

**Present:** The Mayor, Councillor S Gawrysiak  
Councillor W Hamilton  
Councillor Miss L Hillier  
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (Vice chair)  
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith  
Councillor Mrs P Phillips  
Councillor I Reissmann (Chair)  
Councillor Mrs J Wood

**In attendance:** Mrs L Jones – HTC Accountant  
Mrs H King – Committee Administrator  
2 members of the media

77. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from The Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Akehurst.

78. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

79. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

*Richard Rule*

Richard explained he was working for the Henley Herald and asked if he may attend future meetings of the Council to cover events. The Chairman confirmed his attendance would be welcomed.

80. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management (FS&M) Committee held on 3 December 2013 were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

81. **PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillors received and considered the Progress Report and made the following comments:

**Bell Street**

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith advised the meeting that an e-mail update had been sent to the Traffic Advisory Group (TAG) Administrator on 21 January but had been received too late to table at that meeting. It was directed to TAG as it mainly involved the parking arrangements at the site. He undertook to re-send it to all Councillors. Depending on how the overall subject progresses the Finance Committee will decide whether this item should remain with FS&M, transfer to TAG or come under the remit of Town & Community.

*Action: Councillor D Nimmo-Smith*

### Estate Inspections

The Mayor undertook to carry out the inspection allocated to the Deputy Mayor. The Chairman reminded Councillors that a Council resolution had been made to carry out the inspections and the outstanding areas should be covered as soon as possible.

## 82. **FINANCE**

### i) Management Accounts

The cash position detailed in the report showed that no investment drawdown is currently expected in 2013-14 which the Committee agreed was extremely good news, as was the £50k positive variance against budget shown in the Summary.

**It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.**

### ii) Investment performance

It was commented that the report was, as ever, clear and very useful. The Investment Managers were performing well by increasing the value of the Council's portfolio.

**It was RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.**

### iii) List of payments

No comments were made on the listings.

**It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.**

## 83. **RELIEF FUNDING FOR THE PHILIPPINES AND SYRIA**

The Mayor summarised the meeting that was held with a resident and the Town Clerk on the subject. Although the Mayor did not believe the Council had the power to make such a donation to the relief funding, he thought that the item should be included on the agenda so Full Council could debate the issue further if it wished. The resident had been invited to submit a paper on the subject but none had been received, however as he had been unwell of late, this was not unexpected. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council did not have the General Power of Competence and therefore was prevented from making the requested donations. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council could resolve to give itself the General Power of Competence, which would then enable the Council to make a donation as suggested by the resident. The meeting decided without a vote not to give itself the General Power of Competence. The meeting expressed every sympathy with the plight of those caught up in the Philippines and Syrian disasters despite the fact that no financial contribution could be made. It was felt that if groups within the Town wished to undertake fundraising efforts, the Council could act as an enabler by, for example, offering 'free use' of Council rooms.

## 84. **TENDER FOR THE REFURBISHMENT OF MILL MEADOWS TOILETS**

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank the Councillors serving on the Toilet Refurbishment Group. He stated that Robert Rigby (Architect) had produced an excellent tender document and also sourced a large number of samples which would assist in choosing the final fittings. Four responses had been received against the tender document and the R&A Committee would choose the preferred contractor at its meeting on 4 February. The toilets are expected to

have a 15 – 20 year lifespan and will include two disabled facilities (as opposed to the current single one). The refurbishment was expected to start on 24 February 2014 (subject to Full Council approval of the financing) and last approximately 8 weeks.

The meeting was told that it was not possible to have a joint venture with SODC, who were also refurbishing their toilets, as different architects and contractors were being used.

The question was raised concerning the upkeep of the toilets and the cleaning regime to ensure the facility was kept in top condition. The Mayor confirmed this aspect was being covered by the R&A Committee.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Finance Committee was tasked with looking at the additional cost and whether it should be met from the anticipated underspend. It was also confirmed that CIF funding was not available as it did not consider retrospective applications; and given the Town Council's considerable capital reserves, would be unlikely to secure finance from this fund. Consequently,

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the overspend of £60k be taken from the £50k expected 2013-14 underspend, with any shortfall to be taken from the revenue reserves brought forward.**

85. **COUNCIL TAX LEAFLET**

The Chairman advised that the approved leaflet needed to be with SODC by 1 March. Comment was made that the leaflet should be apolitical and therefore be written by the Town Clerk but include a message from the Mayor if desired. However, this did not get general support. The Accountant was asked to check whether the statement that the Council's investment value of £4.8m was a record, was completely accurate.

*Action: HTC Accountant*

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council Tax leaflet was accepted but the second pie chart needed to be resized to include all the relevant information.**

86. **HENLEY RUGBY CLUB**

The meeting had no objection to a new 10 year agreement being drawn up on a similar basis to the one that expired in December 2013 (with the exclusion of the old clause 10.2). It was noted that the car park was currently underutilised with an occupancy rate of only 25-30%. The Town Centre Manager had been in talks with SODC concerning signage (and other issues) to advertise the car park and installation of new signs was expected this week. Councillor D Nimmo-Smith stated his Locality Fund may be of assistance in meeting the cost of a signage report. SODCs support was noted and thanks were expressed. It was suggested that the Town Centre Manager speak to the Henley Partnership so that they may encourage staff working at the various businesses to use the car park. The walk from the car park into town was only short, safe and with sufficient road crossings.

*Action: Town Centre Manager*

**It was RESOLVED that Council consents to the new agreement being drawn up and gives delegated powers to the Town Clerk to**

ensure the resulting document does not depart materially from the expired version and that the Council's interests are properly protected.

87. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The meeting debated this long running subject. The latest boundary change suggested by SODC had not fulfilled the original request by HTC and appeared to be a best compromise. However, the alteration did not follow the existing natural boundaries and also excluded the area of Highlands Farm which would, at some stage, be a likely site of development. It would make more sense to keep this potential urban area within the Henley Boundary as opposed to the rural Harpsden parish. It was agreed that further representations be made to SODC before their deadline of 31 January and it was hoped that the HTC District Councillors would actively support HTC's case.

**It was RESOLVED that Henley Town Council requests that the Town Clerk (under delegated powers), in consultation with the Chairman, reiterate its request for parish boundaries to be redefined to include all the areas as recommended on 4 June and resolved by Full Council on 25 June 2013.**

**The reasons being:**

- **Henley is primarily an urban parish comprising largely of a built environment of residential, business/commercial community buildings and some open space. Harpsden is primarily a large rural parish with a very small population and little built environment. There is a significant and natural separation in the nature of the built environment (or lack of it) of the two along the proposal for the new boundary as submitted by HTC in June.**
- **There is a natural geographical ridge near the proposal for the new boundary as submitted by HTC in June which will bound any developments over the next 15 years.**
- **The proposal for the new boundary is coterminous with the AONB which remains in Harpsden.**
- **The requirement in the Core Strategy for Henley to develop an extra 400 houses in the next 15 years means that it is inevitable that the areas for inclusion in a redefined Henley parish as submitted by HTC in June will be considered for development to meet this requirement. These are already being actively considered. Any such development would be Henley facing and would rely on many of the services and facilities provided in the existing parish of Henley. To provide adequate representation, residents of any such developments need to be within the Henley parish.**

88. **2013-14 PROJECTS**

A Member advised the meeting that damp had been found in the Old Fire Station Gallery. As this was a recent discovery, the remedial work had not been included in the project list produced by the Accountant. The Accountant undertook to get the work costed and included in the schedule. It was

suggested that FPS could look at where savings could be made but the last meeting had been cancelled so the opportunity had been lost. The Chairman reminded Councillors that suggestions could be submitted at any time for consideration and did not need to wait for specific meetings.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that**

**the action being undertaken by Council staff on projects budgeted for in 2013-14 is noted, and**

**the actual/expected costs against budget as detailed in the agenda papers is approved.**

89. **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

A draft calendar for 2014-15 was reviewed. It was felt inadvisable to have a meeting of the Full Council on 23 December as there was a danger of it not being quorate. It was agreed that the order need not be changed but the meetings between 26 August and 23 December should all be put back one week. To achieve this, the 26 August meeting will comprise Planning and Town & Community with all following meetings being a week earlier. As a result there will be no meeting on 23 December. The Officer Manager would reconfigure the calendar and dispatch a new version to all councillors.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the calendar be accepted with the change of meetings between August and December (as described above).**

89. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE 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 matters which were about to be discussed were considered to be confidential.**

**MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2014.**

90. **CONFIDENTIAL**

**i) LEGAL UPDATE**

The Town Clerk talked through all the items on the update. In particular:

**40 Acre Field**

It was noted that the final document had been received and now included the additional clauses suggested by the Council's solicitor.

**It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be given approval to sign the final version and complete the matter.**

**ii) RIVER & ROWING MUSEUM – RENT REVIEW**

The meeting noted that a rent review was due in March 2014 and the suggested level of increase.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the River & Rowing Museum rent is increased to £6,300pa and that the New Chief Executive is advised accordingly. Should there be any disagreement with the revised figure, then there is the opportunity to employ the District Valuer to resolve the situation.**

**iii) 357 READING ROAD SITE**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the meetings he had with the developers and the SODC Planning Officer. All meetings to date have been extremely constructive with no obvious reasons why the potential development plans could not progress. However, it was recognised that AFC Henley and Henley Hockey Club still need to give their consent to the facilities being moved onto the Jubilee Park area.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that HTC**

- **note the discussion with existing developers**
- **note the letter from SODC of 28th Jan regarding the authority's views on**
  - **acceptable uses of 357 Reading Road, in particularly acceptability of housing**
  - **retail use in whole or part which should not be encouraged**
  - **acceptability of relocation of the existing facilities to Jubilee Park as outlined to them**
- **continue to develop plans for the sale of 357 Reading Road**
- **pursue discussions with any developers who intend to use the site for affordable and low cost housing**
- **do not pursue discussions with any developers who intend to use the site for retail use**
- **develop plans for replacement and any possible new facilities at Jubilee Park**

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Chairman  
29.1.14