

Present: Councillor Dr B G Wood, Chairman
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, Vice-Chairman
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor C W Gibson
Councillor Dr P Skolar
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood

In attendance: Mr M Kennedy, Town Clerk
Mr G Bartle, Parks Service Supervisor
Mrs A Gliddon, Committee Administrator
Mrs B Walker, Committee Administrator

Mr A Brown and Mr P Mains (part), River and Rowing Museum

3 Members of the Public

63. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs G Dodds

64. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor, Mrs E Hodgkin, Minute 70, Moorings; Prejudicial; husband employee of the Environment Agency

Dr P Skolar, Minute 70, Mooring, Personal, Boat owner

65. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr A Yeates, Meadow Road

Expressed a wish to reinforce what had previously been stated by neighbours regarding the location of the Youth Shelter and any piece of equipment to replace the tyre swing. She advised that she did not want the Town Council to make any wrong decisions which she would have to report to South Oxfordshire District Council again. She confirmed that the situation had improved.

Councillor Dr Wood advised that he was very pleased to hear this.

Mrs Yeates continued that the more exciting the equipment, the more teenagers would be encouraged to use the equipment in the evening. She had been in discussion with PC Sims regarding the location of any Youth Shelter installed in the Meadows, and PC Sims had agreed to consider her views. Mrs Yates suggested that if a Youth Shelter was installed between the Pavilion and her property, the noise levels would build up. She advised that the police had been called out three times last week due to noise levels from young people screaming and swearing.

Mrs Curwin, Meadow Road, invited any Councillors wishing to do so to visit her apartment to get a feeling for the noise levels.

The Chairman, Councillor Dr Wood, asked Mrs Yeates for comments on the recent event whereby a neighbour walking his dog had been driven at by young people speeding in a car along Meadow Road, forcing him into bushes; and had then stopped the car and pelted him with chocolates. Mrs Yeates advised it had been a very frightening experience for the resident; the police had informed her that an arrest had been made and a caution placed on the car. Cars had been racing up and down Meadow Road again during the previous week.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, advised that she had spoken with the neighbour and the police who had informed her that once a caution is placed on a vehicle, any further incidents would give the police powers to destroy the vehicle.

Mrs Curwin asked if road humps could be installed. Councillor Dr P Skolar advised that there were already a number of speed humps installed in Meadow Road and that legislation existed as to the permitted height of humps which would preclude raising the height any further.

66. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Mill Meadows/River Sub-Committee held on 5 March 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood.

Councillor Dr P Skolar advised that he had sent apologies to this meeting but had been pleased to read in the Minutes the report regarding moorings and the communication with Reading Borough Council.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, asked how the matter would be progressed.

The Town Clerk advised that one issue regarding unpaid mooring fees had been discussed and progressed at a recent meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee.

The Chairman suggested that stricter guidelines between sub and parent Committees be undertaken during the next cycle of meetings.

Councillor C W Gibson advised that he had previously asked that consideration be given to the Leichlingen Pavilion being knocked down. It appeared that the cost of refurbishment had gone through the ceiling and also that it was proposed to offer a 10 year lease to Stepping Stones nursery.

The Chairman confirmed that granting a 10 year lease to Stepping Stones was being recommended by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee to the Full Council meeting on 4 May 2010. He advised that the figure for refurbishments was likely to be c£200k, although best endeavours would be used to bring this figure down once quotations had been received. He confirmed that the Recreation and Amenities Committee had a mandate to proceed with refurbishment of the toilets and as a result the Council was able to move into discussion regarding a 10 year lease with the nursery. Under the Council's Standing Orders, Councillor Gibson could resurrect his suggestion that the Pavilion is knocked down in 6 month's time if he wished to do so.

Councillor Dr Skolar advised that at the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management earlier in the week it had been agreed that a figure of £150k would be put into this budget.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, advised that as no quotations had yet been received discussion on costs was speculative. The matter would be considered by the Recreation and Amenities Committee once quotations had been received.

67. **PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillors received and considered the progress report and made the following comments:

Entrance to Mill Meadows The Mayor advised that she, Andrew Brown, Becky Walker and Adrienne Gliddon had met with Sri from Monson who had suggested some good ideas for improvements to public safety at the entrance to the meadows, which all present had agreed with and would be included in the plan. Monson would now go out to tender for the work and quotations would be brought back to a future meeting. The Mayor advised that Monson had also suggested that it would be beneficial to pedestrian safety if the hedge outside the last property could be cut back and the neighbour (Mrs Yeates) had kindly agreed to this.

Youth Shelter The Chairman advised that a viewing of the shelter at Barkham was being arranged by the Youth Council. Councillor Mrs J Wood advised that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Youth Council on 17 May 2010.

68. **EXCESS CHARGE NOTICES**

Councillors received and considered a report. It was noted that this Committee had established a policy for the collection of excess charges which the staff were implementing.

The Town Clerk advised that an issue in respect of one long-standing moorer with outstanding fees had been the subject of debate at a recent meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee. He had met with the moorer who had advised that the boat was being sold and an agreement had been reached regarding the payment of fees.

Mr Bartle confirmed that moorings were actively patrolled by staff. A new member of staff was currently being recruited which would help. He advised that staff have a pro-forma which is attached to vessels in the case of unpaid fees. Staff took every possible step to collect fees and where these measures were not productive, a report was made to the member of the office staff responsible for moorings who then took steps to recover fees with the assistance of the Environment Agency.

Councillor Dr P Skolar advised that the Town Council could apply to the Magistrates Court for an Admiralty Arrest Warrant to have the boat sealed.

69. **MOORINGS AND CAR PARKING, INCLUDING INCOME, REPORTS**

Councillors received and considered a report and agreed that the outcome from the previous financial year had been good, apart from one or two months. Mr Bartle reminded Councillors of the adverse weather conditions during the winter months.

Councillor Gibson enquired about the percentage fees charge for the collection of card payments and the percentage of people paying by card.

Action: Committee Administrator to find out what percentage of income is collected by card and report back.

Mr Bartle confirmed that all three parking machines were working and that staff had a contact number for the reporting of any problems occurring.

[Post-meeting Note: The Accountant has confirmed that In the 11 months to February 2010 the credit card collections were 19% of the total collections from the three machines at Mill Meadows]

70. SECURITY AT MILL MEADOWS DURING REGATTA

Councillors received and considered a report

The Town Clerk advised that it had been suggested last year that this matter be referred back to Committee prior to the 2010 Regatta. He advised that all reasonable action had been taken by the Town Council last year, with increased staff on duty who had worked closely with the police.

Mr Bartle confirmed that the police had been a visible presence on the Meadows the previous year. Staff had started earlier and finished later in the day over the Regatta period, with the toilets generally being locked as late as 10.30pm.

Councillor Mrs J Wood advised that the proposed introduction of some pay toilets, as part of the refurbishment process, would help with this in the future.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, advised that at a meeting she had called recently which had been attended by all the Councils involved in the Regatta and Thames Valley Police (TVP), it had been confirmed by Sergeant Graham Pink that the TVP would be working with British Transport Police to confiscate alcohol from under age drinkers arriving by train with alcohol in their possession. He had also advised that there would be an increased police presence at Mill Meadows during the Regatta to deal with any anti social behaviour and underage drinking.

Mr P Mains joined the meeting at 10.10am. He advised that on the Regatta Wednesday and Thursday last year behaviour at the Meadows had been civilised. On the Friday and Saturday however behaviour had been 'loutish'. On the Sunday behaviour had reverted to civilised.

The Chairman confirmed that staff could be vulnerable, particularly on the Friday and Saturday. He suggested that the issue of employing security guards be considered.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that

- (i) a review of security arrangement at Mill and Marsh Meadows over the period of the Henley Royal Regatta is undertaken for the current and future years, and
- (ii) a Working Party consisting of Councillors Mrs J Bland, Dr B G Wood and Mrs J Wood, Mr Bartle, Mr Mains and representatives from Thames Valley Police, local residents and South Oxfordshire District Council is formed to put together a plan of action

Mr Mains thanked Councillors for allowing the launch of This Sporting Life to be held on the Meadows recently. He advised that this had been a huge success.

Mr Mains advised that on the previous Saturday he had been duty manager at the Museum and had met with the Mayor. They had had an interesting time and had been involved in getting a Tappings coach to move and organising toilets for the Dragon-boaters. He advised that the Museum was currently involved in a campaign regarding reasonable use of their toilets and car park. People pay for entrance to the Museum and are given free admission for one year but take this as including free parking for one year. He intended to put polite notices on windscreens where abuse was taking place and may also begin to wheel clamp. The toilets were often used by people picnicking on the Meadows to do their washing up. He requested that any review of the Town Council's signage indicates to members of the public that the Pavilion toilets are the toilets for use by the general public.

Mr Brown confirmed that people caused many problems on the Meadows, some of which can become confrontational. He found that the most effective means was having a presence with a communication handset.

The Mayor advised that she had observed people unloading mobile kitchens onto the Meadows for barbeques. They tended to come late in the day.

Mr Mains advise that he would report back to the next meeting of this Committee on steps taken by the Museum.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, left the meeting at 10.20am

Councillor Mrs J Wood, referred to the issue of CCTV cameras which had been found not to be working at the time of the incident referred to in Item 65. The Town Council had not been advised of this until after the event. It had been confirmed that the cameras were currently working.

The Chairman suggested that the Town Council should seek a rebate for the period during which the cameras were not working. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would raise this issue at the forthcoming meeting of the CCTV Management Group.

Mr Brown asked how the cameras were monitored and advised that those at the Museum were triggered if something moved.

The Chairman advised that this was not the case.

The Town Clerk suggested that the Museum be given the telephone number of the CCTV Monitoring station at Abingdon. He advised that the camera settings were pre-determined. Operators could use their initiative to observe if incidents were reported to them.

Action Town Clerk to raise the issue of a refund for the period when the CCTV cameras at Mill Meadows were not working, at the next CCTV Management Group meeting.

Action: Town Clerk to forward the telephone number of the CCTV Monitoring office to Mr Mains.

71. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman, Councillor Dr B G Wood, suggested that the date and location of the next meeting is agreed during the next cycle of meetings

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.35am

Chairman

ahg