

Present: The Deputy Mayor, Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor M Akehurst (Vice chair)
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor Miss L Hillier
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor Mrs P Phillips
Councillor I Reissmann (Chair)
Councillor Mrs J Wood

In attendance: Mr M W Kennedy – Town Clerk
Mrs H King – Committee Administrator
1 member of the public
1 member of the press

92. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin. Councillor Mrs P Phillips sent apologies for a possible late arrival.

93. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

94. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

Miriam Luke 9 Chiltern Close

Miriam explained she was the Chair of the Womens' Regatta and was herself an Olympic medallist. She was attending the meeting to urge Councillors to support the Regatta's grant application. Miriam is looking to grow and develop the event which is family friendly allowing attendees access to all areas. The Regatta is working with the press to raise awareness of the event. There are normally around 1400 competitors, 40 crews from abroad plus associated friends and family which ultimately brings additional money into the Town. As the event had made a loss in the last two years, she hoped the Council would look favourably on the grant application. The Chairman thanked Miriam for her clear and concise presentation.

95. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management (FS&M) Committee held on 5 February were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Arising from that meeting, a member reported that a 5 Member Motion had been considered by Full Council concerning minute 85 of the FS&M meeting. The revised Council Tax information was now available on the SODC and HTC website

96. **PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillors received and considered the Progress Report and made the following comments:

Northfield End Amenity space fronting Sydney House

The notes of the meeting held on 13 February and produced by OCC were reviewed and although they appeared sparse were completely accurate. The meeting was pleased to see that OCC was progressing the issues in a speedy fashion. The Progress Report also contained an item on the Stopping-Up of Bell Street Public Inquiry. It was felt that the two items should be merged and renamed 'Bell St and Northfield End – Parking/Highways issues'. The report for the April FS&M meeting will reflect this change.

Electoral Review of South Oxfordshire

The Chairman confirmed that the final report was awaited.

Localism of Council Tax Support

The Chairman congratulated the Town Clerk on his letter to Eric Pickles MP and John Howell MP. However, it was suggested that the thanks directed towards David Buckle, for the fair and reasonable way the Government Grant was distributed, should have been extended to include SODC Councillors.

97. **FINANCE**

i) Budget Monitoring

It was noted that the investment performance was extremely positive with the capital value increasing by 10.3% in eleven months. However, the parking income from Mill Meadows was down slightly which was a reflection of the continuing bad weather. It was

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

ii) Investment Performance

The meeting was pleased to note that the Council's assets with the Investment Managers now amounted to almost £4.6m. It was

RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

iii) List of payments

The list of payments was reviewed. It was

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

98. **GRANTS**

The Chairman explained that the Grants budget only contained a balance of £3,340 but the applications totalled in excess of £11k. There was c£9.5k left in the Contingency Fund but FS&M did not have delegated powers to vire any of this amount to supplement the grants budget. In essence, there were two options to deal with the situation. Firstly, the balance of the grants budget could be allocated to some or all of the applicants or secondly, recommendations could be made to Full Council for requests that exceeded the budget and would need to be met from the Contingency Fund. It was proposed and agreed that the second option be followed.

Councillor Mrs P Phillips joined the meeting at 8.10.

The meeting considered all the applications and it was

RESOLVED that the following grants be awarded:

Sea Cadets	£500
Henley Wildlife Group	£100
Henley Falaise Twinning	£500*
South Oxon Mencap	£500
Henley Womens Regatta	£500
Regatta for the Disabled	£400
Home Start	£400
Henley Round Table	£500
Henley in Transition	£190

* £250 to be met from the Grants budget and £250 from the Twinning budget

It was suggested that the Sea Cadets may apply to the Educational Trust for additional support.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the following grants be awarded from the Contingency Fund:

Henley in Transition	£100
Headway	£2,708
Springbox Gym Club	£3,000
Summer Fireworks	£1,000

It was suggested that Headway approach the Oxfordshire Masons for financial support as it was the only local Masons group that did not appear to actively support the organisation.

It was speculated that the Springbox Club may qualify for a CIF grant. Councillor W Hamilton suggested if the Club were to contact him, then he could help with the process.

There was a long discussion regarding the Summer Fireworks. Members were disappointed that the Royal Regatta did not provide any financial support to the fireworks even though it was one of the most popular events. It was suggested that the fireworks organisers get permission to leave donation tins in shops to help finance the display. It was reported that although the event was expensive to stage the organisers did make donations to charities of their choice.

The Town Clerk was asked to check the minutes of the Regatta Wash-Up meeting to see if there was any further detail on this subject.

[Post meeting note: the notes of the Wash-Up meeting held on 20 September made no reference to charitable donations by Henley Royal Regatta.]

99. **INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The meeting was pleased to note that overall, the Auditor's report was positive and officers were addressing or had already addressed the issues raised. It was

RESOLVED that Councillors note the Accountant's report and comments.

100. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Chairman stated that he thought the Governance Review and associated potential boundary changes was interesting in view of the Neighbourhood Plan and the association with Harpsden Parish. The Town Clerk was asked to produce a paper for the next FS&M setting out the options and recommending how the Council should respond. He would need to take a view, considering the sensitivity of the subject, whether the report should be heard in closed session. It was

RESOLVED that the Review document supplied by South Oxfordshire District Council be noted and that the Town Clerk presents a paper to the next FS&M setting out the options and recommendations on how the Council should respond.

101. **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 remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as matters which were about to be discussed were considered to be confidential.

MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 MARCH 2013.

102. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) LEGAL UPDATE

First Chapel

The Town Clerk reported that he had spoken to the proposed lessee and was assured that the process would be moved forward to a conclusion shortly.

Bath Site

The current licensees have been asked to reply to the Town Clerk by the end of the month to confirm whether they wish to take out a new annual licence. The Town Clerk was asked to present a report to the next FS&M meeting with the outcome and the various options to be considered for the site.

Henley Rowing Club

The Town Clerk confirmed that the lease to the Rowing Club allowed them to sublet part of their river frontage, which they have been doing so for a number of years. The new legal documentation was required only because the ownership of the barge had changed hands.

Statue at Red Lion Lawn

The Town Clerk updated the meeting with the news that the agreement for the placement for the Ama statue had now been signed.

ii) COMPOSTING AREA

The Town Clerk explained the background to the paper and the need for a bigger composting area. He confirmed, in answer to a question, that there were no other suitable sites for this activity. Part of the allotments had been used in the past but this was no longer an option due to space constraints. Consequently, it was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

the Town Clerk is given authority to open negotiations with AFC Henley for the Parks Service to use part of the land currently leased to the Club as soon as is practicable.

(on the assumption negotiations are successful) to update/put in place the appropriate legal agreement with the Council meeting its own proper legal costs.

to progress the installation of the access way, track, bridge and composting area etc incurring expenditure not exceeding £10k from the Capital Programme for 2013-14.

iii) GARAGE AT MAKINS

The meeting was supportive of Headways activities and thought that the garage could be utilised (long term) as a gym with beneficial results for their clients. The level of rent was more difficult to determine but it was felt that a commercial rent (c£80/month) should apply although consideration should be given to offering a rent free introductory period. It was suggested that this period could last until their next payment. (*Secretary's note: this may not be suitable as the next rent payment date is not due until March 2014*). It was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

in principle, Headway is given permission to occupy the garage with effect from 2 April 2013

that the Town Clerk be given delegated powers to negotiate an acceptable rent with the possibility of a rent-free period.

there is agreement, in principle, for the phase ii) development which involves converting the garage into a physio room/gym

It was **RESOLVED** that the meeting should continue until 10.10.

iv) STAFF APPRAISALS

Members had before them a summary of all staff employed by Henley-on-Thames Town Council as at April 2013, their designation, completed years of service, their spinal column range and spinal column point as at April 2012. The Town Clerk updated the meeting with the results of the staff appraisals and confirmed that provision had been made in the 2013/14 budget for incremental increases from 1 April 2013. It was acknowledged that staff who had not yet reached the top of their scale were contractually entitled to an additional increment on completion of a satisfactory or better appraisal as set out in the Green Book and the contracts of employment for staff

The report also gave details of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services employers' pay offer from 1 April 2013.

The report examined the case for regrading staff in the information centre, both visitor information and council services information staff, having regard the comparable work within the organisation. It was

RESOLVED that the national position relating to public sector pay be noted; and

that the report and summary of staff employed by the Council as at April 2013 be received, approved and adopted; and

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that in recognition of completing a satisfactory or better appraisal those members of staff not yet on the top of their pay scale be advanced by one spinal column point within their grade and paid the appropriate increase in salary from 1 April 2013;

that the two posts of part-time Information Assistants be regraded to pay scale 18-22 and that the current postholders be advanced to spinal column point 22 from 1 April 2013;

that the arrangements for providing additional administrative support in the neighbourhood planning process from 1 April 2013 as set out in the report be approved subject to South Oxfordshire District Council approving the Joint Neighbourhood plan for Henley and Harpsden and that £11,000 be allocated in the budget for this purpose;

that the pay of the Visitor Information Assistants posts be initially brought into line with the pay of the office cleaner from 1 April 2013, the Clerk to present a further report on their salary having evaluated the roles and responsibilities these posts in the context of the salary of other staff where their roles are sufficiently similar in nature; and

In the absence of the Mayor, the Chair read out a short report from the Mayor regarding the Town Clerk's appraisal to the Committee. A Member commented that because a satisfactory (or better) appraisal meant that the Council had to award an extra increment, the committee had no choice but to make this award. Given the fact that the appraisal was solely in the hands of the Mayor, this was undemocratic. The Chair replied that other chairs have been given the opportunity to input to the appraisal so was not solely decided by the Mayor.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

**The Mayor's report on the Town Clerk's appraisal be noted,
in particular the rating of Very Good**

**the Town Clerk's salary be upgraded from SPC65 to SPC66
in accordance with the terms of his contract.**

The meeting closed at 10.20pm.

Chairman
13.3.13