

Present: The Chairman, Councillor Kellie Hinton
Vice Chairman Councillor Sarah Miller
Councillor Julian Brooks (substituting for Councillor Laurence Plant)
Councillor Donna Crook
Councillor Dave Eggleton (also representing the Gainsborough Residents Association)
Helen Gaynor – Friends of Freemans & Northfield End and Bell Street Residents Group

In Attendance: Karl Bishop - Parks Service Manager
Kyle Dowling - Senior Park Warden/Horticultural Park Warden
Ilona Livarski - Conservation Park Warden
Becky Walker - Estates Manager
Judith Smith - Committee Administrator

Also Present: 1 member of the press

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Laurence Plant, (Councillor Julian Brooks substituting), Sally Rankin (Henley Wildlife Group) and Lynne Adam (River and Rowing Museum). The Chairman asked that those from outside organisations such as the Henley Wildlife Group and the River and Rowing Museum consider providing a substitute when they are unable to attend, as the Sub Committee hadn't seen some members for over six months worth of meetings.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

50. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

None.

51. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Open and Green Spaces Sub Committee held on 25 January 2019 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

52. FREEMANS MEADOW AND NORTHFIELD END GREEN – IMPROVEMENTS

i Members received an update regarding progress on the Playground Upgrade. Three companies had been shortlisted by the Working Group using delegated powers. Short informal meetings had been held with each company to give them more of a steer as to what is required before formal presentations on Thursday 25 April 2019. It is anticipated that a recommendation will be put to Full Council on 30 April 2019 with a view to the upgraded playground being ready by the beginning of August 2019.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the report be noted

- ii Members received and considered a report from Helen Gaynor of Friends of Freemans Meadow (FFM). Helen Gaynor stated that progress at Freemans Meadow was leaping ahead, with installation of the new swings proving very popular and the Working Group making progress with the Playground Upgrade. An application for the “It’s Your Neighbourhood” category of the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom had been submitted and an event was planned for Freemans as part of the Chelsea Fringe in Henley in May 2019. The Chairman commented that whilst these events would be great to put on, all members are stretched and it may be that an event at Freemans would be better later in the year to tie in with the opening of the upgraded playground.

A proposal for native bulb planting at Freemans had received popular support and FFM volunteers were looking forward to working with the Conservation Park Warden on planting in the autumn. The Sub-Committee discussed a budget provision for this and a figure of £250 was agreed with any additional funding to come from Henley in Bloom.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that £250 be allocated for native bulb planting at Freemans Meadow in Autumn 2019 and that any additional funding be requested from Henley in Bloom

Helen Gaynor reiterated that keeping grass cutting at a consistently neat level at Freemans this summer would be much appreciated by FFM. The Parks Manager confirmed it was anticipated that grass cutting for the large areas, including Freemans would be on a fortnightly basis, weather and staff permitting.

- iii Members received and considered a request from the FFM to incorporate a noticeboard in or near the playground. Helen Gaynor reported that a recent email survey of FFM had shown that there was support in principle for a noticeboard for community as well as necessary notices, although a few respondents had felt this would be municipalisation of a rural park. The Sub-Committee noted that the Green Flag park scheme does require necessary signage, e.g. “no bikes” to be placed at park entrances but it may also be useful to post relevant council agendas on noticeboards to encourage more people to participate in council meetings, particularly those not on email. Members agreed however that as a review of all noticeboards is currently being undertaken to ensure a holistic approach is adopted across the town, this noticeboard should be considered at a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the request be noted and the matter brought back to a future meeting so that it can be thoroughly investigated

- iv Members noted that the Toilet Working Group are investigating the provision of toilets for Makins Recreation Ground and Mill Lane Car Park and had asked this Sub-Committee to consider if Freemans Meadow should be included in the investigations. Helen Gaynor reported that a recent FFM email survey on the subject had shown there was no requirement for toilets at Freemans Meadow.

It was **RESOLVED**

that toilets were not required at Freemans Meadow

- v Northfield End Green – Members received and considered a report from Helen Gaynor regarding progress at Northfield End Green. An application for the “It’s Your Neighbourhood” category of the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom had been submitted and an event also was planned for Northfield End Green as part of the Henley Fringe in May 2019. The Chairman commented that the IYN initiative would really provide the group with the extra recognition it deserved. A new noticeboard has been ordered and will be installed in a few weeks time, to house community information and informative local and historical information. Helen Gaynor thanked Councillor Eggleton for the donation of a petrol lawnmower and electric strimmer to enable residents to keep the green pristine in between mowing by the Park Services. The Sub-Committee noted however that the insurance and health and safety aspects of using power tools would need to be checked to ensure that residents and the public are covered. The Chairman thanked Helen Gaynor for all her help at Freemans and Northfield End Green.

53. MILL MEADOWS - RIVER AND ROWING MUSEUM

The Chairman advised that Lynne Adams, Operations Director, had sent her apologies due to a last minute meeting. Members noted that as the Operations Director she is very busy and it might be worth seeing if another member of staff could attend future meetings if she is unavailable. Councillor Brookes offered to ask the Trustees for guidance on a suitable substitute.

54. UPDATE ON CONSERVATION

Members received a report from Ilona Livarski, Conservation Park Warden. Ilona Livarski spoke to the report and the following points were made:

- **Chalk Bank** – tree surveys have now been completed and recommended work undertaken. Sycamores have been thinned to allow the woodland understorey to grow up.
- **Mill Meadows** – Ilona Livarski, Sally Rankin and Lynne Adam together with volunteers from the Henley Wildlife Group and the River and Rowing Museum had had two very productive sessions clearing back brambles and nettles from the front of the museum. The area is now nearly ready for planting up with wildflower seeds to be collected from Marsh Meadows and Ilona expressed her thanks to Sally and Lynne for all their hard work.
- **40 Acre Field Woodland** – the area had become overgrown and a volunteer working party comprising members from Henley in Transition and Sue Ryder with help from the Parks Service had come together to rake the mown grass to create habitat piles for wildlife.
- **Freemans Meadow** – a successful day had been spent with volunteers from Friends from Freemans sowing wildflower seeds. Ilona Livarski thanked Helen Gaynor for her help with organising the work parties.
- **Gillotts Field** – the hedge had been prepared ready for laying in November and signs had been put up to encourage people to keep to the paths whilst the bee orchids are flowering.

- **Makins** – Makins hedge had been cut which had been a huge undertaking. The wood chipped cuttings had been placed on the steps to Waterworks Lane. Ilona Livarski expressed her thanks to all involved.
- **Cemetery** – primroses are flowering in the cemetery and so there will be no strimming in the old section for the time being. Temporary notices had been put up to explain this to the public.

A new wildlife leaflet had been printed for Mill and Marsh Meadows and Ilona Lavarski expressed her thanks to Helen Barnett (Town Manager) for her help in producing the leaflet. These will be distributed to the River and Rowing Museum and the Nursery at Mill Meadows and a member suggested that these could also be given to local primary schools. It was noted that for the next print run, the Henley Town Council logo would be added to the front of the leaflet.

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

that the report be noted

The Chairman commented that the Council were heading in a very positive direction with regard to conservation issues and raised the possibility of an “eco vehicle” for conservation work.

After discussion, it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the matter be referred to the Recreation and Amenities Committee to look into options for an “eco vehicle.”

55. UPDATE ON HORTICULTURAL PROJECTS

Members received an update from Kyle Dowling, Horticulture Park Warden. Kyle Dowling spoke to the report and made the following comments:

- preparatory work for the new season, i.e. mulching, edging, pruning and hedge cutting, had been completed.
- a successful pruning workshop had been held at Freemans Meadow with FFM volunteers and Kyle Dowling thanked Helen Gaynor for her help in organising this event.
- Northfield End Green bed is now prepared and ready for planting in the next few weeks and Kyle Dowling asked that thanks be relayed to all the groups involved for their hard work and enthusiasm.
- Beds are being prepared for planting and meetings have taken place between Parks and the Gardening Buddies to create a plan of work and investigate the designs for the Celebration Beds

The Chairman thanked Kyle Dowling for all his hard work particularly at this time of year when the work is mainly preparation.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the update be noted.

56. USE OF THE PUTTING GREEN AT MILL MEADOWS

Members considered a proposal from the operators of the Piazza Café, the Battistas, to place a small cabin/kiosk inside the entrance of the putting green to sell ice creams and hire out putting equipment which would enable the putting green to be

open this year. A decision by the Town Council not to open the Visitor Information Kiosk this year (from which putting equipment was hired) had meant that the putting green was not due to open this year. Members discussed the advantages of the proposal, such as ease of hiring equipment, ease of purchasing drinks and ice creams by users in the adjacent playgrounds, enabling the reinstatement of popular attraction, and the disadvantages, such as competition for existing ice cream sellers and increased litter particularly non-recyclable plastic.

Karl Bishop left the meeting at 10.20am.

There was general agreement that it was the duty of the Town Council to keep the putting green open and whilst it was recognised that commercial business at Mill Meadows should not be ruled out, this was not a suitable location for an ice cream kiosk.

A vote was taken. Councillor Brookes voted for the proposal but the majority were against.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the proposal be rejected.

Councillor Eggleton left the meeting at 10.29am.

57. MILL MEADOWS MOORINGS

- i Members considered a request for the Mushroom Bargee Pizza Boat to moor and sell pizza at Mill Meadows on alternate weekends during the summer. Members were in favour of the proposal as a popular addition to the Meadows in the summer.

It was **RESOLVED**

that permission be granted to the Mushroom Bargee Pizza Boat to moor at Mill Meadows on alternate weekends from 11 May 2019 until the end of the school holidays (weather and river conditions permitting) and sell pizza between 13.00 and 21.00

that permission granted by the Council include the provisos that no vehicles be driven to the boat on the tow path and that all rubbish is removed from site (R and A minute 28 – 10.7.18)

- ii Members considered a request from the organisers of a river treasure hunt for a boat to moor and sell ice cream from the moorings at Mill Meadows on 11 May 2019 in the afternoon. Since this was a one off event happening out of season, for one hour only, members were content for this to go ahead. It was agreed that operators of the Piazza Cafe should be informed of the event.

It was **RESOLVED**

that permission be granted for a boat selling ice cream to moor at Mill Meadows on Saturday 11 May 2019 between 2pm and 3pm as part of a river treasure hunt organised by Phyllis Court members

58. PROGRESS

Members considered the progress report:-

- *Freeman's Meadow Swings* - have been installed, inspected and are in use – remove from progress
- *Northfield End Green* – planting to take place in April/May – noted ongoing
- *Freemans Meadow Football Goals* – 7 a-side goals will be installed when the footprint for the new playground is known - noted ongoing
- *Makins Football Goals* – 7 a-side goals have been installed, nets available on request – remove from progress
- *Mill and Marsh Meadows* – Barbeque ban preparations completed – remove from progress

It was **RESOLVED**

that the report be noted

59. MOORING AND CAR PARKING – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Members received and noted the management accounts for Mill Meadows up to March 2019.

60. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Sub-Committee agreed that the date of the next meeting would be set by the Recreation and Amenities Committee.

The meeting closed at 10:36 am

js/bw

Chairman