

Present: The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood
Councillor Mrs G Dodds
Councillor C W Gibson
Councillor Dr P Skolar
Councillor Dr B G Wood

In attendance: Mr M Kennedy, Town Clerk
Mr G Bartle, Parks Service Supervisor
Mrs C Robb, Moorings Administrator
Mrs B Walker, Committee Administrator

2 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs J Bland, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin and Mr A Brown (River and Rowing Museum). Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Dr P Skolar.

The Town Clerk confirmed the meeting was quorate.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood took the Chair.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood called for nominations for the election of Chairman.

Councillor Mrs G Dodds confirmed that Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin was willing to be nominated as Chairman of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee.

Councillor Mrs G Dodds nominated and Councillor C W Gibson seconded that Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin be elected Chairman of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee for the year 2010 – 2011.

There being no further nominations it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin be elected Chairman of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee for the year 2010 – 2011.

In her absence The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood remained in the Chair.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood called for nominations for the election of Vice Chairman.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood nominated that Councillor Dr B G Wood be elected Vice Chairman of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee for the year 2010 – 2011.

Councillor Dr B G Wood declined the nomination.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood proposed and Councillor Mrs G Dodds seconded Councillor C W Gibson be elected Vice Chairman for the year 2010 – 2011.

There being no further nominations it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor C W Gibson be elected Vice Chairman of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee for the year 2010 – 2011.

The Vice Chairman, Councillor C W Gibson took the Chair.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr P Skolar declared an interest in any discussions on Moorings as a boat Owner (Minute 8).

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mrs S Yeates, Meadow Road

Informed the Sub Committee that since the removal of the nest swing from the Adventure Playground there has been a considerable reduction in noise and the levels are now back to an acceptable level during the day. However there are continuing problems with teenagers making a noise in the evening and she confirmed she had called the police out three times in the last ten days to move them on. She asked if it would be possible to secure the equipment in the Adventure Playground at night or lock the gate.

Mr G Bartle, Parks Services Supervisor advised that it would not be practical to secure the equipment at night on health and safety grounds. Also that if the gate was locked at night it would probably lead to access being sought by climbing over the gate or fence which could also lead to health and safety issues and could lead to damage. Costs would also be incurred as staff would be required to come back and lock the gate.

Mrs Yeates noted that the Youth Shelter was not on the agenda for this meeting but re-iterated her previous concerns that if the Youth Shelter were located on the old putting green it could attract large numbers of teenagers which could lead to a noise nuisance. From Mrs Yeates's perspective it would be preferable for the Youth Shelter to be located on the other side of the Pavilion.

Councillor Dr B G Wood confirmed that the Youth Council were leading this project and the next step was for members of the Youth Council to view other Youth Shelters in the area and that no location has been decided upon.

Councillor Dr P Skolar joined the meeting at 9.40 am.

6. MINUTES

- i) The Minutes of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee held on 29 April 2010 were approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman.
- ii) The Committee received and considered the notes of a meeting re Security at Mill Meadows during Regatta held on 1 June 2010.

Councillor Mrs J Wood confirmed that she had attended the meeting and that the minutes were correct.

The notes of the meeting re Security at Mill Meadows during Regatta held on 1 June 2010 were approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Mrs J Wood informed the Committee that Sergeant G Pink (TVP) subsequent to the meeting had confirmed once the PCSO's who are on duty at Mill Meadows from 2 pm to 11 pm go off duty on the Friday and Saturday of Regatta the coverage will be by officers at sporadic intervals based on how busy the town centre is. Councillor Mrs Wood felt the Police were putting considerable efforts into managing potential situations within staffing constraints.

Post meeting note – the last train from Henley on Wednesday to Saturday of Regatta will leave after midnight and on Regatta Sunday it will leave at 23.35.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the CCTV cameras would be on a pre-set pattern as agreed with the Police.

Post meeting note – It has been confirmed by Hilary Green, Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Officer, SODC) that all the CCTV cameras (Town Centre and Mill Meadows) are operational as at Wednesday 30 June 2010 and the maintenance company have acknowledged the need for immediate attendance in the case of any breakdown and the Control Room will be double staffed at the busiest times during the Regatta.

7. PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the Progress Report and made the following comments:-

Entrance to Mill Meadows – Councillor Dr B G Wood thanked Mr and Mrs Yeates for cutting back their hedge.

8. MOORING CONDITIONS

i) Councillor Dr P Skolar declared an interest as a boat owner.

The Town Clerk referred to a letter received from Mr R Farman of Hotel Boat Baglady who is the owner of a 16.8 m narrow boat which is run as a hotel boat and who has asked for permission to moor at Mill/Marsh Meadows. The Town Clerk asked the Committee for clarification of the Town Council's General Mooring Conditions (2006) point "C3" which refers to the use of moorings for commercial or business purposes.

A discussion ensued regarding what constitutes a commercial or business purpose and the implications of such boats mooring at Mill Meadows and the following points were made:-

- Councillor Dr P Skolar commented that at its strictest interpretation "commercial or business" could include hire boats as well as hotel boats.
- Councillor Dr B G Wood felt "commercial" covered any transaction taking place between two people and a hotel boat should therefore be classified as commercial.

- It was noted however that the booking of a place on a hotel boat by a customer would have taken place prior to the boat arriving in Henley and the hotel boat would not be plying their trade on the river bank.
- It was also noted that there is a distinction between commercial enterprises such as hotel boats/hire boats and people selling items for instance refreshments or souvenirs from a boat to passers-by on the towpath.
- banning all commercial boats from mooring would mean boats like Baglady would not be able to moor even a few hours let alone overnight at Mill Meadows. This could deprive shops and restaurants in the town of potential customers.
- such boats could moor elsewhere in the town (for instance Regatta Reach, Marsh Meadows) however Mill Meadows is the most convenient place to moor for people with any sort of mobility issues or the elderly
- an alternative place to moor is Marsh Meadows however the draft is too shallow for many boats
- the current mooring conditions prevent commercial boats from blocking the temporary moorings and therefore stopping non commercial boats from mooring
- the size of the boat is an important factor as a large boat would take up a number of moorings and deprive other moorers of the opportunity to moor on the temporary moorings. However it was noted that the mooring conditions state "No vessel in excess of 25 metres length will be moored except by special permission of the Council" and it was felt this limit was appropriate.
- Mill Meadows should be for the enjoyment of everyone and should not be used for commercial enterprises

Following this discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that the Town Council's General Mooring Conditions (2006) point "C3" be amended to read (words in bold to be added)

"The Boat Owner shall not use, or allow to be used, the vessel or any part of the Council's property or premises for commercial or business purposes. **Commercial and business activity is defined as any trade that takes place from the vessel to members of the public along the towpath.**"

that no vessel in excess of 25 metres being allowed to moor except with special permission of the Council (included in point B1) be applied to all boats – commercial or non commercial.

The Town Clerk was asked and he confirmed that the above resolution could come under delegated powers and the mooring conditions could take effect from the Monday of Regatta week 2010.

- ii) The Committee considered whether the Town Council's Mooring Conditions (2006) point B1 should be amended in order that a canal boat or narrow boat which "doubles up" on a mooring should pay a mooring fee. Mrs C Robb reported that this issue had been discussed at a recent River Thames Alliance meeting and after much debate it has been decided that each boat should pay a mooring fee when they "double up".

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that point B1 of the Town Council's Mooring Conditions (2006) should be amended to read

"No vessel in excess of 25 metres length will be moored except by special permission of the Council. At busy periods and with the permission of Council staff, canal or narrow boats **ONLY** will be allowed to "double up" on moorings **provided the full mooring fees are paid by BOTH moorers** and the mooring does not obstruct other vessels or river traffic. Otherwise **NO** doubling-up or multiple moorings are allowed."

The Town Clerk was asked and he confirmed that the above resolution could come under delegated powers and the mooring conditions could take effect from the Monday of Regatta week 2010.

9. **MOORINGS – MEETING WITH ENVIRONMENT AGENCY/LOCAL COUNCILS**

The Committee received an update from Mrs C Robb regarding organising a meeting with local councils and the Environment Agency (minute 54 refers). Mrs Robb reported that Mr J Kennard of the Environment Agency was very supportive of the idea of local Town and Parish Council Officers meeting together with the Environment Agency in order to provide an opportunity for information to be shared and to help councils work towards a unified approach to the river. It was noted that this meeting would serve a different purpose to the River Thames Alliance meetings as it would be aimed at discussion between officers of local councils and the Environment Agency rather than all interested parties in the river.

It was suggested that local councils between Oxford and Windsor & Maidenhead be invited to the meeting (including Reading) to be held in the autumn and Ms S Russell, Secretariat of the Environment Agency has agreed to liaise with Mrs C Robb to draw up a list of the contact details of relevant officers. The Committee suggested Henley host the first meeting and the Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood welcome attendees and/or Chair the meeting. The intention would be for different councils to host the meeting which could be held annually or bi-annually as required. Suggested agenda items for the first meeting to include:- doubling up fees; boats overstaying their welcome; commercial use of the river; mooring fees.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that Henley Town Council liaise with the Environment Agency in order to organise a meeting of officers from local riverside councils and representatives of the Environment Agency to be hosted by Henley Town Council in the autumn.

Action: Mrs C Robb to liaise with Ms S Russell regarding the contact details of relevant officers in the local councils along the River Thames from Oxford to Windsor & Maidenhead (including Reading) and that initial contact be made to enquire if they would be interested in attending the first meeting to be held in the autumn and to put forward agenda items for discussion. Mrs C Robb to provide an update to the next meeting of the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee.

Mrs C Robb informed the Committee that the next meeting of the River Thames Alliance is to be held on 6 July 2010 and although Henley Town Councillors do attend there is no formal representative appointed by the Council. The Mayor,

Councillor Mrs J Wood agreed to attend the next meeting of the River Thames Alliance. The appointment of a Henley Town Council representative to the River Thames Alliance be added to the next Full Council agenda.

10. USE OF MILL/MARSH MEADOWS

The Committee noted that there had recently been three different requests received for the use of Mill and Marsh Meadows as follows:-

- “Fit for a Princess” outdoor exercise classes for ladies in Henley are planned to take place over 2 weeks at the end of June/beginning of July at 6 am in the morning at Mill Meadows. A payment for each class will be paid to the Town Council.
- Oxfordshire EBP Crash Landing Event – Thursday 17 June 2010. An event for local school children who will take part in team building Activities with Army personnel organised by the River and Rowing Museum.
- 447 Squadron of the Air Training Corps – to use Marsh Meadows for “green activities” including sports, basic navigation and camp craft (how to erect tents, safe layout of camps etc) as the Drill Hall does not have a green space.

In light of these requests the Town Clerk asked the Committee to consider a policy for use of this area for small scale organised activities. (It was noted there is a policy for the use of Mill/Marsh Meadows for larger events dated 2006 and amended in 2007 and 2008).

The Committee distinguished between commercial and non commercial events. It was felt that non commercial events should be able to proceed subject to the Town Clerk’s approval however the question of commercial events was more complex. It was felt that Mill Meadows, as a green open space, should be preserved for the enjoyment of everyone and certain commercial events may interfere with this however other small scale events could enhance the enjoyment of the area by the public.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that a report be presented to the next Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee in order that a policy for small organised commercial events at Mill and Marsh Meadows can be formulated.

11. EXCESS CHARGE NOTICES

The Committee received and noted the Excess Charge Notices report.

12. MOORINGS AND CAR PARKING, INCLUDING INCOME, REPORTS

The Committee received and noted the moorings and car parking income report.

Councillor Dr P Skolar asked what the “River expenses – charges for discharge” were.

Post meeting note: Mrs L Jones, Accountant has advised that “River expenses – charges for discharge” is the charges made by the Environment Agency for the discharge of the drain from the Mill Meadows Car Park into the river and in future this item will be renamed “Environment Agency charges” for clarity.

13. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed the next meeting would be held at 9.30 am on Thursday 9 September 2010 at the Town Hall.

14. 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.

15. TEMPORARY MOORINGS

The Committee received an update regarding the two boats moored at Mill Meadows and was pleased to note that progress is being made.

The meeting closed at 10.45 pm.

Chairman

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