

Present: The Chairman, Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton
The Vice Chairman, Councillor Dave Eggleton
Councillor Miss L M Hillier
Mrs M Clarke – Henley Herald
Mrs Caroline Langler
Mr P Simms – Henley Standard

In Attendance: Mr G Bartle – Parks Manager
Mrs B Walker – Minute Taker

Also Present: 1 member of the press
Mr T Ahmad – Badgemore School Parent Governor

The Chairman invited Mr T Ahmad to the table.

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Mayor, Councillor Julian Brookes and the Town Clerk, Mrs Janet Wheeler.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

20. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

None.

21. MINUTES

The minutes of the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee held on 25 May 2016 were received, approved and adopted and were signed as a true record by the Chairman.

22. CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS

The Sub-Committee considered the co-option of members on to the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee and agreed additional members, particularly with specific expertise would be beneficial to the Sub Committee.

Members made a number of suggestions and the Chairman advised she would make contact with those suggested and a further update would be brought to this Sub Committee.

23. SCHOOLS IN BLOOM/HENLEY IN BLOOM SCHOOLS FUND

Members received a request from Valley Road School for a donation of £250 from the Schools Fund towards projects being undertaken by their Little Green Fingers Gardening Club which is made up of staff, parents and pupils.

The Chairman reminded members that Henley in Bloom had allocated up to £1000 per year from their budget to support projects at Henley schools with a horticultural theme.

The school provided details of current projects and advised every penny, if awarded, would be put towards creating a thriving and nurturing environment at the school. The wish list includes:-

- plants for the wildlife pond and spring garden area including bluebell, crocus and snowdrops
- robust, sensory and insect attracting plants for the Pre-School and Early Years planters such as lavender, rosemary and other herbs as well as colourful flowers such as rudbeckia, fuschia and cosmos
- equipment for the gardening club including gloves, watering cans, aprons and gardening diaries
- dwarf fruit trees, beanpoles, trellis, willow rods, compost and topsoil
- seeds to create a large wildflower border which will be attractive to bees and butterflies
- a bird bath/feeder
- guttering for the greenhouse so that rain water can be collected

The School advised they would keep Henley in Bloom updated with how the money is spent and would provide photos etc.

Members discussed the amount and felt it was appropriate to the projects listed and congratulated the school on having such an active gardening club. It was

RESOLVED

that Valley Road School be allocated £250 from the Schools in Bloom fund (in the Henley in Bloom budget) for 2016/17 for their horticultural projects

The Parks Manager suggested holding a schools competition with a horticultural theme to encourage interaction with and between schools.

Councillor Miss L M Hillier joined the meeting at 9.19 am.

24. THAMES AND CHILTERN IN BLOOM

The Chairman updated members with the plans for the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom judging day (Thursday 14 July 2016) and the associated costs as follows:-

- welcome tea and coffee at the Bull on Bell Street where the judges will have an opportunity to view the micro-brewery and the recycled Brakspear barrels planted by Sprouts Gardening Club and Henley in Bloom, followed by the presentation. The room is free of charge with a charge for refreshments.
- cost of printing and binding the portfolio
- lunch for the judges and guests - it is proposed the lunch venue be at The Argyll who can accommodate the lunch either inside or out depending on the weather and can incorporate a local element into the menu

The Chairman advised she and the Parks Manager have been practicing and fine-tuning the tour. A member asked if private gardens could be included and it was confirmed only gardens which the public can either see or have access to (even if occasionally) should be included in the tour.

Mrs C Langler joined the meeting at 9.23 am.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that up to £450 be allocated from the Henley in Bloom budget to pay for the costs of the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom judging day including the welcome tea/coffee, the printing and the binding of the portfolio, refreshments for the tour and the judges' lunch

25. GARDENING BUDDIES UPDATE/HENLEY IN BLOOM WORKING GROUP

- i. The Sub Committee received and noted the list of areas which Gardening Buddies are planting and caring for this summer as follows:-
- Fairmile – bed next to the town entrance sign
 - Northfield End Green – 2 x square planters
 - Old Fire Station Gallery – 1 x square planter (red)
 - Fire Station bed, West Street – 1 x bed
 - Millennium Court (Kings Arms Barn) - containers
 - Kings Arms Barn – long raised bed by wall on car park side
 - Wootton Manor shops – 5 x containers
 - Gillotts Corner – 2 x containers
 - Station Park – 1 x square container
 - Harpsden/Reading Road junction – 2 x trough planters
 - Newtown Road entrance – 1 x bed
 - Reading Road roundabout – in association with the designer
 - Reading Road by Watermans Allotments – 1 x bed at town entrance sign
 - Mill Lane Car Park – 1 x circular bed
 - Marsh Lock – trough by Marsh Lock bridge
 - Mill Meadows Celebration Beds – 2 x circular beds
 - Mill Meadows – 4 x half barrel containers by curved benches

Members acknowledged this is a considerable amount of work and extended their thanks to Gardening Buddies.

- ii. **Friends of Henley in Bloom** - The Chairman suggested establishing an informal “Friends of Bloom” group and those who have expressed an interest in being involved in Bloom projects but do not want to be formal members of the Sub Committee be invited to join.

It is suggested an email circulation list be created and members could be kept up to date with current projects and events. Members could also be contacted when help is needed eg for litter picks, an event or for specific project eg an area needs tidying up.

Community groups and organisations in Henley eg residents groups, Gardening Buddies, Henley in Transition, Henley Wildlife Group, SOHA (South Oxfordshire Housing Association) etc could also be included in the email circulation as there is often common ground and interests between these groups and increased interaction could be promoted. This type of community participation would also strengthen the Henley in Bloom group.

After further discussion the Sub Committee **RESOLVED**

that an informal “Friends of Henley in Bloom” group be established and individuals/groups who have expressed an interest in being involved in projects and events be invited to join with a view to creating a wider support and volunteer base

The Chairman advised that following discussions with Councillor Dave Eggleton, SOHA had offered up to £300 in sponsorship for a Henley in Bloom project and members were asked to make suggestions.

Post meeting note: SOHA have advised they would ideally like the project to be located near to their housing eg the Gainsborough or Abrahams Estates and are open to suggestions as to the type of project.

26. EVENTS

- i. The Chairman updated members on the plans for the Henley in Bloom Activity Day to be held on Saturday 25 June 2016 as follows:-
 - activities will be held including face painting, plant a seed in recycled pots, painting etc
 - Councillors have been invited to help with the stalls/raffles etc
 - Henley in Transition will have a stall re air pollution levels
 - the Walkers are Welcome petition and information will be available
- ii. The Chairman provided an update on recent events as follows:-
 - the Cut Flower Market and Annual Plant Sale was a great success and Mrs M Clarke provided a craft stall
 - 2 Brakspear’s barrels have been made into planters by the Parks Services and have been planted up by Sprouts Plant with red, white and blue flowers to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen’s 90th birthday. They are located outside Brakspear’s Head Office.

27. PROGRESS REPORT

Members received and noted the progress report and made the following comments:-

Front and Back Gardens Competition - 11 entries have been received to date. The closing date for entries is 1 July 2016. The Chairman advised a request from a resident in Remenham had been received and asked members if they felt this entry should be accepted. Members agreed the entry should be accepted.

Pubs and Restaurants Awards – the judging date has been moved to the week beginning 18 July to allow plants to develop more. Judges are – Councillor Miss Kellie Hinton, Councillor Dave Eggleton, Mrs Caroline Langer and a representative from the Henley Standard who sponsor the competition.

Members noted the Award Ceremony will be held on Thursday 8 September 2016 at 7 pm in the Town Hall.

Freemans Meadow and Makins Recreation Ground Improvements - The Chairman advised she had planned to have a Henley in Bloom stall at the Gainsborough Residents Association tea party at Makins Recreation Ground on Saturday 11 June 2016 however had carried out a consultation with children and parents instead with regard to the proposed playground improvements on behalf of the Parks Sub Committee.

The Chairman advised she had written to residents around Freemans Meadow regarding setting up an informal group who were interested in the Meadow and was awaiting a response from residents of Luker Avenue.

Horticultural Contract – the Chairman advised that a contractor had not yet been appointed by the Town Council.

After discussion the Sub Committee **RESOLVED**

that the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee unanimously recommends to the Recreation and Amenities Committee that the current contractor be re-appointed as the Town Council’s horticultural contractor

Floral Train - the Chairman advised she had been in contact re a possible sponsor however had no confirmation to date.

Mrs C Langler advised First Great Western had suggested an application be made to their community fund.

Members acknowledged the train would not be planted up this year.

Wooden Gate in Duke Street – the Chairman advised she had been in contact with the owners of the large gate in Duke Street (who own the building where Mint Velvet is located), which has been an eyesore for years. The Chairman asked whether Henley in Bloom could re-paint the gate in the green used on the street furniture in the town. The owners subsequently visited the town and agreed to the re-painting and offered to contribute funds.

Planting and Air Pollution – the Parks Manager advised that it was planned to plant 2 of the donated silver birch trees at Northfield End in the autumn and the remainder in Mill and Mash Meadows.

Members noted that these donated trees were too big to place in Duke Street and Bell Street, however it was suggested planting them on the grass verge on Reading Road opposite Newtown Road (one either side of the Gardening Buddies bed) as this may help to soak up air pollution.

Members noted that there were alternative plants other than trees which help reduce air pollution, eg ivy which maybe more suitable to town centre locations.

It was suggested next year’s Schools in Bloom project could be based on “reducing air pollution by planting” to include scientific monitoring. Mr T Ahmad advised that lichen can be an indicator of levels of air pollution as certain varieties will not grow in areas with high levels of sulphur dioxide and this could be incorporated into the project.

It was noted that in order to reduce air pollution by any significant level would probably require planting on a substantial level and expert advice would be beneficial to ensure the right types of plant and locations are used.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**

that the Highways Authority be asked whether they would allow the planting of 2 silver birch trees on the grass verge on the Reading Road opposite Newtown Road

28. BUDGET UPDATE

The Sub Committee received and noted the budget to date.

29. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting to be Wednesday 27 July 2016 at 9.30 am.

Post meeting note – the date of the next meeting has been amended to Tuesday 26 July 2016 at 9.30 am in the Council Chamber.

The meeting closed at 10.09 am.

bw

Chairman