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16 June 2015

Sir/Madam

**To all Members of the Environment Committee**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Environment Committee to be held on **Monday 22 June 2015 at The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester OX26 6PS** to commence at **7 pm** for the transaction of the following business.

**Susan Mackrell**  
Chief Officer

*Members of the public and press are welcome to attend in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960*

*Please note that the Environment Committee Meeting will be preceded by Public Question Time, in accordance with Standing Order 1e, which will last for a maximum of ten minutes.*

Copy Attached	Agenda item No	<b>AGENDA</b>	Time pm
	<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	<b>7.00</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>  Councillors are reminded to declare any interests on any item on this agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.	
✓	<b>3</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>  To confirm the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on 9 February 2015, <b>ENV05/1415</b> .	
	<b>4</b>	<b>GARTH SKATE PARK REFURBISHMENT</b>  Councillors are asked to discuss points raised following 'Have Your Say' meeting with Thames Valley Police.	

Copy Attached	Agenda item No	<b>AGENDA</b>	Time pm
✓	<b>5</b>	<b>LANGFORD COMMUNITY ORCHARD</b>	✓
		Councillors are asked to consider the attached proposal.	
✓	<b>6</b>	<b>FORWARD PLAN</b>	
		Members are asked to review and comment on the attached forward plan.	
	<b>7</b>	<b>INFORMATION SHEET(S)</b>	
		No information sheets have been issued since the last meeting	
	<b>8</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015</b>	

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee held on **Monday 9 February 2015** at **The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester OX26 6PS** at **7pm** for the transaction of the following business.

**Present:**

- Cllr Jim French
- Cllr Debbie Pickford
- Cllr Richard Mould
- Cllr James Porter
- Cllr Les Sibley
- Cllr Lynn Pratt
- Cllr Nick Cotter
- Cllr Rose Stratford
- Cllr Jolanta Lis
- Cllr Jim Tucker

**In attendance:**

- Chris Johnson – Operations Manager
- Laura Wilson

*Members of the public in attendance for Public Question Time, in accordance with Standing Order 24.*

Minute No	Agenda No	
314/1415	1	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that no apologies had been given.</p>
315/1415	2	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> that there were no declarations of interest declared of any item under consideration on this agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.</p>
316/1415	3	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to confirm the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on:</p> <p>16<sup>th</sup> December 2014, <b>ENV04/1415</b></p>
317/1415	4	<p><b>ALLOTMENT FEES 2016</b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept <b>RECOMMENDATION 1</b></p> <p>1. A 10% increase to all allotment plots implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 with no change to the maintenance charges.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept <b>RECOMMENDATION 2</b></p> <p>2. All allotment fees and charges to be reviewed annually.</p>

Minute No	Agenda No	
318/1415	5	<p>With the wording be amended as follows:</p> <p>2. <b>All allotment fees and charges to reviewed annually in line with Allotment Regulations in either April or September.</b></p> <p>Motion carried all in favour.</p> <p><b>TREE WORKS AT MEDINA GARDENS</b></p> <p>A new proposal was made and seconded as follows:</p> <p>1. That this item be deferred to a future meeting of the Environment Committee.</p> <p>Vote: 3 in favour and 7 against. Motion not carried.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept <b>RECOMMENDATIONS 1 AND 2</b> of the report.</p> <p>Named vote requested.</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr Mould, Seconded: Cllr Sibley</p> <p>1. That this Committee accepts the recommendations for this and future tree works given by the CDC Arboricultural Officer who is retained as an advisor by BTC.</p> <p>2. That the tree is inspected in 2016 / 2017 as part of the BTC inspection programme.</p> <p>Vote: 6 in favour and 4 against. Motion carried.</p> <p>In favour: Cllr Mould, Cllr Sibley, Cllr Pratt, Cllr French, Cllr Lis, Cllr Stratford.</p> <p>Against: Cllr Pickford, Cllr Cotter, Cllr Porter, Cllr Tucker.</p>
319/1415	6	<p><b>FORWARD PLAN</b></p> <p>Councillors were asked to review and comment on the Forward Plan.</p>
320/1415	7	<p><b>INFORMATION SHEET(S)</b></p> <p>None to note.</p>
321/1415	8	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2015 at 7pm</b></p> <p><b>CLOSE OF MEETING: 8:00pm</b></p>

Sue Mackrell,  
Chief Executive,  
Bicester Town Council,  
The Garth,  
Launton Road,  
Bicester  
OX26 6PS

December 20<sup>th</sup> 2014

Re: Designation of Langford Community Orchard Site, Bicester, as a Local Green Space

Dear Sue,

Langford Community Orchard is a much loved and well-used green space providing local people of all ages with a tranquil area in which to relax, a source of fresh fruit to pick (raspberries, apples, pears, blackcurrants and blackberries) as well as informal opportunities for education in horticulture and physical activity in doing maintenance work. A summary of this year's work (January-October 2014) in the Orchard is enclosed. It shows that Bicester people are much involved in caring for this space.

The orchard site is triangular, bounded by the back fences of the gardens of Alchester Terrace to the west, the public footpath from the Town Railway to Langford Village/Bicester Fields to the north and the Claypits Allotments site to the south.

During the recent public consultation concerning Cherwell District Council's Modified Local Plan 2014-2031, representations were made asking for the Langford Community Orchard space to be designated as a 'Local Green Space' under the terms of the National Planning Policy framework paragraphs 76 and 77. These state that:

“76. Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them.

By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

Identifying land as Local Green Space should therefore be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

77. The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”

The Planning Inspector, Nigel Payne, was made aware of the representations at the Local Plan Hearing session on Health, Education, Open Space, Sports and Recreation on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2014. This was because the NPPF states that Local Green Spaces should only be designated at the time when a local plan is prepared or reviewed. The Inspector checked with the CDC Planners who were

present and they said that they felt that the Orchard site did meet the requirements of the NPPF for this designation. However, as Bicester Town Council are the land-owners, it was thought appropriate that the request for designation should proceed via the Council and be processed as part of the Local Plan Part 2 in early 2015.

Hence, I am writing to ask whether Bicester Town Council would consider that the Orchard Site should be designated as a Local Green Space and if so, put this forward to CDC to be included in the Local Plan.

Thank you,  
Your Sincerely,



on behalf of Langford Community Orchard Organising team:

Pamela Roberts  
9 Church Street, Bicester OX26 6AY

Claudia Taylor  
18 Austen Walk, Bicester OX26 2FW

Susan Hall  
22 Woodfield Road, Bicester OX26 3HN

cc. Ian Kemp, Programme Officer, Cherwell Local Plan examination  
cci. David Peckford, Cherwell DC Planning

## **Langford Community Orchard .....a Grassroots Bicester Project**

### Orchard Update January-October 2014

What an amazing year! The statistics show that to date, 41 different people of all ages have been involved during 13 work sessions and have put in over 315 person-hours to the project. This represents a lot of hard work. There are still 2 more sessions booked in before the end of the year! An organising team has been set up to oversee the running of the project.

Overall the orchard is in a much better state than it was. It has benefitted from regular maintenance with weeding, pruning and the dreaded litter-picking. Dog-fouling is not so bad since Claudia installed some attractive notices about this, and local people are beginning to learn that the orchard is a space that needs to be respected and is also a place where children play. We have had a lot more informal interaction with the local children and have got to know them, so now they enjoy joining in various activities and understand what we are trying to do.

Two tree-pruning sessions were held, one with Jon Brewin of Cherwell District Council in March and a second with Corrine Mitchell in June. Corrine gave us a theoretical teaching session first complete with a drawing board, and then we did some practical work. Some of the trees are too huge to reach for pruning and we will need expert help with those.

For the first time, we had a proper harvest of raspberries picked and shared on a sunny afternoon. The canes benefitted from last year's digging out of the competing blackberries and mulching with lovely manure from Hawkwell Farm. It was another fantastic year for blackberries and lots of local people enjoyed picking them. The plum tree had a fair amount of fruit but it had been pruned quite severely the year before to remove some large damaged branches. Neither pear tree looked very happy this year. The apple harvest was good and a lot were picked, but the yield was down compared with last year's amazing crop. The mulberries were disappointing. Corrine investigated whether distortions of the leaves were due to disease but the RHS said not, rather the trees were more likely stressed by too much undergrowth. In future, we will be stricter about not letting the red dead-nettle grow – I had done so to increase the orchard's variety of wild-flowers. The replacement blackcurrant bushes provided by Continental Landscapes are doing well.

We held our first Apple Day in September and luckily chose a beautiful warm day! Everyone contributed such a lot to make it a success. We had at least 100 visitors during the afternoon who came in response to the excellent poster produced by Jason and Tia. There was a popular tea-and-cake stall, make-your-own-bird-box stall with Emma from Bicester Green, apple bobbing, apple pressing with Corrine, nature treasure hunt, and plenty of hay-bales to sit and relax on. Bicester Green Gym had a display of their activities and the Save Gavray Meadows Campaign collected signatures for their petition. There was also a stall laden with produce from the Community Allotment. One highlight was the scarecrow competition organised by Tia. The local children gave very enthusiastic help with setting up the event as well as packing up at the end. The freshly pressed apple juice was delicious and I can't wait until next year to taste it again! Two apple presses were tried, one lent by Bicester Green and the other by Bob Hessian of Bicester Local History Society. Next year we definitely need an 'apple-crusher' to pre-process the apples before pressing!

Another fine addition to the orchard is our first bench, ingeniously designed and crafted by Bicester Green. It was installed just in time for Apple Day.

This year the project was given an allotment on the nearby Claypits site. We are very grateful to Bicester Town Council for letting us have this extra space. We initially planted strawberries, then 3 blackcurrant bushes arrived donated by Becky, then raspberry canes, and a wonderful range of

vegetables donated by the Bicester Garden Centre. Almost by magic a garden shed was constructed by Jason and Bea, and paths laid out according to Corrine's design. Corrine also planted her grafted fruit trees which will be trained as 'step-over trees' along a wooden framework. A lot of work was put in to make the allotment a success and thanks are due to everyone who contributed.

The finances of the project have been expertly handled by our Treasurer, Claudia. We were very grateful to Bicester Town Council for a grant as well as a CAG grant. Jason worked hard on a grant proposal to expand the project which was accepted by A2 Dominion.

In summary, thanks are due to many people who have supported the project in so many different ways over this year and we hope to see the project bear even more fruit next year!

Pam Roberts November 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 on behalf of the Orchard Organising Team and Grassroots

Bicester:

Claudia Taylor, Susan Hall, Corrine Mitchell



FORWARD PLAN: 2015 / 2016

POLICY COMMITTEE		
MEETING DATE	ITEM	COMMENT
13 <sup>th</sup> July	Tree Policy ENV01/1213)	
	Local Management Organisation for NW Bicester	
	Closure policy for cemetery	
	Locality working & funding	
	Policy and revenue implications Sports Village	Update to be included in next TC Mtg – 10 Nov 2014
	Town Plan – Planning Policies	
	BTC liability/commitment to Bicester Vision and the Community Arts Project Scheme	
	Failing Assets Policy	
13 <sup>th</sup> July	Clarification on attendance at Traffic Advisory Group	
FINANCE COMMITTEE		
MEETING DATE	ITEM	COMMENT
Watching Brief	Med-Long Term Strategy	
	Income from new development - short/mid & long term	
14 <sup>th</sup> September	Review and amend Grant Aid Awarding Policy	
	Grass Cutting – Financial Aspects	

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE		
MEETING DATE	ITEM	COMMENT
22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Grassroots - Langford Village Community Orchard project	Min No 356/1112 On-going
	Maintenance of Open Spaces eg Bure Park Nature Reserve	
	War Memorial Options	
	Tree Works Schedule	
	Gavray Drive Protected Green Areas	
	Play Area Refurbishment	
	Claypits Allotment Association	
	Grass Cutting – Financial Aspects	
PLANNING COMMITTEE		
MEETING DATE	ITEM	COMMENT
	East West Rail	Invite East West Rail to Planning Meeting for regular updates.
	London Road Level Crossing	Ongoing – Live issue
	A2 Dominion	Invite A2 dominion to discuss the next phase once the application has been submitted.
	Dan Bramwell Consolidate Property Group (CPG)	Invite Dan Bramwell to for an update on the application.
	Invite Officer from CDC to discuss Parts 1 & 2 of Local Plan	