

Present: Councillor Mrs G Dodds (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Mrs R Myer
Councillor Miss L Pye
Councillor S R Smith
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor Dr B G Wood
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (Ex-Officio)
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood (ex-officio)

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

Also present: 1 Member of the Press
1 Member of the Public

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for lateness was received from the Mayor, Councillor E Hodgkin.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor I Reissmann declared a personal interest regarding any discussion on allotments as a member of the Allotments Association.

50. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded

that Councillor Mrs G Dodds be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Local Government year.

No further nominations were received.

A vote was taken – motion carried.

Councillor Mrs G Dodds took the Chair and thanked the Committee for their vote of confidence.

51. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was proposed and seconded

that Councillor I Reissmann be elected as Vice Chairman for the remainder of the Local Government year.

A vote was taken – motion carried.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds thanked Councillor I Reissmann for agreeing to be Vice Chairman.

52. MINUTES

- i. The minutes of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 10 November 2009 were approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs G Dodds.
- ii. The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Christmas Decorations Sub Committee held on 5 November 2009.

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND**

that the minutes of the Christmas Decorations Sub Committee held on 5 November 2009 be received, approved and adopted.

- iii. The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Christmas Decorations Sub Committee held on 26 November 2009.

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND**

that the minutes of the Christmas Decorations Sub Committee held on 26 November 2009 be received, approved and adopted

53. PROGRESS REPORT

Councillors received and considered the Progress Report and made the following comments:

Sports Centre and Sports Centre Management Contract – The Town Clerk reported on a successful meeting with the previous provider and expected all financial issues to be resolved by the end of the year.

Councillor Mrs J Wood joined the meeting.

Trees at Makins – noted and that this item be removed from the Progress Report.

Hedge Cutting, Greys Road – Councillor Mrs G Dodds updated the Committee regarding correspondence with Mr John Backley of South Oxfordshire District Council, who had advised that SODC was liaising with SOHA regarding the cutting of the hedge at Greys Road and expected to have the hedge cut by February (before the birds start nesting).

Gillotts Field – The Town Clerk referred to recent communications with Oxfordshire County Council whereby they had advised that, in their opinion, now that Gillotts Field is registered as a Town Green it would not be permissible to use it for allotments.

Councillor Mrs R Myer felt that it was important for more allotments to be provided for the people of Henley and suggested the possibility of publicising the idea of people leaving land to the Town Council to be used as allotments or gifting land. Councillor Mrs G Dodds suggested the Henley Standard may like to publicise this.

The Town Clerk advised that there would be financial implications to the Town Council even if land was left or gifted to it for use as allotments for example the cost of bringing land up to a cultivatable standard, providing water, fencing, and maintenance.

Councillor I Reissmann noted that although the waiting list for allotments in Henley was not currently long, this was largely due to demand being met by splitting larger plots into two but the number of larger plots was now limited. Councillor I Reissmann also acknowledged that in today's economic climate the length of the list was likely to increase.

The Town Clerk confirmed a report on the allotments would be presented to the next Recreation and Amenities Committee.

54. BUDGET

The Committee received and noted the budget report for October 2009.

55. MAKINS RECREATION GROUND

The Committee received and considered a report regarding registering Makins Recreation Ground as a Town Green, as this question had been raised at Public Question Time at Full Council.

Councillor B Wood felt that registering Makins Recreation Ground as a Town Green would protect its status as a recreational area and would send a message to potential developers that Henley Town Council valued green areas in the town.

Councillor I Reissmann commended Councillor Wood on his comments but felt by registering the area as a Town Green it may restrict other recreational uses that the Council may decide in the future are appropriate to the area and noted that the District Council had advised that it would not grant permission for development of the area.

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND**

that no further action be taken regarding registering Makins Recreation Ground as a Town Green.

56. 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 (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 as matters which were about to be discussed are considered to be confidential.

57. FIRST CHAPEL, FAIRMILE CEMETERY

The Committee received and considered a report regarding the First Chapel at the Fairmile Cemetery.

The Town Clerk advised that the Committee could decide to discuss certain aspects surrounding the First Chapel in open session if it wished.

Councillor I Reissmann asked if guidelines could be produced giving the criteria required for an item to be confidential. Councillor B Wood agreed the Finance and Administration Committee could undertake this task. Councillor I Reissmann believed this would be helpful as he felt it was best for discussion to take place in open session but understood certain topics were sensitive, particularly when a third party was involved.

Councillor B Wood explained that many options had been considered with regard to the future of the First Chapel at the Fairmile Cemetery and acknowledged that the process had taken a considerable amount of time, but that this reflected the complexity and sensitivity of the situation and felt it was important to take time to find the right solution.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin joined the meeting.

Councillor B Wood believed an application should be made to English Heritage to see if the First Chapel could be de-listed. This would mean more options would be open to the Council regarding the Chapel's future and noted the process would be likely to take up to 5 months.

Councillor I Reissmann felt the Town Council should ask the South Oxfordshire District Council to lift the restrictive covenant on the First Chapel which states that the Chapel can only be used for cemetery use.

A lengthy discussion ensued and it was noted that the First Chapel was no longer used for its original purpose as a Non Conformist Chapel and that an appropriate alternate use was difficult to find. Some members were of the opinion that the First Chapel had limited historical interest and it was not a unique building.

The Committee **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND**

that an application be made to English Heritage to de-list the First Chapel at the Faiimile.

that the South Oxfordshire District Council be asked to remove the restrictive covenant.

that the Town Clerk prepares a paper on the criteria required for items to be considered in the confidential section of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Chairman

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