

Present: Councillor Mrs P G Buckett
Councillor Mrs G Dodds (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor Mrs R Myer
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor C I Pye
Councillor Miss L Pye (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Dr P Skolar
Councillor Dr B J Wood
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood

In attendance: Mr M Kennedy – Town Clerk
Mrs B Walker – Committee Administrator / Minute Taker

Also present: 4 Members of the Public
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds welcomed the Vice Mayor of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea, Florida, Mr Stuart Dodd to the public gallery.

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr P Skolar declared a personal interest regarding any discussion on moorings as a boat owner.

21. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

None.

22. MINUTES

i. The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee meeting held on Tuesday 1 June 2010 were approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds.

ii. The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Mill Meadows/River Sub Committee held on 25 June 2010.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the minutes of the Mill Meadows/River Sub Committee held on 25 June 2010 be received, approved and adopted.

iii. The Committee received the minutes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee held on 26 May 2010.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the minutes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee held on 26 May 2010 be received, approved and adopted.

- iv. The Committee received the minutes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee held on 1 July 2010.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the minutes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee held on 1 July 2010 be received, approved and adopted.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin took the opportunity to thank everyone involved for making Henley look so wonderful for the Thames and Chilterns Regional in Bloom judging on Thursday 8 July 2010 and advised members they could see a copy of the Portfolio in the Mayor's Parlour. The Awards Ceremony will take place on 30 September 2010. Councillor Mrs Hodgkin paid special tribute to the Town Council staff:- Mrs Judith Smith for her excellent work and organisational skills as Committee Administrator, Mr Karl Bishop for acting as team leader for the Parks Services on this project and to Mr Gareth Bartle and his team for all their hard work particularly as the judging followed a very busy Regatta.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds thanked Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin for her tireless work, enthusiasm and dedication year after year towards Henley in Bloom.

- v. The Committee received the minutes of the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee held on 7 June 2010.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the minutes of the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee held on 7 June 2010 be received, approved and adopted.

- vi. a) The Committee received the notes of the Woodland Memorial site visits held on 3 June 2010 and 10 June 2010.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the notes of the Woodland Memorial site visits held on 3 June and 10 June 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted. *(Please note the proposed location runs adjacent to Pack and Prime Lane not perpendicular to it).*

- vii. a) The Committee received the notes of the Outdoor Sports Centre Users Group meeting held on 28 April 2010.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the notes of the Outdoor Sports Centre Users Group meeting held on 28 April 2010 be received, approved and adopted.

- b) The Committee noted that Nexus Community will give a presentation to the next meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee regarding their achievements to date and future plans.

23. PROGRESS REPORT

The Councillors received and noted the Progress Report.

24. BUDGET

The Committee received the budget report for May 2010 and made the following comments:-

Councillor Dr P Skolar queried the income and expenditure for Henley in Bloom.

The Town Clerk confirmed Henley in Bloom is self funding and would liaise with the accountant in order that this be shown with more clarity in the accounts.

Councillor Dr P Skolar was pleased to note that the budget for litter has increased for 2010/2011.

Councillor Dr P Skolar queried the zero income shown for Christmas Festivities. The Town Clerk explained that income from the Christmas Festival (market stalls etc) offsets, in part, the expenditure on the Christmas lights and the Town Council derived no income from the Christmas Festival.

25. FIRST CHAPEL, FAIRMILE CEMETERY

- i. The Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds explained that following the notification received from English Heritage of the Secretary of State's decision not to de-list the Chapel, the Town Council had a responsibility to maintain it, that adequate money had been budgeted for this purpose and that this work would take place as part of the Planned Programmed Maintenance of the Town Council's properties.
- ii. The Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds introduced a proposal received from Mr P Burness-Smith regarding a possible use for the First Chapel as a Visitor Centre entitled "George Orwell's Henley".

The Chairman asked the Committee whether they would like to suspend standing orders and invite Mr Burness-Smith, who was in the public gallery, to participate in the discussion.

It was **RESOLVED**

that standing orders be suspended to enable Mr Burness-Smith to present his report.

The Chairman invited Mr Burness-Smith to elaborate on his proposal. Mr Burness-Smith gave a brief outline of his proposal to create a Visitor Centre that tells the story of the young Eric Blair, better known as George Orwell, who spent his formative years until the age of 21 in the Henley on Thames area. The centre would be aimed at all ages and would tell his personal story in an engaging and accessible way incorporating the social, political and cultural history of the times in a local context.

Mr Burness-Smith explained that, if the Council was willing to consider the project, he would undertake further research utilising the expertise of local like-minded people and would investigate similar projects.

The Committee discussed the project and made the following comments:-

- any proposed use of the First Chapel needs to be considered very carefully due the sensitivity of its location in a Cemetery with graves very close by and the feelings of relatives who may visit the Cemetery must be given the highest priority
- concerns were raised with regard to attracting groups of people, particularly children, and whether this would be appropriate considering the location
- the lack of facilities and utilities may cause a problem
- funding maybe available from the Lottery for this type of project
- the local library could be invited to participate in the project
- it would be a tourist attraction
- advice would need to be sought from the Planning Authority and Conservation Officer
- the project may be supported by relatives of those buried in the Cemetery as it would provide a purpose for the First Chapel

The Committee concluded that the project was an exciting proposal however there were a number of major issues that would need to be investigated further in order to see if it was viable.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that Mr P Burness-Smith forms a Steering Committee to investigate this project further and liaises with the Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood, the Chairman of the Recreation and Amenities Committee, Councillor Mrs G Dodds and the Town Clerk.

that an update be presented to the next meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee to be held on 28 September 2010.

Mr P Burness-Smith rejoined the public gallery.

It was **RESOLVED**

that standing orders be re-instated.

26. REFURBISHMENT OF THE TOILETS AT THE LEICHLINGEN PAVILION

The Committee received and considered a cost appraisal for the proposed refurbishment of the toilets at the Leichlingen Pavilion (received in the Council Offices on Tuesday 13 July 2010) from Roger Waite of Pelling Waite Partnership, Construction Costs and Procurement Consultants based on the plans produced by Robert Rigby Associates. The cost plan summary is as follows (please note the complete cost appraisal is available in the Council Offices):-

	Element Cost (£)
Substructure	-
External Walls	-
Roof Construction	-
Windows and External Doors	9,950.00
Internal Walls and Partitions	2,040.00
Internal Doors	1,500.00
Wall Finishes	19,125.00
Floor Finishes	8,940.00
Ceiling Finishes	2,760.00
Fittings	5,000.00
Disposal Installations	-
Sanitary Installations	28,300.00
Mechanical Installations	31,000.00
Electrical Installations	20,500.00
Sub Total	129,500.00
Demolition and Alterations	12,424.00
Drainage	10,000.00
External Works and Services	-
Preliminaries - 10%	15,154.00
Sub Total	16,693.00
Overheads and Profits	16,669.00
Contingencies	9,168.00
Anticipated Project Cost	192,530.00

Councillor Mrs R Myer opened the discussion and felt strongly that the Council could not justify spending this amount of money in the current economic climate on the refurbishment of toilets.

Councillor Dr P Skolar informed the Committee that he had spent a considerable amount of time at Mill Meadows during the Henley Festival and confirmed that the smell emanating from the toilets, even first thing in the morning and despite being recently cleaned and immaculate, was horrendous. This led the Committee to question whether the smell was due to poor drainage due to being in a low lying area, plumbing problems, bad ventilation or simply that the stench had penetrated the fabric of the building.

The Committee noted that a deep clean had taken place between two to three years ago, the effects of which lasted for approximately 6 months before the smell returned. The possibility of regular deep cleans was contemplated but it was recognised that this could be costly.

Councillor C I Pye summarised that the present toilets are inadequate and not to the standard the Council would like, however in order to move forward the Council needed to decide the amount they are prepared to spend on this project. This figure would dictate the possible solutions ranging from regular deep cleans to a complete refurbishment.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds reiterated the Council's position in that they did not want to release capital by selling investments in order to finance this project and therefore if the works were to require a significant sum, the funds would have to be obtained by way of a loan from the Public Works Loan Board.

The Town Clerk explained that due to the Council's reserves and the current economic climate, it may not be possible to acquire a loan. The Committee agreed that knowing whether a loan would be possible was crucial in order to make a decision on the future of the toilets.

The Committee recognised that immediate action was needed re the current state of the toilets, in particular the smell and that a deep clean should take place as soon as possible.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a deep clean be arranged for the public toilets at the Leichlingen Pavilion which should eliminate/reduce the smell during the busy summer months

that the Town Clerk seek advice from the National Association of Local Councils as to whether the Town Council would be eligible for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board for works to the public toilets at the Leichlingen Pavilion up to a sum of £300,000 and that this information be reported to Full Council.

that the Town Council, at its meeting on 27 July 2010, decide how much the Council is willing to spend on improving the public toilets at the Leichlingen Pavilion.

27. ACQUISITION OF UTILITY VEHICLE AND TRAILER

The Committee received a report on the acquisition of a utility vehicle and trailer for the Parks Services Team which is needed due to the Parks Services undertaking an enhanced range of services previously carried out by contractors, taking on additional staff and the need for greater operational flexibility.

The Committee received 3 quotations for multi-purpose trailers which will be suitable to transport the existing Kubota triple mower to locations around the town as follows:-

- Ifor Williams LM 126 (5m x 1.98m) £2,800.00 + vat
- Indespension FB35146 (14' x 6.6') £2,493.75 + vat
- Indespension FB35146 (14' x 6.6') £2,400.00 + vat

The Committee also received 3 quotations for utility vehicles with the following specifications:- utility pick up "crew cab"; 4 wheel drive, diesel engine; tow bar/electrics and local support (service/repair) as follows:-

- Toyota Hi Lux £19,160.38 (negotiated to £14,960)
Service, after-sales, repair: Henley on Thames
- Mitsubishi L200 £17,917 (negotiated to £16,660)
Service, after-sales, repair: Winnersh
- Ford Ranger £20,739 (no negotiation)
Service, after-sales, repair: Reading

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the Council applies £17,360 (£2,400 for the trailer and £14,960 for the Utility Vehicle) from the allocation of £103,000 in the Capital

Programme for the Parks Services equipment and machinery for the purchase of an Indespension FB35146 and a Toyota Hi Lux Utility Vehicle.

28. ALLOTMENTS

- i. The Committee received and noted an update regarding the fencing at Watermans Allotments and noted that a full report would be presented to the next meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee to be held on 28 September 2010 and this would include:-
- Outcome of the questionnaire sent to all Watermans plot holders in the May 2010 newsletter, regarding plot holders priorities (including views on fencing).
 - Case studies from other local authorities regarding best practice on deer fencing and vandalism.
 - Advice from NSALG (National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardening) on fencing and vandalism.
 - Advice from Stonor, Phillimore and adjacent landowners as to how best to keep deer out of the allotment/fencing specialists in the area.
 - Costing and positioning of propose fencing for each boundary of Watermans Allotment, which is partly dependent on whether or not the strip of land to the north of Watermans is converted into starter plots. This will include photographs of the proposed solutions.
 - Funding options.
- ii) The Committee received and considered a report regarding the proposal to extend the Watermans Allotments into the strip on the northern side of the allotments. The area is approximately 600 metres square and could provide approximately 8 starter plots.

The Committee considered the costs including quotations for the major cost of clearing the land (approximately 66 metres by 9 metres) as follows:-

Company A	-	£4,400 + vat
Company B	-	£2,000 + vat
Company C	-	Did not respond

The Committee also noted from the report that the number of plot holders has increased considerably over the last 3 years from 52 in 2006 to 94 in 2010. This is due to all the plots being rented out and 10 pole plots being split into 5 pole plots. The proposed extension would bring the number of plot holders on Watermans to 102. The Committee acknowledged this increase and the increase in demand on the existing 6 taps and the one car parking area that it had caused.

Councillor Dr B G Wood questioned whether the cost of the proposed extension and the associated improvements would come out of capital expenditure and the Town Clerk confirmed £20,000 had been allocated for this purpose (2010/2011). The Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds noted from the budget report that the Allotments are self-funding.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that planning permission be sought for Watermans Allotments to be extended into the southern half of the strip to the north of the Watermans Allotments

that, subject to planning approval, quote B be accepted (£2000 + vat) for the clearing of the southern half of the strip to the north of the Watermans Allotments

that investigation be made and costs sought to provide additional taps

that costs be sought to provide car parking in the south western corner of the allotment subject to the Parks Services no longer requiring the area

Concern was raised regarding a number of untended plots. Councillor C I Pye informed the Committee that he had recently attended the Allotment Association Committee meeting and assured the Committee that the Allotment Association were very vigilant with regard to uncultivated plots and have a procedure whereby plot holders are asked to vacate their plots if they do not work them.

The Committee congratulated the Allotment Association Committee on their hard work and proposed a vote of thanks be extended to them.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a vote of thanks be extended to the Allotment Association on their hard work.

29. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

It was moved by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds and **RESOLVED**

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

30. TEMPORARY MOORINGS

The Committee received an update regarding the two boats moored on the temporary moorings at Mill Meadows and were pleased to note progress was being made.

The Committee also noted with interest that Reading Borough Council had taken several boat owners to Court who had overstayed the amount of time they are allowed to moor in a particular area and had not moved on when asked to by the Council and the Court had found in Reading Borough Council's favour.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Chairman

bw