

Present: Councillor Mrs G Dodds (Vice Chairman, presiding)  
Councillor A J Follett (Substitute for Councillor Dr B G Wood)  
Councillor Mrs R Myer  
Councillor Miss L Pye  
Councillor I Reissmann  
Councillor S R Smith  
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (Ex-Officio)

In attendance: Mike Kennedy – Town Clerk  
Linda Martin – Committee Administrator / Minute Taker

Also present: 1 Member of the Press  
3 Members of the Public

**19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T B Buckett MBE, Councillor Dr B G Wood and Councillor Mrs J Wood

**20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*Members are hereby reminded that, under the provisions of Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (The Code of Conduct), a member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent. A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgment of the public interest. A member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting is being held whenever it becomes apparent that the matter is being considered at that meeting, unless he has obtained a dispensation from the standards committee of the responsible authority; and not seek improperly to influence a decision about that matter. For the purposes of this Part (of the Act), "meeting" means any meeting of the authority; or any of the authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.*

None received.

**21. MINUTES**

- i. The Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 23 June 2009 were received, approved, adopted and signed by the Deputy Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds.
- ii. The Committee considered the minutes of the Mill Meadows/River Sub Committee meeting held on 22 July 2009 and the following item was discussed:

**Item 9 Leichlingen Pavilion**

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Mrs G M Dodds was unhappy with the amount of money proposed to be spent on the refurbishment of the toilets in the Leichlingen Pavilion. She felt that the proposal had not been thought through properly and there was only one quote provided. Her view was that the quote was excessive and felt that the toilets could

be refurbished for far less money than that proposed. The issue of taking buggies into the toilets was also an issue as she felt that this was not necessary and only added to the expense.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin felt that a proper quote via the Finance Committee should be obtained before the project is moved forward. She also felt that a proper specification should be provided before going out to tender.

Councillor S Smith felt that accepting the proposal as worded in the minutes meant accepting a quote of £150k. He would like it to be referred back to the Mill Meadows Committee for tender quotations and proper outline proposals.

Councillor Mrs R Myer believes that the Council should neither borrow money nor sell investments.

Councillor Mrs G M Dodds pointed out that Stepping Stones had been awarded a grant from OCC for their refurbishment and that the wider picture should be addressed.

Councillor I Reissmann asked what brief was given to potential builders and outlined three areas that need to be addressed:

- Outline proposals before going forward
- Price
- Detailed tender

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin advised that the options detailed in the minutes were brought forward as a way of paying for the toilet refurbishment.

Councillor A J Follett proposed that this item be referred back to the Mill Meadows Sub Committee for clarification and to the Finance Committee for consideration for inclusion in next year's budget.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the minutes of the Mill Meadows/River Sub Committee meeting held on 22 July 2009 be received, approved and adopted subject to the following:

- i. that the matter of the refurbishment of the toilets in the Leichlingen Pavilion be referred back to the Mill Meadows/River Sub Committee for clarification and that
  - ii. the refurbishment of the toilets also be referred back to the Finance Committee for consideration for inclusion in next year's budget
- iii. The Committee received the notes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee meeting held on 18 June 2009.

It was noted that this Sub Committee still did not have a Chairman or Vice Chairman.

Councillor A J Follett questioned if the Chairman could be an ordinary member of the Sub Committee. The Town Clerk advised that according to Standing Orders these posts could only be held by a Henley Town Councillor. Councillor A J Follett suggested that all 6 Councillors who are members of the Sub Committee be invited to attend the next meeting on Thursday 1 October 2009. This would ensure that the meeting is quorate for voting purposes.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the notes be received and noted subject to the following:

Henley in Bloom Sub Committee Administrator to e-mail all Councillors with a request for them to attend the next meeting on Thursday 1 October 2009 to ensure a Chairman and Vice Chairman can be voted in.

- iv. The Committee received the notes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee meeting held on 13 August 2009.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the notes be received and noted.

- v. The Committee received the minutes of the Christmas Decorations Sub Committee meeting held on 9 July 2009.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Christmas Decorations Sub Committee held on 6 April 2009 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

## **22. PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillors received and considered the Progress Report and made the following comments:

Sports Centre Management Contract –

The Town Clerk advised that the previous provider had failed in their obligations and responsibilities and that there were still ongoing problems, particularly in the areas of the showers. Controls and valves still need to be replaced at a cost of £800 per changing room. This represents significant cost and the new provider is not willing to shoulder responsibility for these additional costs. The Town Clerk advised that negotiations with the outgoing provider are still underway and a considerable sum of money has been withheld pending settlement of these issues.

Councillor S Smith thought that the problem with the showers was an old one and the Town Council had accepted that they had completed their obligations. Councillor Mrs R Myer was involved in previous meetings with the outgoing provider and also felt that they had stated that they had fixed the valves on the showers but she felt them to be evasive and not forthcoming about the actual state of the shower valves. In view of these continuing problems the Town Clerk wants this item to remain on the progress report until these issues are resolved.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin asked if the User Group meetings were to be re-instated. The Town Clerk advised that they would be and that a meeting was planned for October, but questioned whether or not Councillors needed to be involved in these meetings. Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin agreed that Councillors need not attend providing the Town Clerk gave his assurances that there would be Council representation at the meeting. The Town Clerk confirmed that this was the case.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the negotiations regarding outstanding monies to/from the previous provider and the issue of the shower valves be delegated to the Town Clerk who should report back to the next meeting on 6 October 2009.

**23. BUDGET**

Councillors received and noted the budget report for August 2009

**24. MILL MEADOWS/RIVER SUB COMMITTEE**

Councillors discussed the proposed date of the next meeting of the Mill Meadows/River Sub Committee and in view of the issues raised earlier regarding the toilets in the Leichlingen Pavilion suggested moving the date so more interested Councillors could attend.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the next meeting of the Mill Meadows/River Sub Committee be moved to a date on a Thursday or Friday to accommodate Councillor Mrs G M Dodds and Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin.

**25. PRESENTATION BY ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION**

The Vice Chairman, Councillor Mrs G M Dodds invited Mr Andrew Hawkins and Mr Peter Herbert of the Allotments Association to the table to discuss a report by Marisa Francini (Allotments Association/Henley Town Council Liaison) on the standing of the Allotments Association.

Mr Hawkins proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs L Martin, Committee Administrator for the hard work put in over the past 12 months with the Allotments Association administration and in particular the 100% rent collection for the first time in many years. He also thanked the Council for the vast improvement in relations between the Council and the Allotments Association and the work carried out to improve the allotments, particularly the vision splay at Watermans.

Mr Herbert outlined concerns from ploholders regarding the future strategy for the allotments and asked if, due to the size of the waiting lists, there is a possibility of more land being made available in the future. Councillor Mrs G M Dodds asked if Mr Herbert had any places in mind and the apple orchard near Gillotts Field was suggested as a possibility. She also asked if an appeal could be made to the residents of Henley for any suitable sites that could be considered. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that legally HTC complies with its obligations and waiting lists are not uncommon. He also thanked the Allotments Association Committee for all the hard work they put in (unpaid) to ensure that the allotments are well run for the benefit of all the allotment holders. Councillor Mrs R Myer thought the idea of a public appeal to local land owners to provide land for cultivation was very appealing and also suggested a garden sharing scheme.

Mr Herbert asked if the two allotment sites currently owned by the Council are safe (from developers) and the Town Clerk replied that they were. Councillor I Reissmann asked how large any proposed area of land would need to be and Mr Herbert thought that 2 – 3 acres would be a feasible size but must include parking. Councillor A J Follett thought that the field next to Watermans Allotments would be a suitable site and asked if this possibility could be investigated.

Councillor I Reissmann pointed out that extra capacity at both allotment sites had been gained by splitting more and more 10 pole plots into two, 5 pole plots. This method of

creating additional plots has now been exhausted. Future capacity can only be gained by investing in more land.

Councillor Mrs G M Dodds asked about the possibility of bee keeping on the allotments. Both Mr Herbert and Mr Hawkins had no objections but thought that professional advice should be sought. There could be issues with current ploholders and the health and safety aspect must be addressed.

The report by the Committee Administrator concerning freezing of allotment rents was discussed. Although allotment rents had increased by 90% over the last five years, the Allotments Association accepted that this was a level commensurate with other, similar sites. However, they would be against any further rises and would not support an increase to £42 for the year 2010/11.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

- i. that allotment rents be frozen for the year 2010/11 at 2009/10 levels
- ii. that allotment rents for 2011/12 be reviewed prior to issuing renewals in September 2010
- iii. that the Town Clerk investigate the feasibility of purchasing the land next to Watermans Allotments and
- iv. that an appeal be launched to try and find suitable sites for new allotments, through a garden sharing scheme

**26. WORKING GROUP ON SMALL CHRISTMAS TREES**

The Committee received the notes of the Working Group on Small Christmas Tree Decorations 2009 meeting held on 3 August 2009.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the notes be received and noted

**27. TREES AT MAKINS PLAYGROUND**

The Committee considered a report by the Senior Parks Assistant regarding the replacement of trees at Makins playground.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin was concerned that the trees had not been looked after properly and that despite assurances some of them had definitely died. Councillor S Smith asked if the problem might be more problematic in that Makins is built on top of an old landfill site and perhaps 18" of topsoil is not enough to support fully grown trees. He asked if this is something that could be tested by the Environment Agency on our behalf. Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin replied that she still thought there was a good level of topsoil but the trees were not looked after. Councillor Miss L Pye agreed with Councillor S Smith that it may not be a lack of watering and that the soil should be tested. Councillor Mrs R Myer asked whose job it was to water these trees – if it was the Council's responsibility then this should happen. Councillor A J Follett thinks that as a Council we need to take a wider view – is the land suitable and are we planting the right trees?

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

- i. that the trees are re-assessed in the spring in line with the report;
- ii. that a further report is prepared regarding their status;
- iii. that a sum be allocated in next year's budget to replace the trees if necessary including the cost of aftercare; and
- iv. that the soil at Makins is checked for possible contaminants

**28. HOCKEY CLUB EQUIPMENT STORE**

The Committee considered a request by the Hockey Club to site a temporary equipment store alongside the astro turf. The Town Clerk explained that the approval was being sought from the Council as landlords. It was agreed that permission would probably be granted but that there was insufficient information on which to base a proper decision. Planning permission may also need to be obtained depending on the size of the store.

The Town Clerk also asked that Councillors consider the Hockey Club's additional request to be given the right to use the grassed area to the rear of the Hockey Club which is currently not being used for any useful purpose and is attracting youngsters who commit anti social behaviour. Permission (as landlords) was given for new patio doors and fencing at a previous meeting but the grassed area had not been specifically included. It is proposed that this grassed area be included in the new Hockey Club lease which is currently being drawn up by the Town Clerk.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

- i. that the Town Clerk be delegated to approve the application from the Hockey Club subject to receipt of detailed drawings/pictures of the proposed equipment store including the proposed site; and
- ii. that the grassed area to the rear of the Henley Hockey Clubhouse be included in the new Hockey Club lease

**29. EXTERNAL DECORATION OF HENLEY OUTDOOR SPORTS CENTRE**

Councillors considered quotes for the external redecoration of the Sports Centre. The Town Clerk explained that, according to the matrix of responsibilities, the Town Council is responsible for the external redecoration. The centre has not been decorated for a number of years and is looking very shabby. The new contractors are anxious to present a good standard in the new centre and three quotes were obtained that included the replacement of several doors which are showing signs of severe wood rot.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the lowest quote of £4250 be accepted and that the funds come from the Repairs and Improvements budget in 2009/10

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

It was moved by the Vice Chairman and RESOLVED

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

**31. FIRST CHAPEL FAIRMILE CEMETERY**

A general discussion ensued concerning the report prepared by the Committee Administrator about the disposal or otherwise of the first chapel at Fairmile Cemetery. Councillor A J Follett asked if there had been any further contact from the local resident who had organised a petition against the sale and had offered to come up with some alternatives. The Committee Administrator replied that there had been no further contact. In view of this information Councillor A J Follett considered that the matter would best be deferred for the foreseeable future. Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin was totally in agreement with Councillor A J Follett and re-iterated that exhaustive enquiries had been made and neither the churches nor the local Funeral Directors were interested in it.

Councillor Miss L Pye and Councillor S Smith were in favour of the sale to a private bidder.

Councillor I Reissmann asked if it was reasonable for us to spend money on repairs that should have been carried out by SODC prior to their transfer to us in 2000. The Committee Administrator advised that repairs had been carried out but they were unsympathetic to the original building materials and had started to deteriorate very rapidly. Councillor I Reissmann repeated that he thought SODC should accept some responsibility. Councillor Mrs R Myer agreed with Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin that the matter was probably best deferred and re-visited at some point in the future.

Councillor A J Follett thanked the Committee Administrator for the work that had gone into the report and felt that it was a good basis for any future discussions on the future of the chapel.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND

that the report be noted but that no further action would be taken at this time.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9pm

Chairman