

Present: Councillor A J Follett (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (Vice Chairman)
Councillor Mrs G Dodds
Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood
Mr J Hobbs - Hobbs of Henley
Mr I McGaw – Rotary Club of Henley Bridge
Mr R Reed – Henley Standard
Mrs M Thomas – River Rowing Museum
Mrs C Yoxall – River Rowing Museum
Mrs J Perigo (in attendance)

Also Present: Miss J Smith, Christmas Festival & Committee Administrator / Minute taker

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Julie Perigo to the meeting who would be talking more about the Living Advent Calendar initiative under agenda item 12.

69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs J Bland and C Pye, Mr O O'Dell and Mrs T Jones.

70. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

71. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2011 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman, Councillor A Follett.

72. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

None.

73. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members had before them a copy of the Terms of Reference for this Sub Committee, attached to the agenda for review and consideration. It was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Term of Reference for the Christmas Events and Decorations Sub Committee as at 31 March 2011 be adopted.

74. BUDGET 2010/11

Members had before them a copy of the 2010/11 budget, attached to the agenda. It was noted that since the budget sheet was issued an invoice for £167.40 from Scottish Southern Electricity for the seasonal lighting had been received. It was reported that the invoice from Oxfordshire County Council for road closure costs was still outstanding so an accrual for the £1398 (maximum estimate) was to be carried forward into the budget for the next financial year.

75. PROGRESS REPORT

The Progress Report, attached to the agenda, was received and it was noted that Christmas lighting contact; large Christmas tree and Live Advent Calendar were agenda items and would be discussed separately. All other items were noted.

76. SPONSORSHIPS

It was noted that following a letter sent to Invesco Perpetual confirming their sponsorship for the large Christmas tree of £1500 in 2011, confirmation had been received from them that they would also be willing to donate an extra £250 towards small trees for the charities/churches in the town centre.

The Chairman advised that following this meeting he was meeting with the SODC Action Plan Group where he would be asking for sponsorship towards new Christmas initiatives e.g. Living Advent Calendar project.

A discussion ensued on other ways of raising sponsorship as there was a concern that other business sponsorship might be tight this year. The following ideas were suggested: contacting Waitrose regarding the 'Community Matters Scheme' and have a community collection for the festival. Holding a Mayor's autumn event, like the 'Mile of Coins' event held in 2009, and potentially holding this on the same weekend as the either the Triathlon or Half Marathon events (17 Sept or Oct).

77. 2011 FESTIVE ILLUMINATIONS CONTRACT

Members had before them a report for the quotation for the 2011 seasonal lighting contract, attached to the agenda. It was proposed that following the successful completion of the 2010 seasonal lighting contract undertaken by Merlin Lighting Installations that under item (1) of the report the quotation for the installation/removal and maintenance of the cross-street lighting; maintenance of the lighting for the large (including large Christmas tree) and small trees; installation/removal of festoon lighting at north Thameside be accepted. It was

RESOLVED that the quotation received from Merlin Lighting for £3,299 for the installation/removal and maintenance of the cross-street lighting; maintenance of the lighting for the large (including large Christmas tree) and small trees; and installation/removal of festoon lighting at north Thameside be accepted.

Members also considered item (2) of the report regarding the refurbishment of existing cross street lighting or the replacement of these lights. It was highlighted that because these lights were now seven years old and with the continuous replacement of sections due to failure this was weakening the circuit causing sections of lights to fail once in situ. Due to budget constraints it was decided not pursue with the refurbishment/purchase of cross-street lighting at this time. It was

RESOLVED that due to budget constraints it was decided not pursue with the refurbishment/ purchase of cross-street lighting at this time.

78. LARGE CHRISTMAS TREE

Members had before them a report for the quotation for the supplying of the 40ft Spruce Christmas tree for the Market Place, attached to the agenda. The report included two quotations one from the existing supplier (A), Elveden Farms for £1497.35 plus VAT and a quotation from Windowflowers (B) for £1750 plus VAT. It was

RESOLVED that the quotation from Elveden Farms Ltd for £1497.35 plus VAT for the purchase of a 40ft Spruce for the Market Place be accepted.

79. SMALL CHRISTMAS TREES 2011 SCHEME

Mr R Reed updated members that unfortunately the charity Face of Henley would not be able to run the scheme in 2011 due to the lack of administration support. Mr J Hobbs advised that he had also approached RNLI who were very interested in helping to promote/run this year's scheme. Like last year, the RNLI would receive a percentage from each tree sold, amount to be agreed between RNLI and the tree contractor. It was

RESOLVED that RNLI help promote/run the 2011 Small Christmas Tree Scheme in conjunction with the tree contractor.

It was agreed that Mr Daniels be invited to attend the next meeting.

80. LIVING ADVENT CALENDAR

Mrs J Perigo updated members on the 'Living Advent Calendar' concept which had originated from Stockholm. Two working group meetings had already been held on 1 February (notes attached to the agenda) and 24 March 2011. Mrs Perigo advised that she had approached businesses for use of their premises and already had a 14 businesses and 4 churches wanting to be involved in the event. She suggested that the businesses should pay a small administration charge around £25 to take part which would cover items like the sound and lighting equipment for the performances. The performers would be sourced locally e.g. Youth Festival; HAODS; local choirs, etc and would be required to have a short audition so that each performance could be matched to each venue. It was also hoped that each business would select a local charity so that donations could be collected each evening for a chosen charity. It had been decided that the launch of the 'Living Advent Calendar' would start on the night of the Christmas Festival (2 December) with a church hosting the performance on 24 December. Mrs Perigo also tabled a proposed timetable for the project. Mr J Hobbs offered the use of the Henley Partnership website to help promote the event.

A further working group meeting to be arranged in late August early September. Mrs M Thomas agreed to be part of the working group as the River Rowing Museum would also like to host an advent performance.

81. CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL – 2 DECEMBER 2011

Members discussed having a theme for this year's event. However, after some discussion it was decided that as this year there would be the 'Living Advent Calendar' event it was not necessary to have a theme for the festival.

82. HENLEY PARTNERSHIP SUNDAY SHOPPING EVENT – 4 DECEMBER 2011

Mr J Hobbs explained that he felt for the cost and work involved in organising last year's event it did not necessarily outweigh the benefits, as many of the retailers that open on Sunday would be open regardless of any additional entertainment. It was decided that the 'Christmas Festival Weekend' should be advertised as one event and as in previous years offer free car parking on the Saturday and Sunday for Christmas shoppers, but that this year the Henley Partnership would focus its efforts in supporting the Living Advent Calendar event as liaison with the businesses.

The suggestion of holding a Santa Run on Saturday, 3 December in Mill Meadows was also revisited and the River Rowing Museum (RRM) agreed that they would organise this event with the help from a working group. Mr I McGaw and the Mayor, Mrs J Wood agreed to be part of this group with Mrs C Yoxall and Mrs M Thomas. It was agreed to hold a working group meeting in the near future date to be confirmed by RRM.

83. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed not to hold another meeting until post the May Elections when there would be new Councillor membership elected to this Sub Committee.

Members gave their sincere thanks to Councillor A Follett for his continued support and hard work over the years as both a member and chair of the Sub Committee.

The following date was proposed for the next meeting: **Wednesday, 13 July 2011 at 9.30am** in the Committee Room, Town Hall.

Meeting closed at 10.40am.