

Present: Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood
Vice Chairman, Councillor D Clenshaw
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Phillips
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Miss S Evans
Councillor Miss K L Gehrman
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor D Silvester

In attendance: Mr M Kennedy – Town Clerk
Ms J Brazil – Committee Administrator/Minute Taker
Councillor M Akehurst
Councillor D Hinke
Councillor W Hamilton

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

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interests were received:-

- Councillor D Silvester declared a personal and prejudicial interest in minute number 10 – African Queen – Mill Meadows, as a long standing personal friend of the proprietors.

19. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

The Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting and invited questions or comments relating to the agenda.

Councillor D Silvester, 102 Luker Avenue – Councillor Silvester explained Mr & Mrs Cowley were long standing personal friends and advised that they were solid members of the community and contributed to the local and national economy. They were well known in Henley and their business was a commercial success and a good product for Henley. They were also sound members of the community and supported D:2 the Baptist church. There are other boats moored along the same stretch of river, e.g. the New Orleans. They sail their boat at a sensible speed and cause a limited wash. They will bring valuable trade to the town and River and Rowing Museum. Councillor Silvester understands there had been previous

difficulties in the past but would like to recommend approval on the terms and conditions presented to this Committee.

Mr D Balfour, 18 Fairmile – Mr Balfour wished to express his use of the Fairmile verges and asked that any action should be applied to all residents along the Fairmile. He requested that Members considered the difficulties faced by all residents in this area and the alternatives. He asked where cars can/do park? If cars were forced onto the Fairmile this would slow traffic down as it entered the town and whilst this is not a bad thing it may also be seen as a danger. Although there were small bollards on the grass to stop people parking on them some had been broken and he requested they be replaced and the possibility of a chain link be added to prevent parking in the future.

Councillor W Hamilton, 153 Greys Hill – advised that in 2001 and again in 2007 a group of residents including himself and Councillor Hinke formed an action group to oppose the development of the Makins site. They were not objecting to a Skate park in principal but this was not the place for such a structure. There were covenants on the site given by Mr Makin and this area should stay as an open area with no further development. He stated the area was used by older youths and that crime was a problem. This included: graffiti, aerosol and drug abuse and even trafficking, all of which had a significant impact on neighbours. Headway had sent a letter pointing out the amount of vandalism they had suffered including major damage to the roof and the remains of 'firebombs' being found in the debris. In 2001, 180 residents had signed a petition and in 2007 again this issue was raised. Councillor Hamilton had looked into skate parks in neighbouring towns such as Reading and noted that they were situated close to railways or roads where the surrounding noise cushioned the noise from skateboarders.

He asked that the Committee look at this proposal from the side of all the parties concerned and also asked where the 10% grant Councillor Meachin had suggested would come from? He also noted that a large amount of money was going to pay for the Astroturf and it was unwise to support another project for the same section of the community, when only a lick of paint would be necessary to vastly improve the state of the skate park. As this area was only built in 2001 it was cited as having a 15 year life span, this would mean the area does not need consideration until 2016. The residents understood that young people needed an area such as this but Makins field was not the place and urged that if such a project was to go ahead another site be sought.

Councillor D Hinke - Advised that he had been part of the residents group set up with Councillor Hamilton regarding the Skate Board park in 2001. He reiterated the views and comments of Councillor Hamilton and added that at the time they were told that issues of noise nuisance would not be an issue and all neighbours would hear would be the sound of laughter and fun from children playing. He commented that 'this Darling Buds of May' image was unfounded as the level of noise was much higher. This was an unsuitable site for further development and also illogical due to the location next to the Headway Brain injury centre building on the same site.

Mr Henderson, 159 Greys Road – Mr Henderson again raised the issue of noise and pointed out that the site in question had been a land fill site and not compacted to current guidelines and standards. This caused concerns over drainage leading to the possibility of making the ground unstable.

Mr C Brathwaite – Skateboard Project Group confirmed that a public meeting had been held on Thursday 16 June 2011 at 7 pm at the Scout Hut at Makins Recreation Ground and all concerns over vandalism and noise had been discussed and issues addressed in the debate. Matters of vandalism and any anti social behaviour were usually caused by ‘youths loitering’ at the site and whilst he agreed that Skateboarders cannot be proved totally innocent it was unfair to hold them totally accountable for all the problems raised.

He confirmed that the Henley Standard had been contacted to advertise the public meeting to discuss Makins Recreation Ground but had failed to print the article. He also advised that the Project Group intends to follow the initial meeting up with subsequent meetings to thoroughly investigate the project and ensure all stakeholders and interested parties have an opportunity to provide input and he personally would be willing to meet anyone with concerns on a one to one basis should they have issues they wish to discuss.

20. **MINUTES**

- i. The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on on 6 June 2011 were approved and then signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood.
- ii. The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee held on 23 June 2011. Minute 8 iii was discussed in full

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the Council contracts out the collection of Excess Charge Notices to Vinci Park, initially for a one year trial period, at a cost of £5.50 per ECN subject to confirmation and a site visit by the contractor.

- iii. The minutes of the Henley in Bloom Sub Committee held on 7 July 2011 - including the notes of the Sub Committee held on 12 May 2011 and 16 June 2011 were received, considered and adopted.

It was noted that the judging of Britain in Bloom took place on Thursday 14th July 2011. A special mention was made regarding the replacement of the New Guinea Impatiens in the Royal Wedding flowerbeds at Mill Meadows due to damage by a virus. On the evening before Garden Buddies and Park Services replaced 500 diseased plants with 700 replacements kindly donated

again by Toad Hall Garden Centre. It was a wonderful event with a tour of the town ending at the Christ Church Centre for lunch made from produce from the Watermans Allotments and Trinity Primary School. A special thanks was made to Judith Smith and Gareth Bartle with all the Park Services Team for all the hard work they make towards this event throughout the year.

21. BUDGET

The Committee received and noted the budget report to May 2011.

22. PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received and noted the progress report and made the following comments:-

Outdoor Sports Centre – Astro pitch replacement - the Town Clerk reported that subject to Full Council ratification on 2nd August 2011, Henley Town Council had agreed to fully fund the astro pitch. This committee was advised by Bryn Lee Consulting to negotiate on the quote and remove Street Snooker along with the 5 a-side and Hockey goals to save between £2000 to £3000. Another local contractor has come forward with a tender, all new bids must be received by Monday 26th July, opened together and then taken to Full Council on 2nd August 2011.

A Committee member questioned the wisdom of such a large sum of money being drawn down from the Council's investments and requested the Town Clerk investigate the possibility of looking in to financing the proposed work with a loan instead.

Public Participation Session – Debris at Rod Eyot – The Environment Agency had been contacted and had spoken to Hobbs regarding keeping the area tidy.

23. MAKINS RECREATION GROUND

The Committee received and considered the reports from Councillors Gehrman and Meachin and Mr Adamson regarding their investigations into the expansion/improvement of the skate park at Makins Recreation Ground.

The meeting scheduled for the 18th July had been cancelled and the new proposed date of 2nd August was unsuitable as it clashed with Council meetings. It was agreed that there was no funding available for the expansion/improvement of the skate park.

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

that the Town Council continue to support the Project Group set up to investigate the improvement of the skate park at Makins Recreation Ground, whilst it is still in the planning stages.

24. PARKING ON THE FAIRMILE VERGES

The Committee received and considered a report regarding the continuing issue of residents parking on the Fairmile Verges. The Committee discussed the possible

alternatives to deal with the matter and it was agreed that the verges were being eroded. This is not a restricted area and issues raised by the email from Oxfordshire County Councils Highways Department gave good sound guidance on the matter.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the damaged posts on the grassed area be replaced and all posts to be painted white to make them more visible. The situation be monitored for the period of one year.

8.40pm Councillors Akehurst and Hinke left the meeting.

25. WOODLAND MEMORIAL

The Committee received and noted the tabled artwork and proposed information leaflet from Sue Ryder. It was confirmed that indigenous species of tree would be used for the planting. Issues were raised that the wording was not clear enough regarding the nature of the planting and that each dedication will not be granted a specific tree.

Post meeting note: Committee Administrator to contact Sue Ryder to request the wording be made clearer in the brochure regarding the nature of the memorial and that trees are not individually assigned.

8.45pm after declaring a prejudicial interest in the following item Councillor Silvester left the meeting.

26. AFRICAN QUEEN – MILL MEADOWS

The Committee received and considered the licensing agreement drawn up by the Town Clerk regarding the African Queen. The past history of this craft was discussed and it was agreed that this vessel would bring welcome income to the town and the strict guidelines in the Moorings rights were considered to be appropriate, but further applications must be considered on a case by case basis. Any boats operating commercially and mooring at Mill Meadows should pay a Commercial Mooring fee.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

the African Queen be allowed to Moor at Mill meadows in strict accordance with the agreement, limited to the six dates applied for and that the time limits be enforced so that there be no overnight moorings for such a large vessel.

27. 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 are considered to be confidential.

Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's consent.

The Town Clerk brought to the attention of the Committee his suspicion that a member of the public may have been filming part of the proceedings that evening and had not made this known to the Committee before hand. The matter was discussed at length and the Committee were advised this action contravened Standing Order 1.o

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It was agreed that Councillor Gehrman would contact the individual immediately at the end of this meeting to request the recording be erased and explain the breach of Council Standing Orders.

Post meeting note: Councillor Gehrman met the individual concerned at the end of the meeting and explained the situation where upon the recording was erased immediately.

**28. CONFIDENTIAL
FIRST CHAPEL**

The Committee received and considered the draft lease between Henley Orwell's Charitable Trust and Henley Town Council regarding the First Chapel, Fairmile Cemetery.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the draft lease be approved subject to the comments made at the meeting and that it be returned to the Henley Orwell's Charitable Trust's solicitors for consideration.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Jb

Chairman