

Present: The Chairman, Councillor Sam Evans  
The Vice Chairman, Councillor H Chandler-Wilde  
Councillor Dave Eggleton  
Councillor David Nimmo Smith  
Councillor Simon Smith  
The Mayor, Councillor Julian Brookes (ex officio)

In Attendance: Janet Wheeler, Town Clerk  
Becky Walker, Minute Taker

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

#### **76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Will Hamilton, Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton and Councillor Sarah Miller.

#### **77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

#### **78. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

*Donna Crook – Abrahams Road* – informed members that residents were continuing to place household rubbish in street bins. Members acknowledged residents may not realise this is not permitted and a publicity campaign to educate that this is not permitted may help reduce this practice. An item to be placed on a future agenda item on the relevant Committee.

Councillor Nimmo Smith, as a District Councillor, offered to speak to South Oxfordshire District Council and Biffa to ask how this matter is dealt with in other areas.

***Post Meeting note:*** *an item to be placed on the Town and Community Committee agenda regarding the above.*

*James Barr - Progress Report – Park Run, Henley, Minute 81* – Mr Barr gave an update on the trial run which took place on 15 January and confirmed the route used, which takes in a section of the upper bridle way and has 2 loops rather than 3, is the preferred route. The next trial run will take place on Sunday 5 March 2017. The final application has been lodged with Park Run UK for their consideration re the Park Run in Henley and Mr Barr confirmed he would advise members of the outcome.

The Town Clerk advised that once the launch date is confirmed, the Visitor Information Centre at the Town Hall and Mill Meadows could promote the event and publicise the need for marshals etc.

The Chairman thanked Mr Barr for all his work to progress this matter.

## **79. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 17 January 2017 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

## **80. BUDGET**

The Committee received and considered the management accounts to 31 January 2017 and were pleased they looked very healthy.

The Committee **RESOLVED**

**that the management accounts to 31 January 2017 be noted**

## **81. PROGRESS**

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

**Budget – Temporary Moorings** – members noted that this item is being progressed by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee and should be removed from this Committee’s Progress Report.

**Park Run** – previously discussed

**Watermans Allotments** – members noted quotes are being sought for the pedestrian access and permission from Oxfordshire County Council. The noticeboards have been ordered.

**Walkers are Welcome and Encouraging use of footpaths in and around Henley** – the Chairman urged members to sign the petition required to attain accreditation.

**Skatepark – Makins Recreation Ground** – the Town Clerk advised the final details re the costings are being reviewed. The Planning Authority are considering the discharge of the planning conditions. The HR and Legal Group have delegated powers to oversee the approval of the skatepark project contract.

**Rising Bench at the Mill Meadows Toilets** – members noted the rising bench has now been installed and thanked the Rotary Club for Henley Bridge for raising the funds.

**East Eyot – Island opposite Mill Meadows** – the Town Manager is investigating who the owner is.

**Budget – Obelisk at Mill Meadows** – members noted the order to clean and carry out conservation work is about to be placed and members agreed this item should be removed from the Progress Report.

Councillor Dave Eggleton offered to investigate having replica, solar powered lamps made to restore the Obelisk to how it would have looked when it was originally located in the Market Place and will provide an update at the next meeting.

**Fairmile Chapels** – members noted a Listed Building planning application has been submitted following advice from the Conservation Officer with regard to the proposed repairs. *Post meeting note - the target decision date is 7 April 2017.*

**Plaque – Henley Bridge** – members noted work on the plaque is underway and noted the suggestion of making the information from the series of plaques in the town into a

leaflet and creating an historical walk. Liaison with the Town Manager to be carried out and a further update to be brought to this Committee.

## **82. CORPORATE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the corporate plan progress report and **RESOLVED**

**that the Chairman and the Mayor, Councillor J Brookes, review the progress of this Committee re the Corporate Plan and bring an update to the next Committee meeting**

**that the Corporate Plan Progress Report be noted**

## **83. FAIRMILE CEMETERY – CHARGES RE BIX AND ASSENDON PARISH**

Members received and considered a report regarding the charges at the Fairmile Cemetery for residents of Bix and Assendon Parish following a meeting with the Town Clerk and Accountant from Henley Town Council and Robert Aitken, Vice Chair and Jane Pryce, Clerk of Bix and Assendon Parish Council.

The report outlined, and the Town Clerk reiterated, that it is accepted practice for the charges for most local authority cemeteries to be increased for those who do not live within the parish of the authority who maintains it. The Fairmile Cemetery is located within the parish of Bix and Assendon however is maintained by Henley Town Council. The upkeep of the Cemetery amounts to many thousands of pounds each year and this amount is only partly funded by the burial charges, the remainder is funded by the precept levied on Henley residents via their Council Tax bills. For this reason Henley residents are charged a standard rate and those living outside the parish are charged up to triple.

The Town Clerk advised that during the meeting a number of aspects were raised and discussed as follows:-

- there is feeling of discontent and unfairness within the parish of Bix and Assendon that residents have to pay the higher rate (eg triple fees) even though the Cemetery is located within their parish
- the number of burials is likely to be low as the population is small, Church of England burials are available at the village churchyard and most rural parish residents of a “certain age” move out of the village and into retirement/care homes
- the cemeteries to which the resident rate applies for residents of Bix and Assendon is Castle Street, Wallingford and Kidmore End – both are some distance away
- the tax base of Bix and Assendon is only 270 and the annual precept is £7000 per annum
- a contribution by Bix and Assendon Parish Council was discussed however it was accepted that it was difficult to arrive at an accurate and appropriate figure
- a suggestion was made, which was acceptable to both parties, as the Henley residents’ rate plus 25% and it was noted this was a goodwill gesture towards the neighbouring parish of Bix and Assendon only purely because of the location of the Cemetery within this parish.

After consideration members **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that a special concession rate for the Fairmile Cemetery be made available to the residents of Bix and Assendon Parish of the Henley residents' rate plus 25%**

Members noted this item has been considered by the Town Council before and thanked the Town Clerk for finding a solution which was acceptable to both parties.

#### **84. MILL MEADOWS – CANOE HIRE**

The Committee received a report which provided an update on Henley Canoe Hire's first year of operation at Mill Meadows, a request from the proprietor, Matthew Couling, to continue to operate from this location and whether a temporary pontoon could be installed.

Members considered the report and were pleased to note the following:-

- there were no health and safety or security issues
- the unforeseen but welcome advantage of the Canoe Hire being on site, particularly in the evenings, was the staff being able to answer questions from visitors regarding a number of topics when the Park Wardens and Visitor Information staff are not on site
- the venture raised £1956 for the Town Council and Mr Couling hope to build on numbers in 2017

The Chairman added that the comments on TripAdvisor re the first year had been very positive.

Members also noted that the Parks Manager agreed it was acceptable for the storage of canoes on trailers close to the hedge on the Marsh Meadows side when the kiosk is open on consecutive days eg weekends and school holidays and this would be monitored. It was acknowledged that promotion is important to increase trade but this needs to be measured and the Parks Manager, Town Manager and Henley Canoe Hire will liaise re this matter

Members considered a request from the proprietor to install a pontoon close to the cabin (approx. 4 m river bank length x 1.5/2 m wide) during the summer months to enable clients easier access on and off the canoes. Members felt this was a sensible suggestion and, although there maybe an occasional loss of temporary mooring income by losing one mooring, the health and safety benefits outweighed this.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that permission be given for the Henley Canoe Hire to continue to operate from Mill Meadows for a second year on similar terms as in year 1**

**that permission be given to install a temporary floating pontoon in the area in front of the Henley Canoe Hire cabin - approx. 4m (riverbank side) x 1.5/2 m subject to:-**

- **Henley Canoe Hire to bear the cost**
- **Henley Canoe Hire to be responsible for the structure**
- **the Town Clerk and Parks Manager approving the final dimensions, style, fixings etc**

## **85. AMENITY LAND AT PARADISE ROAD – COMMUNITY ORCHARD**

The Committee received and noted a tabled report which provided an update on the proposed community orchard at the amenity area at Paradise Road as follows:-

- the aim is to provide an orchard which offers a landscape of trees, fruit, good soil and wildlife.
- the community aspect adds to this by providing a place to learn, exchange knowledge, hold local events, seek solace, be sociable play and explore nature
- the intention is to plant a variety of species of common and more unusual trees of a medium size including apple, pear, plum, mulberry, quince, medlar etc and to include heritage and local varieties – approx. cost of the more common varieties is likely to be between £15 and £20 and more for the more specialised trees
- 1 – 2 year old bare root plants which establish quickly are proposed and these should fruit within approx. 2 years
- a horseshoe planting shape with a sheltered central space for small events, space around the edge, information board and a bench is proposed
- the aim is to order trees in Spring 2017 for planting in December 2017 (during National Tree Week 25.11.17 – 3.12.17) – it is planned that this will be a community event with local residents, schools being encouraged to help plant and learn about the orchard and future plans
- investigation is being carried out into creating a foraging hedge including blackberries, crab apples, damsons etc
- Maintenance - the Parks Service will water in the first year until the trees are established and will mow approx. 4 times per year. It is hoped residents will help with general maintenance including pruning, harvesting etc

Members noted the update and were keen to ensure this was a community project with involvement with local residents, primary schools, Gillotts School and Henley College. A member spoke about a community orchard project in Wolvercote which is run by a community group and has a wide range of varieties of fruit

Members thanked Victoria Newton, the Parks Manager and Committee Administrator for their input in this project.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that in order to place a provisional order for trees to secure the heritage varieties a budget of £500 is allocated form the Other Amenity Areas budget 2017/18 for the purchase of trees, tree guards etc**

## **86. HENLEY BRIDGE PLANTER**

The Committee received and considered a report regarding purchasing a custom made planter to be placed on the right hand side of the road by the bridge as you approach Henley on the Wokingham side to match the Henley Royal Regatta planter opposite.

The Chairman advised this proposal forms part of the holistic review of the floral displays in the town and the remit to focus on the entries to the town. Members noted

2 quotes had been sought and both were in the region of £650 however the price may vary depending on a number of factors and the Parks Manager is reviewing the materials, fixings and provision of railings.

Members welcomed this proposal and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that up to £650 be allocated from the horticultural improvements budget (flower beds) for 2017/18 to purchase a custom made planter and fascia to be placed by Henley Bridge**

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Chairman

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