

Present: Councillor Mrs P Phillips (Chair)
Councillor Ms K Gehrman (Vice Chair)
Councillor M Akehurst (Substitute for Councillor Ms L Meachin)
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor D Hinke
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (ex-officio)
Deputy Mayor, Councillor S Gawrysiak (ex-officio)

In Attendance: Mr M Kennedy – Town Clerk
Mrs N Taylor – Committee Administrator / note taker

Also Present: One Member of the Press
Mr P McConnell – Town Centre Manager
Inspector M Harling – Thames Valley Police

43. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ms L Meachin and apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Mrs J Bland and E Hodgkin.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

45. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

None received.

**46. PRESENTATION FROM PETER MCCONNELL – TOWN CENTRE
MANAGER**

Mr McConnell presented a verbal report on his activities since his appointment as Town Centre Manager in April 2012. He advised the meeting of the following projects he has been involved in:-

Creating a database of all businesses in the town (partially completed)

Working through the Economic Development Action Plan

Preparing a Business Plan and a Report on a shop front improvement scheme – joint funded by HTC and SODC

Loyalty Card Scheme (encouraging shoppers to shop locally rather than elsewhere or on line)

Marketing Henley as a Winter Destination (Workshops, possible craft weekend in the town in March to encourage visitors).

Christmas Events

Empty Shops

SODC Trails

Preparing a strategy document for the next 2-3 years

Information Centre point at this year's Regatta
Come over the bridge campaign
Independence Day (Independent Retailers)
Rejoined Tourism South East
Article in Destination Magazine
Articles in the Henley Standard
Opened a Twitter account
Created a Social Media Policy

Mr McConnell informed the meeting that countrywide the occupancy rate of shops in towns is 85.4% but Henley is currently running at 95%.

Big chains such as Waitrose, Boots, WHSmith etc. act as anchor stores and encourage shoppers into the town. Shoppers then go to the smaller independent shops to carry out further shopping – these larger stores should be embraced by the Council.

Mr McConnell encouraged the Council to develop a vision and a strategy for the Town.

The Chairman invited questions to Mr McConnell.

Reference was made to the Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment contained in the SODC Core Strategy which included detailed retail figures advising that Henley would need an 11,300sq meters of additional floor space in the next 15 years.

In response to 'What could this Council do to aid businesses in the town' Mr McConnell felt that communication was important as well as a plan for the town and working in conjunction with the Henley Partnership.

Although last Christmas most businesses did well, Mr McConnell was asked whether he felt that the limited car parking capped the amount of shoppers that came into town. Mr McConnell thought that car parking should be resurveyed, and better signposting be put in place for the Station Car park. He further advised that Henley gets far more visitors in summer than in winter and copes without any problems. He noted that other Towns such as Worthing spend up to £20k a year on marketing.

A view was expressed that the old Henley Partnership was very shop orientated, while the new Partnership seems to be more business orientated. Notwithstanding the 95% occupancy rate Mr McConnell was asked whether he thought the town was attracting the right kind of shops. It was acknowledged that the Council did not have the powers to prevent businesses coming to Henley, however the Council should be encouraging the right kind of shops for Henley into Henley.

A Member asked if there was anything that would benefit the roll of Town Centre Manager. Mr McConnell felt that as he had only been in the position for 6 months, he should reserve judgment until the end of the contract when any needs / changes to the position can be assessed. Mr McConnell believed that people come to Henley because it offers a good range of Coffee Shops and good quality Charity shops and Hairdressers etc.

The Chairman thanked Mr McConnell for attending the meeting.

Mr McConnell left the meeting at 8.20pm.

47. VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was **RESOLVED** that

Agenda items 14 and 17 be now taken in recognition of our visitor present this evening.

48. LOCAL POLICE AREA UPDATE

Members received, considered and noted an update report from Superintendent Rob Povey

Inspector Harling advised that Superintendent Andy Void would be replacing Commander Rob Povey when he transferred to Bramshill. Superintendent Void is very excited to be joining the team and was previously the Chief Inspector of Vale of White Horse.

It was noted that number 6 Greys Road was being sold off by Thames Valley Police; there would be no reduction in staff members, just a reduction in the space occupied.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the update report from Superintendent Povey be noted.

Members received and considered a report from Sergeant Graham Pink (copy having been tabled).

It was noted that there has been a slight increase in the number of burglaries carried out in Henley; in response to this the local area team have started working on a winter burglary campaign called "Here's a Bright Idea".

Several Members advised that they had received a copy and noted that it was effective and eye catching.

Councillor Mrs J Bland entered the meeting at 8.25pm.

The Campaign recommends that if people go out in the evening they make sure doors and windows are locked, and a light and radio is left on as burglars do not like confrontation and are less likely to target a property that looks occupied.

Members of the Mounted Police had been on patrol in housing areas around the town today.

The Mounted Police provide a highly visible and very effective addition to the force already available for Henley.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin entered the meeting at 8.30pm.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the report be noted.

49. 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 next item on the Agenda in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as matters which will be discussed are considered to be confidential.

The Press left the meeting.

50. PCSO

Members received and considered a Memorandum of Understanding for the Provision of Police Community Support Officer Special Services and considered renewing the contract for the period 01 April 2013 – 31 March 2015 between the Thames Valley Police Authority and Henley Town Council.

After a lengthy and in-depth discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that this Council agrees to continue the part funding of a PCSO based on a funding contribution of 50% of the standard costs set for 2013/14 at £33,063 per annum per PCSO. (In the year 2013/14 £16,532 and in the year 2014/15 to be advised once any pay award for 2014/15 is confirmed).

The Chairman thanked Inspector Harling for attending the meeting.

Inspector Harling left the meeting at 9.00pm.

The Press rejoined the meeting.

51. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 18 September 2012 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

52. PROGRESS

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

Bus Shelter on the Reading Road It was noted that HTC had carried out the requested public consultation. It was **RESOLVED**

that as Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin has the full history of this item she contacts Mr I Connick and advises him that it is this Council wish for the installation of the bus shelter to now take place.

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith advised that he would send an e-mail to Mr I Connick and inform Members of the outcome.

Market Place Bollards Councillor D Nimmo-Smith explained that he did not know why the works had not been carried out, and advised that he would send an e-mail to chase and advise Members of the outcome.

Budget

Round Tables Following clarification from the Clerk on strategic issues, it was **RESOLVED**

that the cost of buying round tables be included in the budget.

Sound System It was **RESOLVED**

that further investigations be carried out into the provision of a good quality sound system for the large hall and reported back to a future meeting.

Laptop As the Information Centre Manager's report stated that the laptop had only been loaned out approximately 8 times this year it was **RESOLVED**

that only the cost of buying a new good quality projector is included in the budget.

Continental Style Markets It was noted that this Council already charges above average fees for its Continental Style Markets.

CCTV Contract Item to remain on progress and further consideration to be given to extending the CCTV contract when it expires on 1 March 2014.

53. BUDGET

Members received, considered and noted the budget report to 30 September 2012. It was **RESOLVED**

that the report is noted.

Members received, considered and noted a report on updated budget figures for 2013 / 2014. It was **RESOLVED**

that the report is noted.

54. CHALLENGE HENLEY TRIATHLON EVENT 2012

Members received the notes of an informal meeting held at the Town Hall on Friday 12 October. It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes be received and noted.

Members considered the most suitable route for the 2013 Triathlon to take, and after an in-depth discussion it was **RESOLVED**

that Just Racing and Oxfordshire County Council be asked for further information and a complete analysis on the effects of the event on residents and businesses as this council is unable to decide on the best route until the balance of impact on the town versus the view of

the spectators has been considered. HTC further requests that the event takes one year off whilst this analysis takes place.

55. TRAFFIC ADVISORY

Members received and considered the minutes of the Traffic Advisory Committee held on Tuesday 9 October 2012. It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes be received and noted.

56. OLD FIRE STATION GALLERY WORKING GROUP

Members received and considered and the notes of the meeting held on 10 September 2012. It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes be received and noted.

57. REGATTA WASH UP

Members received and considered the notes of the Regatta Wash up Meeting held on 20 September 2012. It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes be received and noted.

58. FAIRTRADE

Members noted that Councillor Mrs J Wood felt very strongly about this Council rejoining the Fairtrade Initiative but did not have the time at present to present a report. It was **RESOLVED**

that the item be placed on progress until the New Year when it can be further considered by this committee.

59. INFORMATION CENTRE FOOTFALL

Members received a report from the Information Centre Manager on footfall both in the Information Centre and at Mill Meadows. It was **RESOLVED**

that as there was no time to consider this report fully it should be deferred to the next meeting for consideration.

60. DECRIMINALISATION OF PARKING

Members discussed the possibility of arranging a meeting with Councillors from other local Councils including Thame, Didcot and Wallingford to discuss a combined strategy to achieve Decriminalising of Parking across the district. It was noted that Decriminalisation of Parking is now known as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) and both Didcot and Thame have indicated their support, whilst Wallingford did not have the capacity to undertake this function themselves but are still considering the proposal for the district. It was **RESOLVED**

that a small group of Henley Town Councillors meets with representatives of the other towns to see how we can go forward and persuade SODC that CPE is a good idea.

The meeting closed at 10.00pm.

Chairman