

**Present:** The Chairman, Councillor Sarah Miller  
The Vice Chairman, Councillor Dave Eggleton  
The Mayor, Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton  
Councillor Sara Abey  
Councillor H. Chandler-Wilde  
Councillor Sam Evans  
Councillor Glen Lambert  
Councillor Ian Reissmann

**In Attendance:** Mrs Janet Wheeler – Town Clerk

**Also Present:** 1 member of the press  
2 members of the public

**33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillor Miss Lorraine Hillier.

**34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**35. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

*Mrs Val Stoner – Station Road – Wishing Tree at Marsh Meadows*

Mrs Stoner up-dated the Committee on arrangements for the opening of the Wishing Tree at Marsh Meadows on Friday 22 September 2017 at 6pm. All Councillors and staff were invited. She also thanked the Town Council for their help with this project.

*Mr Ian Clarke – Deanfield Road*

Asked whether housing was planned for Watermans Spinney and was advised this is not a site in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Parks Services are currently investigating ways to improve the conservation and biodiversity of this site.

Mr Clarke asked if the path between Harpsden Road and Watermans Road is to be improved and was advised this would be referred to Oxfordshire County Council in the first instance.

Mr Clarke queried the allocation in the draft budget for re-surfacing of the Mill Lane Car Park and suggested alternative solutions in liaison with Network Rail and Henley Town Football Club.

Councillor Sara Abey entered the meeting at 7.40 pm.

### **36. RECORDING LOST WAYS – CLOSING OF THE DEFINITIVE MAP OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY TO HISTORIC ROUTES**

The Chairman welcomed Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society to give an overview of the closing of the definitive map to historic routes in 2026 and invited her to join the table.

Kate Ashbrook thanked the Town Council for their invitation to the meeting and for taking such an active interest in this important project and highlighted the Town Council's great reputation on access and rights of way having recently dedicating both a footpath and a village green.

Ms Ashbrook explained that we are all used to looking at Ordnance Survey maps which show official footpaths in green and that these paths are recorded public rights of way which are included on the "Definitive Map". Members of the public have the right to "pass and repass" these paths and the surface is owned by the County Council. However there are a lot of routes which are highways, but are not recorded on the official "Definitive Map" and therefore are not on the Ordnance Survey map. These paths may or may not be in use today however "once a highway, always a highway" therefore their status remains.

The Government has ruled that after 1 January 2026 it will no longer be possible to add routes to the Definitive Map based purely on historical evidence and the clock is now ticking very fast towards that deadline. Therefore, in order to protect these rights of way, it is necessary to identify, research, prepare and submit applications for routes based on historic evidence before 1 January 2026 as after this date it will not be possible to register them. Once one starts researching you will find there are a lot of routes which people have forgotten about but are still "highways" and members of the public still have the right to walk and ride them. Ms Ashbrook added that should a path happen to go somewhere which is inconvenient for a landowner then the law allows for the path to be moved.

The Government has advised that a package of measures will be implemented, as part of the Deregulation Act 2015 which will bring into effect the 2026 cut off, which will speed up the process of getting paths on the map and make the application process less tortuous. This package is now expected in April 2018 however the process of applying for these routes must be started regardless.

The aim is to ensure the Definitive Map includes all rights of way, which can be proven by using historical evidence, by 2026. After this date it will not be possible to add these routes (however other types of routes maybe still be added eg those in constant use). These historic routes may or may not be in use currently. They maybe initially identified by local knowledge, observing maps or researching local history records.

**Training Day** - In order to help start the process of recording these paths a Training Day has been organised for Saturday 18 November 2017 in the Council Chamber, which the Town Council has kindly provided free of charge.

The course will be run by experts in this field – Sarah Bucks and Phil Wadey (authors of *Rights of Way – Restoring the Record*) and will be an interactive training session including presentations, demonstrations on the practical process/research required, (eg using the local history library, the National Archive at Kew and on-line) using local examples. Once a volunteer has attended the course they can pass on their knowledge to other researchers to create a local team to progress this project.

**Search for Volunteers** - The aim is to find interested people within Henley and the area who would be willing, interested and have the time to undertake the research required to ensure the paths in Henley parish are identified and applications submitted in time. The volunteer may be keen on walking or simply enjoy the challenge of historical research. Places have been reserved for Henley researchers. Also attending will be representatives from the Berkshire Lost Ways Group, Ramblers and the British Horse Society who are all working together on this project.

The Chairman thanked Kate Ashbrook for her presentation and members discussed ways to find volunteers to undertake this important research and suggested:-

- ask the Henley Standard to publicise
- Henley and Goring Ramblers
- The Henley Archaeological and History Group
- Walkers are Welcome
- Chiltern Society
- run an article in the Town Council's Henley Magazine

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the presentation above be noted and Town Council continue to support this initiative and help to promote attendance at the training day on Saturday 18 November 2017**

### **37. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 18 July 2017, copies having been issued, were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

### **38. PROGRESS**

Members received and considered the Progress Report and the following comments were made:-

*Makins Recreation Ground – Extension and Improvements to the Playground* – the Town Clerk advised a short list of 4 companies, who have quite different ideas, has been drawn up from the 9 expressions of interest received via the Contracts Finder website and a presentation has been arranged for Monday, 25 September 2017 in the Council Chamber between 9 am and 1 pm to which all Councillors are invited.

Members discussed whether residents should be invited to this initial presentation and felt, although continued consultation was important, due to any commercial sensitivity of the information that may be provide during this “tender” process the attendance be restricted to Councillors only at this stage. It was suggested the companies be asked to provide visuals and “sanitised” versions of their proposals which can be made available to residents eg on the website or on display at the Town Hall. A member noted the Chairman of the Gainsborough Residents Association will be invited to the presentation as a Councillor and will be able to feed back relevant information to Gainsborough Residents.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

**that Councillors only are invited to the presentation to be held on Monday 25 September 2017 between 9 am and 1 pm by the shortlisted playground companies**

**that the playground companies are asked to provide a non-commercially sensitive version of the presentations and visuals which can be made available on the Town Council’s website and for display purposes**

*Makins Recreation Ground – Skatepark and Signage*

The Town Clerk advised that feedback from the Henley Skatepark Initiative showed their preference for the concrete style signage as presented at the meeting on 18 July 2017 and the process of ordering this sign would progress.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the concrete style signage be progressed**

The Mayor advised that the Henley Skatepark Initiative and the Scouts are arranging a meeting, to which she has been invited, which will provide an opportunity to discuss the use of this new facility and any practical ways to ensure it is used to its maximum potential.

Members noted investigation into fencing and gates will be progressed between the car park and the skatepark. It was also suggested a gate be pleased on the exit on to Greys Road by the Makins plaque due to increase use of the area and to ensure young children cannot run on to the road.

Members noted the Opening Jam will take place on Saturday 16 September 2017 between 12 noon and 4 pm.

Councillor H Chandler-Wilde enters the room.

*Fairmile Cemetery – Chapels* – the Town Clerk advised the Architects are drawing up a feasibility report re potential uses and the Town Clerk will be investigating the possibility of the pet cemetery.

*East Eyot – Island Opposite Mill Meadows* – passed to Finance Strategy and Management – remove from progress report.

The Committee **RESOLVED**

**that the Progress Report be noted**

### **39. RIVERBANK REPAIRS**

Members received and considered a draft brief with regards to repairs to the riverbank and moorings at Mill and Marsh Meadows. The Town Clerk advised, that as this project will exceed £25k there is a requirement to place the brief on the Government website – Contracts Finder.

Members acknowledged the need for this structural work to be undertaken as a holistic project rather than repairing small sections at a time and this would also provide the opportunity to vastly improve the visual appearance of this hugely important riverside reach and enhances the beauty of the river and the Meadows and therefore the importance of the aesthetic value should be highlighted in the brief.

Members noted this project would require considerable investment and the Town Clerk confirmed the Accountant is including a line in the budget for next year and grant opportunities would be investigated.

After further discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the draft brief be placed on Contracts Finder in order to progress this project and the importance of the aesthetic value of the repairs be emphasised in the context of the Meadows and the river**

**that the Accountant research any grant opportunities**

### **40. HERBICIDE APPLICATION ON THE HIGHWAYS IN HENLEY**

Members considered the current policy of the Town Council re herbicide application on the highways in Henley following a complaint from a resident of weeds in the Deanfield/Valley Road area.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council's Parks Services undertake 2 applications of herbicide on the highways each year following the withdrawal of funding for this service by Oxfordshire County Council. The herbicide used (in line with government guidelines) is a systemic herbicide and only kills the plant which it is applied to.

A member noted that by the Town Council undertaking this role on behalf of the County Council, it may blur the lines of responsibility and accountability for these issues.

A member suggested local residents may like to help with this situation and arrange a work party to help tackle these types of issues eg sweeping weeds away and picking up litter. The Town Council could offer advice and guidance on how to start these type of "street ambassador" and "pride in your place" initiatives.

The Town Clerk queried whether 2 applications a year was sufficient and it was suggested the Parks Manager's advice be sought on the number of applications ideally required, staffing implications on increasing the applications and the feasibility of hiring a mechanical road sweeper on an occasional basis.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that support be offered to local groups to establish residents groups to help alleviate the issues of weeds and litter in their areas

#### **41. BUDGET – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and considered the management accounts to July 2017.

Members were pleased to note the increased mooring income for this summer. The Committee **RESOLVED**

that the management accounts up to July 2017 be noted

#### **43. PRELIMINARY 2018/19 BUDGET CONSIDERATION**

Members received and considered a report from the Accountant regarding the preliminary 2018/19 budget (see Appendix 1).

After discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the preliminary 2018/19 be supported with the following additions to 3.1 and/or amendments/comments:-

(a) – consideration be given to having 2 rates for bands to reflect the number of members in the band and to encourage larger bands. A report to be brought to the next Committee meeting

(b) – consideration to be given to improving the putting green area eg with tasteful Crazy Golf. A report to be considered at the Green and Open Spaces Sub Committee

(e) – members were pleased for Henley Canoe Hire to continue to operate at Mill Meadows and felt this venture was a great asset. A member suggested a “canoe litter pick” could be requested.

(g) – members noted a Cemetery review would be carried out regarding, including income, following the successful appointment of the Town Council’s own sextant and the new Cemetery Administrator

(j) – members supported raising the budget for waste removal to £16k as suggested by the Accountant

(k) – members supported the continued use of the Community Payback Service at £120 per week (for the supervisor) and felt this service provided excellent value

(l) – members acknowledged a degree of additional investment maybe required in this area and are under investigation/consideration eg installation of a tap, CCTV, landscaping, catering facility and toilet block. The amount required maybe considerable and a line specifically for these projects should be created rather than being included in general recreational projects.

(n) – members supported retaining the budget for replacement of the paving around the Pavilion

**(o) – members acknowledged the importance of managing ragwort and supported the £2k suggested. Members asked for clarification from the Parks Manager whether ragwort is notifiable and if any additional budget is required for its management on other Town Council areas**

**(p) – member supported investment in enhancing the conservation value of Watermans Spinney and the Parks Manager and Conservation Warden be asked to indicate budget implications**

**(q) – the Town Clerk advised the netting, fencing and hedging at Jubilee Park require attention in the near future and members agreed provision should be made in the budget**

**(r) – members were pleased to note the Accountant is investigating grant funding opportunities which contribute to the cost of re-surfacing the Mill Lane Car Park**

**(s) – as previously discussed under Minute 39 members agreed the river bank repairs at Mill and Marsh Meadows are of high importance**

The Town Clerk advised, that under point (t) members are asked to consider any potential projects for 2017/18 which may have budget implications and following discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the following projects be considered for inclusion in the 2018/19 preliminary budget:-**

- **improved facilities for Mill and Marsh Meadows including improvements to the Visitor Information service to ensure it is vibrant and successful**
- **a significant increase in the marketing budget to ensure all current projects can be promoted adequately and effectively**
- **ensure the complete signage project at Mill and Marsh Meadows can be completed including the Welcome Wall and Welcome signs at each entrance**
- **low level, subtle lighting at Mill Meadows along the towpath**
- **lease or purchase of a Park Services boat – budget of £1000 suggested**
- **a toilet block at the far end of Marsh Meadows/Mill Lane Car Park area**
- **a toilet block at Makins Recreation Ground**

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Chairman

**HENLEY TOWN COUNCIL****RECREATION & AMENITIES COMMITTEE – 12 SEPTEMBER 2017****Report on: PRELIMINARY 2018-19 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS****1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1** The 2018-19 budget timetable was approved at Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017. In this cycle of meetings each Committee is asked whether they wish to include new income or expenditure lines, or to remove or significantly amend lines as they stand in the 2017-18 budget. The Committee will have the chance to look at each line in detail in the next cycle of meetings.
- 1.2** For reference the 2017-18 budget figures are included in the management accounts elsewhere in this agenda.

**2. Background Information**

- 2.1** The R&A Committee's net spending budget in 2017-18 is £106.3k. This figure is net of various sources of income as indicated in the management accounts, including moorings/Mill Meadows parking/rent from the Pavilion/income from the cemetery/allotments and the contribution from OCC towards grass cutting.
- 2.2** In this cycle of meetings the Committee is asked to consider the broader picture rather than specific budget line items, as well as projects of a capital nature. The overall budget for planned maintenance will be considered by FSM but if Councillors are aware of maintenance issues not mentioned below they should be flagged up.

**3. Detailed Consideration**

- 3.1** The Committee should consider, and give the Accountant a steer on, its intentions regarding the following budget lines:
- a) For several years the Council has paid expenses of up to £250 for brass/jazz bands to play at the Bandstand on Sunday afternoons from June to September, and certain other days such as bank holidays (20 days per year). **It is assumed that Councillors are happy to continue with this.**
  - b) **Councillors are asked for their thoughts on the putting green, the Information Centre at the Pavilion and/or any other facilities at Mill Meadows** so that any financial implications can be considered in good time.
  - c) Temporary mooring charges and parking charges will be reviewed in detail at the next R&A meeting.
  - d) The permanent moorings contract with Hobbs runs until 2020 but will be subject to review shortly by the FSM Committee.
  - e) It is assumed that the Canoe Hire operators will wish to come back in 2018. The RFO will review their figures for 2017 when the season closes but it is anticipated that they should show a significant increase over the 2016 figure of nearly £2k. The operators are currently charged 10% of income that is attributable to their Mill Meadows

location. **Councillors are asked if they are happy to continue such an arrangement next year.**

- f) Horticultural contract/Henley in Bloom – the budget for the contract with Windowflowers was increased by £5k in 2017-18 to £41k to enhance the floral displays in the town, with the HIB budget remaining at £2k. From 2018-19 onwards the horticultural contract budget will also need to include provision for Northfield End and the Red Lion Hotel bed as recently approved by this Committee. There have been suggestions about greening the town including green walls, potted trees etc which could also fall under the T&C remit to reduce pollution. The RFO awaits **Councillors thoughts on these initiatives, and advice on whether the HIB budget of £2k will cover any In Bloom competitions to be entered in 2018-19.**
- g) Cemetery income is expected to increase in 2017-18 due to the Council's new grave-digging service. There will be commensurate costs although where non-resident burials take place the Council will make a surplus to go towards the upkeep costs of the cemetery. The chapels are currently undergoing extensive repair works and it is anticipated that there will be more active management in operating the cemetery by the new Council caretaker once appointed. The resulting overall improvements should lead to higher income - the RFO will provide estimated figures for the next meeting when cemetery charges for 2018 should also be considered. Earmarked reserves already include a capex budget of £25k for paths and drives and a balance of around £77k for any remaining chapel repair works. **If costs are likely to be in excess of these figures they will need to be considered in the 2018-19 budget. Possible grants will be explored.**
- h) The RFO will assume a status quo at the Outdoor Sports Centre for budget purposes until further updates on the possible development and its timing are known.
- i) Allotments were discussed at the R&A Committee meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> July and the recommendations will be incorporated into the 2018-19 budget figures. The current year's planned maintenance budget includes £5k for gates/security measures at Watermans Allotments, and the Allotments Association is also keen to install a CCTV camera at Watermans. These figures may be verbally updated at the meeting.
- j) The RFO will also assume a status quo regarding litter removal – the £14k forecast under R&A for 2017-18 relates to the cost of waste removal from the compactor held at the depot. This is the receptacle for most waste collected from Town Council land, plus a small amount of recyclable waste which is collected separately. **The £14k budget is tight for this year and the RFO feels a figure of around £16k would be nearer the mark.** This assumes any town centre waste removal issues would be budgeted elsewhere (under T&C) if applicable.
- k) Salary costs and levels will be the subject of review by the Town Clerk. It will be assumed that the parks manager wishes to continue to use the probation service at a cost of £120 per week for supervision.
- l) With the skatepark now completed Councillors will need to consider the **provision of toilets, a water supply and a CCTV camera at Makins, and advise the RFO of associated costs and whether the intention is for the cost to come from m) below.**
- m) The budget for enhancements to be made to Makins Recreation Area (and elsewhere) includes the following amounts, total £283,488:

	£	
Accrual for fencing back of Makins	21,397	
Recreational improvements	90,000	For recreational enhancements
Less additions to specification on skatepark - bins/seating	-4,624	To be taken from enhancements provision
Mill Meadows signage project from 2017-18 capex	20,000	To standardise signage at MM/ allotments
Less: Mill Meadows signage costs so far	-3,285	Already spent on consultancy/advice
'Operation Parks' - March 2017	75,000	£25k pa for three years to 16-17 towards all play area replacements/enhancements
'Operation Parks' - 2017-18 capex	25,000	Additional budget 17-18
Makins/Freemans enhancements from capex 2017-18	50,000	
Adult gymn equipment	10,000	
Total reserve	283,488	

A further £25k will be added to the Operation Parks balance in 2018-19 if required - Councillors are reminded that the Operation Parks reserve was set up to cover all ongoing play area replacements as and when they are required. **The RFO seeks Councillors thoughts on whether this will be sufficient to cover the Makins project and signage project, whilst leaving some funds available for enhancements to Freemans Meadow as yet to be determined.**

- n) The project to replace the paved area around the Pavilion already has a budget of £50k and is scheduled for completion in 2017-18 unless an additional budget is required.
- o) The estate inspections recently completed suggest the need for **a budget of £2k to deal with ragwort at Gillotts Field by cutting and baling the grass.**
- p) Councillors may wish to consider a suggestion to make the Spinney at the back of Watermans Allotments into a conservation area and **advise the RFO accordingly.**
- q) With the development project at Jubilee Park (JP) still awaiting progress, **Councillors may feel the issues regarding the hedge and fencing round the Rhinoturf/JP need tackling rather than leaving it as part of the overall JP project.**
- r) Resurfacing/white lining of **Mill Lane Car Park** will be required in due course with indicative costs of £25-£31k prior to possible grant funding/in conjunction with Henley Town Football Club's future plans.
- s) The condition of the **moorings along Mill and Marsh Meadows needs reviewing - a sizeable budget for ongoing works will be required.** This is an asset that the Council must maintain and provides a valuable income stream.
- t) Any other areas of concern should be advised to the RFO.

#### **4. Recommendation**

**4.1** That Councillors minute their initial thoughts on items under section 3 above for the Accountant to incorporate into the 2018-19 detailed budget.

Report prepared by  
Liz Jones (Accountant)  
[l.jones@henleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:l.jones@henleytowncouncil.gov.uk)  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2017