

Present: Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (Chair)
Councillor Ms K Gehrmann (Vice Chair)
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor D Hinke
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor Mrs J Wood
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P Phillips (ex-officio)

In Attendance: Mr M Kennedy – Town Clerk
Ms N Taylor – Committee Administrator / Minute Taker

Also Present: 1 Member of the Press
22 Members of the Public

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were received from Councillor Mrs J Wood – Personal – Item 18, Optimising income from the hire of this council's premises – known to the current tenant of the Kings Arms Barn.

21. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr Dick Fletcher – Mill End. Changes need to be made to the Old Fire Station and the Barn needs to be used more, but the Barn is not suitable for use as an Exhibition Centre. Henley in Transition has made good use of the Barn recently and Mr Fletcher would suggest that this group would probably have not got off the ground if the Barn had not been available if it was being used for exhibitions.

Mr David Welsh – Market Place. Frequently uses the Exhibition Centre, and acknowledged that it does have some disadvantages with footfall etc, but it has excellent natural lighting and plenty of wall hanging space, is in a good position and has a great atmosphere. The Barn has limited windows and wall space downstairs and is even worse upstairs; it would be a great venue for exhibiting other crafts but not good for use as a picture gallery.

Mrs Ann Viner – Reading. Member of both the Henley and Reading Guild of Artists and has been exhibiting for several years at the Exhibition Centre. The Barn, although reportedly a wonderful building, would be highly unsuitable for use as an Exhibition Centre, and on behalf of the Reading Guild of Artists would like to state that the Old Fire Station Gallery is an excellent place to come to, and they would be

very sorry to lose the use of it. It is a very pleasant space to exhibit, greatly welcomed and appreciated by all who use it.

Mrs Carole Stevens – Reading. Member of the Reading Guild of Artists, there is no other space available like it for hanging pictures, the Guild have been exhibiting for several years with the Henley Guild even longer and they would be very sad to lose the facility.

Mrs Penny Kay – Caversham. Member of the West Forest Potters, the Barn is a beautiful building but would not convert to a Gallery.

Mrs Kate Finlay – Reading. Member of Henley Guild of Artists, was part of the group who several years ago persuaded Henley Town Council to run the Exhibition Centre. It is a fabulous resource with nothing else like it in the area and should not be displaced. The Old Fire Station Gallery has fabulous lighting and white walls but is overpriced compared to other facilities in the area, i.e. £200 Nordon £150 Greenham. The Council should help with advertising and promotion which would help to fill the venue and produce more income for the Council. The Guild has lots of ideas for use of the Barn.

Mrs Ann Spires – Gallowstree Common. A Member of a Bridge Club who were recently looking for halls for the club to play, nothing was available in Henley so they have gone to Remenham. More venues like the Barn are needed and with promotion would be more utilised.

22. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 24 May 2011 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

23. PROGRESS

Members received and considered a report on progress and after the following observations noted the information contained therein.

Pinsent Redgrave Award

Councillors Mrs E Hodgkin and Mrs P Phillips to look at the one nomination received and consider if the award is viable.

Road Inspections

A training session was held with Mr Keith Stenning and Mr Chris Softley from Oxfordshire County Council on Wednesday 29 June. Through Councillor Ms L Meachin the following points were noted:

- Issues relating to the highways should not just be reported annually but when they are noticed.
- The main issues to report are **Footway Trips** (*report any footway trips over 20mm – the exception to this, i.e. smaller trips can be reported if they are in areas used heavily by children or the elderly*), **Potholes** (*report any potholes over 40mm, under the following categories – Cat 1: most serious (2 hours or 24 hours repair), marked in red on the road – Absolute emergencies dealt with immediately. Cat 2: 28 days for non emergency, marked in white on the road (if repairs not carried out within 6 weeks report again), Cat 3: crazing and fretting, i.e. not deep potholes but general road damage – no timescale*) and **Weeds** (*noxious weeds report immediately – No vegetation i.e. hedges*)

should be growing over pavements(contact owner as a first response and then highways if problem persists) Oxfordshire County Council no longer remove weeds from curb stones, this will have to be dealt with by HTC staff or an alternative solution found)

- Winter maintenance – OCC looking into the salt bin situation and the possibility of providing additional bins.

A discussion was held regarding the regularity that the road reports should be submitted. It was **RESOLVED** that

i) once a year in February a full Road Report inspection should be carried out and the results reported, but any faults found during the rest of the year should not wait until this time but be reported when noticed;

ii) feedback on the form be sought from Mr Stenning; and

iii) that the Council's thanks and appreciation be conveyed to Mr Stenning for his positive and practical approach on this issue.

It was noted that both Mr Stenning and Mr Softly would be returning at a date to be confirmed to carry out further training.

Cycle Stands

A request was made for the Town Clerk to check that the market traders do not block the use of the cycle stands on market day. It was **RESOLVED** that

an inspection be carried out of the cycle racks on market day to ensure that they are fully usable and not blocked by the market traders.

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith to chase funding possibilities for additional stands around the town.

24. BUDGET

Members received the budget report to 31 May 2011. It was **RESOLVED** that

the report be received and noted.

25. VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was **RESOLVED** that

Agenda item 18 be now taken in recognition of the number of public present this evening.

26. OPTIMISING INCOME FROM THE HIRE OF THIS COUNCIL'S PREMISES

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk that examined opportunities and put forward suggestions for optimising income from the hire of rooms available at the Kings Arm's Barn, Old Fire Station Gallery and the Town Hall.

Discussions were held regarding the possibility of relocating the Exhibition Centre from the Old Fire Station Gallery to the Kings Arms Barn and the possible removal of the current tenant or transfer of the tenant to the Old Fire Station Gallery. The reasons decided that the Barn was not a suitable location for the Exhibition Centre, were:

- the lack of lighting and straight walls for hanging pictures
- the possible cost implications involved in the alterations required to make it useable
- the money already spent refurbishing and rebranding the Old Fire Station Gallery
- no disabled access to the first floor of the Barn
- A survey was carried out 3 years regarding a possible swap of locations which suggested the move would be unpopular
- The Old Fire Station Gallery is the only venue of its kind in the area
- The Old Fire Station Gallery has lots of light, both natural and artificial

The following observations were also made:

- The court yard at the Barn would make an excellent sculpture garden
- The Barn is a wonderful underused and undermanaged building that should be for the benefit of the whole community and not commercially let
- Ideas should be sought from members of the public on how best to utilize, advertise and promote both the Barn and the Old Fire Station Gallery.

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that

the recommendation for relocating the exhibition gallery from the Old Fire Station Gallery to the Kings Arms Barn be not progressed given the extent of support expressed by existing hirers for retaining the exhibition centre space at the Old Fire Station Gallery.

Arising from the report the Committee noted that an item on the renewal of the Barn lease would be considered at the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee on Tuesday 12 July 2011. It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMENDED** that:

- i) the whole Barn be kept as far as possible for community not commercial use, that it be promoted properly for all members of the community to enjoy;
- ii) a Working Group be set up, to meet no more than 6 times to find better ways to promote and market both the Old Fire Station Gallery and the Barn, the group to consist of The Mayor, Councillor Mrs P Phillips, the Chair of Town & Community, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, Mr & Mrs Fletcher, any Councillors who would like to put themselves forward at Full Council and any other member of the public who has an interest in promoting Arts in the town, and
- iii) the public be encouraged to send in suggestions on promotion and marketing and ideas for use of the Barn to the Town Council.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting and for their input at public question time.

Councillor Mrs P Phillips left the Council Chamber

27. PCSO KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Members received and noted the Summary Report for quarter four 2010-2011 and **RESOLVED** that

as there were several questions that the Members would like answered in regards to the PCSOs', i.e. value for money, funding during sick leave and

making best use of their time etc that they be invited to attend the next meeting along with the Police.

Councillor Mrs P Phillips rejoined the meeting.

28. OLYMPIC PLANNING

Members received and considered the notes of the Olympic Planning meeting held on Thursday 19 May 2011 and noted the information.

29. OXFORDSHIRE LIBRARY SERVICE CONSULTATION

Members received information from Oxfordshire County Council advising of the recent launch of the Oxfordshire County Council's Public Library Service Consultation. In noting the consultation is to run from 27 May – 30 September 2011, it was **RESOLVED** that

any comments from Members be sent to the Town Clerk to collate and represent as a corporate response to the next meeting.

30. FREE BUS PASSES

Members received and considered information from Oxfordshire County Council concerning the consultation being held from 6 June – 10 July 2011 on the application process for a bus pass, not the operation of the scheme. It was **RESOLVED** that

the report be noted.

31. JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

i) Members considered forming a Jubilee Celebrations Working Party (in the style of Christmas Events and Decorations) to co-ordinate the different events that the Town Council should lead / facilitate with volunteer organization that will be held around the Jubilee weekend in 2012, i.e. Elizabethan Fayre / Hog Roast (funding secured in the Action Plan), Street Party – Jubilee lunch in the Market Place, Lighting of Beacons, Planting of flower beds, Gillotts picnic lunch etc, and **RESOLVED** that

the membership should consist of Councillors Mrs J Bland, Ms K Gehrman, Mrs E Hodgkin, Mrs P Phillips and any other Councillors who would like to put themselves forward at Full Council, and any interested members of the public.

ii) Members discussed suitable locations to position the beacon. A number of locations were suggested including Makins Recreation Ground, Town Green and Mil Meadows. It was **RESOLVED** that

as the highest point in the town is Makins Recreation Ground that this would be the ideal location for the beacon as it would give the best vantage point.

32. ROAD REPORTS

Members received and considered the road allocation list and noted the information.

33. TRAFFIC ADVISORY

Members received and considered the minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee held on Tuesday 21 June 2011 and noted the information.

34. TOWN ENTRANCE GATES

Members received and considered a request from the Traffic Advisory Committee for provision in the 2012 / 2013 Estimates to purchase, erect and maintain white gates

next to the Henley boundary sign on Greys Road to act as a warning to motorists that they are entering a built up area and **RESOLVED** that Councillor D Nimmo-Smith to investigate the cost of providing and maintaining gates and bring back to the next meeting in September.

35. GREYS ROAD PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Members received and considered a request from the Traffic Advisory Committee for the provision of funding to provide a pedestrian crossing on Greys Road and to make representations to Oxfordshire County Council for funding this scheme from Section 106 developers contributions and **RESOLVED** that

the Town Clerk write a letter requesting that a Pedestrian Crossing be installed on Greys Road at the optimum position for safest use and that the funding be provided from Section 106 funding.

36. REGATTA BUS SERVICE

Members received and considered the notes of the informal meeting on 23 June 2011 to finalise the arrangements for the late night bus service on Regatta Friday and Saturday and noted the information.

An e-mail from Reading Buses was circulated to Members advising that preliminary reports show that both nights went well with the buses running fully seated loads, a full report to be brought back to this committee when available.

It was **RESOLVED** that

the report be noted with satisfaction and that a letter be sent to South Oxfordshire District Council thanking them for the amount of work put into ensuring that the town was clean and clear of litter at all times during the Regatta.

37. SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE MARKET TOWN ACTION PLANS 2011 / 2012

Members received and considered a report from South Oxfordshire District Council, providing an update on the South Oxfordshire Market Towns Action Plan, including bids from this Council previously adopted at the Town and Community meeting on 12 April 2011, and subsequently presented to the District Council for agreement as items that they would be committed to funding in 2011 /2012.

Councillors were advised that unfortunately funding bids for improved signage at Mill Meadows and support for the new information kiosk at Mill Meadows had both been unsuccessful; However, it is possible that funding may be forthcoming from the £12k Capital Scheme that was deferred for the Town Centre signage scheme.

It was noted that although the Partnership did not report back to this Council as much as it had in previous years, which was probably due to the structural changes being made, a very good relationship was being enjoyed between this Council and Matt Prosser and Suzanne Malcolm at South Oxfordshire District Council who both regularly attend very worthwhile Action Plan meetings. It was **RESOLVED**

that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

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Chairman