be given written notice when such conditions are introduced).
18. Wildlife/Trail cameras are permitted on the Community Planting Beds, subject to Council written approval. Cameras must only cover the area of the Tenant's bed, with minimal intrusion onto the

shared paths. Any privacy concerns must be respected. The Council's 'Wildlife Cameras Policy' Applies. The Council reserves the right to retract this, should these rules not be adhered to.

The Council reserves the right to request any footage recorded or saved for any purpose deemed necessary. Signs must be displayed on every Community Planting Bed with cameras informing others that cameras are present.

January 2025.



## Environment and Climate Committee

### 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Report Author: Mike Blake



## Climbing and Kick/Target walls at Edmonds Park

### Introduction

1. Staff have been exploring potential improvements for the large muddy area adjacent to the pool plant room near the splash pad in Edmonds Park. While traditional play equipment may not be suitable for this space, an alternative solution is needed, particularly as the area is scheduled to open for the Easter weekend.

### Background

2. As you may recall, the splash pad opened last summer for the holiday season; however, the groundworks were not fully completed. The original plan included seeding/turfing the area and installing additional seating. These improvements can still be implemented if there is a requirement for extra seating.
3. I recently received an email regarding the installation of a climbing wall designed for children to climb while timing their completion. In response, I contacted the company for further details, and they provided a brochure along with a price list. During our discussions, the company mentioned that a similar wall had been installed in a park near Didcot. On a particularly wet day, myself and the Outdoor Services Supervisor visited the site to assess the design, materials used, and installation process. Following this visit, we discussed the feasibility of constructing a similar structure in-house.



To consider installing a climbing/kick wall in Edmonds Park

4. The company also offers a target wall, which we have not yet seen in person. This structure is similar to the climbing wall but without the climbing grips. These walls can be customised with goal markings, cricket stumps, or general target designs, potentially addressing two issues:
  - a) Preventing unauthorised use of the football club's goals
  - b) Reducing the risk of damage to the new pavilion caused by balls being kicked against it
5. The cost for the walls to be professionally built and installed is £5,950 each, totalling £11,900 + VAT. While this represents a significant expense, we believe that constructing the walls in-house would be a more cost-effective alternative.
6. We have obtained a quote for the required timber at £1,273.80 + VAT, though this may vary slightly due to limited price validity. Additional costs would include purchasing climbing holds, fixtures, fittings, and paint. We estimate that both walls could be constructed for approximately £2,500 + VAT. One of the Outdoor Team members would complete the design for the target wall in-house. Additionally, rubber matting would be required at an estimated cost of £395.00
7. With the potential cost savings in this project, we believe we could also turf the area ourselves at an estimated cost of £700. This would enhance the usability of the space around the splash pad. Additionally, starting with the climbing wall would provide a foundation for further enhancements, allowing us to expand the area into a trail with additional features later in the year.

## Legal Implications

8. Didcot Town Council has a responsibility to provide safe play equipment that is regularly inspected. A post-installation operational inspection would need to be conducted by a play inspection company, typically costing around £450–£500 + VAT. To our knowledge, there are no copyright restrictions on this product.

## Financial Implications

9. The cost for an external company to build and install both walls in Edmonds Park would be at least £11,900 for Didcot Town Council.
10. Alternatively, the Outdoor Services Team could construct both walls and complete the turfing of the area for approximately £4,095 resulting in a potential saving of around £5,000

## Risk Implications



To consider installing a climbing/kick wall in Edmonds Park

11. There are risks in play; however, if a post-operational inspection is conducted and regular inspections are maintained, the Council will fulfil its safety obligations.

## **Recommendation**

12. The Committee is asked to consider whether to proceed with this project and determine whether to engage an external company for installation or allocate a budget of £4,095 for the Outdoor Services Team to complete the work.

This approach would finalise the area for now while allowing for additional features to be added later in the year. However, it should be noted that if turfing is carried out now, the area will not be usable by Easter.

## Environment and Climate Committee 17th March 2025

Report Author: Pierce Bint



## To approve the replacement of the Didcot Civic Hall garden and car park

### Introduction

1. The fence currently in situ at the Civic Hall Garden following into the car park, has become damaged and now poses a safety risk.

### Background

2. The committee is asked to consider which company to use to replace the fence at the back of the Civic Hall garden and car park, and if a gate should be constructed towards the far right hand corner of the car park.
3. The fence surrounding the garden and car park has weathered and become damaged over the years it has been in place.
4. A hole has been cut in the far-right corner of the fence in the car park for the public to gain access. This has had a temporary fix. An option DTC has considered is looking to get a gate installed where this hole currently is. Images of the fence in its current state below:



As is evident from the images, the fence is fragile, visually unappealing with areas of the fence being damaged, specifically in the right corner of the car park and the far-left corner in the garden where the support beam has come away from its post.

5. Additionally, the fence does not provide an aesthetic background to the garden and is missing an impression of privacy for allotment holders at Broadway allotments,

pedestrians walking along the path behind the garden as well as any garden users should there be an event on.

6. DTC has received 3 quotes for the installation of a new fence with the option of having a gate where the hole currently is in the car park.

Company 1:

| Description  | Total            |
|--|------------------|
| Supply and fit new feather edge fencing to Didcot Civic Hall 90m x 5ft capping | <b>£8,700.00</b> |
| Skips for old fencing  | <b>£780.00</b>   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>£9,840.00</b> |

- This company has done work for us in the past with and have provided us with excellent services and finished product.
- This company has told us that if a gate was to be constructed, the most viable option would be to place it where the hole in the fence already is, and further groundwork would have to be undertaken to include a ramp for wheelchair access.

Company 2:

| Description  | Total                    |
|--|--------------------------|
| Supply and fit in place along same line a new 1.5m high close boarded fence with all posts 100mm x 100mm 3x morticed and cemented into a depth of 60cm | <b>£5,625.00 (+ VAT)</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>£5,625.00 (+ VAT)</b> |

- This company has completed work for Wallingford Town Council as well as the playground for Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Council.
- They dispose of the waste on site and have their own skips which will not come at an extra cost. The total cost of this quote includes a skip and ethical disposal.
- A lock has been provided in the quote for a gate if this option is chosen.

Company 3

| Description   | Total                    |
|---|--------------------------|
| Supply and fit 89m of 1.5m high close board fencing, concreted into ground – includes capping | <b>£6,000.00 (+ VAT)</b> |
| Supply and fit close board gate   | <b>£275.00 (+VAT)</b>    |

|                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>£6,275.00 (+ VAT)</b> |
| <b>TOTAL (INCL VAT)</b> | <b>£7,530.00</b>         |

- This quote includes the removal and disposal of waste.

## Legal Implications

7. This is Didcot Town Council land so there is no legal implication.

## Financial Implications

8. If a gate is installed, it will most likely be required to install a ramp as well for wheelchair access, which would incur a further cost.

## Risk Implications

9. It is recommended by that a fence put up next to a public footpath should not exceed 1m in height.
10. If a gate is implemented, it would be required to also install a a ramp for wheelchair access as well as possibly steps.

## Recommendation

11. The Committee is asked to consider which quote to use and whether members wish to install a gate at the far-right side of the car park where the damage has been made for entry.
12. DTC has worked with Company 1 in the past with no issues raised.
13. Company 2 has completed work for other local councils including Wallingford Town Council and Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Council.

## Environment and Climate Committee

### 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Report Author: Lucy Blake



## Update on Restore

Following a meeting with Restore and representatives from Jessop and Cook Architects on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Officers wanted to update members on the discussions.

As part of its statutory responsibilities, Didcot Town Council has a legal duty to provide allotment gardens where there is unmet demand and where it is reasonable to do so – Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, specifically section 23. Given the growing number of applicants on the waiting list, Officers have been exploring potential location options for the new Restore building. A proposed solution is to relocate the building to the far corner of the car park, thereby freeing up space within the allotments for inclusive raised beds and a potential overflow car park.



It was considered that this proposal could serve as a reasonable compromise for both the Council and the charity while still providing valuable growing space for those on the waiting list.

However, representatives from Restore and Jessop and Cook Architects did not support this proposal. Following the meeting, they provided their thoughts via email, which have been circulated to all members of the Council.

- The proposed solution does not provide any more car parking or allotment space than is already proposed
- Creating a car park on the allotment land is similar to constructing a building and could potentially cause contamination to the land
- The proposed building footprint does not fit at scale in the proposed new location. If it were moved it would result in additional redesign costs to the charity
- In their opinion, neighbours would not support this relocation
- Relocation would provide a negative 'impact on aspect, daylighting, and access for Restore, looking on to a car park or a brick wall and losing the connection to the garden oasis'
- Disconnection – lines of sight and safeguarding resulting in the need for additional staff and/or volunteers
- Not in keeping with rest of street scene
- Existing drainage runs lie underneath the proposed location in the car park
- SODC Planning Officer is in support of the original proposed location on the allotment land
- More people would benefit from the new building than new allotment plots

The Town Clerk highlighted that the original permission granted by the Secretary of State in 2019 was based on the number of people on the allotment waiting list at that time. Since then, the waiting list has grown, altering the circumstances.

Furthermore, the Council must ensure that any disposal of land is conducted in a lawful and transparent manner, following all necessary legal procedures, which inevitably will require public consultation. Although the land is owned by the Town Council, it ultimately belongs to the taxpayers of Didcot. As such, they have both a legal and moral right to be consulted on any decisions regarding its use.

To proceed further, the Officers recommend that the Council seek legal advice on the appropriate course of action. Before reaching out to the Secretary of State, Didcot Town Council is likely to be expected to provide evidence of public consultation, provide land valuation, and include any resident comments in the correspondence.

## Didcot Town Council

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### Minutes of the

### Allotment Liaison Group

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 7pm

All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



#### Councillors:

Cllr A Jones

#### Allotment Representatives:

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| Mr A Feest  | Broadway      |
| Mrs T Feest | Broadway      |
| Mr T Morey  | New Road      |
| Mr T Bray   | Cockcroft     |
| A Pitts     | Mereland Road |

#### Officers:

|            |                                     |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mr M Blake | Outdoor Services Manager            |
| Mrs T Tye  | Mayor's Secretary & Admin Assistant |

[minutes]

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies were tendered from: -

Cllr N Hards  
Cllr D Rouane  
Cllr G Roberts  
Mr J Chapman



## **2. To agree the minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024**

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

## **3. Questions from the minutes and matters arising**

Mr A Feest raised a question about the numbered pegs.

Going forward, all new plots issued will need to number the plot – either with a peg or on the shed.

## **4. To note the Progress Report**

The Outdoor Services Manager read through the progress report and explained each item.

The group noted the progress report.

## **5. To note the Outdoor Services Manager's Report**

The Outdoor Services Manager gave a brief update on the current staffing, projects, and key tasks for the Outdoor Team.

It was noted that there had been a few staffing issues, which had an impact on the progress of the works on the allotment sites.

Since August 2024 we have welcomed 30 new tenants:

- Broadway – 8
- Mereland Road – 6
- Cockcroft – 8
- New Road – 6
- Wantage Road – 4

The following plots are available:

- Broadway – 2 (need clearing)
- Mereland Road – 6 (all ready to go)
- Cockcroft – 3 (need clearing)
- New Road – 5 (2 offered and the rest to be done next week)
- Wantage Road – 1 (ready to go)

We have the following people on the waiting list: -

- Broadway – 57
- Mereland Road – 5
- Cockcroft – 6
- New Road – 43
- Wantage Road – 45

Due to the long waiting lists on three of the sites, applicants will be contacted about their secondary sites first in an attempt to clear out some of the waiting lists.

**Work planned for this Spring/Summer is as follows:**

**Broadway** – Since the last meeting, new gates have been installed on this site, as well as a memorial bench. At the beginning of February, the site was targeted, and sheds were broken into. The Outdoor Services Manager reminded the group that sheds, and their contents, are granted at the plot holder's risk.

The Outdoor Services Manager had received complaints regarding the fencing not being adequate and people wanting a replacement. Unfortunately, a new fence would not be an option due to budget constraints.

A natural Hawthorne hedge would be more cost effective and was suggested as an alternative. The orchard plot has now been let out to a community group.

**Cockcroft** – The entrance gate on this site has been amended, and a new pedestrian gate has been installed. This means that the vehicle gate can be locked in the winter to avoid any unnecessary damage caused by vehicles entering the site.

This site was also targeted by vandals/thieves at the beginning of February. All sheds and the contents in them are left at the plot holder's risk.

The Outdoor Services Manager had received complaints regarding the fencing not being adequate and people wanting a replacement, including a social media campaign. Unfortunately, a new fence would not be an option due to budget constraints.

A natural Hawthorne hedge would be more cost effective and was suggested as an alternative.

**Mereland Road** – The Outdoor Services Manager stated that all necessary tree works were completed over the winter. A temporary compost bay was added by the Outdoor Team as a trial, to put leaves in and for the allotment holders to use. The trial was successful, and no misuse was observed. A more permanent solution is being investigated for the next autumn/winter.

The Outdoor Services Manager also stated that all plots were ready to be given out, with one exception, as the Outdoor Services Manager was hoping to make it accessible.

**New Road** – The Outdoor Services Manager stated that the compost bays are due to be screened, and that the works were authorised by the Environment and Climate Committee. The Outdoor Team is still waiting for the due date, as the ground conditions may have held the works up.

The area behind the compost bays was also cleared, with Community Planting Beds being installed – this was an ongoing project, with further improvements planned in the future.

The bramble area near the Fleet Meadow Community Hall has been cleared, with the area earmarked for tree planting, possibly Willows, in an attempt to soak some of the water away. Wildflowers will also be spread over this area.

A new water supply was installed at the poly tunnel, meaning that the supply can be spurred off, and 2 new troughs could be added at the back of the allotments.

***Recommendation to Environment and Climate Committee – Purchase two new water troughs***

**Wantage Road** – The Outdoor Services manager noted that this site does not currently have any representatives and explained that no reports were made of anybody targeting this site. Regular work has been carried out on this site over the winter.

**Across all sites** – Full council agreed to the new charges from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2025, which would be as follows:

|                             |               |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 5 pole plot -               | <b>£41.00</b> |
| 2.5 pole plot -             | <b>£20.50</b> |
| Concessions 5 pole plot -   | <b>£28</b>    |
| Concessions 2.5 pole plot - | <b>£14</b>    |

Deposit - **£95 (£47.50 for 2.5 pole plots)**

Late Payment Fee - **£16.00**

The Outdoor Team investigated the amount of waste removed from the allotment sites and noted that there were several plots which required attention and required structures to be removed.

The Outdoor Services Manager suggested that a revised deposit scheme for structures (including sheds and chicken coupes) should be introduced, adding an additional deposit of approximately £100 to £150 per structures.

Similar to plot deposits, the structure deposits would only be returned at the end of tenancy, if the structures are left in a good condition, or taken away from the site.

More vigilant notice will be taken to plot holders who are bringing a lot of extra pallets and building materials on site, and should they be deemed as too excessive, the tenants will be asked to remove the items from the allotment site.

The Outdoor Team was looking at bringing back the chargeable services, including rotavating and strimming. The charges are due to be agreed at the next Environment and Climate Committee meeting.

***Recommendation to Environment and Climate Committee - to bring back payable services.***

The Outdoor Services Manager gave a brief update on the ongoing and planned works, which included providing more compost bays for the Outdoor Team to provide with leaves, grass, and woodchip when available. These would be strictly for the Outdoor Team to add material; however, allotment holders can use the compost for their plots.

Further planting throughout the allotment sites will take place in early spring. Autumn and Spring bulbs will be planted on each site going forward.

The Outdoor Services Manager also stated that the trailer skips could change in the future, as they are currently being paid for by the overall allotment budget, with approximately half of the tenants using the service. This could be changed to be a chargeable service and would reduce the reliance on the allotment budget.

The Outdoor Services Manager also stated that if allotment holders cannot attend the site on the skip trailer day, they should inform the Didcot Town Council, and a collection of the allotment waste will be arranged.

**6. Ducks on site**

A tenant had enquired about the possibility of having ducks on the allotment plot.

The Outdoor Services Manager stated that ducks are not permitted on the plots, as they require water ponds, which are currently not allowed as per the allotment rules.

**7. Dogs roaming on site**

Some allotment holders bring their dogs to the site and then let them off the lead to run about the site. This is not acceptable - all dogs should be on a lead.

***Recommendation to Environment and Climate Committee – sign with all rules on (dogs on leads etc).***

## **8. Burning waste**

Mr T Bray enquired about a possibility to return to burning allotment waste, as a few tenants preferred the old method of waste removal.

The group discussed a possibility of having a burning weekend near to a bonfire night.

Didcot Town Council staff will add November burn dates onto the invoice letters.

***Recommendation to Environment and Climate Committee – to suggest a weekend for fires***

## **9. Rats**

Mr A Feest enquired if other allotment sites have any issues with rodents.

The group discussed if the possibility of returning the burning of allotment waste could improve the situation, as it would remove the items which attract rats.

Didcot Town Council staff will update the rules in the noticeboards.

## **10. Lessons learned from the rent renewal experience**

The group discussed the previous rent renewals, and agreed that the process should be sped up

This year's allotment rents will all be emailed out at the end of August.

Didcot Town Council staff will put a notice up to state that emails have been sent out two weeks later, asking tenants to check their inboxes and spam folders.

The tenants will also be asked if they are happy for an elected person to collect their rent letters on their behalf, they would need to email Didcot Town Council and inform the staff about their request. The staff will need to remove any personal information from the envelope and replace it with just the allotment plot number if they are to be collected by an elected person instead of the tenant.

## Environment and Climate Committee

### 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Report Author: Lucy Blake



## Recommendations from the Allotment Liaison Group meeting 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Following the ALG meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025, the following recommendations have been referred to the Environment and Climate Committee for consideration:

### 1. Installing additional water troughs on the New Road allotment site

The group would like the Committee to consider installing three additional water troughs on the New Road allotment site, to help tenants with easier access to water.

The cost for three troughs breaks down as:

- £158.00 per trough
- Service box per trough £34.17 each
- Rolls of blue plastic piping and additional fixings approximately £400

Total cost for three water troughs = £976.51 plus VAT – this cost can be taken from cost centre 311/4041 Allotments Grounds Maintenance (£1,845 currently available).

**Recommendation** – whether to approve the purchase of these water troughs.

### 2. Reinstating additional services for allotment tenants

For the 2023-2024 financial year, DTC implemented additional chargeable services for allotment tenants, which included strimming, weed spraying and rotavating. These services were soon rescinded due to the loss of staff and the pressure on remaining staff to undertake everyday work commitments.

Now that the outdoor team is fully staffed and the Council has purchased a rotavator, the OSM would like to reintroduce these services with the following fees:

| Service                                    | Charge for the 25-26 year |
|--|---------------------------|
| Strimming                                  | £45                       |
| Spraying (weed killing) by qualified staff | £45                       |
| Rotavating                                 | £95                       |
| All three                                  | £175                      |

**Recommendation** – whether to reintroduce these charges and approve the charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

### **3. Consider allowing burning on the allotment sites**

Historically, Didcot Town Council permitted controlled burning on all allotment sites at designated times throughout the year. However, in 2023, this practice was discontinued and replaced with the provision of green waste skips at each site once per year. Whilst the green waste skips are extremely popular, they are quite expensive at approximately £360 each per site, and tenants cannot dispose of things such as wooden structures etc. These structures are usually left for the outdoor services team. Tenants have requested that the Council re-consider allowing burns on a more restrictive basis.

The OSM has taken tenants' views into consideration, and it is his recommendation that the Committee permit controlled burning on the allotment sites for one weekend per year, specifically during Bonfire Weekend. This timing would align with annual bonfires and help minimise any nuisance to neighbouring households. It would need to be made clear that any burning outside of this one weekend is strictly prohibited.

If this weekend for burning was allowed, DTC would not need to hire Green Waste skips for each site, saving an annual cost of approximately £1800.

**Recommendation** – to allow bonfires on the allotment sites but strictly limit them to Bonfire weekend only.