

Present: Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin (presiding)
Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Mrs G M Dodds
Councillor A J Follett
Councillor C W Gibson
Councillor Miss L M Hillier
Councillor Mrs R Myer
Councillor C I Pye
Councillor Miss L H Pye
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor S Smith
Councillor Dr B G Wood

In Attendance: Mr M W Kennedy – Town Clerk
Miss J Smith – Minute Taker / Committee Administrator
Mr C Austin - Town Sergeant

Also Present: 1 member of the press
11 members of the public

The Town Clerk read out the fire evacuation procedure. The Mayor reminded Councillors and members of the public of the Code of Practice relating to Public Participation as stated on the agenda.

94. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr P Skolar.

95. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith – Planning Committee 19 January 2010, Minute 126 (P09/E1267 and P09/E1328) - personal interest, neighbours.

96. **MINUTES**

Councillor I Reissmann referred to *Minute 89 – District/County Councillor Reports* and stated that the response minuted from Councillor Dr P Skolar had not included his response that he had confirmed that “Youth Services would be considered for cuts.” Councillor I Reissmann stated that he would like this added to the Minutes. After some discussion regarding adding this statement, the Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 8 December 2009 were approved and signed by the Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, subject to the above amendment, as a true record.

97. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mrs V Alasia – Makins Road

As a past secretary of the Henley Society, she was not pleased to see the proposed changes to the procedures for the automatic referral of planning applications to the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) planning committee.

Councillor Miss L Hillier confirmed that she was not at the meeting where these changes were discussed. However, these changes would mean that all district council ward members would need to be more vigilant on the planning decisions made by the Henley Town Council (HTC) Planning Committee.

Mr W Hamilton - Greys Road

Mr Hamilton congratulated Mr Tom Campbell's efforts on organising a team of residents to help clear the snow within the town. He asked if the same team could help in clearing the town's weeds.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin advised that the Henley in Bloom 'Gardening Buddies' already carry out this function and that many of the snow clearing volunteers were in fact 'Gardening Buddies' volunteers and that they should combine forces with any additional volunteers who want to help with clearing the town's weeds.

Mr W Hamilton confirmed that he would like to be involved with the Gardening Buddies to help clear the town's weeds.

Mr R Cross - Hamilton Avenue

Mr Cross expressed his concern on the road safety in Hamilton Avenue and Vicarage Road. These roads are used as a 'rat run' for traffic so are very busy at peak times. The pavements are often obstructed with recycling bins and parents who are dropping off/picking up children at Trinity School who park on the pavement forcing pedestrians to step into the road. Having had his daughter seriously injured following a road traffic accident he asked that the Mayor writes to Trinity School to draw their attention to the potential road safety issues in this area.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin advised that she too had concerns over the road safety in these roads, and that in the past Henley Town Council (HTC) has written to Trinity School but received the response that as the cars are not parked in the schools grounds they are outside their authority, however, she would be happy to write to Trinity School again.

She also asked that Mr Cross' concerns be put on the next Traffic Advisory Group (TAG) meeting agenda.

Action: Letter to be sent to Trinity School. Committee Administrator for TAG to inform Mr P Ronald of Oxfordshire Highways of the issues and to add to the next TAG agenda in March.

Mr K J Arlett – Elizabeth Road

Mr Arlett advised that he had attended the Finance Strategy and Management on 12 January 2010 and was alarmed at some of the findings of the Auditors Report. He asked if HTC had gone out to tender for the estate inspections report and for the designs for the new Henley Information Centre in the Town Hall.

The Town Clerk confirmed that HTC had not gone out to tender.

Mr Arlett questioned why a particular contractor had been used for the estate inspection report.

The Town Clerk confirmed that in the case of the estate inspection, two quotes had been obtained and the contractor used provided the cheapest quote. In respect of the designs for the new Henley Information Centre (HIC), HTC had gone with the chosen contractor because of the speed needed to get this new centre up and running by the 31 March 2010. However, the contractor was obtaining individual quotes for the various works needed to construct the new centre.

Mrs D Browne, Bell Street

Mrs Browne asked if HTC could provide funds to renovate the litter bins in Bell Street as they were an absolute disgrace.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin agreed that renovation of these bins should be a priority.

Action: Agenda item to next Town and Community Committee

Mr W Hamilton - Greys Road

Mr Hamilton asked what plans the Mayor had in place to enable the Henley Regatta Fireworks to go ahead in 2010.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin confirmed that she was not responsible or involved with the Henley Regatta Fireworks.

98. **PROGRESS REPORT**

Members had before them a progress report on the following matters, copy having been issued. The Council was apprised of the latest developments.

New Waste Recycling – Minute 89 – 8/12/09

Councillor S Smith confirmed that he had recently had a meeting with South Oxfordshire Housing Association (SOHA), SODC and the affected residents regarding the maintenance of the SOHA bin store and a satisfactory conclusion had been reached by all parties.

In addition, he advised that all flats were going to lose the option of using bags and that bulk bins would be used for recycling and general waste.

Councillor Miss L Hillier confirmed there would be an exception for flats within the conservation areas and thanked Councillor Smith for his help in resolving these issues.

Northfield End Traffic Issues – Minute 87- 8/12/09

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith advised that the electronic survey to be carried out by OCC had been delayed slightly because of the recent bad weather.

Review on Yellow Lines in and around the town – Minute 89 – 8/12/09

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith confirmed that the report would be reviewed with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on 11 February 2010.

99. **DISTRICT/COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

The Council received the following verbal reports from District and County Councillors.

District County Councillor reports:

District Councillor Mrs J Bland reported on the following matters:

- *Market Town Coordinators*: SODC were in the process of appointing Market Town Coordinators for Henley, Didcot, Wallingford and Thame.
- *Miller Report*: was coming to a conclusion.
- *Review of Bursary*: each year SODC gives monies to the youth services.
- *Citizens Award*: at an Awards Ceremony held on 19 January 2010 this new award was given to someone who had made outstanding achievements within the community, and encouraged Members to put forward names for future Citizens Awards.

District Councillor Mrs R Myer reported on the following matters:

- *SODC PCSO key performance indicators – 2009/10 second quarter 2 report*: from this report advised that SODC part fund seven PCSOs in Oxfordshire. PCSOs have issued 488 fixed penalty notices (FPN) during the quarter for vehicle-related incidents. From 1 September 2009, PSCOs have been able to issue FPNs for littering, fly posting, graffiti and dog fouling. Alcohol had been confiscated from over 100 under age drinkers.
- *Advanced chemical technology for snow clearance*: had been given information from Germany for a chemical technology to add chemicals to the grit/salt for the rapid clearance of snow. Councillor Mrs R Myer would be passing this information onto OCC.

District Councillor Miss L Hillier reported on the following matters:

- Waste recycling system: advised that rubbish collections would be back to normal this week following the disruptions caused by the recent adverse weather.
- Cold weather payments: confirmed that between 1 November 2009 and 25 January 2010 in RG9 there were three periods of cold weather at £25 allowance per period.
- Green spaces: SODC are inviting residents to have their say on green spaces before the 1 February 2010. An online questionnaire is available on the SODC website and hardcopies are available in the library and One-Stop-Shop.

Councillor C Pye asked if the 488 FPN's that had been reported for Oxfordshire in the SODC report had been broken down to show those issued in Henley.

District Councillor Mrs R Myer reported that she did not have this information.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin suggested that it would be useful to have the breakdown on the FPN's issued for littering and graffiti.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin asked about the bins on Gravel Hill and whether a solution had been made as to whether these residents would be provided with bags.

District Councillor Miss L Hillier advised that a solution had still not been resolved, but she would continue to pursue.

Councillor I Reissmann asked why none of the District Councillors had reported the impending changes to the planning procedures prior to the letter from SODC of the 19 January 2010 being circulated with the Full Council agenda.

District Councillor Miss L Hillier advised that she had been unaware of these changes and did not have this information prior to the last Full Council meeting and that she would report back after the next SODC planning meeting.

District Councillor Mrs J Bland advised that the Henley Councillors were very good at attending meetings when there had been disagreements with SODC officers on planning decisions. However, the changes would improve the efficiency and reduce the costs of running the planning service.

District Councillor Mrs R Myer agreed with the District Councillor's comments and by implementing the changes SODC were trying to streamline the planning process.

County Councillor reports:

County Councillor D Nimmo-Smith reported on the following matters:

- Highway ownership issues at Northfield End: findings would be available at the end of February and he would report back at the next Full Council.
- Pot holes: confirmed he was sending emails daily on pot holes in and around the town and urged other members to report any pot holes findings to OCC.
- Paving works, Reading Road: works started late due to the adverse weather conditions but are going to schedule.
- Snow clearing: OCC have put in a bid to central government to help with replenishing the monies taken from the pot hole budget to cover the recent adverse weather conditions. OCC are carrying out a wash-up report of lessons learnt and the problems experienced with the lack of salt supplies. Formal feedback from OCC was that Henley's roads and pavements were in the same condition as most of the towns in Oxfordshire and that each town had been dealt with on the same basis.

Councillor Miss L Hillier suggested that luminous paint is put around each of the pot holes in the interim before they are filled to alert motorists and cyclists.

County Councillor D Nimmo-Smith agreed and confirmed that he would make this suggestion to OCC.

Deputy Mayor, Mrs J Wood asked when there would be a definitive answer on what can and can not be done regarding clearing the snow from the pavements. Councillor Dr B Wood referred to a report from OCC's Councillor K Mitchell that confirmed OCC would be seeking guidance from parliament regarding this situation. He confirmed that volunteers from the community were extremely helpful but that a defined organised approach from OCC, SODC and HTC needed to be adopted for clearing the snow in future in addition to the use of the correct machinery and equipment e.g. plastic shovels rather than metal ones that can potentially cause damage to the pavement slabs.

Councillor Dr B Wood asked for a definite answer to whether there would be cost cuts to Youth Services.

County Councillor D Nimmo-Smith reported that the budget was to be set in three weeks time but that funds allocated for Youth Services would remain the same.

100. **FEEDBACK REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin confirmed that a request had been sent to Members asking for reports on the outside bodies they represent. These reports are due to be submitted by 13 February 2010.

Councillor Mrs R Myer stated that she had been appointed as a representative on the Henley Partnership Traffic Committee but had not received an invitation to attend any of these meetings.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin asked her to confirm her appointment with Mrs C Robb, HIC Administrator.

Councillor Dr B Wood asked that, in addition, reports are received from non-Councillors who still represent HTC on outside bodies e.g. Municipal Charities and Henley Royal Regatta.

101. **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Members had before them the list of Mayoral engagements from 8 December 2009 to 21 January 2010 inclusive, copy attached to the Agenda.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin advised Members of the 'Mayors Together' event on 6 February 2010 in Didcot and that she would be sending out details regarding further fund raising events (a Pancake Race and Quiz) for the Mayor's chosen charities.

102. **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

- (i) The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 15 December 2009 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 15 December 2009 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

- (ii) The Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19 January 2010 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19 January 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted, subject to the following recommendation.

Councillor A Follett made reference to Minute 130 and recommended that an additional item (vi) is added to the proposal that states that HTC will instigate a system that all planning objections are sent to the Ward Members at the time of sending the objections to SODC. It was

RESOLVED that an additional item (vi) is added to the proposal that states that HTC will instigate a system that all planning objections are sent to the Ward Members at the time of sending the objections to SODC.

- (iii) The Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 15 December 2009 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and Amenities Committee held on 15 December 2009 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the report:

Minute 55 – Makins Recreation Ground

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith referred to an article in the Henley Standard that stated that HTC does not own Makins Recreation Ground.

The Town Clerk confirmed that HTC is the owner of this land and had sent a response quoting the Land Registry title document number to the Henley Standard.

Minute 57 – First Chapel, Fairmile Cemetery

Councillor C Gibson confirmed that forms had been completed asking for the de-listing of the First Chapel, Fairmile Cemetery.

- (iv) The Town and Community Committee to be held on 5 January 2010 had been cancelled due to the adverse weather conditions on this day. The Mayor Mrs E Hodgkin advised that a nomination for a representative to sit on the SODC interview panel which will appoint a Market Town Coordinator for Henley needed to be considered as interviews are to take place week commencing 1 February 2010. She made the recommendation that the town's representative should be Mr J Hobbs, Chairman of The Henley Partnership. In addition she advised that it had been discussed that a representative from Henley Town Council also sits on the interview panel, but SODC had requested that just one representative from each town should be involved in the interview process, however, Members were welcome to attend on the day of interview to meet candidates over lunch.

Councillor A Follett confirmed that once an appointment had been made a meeting would need to be set up to discuss HTC proposals and budget. Councillor Dr B Wood asked how long SODC would provide the funding for this position, as in the past SODC had withdrawn funding for services and HTC had to then source funding e.g. the One Stop Shop.

Councillor A Follett confirmed that it was a SODC officer position not a HTC position, and that it was to be a part-time position of a Market Town Coordinator for Henley rather than a Town Centre Manager.

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood recommended that because of HTC's ongoing keen involvement in getting this position established a representative from HTC should sit on the interview panel.

After a lengthy debate, it was agreed that Mr J Hobbs be nominated as Henley's representative for the interview panel and in addition SODC are asked if a representative from HTC can also attend. Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood was nominated as the HTC representative if SODC accepts the request. It was

RESOLVED that Mr J Hobbs, Chairman, The Henley Partnership be nominated as Henley's representative for the interview panel, and in addition SODC are asked if a representative from HTC can also sit on the interview panel. Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood was nominated as the HTC representative if SODC accepts the request.

Post meeting note: It has been agreed that Mr J Hobbs is the nominated representative for Henley on the interview panel and that Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood and Mayor, Mrs E Hodgkin will attend the lunch on the day of the interview to meet the candidates along with any other Councillor who wish to do so.

- (v) The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 12 January 2010 were before the Council. It was

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 12 January 2010 and the recommendations therein be received, approved and adopted.

Arising from the report:

Minute 82 (ii) – Value For Money & Resources (VFM & R) Working Group
Councillor Dr B Wood, who did not attend this meeting, queried the meaning of some of the content of the Minutes regarding the role and powers of the working group and asked for an explanation.

Councillors Miss L Hillier and Mrs G Dodds replied that they were rather dismayed at certain decisions that had been undertaken by the VFM & R Working Group and that some of the recommendations were potentially contentious and would need Full Council approval.

Councillor Dr B Wood confirmed that no decisions are made from the VFM & R Working Group, only recommendations which are then reported back and scrutinised by the Finance Strategy and Management Committee and then approved at Full Council.

Councillor S Smith asked if the VFM&R Working Group powers had been changed.

Councillor A Follett confirmed that this Working Group still reports to the Finance Strategy and Management Committee with its recommendations.

Councillor Dr B Wood confirmed that it had been agreed in principle to charge for the new toilets. Advice will be sought from the Architect, but it had not yet been confirmed that there would be turnstiles. Options for charging or not charging would be included in the Architect's report. A full report will be brought back to committee and then to Full Council.

Councillor Mrs G Dodds referred to Members to Minute 92 (iii), Full Council on 8 December 2009 – “Councillor Dr B Wood had advised that all information would be included in the report and be brought back to Committee for approval.”

- (vi) Townland's Steering Group (TSG) there had been no meeting of the TSG since last Full Council, therefore, Mr I Reissmann gave the following verbal update:-

- Townlands Project Group (TPG): meets on the first Tuesday of each month.
- Project Timetable - an 'Invitation to Participation Dialogue Pack' is currently being reviewed and is still on track to be sent out to bidders at the end of January. A recommendation of bidder and tender for the site, subject to planning permission, will be presented for board approval at the Primary Care Trust Board meeting on 26 November 2010.
- Primary Care Trust (PCT) – a new Chief Executive will be appointed on the 1 March 2010 and was not the acting Chief Executive, Mr M Tait.
- Date of next TSG meeting: 22 February 2010 and not 27 January 2010 as stated on the agenda.

103. **COLLAPSED DRAIN OUTSIDE HENLEY TOWN HALL**

Members had before them a tabled report prepared by the Town Clerk regarding emergency repairs needed to a collapsed drain outside the Town Hall. For some time, the main office which is below street level had suffered ongoing flooding during periods of heavy rainfall. During recent rainfall, the basement flooded out to 4.5m² and the carpet was completely under water causing health and safety concerns. A CCTV survey of the drains and pipes had been carried out to clear a suspected blockage, however, a cracked pipe on the Council's side of the foul sewer was discovered and therefore the Council is responsible for carrying out the repair.

Councillor S Smith asked if this repair could be covered by HTC insurance. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would need to check HTC insurance policy but felt this was an insurable risk.

Councillor A Follett advised that in due of the health and safety risk that these works are carried out immediately. It was

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Council approves expenditure in the sum of £5,237.50 from this year's repairs and maintenance budget for the Town Hall;
- (ii) postpones the earmarked expenditure for planned redecorations of the Town Hall until 2010/11; and
- (iii) instructs the Town Clerk to take cognisance of this in preparing the schedule of works to be completed before 31 March 2010 in accordance with Council's adopted recommendation of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee of the 24 November 2009 Min 62 refers.

Post meeting note: The Town Clerk confirms that the cost of repair is below our excess held on our buildings policy and cannot therefore be recovered.

The meeting closed at 09:05pm.

js

Mayor