

Present: Councillor Dr B G Wood, Chairman
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, Vice-Chairman
Councillor BW Gibson
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood

In attendance: Mr M Kennedy, Town Clerk
Mr G Bartle, Parks Service Supervisor
Mrs A Gliddon, Committee Administrator
Mrs L Hastings, Car Park Administrator
Mrs C Robb, Moorings Administrator

Councillor A J Follett

Mr B Stanesby, Reading Borough Council
2 Members of the Public

49. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Bland, Mrs G Dodds and Dr P Skolar and Mr A Brown, River & Rowing Museum

50. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor, Mrs E Hodgkin, Minute 54, Moorings; Prejudicial; husband employee of the Environment Agency

51. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Mill Meadows/River Sub-Committee held on 28 January 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood

52. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr A Yeates, Meadow Road

Asked to say a few words on behalf of neighbours in Thamesbank, the Mews and Regatta Villas.

In the minutes of the last Mill Meadows meeting on 28 January, we note that Adrienne Gliddon is to seek advice regarding possible equipment to replace the nest swing which is suitable for use by children with disabilities. In order to avoid a repeat of the steps that had to be taken to confirm the noise nuisance caused by the nest swing, it would be appreciated if the local residents who previously raised the noise concerns could be consulted about the style and location of the new equipment before a decision to purchase is made. The Town Council must be aware that the noise level is already quite high from use of the remaining equipment, particularly the tyre swing and zip wire, and this will only increase as the milder weather comes.

When Trevor Dean made his report last year, the possibility of the gates into the Playground being locked in the evenings and the possible immobilisation of the zip wire, were being considered by the Committee.

In view of the consideration now being given to the positioning of the Youth Shelter, and the wish to draw anyone loitering away from the sensory garden and the adventure playground, can these points please be considered once more?

We note that two sites are being considered for the Shelter. The concerns raised about the Putting Green location prior to the last meeting, remain an issue for local residents. If you remember Suzanne wrote to you before the 28th January meeting with residents concerns about its location. Since then Suzanne and Ann Curwin have met with PC Vicky Sims. It would be helpful to know if the police view on the location may have now changed in favour of an area between the Pavilion and the kiosk.

If the Youth Shelter were to be placed on the putting green it would only exacerbate the existing problem by encouraging the young people to hang around near to the playground and housing. This is already a real problem for us in Thamesbank, the Mews and those living in Regatta Meadows.

If however the adventure playground could be locked in the evenings and the lighting encouraged visitors to the Meadows after dark to move down beyond the Pavilion, this would surely help to reduce the noise to residents without detracting from the use which the Shelter is intended to offer.

Noise levels in the Playground area are already beginning to increase after the wintery weather of the last couple of months and we really cannot have a repeat of the Summer we and the residents of Regatta Meadows had last year.

I am making this request on behalf of the residents and thank the committee for considering our concerns

The Chairman, Councillor B G Wood thanked Mr Yeates for his comments.

53. PROGRESS REPORT

Councillors considered the progress report and made the following comments Youth Shelter, Minute 45 (9.10.09). Councillor Dr Wood confirmed that the Henley Youth Council was getting involved in this item and would be visiting the Youth Shelter in Barkham which had recently been installed.

54. MOORINGS

The Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood invited Mr Ben Stanesby, Parks Manager at Reading Borough Council, to the table. He thanked Mr Stanesby for attending and advised that Henley Town Council had some problems with the collection of mooring fees which might be mutual to both Councils.

Mr Stanesby reported on some of the issues encountered by Reading Borough Council (RBC) and advised that steps were being taken to approach the courts with a view to seeking possession of the Council's land. He agreed to keep Henley Town Council informed of developments, either by attending a future meeting of this Committee or through liaison with officers.

Mr Stanesby advised that problems occurred on up to two thirds of the mooring sites in Reading, particularly stretches of the river adjacent to Tesco store and residential areas. RBC would like to provide better access to sanitary facilities, electrical pickups and waste disposal if funding was available. RBC would like to emulate the reputation that Henley has along the river.

Mr Stanesby answered a number of Councillors' questions, following which, it was agreed that there is not currently enough joined up thinking with Councils along the river. Mr Stanesby advised that what had come out of various consultations was that it was the view of the navigation authority that local authorities did not do enough to manage their waterways. RBC dealt with issues as and when they arose but had not had the opportunity to be pro-active. At the River Thames Alliance meetings local authorities were often conspicuous by their absence (although HTC and RBC attended.)

The Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood, suggested that it might be useful if the Environment Agency met with local councils to give advice. Many tourists would be visiting the country for the 2012 Olympics and the waterways would be an attractive area for them to visit. It would be useful to receive input from the Environment Agency regarding ways of managing this.

Mr Stanesby suggested that Angela Quayle, Strategic Waterways Manager of the Environment Agency be contacted.

Councillor Dr Wood thanked Mr Stanesby for attending. It was agreed that his input had been very useful and that meetings should continue with representatives from Marlow and Shiplake invited to attend in future.

Action: Mr Stanesby and Mrs Robb to liaise regarding future meetings

Mr Stanesby left the meeting at 10.05am

55. WEATHER ACTION PLAN

Councillor Dr Wood advised that this matter had been discussed at the meeting of Full Council on 2 March 2010 where it had been decided that OCC and SODC be asked to engage in discussions regarding the implementation of a joint bad weather action plan.

Mr Gareth Bartle reported that, with regard to the two recent instances of heavy snowfall, the first had taken people unawares and the second had coincided with the Town Council's tractor breaking down. A tractor with an attachment for snow clearing had been hired in and this had enabled the Parks Service staff to clear Mill Meadows and Mill Lane car parks and the Market Place. In common with the rest of the country, Henley had run out of salt. What was available had been spread on areas such as the front of the Town Hall and the nursery at Mill Meadows. He advised that it was not the statutory responsibility of the Town Council staff to clear highways which are the responsibility of other Councils.

Mr Bartle was of the opinion that no revenue had been lost during the period from parking at the Mill Meadows car park. He confirmed that this had been kept clear with a path opened up for access to the nursery and the River & Rowing Museum.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, congratulated the Parks Service staff on the hard work they had carried out during this period.

Mr Bartle advised that the cost of equipment hire was £300 per week for a tractor with a bucket attachment. It would be useful for HTC to have a stockpile of grit. It was confirmed that if HTC paid for storage bins Oxfordshire County Council

supply grit. Mr Bartle was of the opinion that it would be useful for HTC to purchase a bucket attachment for the tractor which could spread grit and be used as a fertiliser spreader at other times of the year. This was the first time in at least six years that conditions had been so severe. He advised that with grit and a spreader available it would take c3 hours for the Parks Service staff to set up and be ready to clear snow.

The Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood advised that he would like to see arrangements put in place for Mill Lane to be cleared in future, together with areas such as Townlands Hospital, the Day Centre and outside schools.

56. MILL MEADOWS ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

Minute 18, 9.10.09 refers

The Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood, advised that he was committed to replacing the nest swing which had been removed, as there was now no specific equipment for disabled use. He tabled pictures of equipment which might be suitable and confirmed that these were as a result of advice given by Roger Davis, ROSPA inspector as suitable for disabled use. Councillor Wood believed that the noise levels from children using this equipment would be low. He confirmed that no funding was currently available for the purchase of a replacement piece of equipment. However, he would like to seek the opinion of the Youth Council and schools on the suggested equipment. It was confirmed that a grant of 100% of the cost of the equipment at Mill Meadows Adventure Playground had been received.

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND**

that a letter is sent to the initial funding providers of the playground equipment at Mill Meadows to advise them of the situation, and

that options as to an alternative site for the location of the nest swing which was currently being held in storage be considered

57. EXCESS CHARGE NOTICES

Councillor Dr B Wood invited Mrs Louise Hastings to the table to report on the process of the collection of unpaid parking fees.

Mrs Hastings advised that currently a letter is sent to the DVLA giving car registration numbers of defaulters. The DVLA respond by providing names and addresses of who the car is registered to. An initial letter is sent and a follow up letter after a period of time to those who had still not paid. There had been occasions when the car had been sold on.

Councillors discussed the arrangements for collecting unpaid excess charge notices and

It was **RESOLVED** that the arrangements for collecting unpaid excess charge notices discussed at the meeting be implemented.

58. MOORINGS AND CAR PARKING, INCLUDING INCOME, REPORTS

Councillors received and noted a report which they had before them. Mr Bartle confirmed that there are less boats mooring at this time of the year, but that generally boat owners were purchasing tickets from the machines provided.

59. **ENTRANCE TO MILL MEADOWS**

Councillors received and noted a drawing and accompanying letter from Monson giving details of changes to the entrance to reduce the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. The Chairman, Councillor Dr Wood, confirmed that the removal of some scrub hedge had been included in the plan but that no trees would be taken down.

Concern was expressed at the narrowness of the pathway outside the corner house in Meadow Road

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that

Monson are asked to look at ways of improving pedestrian safety at the pathway outside the corner house in Meadow Road, and include these in the plan;

bollards should not be installed but that the post and rail fencing be extended; and

Monson are instructed to go out to tender to obtain three quotations for the work

The two members of the public left the meeting at 11.40am

60. **REFURBISHMENT OF TOILETS AT THE LEICHLINGEN PAVILION**

The Chairman, Dr B G Wood advised that Mr Rigby's proposals had been received the previous day and sent out with the Agenda papers for the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting to be held on 9 March 2010, where Mr Rigby would be giving a presentation on the proposals.

The Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood, hoped that after two and a half years work on the project the Council would give Mr Rigby a clear guide and instructions to go out to tender.

61. **BATTLE OF BRITAIN 70TH FLOWERBED DISPLAY**

Referred from Minute No 527, 01.10.09 and 539, 14.01.10, Henley-in-Bloom Committee Councillors considered a request for the Air Training Corps to be given permission to carry out collections in support of the ACT and the 'Wings Appeal' in front of the raised flowerbeds at Mill Meadows.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that

permission is given to the Air Training Corps to carry out collections in support of the ACT and the 'Wings Appeal' in front of the raised flowerbeds at Mill Meadows.

62. **DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be at 9.30am on Thursday 29 April 2010. Venue to be confirmed.

[Post meeting note: Meeting will be held at the River & Rowing Museum]

The meeting closed at 11.50 am