

Present: Councillor J Brookes (Mayor)
Councillor Will Hamilton (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Sara Abey
Councillor Miss H. Chandler-Wilde
Councillor D Eggleton
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor Miss L M Hillier
Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton
Councillor D Nimmo Smith
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor Jane Smewing
Councillor S Smith
Councillor D Thomas

In Attendance: Mrs J Wheeler - Town Clerk
P Price-Davies - Committee Administrator

18 members of the public
1 member of the media

181. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Akehurst; S Evans and Sarah Miller.

182. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

183. MINUTES

- (i) The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on **11 October 2016** were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record, with the addition of the following text for Minute 177, para 5:

“There followed a debate on who needed affordable homes in Henley. It was stated that the SODC Local Plan identified 333 affordable homes needed in the area. The NP allocated sites for 500 homes, which would provide a minimum of 200 @40% - a deficit of 133. Of these 42 could be lost with no plan to replace them. (Currently the figure is 21 lost affordable homes at the 345 Reading Road site.) To approve 90% would put 29 affordable homes on this site. Another member felt that the 60/40 followed NP policies HO3 and HO6 and that the Town Council must set a precedent by following the Neighbourhood Plan. Recorded votes were asked for all proposals and amendments.”

184. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Valerie Alasia, Makins Road

Valerie had a question about the status of the Neighbourhood Plan now that SODC were seemingly failing to follow the recommendations when determining planning applications.

Mrs Pam Phillips, St Marks Road

Requested that items 12 and 13 were brought into the public part of the meeting. It was explained that item 12 must remain confidential for legal reasons. The Town Clerk reminded the audience that Henley Town Council is an employer as well as a Council and has a duty to protect the integrity of the staff during a public meeting. Mrs Phillips also had a question about the voting rights of the Town Councillors at the District Planning meetings.

Mr Ken Arlett, Elizabeth Road

Referred to a recent email requesting help for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. It was confirmed that just one email had been sent to the MP John Howell in error and this was beyond the control of the Council staff. It was also confirmed that another two people had been co-opted to help with the NP but the Planning Chairman did not serve on this Group.

Mr Ian Clarke, Cromwell Road

Questioned the responsibilities carried out by Cllr Nimmo Smith on District and County.

Mr Chris Baker, Lauds Close

Mentioned the vandalism on some of the approaches to the Town – a Councillor spoke to confirm the awareness of the Town Council.

Mrs P Philips, St.Mark's Road

Spoke about the services of the Bluebell Centre at Christchurch Community Hall which are at risk of closure. The Mayor was not aware of the threat and requested time to make some enquiries.

185. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORTS

Members had before them the reports from the three District Councillors. It was **RESOLVED**

that the reports be received and noted.

Matters arising from the report

Cllr Gawrysiak confirmed that all three District Councillors were due to meet an Officer at SODC to discuss the draft proposals from the Transport Strategy Working Group. He would seek to clarify whether SODC have abandoned the low emission zones and the figures relating to the pollution from HGV traffic movements.

Cllr Gawrysiak will also request that the figure in the SODC budget for tackling air quality is considerably more than the £20,000 in this year's budget.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Members had before them a report from County Councillor Nimmo Smith. It was **RESOLVED**

that the report be received and noted.

District Councillor David Nimmo Smith stated that he had organised a meeting with the Chief Executive of Great Western Railways regarding the future of the Henley Branch Line now that electrification has been delayed.

186. FEEDBACK FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Hamilton spoke about the various visits to Bled, Slovenia from our sporting clubs and the Henley Symphony Orchestra. There was also a wine tasting at the River and Rowing Museum on 14 December where the ambassador would be bringing some wine to share.

187. MAYOR'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS

Members had before them the list of Mayoral Civic engagements from the Mayor for the period **4 October – 15 November 2016**. It was **RESOLVED**

that the list of Mayoral Civic Engagements for the period 4 October to 15 November 2016 be received and noted.

Matters arising from the Mayoral Civic Engagements

The Mayor thanked everyone involved with the Remembrance Sunday ceremony. The British Legion raised £20,800 over the period of remembrance. This was seconded by Cllr Kellie Hinton. The Mayor also briefed the audience of the Christmas activities in December.

188. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(i) The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on the 18 October and 08 November 2016 were before the Council. It was **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 18 October and 08 November 2016 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the Minutes:

Minute No. 130 – Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

It was noted that the embargo on discussing the notes of the meetings had been lifted. There were a series of questions that needed answering as a matter of urgency. In particular, members wanted to know how CIL monies directed to Harpsden would come to Henley Town Council. Another urgent matter was the process by which the Steering Group was engaging with SODC to gain clarity as to the status of the Neighbourhood Plan and the process in which the Town Council can ensure that the maximum weight is given to the Neighbourhood Plan when determining planning applications. The Mayor stated that there were several people tackling this process on multiple levels and the strategy was laid out in the Finance, Strategy and Management Committee meeting on 01 November 2016.

(ii) The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee, held on **18 October 2016** were before the Council. It was **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 18 October 2016 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the Minutes:

Two members queried whether there was any money reserved for the Street Angels project. This item was on the agenda for the next Town & Community Meeting.

(iii) The Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on **25 October 2016** were before the Council. It was **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 25 October 2016 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the Minutes:

Minute No. 44 d) Fairmile Cemetery

Concern was expressed that Council had only considered the request to give resident's rates to people living in the parish of Bix and Assendon. One member stated that the Parish Council were not prepared to make any contribution to the upkeep.

It was proposed, seconded and carried that the item be referred back to the Recreation & Amenities Committee for a full review before the Town Clerk contacts the Parish Council.

Minute No. 44 g) Conservation Officer Role

One member was concerned that the Minutes had been misinterpreted regarding the need for this role.

The Town Clerk has spoken to the Parks Manager and he has confirmed that he would look to fulfil this role once he has space on his team to find a Parks Warden with specific qualifications in this area.

(iv) The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on **01 November 2016** were before the Council. It was **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 01 November 2016 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted

Arising from the Minutes:

Minute No. 61– Planning Consultants

Some members queried the use of a Planning Consultant as there was no guarantee that the outcome would be any different. Another member wanted to look at the legal issues regarding the status of our Neighbourhood Plan and the weight given by the SODC officers. The Mayor felt that there were areas where the Town Council could successfully use professional help to present a stronger argument. The Finance Chairman clarified that the item was to allocate £5k in the budget.

189. REPLACEMENT TO SERVE ON PARKS SUB COMMITTEE AND JUBILEE PARK USER GROUP

Members discussed these vacancies and **RESOLVED**

that Cllr D. Thomas serve on the Parks Sub Committee and Cllr Miss L Hillier will serve on the Jubilee Park User Group.

190. REPAIRS TO CHAPEL

A local stonemason was contracted to survey both Chapels and put together a brief of works needed and a five year time line on the urgency. The Brief was then sent to several companies with the invitation to quote. This was done to help provide quotes that are as like for like as possible. Three quotes were presented to members:

- Company A £34,053.84
- Company B £35,393.00
- Company C £47,943.07

It was noted that this first batch of works may make a difference to further works and the condition of the chapels will need to be re-evaluated.

It was **RESOLVED**

that Company A should be contracted to carry out the works.

191. CEMETERY PROGRESS REPORT

The Town Clerk gave an up-date as to the work that has recently taken place to review the look and future maintenance of the cemetery. It was noted that:

- Clearance works has started between the old field and the new.
- Parks Manager and Town Clerk has spoken to two companies on potential landscaping ideas such as: retaining the rural feel; raised borders to discourage the wildlife; retaining wall schemes to maximise the gradient and the use of a concrete beam below ground with slots for the head stones

The Parks Manager is gathering quotes for contracting out the grave-digging in order to control the standard of work in the cemetery. The Town Clerk said the grave-digging quotes would be on the next Recreation & Amenities Committee and the design ideas should be available early in 2017.

192. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED**

that the public and the press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

193. UP-DATE ON THE TWO EXHUMATIONS

The Town Clerk gave details of the exhumation of Mr Stevens which would take place in the next week over two days. A specialist team from Wales has been employed to do this work – they have carried out over 30,000 exhumations and are entirely independent. The Town Clerk was pleased to get this resolved before Christmas to give a measure of relief to the family.

A member was concerned that the staff were getting the support they needed during this stressful time in the work place. It was agreed that Councillors were equally responsible when things go wrong and should look to support the staff at all times. Members should also be aware of the legal implications of speaking outside of meetings and the use of social media and should take the advice of the Town Clerk if they were unsure what to say.

The Town Clerk spoke about the risk of legal action and comments were noted. The Town Clerk will also look carefully at training for the future management of the cemetery and that we have a duty of care to all families who have loved ones buried in the cemetery.

One the second case, the Town Clerk confirmed that she had been working with a solicitor. Witness statements were due to go off to the Diocese this week also with various items of evidence. She did not have a date for the hearing but had decided not to take any other members of staff.

Councillors requested a full investigation of both cases - to be carried out as soon as possible and placed on record for future management of the cemeteries.

194. 353 – 357 READING ROAD PROJECT

It was AGREED for the Officers to use the Scoping Report prepared by Ridge to gather three quotes for consideration of the Project Monitoring role. It was noted that a consultant was likely to cost in the region of £18,000 – about 2% of the contract.

It was also AGREED to delegate the routine paperwork such as access licences to the Town Clerk in consultation with the 353-357 Reading Road Working Group or the Legal/HR Working Group.

The meeting closed at 21.50pm.

jw

Mayor