

## Minutes of the Environment Committee

A meeting of the **Environment Committee** was held on **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026** at **19:00hrs** at **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**

### Present:

Cllr Alisa Russell – (Vice Chair)  
 Cllr Donna Ford  
 Cllr Damien Maguire  
 Cllr Nick Mawer  
 Cllr Chris Pruden  
 Cllr Les Sibley  
 Cllr Nick Cotter Sub on behalf of Cllr Rachel Mallows – (Chair)  
 Cllr Paul Wheatley Sub on behalf of Cllr John Willett

### In Attendance:

Trevor Longfield (Responsible Finance Officer)  
 Tanya Govorusa (Sports and Facilities Administrator)

### 48/ Apologies for Absence

**2526 RESOLVED** that apologies for absence were received from Cllr Rachel Mallows, Cllr Harry Knight and Cllr John Willett.

### 49/ Declarations of Interest

**2526 RESOLVED** that declarations of interests were received from:

- Cllr Alisa Russell – (Vice Chair)
- Cllr Donna Ford
- Cllr Nick Mawer
- Cllr Chris Pruden
- Cllr Les Sibley
- Cllr Nick Cotter
- Due to either of them being affiliated with Cherwell District Council or Oxfordshire County Council.

### 50/ Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting

**2526 RESOLVED** that Committee did **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting:

- **ENV04/2526 – Monday 17th November 2025**
- **ENV05/2526 – Monday 19th January 2026**

### 51/ Public Session

**2526 RESOLVED** that no members of the public were present.

### 52/ Cherwell Bins

**2526 RESOLVED** that the Committee **COMMENTED** on the proposal regarding the continuous issues with Cherwell emptying the bins around town.

- Cllrs raised the following points:
  - Cllrs discussed the proposal regarding the continuous issues with Cherwell emptying the bins around town and how it has been ongoing for quite some time and is occurring regularly, after some investigating it transpired that there was one operative that could empty the bins, Cherwell have now trained another operative, there were a considerable amount of complaints due to the operatives being off all at once, so left with the bins around the town not being emptied.
  - Cllrs suggested we look to provide a satellite map to find out where the bins are that need attending to.
  - Cllrs have requested the officer to look into getting a number of quotes from other contractors or could Bicester Town Council train their own operatives to empty the bins or look at investigating getting a wastes licence.
  - Cllrs raised a number of alternatives that need to be investigated further by the officer, such as the possibility of in-house operatives or a joint venture with Cherwell District Council where we have joint staffs and can distribute staff where most needed or hiring a member of staff from Bicester Town Council out to Cherwell District Council. Cllrs stipulated that the officer must ensure that the staff that is lent is fully trained and equipped.
  - After considerable discussions on this matter Cllrs have raised that they feel it is a far bigger cost to have ongoing complaints from residents, regardless of the financial aspect of the matter of getting contractor's in and would like the officer to investigate further ensuring bin services are being maintained.
- In depth review required from officer in relation to the following points:
  - Cllrs suggested to look into claiming or rebate from Cherwell District Council due to non-compliance of service requirements and for the ongoing occurrences of continuous full bins.
  - Cllrs suggested the officer liaise with Cherwell District Council in order to find out what their framework is, so we can ensure our staff are fully trained to match their framework, if we are able to hire out to Cherwell.
  - Cllrs raised that an in-depth review is required of the costs needed and what the contractors are expected to do and provide.
  - Cllrs would like the officer to investigate quotes from alternative contractor's, due to our contract with Cherwell District Council not being met.
  - Cllrs closed the discussion with confirmation that the officer would look into and investigate the multiple directions discussed and report findings regarding what is the best fit and would like the contract & terms with Cherwell investigated, in case there is any entitlement to a rebate.

### 53/ Medium Priority Tree Works Off Tree Survey

**2526 RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** and **COMMENTED** on the proposal.

- Cllrs raised concerns about the play areas and the lack of repairs.
- Cllrs raised concerns with the delays, resulting in catching up of tree maintenance.
- Cllrs would like the officer to investigate whether there was a swapped contract and if trees used to be included and not always separated from the outdoor spaces fund.
- Cllrs confirmed the works in tree maintenance that have been completed in

Langford were received in high esteem from members of the public.

- Cllrs proposed and seconded in support of approving the proposal.

#### **54/ Mess Room Toilet Block**

**2526 UNRESOLVED** that the Committee did **NOT APPROVE** and **STILL UNDER REVIEW** on the proposal regarding purchasing a toilet to add on to the mess room.

- Cllrs raised concerns regarding having an empty building, suggested this was not fully looked into the first time, due to having further costs that have now been added and brought to our attention later down the line.
- Cllrs have requested the officer to thoroughly investigate was this our mistake, therefore our expense, or the provider's mistake.
- Cllrs have questioned whether this the last of the finances to be found or will there be further extra costs brought to our attention. Cllrs would like the costs explained, what is does the costs include exactly, what is provided and are there any extra's that are required.
- Cllrs questioned does having toilets near the sewers require planning applications to be submitted.
- Cllrs closed the discussion with confirmation that they agree to refer back to the officer, as there are too many questions that need answering and require further investigation.

#### **55/ Bedding Plant Beds in Garth Park**

**2526 RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** on the proposal regarding that we use the countries that Bicester is twinned with as this year's bedding plant designs.

#### **56/ Biodiverse Planting Area**

**2526 UNRESOLVED** that the Committee did **NOT APPROVE** and **STILL UNDER REVIEW** on the proposal regarding a biodiverse planting area in town.

- Cllrs raised concerns and suggested management is required, to ensure the area is being looked after and maintained.
- Cllrs questioned the lack of there being no suggested location or what the costs of this are.
- Cllrs closed the discussion with confirmation that they agree to refer back to the officer, due to making sure the number of areas are managed properly and that there is a contract in place with a full breakdown and framework that ensures the up keep of the area, such as the area will be mowed down at a timely manner.

#### **57/ Bloombox for Bicester**

**2526 UNRESOLVED** that the Committee did **NOT APPROVE** and **STILL UNDER REVIEW** on the proposal regarding installing Bloom boxes around town.

- Cllrs suggested to source locally from the Littlebury Hotel Bicester and to arrange a more lucrative option.
- Cllrs have recommendations as per prior relationships and is able to liaise

with Littlebury Hotel Bicester to ensure optimum support towards Bicester Town Council, if deemed appropriate.

- Cllrs raised concerns regarding to be sure we are not picking up responsibility from other council's, due to budgets and may incur further costs down the line.
- Cllrs closed the discussion with confirmation that they share multiple concerns regarding that is not the right time, and there is no definite location or responsibility in location, they stated it is a lovely idea, but the bins need to be prioritised currently and sorted out, prior to discussing this. Cllrs have requested this be deferred to future discussions.

## **58/ Forward Plan**

**2526 RESOLVED** that the Committee did **NOT APPROVE** and **STILL UNDER REVIEW** on the report.

- Security Company for park lock up:
- Cllrs raised the following points:
  - Cllrs suggested concerns regarding the tenants leaving the gates open, concerns regarding park not being thoroughly checked and if checks are being made to ensure no residents are still left on the premises.
  - Cllrs also raised further concern regarding the costs and financial strain it could cause. Cllrs would like the officer to investigate the leases for the tenants.
  - Cllrs suggested automatic closing mechanisms on the gates.
  - Cllrs raised concerns regarding going private with a security company could make more issues arise.
  - Cllrs have requested the officer investigate what alternative security companies offer and a full breakdown of costs, with a framework created for what needs to be done by the security company when closing.
  - Cllrs suggested a Key Holder is created and has a diary log stating all users in the park.
- Play Area Equipment:
  - Cllrs raised concerns with multiple play parks and the concerning number of parks with out of action equipment on Lucerne Avenue in particular and the overall Bure Park area.
  - Cllrs also raised issues with the Langford play parks and need to be investigated.
  - Cllrs would like the officer to investigate the lease arrangements, as they feel uneasy about Bicester West not having an upgrade to the play areas, concerns of feeling short changed were raised.
  - Cllrs requested the officer to investigate and look at the inspection details from inspections that took place in 2022 for play parks, as there are still play parks in the same state in 2026.

## **59/ Date of Next Meeting:**

**2526 TBC, at 7pm, The Council Chamber, The Garth**

**CLOSE OF MEETING: 20:00**

---



---