

Present: Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (Chair)
Councillor Ms K Gehrman (Vice Chair)
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
Mrs N Taylor – Minute Taker / Committee Administrator

Also Present: 1 Members of the Press
3 Members of the Public
Councillor M Akehurst
Inspector M Harling – Thames Valley Police

106. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs J Bland.

107. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

108. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mrs Valerie Alasia – Makins Road Asked where the Thames Valley Speeding investigation that was mentioned in the Roundabout magazine was being reported to. Inspector M Harling will contact Mrs Alasia direct with the information.

Councillor I Reissmann stated that it would be interesting to see the figures produced by Oxfordshire County Council on the difference in road accidents from when the cameras were turned off to when they were turned back on again.

Councillor Martin Akehurst - Two Tree Hill Questioned if the Council was going to submit a combined response to the Rail Consultation, and as the closing date was Friday 16th, would councillors get to see it before it was submitted.

Mr Ken Arlett – Elizabeth Road Questioned if as South Oxfordshire District Council did not save any money on the last election and, actually paid out

more that they should have, how much extra did the election cost to run with all the problems that took place?

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin will investigate with SODC and report back.

Mr James Vaughan – Greys Road Stated that Mr Buckle failed his first election, he didn't listen, learn or lead, he repeated his mistakes again with the last election. He advised that Mr Buckle should receive a penalty to ensure that does listen, learn and lead if he is the Returning Officer at the next elections.

109. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 31 January 2012 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

110. POLICE

The Chairman Invited Inspector Mark Harling to the table.

Inspector Harling informed the meeting that there was a 22% reduction in crime over the whole sector and a 12% reduction in Henley. Detection of crime in the sector is at 40% which is up from 11.1% last year.

There are more patrols on the streets which has enabled a Public Order offence detection rate of 93.3% with nearly all being solved. Officers are patrolling until 4am.

In other areas the team are being kept very busy – calls from concerned members of the public have been recorded at February 28, January 29 and December 25. Reports on suspicious circumstances were recorded at February 45, January 39 and December 28.

So far this year 275 parking notices has been issued and 215 speeding notices (travelling in excess of 34 mph) in Henley.

There have been 2 meetings of the Neighbourhood Action Group so far, they got off to a slow start, but the feedback is that members have more confidence in the group this time round.

Due to cuts in the Police budgets there will be Chief Constable Management Team changes. Inspector Harling will remain based in Henley in charge of the Neighbourhood team, but his area of responsibility has increased to cover South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. There will now be a team of 5 Officers in charge of 5 teams of 24/7 PC's.

Unfortunately due to these changes there is no guarantee who will be available to attend future meetings, and on some occasions it may just be a written report.

There should be no visible difference to the town's policing.

Inspector Harling confirmed that the cuts would mean a trading of responsibilities and that the 24/7 team would now be looked after by an Officer not based in Henley, but as he was currently not on duty all the time and there was still an Officer in charge it shouldn't make too much difference. He stated that this was a good thing as it meant an Inspector would be with the team at every shift, and as at present there are only 5 Officers this would mean an extra officer will be available.

Inspector Harling was unsure of the date of the next Neighbourhood Action meeting but will provide the Mayor with the details to enable her to attend.

When questioned about the decriminalisation of parking, Inspector Harling confirmed that the Police would do whatever they could to help. Different views were expressed on South Oxfordshire District Council's opinion of decriminalisation as some Members had heard that it was not feasible in Henley as there were too many parking authorities, but another member had heard that they were looking for a town to run a pilot scheme.

With the installation of the new Police Commissioner being a political move brought in by the Coalition Government, Inspector Harling was asked if this would affect the police at all. In response the Inspector advised that the Chief Constable will make it work, everyone is in the dark at the moment and we all need to wait and see how things pan out. The Chief Constable's drive is to make sure that less crime is committed and to ensure that more crimes are solved.

It was noted that even though there had been cuts; the Police had managed to change their policing patterns and worked hard to reduce crime. Inspector Harling said that the Chief Constable had stated that there would be no cuts to the front line, and although Thames Valley Police had lost civilian posts it was still continuing to recruit Officers.

When questioned about what could be done to prevent vehicles being broken into when parked at beauty spots, Inspector Harling advised that people need to be responsible and not leave valuables on display, if a car is spotted by a patrol with valuables on display a conversation will be had with the owner, if they are not available then details will be taken and a letter sent, but unfortunately some people do not listen and sometimes need to become a victim of crime before they take any notice.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Harling for attending the meeting.

Inspector Harling left the meeting at 8.05pm

111. PROGRESS

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

Town Hall Pavement Lights

A quotation from Monson to carry out the works was tabled, and after a lengthy discussion it was decided that further quotations should be sought.

Road Inspections

Outstanding inspections should be completed and returned to the office within the next 5 weeks.

Cycle Stands

Traffic Advisory.

Old Fire Station Gallery and Barn Users Group

Date for next meeting to be arranged.

Parking on the verges at Upton Close

Meeting held with Keith Stenning on 9 March 2012. Mr Stenning does not think that bollards are a suitable solution to the problem. He will bring a proposal back to Traffic Advisory and discuss with Councillor D Nimmo-Smith.

Greys Road / Swiss Farm Pedestrian Crossing

Traffic Advisory

CCTV Monitoring Station Visit

Visit arranged for the end of the month.

Signage & Physical Town Promotion Project

Orders placed, moving forward, report to be brought back to next meeting.

Bus Shelter on the Reading Road

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin to make contact with Bus Company and carry out consultation.

Market Place Bollards

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith to discuss with Mr Keith Stenning.

Parking Control at Upper Market Place

Report to be brought back to a future meeting.

Item on Decriminalisation of parking to be placed on next agenda.

Patisserie Valerie Mobile Ice Cream Cart

Awaiting report on the ice cream cart from Patisserie Valerie.

112. BUDGET

Members received, considered and noted the budget report to 31 January 2012.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the report be noted.

113. JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Members received the notes of the Jubilee Working Party Meetings held on Wednesday 1 and Wednesday 29 February 2012.

It was suggested that the Flotilla be arranged for the Sunday at the same time as the event taking place in London.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes should be received and noted and the suggested date for the Flotilla be passed to the Jubilee Working Party.

114. HEROES RETURN / OLYMPIC WORKING GROUP

Members received the notes of Heroes Return / Olympic Working Group meeting held on Thursday 26 January 2012.

Members were advised that an official press release would be made on 19 March on the route of the Olympic Torch.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes should be received and noted.

115. PARISH ELECTIONS MAY 2011

Members received and considered a report on the schedule of charges for the elections in May 2011 showing the reduction of £270. £55 per ward Returning Officer fee, £25 per ward Postal Voting Pack fee and £55 per ward Ballot Paper fee.

After a lengthy and in-depth debate

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND**

that this Council accepts the revised charge of £3822.65 and authorises the Clerk to process this invoice for payment, and

that a letter be sent to South Oxfordshire District Council, stating that

- we accept our responsibility for payment and are paying because we are obliged to do so
- we do not accept that the service received was adequate for what the people of Henley require and expect
- we are concerned that we have not received any assurances regarding the next elections
- in the past when the Head of Democratic Services was the Returning Officer the problems experienced in the last two elections did not occur
- SODC should reconsider the appointment of Mr D Buckle as Returning Officer.

116. OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION PORTAL

Members considered participating in the Rail Strategy for Oxfordshire consultation. It was noted that some Councillors had responded on line and that others had sent their response to the office.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the views expressed at the meeting be incorporated with those responses previously received, together with any further responses Councillors may wish to make, the final response to be delegated to the Clerk to make.

117. FAIRTRADE

Members considered a request from the Henley Fairtrade Initiative to renew the towns Fairtrade status.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that this Council should renew its Fairtrade Status, and

that Councillor Mrs J Wood be the Council's nominated representative to join the Fairtrade Town Steering Group to ensure that there is good ongoing communication between the campaign and the local authority.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm