

**Present:** The Chairman, Councillor Kellie Hinton  
Councillor Donna Crook  
Councillor Dave Eggleton (also representing the Gainsborough  
Residents Association)  
Helen Gaynor – Friends of Freeman’s & Northfield End and Bell  
Street Residents Group  
Sally Rankin – Henley Wildlife Group

**In Attendance:** Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk  
Karl Bishop - Parks Manager  
Kyle Dowling - Senior Park Warden/Horticultural Park Warden  
Ilona Livarski - Conservation Park Warden  
Becky Walker - Estates Manager  
Janet Munro-Nelson - Committee Administrator

**Also Present:** 1 member of the public  
1 member of the press

**36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sarah Miller and Lynne Adams (River and Rowing Museum).

**37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received.

**38. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

None

**39. MINUTES**

The Sub Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Open and Green Spaces Sub Committee held on 9 November 2018. Sally Rankin called attention to two points that she would like changed regarding Henley Wildlife Areas and Open Spaces. On page 5, Mrs Rankin wanted it clarified that the “recent work undertaken” under 28.i. was undertaken by the Conservation Park Warden. On page 6, Ms Rankin explained that the two plants listed after, “Upcoming Projects”, i.e., ‘pyramidal orchid’ and ‘fox and cubs’ were not on the Oxfordshire Threatened Plants List.

Members then noted and approved these amended minutes of the 9 November 2018 meeting and they were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

**40. FREEMAN’S MEADOW – IMPROVEMENTS**

Members received and considered a report from Helen Gaynor of Friends of Freeman’s Meadow (FFM) regarding activity in Freeman’s Meadow since 9 November 2018 including these verbal comments:

- it has been a great year at Freeman’s Meadow and wanted to thank everybody especially Parks and Becky Walker. FFM feels that the lines of communication are now open.

- orchard trees and shrubs have now been planted.
- FFM are looking forward to the new swings being installed at the end of February 2019.
- regarding the upgrade of playground, FFM has been consulted on which playground equipment should remain and which maybe could be removed to maximise use of the space. Mrs Gaynor queried if mud would be an issue if the whole playground was not surfaced in wetpour. Discussion of the playground surface ensued and it was noted the area is raised which helps with drainage.
- Mrs Gaynor asked for clarification regarding the funding for the playground upgrade and asked if grants were available. The Town Clerk confirmed there was £60,000 earmarked for this upgrade. The Town Clerk added that FFM has indicated they would like fencing all around the playground, a quite substantial area, and suggested the cost of the fencing could possibly be taken from an alternative budget and would seek the Accountant's advice (eg a maintenance budget rather than the new equipment budget).
- Councillor Eggleton suggested Friends of Freeman's should become a registered association similar to the Gainsborough Residents Association and would then be eligible for small grants.
- the location of the goals to be decided once the playground design is finalised

After discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that delegated powers be given to the Town Clerk, the Parks Manager, the Chair of Recreation and Amenities Committee, the Estates Manager, Councillor Donna Crook and Helen Gaynor to progress the project to upgrade the playground. A further report to be brought to this Committee or the Recreation and Amenities Committee regarding the expressions of interest/short listed companies.**

#### **41. NORTHFIELD END GREEN**

Members received and considered a report by Helen Gaynor on behalf of the Northfield End Green Group (NEGG) regarding the improvements to Northfield End Green.

The report told of local residents along with Councillor Dave Eggleton planting some 300 snowdrop and 150 crocus bulbs and a Photinia Red Robin shrub (all donated by Councillor Eggleton) on the Green.

Helen Gaynor spoke to the report and made the following comments:-

- the newly planted tree is thriving and is much admired
- the Ceremony was truly wonderful
- the next step is to replace the noticeboard
- attended a meeting with Viv Greenwood who has offered to provide local historical information of the area for display. As residents are keen to reduce signage pollution in this area and it has been suggested that a changing display of historical information is placed within the community section of the new noticeboard rather than having a static display (eg plaque). The Chairman suggested Rupert House School be involved in this project. The community section would also contain information on performances at the Kenton Theatre as it is a local facility
- the planting of the shrub bed is due to take place in the spring

After discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the report be noted**

One member of the public left the meeting at 9.55 am.

**42. HENLEY WILDLIFE AREAS AND OPEN SPACES**

- i. Members received a verbal report from Sally Rankin of the Henley Wildlife Group (HWG)/Henley in Transition as follows:-
- in December and January the HWG working parties worked on clearing areas on the Valley Road Chalk Bank and the Conservation Park Warden worked on clearing brambles and nettles by the Gainsborough Estate. The aim is to keep this area as natural grassland (as it has had minimal disturbance).
  - had a very productive meeting with Lynne Adam of the River and Rowing Museum (RRM), Town Clerk, Parks Manager, Senior Park Warden, Conservation Park Warden and Estates Manager. The RRM would like to improve the area to the front of the area and Sally is keen for it to be a wildflower area. It is planned to have RRM volunteers working with the HWG work parties on this area.
  - Sally Rankin subsequently had an introductory meeting with Sarah Posey (Director) and Helen Cook (Head of Learning) at the RRM. One topic of discussion was the re-printing of the Wildlife Trail leaflet which the RRM supported. Sally Rankin requested the leaflet also appear on the Town Council's website.

The Sub Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the Wildlife Trail leaflet be re-printed and also placed on the Town Council's website**

**that the Conservation Park Warden's Wildlife Treasure Hunt leaflet for Mill Meadows be printed**

***Post meeting note – the Accountant advised there is available money in the “Marketing of Facilities at Mill Meadows” budget.***

Sally Rankin confirmed the Henley Wildlife Group is now the “Nature Conservation Arm of Henley in Transition” but for ease would continue to be referred to as the Henley Wildlife Group.

Sally Rankin plans to work on a Green Living Plan for Henley including open spaces and parks for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chair thanked Sally Rankin for her work and it was **RESOLVED**

**that the above update be noted**

- ii. Members received a report from the Conservation Park Warden outlining projects she has been working on as follows:-

- the art work for the Wildlife Treasure Hunt leaflet at Mill Meadows which is aimed at children has been completed. The RRM indicated they may stock the leaflets.
- at the meeting with the RRM the possibility of holding a “Wildlife Week” this summer similar to the Wildlife Trust’s “30 Days Wild” which campaigns for people to be outside and do something wild. It is hoped also to incorporate the Big Butterfly Count (19 July to 11 August). The RRM were keen to be involved and a further meeting is to take place to discuss this collaboration.
- working on the hedge cutting rotations – it is planned to cut alternative sides of the conservation hedges on alternate years so there is always young growth on one side of the hedge. To cut both sides causes destruction on both sides. A record of which hedges are cut and when will be kept.
- organising a butterfly transect on Gillotts Field with a volunteer. This involves undertaking a survey each week between April and October.
- organising a volunteer day with Sue Ryder and Henley in Transition to work at 40 Acre Field woodland area. The Chairman suggested contacting Park Run to see if runners would volunteer.
- liaising with Badgemore School regarding the project to have both sides of the road as wildlife areas (eg in Badgemore School and the part of the grass verge opposite). It is planned put notices up (saying “Nature is not a place to visit – it is home”) and a press opportunity to promote awareness.
- sowing wildflower seeds at Freemans where the grass is to be left unmown (by Pearce’s Orchard)
- investigating the possibility of using wildflower turf at Makins by the skatepark
- the Parks Service will undertake the Big Garden Bird Watch at Mill Meadows this weekend
- one of the Valley Road signs had become unstuck and repairs were being sought.  
***Post meeting note:** the manufacturer is replacing the signs free of charge.*

The Chairman felt that conservation and awareness of it in Henley had improved rapidly thanks to the Wildlife Group and the Conservation Park Warden and fully supports the Wildlife/Conservation Week.

The Chairman thanked Ilona Livarski for her work and it was **RESOLVED**

**that the report be noted**

**43. MILL AND MARSH MEADOWS – BARBECUE POLICY**

This item was referred back from the Recreation and Amenities Committee Meeting of 13 November 2018. Members received a report which listed the advantages and disadvantages of having barbecues at Marsh Meadows and a discussion ensued and the following comments were made:-

- the Town Clerk advised that a Park Ranger should be employed again for 2019 and this was supported by the Parks Manager
- the Conservation Park Warden outlined the environmental impact of barbecues as follows:-
  - encourages single use plastic
  - charcoal production is unsustainable
  - burns the grass and harms the tree roots

- if the barbecue ban is upheld it would be useful to put statistics on the signage to reinforce the ban
- the scale of the barbecues has grown significantly had has lead to Increased rubbish (and danger for wildlife)
- steps should be taken to prevent the negative messages which appeared on social media last year

The Sub Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the temporary ban on barbecues in Marsh Meadows is extended permanently**

**that a Park Ranger is employed to enforce the ban in 2019**

**that this recommendation be referred to Full Council on 5 March 2019 for a decision in order that a decision is in place for Easter**

**44. MILL MEADOWS - RIVER AND ROWING MUSEUM**

The Chairman advised Lynne Adams, Operations Director, had sent her apologies. Members received and noted a written report providing an update on the current and future exhibitions and operational matters.

The Sub Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that report be noted**

**45. PROGRESS**

Members received and considered the progress report:-

- Fencing by Brunner Hill has been installed and hedge has now been planted in front of the fencing – completed – remove from the report
- Freeman’s Meadow – Town Green status – to be considered by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee on 12 February 2019.
- Freeman’s Meadow Swings installation is due on 25 February will be placed on Contracts Finder
- Northfield End Green – the Recreation and Amenities Committee recommended a noticeboard be bought for Northfield End Green from capex.
- the Events Team are investigating lights in the tree for Christmas 2019

It was **RESOLVED**

**that the report be noted**

**46. MOORING AND CAR PARKING – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Members received and noted the management accounts for Mill Meadows up to December 2018.

**47. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as **Friday 5 April 2019 at 9.30 a.m.**

The meeting closed at 10:21 am

