

Present: Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood (presiding)
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Mrs P G Buckett
Councillor Mrs G M Dodds
Councillor A Follett
Councillor Miss L M Hillier
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Deputy Mayor, Councillor C Pye
Councillor Miss L H Pye
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor Dr B Wood

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

Also Present: 1 member of the press
15 members of the public

The Town Clerk read out the fire evacuation procedure and reminded Councillors and members of the public of the Code of Practice relating to Public Participation as stated on the agenda.

50. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for ill health were received from Councillors C W Gibson, Mrs R Myer, S Smith. In addition apologies from Councillors D Nimmo-Smith and Dr P Skolar who were on holiday.

51. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Dr B Wood – personal and prejudicial interest - item 91 Nomad Grant on Finance Strategy and Management Committee 14 December 2010 meeting. It was noted that he would be making representation during the Public Participation on this item.

52. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 23 November 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman, as a true record.

53. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr K Arlett, Elizabeth Road

Mr Arlett was disappointed to see that both County Councillors were not at the meeting, as at the last Full Council both had expressed that they would be fighting Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) for their continued funding of £25k for the Youth Centre. OCC had recently withdrawn funding so he would have been very interested to hear their report on this item. He stated that the Youth Centre would obviously be looking to find monies locally to fund this much needed facility and asked if Henley Town Council (HTC) would be contributing.

It was confirmed that the Trustees of the Youth Centre were actively meeting to seek alternative funding and that they had already had many offers of financial support. It was mentioned that all the support received had been positive and the Trustees were determined to keep the centre open.

It was noted that County Councillors had been asked to submit reports prior to this meeting and that no update had been made regarding the Youth Centre.

Mr P Burness-Smith, St Marks Road

Mr Burness-Smith said he was attending on behalf of The Henley Orwell Charitable Trust regarding the First Chapel on The Fairmile and confirmed that he was happy to liaise with Councillors to reach a successful conclusion.

Mrs L Meachin, Lovell Close

Mrs Meachin asked what steps were being taken to make cuts to District and County executive salaries and members' allowances.

It was confirmed that at a District level there had been salary freezes and that posts had been combined with the Vale of White Horse District Council to further save on the salaries budget.

Mr C Russell, Bell Street

Mr Russell informed members that although he had made representation at past Council meetings regarding the aggressive clamping at Northfield End he updated the Council that he was now seeking recovery of the fines through the small claims court. He asked if the Council was aware that the address displayed on the clamping signs had not been in existence since February 2010. He asked what progress had been made on declaring this area as highway which would make further clamping illegal.

In addition, Mr Russell showed members photographs of an area outside his property (which had been confirmed as highway) where a developer had been dumping excavation materials from nearby housing development works. He stated that heavy plant vehicles were mounting the pavement to avoid the rubble obstruction and had caused the Georgina slabs outside the property to crack, thus potentially causing a trip hazard. He believed that OCC needed reminding that HTC still had the power of veto over the proposed stopping up order.

It was noted that this item would be discussed under agenda item 8 (iv) Finance Strategy and Management, 14 December – item 87. It was reiterated that HTC did not own the land in question and that it was a matter for OCC.

Mr W Hamilton - Greys Road

Mr Hamilton referred to the Finance Strategy Management Committee on the 14 December 2010, when the budget for 2011-12 had been discussed and expressed the following concerns. If £25k was needed to fund the Youth Centre, he argued why Henley was the only town in Oxfordshire paying £17k for the service of a dedicated PCSO. He asked why was the Council looking at funding a youth shelter at Mill Meadows at a cost of £10k when the bandstand could be used instead. He also asked why the Council were not prioritising funding and that if it was being forced to sell investments it was obviously living beyond its means. He requested that the budget be sent back to the Finance Strategy Management Committee for further scrutiny and not adopted.

He was informed that recent meetings had been held and it had been decided that the provision of a dedicated PCSO for Henley was seen as good value. With regard to the provision of £10k for a youth shelter, this was only a provision in the Capital Programme and not a commitment. As regards selling investments, members were reminded of the difference between cash flow and budget and that the Council, via its Value for Money Committee, looks at capital loans and other options to finance capital expenditure not just by selling investments.

Mrs S Russell, Bell Street

Mrs Russell referred to the bottled water on the Councillors' table and asked if tap water would not be a more economical option in these cost cutting times.

Mrs Russell continued to express her distress at living 3 meters away from piles of mud, which after the recent snow and rain had caused the recently white painted houses in Bell Street to become splashed with mud. She reiterated that the pavement

was badly damaged and implored the Council to do something. She suggested that the installation of bollards would potentially solve the problem.

A member asked if SODC had been contacted as they were responsible for overseeing building works and pavements. Mrs Russell confirmed that she had made contact with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) whom she had come out for a recent site visit. The District Councillors agreed to take Mrs & Mrs Russell's comments back to the relevant SODC Officers and Mrs Russell was advised to telephone SODC herself to speak to the SODC officer she had spoken to onsite.

Councillor Dr B Wood

Councillor Dr Wood requested to speak about the organisation Nomad. He referred to a report that demonstrated that Nomad provides support to 203 local young people and has contact with 843 local families who are often disadvantaged through economic and/or complex social issues. He stated that Nomad workers organise activities for children and young people to enable them to develop their self esteem and confidence through life skills referrals in addition to helping young people aged 16+ with job recruitment. He stated that in the past HTC had always provided a higher grant fund to Nomad and that the £5k grant allocated from HTC for 2011-12 was not sufficient and should be increased to £10k. He asked that a proposal be put forward under item 8(iv) to increase the grant from £5,000 to £10k.

The Town Clerk confirmed that a proposer and seconder would be required to introduce this proposal under agenda item 8(iv) as Councillor Dr B Wood, after declaring a prejudicial interest, would need to leave the meeting.

Members heard that Nomad is a fantastic cause and that the Baptist church which houses Nomad recently received £100,000 from the District's Community Investment Funding. It was highlighted that if extra money were to be granted to Nomad that cuts would have to be made elsewhere in the budget.

54. **DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

Members had before them two reports from District Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin and County Councillor Dr P Skolar, copies attached to the agenda. It was

RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

A member referred to the remuneration of Council's executives and why District and County Councillors pay was not being reduced.

It was confirmed that the District Council had frozen the chief executives' and officers' salaries with many now being responsible for two jobs. However, legally there could not be salary reductions and that any reductions would have to be voluntary.

A reference was made to the absence of County Councillors at this and future meetings and it was requested that attendance records are published, as this was the practise several years ago. It was agreed that this item would be added to the next Finance Strategy and Management (FSM) agenda.

Action: FSM administrator to include as an agenda item for the next available meeting.

55. **FEEDBACK REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members had before them the following reports, copies attached to the agenda:

- (i) Minutes from the River and Rowing Museum (RRM) Annual General Meeting and Trustees meeting both held on 26 November 2010; and
- (ii) Minutes from the Henley Partnership Tourism and Hospitality Group on 7 December 2010. It was

RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

A member referred to item 1735 of the Minutes of the RRM Trustees meeting regarding "the encouraging discussions regarding the possible relocation of the railway station." He asked for clarification on what was referred to by this minute as nothing had been brought before the Council regarding the station's relocation. A discussion took place regarding the fact that this had been an item for discussion on the table a number of

years ago under a different Council. Reference was also made by another member regarding the construction of a footbridge over the railway to allow coach parties to park at the station and cross over the railway line safely, which had been discussed under than same Council but the River and Rowing Museum had not taken the idea forward.

56. **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Members had before them the list of Mayoral engagements from 18 November to 22 December 2010 inclusive, copy attached to the agenda. It was

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Mayor referred to her attendance at the National Association of Local Councils Conference held on 1 December 2010 and explained in detail what the day had entailed.

57. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

(i) The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 30 November 2010 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 30 November 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

(ii) The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 21 December 2010 and were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 21 December 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the report:

Minute 129 – Groveland, St Andrews Road

It was noted that SODC had agreed to arrange a site visit on 17 January 2011 prior to the SODC Planning meeting on the 19 January 2011.

(iii) The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 7 December 2010 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 7 December 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the report:

Minute 90 – Diamonds and Pearls Night Club

A member praised the positive and unified approach which had been recommended to approach SODC and urge them to adopt the new Government guidelines regarding lap dancing clubs, as it was felt Greys Road car park was an inappropriate location for such a club. It was confirmed that an SODC Licensing Officer would be attending a future Town and Community Committee meeting and any interested members were invited to attend.

(iv) The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 14 December 2010 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 14 December 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the report:

Minute 87 – Progress Report – Northfield End

Following the concerns addressed at Public Participation regarding the building excavation material being dumped by a developer in Bell Street, a discussion ensued regarding OCC not discharging its responsibility in this area. It was proposed that the Council uses its right to veto the stopping up order at Northfield End as leverage against OCC in order to get them to take action against the said developer. It was

RESOLVED that in addition to the recommendations made in item 87 of the minutes of the Finance Strategy and Administration on the 14 December 2010. HTC write to OCC informing them the Town Council would consider exercising its right of veto over OCC's proposals if OCC continued in its failure to discharge its responsibility and obligation to protect the highway.

Councillor Dr B Wood left the meeting.

Minute 91 – Nomad Grant

Following the earlier representation from Councillor Dr B Wood during Public Participation, a discussion ensued regarding the demand that will be put on HTC by local organisations during the austere times regarding local government funding of projects. It was highlighted that HTC does have a sizeable contingency fund but that it would be more prudent to wait before allocating additional grant monies at this time. A proposal that the Nomad grant be increased by £5k to £10k was put to the vote and was defeated.

Minute 92 – Budget 2011/12

Members were informed that two proposals needed to be resolved as per the recommendations in minute 92 of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee of 14 December 2011:

- (i) Acceptance and adoption that a precept of £468,700 be levied on SODC, representing no change in the overall amount from the current year, but a reduction in the Band D equivalent from £82.42 to £82.16;
- (ii) Acceptance and adoption of the Revenue Estimates for 2011/12 subject to the amendment showing the reduction in the employers' superannuation contribution and the reduction in the audit fee; and
- (iii) Acceptance and adoption of the Capital Programme for 2011/12.

A lengthy debate ensued. One member suggested that the Council's funding of Henley's dedicated PCSO should be withdrawn and that the full cost should be borne by Thames Valley Police. It was highlighted by a member that four years ago there was a death in one of the streets of Henley which had resulted in the community requesting for more policing and PCSO's on Henley's streets.

Councillor Dr B Wood requested a recorded vote. It was

RESOLVED that the Revenue Estimates for 2011/12, as amended, be received, approved and adopted and that a precept in the sum of £468,700 be levied on South Oxfordshire District Council.

For
Cllr Mrs J Bland
Cllr P Buckett
Cllr Mrs G Dodds
Cllr A Follett
Cllr Miss L Hillier
Cllr Mrs E Hodgkin
Cllr C Pye
Cllr Miss L Pye
Cllr I Reissmann
Cllr Mrs J Wood

Against
Cllr Dr B Wood

The Council continued to consider the Capital Programme for 2011/12.

Further clarification was given regarding the extent of the capital expenditure which would be needed to buy Parks Services equipment and machinery in 2012, in order that certain services could be brought in-house. Mention was made of the need to sell investments in order to fund this expenditure. However, it was confirmed that this may not necessarily be the case and it would depend on the cash flow situation at the time and whether other sources of funding were available.

The decision regarding the cost (£200k) of replacing the astroturf at the sports centre at Tesco in 2012 was mentioned. However, it was confirmed that this was outside the scope of this budget and steps were being made regarding options on how to fund its replacement in 2012/13. It was noted that HTC's £4m investments belong to the town and not the Council and should be used for the benefit of Henley's community when required.

Councillor Dr B Wood requested a recorded vote. It was

RESOLVED that the Capital Programme of Schemes for 2011/12 be approved and adopted.

For
Cllr P Buckett
Cllr Mrs G Dodds
Cllr A Follett
Cllr Mrs E Hodgkin
Cllr C Pye
Cllr Miss L Pye
Cllr I Reissmann
Cllr Mrs J Wood

Against
Cllr Mrs J Bland
Cllr Miss L Hillier
Cllr Dr B Wood

Minute 93 – Council Tax Leaflet 2011-12

It was noted that a draft copy of the narrative had been issued to members for comment. Due to the tight timetable to approve the leaflet by the required deadline. It was

RESOLVED that delegated powers be given to the Finance Strategy Management Committee to approve the final copy.

Minute 98 - Local Transport Plan 2011-30

It was noted that dispensation had been granted from OCC following the postponement of the Full Council meeting on the 4 January and that the 9 January 2011 deadline for submissions had been extended. In addition to the items outlined in Minute 98, the following three items were noted for inclusion:

- (i) Integration and Communication – develop ways of improving the availability of information about public transport, e.g. bus and train times as a way of encouraging increased uptake of public transport.
 - (ii) Encourage improved involvement in use of Section 106 arrangements in planning and ensuring these improvements happen quickly to take advantage of the improvements as soon as possible.
 - (iii) OCC to develop strategies for installing electric ‘hook-ups’ for electric cars in public places e.g. car parks.
- (v) The Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 21 December 2010 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 21 December 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

- (vi) Townlands Steering Group
 The Chairman updated members that Mr Richard Darch, Townlands Project Manager Primary Care Trust had replaced Mrs Catherine Mountford and he was also pleased to announce that Mrs Rhianna Relihan, who had been involved in the Townlands project in the past, had taken over responsibilities from Mr T Burrage.

It was stated that the Prior Information Notice (PIN) had been issued and would be published in The European Journal.

Reference to the effect the National Health Service (NHS) reorganisation would have on the project and the fact that Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Primary Care Trusts would be clustered together was made. This process would affect the Townlands project deadlines plus add extra risks. He confirmed that a meeting regarding the NHS reorganisation was being held on 27 January 2011 at 7:30pm at Kassam Stadium, Oxford and urged members to attend to gain a better understanding of what would be happening to the NHS in the future.

It was noted that bidders are looking at the existing facilities, plus the addition of the nursing home and that the TSG were watching carefully the allocation of the number of beds. A member urged that a report be drawn up to ensure that there is no loss of beds at the new hospital.

58. **SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE PROPOSED SUBMISSION CORE STRATEGY**

Members had been given the opportunity to comment on the core strategy document and it was noted that there had been no major comments made. It was

RESOLVED that HTC have no substantial comments on the Core Strategy document and the necessary response to this effect be sent to SODC.

59. **TOWN HALL PAVEMENT LIGHTS**

Members had before them a report submitted by the Town clerk, attached to the agenda. The report considered two options for progressing this project:

- (i) Supply and fix new cast iron pavement lights at a cost of £26,720 plus the cost of providing stone bearings, hoarding fences and the appropriate local authority license; or
- (ii) Appeal against the decision by SODC to refuse planning permission for the installation or alternative similar modern materials, this will cost the Council £1,600 in professional fees, plus the cost of installing the alternative pavement lights in the sum of £4,956.

Members were informed that these lay lights had been installed because of the public toilets that had once existed in the basement. This area was now used as storage space, therefore, the pavement lighting was not required.

Some members expressed their concerns that the Town Hall was a Grade II* listed building and the Council was custodian of this building they were responsible for the appropriate repairs. It was stressed that the lay lights were in the pavement adjacent to the building and not part of the fabric of the Town Hall.

A member stated that the Council was being bullied by SODC to potentially spending £26,720 on fixing these pavement lights which in such austere times would be seen as a waste of tax payers' money. A suggestion was made to write directly to the Secretary of State for communities and local government to appeal against the District Council's decision. It was

RESOLVED that an appeal against the decision by SODC to refuse planning permission for the installation of alternative similar modern materials be made, at a cost of £1,600 in professional fees, plus the cost of installing the alternative pavement lights in the sum of £4,956, if the appeal is successful.

The meeting closed at 10:10pm.

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Mayor