

Recreation and Amenities

Wildlife, Conservation and Horticulture

HTC try to be as proactive as possible with our open and green spaces. Henley Town Council have employed a Conservation Warden and a Horticultural Warden as part of the Park Services team and has a longstanding working relationship with Henley Wildlife Group. The HWG have traditionally helped the council to manage their wildlife areas. The town now has more dedicated wildlife space than ever before, seeing better management of existing areas such as Valley Road Chalk Bank, Gillotts Field and Marsh Meadows and the creation of new areas such as the space in front of Badgemore School and the 'wildlife motorway' on the Greys Road verge.



Photos – NHS 70 Celebration bed at Mill Meadows, Marsh Meadows planned mowing

Makins – Skate Park

After opening in 2017, the skate park has been very well used! Nomad hold weekly outreach events, police and PCSOs continue to monitor in an effort to decrease anti social behaviour. The R&A committee are currently investigating the need for CCTV at the facility.



Photo – The skatepark when it opened

Makins – Playground

This project was originally due to start in 2015, but the project stayed stagnant for two years. In 2017 the project was kickstarted before being finalised in summer 2018. Complimenting the other upgraded areas of Makins, the playground was officially opened by Deputy Mayor Ken Arlett in September 2018.



Photos – One of the many site meetings between councillors, staff and contactors & Ken Arlett opening the playground with supplier Wicksteed.

Makins – Outside Gym

In 2017, it was decided this project would finally be progressed after years of discussing the idea, once the skate park was finalised. A cross party working group helped the council decide on the location and budget and a successful grant application was made to SODC to cover some of the costs. The outdoor gym was officially opened in September 2018 by Deputy Mayor Ken Arlett, SODC Chairman Lorraine Hillier and celebrity Angie Best.



Photos – Cllr Donna Crook using the equipment & the official ribbon cutting

Makins – Secure Fencing

With increased usage of Makins Recreation Ground, came an increase in some anti-social behaviour. Neighbours to the site, including the Scouts and Headway charity reported some vandalisms to their properties. With Henley Town Council being responsible for their safety and protection, HTC arranged for security fencing to be installed.

Community Orchards – Paradise Road

First proposed for Paradise Road in February 2017 by the Parks Manager, R&A Administrator and resident Victoria Newton, the orchard was officially opened in 2017 and has been popular since. The trees have been joined by vines and they are all progressing well. Over the past year we have had a community picnic as part of Chelsea Fringe and plan to hold more events during 2019.



Photos – Chelsea Fringe Community Picnic & the opening planting day

Marsh Meadows – Wishing Tree

Opened in September 2017, the tree has proven very popular, now brightening up even the dullest of cold winter days! You can find it in Marsh Meadows, next to the healing glade.



Photo - The tree in January 2019

Henley in Bloom – Regional Gold

Despite being a focus for the committee each year, the work done as part of Henley in Bloom is done with or without entry into the regional competition because the beauty and attractiveness is so important to the people and businesses of the town. After the death of Parks Manager, Gareth Bartle, it was decided that Henley would not enter the regional competition in 2018. Henley is entering Thames and Chilterns in Bloom in 2019.

Allotments – Pedestrian Access/Fencing/Joint Events

Over the past few years, improvements have been made to the fencing at both allotments, a new pedestrian access was created at Watermans Allotments from the Reading Road, new noticeboards were installed and the relationship between the allotment users and the Parks Services team has strengthened.

Green Flag Award – 2018 award for Mill and Marsh Meadows

Mill and Marsh Meadows have successfully achieved a Green Flag Award since 2014, continuing to do so over the past few years. Park Services, the Estates Manager and their management of the area are the main reasons for the success, supported by the relevant R&A committee chair each year.



Photos – The awards for the past two years.

Singers Park – New Bench/Hedge/Heritage Sign

After a year under the radar, the rat issue at Singers Park came to light because of the need to replace the hedge at the much-loved lunch time spot. After the wrong information was given out, lots of suggestions were put forward that resulted in the hedge being replaced with 120 beech hedge saplings in February 2019 by the Park Services team, after expert advice from the Parks Manager, the Conservation Warden, the Horticultural Warden and the Estates Manager. The new hedge compliments the new heritage sign, installed in November 2017.

Walkers are Welcome

HTC have supported the idea with a representative on the working group set up to help Henley become a Walkers are Welcome town since its inception, councillors have supported grant applications from Walkers are Welcome both before and since the town became accredited in April 2018. There was an official launch in October 2018, attended by Mayor and keen walker Glen Lambert.



Photo – Glen at the launch with WaW Chairman Peter Stone and OSS Kate Ashbrook

Chelsea Fringe

Henley in Bloom, and by extension, Henley Town Council, have supported Chelsea Fringe since Henley became the first official festival location outside of Chelsea. Councillors have been active in helping to promote and run these events, such as the floral flotilla, the community picnics and use of HTC owned land including Mill Meadows and the Old Fire Station Gallery.

Friends of Freemans

After an initial meeting in the Mayor's Parlour in 2017, the Friends of Freemans group was set up and have since been fully engaged in helping to improve Freemans Meadow. There is now an ongoing working relationship between the Park Services team and the group.

Improvements over the past eighteen months include;

Creation of a community orchard on the Pearces Orchard boundary - planted by FoF and Park Services, creation of a conservation area to increase biodiversity, a plan for the grasscutting, hedging planted on the Leicester Close boundary by FoF and Park Services, removal of unsafe concrete bases, installed two new bins, removed the ball shoot, replaced the swing set and more.

Improvements set to happen in 2019;

Install 5 aside goals which have already been ordered and will be done in time for summer, bins and benches will be installed once the overall improvements plans is finalised to ensure they are placed correctly, shrubs will be planted by the Fairmile and Leicester Close entrances to the meadow and the playground will be upgraded and should be installed in the summer.



Photos - Cllr Donna Crook, Parks and Friends of Freemans, Freemans Playground

Northfield End Improvements

After a proposal from residents of Northfield End to improve their green space, HTC councillors fully supported suggestions made, working with the residents to progress them, including the planting of the WW1 Armistice Commemoration Tree and remembrance poppies in November 2018.



Photos – Dave Eggleton planting poppies made by a local school & HRG Mayor Glen Lambert at the tree planting ceremony.

Annual Litter Pick

The annual town litter pick was started by former Councillor and Mayor Elizabeth Hodgkin about 15 years ago, and run since then by Henley in Bloom. This year's event was held on 30th March. (Not happened at time of writing report.)



Photo – Last year's litter pick.

Mill Meadows Adventure Playground Benches and Toddler Playground Shade

Over the past few years, alterations have been made to the playgrounds at Mill Meadows after requests from parents including a shaded area and new benches.



Photos – One of benches in playground.

Mill and Marsh Meadows

After a hot summer and increased usage of the meadows, the committee discussed improvements that could be made and resulted in the following resolution in July 2018;

that the following actions and/or investigations are carried out to reduce the issue regarding on-going issues at Mill and Marsh Meadows:-

- a. include bbq rules on the Mill Meadows summer leaflet in future
- b. a poster/leaflet with bbq rules, locations of bins etc, to be designed to be displayed (flyers not to be handed out)
- c. 5 additional large bins (Bensham 145 litre) to be installed along the towpath at Marsh Meadows - subject to approval from Finance Strategy and Management Committee (FSM). The Assistant Parks Manager to determine the precise locations.
- d. small, permanent notices (plaques) to be put on bins and bbq stumps to advise not to put rubbish by bins if they are full but to use alternative bin or take home
- e. the 3 large wooden multi-bin units on Mill/ Marsh Meadows be removed and replaced with easier to use, large capacity bins, screened when necessary for aesthetic purposes. The type to be decided by the Town Clerk and Assistant Parks Manager - subject to FSM approval.
- f. a temporary sign to be placed at Mill Lane Car Park regarding the bbq.
- g. investigate installing a noticeboard at Mill Lane Car Park. Councillor S Evans to investigate sponsorship opportunities from local companies for temporary and permanent signage at this location
- h. investigate creating a forum or Friends Group to engage with users and a letter to be written to the Henley Standard to gauge interest on people wanting to be part of a User Group
- i. the Town Clerk to investigate whether it is possible and feasible to fine

for litter on Henley Town Council land and to report back to Committee

j. investigation into providing a “Park Ranger” to provide additional support and security to attend the Meadows at regular designated hours (subject to FSM approval)

k. the Visitor Information Kiosk to have a stock of bin bags and dog waste bags to offer to visitors to the Meadows

l. investigate CCTV at Marsh Meadows

Since then, improvements include;

A permanent bbq ban on Marsh Meadows, 5 new bins and 3 new recycling bins installed, better signage installed, security warden employed seasonally, new signage directly on bins, operational changes within Park Services and more. This is an ongoing and ever-evolving issue that will continue to be monitored.

Kellie Hinton – Chair of Recreation and Amenities 2018/19