

- Present: The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood
The Vice Chairman, Councillor M Akehurst
The Mayor – Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor D Clenshaw
Councillor Miss S Evans
Councillor I Reissmann
- In attendance: Mr M Kennedy – Town Clerk
Mrs B Walker – Committee Administrator/Minute Taker
- Also Present: 3 members of the public
1 member of the press

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Silvester.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

30. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr P Anderson, 159 Greys Road (minute 32 – Street Snooker, Makins Recreation Ground) made the following comments:-

- the Street Snooker wall does not appear to have sound proofing and therefore when the balls hit the wall it will create noise issues for neighbours
- the installation of bare tarmac may not meet health and safety standards

Mr W Hamilton – 153 Greys Road (minute 32 – Street Snooker, Makins Recreation Ground) made the following comments:-

- queried the reference in the report to a “unused” football pitch as he has observed it is regularly used for football and cricket
- is against the proposal and there are few green spaces in the centre of Henley and feels it should remain as such for the use of the people of the town
- having spoken to a number of residents from the Gainsborough Estate the view was the £1000 hire cost could have been better spent and that the £16,000 purchase price is excessive

31. VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with Standing Order 5 (a) (vi) it was **RESOLVED**

that in view of the public present at the meeting the order of business on the agenda be altered to allow the Committee to consider minute 32 – Street Snooker – Makins Recreation Ground next.

32. **STREET SNOOKER – MAKINS RECREATION GROUND**

The Committee received a report by the Town Clerk which contained feedback from participants who used the mobile street snooker games wall which was hired by the Town Council (and was part funded by Oxfordshire County Council) and was made available from 10 am – 6 pm at Makins Recreation Ground on 13 August 2013. The feedback was largely positive and the Committee was asked to consider purchasing a street snooker games wall at a cost of £16,518 to be funded from the capital budget 2013/14 and to make provision in the future for extending the project to incorporate a multi-use games area (MUGA).

A lengthy debate ensued which included the following points:-

- there are no restrictive covenants on Makins Recreation Ground
- Makins should remain a green space for aesthetic, environmental and recreational reasons
- Makins has a number of recreational areas on its green space
- concerns were raised regarding spending this amount on a non-traditional sport
- although the feedback was positive from the trial day the sample was small with only 20 people completing feedback forms
- a holistic approach should be adopted by the Town Council and a review of all recreational areas in its ownership should be undertaken and not just Makins Recreation Ground.
- a spreadsheet entitled “Ideas for Improvements” was referred to which was produced following a site-meeting at Makins with the Town Clerk, Councillor Ms L Meachin and Councillor Mrs J Wood. A member asked this be circulated to all members.

Post meeting note: the report has been circulated by email to all members with updates provided.

- It was suggested a review of recreational facilities be referred to the Neighbourhood Plan however it was noted this may delay any decisions

It was proposed and seconded

that a decision on improvements to Makins Recreation Ground be deferred and that the drawing up of a policy for all recreational areas be referred for consideration by the Neighbourhood Plan

An amendment to the motion was proposed and seconded

that the words “for all recreational areas” and “Neighbourhood Plan” be removed and replaced with “Makins Recreation Ground” and “Henley Town Council”

A vote was taken on the amendment – motion lost.

A vote was taken on the original motion – motion carried.

The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk for his report.

33. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 23 July 2013 were approved and then signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood as a true record.

34. PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received, considered and noted the progress report that Sport England had refused the grant application put in for the multi-wheeled sports facility at Makins.

It was requested that outstanding items from the spreadsheet produced following the meeting at Makins with Councillors Mrs J Wood, Ms L Meachin and the Town Clerk be added to relevant progress reports of Town and Community and Recreation and Amenities Committee.

It was noted a report will be presented to the Mill Meadows and River Sub Committee regarding a holistic review of moorings including the provision of facilities, condition of the river bank and charges. A report will be presented to a future Recreation and Amenities Committee regarding the management and medium and long term strategy for the moorings as recommended by the Finance Strategy and Management meeting held on 10 September 2013.

35. BUDGET

The Committee received, considered and noted the outturn of the budget report to July 2013 and that the car parking figures for August, which members noted were very healthy.

36. MILL MEADOWS - REFURBISHMENT OF THE TOILETS

The Committee received, considered and noted the notes of the Toilet Refurbishment Working Group's meetings held on 2 August, 28 August and 9 September 2013. The Mayor recapped that 5 companies had been approached to produce the initial design, detailed design to tender, undertake the tender process and supervise the the refurbishment, 2 of whom had provided quotes. There was a variation of £10,000 between the two quotes however it was a unanimous decision to recommend appointing Robert Rigby Architects Ltd as during the meeting he had shown a complete understanding of the Town Council's requirement for this project and its importance and could provide a high level of expertise and experience. The Mayor also proposed the Toilet Working Group be given delegated powers to enable them to make decisions on such matters as the type of tiles, lighting, colour schemes etc in order to enable this project to progress between meetings and ensure the refurbishment is complete by the summer of 2014.

A lengthy discussion ensued and the following comments were made:-

- a project such as this will require many small decisions to be made and giving delegated powers to the Working Group is a practical solution. The final decision re costs/tenders will be brought back to this Committee
- it was noted the rules and regulations surrounding the provision of toilets have become more complicated and advice will be required particularly with regard to provision for the disabled
- signage should be erected to say no washing up of plates etc. should take place in the toilets
- it was noted a ballpark figure of £100,000 rather than £50,000 has been reported by Robert Rigby Architects Ltd and that the budget has provided for £50,000 only. The final figure will not be known until tenders are received.
- appointing Robert Rigby Architects Ltd does not mean accepting a price for the refurbishment of £100,000 plus £16,000 fees
- it is intended the new facility should last 20 years plus – choosing a cheaper option could be a false economy and could shorten the life of the new facility

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

that the appointment of Robert Rigby Architects Ltd as the preferred contractor for the design, tendering arrangements and project management of the refurbishment contract of the toilets at Mill Meadows at a cost of £16,325, be recommended to Full Council

that the Toilet Working Group be given delegated powers to make decisions regarding the choice of sanitary ware, type of floor/wall finish, colours, lighting etc. in order to progress the contract

Councillor I Reissmann requested it be minuted that there is £50,000 in the budget for this project and it has not been considered in this debate to spend more than this amount.

37. ALLOTMENTS

The Committee received and considered a report regarding the provision of facilities and financing of the Allotment Association. The report outlined that there are “hidden” costs which are not separated out in the Town Council’s accounts with regard to the running of the Allotments e.g. the Parks Service costs (grass cutting, hedge cutting, tree maintenance etc) and office administration (maintaining the plot holders register, collection of rents etc). It is the Accountant’s view that this cost would be at least £1500 and therefore the estimated true figure for expenditure is £3,900 – giving a projected “profit” of £100 for 2013/14 and £500 for 2014/15.

The Committee considered increasing the management fee to the Allotment Association who carry out work on behalf of the Council e.g. managing the sites, letting plots and holding the waiting list, terminating agreements with plot holders, producing newsletters, arranging insurance etc. The fee is currently £400 and has not increased since 2006/7.

The Committee also noted the Allotment Association fund some infrastructure maintenance from its own funds (raised through social events) eg repair of taps and water pumps, strimming overgrown plots etc. It was felt these should be paid for by the Town Council.

The Committee received and considered a request for the Council to purchase 2 new noticeboards for each site. These noticeboards convey urgent information (concerning vandalism, bonfires etc) as well as social events. The current noticeboards are old and weathered.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that an additional amount of £350 is paid to the Allotment Association to cover these urgent, day-to-day repairs. This will be funded from the expected profit of £500 for 2014/15.

that the management fee be increased from £400 to £550 to cover £350 honoraria (5 x £70), insurance costs (£120 for 2013/14), newsletter and AGM costs/postage (approx. £80). This will be funded from the expected ‘profit’ of £500 for 2014/15.

that costs be obtained for provision and installation of 4 new noticeboards and re-presented at the next meeting for approval.

38. RED LION LAWN

The Committee received and considered a report of the new arrangements in place for the use of Red Lion Lawn for serving light refreshments by the Red Lion Hotel that addressed a number of concerns raised by members and the remedial action taken. The Committee noted a requirement of the licence is for the Red Lion Hotel to keep the area clean and to empty the bins. The Town Clerk confirmed he had a good working relationship with the Manager of the hotel.

Members commented that, despite a number of teething problems, the feedback from residents consulted is positive, that staff were extremely polite and helpful and the dual use of the site was very popular. After discussion **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the licence for the Red Lion Hotel to serve light refreshments on Red Lion Lawn be extended for 2014 – the details to be clarified by the Town Clerk.

39. OPEN SPACES SOCIETY – CHOOSING DIRECTION – STRATEGIC THINKING FOR 2013 – 2018

The Committee received and considered the Open Spaces draft strategic plan for 2013 – 2018. The Committee supported the aims, objectives and work of the Open Spaces report and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the Town Clerk respond to the Open Spaces Society on behalf of the Town Council

40. STATUE – STATION PARK

The Committee received and considered a report by the Town Clerk requesting free use of the Old Fire Station Gallery for an exhibition as a quid pro quo arrangement for the loan of the Frog Ball Statue at Station Park and after discussion **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that free use of the Old Fire Station Gallery be given between 6 – 13 November 2013 for an exhibition of works in recognition of the loan of the Frog Ball statue, Station Park

41. FAIRMILE – REGATTA PARKING

The Committee received and noted a letter of thanks from the Lions Club of Henley regarding the Regatta parking on the Fairmile, which raised £2110 for local charities and organisations and some individuals in the locality.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Chairman

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