

Minutes of the Environment Committee

A meeting of the **Environment Committee** was held on **Monday 17th June 2024** at **19:00hrs** at **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester Oxon, OX26 6PS.**

Present:

Cllr Rachel Mallows (Chair)
 Cllr Donna Ford
 Cllr Harry Knight
 Cllr Nick Mawer
 Cllr Chris Pruden
 Cllr Alisa Russell
 Cllr Les Sibley
 Cllr John Willett
 Cllr Tom Beckett (Sub for Cllr Maguire)

Public in attendance:

Paul Davis (Ace Academy)
 Brian Welters

In Attendance:

Paul Canning, Office Manager
 John Burnett, Service Manager
 Maria Galic, Civic and Democratic Administrator

1/2425 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cllr Damien Maguire with Cllr Beckett attending as Substitute.

2/2425 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED that the following Cllr's were also CDC councillors, Cllr Ford, Knight, Mawer, Pruden, Russell, Sibley, Willet & Beckett

3/2425 Minutes of the Environment Committee

RESOLVED that Committee **APPROVED** the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** of the following meeting:

- **ENV06/2324 – Tuesday 19th March 2024**

4/2425 Public Session

- Brian Welters – Forward plan Tiny Forests.
- Brian read out the BTC Emergency Climate resolution 2019 to councillors urging the Council to monitor and report steps taken to improve its environment footprint. Cllr Mallows responded with actions the council has taken but will look for further improvements.
- Funding restricted for Tiny Forests projects but maybe an opportunity to look for other funding options.

- Paul Davis, Ace Academy – Item 10 Whitelands Farm Sports Ground. The following ideas were discussed:
- Ace Academy currently rent the Function Room 5 days a week, 9am-5pm throughout the school terms
- Offer to contribute 50% of price required, £10,000, as a gesture of good will, towards the proposal
- Suggestion of a moveable partition in the Function room to improve use of the space
- Pillar restricts use of the room for lessons
- A moveable partition wall will provide 2 separate spaces for learning
- It will be a financial improvement for the Kitchen and Bar who will be able to hire out two spaces for functions rather than the one
- Councillors are welcome to see Kings mere Community Centre for an example of the functionality of a moving room divider

Committee welcome the idea to improve the use of the room for ACE and other users by way of a moveable partition. Councillors did note that the offer to pay 50% is generous and the possibility of accepting this gift does not have a negative impact.

However, Committee raised questions and concerns on the following:

- Financial transparency – officers to provide more details regarding: supplier quotes, value, quality, fixtures, fittings, door movement, sound proofing decibels, maintenance costs/responsibility and fire exits/safety
- Budget – Officers requested to provide the budget available for proposals like this and question the justifiability of this expenditure
- Best Value – does not mean the cheapest, it means the best value for the money
- Capacity – concerns raised over increase in student numbers of ACE
- Negotiation – concerns raised over the process of negotiation between Council and ACE
- Investment – concerns raised over the investment by ACE. Council should consider the notion that they solely invest in this proposal. By doing so this would safeguard all interests
- Full Council Special / Finance Committee – request for Officers to present this proposal again at another committee meeting. Taking into to consideration the quote prices, a fee of £25,000 or more, would result in a Finance Meeting
- Lease of Whitelands Farm Sports Ground – this is an ongoing issue which needs resolution from CDC

Officer responded to questions and concerns raised on the following:

- Supplier A – will provide the best service and strong quality of product at the cheapest quotation price
- There is no notable difference in quality between Supplier A, B or C

5/2425 Garth Park

RESOLVED that Committee **APPROVED** Phase 1, the recommendation of the Destination Park at a value of £400k, with the amendment for it to include equipment for children with disabilities.

This decision was held based on these key discussion points:

- The project does not commence until after the School Summer Holidays
- Work to commence in September
- Timescale of work is approximately 8 -10 weeks, with completion in Autumn
- Consideration of a future splash park:

6/2425 Grounds Maintenance Service & Pool Vehicle

RESOLVED that Committee **APPROVED** the amended recommendation, of the make and model of the vehicle.

- Councillors have requested the Officer to put this proposal to Finance Committee
- Consideration of leasing the vehicle rather than purchasing

7/2425 Whitelands Defibrillator

RESOLVED that Committee **APPROVED** the report and for funding of a defibrillator at Whitelands

- Councillors shared information regarding London Hearts Funding
- Councillors expressed the importance of having defibrillators located in as many places as possible, including schools and local centres

8/2425 Wall and Building Repairs

UNRESOLVED that Committee do not approve the repairs to be conducted until further information is provided on:

- Status of insurance claim
- A minimum of three quotations for repair works
- Officers to seek next steps from CDC to ensure that the Council undertake legally compliant steps
- Officers to investigate if the walls are of a historical asset and the nature of materials required to fix it appropriately
- Once all information has been sought, Officer to provide this proposal at the next Committee meeting

9/2425 Christmas Trees

RESOLVED that Committee **APPROVE** the purchase of one tree for Christmas. Officer to investigate:

- Use of bollards to protect the tree
- Liaise with CDC to ascertain information regarding the rights of the food vendor on the Market Square and to support a possible new location for this vendor
- Councillors suggested seeking sponsorship for an additional tree in front of the Methodist Church

10/2425 Whitelands Function Room

RESOLVED that Committee **APPROVED** the installation of a room divider and proposed the following amended motion:

Cllr Donna Ford proposed that Bicester Town Council must acquire responsibility to pay for this proposal as it is their asset.

Cllr Les Sibley seconded the motion.

This Substantive amendment received a majority vote.

11/2425 Approved Projects

RESOLVED that Committee **NOTED** the work schedule for approved projects and for the inclusion of:

- Bure Park gate
- Officers will investigate staffing and options for pulling forward the Biester Litter Pick to Autumn 2024.

12/2425 Forward Plan

RESOLVED that Committee **REVIEWED** and **COMMENTED** on the Forward Plan:

- Grounds Maintenance Contract – suggestion of a review in Policy Committee
- Graven Hill Bus Shelter - Possible s106 Funding for
- Additional bins – budget has been spent, and some dog bins are earmarked for replacement

13/2425 Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 22nd July 2024 - 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth House

CLOSE OF MEETING: 21:05hrs