

Present: Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, Chairman
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor A J Follett
Councillor C W Gibson

In attendance: Mr M Kennedy, Town Clerk
Mr G Bartle, Parks Services Supervisor
Mrs C Robb, Moorings Administrator
Mrs B Walker, Committee Administrator/Minute Taker

2 members of the public

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs G Dodds and Councillor Dr P Skolar.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

44. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mrs S Yeates, as a close neighbour of the Adventure Playground, re-iterated her concerns regarding the choice of a replacement piece of play equipment for the nest swing regarding noise issues.

Mrs Yeates also raised concerns regarding the number of coaches entering Mill Meadows Car Park. The Committee advised that any coaches entering the car park would be visiting the River and Rowing Museum and Mrs Yeates should direct her concerns to them direct. The Town Council would also inform the River and Rowing Museum of Mrs Yeates' concerns and review signage in the area.

Post meeting note: there is currently no signage advising that the Mill Meadows Car Park is unsuitable for coaches. Investigation to be made as to the possibility of erecting a sign at the junction of Station Road and Meadow Road stating "Access for Authorised Coaches Only" and this to be reported back to this Sub Committee.

Mrs Yeates asked that if consideration were to be given at this meeting to the location of the proposed Youth Shelter that the local residents preference would be for it be located on the Kiosk side of the Pavilion.

45. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee held on 18 November 2010 were approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin.

46. PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received, considered and noted the Progress Report and made the following comments:-

Youth Shelter – The Sub Committee noted £10,000 has been placed in the capital expenditure budget for 2011/12 for a Youth Shelter and are awaiting formation of the Youth Council prior to any progress on this item.

Representatives of Town and Parish Councils along the River Thames meeting – The Committee noted that the date of the above meeting being organised by Wallingford Town Council is Wednesday 23 March 2011 at 10.30 am and Mr G Bartle offered to accompany Mrs C Robb to the meeting (subject to work commitments) as operationally it provides a good opportunity to network with officers from neighbouring riverside authorities.

47. ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

The Committee considered a report regarding possible alternatives to the nest swing, which was removed from the Adventure Playground following complaints from neighbours due to the noise it generated and notification from South Oxfordshire District Council that a Noise Abatement Order would be issued unless it was removed.

The Sub Committee noted that £4,000 has been placed in the capital expenditure budget for 2011/2012 for a replacement piece of equipment. The Sub Committee agreed that the concerns of nearby residents and the needs of the users of the playground should be taken into account when making any decision with regards to possible noise issues.

The Sub Committee considered a number of options:-

- a replacement piece of equipment – the Sub Committee received a list with costs of replacement pieces of equipment provided by Timberplay, who installed the Adventure Playground. The Sub Committee regretted that the list did not include any pieces of equipment which were specifically for disabled children. The Sub Committee identified the following pieces of equipment as possibilities however felt public consultation should take place prior to any decision being made:-
 - rotating bean
 - horizontal bars
 - wobble dish
 - lifting equipment
- the placing of a bench/picnic table in this area. The Sub Committee noted that a bench/picnic table may attract groups of people in the evenings and could create a noise problem.
- Attaching standard swings to the existing nest swing frame. The Sub Committee acknowledged that swings may create a noise issue however also noted standard swings only accommodated single people whereas the noise issue arising from the nest swing was mainly due to groups of children using it. The Sub Committee also noted that this would be a cheaper option and could be trialled and if the proved unsuitable the swings seats and chains could be utilised in other Town Council playgrounds.

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

that, in the first instance, standard swings should be attached to the existing nest swing frame.

that, should the swings prove unsuitable, consultation with users of the Adventure Playground and local residents should be undertaken regarding the type of play equipment to be installed in this area.

48. USE OF MILL MEADOWS BY THE CHILDREN'S TRUST

The Sub Committee considered a request from the Children's Trust to use Mill Meadows on Saturday 4 June 2011 from 6 pm as a place to congregate, register and warm-up prior to a Twilight Walk to raise funds. Also to put up a mini-marquee for their registration desk, refreshments (tea, coffee and sandwiches at no charge) and to hand out medals.

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

that permission be given to the Children's Trust to use Mill Meadows on Saturday 4 June 2011 from 6 pm to congregate, register and warm-up prior to a Twilight Walk to raise funds for their charity.

that permission be given to put-up a mini-marquee for their registration desk, refreshments (tea, coffee and sandwiches) and to hand out medals at the finish.

that arrangements be put in place for the toilets to be made available to the walkers until 10 pm.

The Sub Committee agreed the Town Clerk could use his delegated powers to authorise events such as these (minute 21 – 9 September 2011 refers).

49. FUTURE USE OF THE FORMER PUTTING GREEN AREA

The Sub Committee considered a report regarding the future use of former putting green area including:-

A Maze – following an approach from a local resident the Sub Committee considered additional information regarding locating a fine hedge maze in the putting green area. The Sub Committee noted that although the maze may enhance the area it would require considerable maintenance, maybe subject to vandalism, could be an area which attracts anti-social behaviour due it containing hidden areas and would take a number of years to grow.

Restoring the Area to a Putting Green – The Sub Committee noted that the putting was popular and visitors still comment that they would like it re-instated, however the area would require manning. An approach had been made to the tenant of the café as to whether they would like to take on the management of the putting green however they had declined.

Alternative suggestions for administering the putting green were considered as follows:-

- that the putting green area be “bundled” together with other concessions, such as deck-chair hire, day-ticket fishing etc and offered to an external operator as a concession.
- that groups in the town be approached such as the Bowls Club, the Lions be asked if they would like to administer it as a fund raising venture

- that, if the satellite Tourist Information kiosk is opened up during the summer, the staff could administer the putting green.

Re-development of the Area to Formal Gardens – The Sub Committee considered removal of some or all of the hedge behind the Obelisk, installing steps up to the former putting green and creating a seating area with formal flower beds and a view of the river and the Obelisk. The Sub Committee noted the Police would be in favour of opening up the area as its “concealed” nature can attract anti-social behaviour.

After discussion the Sub Committee agreed that a formal maze in this area would not be preferable, however that further investigation should be made into creating a living willow maze in Marsh Meadows as willow would survive flooding and could prove popular with children. The Sub Committee agreed that a letter should be sent to Mr Read to thank him for his suggestion and to send him a copy of the relevant minute.

The Sub Committee acknowledged that the re-instatement of the putting green had been discussed a number of times over the years. It was suggested that the facility be offered up to local organisations to manage but that if no response is received after two months then consideration be given to opening up the putting green area as a formal seating area.

The Sub Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that further investigation be made into re-instating the putting green to be administered by Tourist Information staff at the satellite office in the Pavilion should this project progress, and/or organisations/charities be approached to ask if they would be interested in administering the putting green in order to raise funds (Town Council costs to be covered), but that if no response is received after two months then consideration be given to converting the putting green into a formal seating area.

50. HENLEY IN BLOOM UPDATE

The Chairman provided an Henley in Bloom update as follows:-

- the circular bed by the Obelisk to be planted with a Royal Wedding theme with an associated information board.
- The Parks Services have taken over the planting at Mill Meadows and are doing a fantastic job. The Sensory Garden is being replanted and the water feature restored.
- 1000 crocuses have been planted on Two Tree Island by the entrance to Mill Meadows.
- Mr G Bartle advised that the semi-circular Coronation Bench is being restored and the half moon bed in front of it is to be planted up. Investigations are being made into having a duplicate bench made to mirror it on the other side of the path to mark the Golden Jubilee in 2012.

51. MOORINGS AND CAR PARKING – ACCOUNTS

The Sub Committee received and considered the management accounts up to January 2011 and noted that the car parking income for January had increased compared to 2010 and 2009.

Mrs C Robb advised the Sub Committee that the permanent moorings at Mill Meadows continued to be very popular and there was a waiting list. Investigations are being made into creating 3 smaller moorings instead of 2 larger moorings.

52. EXCESS CHARGE NOTICES

The Sub Committee received and considered the ECN report up to February 2011.

The Town Clerk advised the following:-

- the number of ECNs issued in 2010 was higher than in 2009
- the income in 2010 was £4,057 and in £2009 was £3,222
- the administration of ECNs is to be moved to the Accounts Department from April 2011. Investigation had been made into contracting out the ECN administration process at a cost of £5.50 per ECN however it was felt that administration by the Accounts Department should be trialled first.

The Sub Committee noted that there had been no repeat offenders re non payment of ECNs.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the report be noted with satisfaction and that arrangements for administering the ECNs from 1 April 2011 be approved.

53. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 23 June 2011.

54. 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 (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 as matters which were about to be discussed are considered to be confidential.

55. TEMPORARY MOORINGS

Mrs C Robb updated the Sub Committee on the temporary moorings and reported that only one boat remained.

The meeting closed at 10.55 am.

bw

Chairman