

Town & Community Committee

Responsibilities:

Market Place Licences & Markets
Town Team/Action Plan
Street Furniture
Town Events
CCTV/Police/Crime
Tourism
The Kings Arm Barn
Old Fire Station Gallery
Henley Town Hall
Henley 60+ Club
Tourism & Henley Information Centre
Traffic Advisory

Committee Members

Cllr Hodgkin – Chairman
Cllr Phillips – Vice Chairman
Cllr Bland
Cllr Hamilton
Cllr Hinke
Cllr Hinton
Cllr Nimmo-Smith
The Mayor – Cllr Akehurst
The Deputy Mayor – Cllr Wood

Markets

There is a Charter Market every Thursday and Henley Town Council receive income from this. This is a Market that is statutory.

During 2014/15 a Market Working Group was formed to discuss the four seasonal markets that have been held over the past few years together with discussions on the Farmers Market. It has been felt that improvements could be made and the Town Centre Manager undertook a survey which had interesting conclusions about what our residents and visitors wanted to see in a market.

The work of this group has been successful in ensuring the continuation of the Farmers Market, both monthly and every fifth Sunday. We have encouraged the organiser to improve the offer and also asked that an additional market be held on the second Saturday of each month and will consist of 12 pitches selling local produce. The first one of these will be on April 11th.

Also new for 2015 will be a Flea Market in May, a Twinning Market in June, a French Market in October and a Christmas Market in November.

Street Furniture

During 2014 most of the street furniture was painted. The balance will be painted during 2015. Henley has very special Edwardian style lamp posts and rubbish bins and it is important that we maintain them to a high standard.

Included in this are the entrance signs to the town which are unique. During the year we have designed a new part of the sign to add “Bled” our newest twin town. This is currently out for quote.

CCTV/Police Liaison

We pay for part of a Police Community Support Officer. It has always been felt that this is important and this PCSO is dedicated to Henley and we are able to have input on priorities. Every other meeting a representative of the local Police will come and speak with us regarding what is happening. We continue to support CCTV and pay specifically for the ones on Mill Meadows. The Council has agreed to continue with this support and also with the PCSO.

Tourism

The Council understands and believes that tourism is vital to the economic development of the Town. We continue to support and maintain the Henley Information Centre and also the satellite office at Mill Meadows. We continue to support the Town Centre Manager – Peter McConnell – who is proving invaluable with his links to local business groups. We work closely with South Oxfordshire District Council on projects in Henley.

We have now produced the Henley Town Guide for 5 years in conjunction with the Henley Standard. Each year we meet to update and add new items and this has now become a very popular guide for visitors. It is delivered to many areas of the town including hotels, restaurants, estate agents, camp sites, etc.

Town Hall, Kings Arm Barn & Old Fire Station Gallery

These are assets of the town and over the years we have increased their use and thus their income. They have to be maintained to a high standard and to have such buildings in our portfolio is a great responsibility. Weddings are very popular in the Town Hall.

Over the past few years research has been carried out on the sound system in the Town Hall. This has been a difficulty over many years and it was decided to “take the bull by the horns” and bring the main hall into the 21st Century. Whilst dealing with this it was decided to also look at the vision and lighting aspects of the Hall. We are currently seeking planning advice from the authorities as the Town Hall is a Grade II* Listed building. Funds have been put in the 2015/16 budget.

Also over the past few years we have upgraded and tried to improve the knowledge of the Old Fire Station Gallery. This has been achieved by information boards in both the Market Place and at the rear of the Barn, by painting the doors red, by making sure there was information regarding the letting space in the public domain. This is a unique art space and is loved by all who use it. Red footsteps were put from the Town Hall to the Gallery and although there were problems with the first ones put down the second ones appear to be staying in place!

At the same time as looking at the Old Fire Station Gallery we also looked at the use of the Barn. This is a wonderful space but being so full of history has its own problems with making sure that it is used fully. It is a community space and like the Town Hall can be used free of charge on Monday and Tuesdays for local groups.

Henley 60+ Club

This is a Town asset and is well supported by its members. Over the past years some major refurbishments have been required and this has been carried out, not only by the Town Council but also by the members. The Club is run by a Management Committee supported by a members committee and recently a member donated funds for the ladies toilet to be upgraded. The exterior of the building was also re-painted and the electrics were re-wired. The Town Council gives a grant towards the running of the Centre. A member may access hairdressing and chiropody facilities and lunches are available most of the week. Outings are enjoyed as are bingo sessions and exercise classes. The Management committee have been allowing a bridge club to use the Centre on two evenings of the week when not being used by the members. This has brought much needed income into the Centre.

Traffic Advisory

This committee reports to Town & Community. Over the past few years a good relationship has been built up with both District and County Councils, with the Police, with the Henley Partnership and most recently with Henley in Transition.

Co-operation between the various groups is vital and with issues such as air pollution, HGV's, road safety, etc., on the agenda there has been much discussion. The committee has initiated road traffic surveys, calming measures, etc. It was through this committee that all the road signage on the Gainsborough Estate was renewed.

Fairtrade

The committee asked a local resident, Chris Baker, to assist with re-establishing Henley as a Fairtrade town. He got together a group of people and we recently received our accreditation.

Northfield End/Bell Street Parking

This matter has been on our agenda for some years and now a traffic order has been published and consultation has been entered into. It is hoped that this will clear up the difficult parking situation in this area.

Above is a short report on what this committee does. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes and as Chairman I would like to thank the Committee Administrator, Nicci Taylor and the Town Clerk, Mike Kennedy for their support.

Elizabeth Hodgkin
Chairman