

**Present:** The Chairman, Councillor Sarah Miller  
The Vice Chairman, Councillor Dave Eggleton  
The Mayor, Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton  
Councillor David Nimmo Smith  
Councillor Sam Evans

Lynne Adam – River and Rowing Museum

**In Attendance:** Janet Wheeler – Town Clerk  
Karl Bishop – Senior Park Warden  
Marcus Militello – Conservation Park Warden  
Becky Walker – Administrator/Minute taker

**Also Present:** 8 members of the public  
1 member of the press

## **27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Miss Lorraine Hillier and Mrs Sally Rankin.

## **28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **29. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

*Peter Lloyd – 10 Leicester Close – Minute 33 – Freemans Meadow*

Spoke to the proposal submitted by the Friends of Freemans (FoF) for consideration at this meeting and explained the reasons for the recommendations regarding new and existing benches, the location and number of general and dog bins, drafting a conservation/landscaping plan and refurbishment of the play area. Also advised a timetable for the refurbishment would be helpful. He felt a decision on the precise location of benches should form part of the design of the whole area.

Mr Lloyd thanked the Parks Services for recent meetings and for arranging the planting of 160 hedge saplings with the help of 4 residents.

*Catharine Notaras – Elizabeth Road - Minute 33 – Freemans Meadow*

Referred to the previous consultation undertaken by the Town Council regarding improvements to Freemans and Makins and these comments should be taken into consideration.

*Post meeting note – the results of the survey undertaken in 2014/15 have been forwarded to the Friends of Freemans.*

*Helen Gaynor – Bell Street – Minute 33 – Northfield End Green*

Spoke to the proposal submitted by the residents of Northfield End and Bell Street and explained the aim is to improve the look of Northfield End Green following consultation with nearby residents. The plan is divided into 2 parts – new landscaping and to improve the existing signage and reduce “signage pollution”.

The Town Clerk advised she may know of a potential sponsor for this area.

*James Barr – Minute 34 – Minutes – Park Run* – spoke regarding possible location for a Junior 2km Park Run on Sunday mornings and the suggestion this be held at Henley Rugby Club and would like to confirm a date to meet with a small number Councillors to explore the options.

*Connor Wright – Minute 31 – Mill Meadow Event* – was invited to the table and spoke to his application to use Mill Meadows for a small event as part of his Business Studies course and to raise money for Sue Ryder.

*Catharine Notaras – Elizabeth Road – Minute 33 - Freemans Meadow*

- asked that the principals concerning conservation could be extended to other green spaces owned by the Town Council.
- expressed concern regarding the clearing of hedging and shrubs due to the disruption it causes to wildlife and asked if a conservation assessment had taken place beforehand.
- highlighted the erosion of grass verges by car parking.
- asked if the Town Council had a conservation policy for its Open Spaces.

*Tony Lawson-Smith – Northfield End – Minute 33 – Freemans Meadow*

- Queried the amount budgeted for Freemans in the revenue accounts which was confirmed as £500.
- Thanked the Town Council and Parks Service for removing the youth shelter.

### **30. VARIATION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS**

In accordance with the Standing Orders 5 (a) (viii), it was **RESOLVED**

**that in view of the member of the public present the Order of Business on the agenda is altered to allow Item 13 – Mill Meadows Event to be considered next**

### **31. MILL MEADOWS – EVENT**

Members received and considered a request from a Henley College student to hold a small event at Mill Meadows as part of his Business Studies course on “planning an event” to be held on Thursday 3 May 2018 in the afternoon.

Members were supportive of the event and made the following comments:-

- the event be held later to enable school children to attend eg 3.30 – 5.30 pm
- litter to be removed and any damage made good should it occur

After discussion the Sub Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that permission be given for an event to be organised by Henley College be held at Mill Meadows on Thursday 3 May 2018 in the afternoon subject to the necessary public liability insurance and risk assessment being provided and all necessary permissions**

### **32. NORTHFIELD END GREEN**

Members received and considered a report from the residents of Northfield End and Bell Street regarding improvements to Northfield End Green.

Members congratulated the residents for their initiative in producing the report which was very welcome. During discussion the following points were made:-

- the signage element be referred to the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department - it was noted there are strict guidelines regarding signage laid down by Central Government
- checks to be made for underground cables and drainage
- Welcome signs should be located further out of town
- planting a tree maybe more feasible than a Welcome Sign to “hide” the rear of the large highways sign
- the planting to be sustainable, low maintenance and pollution reducing plants to be included where possible

After discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the horticultural element of the proposal for Northfield End Green be put on the next Henley in Bloom agenda to consider the detail and budgetary implications of:-**

- **the physical creation of the beds, the design and planting**
- **the inclusion of the watering and on-going maintenance in the Horticultural Contract**
- **the proposed timetable**

**that the residents of Northfield End and Bell Street be involved in this project including the design of the beds**

**that the final design and proposals be considered by the Recreation and Amenities Committee**

**that the Town Clerk investigate sponsorship opportunities**

### **33. FREEMANS MEADOW**

Members received and considered a report from the Friends of Freemans regarding improvements to Freemans Meadow including the locations of bins, the types of benches and landscaping. Members thanked the residents for all of their ideas and felt this was a brilliant example of residents and the Council working together.

Members supported the ideas in principal and noted the following:-

- 5 foot Mendip benches are preferred by residents
- red dog waste bins are preferred over green as they are more noticeable
- the contract for the emptying of dog waste bins is limited to 2
- the proposed location of the benches may change once the overall landscaping plan is devised. The benches require concrete bases to be installed therefore are semi-permanent.

After discussion members **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the proposal and the recommendations therein are agreed in principal (the details to be considered at a later date) including producing a timetable for the following:-**

- **drafting a landscape and planting plan**
- **investigating the refurbishment and fencing of the play area**
- **conservation and landscape plan**

**that the Horticultural Park Warden (due to be appointed) take the lead on the horticultural elements and design of this project (in liaison with the Friends of Freemans) with the support of the Parks Services Team**

### **34. MINUTES**

The Sub Committee received, approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Open and Green Spaces Sub Committee held on 19 January 2018 and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Members of the public left the public gallery.

### **35. RIVER AND ROWING MUSEUM**

The Sub Committee received an update from Lynne Adams, Operations Director at the River and Rowing Museum as follows:-

- the Museum is marking its 20<sup>th</sup> year
- the Museum has had its best ever February in terms of visitor numbers
- the Barbara Hepworth exhibition has been very popular
- the Museum has increased its volunteer base
- maintenance work continues on the interior of the Museum
- looking to develop a “green” strategy – investigating solar panels on the roof, enhancing the wildlife areas etc
- making contact with the office of the architect, David Chipperfield to possibly hold an event or talk about the building

The Chairman thanked Ms Adam and members noted the update.

### **36. HENLEY WILDLIFE AREAS AND OPEN SPACES**

The Conservation Park Warden gave a verbal update on the Town Council’s wildlife areas and open spaces as follows:-

- work has continued with the Henley Wildlife Group (HWG) to clear the area around the ponds at Marsh Meadows and the snakehead fritillaries are coming into blossom
- Valley Road Chalk Bank – working on improving the meadow area at the top
- very successful volunteer planting day at the orchard and all the fruit trees have been planted. Another planting day is being held tomorrow when the grape vine and edible hedge will be planted
- trimming hedges and planting trees at Makins

Members noted the update.

### **37. GREYS ROAD EMBANKMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Members received and considered the draft Greys Road Embankment Management Plan written by the Conservation Park Warden who made the following comments:-

- the area has been managed for wildflowers for the last few years and the purpose of this plan is to create a structure which can be followed each year to provide consistency and will benefit wildlife as follows:-
  - regular cuts of the approx 1 m strip flat area by the pavement during the summer months
  - a late summer cut of the main part of the bank to encourage wildflower growth and possibly an aftermath cutting in January or February
  - a 2 – 3 year cut of the 0.5 – 1 m section nearest to hedge to provide a habitat for small mammals and invertebrates
  - create a 3 m strip of unmown grass on the Makins side of the hedge to allow wildflowers to grow up and provide a better habitat for a range of animals. This will therefore create a habitat for wildlife on both sides of the hedge
  - the sowing yellow rattle to help reduce grass growth and favour flowering herbs

Members supported the recommendations made in the report however felt a 1.5 – 2 m strip on the Makins side would be preferable. It was noted signage will be installed to interpret the management and wildlife. It was also felt nettles, although are beneficial for wildlife particularly butterflies, should be pulled if they overhang the park.

After consideration it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the management of the bank on the Greys Road side is managed in much the same way as it has been for the last few years (and as outlined in the plan), the one exception being the narrow strip of grass closest to the hedge being cut on a rotation of longer than one year**

**that the hedgerow is trimmed on a 2 year rotation on the sides and on top in order to improve it for wildlife. Also a 1.5 – 2 m strip of grass be left unmown in 2018 and a yearly cut take place annually thereafter in August/September. This will have benefits for both wildlife and the local community. Full benefits are listed within the plan but include: the creation of a better screen between houses on Greys Road and the Makins Recreation Ground, improved air quality, improved conditions on the field during flood and drought times, and a general improvement of habitat for all wildlife associated with the hedgerow and grassy bank**

**that sowing of yellow rattle be approved and that if necessary, money be allotted later in the year for yellow rattle seed**

**that the management plan be adopted (with the above amendment regarding the width of the unmown strip on Makins being reduced from 3 m to 1.5/2 m)**

Members thanked the Conservation Manager for his informative report.

### **38. MAKINS RECREATION GROUND – TABLE TENNIS TABLE**

The Chairman spoke regarding the purchase of a table tennis table at Makins Recreation Ground and members agreed there did not seem to be sufficient demand for a table at this time.

A member suggested a table tennis table could be placed at Mill Meadows.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that the Town Council do not purchase a table tennis to be located at Makins Recreation Ground at this time and this matter be re-considered in the future**

### **39. MAKINS RECREATION GROUND – OUTDOOR GYM**

Members received a report regarding outdoor gym equipment at Makins Recreation Ground plus information and quotes for equipment up to £10k and £20k from 8 companies. Members noted that in order to apply for a grant from South Oxfordshire District Council quotes from 2 companies needed to be submitted and 3 were required for the Town Council's financial regulations. Members acknowledged the

companies and equipment could be amended once the decision regarding a grant was made.

The Town Clerk advised it would be valuable for Councillors to visit sites and a list of locations was made available. It was noted the equipment should be for adults rather than children.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**

**that the short list comprise of The Great Outdoor Gym Company, Wicksteed Leisure and Fresh Air Fitness and the first 2 companies' quotes be used for the grant application**

#### **40. MAKINS RECREATION GROUND - FENCING**

Members received a report regarding fencing between the car park and Makins Recreation Ground. It was noted the adjoining fence proposed for the area around Brunner Hall is 1.8 m dark green mesh fencing.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

**that 1.2 metre high dark green mesh fence be installed along with a 12 foot wide vehicle gate and a pedestrian gate between Makins Recreation Ground and the car park**

#### **41. PROGRESS**

Members received and considered the progress report.

The Committee **RESOLVED**

**that the progress report be noted**

#### **42. MOORING AND CAR PARKING – MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Members received and noted the management accounts for Mill Meadows up to December 2017.

A member suggested consideration should be given to car parking fees being cheaper in the winter than summer which may encourage more winter use.

*Post Meeting Note from the RFO - Parking charge increases in the past have suggested that there is little price elasticity regarding the parking charges. Increases have not resulted in lower usage, therefore reductions are unlikely to result in greater usage. Good weather is the primary factor in usage, along with weekends and school holidays, all which see significantly greater usage. Furthermore doubling the number of different charges on the already cramped boards at Mill Meadows would increase the number of complaints already fielded by the staff regarding the complexity of the charging structure.*

#### **43. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as **Friday 8 June 2018.**

The meeting closed at 10.55 am.