

Present: Councillor Mrs P Phillips (Chair)
Councillor M Akehurst (Substitute for Councillor Ms K
Gehrmann)
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Miss S Evans (Substitute for Councillor W Hamilton)
Councillor D Hinke
Councillor Ms L Meachin
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: Superintendent Andy Boyd – Thames Valley Police (TVP)
Inspector Mark Harling – TVP
Mr Pete Ronald – Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)
Mr Alan Rose – Just Racing (JR)
Councillor D Silvester
One Member of the Press
Five Members of the Public

73. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss K Gehrmann and W Hamilton.

74. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

75. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

Mr Dennis McCoy – Hamilton Avenue – Hoped that the Committee would give its support to the Falaise Twining Association's request to install a 40th anniversary street sign on the Market Place.

76. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Town and Community Committee held on 11 December 2012 were received, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

77. LOCAL POLICE AREA UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed the Local Police Area Commander for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Police Area, Superintendent Andy Boyd, and Inspector Mark Harling to the meeting and invited them to the table.

Superintendent Boyd introduced himself to the committee and advised that he is the Local Police Area Commander for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council, and advised that part of his role is to implement the Thames Valley Policing Plan. A draft copy of the plan is available on the PCC website and Councillors are encouraged to take a look and see if it meets local needs

(Consultation end date: February) <http://www.thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/Get-Involved/Police-and-Crime-Plan-Consultation.aspx>

When asked if he was in support of Henley and other local towns bids for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Superintendent Boyd advised that he had already informed SODC that CPE had the full support of the TVP, as it would release manpower from issuing parking tickets and free them for other duties.

It was noted that although crime is currently at an all-time low, it is still occurring, and as with all Public Services, the police are now struggling with resources and rely on help from the public.

Superintendent Boyd informed the Members that any support that they can give to both the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and the Neighbourhood Action Group would be greatly appreciated.

Thames Valley Police have dealt with the 20% budget reduction with a host of measures including the removal of a whole layer of bureaucracy, efficiency savings and capital gains.

The Thames Valley resources are spread across the whole of the Thames Valley from Farringdon to Reading and Oxford to Aylesbury and a meeting is held every morning to prioritise resources.

The use of mounted police in Henley was questioned, and it was explained that mounted police are used in areas of high crime as they act as a visual deterrent, add an additional physical presence and are reassuring to people who feel under threat. When questioned if he felt they were out of context in Henley, Superintendent Boyd explained that the horses had to be exercised and as part of their deployment have to patrol somewhere in the Thames Valley every day.

It was noted that subscribing to the police alerts was very informative.

When asked what success rate this area had with burglaries, Superintendent Boyd advised that there is a 17% detection rate nationally but this area currently has a detection rate of 38%.

The area covered by South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse is one of the safest places to live in the Country, with the best detection rates and the lowest number of crimes, but the police find it very frustrating the number of people who still leave windows and doors unlocked.

The Chairman invited the police to use the Market Place on a Saturday to inform the public on how to secure their homes.

When it was suggested that victims of crimes are encouraged to come forward to say what happened to them and get the message across, Inspector Harling reminded members that each burglary affects a family and it can be a very traumatic experience that has a high impact on them, it should be remembered that statistics are people and not just numbers.

Inspector Harling advised that since 1 April 2012 there have been 49 burglaries to homes in the town, which is an increase of 19 on the same time the previous year.

Crime dropped last year by 6.1% but that is down from last and previous years, so we cannot afford to get complacent.

The Chairman thanked Superintendent Boyd and Inspector Harling for attending the meeting.

Superintendent Boyd and Inspector Harling left the meeting at 8.15pm.

78. **CHALLENGE HENLEY TRIATHLON**

The Chairman Welcomed Mr P Ronald to the meeting and invited him to the table.

Having been previously provided with a list of questions that Councillors had submitted Mr Ronald gave the following information on the proposed 2013 route:

How did JR consult, on what, and with whom as Route 4 affects us all and has never been see before?

Consultations documents were sent out in December and Councillor Rodney Rose, John Howell MP and Just Racing looked at them and discussed the 4th option. Some of the concerns raised in this option have now been addressed and a 5th option has just been presented.

JR have a route deadline of 1st week of February, this will then go through the legal process with Council and resident consultation. Residents and businesses fronting the route will receive a letter drop asking for comments and observations and also requesting that they supply information of any activity or event that they are aware of that is taking place, i.e. Weddings.

Route submitted	February
Consultation	February / March
Report	April
Papers	May
Councillor Decision	June

Is route 4 the final route or is this route being consulted on?

Route 4 was only a proposal and was only published due to pressure from the Henley Standard, and has now been changed, route 5 was proposed earlier today.

How are residents and visitors expected to be able to get to places on the route?

Motorcycle escort.

What signage will there be to give people a cycle free route to Badgemore Golf Club, Greys Court and Stoner etc, and how long will signage be up before the event?

Signage will be up 2 weeks in advance of the event, if the roads are closed access will only be possible with an escort and notices about the event will be sent out in March.

What marshaling will there be, by whom and at what strategic locations?

Unfortunately last year JR were let down by 30-40% of the volunteer marshals, this year they will be using professional paid marshals to cover the event.

What guarantee will be given that all living on the course and immediately adjacent to the route get details circulated to them?

Residents living on the route will be given all the relevant information, those living adjacent to the route will have to follow the diversions.

What steps are being taken to make sure that escort arrangements work properly on the day?

JR will be providing more motorcycle escorts this year, and the route proposed actually require less marshals.

Has the decision on closures been made already?

No, not yet but OCC as the enabling body can only say no if there are specific reasons, i.e. can the event take place off road – NO, would there be safety issues if

there was not a road closure – YES and does the event cause a Traffic Management problem – NO.

There are only minor problems at the cyclist / runner transition.

Do OCC have a statutory obligation to consider all applications for road closures?
Yes.

On what grounds can OCC refuse an application – Health and Safety only?
Yes, grounds as above.

Do possible grounds include inconvenience to the public?
No.

What consultations do OCC have to carry out before approving an application?
Legal process.

What discussions have OCC had on this matter with the MP?
Lengthy discussions have taken place and there will be another meeting on 15 February.

Who pays for the office time taken up in considering an application for road closure?
JR.

Why have Parish Council's including Watlington not been consulted on the new route?
There has been no formal application yet.

Why are different roads not time zoned so that they can be closed for the shortest time?
Not possible as there will be 3 laps of the same roads with the professionals going first. Closure for cycling will be from 6am – 6pm and for the running 11am – midnight.

Why have roads been included that were not part of the initial consultation?
Formal application has not been received yet.

Every Parish Council has misgivings about the routes and objects to them, why have they not been listened to?
Councils have been listened to and Watlington have not raised any issues.

If OCC have listened to what councils have to say, and they have objected, why is the event still going through their villages?
OCC has listened, but they are only the enabling authority and there are limited grounds on which they can say no to the event taking place.

Does JR pay for the man hours used by the OCC Officers to facilitate the event?
Yes.

Has an economic survey been carried out, and what specialist will be used?
Don't know.

Who will pay for the time that SODC officers put in for the survey?
Don't know.

Responsible organisations have a zero waste policy. Last year rubbish went to land fill at the expense of the tax payer. What is JR's waste policy?
Don't know, waste is the responsibility of the event organizer.

How much money has JR donated to Sue Ryder, the charity that the company claims to support?
Don't know.

What guarantee do you have that JR will supply sufficient trained marshals to deal with the safety of the event and to deal with emergencies?

JR is providing professional marshals this year.

Do you think that signs saying roads will be closed for 13 hours is good for business? Signage is covered by legislation.

How do you know that the residents affected by the road closures will be told that they will not be able to use their cars for 13 hours, or receive visitors?

Residents will be able to use their car and receive visitors with the help of an escort.

Henley has many events throughout the year of which it is very proud. None of the events close down the roads for long periods. What is your reason for allowing this event to cause such disruption?

HTC and SODC supported the event; I was originally against the event but told to find a way to make it happen.

Where can we see the detailed plan for emergency vehicles to travel through the closed streets safely?

Emergency vehicles have access through all closures.

What makes you think this major disruption to the residents and businesses of Henley is a good thing?

Can't comment as the event does not cause any major traffic issues.

What makes you think that the majority of our Council Tax payers are in favour of the event?

Don't know.

Are we being presented with a confirmed decision or do we still have a choice, as we have not so far been involved in any consultation over the 4th route?

The new route will go out to consultation with residents invited to make comments and observations.

Can you supply timings for road closures now for us in order to consider as part of this proposal?

No.

Why has OCC Media department written a press release that implies we and all other interested bodies are happy with the 4th route? We should consider asking for references to HTC to be omitted from this and include our own words.

Councillor Rodney Rose is responsible for any releases to the press.

Given the fact that OCC assert that we have been involved in the consultation and we have not, have they really had meaningful consultation with other interested bodies, can a list of those businesses that have been consulted be supplied with a short summary of the consultation and the outcome?

National Trust at Greys Court have responded, Henley Business School, Toad Hall & Swiss Farm support the event. All parishes on the route and businesses that front onto the route have been consulted.

As there have been very mixed responses from residents who have contacted JR, there is concern regarding the statement 'Residents directly affected by the closures will have a further opportunity to raise specific issues which can be passed on to JR, giving the company the information needed to limit disruption', will the residents be dealing directly with OCC or JR. Who will pay for this service, can we have a full summary and timescales of how this consultation will be carried out, what confirmation can we have of the way in which these enquiries will be dealt with, what

confirmation can we have of the kind of action taken, the replies necessary and timescales in which these will happen, to alleviate the concerns of residents?

Consultation will take place within the legal timescales, residents will be able to make comments / observations, responses will go to OCC, Mr P Ronald available if anyone needs information and JR will pay for the service.

After an additional question and answer session Mr Ronald confirmed that:

- The standard letter that is sent to residents and businesses is agreed by Legal Services.
- Objections will not be accepted on the consultation, only comments and observations.
- The event will take place; it is only the route that needs to be confirmed.
- Lancashire & South Wales both have similar events with road closures, the Oxford City Road Race last year had road closures that lasted 24 hours for Health & Safety reasons and to allow for barrier set up and TV crews; in Wales no access was allowed
- Residents and businesses will be able to travel freely if accompanied by an escort.
- Route 5 has only just been submitted; Councillor Rose will look at all communication but due to legislation is unable to prevent the event from taking place.
- Joanna Simons CBE, the Chief Executive of OCC will send a reply to everyone who responds to the consultation.
- Enough escorts will be available to get people to time dependent events i.e. church etc.
- Until the final route is decided the number of marshals required cannot be determined, but there will be enough to provide 1 or 2 at each strategic point plus motorcycle marshals at a central point.
- The final decision on the route will be made after much deliberation by Councillor Rose and the MP.
- The event would only be granted permission to take place without road closures is if it could answer "yes" to the following questions: Can the event take place off road - NO, do road closures cause any safety issues - NO, will the road closures cause any major traffic congestion - NO.
- Local people will have knowledge of the local diversions and will be assisted by marshals, people travelling from out of area will be diverted via Reading, Marlow or the motorways.
- The road closures will not be removed until 12 midnight to allow runners time to complete the course.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ronald for attending the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Alan Rose to the meeting and invited him to the table.

Mr Rose informed members that nothing had changed, JR still had one simple objective to deliver a World Class Triathlon.

He noted that they had not got everything right in the past, but that they do listen and take things on board.

Members were informed that JR had been happy with the original route used for the first event, but they had been forced to change it, and had done their best to come up with a more popular route that gave better access.

1250 athletes took part in the event last year, and it is hoped that there will be 1500 this year. Most of these athletes and their families will come to the town and spend money.

JR have tried hard to work with residents and a meeting with businesses and churches is proposed.

JR have attended numerous meetings and discussed a great deal, unfortunately people know what they don't want but do not provide alternative suggestions.

The final route will be with OCC for approval by 7 February 2013.

Following a short question and answer session Mr Rose confirmed that:

- A final route has been decided that will be put to OCC for approval.
- The part of the route actually in Henley has not changed.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rose for attending the meeting.

Mr P Ronald and Mr A Rose left the meeting at 9.10pm

79. VARIATION IN THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was **RESOLVED**

that Agenda item 13 be now taken in recognition of our visitor present this evening.

Councillor Mrs J Bland left the meeting at 9.15pm.

80. FALAISE TWINNING

Members considered a request from the Falaise Twinning Association to erect a sign on the Market Place to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the twinning of Henley and Falaise.

It was agreed that the Twinning Associations original request to erect a street sign on top of the triple sided information board was not suitable, and that an engraved paving slab would be more appropriate.

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that Iver Parish Council had some very good examples of engraved stones that were embossed in Gold.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that this Committee grants permission for the engraving of a more prominent paving slab giving the anniversary details, and

that the Town Clerk investigates the gold embossed stones at Iver Heath and forwards to the Twinning Association.

81. 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 Mr Connick was not happy about installing the shelter without the approval of all the residents in the flats behind the bus stop, but would do so if we made the request.

Members agreed that as the flats adjacent to the bus stop were not occupied and a Public Consultation had taken place, Mr Connick should be advised that it is the wish of this Committee that the installation of the bus shelter takes place.

The Committee **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that Mr Connick be contacted and asked to go ahead with the installation of the bus shelter.

Bollards Ordered and awaiting installation.

Decriminalisation of Parking Didcot and Wallingford Town Councils have now advised that they would be interested in attending a meeting with this Council and Thame Town Council to discuss a combined strategy to achieve CPE across the district.

The Committee **RESOLVED**

that a date be set for the meeting to take place.

Budget Visit to Marlborough Town Council to view their sound system postponed until March (date to be confirmed).

Councillor M Akehurst to e-mail details to the Town Clerk of a sound systems he had recently seen at another venue.

82. BUDGET

Members received and considered the budget report to 31 December 2012.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the report is noted.

83. OLD FIRE STATION GALLERY AND KINGS ARMS BARN WORKING GROUP

Members received and considered the notes of the meeting held on 14 January 2013.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes be received and noted.

Arising from the report

Members considered a request from the Working Group to extend the number of meetings that this group meets. It was noted that the group had so far concentrated on the Old Fire Station Gallery and did not feel that it had finished its work with the promotion of the Barn.

It was further noted that a lot of Officer time was being used by this Working Group, and it was suggested that if the group is to continue meeting it should be administered from within.

After a lengthy discussion it was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

i) that the group continues for another 4 meetings to complete the promotion of both the Gallery and the Barn, and

ii) that the group provides its own administration support, invites Officers to attend meeting if their knowledge or assistance is required on specific items and continues to report to this Committee.

The Chairman thanked Mrs N Taylor for her Officer support over the 6 meetings.

84. TRAFFIC ADVISORY

Members received the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 January 2013.

A Member reiterated that any issues with pot holes should be reported to highway.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk

It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes be received and noted.

85. HENLEY FESTIVAL 2013 TOWPATH CLOSURE

Members received a request from the Henley Festival for a short diversion of the tow path for the stage build from Monday 8 July – Wednesday 10 July; full diversion on show nights Wednesday 10 July – Sunday 14 July 2012 and a short diversion for stage de-rig from Monday 15 July – Tuesday 16 July.

It was **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the application as presented be supported.

86. FLAGPOLES

Members reconsidered a request from the Henley Festival to use the Flagpoles in the Market Place from Monday 1 July – Monday 15 July to publicise the 2013 Festival.

It was noted that the Committee were happy for local groups / associations to use the flagpoles but that traditionally the Henley in Bloom Committee use the poles at this time to hang the Henley in Bloom Banners but the Committee suggested the Henley Festival might like to use the Flag Poles in June.

A Member advised the Committee that the Henley Festival bring a lot of visitors to the town and that 2013 was a very important year for them as they have new sponsors and a new brand and need to be seen to be giving something back to the sponsors.

As the use of the poles would involve Officer time and resources, it was **RESOLVED**

that an item be placed on the next agenda to discuss producing a Flag Pole use Policy, and

that talks be held with the Festival to see if it is possible to come to a compromise.

Members also considered a request from the Youth Festival to use the poles in March. It was **RESOLVED**

that permission be granted for the Youth Festival to use the Flag Poles from 9-18 March 2013.

87. 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 will be discussed are considered to be confidential.

88. CONFIDENTIAL

i) CCTV

The Committee received and considered the Confidential notes of the CCTV meeting held on Friday 30 November 2012, including the Henley CCTV camera usage figures.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the notes be received and noted.

The meeting closed at 10.12pm.

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Chairman