

Present: Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Mrs P Buckett
Councillor C W Gibson
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor Mrs R Myer
Councillor C I Pye
Councillor Miss L Pye, Vice-Chairman
Councillor D Nimmo Smith
Councillor Mrs J Wood, Deputy Mayor (ex officio), Chairman

In Attendance: Mr M Kennedy, Town Clerk and Mrs A Gliddon, Committee
Administrator/Minute Taker

Also Present: Mr Oliver O'Dell, Market Town Co-ordinator for Henley
1 Member of the Press

103. **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor Dr P J Skolar and from Councillor Mrs J Bland for lateness.

104. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received

105. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

None

106. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 9 February 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Oliver O'Dell to the meeting and invited him to the table for the following item

107. **MARKET TOWN CO-ORDINATOR FOR HENLEY**

Mr O'Dell introduced himself as the newly appointed Market Town Co-ordinator for Henley and advised Councillors that today was his fifth day in the role. He divided his presentation into three aspects:

1. The context of the role, 2. A brief introduction to himself, and
3. His aspirations for the role and how it might work.

1. Context of role Mr O'Dell explained that South Oxfordshire District Council had agreed to fund Market Town Co-ordinators for the towns of Henley, Wallingford and Thame for two years and had decided that it was better to have three individuals working part time 18½ hours per week, dedicated to each town, rather than one person covering all towns.

2. Introduction to himself. He was a planner by profession, with experience of delivering government and regeneration projects; with fifteen years spent managing projects for Local Authorities, having most recently worked as Chief Executive of Oxford City Centre Management Company. His local authority experience had included setting up CCTV systems, regeneration, street trading,

security and partnership working. He therefore brought a breadth of experience to the role in Henley. Otherwise, he ran his own company providing place management, project management and funding expertise to partnerships and community groups.

3. Aspirations for Henley He would work with Henley Town Council, The Henley Partnership and South Oxfordshire District Council to deliver added value, seeking matched funding from external funders. He was aware that there was a real need for him to avoid duplicating what others were doing to ensure the best use of the limited time. He intended to limit the number of meetings attended and spend his time working to introducing added value. In terms of the Henley Partnership he would support the Commercial arm (the Tourism element was strong) ; look at ways of getting business more involved and able to benefit from events in the town; increasing revenue generation for the Partnership and how to make best use of public sector funds. He would also look at initiatives for the town, the relationship between the town and the river; youth engagement etc.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, thanked Mr O'Dell for his presentation and invited Councillors to ask one question each.

Councillor Mrs R Myer: In the present economic climate cutbacks were likely following the forthcoming general election. She asked how Mr O'Dell would keep the focus on Henley. Also, some constituents, particularly the elderly and young, were struggling.

Mr O'Dell: In this economic climate, people were more likely to spend locally and to become more environmentally aware and support local traders/food markets etc. People were likely to cut down on foreign holidays and spend money locally.

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith: How long would it take to establish what is already being done, who is judging the added value provided within the role and who would be his main emphasis, residents or visitors.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin joined the meeting at 7.50pm.

Mr O'Dell: He had already realised that there is a lot going on in Henley and that he would be able to spend less time than anticipated getting people enthused. He had attended a meeting of the Town Council's Christmas Decorations Sub Committee from which he had realised that the issue of the supply of Christmas trees was already being dealt with effectively and he could therefore tick this off his list. He would have an influence on SODC's Action Plan spending. He intended to put together a draft action plan for his work during his first year. With regard to added value, he would be judged on what gets delivered. Although employed by the District Council he was answerable to stakeholders in the town. He would look at ways of helping the Henley Partnership to realise aspirations where budget was not available. His priority was to look at the sustainability of the town for residents and people who visit the town regularly.

Councillor C I Pye : wondered if 18½ hours was long enough in the post?

Mr O'Dell confirmed that 18 ½ hours was not very long but that he had wanted a part time role to consolidate with his other work and his previous experience would be of benefit. He advised that he could be contactable outside of his working hours.

Councillor Mrs J Bland joined the meeting at 8.00pm.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, apologised for her late arrival. She wished Mr O'Dell well in his role and advised that the town had been asking for a Town Manager for some years and was fortunate to have him in the post.

Councillor Mrs J Wood advised that, as Members were aware, the remit for the Market Town Co-ordinators was based on the findings of Miiller Report. Mr O'Dell had already met with landlords in the town. He was a professional with much experience whereas many of the people he would be working with were amateurs. She hoped that he could help with two projects which would be

discussed later in the meeting – funding for repairs to the lay lights and SODC's funding from its Action Plan, where the Town Council had asked for £500 matched funding to support the making of a documentary film on Henley war veterans and had been told that SODC could not divert this funding from funds allocated for the Olympics but not spent. She also asked for comments from Mr O'Dell regarding SODC's removal of funding for the Visitor Information Centre and the removal of their information terminal in the Market Place (to be replaced with a new 'destination management' system online website with which HTC staff would be required to assist), together with the removal of funding for the One Stop Shop, all of which the Town Council was now required to meet at great expense

Mr O'Dell advised that he was looking to influence the way SODC allocates funding in the Action Plan. He suggested setting up a structured system of feedback. It was agreed that this Committee was the format for this and that Mr O'Dell would attend meetings every six months for the exchange of information.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, thanked Mr O'Dell for his interesting report and he left the meeting at 8.20pm

108. **PROGRESS**

Councillors received and noted a report on progress and made the following comments

Henley International Film Festival, Minute 101, 16.3.10. The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, referred to an email which had been tabled at the meeting, from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)'s Economic Development Officer in response to the Town Council's request for matched funding of £500 to produce a film on Henley war veterans. This advised that SODC could not offer match-funding on this occasion, as they did not have any funds left in this year's budget and would need to divert money from the Henley Partnership which was originally allocated to the Olympics. Jonathan Hobbs from the Henley Partnership had been happy with this proposal but SODC felt that this was too important an area to reduce the budget.

The officer had further advised that the budget, which traditionally supported ad-hoc projects, would not be available for next year and could not be called upon for this initiative. Moreover, SODC were already contributing to the HIFF in another way. Indeed the Festival had contacted them a few months previously to ask whether SODC would take-up a page in their programme. SODC had been told at the time that HTC would be supporting a film category. SODC had agreed to support the programme and were intending to contact the Town Council to suggest that HTC and the Henley Partnership share the page (at no cost to either). The officer had been consequently surprised to hear that further contribution was actually expected from SODC for something she thought was already fully funded by HTC.

Councillors expressed disappointment at the decision taken by SODC, particularly as the Chairman of the Henley Partnership had advised that he would not now need the allocation to fund a pre-Olympic event. It was confirmed that the Town Council had not yet been advised of the Partnership's decision as to whether they would be providing matched funding of £500 towards the film (total cost £1,500).

District Councillor Mrs J Bland offered to speak to the Small Grants Officer at District Council the following day to request funding of £500 towards the making of the film. Following further discussion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that

Councillor Mrs J Bland offered to speak to SODC's officer about the possibility of part funding a documentary film on war veterans in Henley being accepted, and

The Henley Partnership is asked whether a decision has been taken regarding its provision of £500 matched funding

Post Meeting note:

The Henley Partnership has confirmed that matched funding of £500 is agreed. SODC have advised Councillor Bland that no matched funding is available. Richard Truter from the Hiff has advised that £1,000 would be acceptable (£500 from the Town Council and £500 from the Partnership) The matter will be referred back to the meeting of Full Council on 6 April 2010.

Lay Lights, Minute 94, 9.2.10 The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, referred to a letter dated 16 March 2010 which had been tabled at the meeting, from SODC's planning officer in response to the Town Council's letter seeking agreement from the Conservation Officer for work to infill the glass prisms with fine concrete, as suggested by the Town Council's approved property surveyor, prior to carrying out a permanent repair in the future when funding was available.

The letter stated that the Planning Officer had discussed the proposals to infill the glass prisms with concrete with the District Council's Conservation Manager with whom HTC had discussed the matter previously. He confirmed that to infill the glass prisms in this manner would not be considered as repair work, rather as an alteration to the Grand 11* listed building that would require the prior grant of Listed Building Consent. To that end, he confirmed that officers would likely resist this alteration if a formal application were submitted. Furthermore, such work would likely cause more long term damage as the inflexible nature of concrete would conflict with the natural expansion and contraction of the cast iron supports. This would lead to one, or possibly both, of these elements fracturing and thus cause more long-term damage to the lay lights.

The Officer had reiterated previous advice that the cast iron lights are original to the listed building, they thus make an active contribution to the appearance of the building, its setting and the character of the surrounding conservation area, and only their repair on a like for like basis would avoid the need for Listed Building Consent. He recognised that this will not be possible in the short term, so suggested investigating alternatives such as steel supports underneath the glass prisms to support the eroding cast iron work or to seek replacement parts from salvage yards.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that

The Planning Officer's letter is noted and that the Town Clerk is instructed to look into the suggestions of steel supports and presents a further report to Committee.

Henley Royal Regatta, Minute 98, 9.2.10 The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, noted that Mr Edwards had raised the Council's concerns at a Regatta meeting. She had spoken with the Regatta Secretary who had confirmed that they take no responsibility for traffic matters. She confirmed that this issue would be discussed at the pre-Regatta meeting to be held in the Town Hall on 23 March 2010, to which representatives from SODC and Wokingham District Council had been invited.

Councillors D Nimmo Smith and C I Pye both requested that their apologies are given to the meeting on 23 March.

109. **BUDGET**

Councillors received and noted the budget report to January 2010

110. **BUS SHELTERS**

Councillors received and consider a report which they had before them together with an updated '*List of Bus Stop Locations in Henley which have passed the Highways Safety Inspection for new shelters*'. Members noted that, in accordance with the Council's requests, the following amendments had been include in the proposed agreement between the Town Council and Primestie:

- The length of the Agreement was now 10 years
- A clause had been added, stating that if any route ceased to be serviced the shelter(s) would be removed from the site within 24 months
- An additional bus shelter, to be provided by Oxfordshire County Council in Hart Street had been added to the maintenance schedule.

Members also noted that the views of the Oxfordshire Highways Officer had been sought regarding alternative sites suggested by Councillors to replace those at Reading Road opposite No 57 and the Marlow Road opposite the Rugby Club which Primesite had agreed to remove. The Highways Officer had confirmed that suggested sites at Reading Road adjacent with Hamilton Avenue and Marlow Road adjacent to Phyllis Court, had been identified as the safest for shelters without interfering with visibility for drivers at or approaching the junctions. The Officer had, however, suggested that if Councillors still had concerns, a meeting could be arranged with himself, Mr Corbett from Primesite, Chris Hulme from Thames Valley Police and Matt Bromley, Oxfordshire County Council Passenger Transport Officer and the Town Councillors who have problems with the possible sites.

Councillors advised that they did not want a shelter adjacent to Hamilton Avenue. Following further discussion, during which some Councillors expressed concern at the effect large numbers of bus shelters, some of which would contain advertising, would have on the town, others expressed concern for people without cars having to wait in the rain at bus stops. It was agreed that it was important to get the balance right and,

the Committee **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Members of the Bus Shelters Working Group and any other concerned Councillor meets with Mr Bowler, Mr Corbett, Mr Hulme and Mr Bromley to carry out a site visit of the proposed locations; and
- (iii) the final Agreement be brought back to Committee for approval

The Chairman encouraged as many Councillors as possible to attend the site meeting

111. **CCTV QUARTERLY REPORT**

Councillors received, considered and noted CCTV Report for Quarter 3, 2009-10 which they had before them.

112. **HENLEY TOWN YOUTH COUNCIL**

Councillors received and considered the minutes of the 15TH meeting held on 8 February 2010 which they had before them.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, referred to Item 7, Henley in Transition Group presentation, with which the young people had got very involved. The speaker had been delighted with their comments and their feedback work .

113. **HENLEY ROAD REPORTS**

Councillors received and considered a Road Report schedule which they had before them. The Town Clerk advised that at a recent meeting with Brian Short, it had been agreed that completed forms would be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council as soon as these were received in the office and not in batches as had previously been the case.

The Committee **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that

the allocated Councillor responsibilities for each area as shown on the Schedule are agreed, apart from Councillors Mrs P Buckett and Dr B G Woods who would exchange areas

It was agreed that the relevant forms would be forwarded to Councillors in the next mailing and by email.

114. **SPEED CHECK ON NORTHFIELD END**

Councillors considered the results of a speed check on Northfield End, which had previously been sent by email, and noted that one of the by-products of the changes to the yellow lines in Northfield End would be to make the road appear narrower, and reduce the traffic speeds.

Councillor Nimmo-Smith advised that the results indicated that traffic going out of Henley travelled slightly faster than that coming into Henley, probably due to the location of the speed camera. He would ask the Highway's Officer to carry out a comparison of speeds before and after the changes to yellow lines.

Members thanked Councillor Nimmo-Smith on the work he had carried out.

115. **HENLEY PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN 2010/2011**

Councillors received and noted the Henley Partnership Action Plan and the Town Clerk's explanatory report which they had before them.

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood, thanked the Town Clerk for his report, which confirmed that the Action Plan was a 'wish list' of projects put forward by the Partnership's Commercial / Retail Group, the Arts Group and the Tourism & Leisure Group. Many of the schemes identified by the Partnership were contained in the recommendations presented in the Miller Research report. Funding would come from a variety of sources including the Henley Partnership, the Town Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and other funding providers and it was hoped that Mr O'Dell would be able to unlock funding sources. The Town Clerk had confirmed in the report that the extent of the Town Council's funding comes from the budget provision in the 2010/11 Town Improvements / Action Plan budget of £3,500; £1140 of which is already earmarked for removal of posters.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin asked about an earlier proposal for the removal of posters to be taken in house and the Town Clerk advised that this had been factored into the savings within the review of the Parks Service.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that

the Henley Partnership's Action Plan is supported by Henley Town Council and the schemes endorsed for submission to South Oxfordshire District Council.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00pm

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Chairman