

Present: The Chairman, Councillor Miss K Hinton
The Vice Chairman, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor M Akehurst (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs P Phillips
Councillor Mrs J Wood
Mr D Eggleton
Mrs C Langler
Ms M Francini

In attendance: Mr G Bartle – Parks Services Manager
Mr K Bishop – Senior Park Warden
Mrs B Walker – Minute Taker/Committee Administrator

1 member of the press

67. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ms K Kobik and Mr S Khan.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

69. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

None.

70. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Henley in Bloom / Civic Pride Sub Committee meeting held on 9 December 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

71. PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received and noted the progress report and made the following comments:-

Planter at the Old Fire Station Gallery - the re-painting of the planter is being co-ordinated by the Old Fire Station Gallery Working Group administrator and it is hoped to schedule the painting to co-ordinate with the spring planting

Stonehouse Property Services – the Chairman advised the Committee of an email she had received from Stonehouse Property Services regarding the proposed green wall on the Pavilion at Mill Meadows and they have kindly offered to provide the labour and the system free of charge which is ready for soil, irrigation and planting.

Stuart Turner Ltd – Martyn Sheldrake of Toad Hall Garden Centre has visited the site and has proposed a formal planting plan which is sustainable and requires low maintenance and will complement the hard landscaping in the area. The plan consists of 3 buxus or ilex cones surrounded by buxus/ilex balls, bulbs for colour and a membrane and plum slate surface material to prevent weeds. The Chairman advised she would liaise with Stuart Turner to seek their views on the planting plan and costs.

It's Your Neighbourhood – the Chairman advised packs containing information regarding the IYN were available for distribution. It was acknowledged entering the

Thames and Chilterns IYN may be daunting for first time entrants and that it was important for potential entrants to feel supported by Henley in Bloom re advice and help. It was suggested Henley in Bloom run a version of IYN as an option and a possible forerunner to the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom IYN. The importance of finding a “champion” was highlighted. Mr D Eggleton and Mrs C Langler confirmed they would take the lead in co-ordinating this initiative.

Henley Standard – a member expressed concern regarding Henley in Bloom forming a partnership with the Henley Standard and being restricted to using one news outlet. The Chairman advised this was not the case and agreed it was important for Henley in Bloom to use all media outlets available eg on-line media, TV, radio and the Henley magazine etc – particularly in view of entering the regional, national and Entente Florale campaigns. It was acknowledged the Henley Standard had been a strong supporter of Henley in Bloom and their support was invaluable and in future the Henley Standard would have prior notice of certain projects and press releases.

The Chairman referred to the minutes of the previous meeting regarding co-opting Mr Phil Simms, News Editor of the Henley Standard, onto the Henley in Bloom/ Civic Pride Sub Committee. Members felt he would be a considerable asset to the Committee and bring specific expertise. A member reminded the Committee that Richard Reed had been a valuable member of this Sub Committee and the Christmas Decorations and Events Sub Committee when he was News Editor. After discussion it was **RESOLVED**

that Phil Simms be co-opted on to the Henley in Bloom/Civic Pride Sub Committee

72. BUDGET UPDATE

The Sub Committee received and noted the budget to date for 2014/15.

73. SPONSORSHIP

Ms M Francini confirmed she is recently back from holiday and will be concentrating on sponsorship over the next few weeks which will include:-

- meeting with Brakspear to discuss the production of the beer “Blooming Marvelous” again in 2015. Members were asked if they would like to once again have a beer launch and it was felt it was worthwhile and had brought new partners in (eg Stonehouse Property Care and Stuart Turner), however a member felt the cost of the launch should be kept to a minimum.
- the three planters on the traffic island at Northfield End remain unsponsored – it has been difficult to find a sponsor due to the cost (the pair of planters on the traffic island are sponsored by Higgs Group). The current maintenance contract of these planters with Windowflowers ends in May and if no sponsor is found before the contract needs re-newing the Committee will either need to decide whether to remove them, or fund their maintenance.
- continuing to liaise with current and potential sponsors

74. HANGING BASKETS

Members received and noted the cost of the sponsored hanging baskets for 2015 from Windowflowers will be £46.30 (from £45.50 in 2014)

Note: *This includes the hire of a wire hanging basket, filled with Supermoss, fresh compost and planted with colourful plants and ivies, installation and maintenance (watering and feeding) throughout the season.*

Ms M Francini advised that last year the basket retailed at £50 (£60 including VAT) or 2 for £97 (£116.40 including VAT) – the income made (over £800 in 2014) was added to the Henley in Bloom budget and was put towards other projects.

Members commented how wonderful the baskets looked in 2014 and that they had received many complements. It was noted there are noticeable gaps particularly corner properties which tend to be national companies and these should be targeted.

It was confirmed that having a leaflet to hand to people with an order form was very helpful and production costs should be obtained for this year.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**

that the charge for sponsored hanging baskets for 2015 be as follows:-

- 1 basket - £50.83 (£61 including VAT)
- 2 or more - £49.58 each (£59.50 including VAT) – Total £119 including VAT for 2
- 10 or more – cost price £46.30 per basket; and

that an additional discount be considered, eg for those buying for instance 6 baskets and Ms M Francini be asked to investigate and set this discount on a sliding scale; and

that costs be obtained for a hanging basket/order form leaflet for 2015

75. SCHOOLS IN BLOOM

The Chairman updated members on the proposed projects for School in Bloom 2015:-

- **Strawberry Summer** – the Chairman provided an update and costs regarding the Schools in Bloom project for 2015 – a “Strawberry Summer”. The Chairman has contacted all the primary schools and all would like to participate. A fun fact sheet will be provided including recipes etc, schools will be encouraged to keep a tally of the amount of strawberries produced and provide feedback. Toad Hall Garden Centre are providing the plants and pouches at a greatly reduced price - £120 for the strawberries and £60 for the pouches.

It was suggested sunflower seeds also be provided for schools as this is always popular.

After further discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that the cost of the Schools in Bloom “Strawberry Summer” initiative be funded from the Henley in Bloom budget at a cost of £180 plus vat (£120 plus vat for the strawberry plants and £60 plus vat for the plant pouches).

that sunflower seeds also be provided for the primary schools in Henley

- **Launch of Schools Fund** – the Trinity School is progressing. It was suggested an alternative name for “fund” be found as it suggest only financial help whereas the help maybe in time, advice, material, organisation etc.

- **Miniature Garden Competition** - the Chairman provided an update on the Miniature Garden Competition which was postponed from last year. It is suggested this would be ideal for pre-schools (and possibly for the younger year groups of the primary schools), the theme would be to create a miniature garden without buying anything and re-using and re-cycling goods.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**

that pre-schools (and possibly the younger years of primary schools) be invited to enter a Miniature Garden Competition and the winning gardens be placed on display at the Plant Sale and Swop. The Chairman to finalise the guidelines including the size of the gardens.

Mr D Eggleton left the meeting at 10.30 am.

76. HIT LITTER

Following the success of last year's event the Committee considered once again providing soup after the HIT litter to be held on Saturday 28 March 2015. It was suggested the Lions of Henley may provide the soup free of charge and that the event should finish in the Market Place.

It was suggested a second litter pick event be held prior to judging in June or July.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that the Lions Club of Henley be asked if they would provide soup free of charge to participants after the HIT litter event on Saturday 28 March 2015 in the Market Place

77. BUDGET FOR PLANTS

The Committee considered allocating money from the Henley in Bloom budget for the following:-

- I. Plants for Gardening Buddies to plant up areas and planters in the town

It was **RESOLVED**

that up to £350 be allocated for plants for Gardening Buddies to plant up planters and areas within the town.

- II. Plants for improving "grot spots" which have been identified to date. There are a number of spots around town which could be improved by one-off gardening. Attempts will be made on every occasion for the owners to cover costs and on-going maintenance, however a budget is required in order to ensure works are carried out in time for this year's Bloom campaigns.

It was **RESOLVED**

that further attempts be made to encourage owners to cover costs and on-going maintenance of identified "grot spots"

78. READING ROAD ROUNDABOUT

The Chairman provided an update regarding the competition to re-design the Reading Road roundabout (subject to Oxfordshire County Council permission). The winner is Paul Terroni and his design based on "Gateway to a Healthy Lifestyle" includes a wire statue of figure by artist Rachel Ducker surrounded by flowerbeds and grasses that are laid to look like water.

The Chairman advised she had met with Mr N Ratcliffe, Managing Director of the Henley Standard who had agreed to sponsor the roundabout for 5 years at a cost of £8,500 (upfront payment). The cost of the project is £10,000, however ways to reduce the cost are being investigated so the sponsorship covers the costs in total, eg sourcing alternative suppliers for the plants, asking sponsors for loan of equipment etc. It was however acknowledged that the savings had not yet been ascertained and in order for the project to progress this year a sum of money should be authorised in case it is required.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that up to £1,500 be allocated from the Henley in Bloom budget (revenue) for the refurbishment of the Reading Road roundabout should the sponsorship of £8,500 not cover the costs

that every attempt be made to reduce the cost of the refurbishment in order that it is covered by the £8,500 sponsorship gained

The Mayor, Councillor M Akehurst left the meeting at 10.55 am.

79. VARIATION TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

In accordance with Standing Orders 5(a) (vi), it was **RESOLVED**

that as a Councillor needs to leave the meeting by 11.40 am and the meeting will therefore be inquorate, the order of business on the agenda is altered to allow items 17 – Plant Sale and Swop and Item 15 iii – Entente Florale Europe – Judging Group accommodation costs, to be considered next.

80. PLANT SALE AND SWAP

The Chairman provided an update regarding the Plant Sale and Swop which is to be held on Saturday 28 May 2015 in conjunction with the Allotment Association and Green Shoots.

The Chairman advised the Chelsea Fringe organisers would like to be involved in the Plant Sale and Swop possibly with a floral display and a plant advice stand and asked members to consider registering the event with the Chelsea Fringe at a cost of £25. The Chelsea Fringe are also holding a Floral Flotilla, Flower Festival and Healing Garden Event.

During discussion it was suggested the event is a small scale, local event and it was not appropriate to register it as a Chelsea Fringe event.

The Committee **RESOLVED**

that the Plant Sale and Swop not be registered as a Chelsea Fringe event at a cost of £25

81. ENTENTE FLORALE EUROPE

The Committee considered accommodation costs for the Entente Florale Europe (EFE) judging and mentor group for the nights of Saturday 18 July and Sunday 19 July 2015.

The Chairman reported that research had been made to find suitable accommodation for EFE party (up to 14) for the duration of their visit (2 nights/3 days). The Chairman communicated the importance of finding accommodation of similar standard for each of the group ideally in the same location for logistical purposes. The establishment meeting the above criteria and offering the best value is the Henley Business School who, following discussions and understanding the significance of the visit, have offered double rooms at the single room rate (£70 pppn)

Members agreed the venue offered many benefits including 14 uniform en-suite rooms set in a beautiful location and adjacent to the River Thames.

After discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**

that up to £2000 be allocated from the Henley in Bloom budget to fund the cost of the Entente Judging group to stay at the Henley Business School on Saturday July 18 and Sunday July 19 2015

82. PLANTING TO REDUCE AIR POLLUTION

Mrs C Langler provided a brief update regarding planting for the town centre in order to reduce air pollution as follows:-

- Claire Spendley – Environmental Health Officer at South Oxfordshire District Council has provided information regarding the best species of trees to reduce air pollution and has offered to help in any way she can
- Contact has been made with Dr Maria M Vahdati, a lecturer in Renewable Energy at Reading University who is keen to help with this project
- Henley in Transition are keen to support the project

Members thanked Mrs Langler for her research and looked forward to a further update at the next meeting.

Due to a Councillor needing to leave and the meeting therefore becoming inquorate it was agreed the remaining agenda items be considered at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.38 am

bw

Chairman