

Present: The Mayor Elect, Councillor Will Hamilton (substituting for
Councillor S Evans)

Councillor David Nimmo Smith
Chris Baker – Henley Hockey Club
David Bancroft – River and Rowing Museum
Sally Rankin – Henley Wildlife Group

In Attendance: Janet Wheeler – Town Clerk
Gareth Bartle – Parks Service Manager
Becky Walker – Minute Taker

Also Present: 6 members of the public
1 member of the press

In the absence of the Chairman, the Mayor Elect – Councillor Will Hamilton took the Chair.

65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Chairman – Councillor S Evans (Councillor Will Hamilton substituting), Councillor Dave Eggleton, Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton and Councillor S Miller.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Will Hamilton – Minute 68 – Makins Recreation Ground – personal - neighbour.

67. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Peter Lloyd – 10 Leicester Close – Minute 68 – Provision of Amenities To Freemans Meadow - spoke on behalf of residents of Leicester Close and made the following comments:-

- requested the holly bushes in the south west corner be cut back
The Parks Manager confirmed this work will take place in the autumn.
- residents are broadly in support of improvements to Freemans Meadow however raised concerns, firstly re the proposed path which will run near to their property lines and queried its usefulness and secondly, the location of outdoor gym equipment which may enable people to climb up and look over their fences into their garden

Ian Tiffin – 59 Northfield End – Minute 68 – Provision of Amenities to Freemans Meadow – queried increasing the size of the playground along with associated maintenance requirements and advised new surrounds to playground is required. Commented that the need for toilets will increase with additional facilities.

Tony Lawson Smith – Alma Mews – Minute 68 – Provision of Amenities to Freemans Meadow - highlighted that Alma Mews has been built since the image accompanying the plan was taken.

Louise Lloyd – 10 Leicester Close – Minute 68 – Provision of Amenities to Freemans Meadow - queried the need for a path and if a path is to be installed it should link all 5 entrances. Supported additional seating which would be appreciated particularly by older residents plus the removal of the youth shelter.

Jean Garon .– 8 Leicester Close – Minute 68 – Provision of Amenities to Freemans Meadow - nearby residents value this open space and supported facilities for older people eg seating and planting.

68. MINUTES

The Sub Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Parks Sub Committee held on 29 July 2016. The minutes were received, approved and adopted and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

69. VARIATION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

that in view of the number people in the public gallery, the order of business on the agenda be altered to allow the discussion of Freemans Meadow (item 10 ii) be considered next

70. PROVISION OF AMENITIES AT FREEMANS MEADOW AND MAKINS RECREATION GROUND

i. FREEMANS MEADOW

Members received a report regarding investment in Freemans Meadows and the following comments were made:-

Outdoor gym equipment should be trialled at Mill or Marsh Meadows and if well used outdoor gym equipment then to be considered at Freemans Meadow and Makins Recreation Ground.

The Town Clerk advised the location is key to success when installing outdoor gym equipment and needs a high footfall and easy access.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that investigation be made into installing outdoor gym equipment at Mill Meadows, in a clustered format, as a trial site and plans to put outdoor gym equipment at Makins and Freemans Meadow be put on hold

Paths - the need for a path around Freemans was questioned although it was noted the entrance areas can get muddy. Installing a path can “urbanise” these green areas.

After further discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a circular path is not installed at Freemans Meadow but the entrance areas are enhanced to prevent them from getting muddy at certain times of the year

Following comments during public question time it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the holly bushes in the south west corner be cut back by the Parks Service

Members discussed the provision of seating at Freemans Meadow and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that investigation be made into appropriate seating for Freemans Meadow to be placed at various locations (sunny and shaded) including near the playground and close to Bowling Court.

that the removal of the youth shelter (the only current seating) be considered in conjunction with the provision of additional seating

Six members of the public gallery left the meeting.

ii. MAKINS RECREATION GROUND

Members considered the planned improvements to Makins Recreation Ground and received and considered a report from the Town Clerk, which incorporated quotes for play equipment (from Kompan, Sutcliffe Play and Wicksteed), surfacing (bonded rubber mulch), fencing (coloured bow top) etc.

The installation and surfacing will be in the region of £4 - £6k (depending on the specification and meterage of the surfacing) plus the cost of the equipment.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- consultation including visuals of the proposed play equipment should be undertaken on site with parents and children
- it was confirmed the playground area would be increased, a new surface would be laid and additional equipment would be purchased

The Town Clerk advised that as the cost of this project is over £25,000 it would need to be placed on the "Contractor's Finder" website in line with EU directives. This will also ensure "value for money" is obtained.

A brief will be required which should include:-

- visuals to enable public consultation
- provision of shade (eg flat topped trees)
- a review of the consultation carried out by the Town Council, Gainsborough Residents Association and Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton
- elements of "green-ness" and "sustainability" as outlined in David Bancroft's report to be included

After discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a brief be drawn up by the Town Clerk for improvements to the playground at Makins Recreation Ground including play equipment, surfacing, seating, shading and fencing

that, for reasons of expediency, the brief be circulated to Councillors by email, prior to being placed on the Contracts Finder website

Footpath around and across Makins Recreation Ground - Members noted a path around and across Makins Recreation Ground had previously been agreed but that this should be put on hold at this point as concerns had been raised by a number of Councillors.

Goalposts - members discussed the provision of goalposts at Makins Recreation Ground. It was acknowledged nets were not required as they get damaged and the hooks created a health and safety risk. The current goalposts are old and the cost to replace would be approx. £600. It was agreed they be inspected by the Parks Manager to ascertain their condition and whether they should be re-painted/repainted or whether to replace.

71. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members noted the resignation of Councillor H Chandler-Wilde (Vice-Chairman) from the Sub Committee and the subsequent appointment of Councillor D Thomas by Full Council on 22 November 2016 (minute 189). It was also noted that Councillor D Thomas resigned from the Council in February 2017 and that members will be re-appointed to this Sub Committee at the beginning of the new municipal year.

72. HENLEY WILDLIFE AREA

Mrs Sally Rankin provided an update on the work being undertaken by the Henley Wildlife Group:-

- work continues at Mill Meadows eg cutting back of vegetation and brambles
- muchwork was undertaken with Park Warden Chris Baldwin before he left the Council
- there will considerable work cutting back vegetation later in the summer and hopes the Town Council will assist with providing manpower and resources

The Parks Manager confirmed a Park Warden position is being advertised with an emphasis on conservation.

73. RIVER AND ROWING MUSEUM

Members received and noted an update from David Bancroft re the River and Rowing Museum as follows:-

- there has been uplift in visitor numbers in the Autumn/Winter and the Museum had 2 successful "Family Days" during the February half term and Easter) with attendances of 750 and 550 respectively
- the programme of upgrading the facilities and galleries continues and the John Piper Gallery opened in December and has proved a popular draw
- the reception area has been reconfigured with the original desk being removed and the retail space increased
- new caterers, the Wild Fork, have taken over the operation of the café and are investigation early evening openings

- Reama Shearman has been appointed Head of Development and will be looking at ways to develop a network of local relationships, including with the Town Council for mutual benefit
- David Worthington has succeeded Paddy Nicoll as the Chairman of the Museum Trustee Board. Previously Mr Worthington was the Chair of London Transport Museum Trading and the Managing Director of the Conran Design Group
- investigation into improving the car park and outside aspect of the Museum are being investigated along with funding
- it will be the 20th anniversary of the River and Rowing Museum next year

Large Tree by the Entrance - The Town Clerk asked for an update regarding the large tree by the entrance to the Museum, which the RRM wanted to crown lift. The Town Council had provided the survey results, which recorded “no work required” and advised the tree was covered by a TPO therefore if the RRM wanted to carry out any works they would need to apply for permission from SODC and confirm any works with the Town Council. Mr Bancroft confirmed he would investigate.

74. MILL AND MARSH MEADOWS

Members received a verbal update from the Town Manager, Helen Barnett regarding the following projects at Mill and Marsh Meadows as follows:-

- i. Signage Project as follows:-
 - the artwork has been agreed for the signs at Mill Meadows
 - the copy is being written for the Welcome Wall which will promote the Meadows and the town
 - analysis is being undertaken to ascertain whether additional signs are required
 - production costs are being sourced.

- ii. New initiatives at Mill/Marsh Meadows for 2017 as follows:
 - the Information Kiosk has been upgraded and the staff are undergoing additional training re local venues and events along with the information staff at the Town Hall
 - the Floral Flotilla is now being accompanied by a band on the bandstand, Henley WI selling cakes and a community picnic
 - working with partners – River and Rowing Museum/Wild Fork Cafe

- iii. Mill Meadows – Summer 2017 – members received and noted the information leaflet which outlines:-
 - events - performances on the bandstand and pop-up cinema
 - facilities - Canoe Hire, putting. Playgrounds etc
 - a map
 - larger type face

75. PROGRESS REPORT

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

- Henley Canoe Hire – members were pleased to note Henley Canoe Hire will be operating from Mill Meadows for a second year
- Obelisk Plaque is now in situ and repair work to the Obelisk is scheduled for the autumn
- Provision of Shade in the Toddler Playground – the flat top trees have been installed and are settling in well

- Future Management of the Wildlife Area – the Park Warden (Conservation) is being advertised

76. MOORING AND CAR PARKING – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Members received and noted the management accounts for Mill Meadows up to 31 March 2017. The Parks Manager advised new car parking machines have been installed.

77. USE OF THE PARKS

- i. Members received and noted the calendar of events on Mill and Marsh Meadows, Freemans Meadow and Makins Recreation Ground.
- ii. Members received and noted the entry details for the Floral Flotilla to be held on Sunday 4 June 2017 between 2 and 4 pm.

78. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Friday 21 July 2017 at 9.00 am.

bw

Chairman