

Present: Councillor Mrs P A Phillips
Councillor D Clenshaw
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor Miss K Gehrman
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor Mrs J Wood

In attendance: Mr A Brown – Facilities Manager, River and Rowing Museum
Mr M Kennedy, Town Clerk
Mr G Bartle, Parks Services Supervisor
Mrs L Jones, Accountant
Mrs C Robb, Moorings Administrator
Mrs B Walker, Committee Administrator

1 member of the public

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Phillips took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Phillips called for nominations for the election of Chairman. Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin proposed and Councillor D Clenshaw seconded that Councillor S Gawrysiak be elected Chairman for the year 2011 – 2012.

There being no further nominations it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor S Gawrysiak be elected Chairman for the year 2011 – 2012.

Councillor S Gawrysiak took the Chair.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman, Councillor S Gawrysiak called for nominations for the election of Vice-Chairman. Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin proposed and the Mayor, Councillor Mrs P A Phillips seconded that Councillor Mrs J Wood be elected Vice-Chairman for the year 2011 – 2012.

There being no further nominations it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor Mrs J Wood be elected Vice-Chairman for the year 2011 – 2012.

The Chairman, Councillor S Gawrysiak asked that, as this is the first meeting, introductions be made for the benefit of the new Councillors. Each Councillor, attendee and officer introduced themselves. The Town Clerk added that there were a number of offices present, as this Committee is very much a working Committee with many aspects involving officers with specific responsibilities connected to Mill Meadows.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Miss S Evans.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mrs S Yeates explained that as an adjacent neighbour to the Adventure Playground at Mill Meadows she, and other neighbouring residents, have a real interest in matters relating to the area, particularly regarding noise emanating from the Adventure Playground. Mrs Yeates noted that the new junior swings are to be installed on the frame of the previously removed nest swing and hoped this would not cause a noise nuisance as this may lead to it having to be removed, as the nest swing was.

Mrs Yeates gave a brief history of the issues she has had regarding living next door to Mill Meadows, in particular the refurbishment of the Adventure Playground and youths gathering at Mill Meadows. Mrs Yeates however advised that currently these issues were greatly reduced and felt this was mainly due to the excellent work of the Neighbourhood Police Team who carefully monitor the area. Mrs Yeates urged the Committee to take into account the neighbours' views when considering a replacement piece of equipment for the nest swing and the location of the proposed youth shelter in order not to worsen the situation.

The Chairman read out an email from another neighbour of Mill Meadows - Mrs Anne Curwin which re-iterated Mrs Yeates's comments in that there was a considerable improvement with the noise situation at Mill Meadows with an acceptable balance between children having fun and the neighbours being able to enjoy their location.

6. MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee held on 3 March 2011 and the following comments were made:-

Page 2 – it was noted that the swings are being installed on the nest swing frame as a trial and their use will be carefully monitored.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee be approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman, Councillor S Gawrysiak.

7. MOORING AND CAR PARKING – ACCOUNTS

The Committee received the moorings and car parking accounts up to May 2011.

Mrs L Jones - Accountant - highlighted that the income from car parking in April and May 2011 was the best it had ever been and this was largely due to the good weather and the Bank Holidays/Easter. Mrs Jones also advised that she is preparing a report on the correlation between car parking income and the weather which will be considered by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee on 12 July 2011.

It was noted that the income from the car park had greatly increased over the years and this, it was felt, was largely due to the hard work of the Parks Services.

The Committee noted the moorings and car parking accounts up to May 2011.

8. EXCESS CHARGE NOTICES

- i. The Committee received and noted the Excess Charge Notice (ECN) Report 2010/2011.

The Town Clerk confirmed that ECNs were issued when there were breaches of the Off Street Parking Order that the Town Council has in place for Mill Meadows for instance:- for not displaying a valid ticket or parking outside of a marked bay and that the fines range from £20 to £75 depending on the offence and when the fine is paid.

- ii. The Committee received and considered a report regarding the administration of the ECN notices which outlined that currently the administration is carried out in the Council Offices and the Committee was asked to consider contracting this process out to a company who specialises in collecting ECNs called Vinci Park. This would free up a considerable amount of staff time and would also result in a higher percentage of ECNs being paid partly as Vinci Park have a licence for direct access to the DVLA's vehicle registration database enabling them to speed up the process. Vinci Park currently undertake this task on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council for the on-street parking in Henley.

It was noted that historically less than half of the ECNs issued are paid. Vinci Park expect their collection rate to be in the region of 70%. The fee to Vinci Park would be approximately £5.50 for each ECN issued. It is estimated that the additional revenue raised would be in the region of £1,000 per annum after taking into account their fees and in addition it would free up staff time in the Council Offices.

The Committee discussed the matter and the following comments were made:-

- Payment of all ECNs should be pursued however a level of compassion should be retained in special circumstances
- The contracting out to Vinci Park should initially be for a trial period of no longer than a year and then reviewed.

- a problem can exist with cars registered abroad and a suggestion was made that a letter/notice could be devised to re-iterate that a car parking ticket was required during certain times and placed on the car windscreen.

The Committee **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.

9. **PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee considered the progress report and made the following comments:-

Youth Shelter – the formation of the new Youth Council is expected in September 2011 with the start of the new academic year.

Adventure Playground – the swings are due to be fitted to the nest swing frame during the week of 27 June 2011.

Henley in Bloom – the Royal Weddings information board next to the circular flowerbeds by the Obelisk planted in a wedding cake theme – will be unveiled by the Mayor on Thursday 23 June 2011 at 11.30 am. The re-planting of the Sensory Garden, which has been undertaken by Alex Bell of the Parks Services is now complete and is much improved – it was felt the family who originally sponsored the Sensory Garden should be contacted and the Chairman offered to make enquiries.

Putting Green – the putting green has been close-mown and all the operational equipment is ready for use. The ground does have divots but is felt to be adequate for this summer's trial period opening. The Town Clerk reported that an application has been made to the South Oxfordshire District Council for funding for the Satellite Information Point however a decision on this would not be made until August and the bid was unlikely to be successful as this project did not comply with the District Council's tourism policy. The Town Clerk advised therefore that the budget for the necessary equipment (IT/furniture) and alterations would be met from the Council's central administration budget. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Satellite Office is to be manned this year by volunteers.

Coaches Using Mill Meadows – the Parks Service to continue to monitor the situation.

10. **PARKS SERVICES SUPERVISOR OVERVIEW**

Mr G Bartle gave an overview of the operations at Mill Meadows and made the following points:-

- the successful management of Mill Meadows and provision of services is a team effort involving the following:- the Parks Services, Town Council administrative staff, Garden Buddies, the Henley Wildlife Group, the River and Rowing Museum, the Bowls Club, Stepping Stones Nursery, the Kiosk, the residents nearby and the members of the public who use the area.
- The Parks Services aim to have two members of staff at Mill Meadows in summer and one in winter.

- The Parks Services staff undertake a range of duties including horticultural and general maintenance of the formal areas, litter clearing, checking/collection of mooring fees (twice daily), monitoring the car park and issuing ECNs, health and safety checks of playgrounds, cleaning of toilets, care of wildlife areas and Marsh Meadows, tree works, maintenance of benches,
- the Parks Service is working towards applying for Green Flag status for Mill Meadows.

Mr Bartle extended an invitation to members for a tour of the area to explain in more detail the operational side of his work.

11. **MOORINGS**

The Committee received and noted a report giving an overview of the Town Council's moorings as follows:-

- White Hart Moorings
- River Terrace Moorings
- Mill Meadows – Permanent and Temporary
- Singers Park
- Red Lion Lawn
- The role of Mr Hooper who monitors the Town Council's moorings.

12. **SIGNAGE – MOORINGS**

The Committee considered a report regarding signage at Mill Meadows as follows:-

- i. Slipway Signage – The Committee considered a suggestion from the Environment Agency that standardised signs be placed at all Slipways along the Thames.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that permission be given for a standardised slipway sign being placed at the New Street Slipway at the Environment Agency's expense.

- ii. Temporary Mooring Signs at Mill Meadows

The Committee considered placing new temporary mooring signs at Mill Meadows based on an Environment Agency template.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that the current Henley Town Council signs are adequate.

that when the current signage needs replacing additional information be added including the postcode and phone number of Floodline.

- iii. Information Boards – The Committee noted the success of an Information Board at Wallingford and leaflets that have been produced to encourage moorers to visit Wallingford Town Centre and considered whether the Town Council should place similar information boards by the temporary moorings at Mill Meadows.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that an application be made for funding from the South Oxfordshire District Council Action Plan for the provision of one/two Information Boards and leaflets for Mill Meadows to encourage moorers to visit the town centre.

that, should funding be approved for the Information Boards, they be placed away from the water's edge on the other side of the tow path.

13. MILL/MARSH MEADOWS

- i. The Committee received and noted the Mill/Marsh Meadows policy for granting usage.
- ii. The Committee noted the following events to take place at Mill/Marsh Meadows for which the Town Clerk, under delegated powers, had given permission:-
- River and Rowing Museum – Rowing Boat Naming Ceremony for a school boat club on Sunday 26 June 2011 between the Museum and the jetty.
 - Schools Cross Country event on Marsh Meadows on Friday 9 September 2011 from 5.00 to 9.00 pm as part of the Henley School Olympics initiative.
 - Henley Youth Centre to operate a car wash at Mill Meadows to raise funds for the Youth Centre (subject to confirmation of date and time).

The Town Clerk advised that a letter had been received from Mr P Mainds, Chief Executive of the River and Rowing Museum regarding filming which took place in May at Mill Meadows of a Bollywood Film and which restricted access to the River and Rowing Museum due to the high number of cars and lorries parked outside. The Town Clerk assured the Committee that closer communications between the River and Rowing Museum and the Town Council on any large events either were holding would be put in place. Mr A Brown confirmed communications had already improved.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 15 September 2011 at 9.30 am at the River and Rowing Museum.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am.

Chairman

