

Present: Mayor, Councillor S Gawrysiak  
Councillor D Clenshaw  
Councillor Miss S Evans  
Councillor W Hamilton  
Councillor D Hinke  
Councillor Miss K Hinton  
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin  
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith  
Councillor D Silvester  
Councillor Mrs J Wood

In Attendance: Mr M W Kennedy - Town Clerk

Also Present: 4 members of the public

**41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Akehurst, Miss L Hillier, Ms L Meachin, Mrs P Phillips and I Reissmann. The Town Clerk reported that the Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Akehurst had requested an extended leave of absence from all Council meetings on grounds of ill health. It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Council grants extended leave of absence to Councillor M Akehurst from all meetings of the Council and its Committees for a period of up to 6 months on grounds of ill health and that the Council's best wishes be conveyed to Councillor Akehurst and his wife, Glynis.**

**42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**43. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Mr M Dodds, Greys Road*

Mr M Dodds hoped that the Council would actively support the provision of affordable housing for young people in Henley and Harpsden.

*Ms M Francini, St Marks Road*

Ms Francini, spoke in support of the retention of the Watermans Allotments on its current site. She explained that after 40 years of cultivation, the quality of the soil, which is essential for the successful production of crops, was excellent. Moreover, the Council has made a considerable investment in Watermans through the erection of fencing; improvements to the vision splay; the provision of additional water taps and new starter plots. The site was fully let with over 100 allotment holders.

**44. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED**

**that the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the matters about to be discussed were considered to be confidential.**

**MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2013.**

**45. POTENTIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SITES**

Members considered the Council's position as Landowners of potential housing development sites in the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan process.

**Opening Remarks**

Members were advised that the Council's deliberations should focus on identifying sites for potential development in the future that were owned by the Town Council while no decision would be taken on selling land at this stage. The following sites were put forward for debate:

- 364 Reading Road (Exclusively Ladies Gym; Henley Hockey Club & AFC Henley
- Watermans Allotments
- Watermans Spinney
- Jubilee Park
- Henley Town FC
- Dry Leas (Henley Rugby FC)
- Freemans Meadow
- Land off the Fairmile
- 40 Acre Field

Councillors were invited to nominate other sites. Following discussions on this point, a view was expressed that all options should be kept opened and that the whole of the Town Council's land holdings should be offered up since it would be up to the people of Henley and Harpsden to decide the appropriate sites for development, not the Council.

It was noted that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan would allow parcels of land to be protected as well as being developed and that the purpose of this meeting was to decide which sites in the Town Council's ownership, the Council considered would be suitable for development and should be put forward or not. The Consultants, Nexus Planning had made it clear that the people can only decide those sites which would be available for development and that it had never been intended to be a blank sheet of paper exercise. Speculation and uncertainty was very worrying and the Council needed to clearly identify those sites that could be considered for development. It was **RESOLVED**

**that those sites identified above along with other land in the Town Council's ownership be considered as part of the Council's deliberations.**

Members proceeded to consider each site in turn.

**364 Reading Road**

This site is located to the rear of the Jet Garage; Tyre business and former Timber Yard and contains the former exclusively Ladies Gym, leased to Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), and the Changing rooms and club house for Henley Hockey Club and AFC Henley. Subject to the relocation of these facilities to Jubilee Park, this site was considered appropriate for housing development. It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

**that the site of 364 Reading Road be put forward for consideration.**

Watermans Allotments, Reading Road

Members expressed conflicting opinions on this site. A view was expressed that the site should be retained for horticultural, social and moral reasons while the Council needed to protect the town council's boundary from coalescence with Harpsden. Opposing views were expressed that 10 councillors should not make decisions for the people of the town. The opposing view was expressed that Henley Town Council was the democratically elected body and therefore it was legitimate that Henley Town Council also made decisions on which sites to include or not; that the site should be kept as a reserve site for Townlands Hospital and that the allotments could be relocated to the adjoining field. It was **RESOLVED**

**that the Watermans Allotment site be not submitted for consideration.**

Watermans Spinney, off Reading Road

This site is located to the rear of the Watermans Allotments with easy access from Noble Road and would be ideal for Affordable Housing (i.e. shared ownership or rented accommodation). The existence of a Tree Preservation Order was considered a misnomer since the trees had no aesthetic value as the woodland was unattractive. It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

**that the site of Watermans Spinney be put forward for consideration.**

Jubilee Park, Reading Road

This is the site of the all-weather pitch and pitches for AFC Henley and Henley Hockey Club. It was **RESOLVED**

**that Jubilee Park be not submitted for consideration.**

Henley Town Football Club, The Triangle, Mill Lane

The site lies within the flood plan and would be difficult to develop. It was **RESOLVED**

**that the site of the Henley Town FC be not submitted for consideration.**

Henley Rugby Football Club, Dry Leas, Marlow Road

Members expressed conflicting opinions on this site. A view was expressed that provided the Rugby Club could be relocated, the site would be ideal for housing with easy access to the town centre. Others expressed the need to retain this green open space. A motion for the inclusion of this site was lost whereupon it was **RESOLVED**

**that the site of the Henley Rugby FC, Dry Leas be not submitted for consideration.**

Freemans Meadow

Following consideration of this site, off The Fairmile, it was **RESOLVED**

**that the site of Freemans Meadow be not submitted for consideration.**

Land off the Fairmile, with access to land south of The Fairmile and Luker Avenue

This development site requires access off the Council's owned land along the Fairmile. Following consideration of this site it was **RESOLVED**

**that land off The Fairmile with access to land south of The Fairmile and Luker Avenue be put forward for consideration.**

40 Acre Field

This field is let to a local farmer for grazing cattle. Two acres of land have been leased respectively to Henley in Transition for a woodland and to Sue Ryder for a Memorial Wood and lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It was **RESOLVED**

**that 40 Acre Filed be not submitted for consideration.**

The Council proceeded to consider the following additional sites.

Parcel of Land at 55-59 Blandy Road

This site would allow access to the Gillotts School site. It was decided that on grounds of fairness, the parcel of land off The Fairmile having been previously considered, it was **RESOLVED**

**that the parcel of land at 55-59 Blandy Road with access to Gillotts School Field be put forward for consideration.**

*Councillor Mrs J Wood asked that her abstention be recorded in the minutes.*

Makins Recreation Ground, Grey Road

Following consideration of this site, it was **RESOLVED**

**that the site of Makins Recreation Ground be not submitted for consideration.**

Town Green, Gillotts Field

It was acknowledged that the making of this filed as a Town Green by Oxfordshire County Council in 2009 effectively protects the site from development. It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

**that the site of Town Green, Gillotts Field, be not submitted for consideration.**

Additional land owned by the Town Council

The Council discussed the merits of considering other land within the Council's ownership and **RESOLVED**

**that other land owned by the Town Council be considered on a case by case basis by reference to Full Council should any new be put forward for possible development.**

The meeting closed at 8.56pm.

*mwk*

*Mayor*