

Present: The Chairman, Councillor Kellie Hinton
The Vice Chairman, Councillor Sarah Miller
Councillor Donna Crook
Councillor Dave Eggleton
Councillor Sam Evans
Councillor Laurence Plant

Sally Rankin – Henley Wildlife Group

In Attendance: Janet Wheeler – Town Clerk
Karl Bishop – Parks Manager
Kyle Dowling - Senior Park Warden/Horticultural Park Warden
Becky Walker – Administrator

Also Present: 5 members of the public
1 member of the press

The Chairman of the Recreation and Amenities Committee, Councillor Kellie Hinton took the Chair.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Kellie Hinton called for nominations for the election of Chairman for the municipal year 2018 – 19.

Councillor Sarah Miler proposed and Councillor Dave Eggleton seconded that Councillor Kellie Hinton be elected.

There being no further nominations, and following a vote, it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor Kellie Hinton be elected Chairman of the Open and Green Spaces Sub Committee for the municipal year 2018 – 19

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman called for nominations for the election of Vice Chairman for the municipal year 2018 – 19.

The Chairman, Councillor Kellie Hinton proposed and Councillor Dave Eggleton seconded that Councillor Sarah Miller be elected.

There being no further nominations, and following a vote, it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor Sarah Miller be elected Vice Chairman of the Open and Green Spaces Sub Committee for the municipal year 2018 – 19

3. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Councillors Donna Crook and Laurence Plant to the Sub Committee.

4. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members received and noted the terms of reference for this Sub Committee.

5. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None received.

6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

7. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

None.

8. **HENLEY WILDLIFE AREAS AND OPEN SPACES**

i. Members received a verbal report from Sally Rankin of the Henley Wildlife Group(HWG)/Henley in Transition regarding the Town Council's wildlife areas as follows:-

- work has continued at Mill/Marsh Meadows including cutting back vegetation and removal of Himalayan Balsam
- the next work party is Wednesday 1 August 2018 – 9.30 am to 12.30 am at Mill Meadows – volunteers always welcome
- the Green Gym and volunteers spent a session replacing steps on the Valley Road Chalk Bank in May
- pyramidal orchids were once again found on the Greys Road embankment
- due to the very dry weather the wildflowers have gone over sooner than usual
- very grateful for the work of the previous Conservation Park Warden and looks forward to working with the new Conservation Park Warden

The Chairman asked if the wildlife areas at Meadows had been affected by recent issues at the Meadows. Mrs Rankin acknowledged litter is a problem in most public areas and the HWG work parties do litter pick in the wildlife areas to support the Parks Service when they can. A discussion took place regarding nettles being a deterrent for those using the Meadows as a toilet and it was noted nettles and brambles grow very well in the Meadows (but not under trees) and are beneficial for wildlife.

ii. Members were pleased to note a Conservation Park Warden has been appointed and will start on Monday 30 July 2018.

9. **GRASS VERGES OPPOSITE BADGEMORE SCHOOL**

Members considered a request from Badgemore School to leave an area of grass unmown on the verge opposite the school to allow wildflowers to grow and seed to complement and create a mirror image of the wildlife area opposite in the school grounds and to put up a temporary sign (as presented) to explain the mowing practice.

Kyle Dowling advised he had met with Tuc Ahmad (Badgemore School Parent Governor) on site and agreed this project would be beneficial for wildlife and suggested a wavy pathway could be cut through the grass to add interest.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a section of the grass bank opposite Badgemore School be left unmown to allow wildflowers to grow and seed to create a mirror image of the wildlife area inside Badgemore School's fence to increase biodiversity. The Parks Manager to decide the extent and when the

area should be cut following the flowers setting seed

that a temporary sign be installed to say “The area is managed for wildlife, so we are cutting down on mowing”

10. MILL AND MARSH MEADOWS – BARBECUE BAN AND LITTER

- i. Members noted a temporary barbecue ban has been put in place in Marsh Meadows due to the hot and dry conditions and the associated fire risk.
- ii. The Chairman (as the Chairman of the Recreation and Amenities Committee) provided an update on measures which have been taken to tackle on-going issues at Mill and Marsh Meadows as follows:-
 - Short Term Measures
 - an additional Park Ranger has been contracted to work in the evenings to be a presence in the Meadows when the Park Wardens are off duty and to enforce the barbecue ban and to advise and educate visitors to the Park regarding the disposal of litter etc.
 - extra and larger bins have been ordered
 - temporary entrance signs stating the rules have been installed at the Mill Lane entrance and Mill Meadows entrance
 - temporary “No Barbecue” signs have been installed on Mill and Marsh Meadows
 - signs have been put on bins stating no rubbish to be left next to bins as it is hazard to dogs and wildlife
 - Long Term Measures - 2019
 - the Recreation and Amenities Committee (R and A) will consider whether to ban barbecues in 2019
 - R and A will consider whether to contract a Park Ranger to patrol the park in the evenings when the Park Wardens are not on duty and recommend whether this should be included in the 2019/20 budget

It was **RESOLVED**

that the update be noted

11. FREEMANS MEADOW – TOWN/VILLAGE GREEN STATUS

Members received and considered a report from the Friends of Freemans written by Mr Tony May proposing the Town Council apply for Town/ Village Green status.

The Chairman invited Mr May to the table for this item. Mr May advised that applying for town green status was the best way to provide legal protection to ensure Freemans Meadow remains an open space and to not allow development in perpetuity. He explained the procedure was relatively straight forward if the landowner applied and there was no registration fee.

The Town Clerk advised legal advice would be required as this would in effect be “disposal of an asset” and would report back. Also legal costs would be incurred.

Members agreed in principal. Councillor S Evans proposed and Councillor Kellie Hinton seconded that it be **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the registration of Freemans Meadows as a Town/Village Green be progressed subject to legal advice on “disposal of an asset”

Mr May left the table.

12. **FREEMANS MEADOW – IMPROVEMENTS**

Members received and considered a report regarding proposed improvements to Freemans Meadow.

The Chairman invited Peter Lloyd and Helen Gaynor of the Friends of Freemans (F of F) to the table.

Mr Lloyd and Mrs Gaynor spoke to the report and made the following comments:-

- the play area would benefit from an upgrade and possibly removing the central climbing frame which is too high for small children and is not fully utilised plus adding some new pieces of equipment. The area to be fenced to dog proof it and an alternative surface investigated
- a 5-a-side football pitch would be more suitable than a full sized pitch
- planting fruit trees in the Pearces Orchard/Fairmile Court corner to create a community orchard
- planting of hedging and trees should take place between November and February
- the fence and hedging on the boundary between Fairmile Court and Freemans by the Northfield End entrance would benefit aesthetically from improvement. Friends of Freemans to have initial discussions with the Fairmile Court residents association as to possible solutions
- to trial a small area of wildflowers to see how well they establish in the Meadows
- signage should be installed in the wildlife areas to inform residents

After consideration it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that thanks be extended to the Friends of Freemans for their work on this project

that following the discussions above the actions and timetables as listed below be adopted (subject to F of F availability and Parks Service staffing levels)

Children's Play Area Upgrade

The timetable of works for the improvements including consultation, preparing Contracts Finder information, presentations by playground companies etc be advised following consultation with the Town Clerk

Conservation Area

To leave an area by Pearces Orchard boundary unmown to create a conservation/wildlife area and increase biodiversity
Commenced June 2018 – to be trialed for one year

Mowing

The Parks Service are aiming to mow every 2 weeks subject to staffing, weather and grass growth
Commenced June 2018

Planting hedging on Leicester Close Boundary

By Parks Service with F of F volunteers
November 2018 to January 2019

Removal of concrete bases

Quotes being sought (to be funded from Recreational Improvements budget)
September 2018

Planting of Fruit Trees by Fairmile Court corner

By Parks Service with F of F volunteers
Before February 2019

Install 5 aside goals

Seek advice on positioning of the pitch
Summer 2018

Toddler Swings

Replacement of swings. Swings on order
Repainting of swing frame - Work day to be arranged with F of F and Parks Service
Time: to be advised by F of F

Installation of 2 additional Big Ben Bins

Choice of locations to be decided once improvements plans is finalized to ensure the correct positioning of bins and benches

Shrubs by entrance by Fairmile and vehicle entrance

Fof F to discuss with residents the types of shrubs which would be suitable for planting in consultation with the Horticultural Park Warden

Move the Ball Shoot to Makins Recreation Ground

September/October 2018

It was **RESOLVED**

that the following cost be approved and orders can be placed forthwith (as within the Recreation and Amenities budget)

- up to £750 for trees, hedging and shrubs
- funds for tree guards (if required) at a cost of approx £200 each plus delivery
- up to £1000 for 2 x additional Big Ben bins with lids

Mr Lloyd left the table.

13. NORTHFIELD END GREEN

Members received and considered a report regarding improvements to Northfield End Green written by the Northfield End residents in consultation with Kyle Dowling and Becky Walker.

Helen Gaynor spoke to the report and advised:-

- the layout of the beds has been revised and now forms one large bed with a separate bed for the large tree. A second bed on the north side to be considered following the establishment of the main bed however the retention of some grassed area is desirable
- examples of the desired look of the shrub bed included in the report eg shrubs with varying colours, shape and structure and ground cover
- further investigation into the type of tree has been carried out and it is felt an evergreen is preferable - a Portugese Laurel, a Japanese Tree Privet or a Cherry Laurel is suggested and quotes will be sought
- no response has been received from the Highways Department regarding moving the signage
- a new memorial bench is due to be placed at Northfield End Green

- the Northfield End Residents Group would like to trial looking after the area with assistance from the Parks Service particularly regarding watering. It was noted the tree may need specialist care initially

After discussion Councillor Sam Evans proposed and Councillor Laurence Plant seconded that it be **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that thanks be extended to Helen Gaynor and the Northfield End Residents Group for their work on this project

that the design be agreed in principal and delegated powers be given to the Parks Manager, the Horticultural Park Warden and Committee Administrator to progress this scheme in a timely manner in liaison with the Northfield End Residents Group and the Town Clerk and Chairman of this Sub Committee's agreement on the final detail

that the Northfield End Residents Group with the Parks Service trial looking after the bed until May 2019 (advice on the watering requirements of the tree to be sought and the various options considered)

Helen Gaynor left the table.

14. MILL MEADOWS - RIVER AND ROWING MUSEUM

Members received and considered a report from Lynne Adams, Operations Director regarding the River and Rowing Museum (RRM) and noted the list of current collections and exhibitions. The report also outlined their educational programme for the summer terms with approx 5700 children and adults expected by the end of July. New activities have been introduced which includes using the Meadows including:-

- a maths workshop on Mill Meadows planning a birthday party for Mr Toad including working out the best tree to sit under for the picnic and best boat to take a boat trip in
- using Marsh Meadows to compare plant species on the mown and unmown areas and then creating stencils of plants for block printing

The report also outlined operational improvements being undertaken including redecorating, improving lighting in the car park and the replanting of Ratty's Refuge. Future projects include developing facilities for disabled customers.

Councillor Sarah Miller highlighted the Plastic Reduction exhibition at the RRM which is on between 9 August and 2 September.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the report be noted

15. MILL MEADOWS - EVENT

Members received and considered a request to hold a Mandaean Baptism for approximately 40 to 60 people. Although broadly in favour members expressed concerns regarding having a large gathering which may involve catering, adequate parking space, the possibility of vehicles driving on the grass and health and safety issues if the Baptisms are to take place in the river. Members agreed more information was required and due to timing the decision should be delegated to the Town Clerk and Parks Manager. The Chairman and Councillor Laurence Plant offered to attend a meeting if one was arranged and after discussion **RESOLVED**

that more information be sought regarding the detail of the Mandaean Baptisms and the decision as to whether the event should take place be delegated to the Town Clerk, Parks Manager and Chairman of this Sub Committee

that a deposit should be taken should the event take place

Post Meeting note: the Parks Manager and Chairman of the Open and Green Spaces Sub Committee met with the proposer and it was agreed mutually that Mill Meadows was not a suitable site.

16. MAKINS RECREATION GROUND

Members received and considered a request from a resident to install a netball post at Makins Recreation Ground. Members noted England Netball recommends a semi-circle with a radius of 4.9 m of tarmac be installed with a socketed post.

Members were mindful that there had been a number of projects focused on Makins including the skate park, the improved playground and the outdoor gym equipment and Freemans Meadow was considered as an alternative location.

Members felt a netball post could be trialled at Makins but were not in support of a tarmac base. After further discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a netball post with a tarmac base not be installed at Makins Recreation Ground

17. MINUTES

The Sub Committee received, approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Open and Green Spaces Sub Committee held on 23 March 2018 and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

18. PROGRESS

Members received and considered the progress report and made the following comments:-

Makins Playground – the playground improvements are due to be finished by the start of the summer holidays. The fencing will be installed at the end of July/early August

Fencing by Brunner Hall – the fencing will be installed in August.

Outdoor Gym Equipment at Makins - the equipment will be set out in a “c” shape located near to the hedge by Greys Road (agreed at the Recreation and Amenities Committee)

Greys Road Embankment Sign - the order has been placed.

Post meeting note – the sign was installed on 19 July 2018

19. MOORING AND CAR PARKING – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Members received and noted the management accounts for Mill Meadows up to May 2018.

20. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as **Friday 26 October 2018 at 9.30 am.**

The meeting closed at 10.27 am.

Chairman

bw