

Present:

Councillor Mrs J Wood, Chairman
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, Vice Chairman
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor A J Follett
Councillor C W Gibson
Councillor Miss L Pye
Councillor Dr P J Skolar
Councillor S R Smith
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G M Zakss (ex-officio)

In Attendance: Mr M Kennedy, Town Clerk and Mrs L A Martin, Committee Administrator/Minute Taker

Also Present: Mr Richard Truten, RT Films, Mr Jonathan Hobbs, Suzanne Malcolm, SODC, Caroline Wood, SODC, two members of the public and one member of the press.

1962. **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

1963. **RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are hereby reminded that, under the provisions of Part 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (The Code of Conduct), a member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent. A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgement of the public interest. A member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting is being held whenever it becomes apparent that the matter is being considered at that meeting, unless he has obtained a dispensation from the standards committee of the responsible authority; and not seek improperly to influence a decision about that matter. For the purposes of this Part (of the Act), "meeting" means any meeting of the authority; or any of the authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

Councillor Mrs J Bland – Minute 1973 – personal and prejudicial interest – trader in the town.

1964. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town Management Committee held on 10 February 2009 were approved and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Henley in Bloom Civic Pride Sub-Committee held on 26 February 2009 be adopted.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that the Minutes of the Mill Meadows / River Sub Committee meeting held on 10 March 2009 be adopted.

1965. **PROGRESS**

Councillors received and noted the Progress Report and made the following comments:

Weed Killing – Minute 1866

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin queried the position on weed killing in the town. The Town Clerk advised that this item was due to be covered later in the meeting but gave an update. He met with the Southern Area Engineer on 5 March 2009 and was able to confirm that there is a £750k budget for weed killing in the County. £450k is allocated for removal of weeds and £375k is allocated for weed spraying. It is suggested that an agency agreement is agreed between County and HTC to ensure Henley is part of this overall programme. Councillor Dr P J Skolar suggested that this agreement was delayed until the May meeting so the proposal is submitted to OCC after June 4th when it may be more favourably received.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that Henley Town Council enters into an agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to cover weed killing in the town and that this is submitted after 4th June 2009.

ACTION: In the meantime HTC MUST ensure OCC carries out weedkilling in the town as per their responsibility – as weedkilling should start in April when the weeds start to grow.

Bus Shelters - Minute 1937

The Town Clerk has no further updates on placement of bus shelters. Councillors suggested that the Town Clerk refers to the ITS minutes for confirmation of which shelters were to be provided and to chase Oxfordshire County Council for progress.

Action: Town Clerk to chase Oxfordshire County Council for progress on installation of bus shelters.

Mill Meadows Kiosk, Minutes 1090&1913

The Town Clerk confirmed that Mrs Battista has now written formally to Henley Town Council regarding plans for a staff toilet.

1966. **BUDGET**

Councillors received and noted the monthly budget report for January 2009.

1967. **HENLEY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, invited Mr Richard Truter and Mr Jonathan Hobbs to the table.

Mr Jonathan Hobbs in his capacity as Chairman of the Henley Partnership introduced Mr Richard Truter of RT Films. Mr Truter is a documentary film maker who has lived in Henley for seven years.

Mr Truter gave an overview of his reasons for wanting to establish a Film Festival in Henley and how he envisages it would work.

- i. The festival would be called “THE-HIFF” or The Henley International Film Festival. This was to distinguish the event from two other events that are also called HIFF.
- ii. THE-HIFF would be an international documentary film festival hosted at various venues in Henley to celebrate and showcase the best in international feature and short documentary film making.
- iii. THE-HIFF would accept entries from all over the world and a shortlist of 40 films would be drawn up and judged by a panel consisting of two local dignitaries and 3 industry leaders. A prize giving would be held and cash prizes would be awarded together with statues – these cash prizes would be sponsored by corporate partners.
- iv. THE-HIFF would be run over a five day period each year at the end of May beginning of June so as not to interfere with other Henley events and festivals. For 2010, 25th – 29th May has been earmarked.
- v. It is hoped to make the film screenings accessible to all and a number of venues across the town have been selected. There will also be an interactive outdoor event to include the Market Place utilising a ‘film pod’.
- vi. THE-HIFF recognises that it must have a social responsibility to the Henley community. It is envisaged that it will engage with the local business community, schools, charities and news publications with a view to creating short film projects about current issues in the town.
- vii. THE-HIFF is hoping to promote Henley as a premier destination supporting local business throughout the town.
- viii. Mr Truter wants to promote Henley as a FILMING location.

In conclusion THE-HIFF seeks approval and support by Henley Town Council.

A discussion ensued at which the following questions were asked by Councillors:

Councillor Dr P J Skolar questioned the funding required by the festival – will public attendance at screenings cover the costs?

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G Zakss, asked Mr Truter what exactly he was looking for in terms of support from Henley Town Council. Was it just permission to site the film pod in the Market Place or was there monetary support as well?

Councillor A J Follett asked about uptake from THE-HIFF website.

Councillor Mrs J Bland asked what Mr Truter expected from the festival – if it is envisaged to be self financing, why approach Henley Town Council?

Councillor Mrs J Wood asked if Mr Truter was seeking funding and if so, how much.

Mr Truter replied that £120k in funding is required overall, with £75k - £80k required for the festival itself. Uptake from the website had been good with over 200 enquiries. The bottom line was that although the festival was seeking as much funding as possible, he would like Henley Town Council to contribute £10k to the project.

Mr Hobbs pointed out that it was not just Mr Truter involved in the venture, there were others as well. He recommended that Henley Town Council become a partner in the THE-HIFF in a similar way to the Literary Festival.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that the concept of THE-HIFF be supported in principle and that a working group be formed to discuss this proposal in more detail with Richard Truter.

1968. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, invited Ms Suzanne Malcolm and Ms Caroline Wood of South Oxfordshire District Council to the table.

Ms Suzanne Malcolm introduced herself and explained that she was the Economic Development Manager for South Oxfordshire District Council. She also introduced Ms Caroline Wood who is the Economic Development Officer. Ms Malcolm and Ms Wood delivered a PowerPoint presentation entitled 'Market Towns Action Plan for Henley'. The key points are summarised below:

- i. South Oxfordshire District Council's declared strategic objective is to support economic growth with a priority of creating vibrant market towns and to promote business growth and create new jobs.
- ii. A consultation workshop in Henley had been attended by 44 people and comments and issues were noted together with information gathered from previous work.
- iii. The plans highlight a timescale for the next 3 years but focus on 2009/10 for detailed actions. Plans will be reviewed annually and will form part of economic development strategy document to be published in 2009.
- iv. South Oxfordshire District Council plans to work in partnership with the town to enhance links and to encourage the town to develop a business plan identifying opportunities for income generation and to ensure that any county wide initiatives add value to these action plans.
- v. Initial consultation areas included:
 - a. marketing to visitors
 - b. future of Henley
 - c. transport
 - d. town centre co-ordinator
 - e. roadworks
 - f. riverside
- vi. To invest in Henley data gathering on visitor profile is a must as is developing Henley's distinctiveness.
- vii. High priorities include:
 - a. Supporting development of a web portal
 - b. Improving navigation
 - c. Establishing town centre co-coordinator
- viii. Lower priorities include opportunities for enhanced use of the river
- ix. The budget for Henley for 2009/10 is £81,500 broken down as follows:
 - a. Tourism Survey - £10,000
 - b. Economic Data - £4,000
 - c. Distinctiveness work - £20,000

- d. Town Centre Co-ordinator - £12,500 (between 3 towns)
 - e. Signage - £25,000
 - f. Enhanced river - £10,000
- x. Consultation on draft plans will be carried out between 24 February and 24 March. Full plan available on the website.

1969. **MARKET TOWNS CONSULTATION**

- i. Councillors considered the Market Towns Action Plans relating to Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.

South Oxfordshire District Council Action Plan

Councillor's comments and concerns are summarised below:

- a. Concerns that there now appear to be three different groups involved in producing plans for Henley.
- b. Item H1 There is no mention of SEEDA. How is a share of the £460k of SEEDA funding coming to Henley?
- c. Item H1.2 The allocation of £15k of funding for a website would be more wisely spent funding the Visitor Information Centre. The Town Council is already funding this provision and a further allocation of £15k would enable the Visitor Information Centre to open all year round.
- d. Item H2 Economic Data – should be gathered from the Thames Valley region not just South Oxfordshire. No mention of impact of 2012 Olympics.
- e. Item H3 Light on transport proposals – problems with through traffic, signage and car parking. There is no provision for cycle paths which would lead to a reduction in CO2 emissions. No new initiatives within the plan such as Park and Ride or subsidised transport schemes etc.

Ms Suzanne Malcolm advised that the Air Quality Group at South Oxfordshire District Council are dealing with parking, rail and park and ride etc. Her team wants to be able to deliver what they have promised and due to the relatively small amount of funding they have to trim their plans accordingly.

- f. Item H3.1 Public transport needs to be improved. There are several outlying villages not linked directly to Henley by public transport.
- g. Item H4.1 Henley Town Council advocates a dedicated Town Centre Co-ordinator for Henley; the start date should be brought forward from October 2009 to July 2009 – HTC does not want to share this resource with either Wallingford or Thame. The budget for the co-ordinator is insufficient and is less than that allocated for the website in 2009/10. Funds should be re-allocated to allow for a dedicated person.

Ms Suzanne Malcolm advised that both Wallingford and Thame had advocated the same proposal regarding a dedicated Co-ordinator.

- h. Item H6.1 does South Oxfordshire District Council really need to spend £10k deciding what can be done with the river? - People walk

by it or sail on it. The more people are encouraged to just visit the river, the more they bypass the town and its shops and restaurants.

- i. General observations – There is no provision for young people within the Action Plan. There should be greater flexibility in resource allocation between priorities
- j. Councillor Mrs J Wood was concerned that the timescale for the submission of comments on the plan was very tight and that it would not be possible to meet the 24th March deadline before Full Council approval.

The Committee therefore RESOLVED

that the Town Clerk will collate responses and comments in consultation with the Chairman and forward to South Oxfordshire District Council.

Oxfordshire County Council Action Plan

The Town Clerk referred to the extract from Oxfordshire County Council's document on supporting the Economic Success of Market Towns and felt that it was already out of date. Councillors considered the response to the document and felt that Henley Town Council should respond to Oxfordshire County Council in the same way as the response to South Oxfordshire District Council.

Councillor's comments and concerns are summarised below:

- a. How does this plan relate to South Oxfordshire District Council's plan - are the two councils liaising?
- b. Para 12 – Why do we need dedicated officer support for Oxfordshire market towns when there are already mechanisms in place at district level including proposals for the appointment of a town centre coordinator.
- c. Para 13 & 138 - Henley Town Council seeks further guidance on the mechanism for accessing the £460k of SEEDA funding – When should this approach be made?
- d. Para 135 - Human Resources – how exactly is Oxfordshire County Council going to allocate funds?
- e. Para 224 - Whilst there appeared to be widespread support of para 224, Councillors wondered if it was absolutely necessary for this document at all in view of South Oxfordshire District Council's plan. Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council should be encouraged to talk to each other.
- f. Para 224.2 – quality of shops. A general discussion covered how it would be possible to influence what type of shop will open in Henley. The majority opinion was that it is not possible to influence the type of shop. There were other factors to be considered including cost of leases and the type of property available.
- g. Para 225 - the statement that Henley's economy is based largely on retail is not true. Henley does not just have retail outlets; it also has offices, hotels, restaurants and other businesses. Many smaller businesses are situated in offices above the shops.
- h. A lot of time and money has been spent by Oxfordshire County Council on the production of the document but what does it mean for Henley in monetary terms?

- i. We urged both councils to stop wasting money on duplicating each other's work and give that money to supporting our Visitor Information Centre which will be an absolutely necessary resource coming up to and including the Olympics in 2012 because of our special relationship with rowing we want Henley to be a Must See, Must Visit location.
- ii. Councillors considered the response to both documents and felt that Henley Town Council should respond to Oxfordshire County Council in the same way as the response to South Oxfordshire District Council.

The Committee RESOLVED

that the Town Clerk will collate responses and comments in consultation with the Chairman and forward to Oxfordshire County Council

1970. **VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE**

Councillors received and noted the following reports

- Visitor report running total for year 2008/2009
- Budget report – February 2009
- Report for 1 to 28 February 2009

The Town Clerk advised that continuation of the Visitor Information Centre has been agreed until end of September 2009 and this has been communicated to French Jones.

Councillor C W Gibson advised that there is a meeting on Tue 24 March at the Red Lion at 1600 hours with the Henley Partnership to discuss future funding. Councillor E Hodgkin volunteered to attend on behalf of Henley Town Council.

1971. **A-BOARDS – A REASONED APPROACH**

Councillors received and considered a paper prepared by Councillor Dr B G Wood.

Councillor S Smith agrees with most elements of the new code of practice but was not inclined to agree to the proposed width restriction. He also considered that £5m of public liability insurance was excessive and that the amount should be a more reasonable £1m.

Councillor Dr P J Skolar was not in favour of the general principle of the proposal. County cannot grant planning permission and he therefore thinks that the Town Clerk cannot enter into an arrangement with them to grant licences. The Town Clerk quoted from the Highways Act 1980 and informed the meeting that the Highways Authority has powers to remove unauthorised signs from the highway. These powers have been devolved to Henley Town Council by Oxfordshire County Council.

Councillor C W Gibson felt that it was Henley Town Council's job to preserve the character of the town and is of the opinion that A Boards are dangerous and an eyesore. He believes that South Oxfordshire District Council has a responsibility to enforce regulations regarding the placement of these boards and that Henley Town Council should write to them regarding this responsibility.

Councillor Mrs J Wood does not want to see obstructions on the pavements in the town as she considers them to be dangerous and a health and safety risk. Councillor Mrs J Wood had attended a presentation about market towns and saw

that other councils had adopted a policy in respect of signage above shops. This would encourage people to look up and obviate the need for advertising on the pavement. If however, we have to have this type of advertising then she believes it must be licensed.

Councillor Mrs J Bland pointed out that signs on buildings can be knocked down by large vehicles mounting the pavement on the narrow roads in Henley as has happened several times in Bell Street.

Councillor Miss L Pye thinks that a directory of town businesses on a board in the Market Place is a better alternative.

Councillor Dr P Skolar re-iterated that enforcement is the problem. The Town Clerk pointed out that Henley Town Council has the power to enforce the legislation – if it is felt that a sign is a problem then we must take a pragmatic approach and be aware of any dangers.

Councillor Mrs G Zakss proposed that the situation stays as it is and the paper is withdrawn.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the paper is withdrawn; the status quo shall prevail and Henley Town Council continues to take appropriate action against any business found to be in contravention of the rules regarding the placement of A Boards on a pragmatic basis.

1972. **LEGISLATION ON LICENSED PREMISES**

Councillors received and considered a paper prepared by Councillors T B Buckett, Dr B G Wood, Mrs J Wood and A Follett.

Councillor Mrs G Zakss informed Councillors that she was uneasy about the paper, particularly paragraph 14 which she considered to be inappropriate. Henley Town Council should make its view known now to John Howell, Henley's Member of Parliament, and request that he lobbies on our behalf prior to the legislation being enacted. South Oxfordshire District Council cannot be expected to make changes to their licensing guidelines in advance of any law that might be passed.

Councillor A J Follett replied that the document should be sent to Councillor Ann Ducker at South Oxfordshire District Council and advised that it is intended to enhance the Council's view that all establishments regulated by licensing laws should not be 'lumped' together. Henley Town Council should have been consulted on the opening of a 'sex establishment' and not just be given two days notice. He wants to send the document as it is.

Councillor Dr P J Skolar cannot agree – the law must be changed first.

Councillor Mrs J Bland advised the meeting that South Oxfordshire District Council has written to Parliament and South Oxfordshire District Council will be able to deal with licences retrospectively.

Councillor A J Follett proposed that paragraph 14 be removed from the document and then sent to South Oxfordshire District Council and John Howell MP.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that the paper entitled 'Response to SODC on seeking revised legislation on Sex Establishments' dated 16th February 2009 be submitted to SODC and to John Howell MP after deleting paragraph 14.

Councillor Mrs J Bland declared an interest and left the meeting for the following item:

1973. **USE OF MARKET PLACE FOR AN ETHICAL TRADE MARKET**

Councillors considered a request from Market Square Group Ltd to hold an Ethical Trade Market in the Market Place 18-20 September 2009

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin re-iterated the Council's decision to only have 4 additional markets per year. It was suggested that Market Square Group apply next year for one of the four available slots.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that the request for an Ethical Trade Market be declined but that Market Square Group be advised to re-apply for 2010.

Councillor Mrs J Bland returned to the meeting

1974. **THE HENLEY PARTNERSHIP**

i. Councillors received and noted the Henley Partnership Restructure Proposal paper.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that in respect of the request for Henley Town Council to pay its subscription for 2009/10 there were no funds specifically allocated in the budget. However, it would be possible to pay £100, the tariff set by the Henley Partnership for an organisation of this size, from within the subscriptions budget.

Councillor Mrs Wood stated she would support the first 2 proposals but as we did not have money in the budget for any subscription at all for the Partnership where were we just going to "find" £500? Mrs Wood proposed paying only £100 subscription this year to show support of the new Management team - especially as Accounts for the Partnership, for the past couple of years, have not been presented - and budget £500 for 2010/11. Councillor Skolar agreed.

The majority of Councillors felt that we should pay the full £500 providing it was matched by Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council. Councillor Dr P J Skolar agreed to talk to Oxfordshire County Council.

Councillors are happy to endorse the revised structure and will support both re-organisation and the liaison group.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that Henley Town Council support the reorganisation plan, support the liaison group and pay £500 membership fee for this year.

- i. Councillors noted that the Henley Partnership has set up two groups
- ii. Councillors appointed Councillor A J Follett to represent Henley Town Council at a meeting of the Henley Partnership Community Liaison Group on 6 April 2009.

1975. **RED LION LAWN MOORINGS**

- i. Councillors considered and noted the renewal of licences for Red Lion Lawn moorings.
- ii. Councillors considered delegating powers to the Town Clerk to agree renewal of licences.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that the two licences are renewed for 2009/10 and the Town Clerk be given delegated powers to renew these licences in future years without referral to Committee

1976. **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS**

- i. Councillors considered and accepted a suggestion that Woodcote and Henley Town Councils work together to encourage OCC Highways to maintain disintegrating granite setts.

The Committee RECOMMENDS

that Woodcote Parish Council and Henley Town Council work together to encourage Oxfordshire County Council highways to take their responsibility seriously in respect of granite setts.

Action: Committee Administrator to contact Woodcote Parish Council

- ii. Councillors noted a response from Oxfordshire Highways regarding weed control.

1977. **CCTV**

Councillors noted Henley Town Council's CCTV strategy comments

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10:10 pm

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Chairman