

Present: Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood (presiding)
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Mrs P G Buckett
Councillor Mrs G M Dodds
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor A Follett
Councillor C W Gibson
Councillor Miss L M Hillier
Councillor Mrs R Myer
Deputy Mayor, Councillor C Pye
Councillor Miss L H Pye
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor S Smith
Councillor Dr B Wood

In Attendance: Mr M W Kennedy – Town Clerk
Miss J Smith – Minute Taker / Committee Administrator
Mr J Churchill- Coleman– Acting Town Sergeant

Also Present: No members of the press were present.
7 members of the public.

27. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Councillors Dr P Skolar and I Reissmann.

28. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

29. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEE**

(i) The Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 13 July 2010 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 13 July 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the report:

Minute 26 – Refurbishment of the Toilets at the Leichlingen Pavilion

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin advised that for the past three years she had been heavily involved in getting this project to its current stage by progressing it through the Mill Meadows Sub and Town and Community Committees. This project had involved a lot of Councillor and Officer time, including site visits to other public toilet facilities. The toilets were 20 years old and by giving them a deep clean would only scratch the surface; furthermore they needed a refurbishment to improve the disabled access and the mother/father baby changing facilities. Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin stated that £150,000 had been set aside for the last three years to cover refurbishment costs and to cover inflation the £192,000 proposed was not too far off the mark. She explained to Members

that the immediate decision that needed to be taken was how much was to be spent on the toilets, advising against the decision to go just for a deep clean as most complaints that were received into the Town Hall were either toilet or litter related, therefore, a refurbishment of these facilities was long overdue.

Councillor Dr B Wood agreed with Councillor Hodgkin and explained there had been a long three year history to this project. Initially, Healthmatic had put together a proposal which would have cost £130k, but the Council decided against this option. He stated that at this time everyone had agreed to put in place a charge to use these toilets if they were refurbished and that there had always been a budget against a loan facility for this project in the capital programme. He explained that that building costs had increased by 2% since this project had commenced. He also stated that he wanted to dispel several myths: that the Council could not afford this cost and that a satisfactory refurbishment could be done for £60,000. Councillor Dr B Wood explained that once a decision had been made on the funding then the project would go out to tender to get costings and then negotiations could take place to try and reduce costs so in fact the proposed figures of £224,000 could come in at nearer £200,000. He made reference to recent negotiations that had taken place in respect to the refurbishment of the Henley Information Centre and the savings of 5% that had been made. He summarised by proposing to proceed with a project by obtaining a loan of up to £230,000.

The following comments were received from Members that supported spending £230,000 on a refurbishment:

Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood supported the recommendation and explained that the interest charges on such a loan would now be 2.3% and not the initial 2.8% when the option of a loan was first explored. She expressed her concern that with the 2012 Olympics approaching these toilets needed refurbishment in time for the event.

Councillor A Follett advised that Mill Meadows was the Council's biggest revenue stream with earnings of around £160,000 per year and that the Council owed it to the residents to contribute some of this revenue to provide decent toilet facilities. He stated going down the loan route was sensible with potentially the loan being repaid within the next four to five years, if the economic climate improved. In addition, he stated that the loan application could take up to 6-8 weeks to complete and that it was essential that this process was started now to get the project moving.

Councillor C Gibson advised that although not an initial supporter of this project he now agreed that the toilets needed improving.

Councillor Mrs J Bland advised that as a Member of the Mill Meadows Sub Committee she had agreed the toilets needed work as they stank and that no type of cleaning would get rid of the embedded smell, however, she had never supported expenditure of £230,000 but had agreed spending £100,000. She advised that she was heart warmed by the number of the disabled visitors to Mill Meadows and stated the disabled facilities were currently not appropriate. She also advised that she felt visitors to Mill Meadows spending all day there would be happy to pay for new facilities.

The following comments were received from Members that were against spending £230,000 on a refurbishment:

Councillor Mrs R Myer stated the cost proposed of £230,000 was outrageous, especially in the current economic and therefore another solution needed to be found to keep the toilets sanitised and clean. She explained that the original design of the Leichlingen Pavilion was seriously flawed in its design and therefore subject to flooding.

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith agreed that after 20 years something needed to be done, but that £200,000-230,000 was still an awful lot of money. Councillor Miss L Hillier stated that the Council could not justify spending this amount of money on a refurbishment and needed to look at the option of a deep clean. She pointed out that extra temporary toilets would need to be brought into the town for Olympics to accommodate the number of visitors in any event. Councillor C Pye did not support the recommendation and stated that it was not sensible to borrow this amount of money and agreed a deep clean was the way forward.

Councillor Dr B Wood summarised that the costs had never been given as £100,000 and that the initial costs had always been £130,000. He reiterated that with around 2000 visitors to Mill Meadows in any one weekend it was the Council's duty to refurbish these toilets to an acceptable standard and get them open for use in 2011. He confirmed that it was not a good time to sell investments and a loan was the best option, however, in the future there may be an opportune time to pay off the loan by selling some investments if the markets moved. He recommended the project proceeded with the application of a loan of £230,000.

Councillor Miss L Hillier requested a recorded vote.

For

Cllr Mrs J Bland
Cllr A Follett
Cllr C W Gibson
Cllr Mrs E Hodgkin
Cllr Mrs J Wood
Cllr Dr B Wood

Against

Cllr Mrs P Buckett
Cllr Mrs G Dodds
Cllr Miss L Hillier
Cllr Mrs R Myer
Cllr D Nimmo-Smith
Cllr C Pye
Cllr Miss L Pye
Cllr S Smith

Motion lost.

Councillor Miss L Hillier proposed a deep clean package and follow-up proposals as outlined in 3(a) on the agenda be carried out.

Councillor S Smith stated that there was an error in the proposal and it should read a 'cleanser for uric acid.'

Councillor G Dodds explained that she had recently visited public toilets in Brighton which although had been built before the war were properly sanitised, clean and did not smell. After making an enquiry she had been told that they were washed down three times a day. She recommended going with the deep clean option, even if this had to be carried out every six weeks. Councillor Dodds stated she had concerns that the current problems with the smell could be due to a failure in the building/drainage system and feared that even after spending money on a refurbishment the problem of the uric acid stench may not be solved.

Councillor C Pye agreed an initial deep clean should take place with the situation being reviewed again in the Spring.

Councillor Dr B Wood disagreed with this proposal and stated that having worked in a cleaning company a deep clean would not get rid of the uric acid problem.

Councillor Miss L Hillier requested a recorded vote. It was

RESOLVED that

- (i) A deep clean of the gents, ladies, over-flow ladies and disabled toilets £1100 + vat (takes 1 to 1 ½ days).

- (ii) A product to deal with the build up of uric acid called proflush that dispenses directly into the cistern and provides bacteria that eats the uric acid is used. They would place the product in the cistern each month at a cost of £25 per month.
- (iii) Air Fresheners - a battery powered air freshener which “eats” the odour molecules and then there is a choice of aromas i.e. cherry, apple etc is installed. They would come out each month and maintain the units (changing batteries, aromas, wicks etc) for £32 per month.
- (iv) Package deal for uric acid cleanser and air freshener per month is £56 per month.
- (v) The Parks Service paints the gents toilets which will help to alleviate bad odours in the short term.

For	Against	Abstention
Cllr Mrs J Bland	Cllr A Follett	Cllr Dr B Wood
Cllr P Buckett	Cllr Mrs E Hodgkin	
Cllr C W Gibson	Cllr Mrs J Wood	
Cllr Mrs G Dodds		
Cllr Miss L Hillier		
Cllr Mrs R Myer		
Cllr D Nimmo-Smith		
Cllr C Pye		
Cllr Miss L Pye		
Cllr S Smith		

(ii) **Townlands Steering Group**

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood advised that as Councillor I Reissmann was not able to attend the meeting Members had before them a copy of his report and asked Councillor Dr B Wood to speak on his behalf.

Councillor Dr B Wood asked for a few minutes for Members to review the report. It was

RESOLVED that the written report from the Townlands Steering Group dated 3 August 2010 and received from Councillor I Reissmann be approved and adopted.

Arising from the report:

Councillor Mrs G Dodds expressed concerned over the plan to potentially move the Chiltern End Nursing home to the new Townlands site. She stated that the hospital had been squeezed on to too smaller a site with the proposed 66 houses also planned.

Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood advised that no mention had been made about Chiltern End moving and that this was still a matter of conjectural, but we should keep a watching brief.

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith advised whilst OCC owned the land on which Chiltern End stands it is run and managed by the Order of St John.

The meeting closed at 7:50pm.