

Present: The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ken Arlett
Councillor Sara Abey
Councillor Julian Brookes
Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak
Councillor Will Hamilton
Councillor Lorraine Hillier
Councillor Laurence Plant
Councillor Ian Reissmann (Vice Chair)
Councillor Jane Smewing (Chair)
Councillor Kellie Hinton (sub for The Mayor, Councillor Glen Lambert)

In attendance: Janet Wheeler– Town Clerk
Liz Jones – HTC Accountant/RFO
Caroline Adamson – Committee Administrator
1 member of the media
7 members of the public

74. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from The Mayor, Councillor Glen Lambert and Councillors Julian Brookes and Sara Abey for late arrivals.

75. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Laurence Plant revealed a personal interest with Henley Town & Visitors' Regatta who were due to be discussed later on for a Grant application.

76. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

Helen Gaynor, Bell Street

Ms Gaynor spoke on behalf of Freeman's Meadow, expressing how disappointed the group were by the report dated 14th January 2019. Helen summarised the group's response, dated 11 February, in particular emphasising that the 14th January report should be rejected or at the very least put on hold; that the Council should continue to pursue the registration of Freeman's Meadow as a Village Green; in particular to clarify the legal position; any case histories regarding enhancements or the building of some structures should be explored with the Open Spaces Society and that the matter is passed back to the Freeman's working group.

Peter Lloyd, Leicester Close

Mr Lloyd endorsed what Helen had just said, saying that Freeman's Meadow is a wonderful green lung and needs to be preserved for the community and that the 14th January report would not bring an appropriate conclusion to the matter.

John Carroll

Mr Carroll is a solicitor and is particularly interested in the legal concerns regarding Freeman's Meadow, saying that the erection of structures on the land designated as a Town or Village Green is permitted if the purpose is for the better enjoyment of the community.

Roger Cole, D:two

Mr Cole thanked the Council for considering the grant. He stated that a grant of £2000 would help repair the lift which broke before Christmas. The foodbank is on the second floor and use of a working lift is essential. The foodbank's use had increased by 34% since January 2018.

Councillor Abey enters the meeting.

77. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 4 December 2018 were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

78. **VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

In accordance with Standing Orders 5(a)(vi), it was **RESOLVED**

that in view of the members of the public present, the order of business is altered to allow Agenda Item 9 – Freeman's Meadow to be brought forward and considered before item 5 – Progress Report.

79. **FREEMAN'S MEADOW**

The hard work carried out by the Friends of Freeman's Meadow was recognised by the Councillors. Councillors felt that they could work with the group to get the correct decision. Of key importance would be the legality of erecting structures for the better enjoyment of the community. There was a proposal that the land should be registered as a Village Green as there was a clear signal that this was the best option. It was noted that inclusion in the JHHNP was a relatively short term and non-statutory solution.

It was RESOLVED that the Council approve in principle the proposal for Village Green Status for Freeman's Meadow, subject to a satisfactory outcome of investigations into the legality of erecting structures for the better enjoyment of the community. It was agreed that its inclusion in the revised JHHNP alone was not sufficient protection.

80. **PROGRESS REPORT**

It was RESOLVED that the Progress Report be received and noted.

81. **FINANCE**

i) Management Accounts and dashboard papers

It was RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

ii) Investment Performance

It was RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

iii) List of payments

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

iv) HTC's own Grant Applications

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

v) Expenditure from CIL funds.

Following a brief discussion,

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

82. **COMMUNITY GRANTS**

Since the budget was sufficient, the Chair suggested that the bulk of the applications be approved, subject to any issues Committee wished to raise. There was a discussion on Enrych Oxfordshire, D:two and Walkers are Welcome. Enrych Oxfordshire have had their request declined for the time being due to there apparently only being 3 Henley residents within its membership, but they should be encouraged to re-apply in September 2019 and to provide additional detail.

After consideration awards to applicants were agreed.

It was RESOLVED that the following grants be awarded:

Borama Friendship Association	£200
Henley in Transition	£111.72
Regatta for the Disabled	£600
South Oxfordshire Mencap Society	£600
Oxfordshire Volunteer Befriending Society	£1000
D:two Henley Baptist Church	£2000
Henley Town & Visitors' Regatta	£1500
Walkers are Welcome	£500

The total of the above amounts to £6,511.72 which is £895.28 less than the available figure of £7,407.

It was also RESOLVED that this £895.28 was earmarked and held over to add to 2019/20's budget for Community Grants.

83. **PARKS SERVICES EQUIPMENT – COMPOSTER**

It was recognised how heavily used is this piece of equipment by the Parks Services Team. There was a brief discussion about renting but given the almost constant use of the machine this was not considered to be good use of money.

There is sufficient headroom in the 2018/19 Capex budget to afford the purchase of the equipment, though it was not specifically budgeted.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Town Clerk has delegated powers to authorise the purchase of a new composter at a cost of up to £34,200.

84. **BLUEBELLS DAY CENTRE GRANT**

The FS&M Committee recognised the benefits of this community club, in particular noting the work carried out by The Mayor, Glen Lambert, in ensuring its future.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the balance of the ‘former’ Bluebells Day Centre grant for 2018/19 (£5,150) be appropriated to start-up costs of the ‘new’ Bluebells Day Centre and that the previously approved annual grants for 2019/20 and 2020/21 be allocated to the ‘new’ Bluebells Day Centre providing that the Centre does evolve.

85. **FUTURE RUNNING OF JUBILEE PARK**

There was appreciation of the range of possible business models and the need for expert advice regarding this complex area in order to move the matter further.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the officers continue to research potential management options and that the Council reviews the future running of Jubilee Park once a decision has been made on the 353-357 Reading Road project.

86. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

It was moved by the Chairman and

RESOLVED that the public and the press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as matters which were about to be discussed were considered to be confidential.

MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY 2019

87. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) **LEGAL UPDATE**

The updates were noted.

Part b) – Land next to 65 Valley Road – Claim for adverse possession.

A Mediation Session had taken place in London on 8 February at which the owner of the property proposed a sum to purchase the land. The owner contested the Council's valuation but was not prepared to arrange an alternative valuation. The proposed sum stated in the Confidential Appendix A had already been deemed not acceptable to the Council.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council proceeds to a Tribunal.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Legal Update be noted.

ii) **SPORTS CENTRE MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update of the situation. Information from the GLL is slowly coming through. The employment contracts for the staff joining HTC will be available shortly. The staff have been notified of their change of employer. The management of the site will be from 01 April 2019.

iii) **STREET CLEANER UPDATE**

Due to a pending court case – the minutes of this section must be referred to in the Confidential Appendix B.

iv) **BATH SITE**

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Parks Service carry out general maintenance twice a year and some lighting was installed in August 2018. Councillor Gawrysiak wanted to know particularly about the riverside aspect as there could be high maintenance costs, but this is not the case as there is concrete there.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the revised five year licences should be increased to the sum stated in the Confidential Appendix C plus VAT, RPI linked, but this would cover maintenance costs.

v) **353- 357 READING ROAD**

It was RESOLVED that the notes of the meetings on 11 December 2018, 19 December 2018 and 16 January 2019 be received and noted.

vi) **STAFF HOURS**

It was noted how hard this member of staff was working at the moment on several large and complex projects at the same time.

It was RESOLVED to APPROVE the recommendation that the staff hours should be increased to 37 per week for the period 1 February to 31 March 2019. The staff member is stated in Confidential Appendix D.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chairman
13.02.19

