

Present: The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood
The Vice Chairman, Councillor D Clenshaw
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Miss S Evans
Councillor Miss K Gehrman
Councillor W Hamilton (substituting for Councillor D Silvester)
Councillor I Reissmann

In attendance: Mrs L Jones - Accountant
Mrs B Walker – Committee Administrator/Minute Taker

Also Present: Councillor M Akehurst
1 member of the public
1 member of the press

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Silvester.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

45. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Councillor M Akehurst – Two Tree Hill – Minute 50 – Solar Panels at the Leichlingen Pavilion – urged members not to allow solar panels on the Leichlingen Pavilion as they would be an eye-sore in this iconic location.

Mr R Atkin – Elizabeth Road – Minute 48 - spoke to the creation of a Jubilee Walk along the Fairmile which he proposed and is being progressed through this Committee. In response to comments on the progress report he would argue the traffic island is a safe crossing point and funding is being sought from TOE2 for the pedestrian bridge.

46. MINUTES

- i. The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 2 October 2012 were approved and then signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood.
- ii. The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee held on 24 September 2012 and

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee held on 24 September 2012 be received, approved and adopted.

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that the minutes of the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee held on 24 October 2012 be received, approved and adopted.

- iv. The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee held on 12 October 2012 and **RESOLVED**

that the minutes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee held on 12 October 2012 be received, approved and adopted.

- v. The Committee received the notes of the Jubilee Park User Group held on 24 October 2012.

The Committee was pleased to note the number and variety of groups using the new facility.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes of the Jubilee Park User Group held on 24 October 2012 be received, approved and adopted.

47. **BUDGET**

- i. The Committee received, considered and noted the budget report to September 2012.
- ii. The Committee received and considered an updated report on proposed budget figures for 2013 / 2014.

During discussion the following comments were made:-

- Mrs L Jones advised the budget figures will be confirmed at the next Finance Strategy and Management Committee on 18 December 2012 by which time the figures re the tax base and the notification regarding staff salaries (Green Book) will be known.
- Mrs L Jones confirmed £1500 has been put in the capital budget for 2013/14 for the new litter bins/recycling at Mill Meadows
- the re-charge amount to Oxfordshire County Council regarding grass cutting of grass verges in Henley has not increased for 3 years and it was suggested another approach be made to Oxfordshire County Council to review this.

Post Meeting Accountant's Note: The accountant has reviewed the agreement with Oxfordshire County Council for the grass cutting grant. The agreement is rolling with a three month notice period from either side. The amount received by Henley Town Council is based on

the area of land and on there being five cuts per year. The current rate is 20p per meter, which has stood since 2009. In that period fuel prices alone have increased from around 90p per litre to 139p per litre for unleaded, an increase of 54%. Whilst staff salaries have not 'flat rate increased' across the board since 2009 there have been incremental pay rises for almost all staff, and furthermore labour is only one of a number of costs making up the overall cost of grass cutting and this has been pointed out to Oxfordshire County Council by the Accountant in an attempt to obtain an increased rate from 20p per meter. Their budget setting meeting will be held in February/March 2013 at which time the rate will be considered.

- in response to a query as to whether sponsorship would be sought towards the cost of entering Britain in Bloom 2013 (in addition to the £5000 allocated in the budget for 2013/14), it was confirmed this process had already started. The Gold Celebration held on 24 October 2012 aimed to increase awareness and to reach out to potential sponsors. It is also intended, subject to Council permission, to set up a Henley in Bloom Twitter and Facebook account which will enable new lines of communication to be opened up to existing and potential sponsors and there is a promotional page in the new "Visit Henley" publication dedicated to Henley in Bloom, which will also inform the wider community.

It was noted that Henley in Bloom does not receive funding from the Town Council and the £5000 is allocated for one year only due to the additional costs of entering the national competition, which is considerable value for money bearing in mind towns such as Bicester budget for £20,000.

The updated budget report for 2013/14 was noted.

48. PROGRESS REPORT

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

First Chapel – the Town Council would like to play a part in the official opening and any associated publicity. It was noted a date for the opening has not yet been set.

Sue Ryder signage – a member, having seen the new wooden signage in situ, commented that it looked fantastic.

Jubilee Park – the Committee was pleased to note the one year inspection of the pitch by the Consultant had taken place and he confirmed the pitch is in excellent condition.

Red Lion Lawn – the Committee noted the sheet piling and repaving of the area was complete and felt the area looked superb. Work is still in progress – the railings are to be re-instated, the lean-to building refurbished and the beds and troughs re planted. The Committee also considered the principal of allowing a commercial venture to sell refreshments at Red Lion Lawn and the following comments were made:-

- the suitability of the site for the selling of refreshments was questioned as the area is quite restricted in size and access
- currently there is no water or electricity at Red Lion Lawn
- the area is a public amenity and should be open to everyone not only people wanting to buy or sell refreshments
- the area was used for the serving of refreshments by the Red Lion Hotel in the past as shown by photo on the Information Board at the New Street Slipway. However the area has changed considerably since then.
- more information regarding possible uses is required and a site visit before any decision can be made on the future use of Red Lion Lawn

After further discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a report be presented to a future Recreations and Amenities Committee outlining more detail of the expressions of interest received and other possible uses and considerations.

that a site visit for members of the Recreations and Amenities Committee be held once the refurbishment is complete.

Refurbishment of Toilets at Mill Meadows – the Chairman of the Mill Meadows Sub Committee advised the Committee that he had drawn up a draft specification which retains the existing layout and includes the replacement of the flooring, cubicles, lighting, tiling and sanitary ware. It also includes an option to change the smaller ladies toilets into a family/baby changing rooms. This specification has been forwarded to two local builders in order to obtain a ballpark figure for budgeting purposes only. This item will be placed on the agenda of the Mill Meadows Sub Committee to be held on 24 January 2013 for further consideration and by this stage it will be known whether money has been placed in the 2013/14 budget. The matter will then go through the Committee process eg Recreation and Amenities and then Full Council.

During discussion the following comments were made:-

- the disabled toilet needs to be designed in a way to allow adequate room for a person in a wheelchair and a carer.
- should the project progress the tender process would not be able to start until the budgets for 2013/14 are finalised – January 2013.
- the current draft specification to be forwarded to members of the Recreation and Amenities Committee
- the possibility/legality of taking out a loan for the refurbishment of the toilets be investigated by the Accountant.
- a Toilet Refurbishment Working Party be set up in order to progress the project between meetings. The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a Toilet Refurbishment Working Group be formed to consist of Councillor S Gawrysiak, Councillor Mrs J Wood, Councillor Miss S Evans and Mr G Bartle – Parks Services Manager.

49. STATUE – MERMAID STATUE

The Committee received, considered and noted the following from Councillor Miss S Evans:-

- i. the revised contract with the amendments requested by Full Council as follows (a) a “get out” clause, - which would be at the Council’s discretion. (b) confirmation that the promoter will “make good” the site where the sculpture is to be located, once it is removed and (c) confirmation there are only 20 sculptures worldwide.
- ii. photographs showing suggested riverside locations for the mermaid statue including Red Lion Lawn, Singers Park and the New Street Slipway.

The Committee considered the contract and made the following comments:-

- the documentation provided is a memorandum/letter of agreement rather than a contract
- the Proposer will draw up the contract once the memorandum/letter of agreement has been agreed
- the Council Solicitors would then need to approve the agreement
- the “get out” clause should be more specific
- confirmation that the Promoter is covering all aspects of insurance – including Public Liability – be included in the contract
- the Promoter should be responsible for organising and paying for any repairs to the statue or the plinth.

The Committee considered the proposed locations during which there was a considerable divergence of opinions and the following comments were made:-

- should the New Street Slipway area be chosen then the owners of the adjacent house would need to be consulted.
- would planning permission be required
- future plans for Red Lion Lawn are uncertain and therefore this may not be a sensible place to locate the statue there as it may restrict future uses
- the statue would be too large for Singers Park
- could photos of the locations around the world where other statues are placed be provided and circulated.
- would a plaque be provided to explain the statue and if so, the Town Council would want to approve the wording and design

Following a lengthy debate and a recorded vote it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the Mermaid Statue be placed by the railings at the northern end of Red Lion Lawn.

For

Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Miss S Evans
Councillor S Gawyrsiak
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor Mrs J Wood

Against

Councillor D Clenshaw
Councillor Miss K Gehrman
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor I Reissmann

After further discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the Promoter be requested to make the following further amendments to the contract and it then be bought back to Recreation and Amenities for approval:-

- **the following clause be added “Either the Promoter or the Proposer can ask, at any point after one year, for the statue to be removed.”**
- **that the words “to five” years be deleted from the following clause “In the event of the sculpture not being sold after three to five years, the Promoter and Partner will agree on the date of public and or internet auction.**
- **the contract to specify that all aspects of insurance be covered by the Promoter including Public Liability Cover.**
- **the contract to specify that the Promoter is responsible for the organising of and payment for any repairs required to the statue or plinth.**

50. SOLAR PANELS AT THE LEICHLINGEN PAVILION

The Committee received photo montages which showed how the Pavilion would look with 2 different types of PV solar panels on two aspects of the roof. The Committee considered the visual impact the Solar Panels would cause.

The Committee discussed the visual impact and the financial/ecological benefits of installing solar panels. A recorded vote was taken on whether to install PV Solar Panels on the Leichlingen Pavilion as follows:-

For

Councillor Miss K Gehrman
Councillor S Gawyrsiak
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor I Reissmann

Against

Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor D Clenshaw
Councillor Miss S Evans
Councillor D Silvester
Councillor Mrs J Wood

Therefore the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that PV Solar Panels should not be installed on the Leichlingen Pavilion.

51. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

It was moved by the 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 matters which were about to be discussed were considered to be confidential.

MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE RECREATION AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 NOVEMBER 2012.

52. CONFIDENTIAL

i) RE-SURFACING OF THE MILL MEADOWS CAR PARK

The Committee received, considered and noted a report regarding the re-surfacing of the Mill Meadows Car Park and the following comments were made:-

- it is proposed to re-surface the car park in two phases – the area by the entrance to be re-surfaced first
- it was noted that an additional quote from Oxfordshire County Council is being sought by the Accountant, Mrs L Jones to coincide with other resurfacing works in the area.
- confirmation to be obtained as to whether the prices in the three quotes presented can be held for 2 years – should the second phase be delayed until 2015/16. (Accountant's note: the contractors have indicated that there would be an inflationary increase in the cost of materials only).
- access to the Kiosk, the River and Rowing Museum, the Pavilion etc would be maintained at all times.
- confirmation was sought that the correct procurement procedure had been followed. Given that the chosen original quote value is under £50,000 this was confirmed.

After further discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that, unless a better quote is received from contacts provided by Oxfordshire County Council the Council approve the appointment of the preferred contractor, who was identified at the meeting, to undertake the works.

that the logistics of phase one be ascertained by the Parks Services Manager, the Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Receptions and Amenities Committee – Councillor Mrs J Wood such that there be minimal disruption to parking income and to staff and visitors to the River and Rowing Museum, Refreshment Kiosk and to the Mill meadows play areas and open spaces.

iii. PARKS SERVICES – SECURE STORAGE/OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The Committee received, considered and noted a report regarding providing secure storage at the Reading Road Depot and after discussion **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND.**

that additional security measures be undertaken at the Reading Road Depot including:-

- **the conversion of the existing office area in the Parks Services Depot into a strong room for tool storage**
- **the bricking up of external windows in the Parks Services Depot, replacement of the existing doors with multi lock security doors**
- **the purchase of a steel container structure to be located in the fenced compound by Exclusively Ladies for the storage of various larger pieces of equipment including the water bowser, signage, ride-on mower etc.**
- **the purchase of a portable unit (portakabin type) to be placed on top of the steel container to be used as the Parks Services Office**

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Chairman

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