

Present:

Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor C W Gibson
Councillor Mrs R Myer
Councillor Miss L Pye, Vice-Chairman
Councillor C I Pye
Councillor D Nimmo Smith
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, The Mayor (ex officio)
Councillor Mrs J Wood, Deputy Mayor (ex officio), Chairman

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

Also Present: PC Vicky Sims and Sergeant Graham Pink, Thames Valley Police, One member of the public and one member of the press.

40. **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor Dr P J Skolar

41. **TO 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 E Hodgkin Minute 48, Personal, husband on the Management Committee of Talking Newspapers and she also works for Talking Newspapers.

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith, Minute 52, Personal, resident of St Andrew's Road.

Councillor Mrs J Bland, Minute 51, Prejudicial, trader in Henley

42. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 30 June 2009 were approved and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood.

43. **PROGRESS**

Councillors received and noted a report on progress and made the following comments:

Leichlingen Pavilion/ toilet refurbishments, Minute 244 (Mill Meadows Committee) 1784 (F&A Committee)

In response to a query from Councillor D Nimmo-Smith, the Town Clerk confirmed that this item had been referred back to the Mill Meadows / River Sub Committee and to the Finance Strategy and Management Committee.

Visitor Information Centre, Minutes 1894, 9, 16 (FS&M) and 52 (Full Council):

The Town Clerk confirmed that the matter had been referred back to the Finance Strategy and Management Committee to appoint a sub committee to progress delivery of the service from the Barn to the Town Hall from 1.10.09.

Finger Signage Refurbishment, Minute 1651 Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin confirmed that, apart from the new post in the Kings Road car park, the finger signage refurbishment is completed and is very much improved. This was funded from the SODC Action Plan.

Councillor Mrs J Bland joined the meeting at 7.40pm

Market Towns Consultation, Minute 1969 Concern was expressed regarding the lack of progress on the appointment of a Town Centre manager and that the relevant funding budgeted in the current financial year by SODC could be lost. The Town Clerk advised that he had attended a meeting of the Partnership Steering Group today, at which SODC had stated that it would be reviewing its position.

Councillor Mrs R Myer joined the meeting at 7.43

Action: Committee Administrator to write to SODC to seek information on progress on the proposed appointment of a Town Centre Manager

Councillor Mrs J Wood advised that Miller Research had been appointed by SODC to assist in the development of a Unique Selling Point for Henley, Thame and Wallingford. as part of the Market Towns Consultation. She had sat on the interview panel. Miller's remit would involve 're-branding' each of the towns. They had done similar work in Durham and Cheltenham. Councillor Wood would be attending a meeting with them on 24 September and would report back to a future meeting of this Committee.

The Old Fire Station Gallery, Minute 1816, Finance and Administration. Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin urged Councillors to visit the Gallery to see the works for themselves. She had been particularly impressed with the new toilet suitable for disabled use and the new kitchen, both of which had been fitted into the side gallery.

Clamping in Henley, Minute 26 The Town Clerk reported that he and the Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, had met with Sean Roberts, who is a legally licensed operator working in Henley. Mr Roberts manages 29 sites throughout the town, including Upper Market Place for the Town Council. The Rugby Club also plans to use Mr Roberts's services. Mr Roberts had confirmed that he has had no problems with the Licensing Authorities. He charges £130 for unauthorised parking which can be reduced to £100 at his discretion; and £50 for parking in an authorised space without displaying a permit.

The Town Clerk advised that Mr Roberts had stated that he does not patrol sites excessively and responds when clients ring him to alert him to problems. He refutes that he acts in an aggressive manner.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, stated that it is important that Upper Market Place spaces are kept free. Mr Roberts had advised that he had clamped 5 cars there over the past year. He would be willing to meet on a regular basis of 3 / 4 times per year.

Some Councillors took the view that the charges were excessively high and that a similar level of fines to those imposed in SODC's car parks would be more acceptable; others took the contrary view and were of the opinion that there is adequate signage warning that people should not park there. It was suggested that illegal parking in an individual's designated space in a private car park is a different issue to parking illegally in a public car park where there are lots of alternative

parking spaces. It was understood to generally be people visiting the town, rather than local residents, who parked illegally in Upper Market Place.

44. **BUDGET**

Councillors received and accepted the monthly budget report for July 2009. The Town Clerk reported that generally figures were as expected. The anticipated outturn of £20k in respect of the move of the Visitor Information Centre would not be required this year as any changes to the building were likely to be implemented the following year. The projected income stream in respect of the Barn would take effect from 1 October when KVB Designs moved into the premises.

45. **POLICE**

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood invited PC Vicky Sims and Sergeant Graham Pink to the table. PC Sims introduced Sergeant Pink and advised that he was the new neighbourhood Sergeant based at Henley Police Station.

Sergeant Pink reported on the following:

- A new neighbourhood officer, PC Tina Hislop, had started in Henley last month. This was a new appointment for Henley. PC Hislop had two year's experience as a neighbourhood officer.
- He drew Councillors attention to the town centre patrols carried out on Friday and Saturday nights from 10pm to 3.00am. A minimum of two foot officers worked to combat anti social behaviour and drinking.
- Licence checks had been carried out on key establishments in the town centre.
- Criminal damage – there had been two incidents in Reading Road. It had been reported in the Henley Standard that nine cars had been damaged although damage to four cars had been reported to the police. Another incident involved damage to flower boxes in Friday Street.
- Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) – Number one priority was dealing with vandalism in the town
- CCTV – was working well. The Henley Police had established good working relationship with the CCTV operators. The majority of incidents reported in Henley have a positive outcome. Store detectives have highlighted shoplifting which had been captured on CCTV. Burglaries had decreased following identification and arrest of a suspect. These historically increased in the run up to Christmas and extra resources would be put in place in an attempt to prevent this.

PC Vicky Sims reported on the following:

- The two PCSO's working in Henley had issued 1,211 excess charge notices between March 2008 and March 2009. This compared to 483 in Didcot.
- PCSO's had been allocated to three schools each which they patrol, speak with parents etc. The PCSO's also hold regular surgeries which they advertise in the press and by leaflet drop to communicate with the community. In response to a question, PC Sims advised that these are not always well attended. No-one had turned up at a recent surgery held on the Gainsborough estate.

Councillor Mrs J Bland referred to commercial vehicles parking in Gravitt Close and to criminal damage which had been done to her property in the early hours of the morning when a flower pot had been kicked down the road. She asked if anything could be done.

PC Sims advised that the issue of vandalism was being looked into by the police and NAG.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin referred to vandalism at Waterman's Allotments and advised that when the manager of the site had reported this to the police he had been told that the allotment holder should report the incident to them.

Sergeant Pink confirmed that the aggrieved party must be the one who advises the police, although a report would have been filed and passed on following the call from the site manager, and the police would have visited.

Councillor Mrs R Myer advised that she has been informed by an allotment holder that vandalism had decreased. However, young people congregate in the woods behind the allotments.

PC Sims advised that the police are aware of this and put on additional patrols and will also hold a surgery in the area.

Councillor C W Gibson advised that membership of Neighbourhood Watch in his road had decreased and asked the police how much longer the scheme would be operating.

Sergeant Pink stated that Neighbourhood Watch is the eyes and ears of the community. It was agreed that he would arrange for the Neighbourhood Watch coordinator to contact Councillor Gibson.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin enquired about breaches of licence in the White Lotus night club. Sergeant Pink confirmed that Thames Valley Police (TVP) had asked for a review of this licence and notices have been displayed stating that the public have 28 days in which to comment.

Councillor C I Pye referred to a scheme operating in another part of the country whereby night patrols were being carried out checking resident's front doors, when a high turnover of properties with unsecured front doors with keys left in, keys in cars etc had been discovered. He wondered if Henley Police could run a similar initiative to make people aware of opportunist thefts.

Sergeant Pink advised that TVP were looking at various methods to increase public awareness and could not comment on the police entering people's houses in the middle of the night. There was a high sense of community in Henley and people feel safe, the police are looking at ways of educating people regarding opportunist thefts.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin asked if the creation of litter in the town has an effect on anti social behaviour.

Sergeant Pink stated that the Bell Street flowerpot incident had been monitored by CCTV and had been seen to have started in the town centre with litter being kicked around, following which rubbish bags had been kicked and then flowerpots. He agreed that litter is contributing to possible anti social behaviour where the town centre is looking untidy. He advised that the town centre bins are usually overflowing by 10pm.

In response to further questions, Sergeant Pink confirmed that the number of CCTV cameras in Henley is consistent with other towns in South Oxfordshire; the increase in police numbers and good links with CCTV and the use of shop radios to communicate with CCTV operators is helping to control shoplifting. He did not believe shoplifting to be a major problem in Henley and did not consider that a suggestion to have undercover patrols at the train station was necessary.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood thanked the police for their reports and invited them to remain at the table for the following item.

46. **CCTV KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Councillors received and noted summary report, Quarter one 2009-10.

Councillor C W Gibson referred to the cost of CCTV at £5,700 per quarter and queried if the results were cost effective.

The Town Clerk advised that a meeting has been arranged with the Town Clerks from Didcot, Thame and Wallingford and the Strategic Director from SODC on 23 September 2009. HTC and the other towns have long complained about the costs of CCTV; SODC have referred back to the agreements signed at the commencement of the project. The Town Clerk has made representation to the Chief Executive at District Council suggesting that the costs of monitoring are too high.

During further discussion, some Councillors were of the opinion that CCTV acts as a deterrent and helps with arrests and that there would be an increase in problems if it was removed. Councillor Mrs J Bland advised the Committee of the implementation of CCTV in a nearby Market Town which had been achieved at little cost to the local Councils. Funding had been secured from a number of sources including businesses. The cameras were monitored by volunteers to keep costs down.

Sergeant Pink advised that CCTV had contributed to 30 arrests thanks to the good work of CCTV operators.

Councillor C I Pye suggested that the scheme was working well with good co-operation between operators and the police. There is also an extra police officer on the ground. If the results continue to be good this Partnership should be continued.

47. **VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE**

Councillors received and noted the following reports:

Visitor report running total for year 2009

Budget report June to August 2009

Report for June to August 2009

Councillor C W Gibson asked if the decision to move the VIC to the Town Hall had been made without reference to Committee. He had been given assurances at a previous meeting that no decision would be made without consultation.

The Town Clerk confirmed that this had been a democratic decision made by Full Council. He had presented a full report to the Finance Strategy and Management Committee on 2 June, under whose remit the matter came. The decision made by this Council on 16 June was to take the VIC staff on; one person per day to be accommodated in the One Stop Shop, Henley Town Hall. The report had included the cost of the additional staff and the income from the letting of the barn.

The Town Clerk suggested that Councillor Gibson was referring to the proposal to carry out alterations to the Town Hall building. He confirmed that no decision had been taken in this regard and that a working group of Councillors would meet with staff and Tourism South East to discuss what services would continue to be offered with recommendations brought back to Committee.

Councillor Gibson asked if his question and the answer had been minuted at the Full Council meeting.

The Town Clerk advised the Chairman that he would assist Councillor Gibson with his queries outside of the meeting.

48. **ADVERTISING BOARDS ON PAVEMENTS IN HENLEY TOWN CENTRE**

Councillors considered a report on the re-appearance of A-Boards on pavements in the town centre.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, advised that she had brought this subject to the attention of Councillors on a number of occasions over the past six years. She has regular contact with 80 blind and partially sighted residents who have advised that they get to know where fixed street furniture such as bins and flower pots are located but have difficulty negotiating pavements with so many A-Boards appearing. Day Centre personnel had complained at a recent meeting that they are forced into the road by A-Boards taking up pavement space. Councillor Mrs Hodgkin advised that she works hard to support businesses in the town but disabled people have the right to walk around town safely.

Councillor Mrs J Wood expressed surprise that there had not been more complaints from mothers pushing buggies or disabled people using scooters. She would be in favour of a sweep of A-Boards in the town centre and asking traders to put up swinging signs instead.

During discussion, Councillors were generally of the opinion that substantial resources had been put into improving the pavements in the town centre for pedestrians recently, only to have them cluttered with A-Boards. It was agreed that the Information Sheet on Pavement Advertising should initially be distributed to traders in the town centre with the ultimatum that if they did not cooperate A-Boards would be removed, and that this should be followed up with a sweep of all remaining A-Boards after a period of time.

Councillor C I Pye advised that this had been tried in the past with A-Boards held in the Town Hall and handed back to traders who had simply put them out again. He suggested that consideration should be given to means of preventing this happening in the future. Councillors agreed that there was a need to be clear what action could be taken by the Town Council in respect of confiscated A-Boards.

Following further lengthy discussion

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that

- a) the Information sheet on Pavement Advertising is updated by the Town Clerk and distributed to businesses in the town centre, with a notification that any A-Boards remaining after a period of time would be removed by the Town Council, and
- b) this is followed up by a sweep of all A-Boards in the town centre by the Town Council's Parks Service staff, and
- c) the Town Clerk takes legal advice and brings suggestions for an enforcement strategy to the Full Council meeting on 29 September 2009

49. **PROVISION OF FREE BUS SHELTERS IN HENLEY**

Councillors considered a proposal from Primesite Media for the installation of nine bus shelters in Henley.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin advised that she, The Deputy Mayor, Mrs J Wood and the Committee Administrator had walked around some of the possible sites with a representative from Primesite during which time residents had been asked if they wanted bus shelters. 100% had said yes. The representative had confirmed that Primesite would be responsible for obtaining all necessary planning permission, installation and maintenance of the shelters, at no cost to the Town Council. This would include the shelter in Grey's Road which had been subject to vandalism and graffiti in the past.

Some Councillors expressed concern about the quality of advertising and regarding the installation of bus shelters containing advertising in conservation areas.

Following discussion, It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

- a) the proposal is taken to the next stage and a copy of the agreement is brought back to a future meeting of this Committee, and
- b) Councillors' concerns regarding the suitability of advertising are expressed, and
- c) the advice of District Council is sought regarding advertising on bus shelters in conservation areas, and
- d) the length of the term of the contract is queried

50. **LEGISLATION ON LICENSED PREMISES**

Minute No 16, 28.5.09 refers.

Councillors received and noted a letter from the Home Office dated 3 July 2009.

Councillor Mrs J Bland advised that central Government is passing back responsibility on lap dancing clubs to local authorities. A Licensing Panel Hearing, the provisional date of which is 8 October 2009, would be held at South Oxfordshire District Council regarding the club in Henley, at which representations from individual residents in the vicinity would be considered. It was hoped that the Henley Standard would inform residents of this via their newspaper.

Councillor Mrs J Bland, having declared an interest, left the room for the following item:

51. **CONTINENTAL MARKETS IN HENLEY 2010**

Councillors considered a report regarding Continental markets in Henley in 2010 and noted that a reduction in fees had been requested by the Market managers in the light of the current economic climate (Note: charges were £1000 in 2008 and £1050 in 2009 for 2 or 3 day markets).

The Town Clerk advised that he had canvassed other Councils regarding fees charge to Continental Markets and had received the following responses:

- Old Bolsover Town Council charged £700 for a two day event in May this year, in 2007 £650 and £550 previously. Their footfall for the 2 days was between 15500 to 20000 based over the last 4 years (Henley has no information on footfall)
- Newbury Town Council charges £300 per day which is what it costs them to manage
- Hunts District Council hold one very large market with 30 stalls and charges £2,000 for three days
- Tring charges £120 per day.

Following discussion, in which the Mayor confirmed there is a waiting list of Foreign Market Traders who wish to hold a Continental Market here;

it was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

- a) A total of four Continental type markets are permitted in Henley in 2010, and
- b) The fee for 2010 remains £1050 per market.

Councillor Mrs Bland returned to the meeting.

52. **TRAFFIC IN ST ANDREWS ROAD**

Councillors considered a report on the issue of traffic in St Andrews Road. It was noted that this is the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council who had looked into the history of the road and had advised that it was unlikely that the road would be considered as a priority for measures.

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith advised that he had passed the matter to Peter Ronald at Oxfordshire Highways and would discuss this with him.

Councillor C I Pye advised that the matter should be referred to a future meeting of the Traffic Advisory Group.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

No further action is taken by Henley Town Council at this time.

53. **LITTER IN HENLEY**

Councillors received and noted a number of emails and photographs concerning the issue of litter in the town, particularly following the recent 'Rewind' Festival. It was also noted that the area outside Starbucks, Market Place has been an ongoing concern, with bins becoming full and rubbish left around the bins in the evening and overnight. The police's comments on the effects of litter and anti-social behaviour were given earlier in the meeting.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, advised that she had been in contact with officers at SODC who have responsibility for litter clearance in the town centre.

The Town Clerk advised that he is arranging a meeting with waste management officers at District Council and other Town Clerks in South Oxfordshire and would report back to a future meeting of this Committee.

Councillors discussed whether or not the removal of the litter bins would encourage people to take their rubbish home. It was suggested a good idea would be to trial the proposal by removing 2 of the bins which actually require refurbishment at this time and monitor the litter situation in those areas closely.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

The litter bins outside Starbucks, Market Place and Bell Street are removed for refurbishment

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

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Chairman