

1. **ATTENDANCE**

Councillors present: The Mayor, Mrs G Zakss  
The Deputy Mayor, Mrs L Hodgkin  
Councillor Mrs J Bland  
Councillor A J Follett  
Councillor Miss L M Hillier  
Councillor Mr D Nimmo-Smith  
Councillor C I Pye

In Attendance: Mike Kennedy – Town Clerk  
Adrienne Gliddon – Minute Taker  
Mr David Bates, OCVA  
A member of the press  
66 Members of the public.

The Mayor welcomed organisations to the Annual Town meeting. She had enjoyed meeting many of those present during her year as Mayor, which was now coming to an end. The highlights had been the Olympic Rowing event, and the Mile of Coins which had raised almost £1,000 to be shared by three charities.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors, C W Gibson, Miss L Pye, Dr P Skolar, S Smith Dr B Wood, Mrs J Wood, Mr Oliver Makower

3. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2008 were approved and signed by The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G Zakss as a true record.

4. **GUEST SPEAKER**

Mr David Bates from Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) gave a presentation on the work of the OCVA. Mr Bates advised that OCVA is based in Oxford and part of a development team initiated to provide advice and help to community groups. Local information points have been set up, including one based at D:2 in Henley which provides a local advice surgery, available by appointment, to talk about policies, procedures, particularly funding by means of ‘funderfinder’ software which gives information of c4,000 trusts. The notes of Mr Bates’ presentation are attached to these minutes.

5. **PRESENTATION OF TOWN MEDALS**

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G Zakss, informed the meeting that the criteria for nomination for the Town Medal included *outstanding and inspirational service for a substantial and meaningful period to a person who has enhanced the status of the Town and the well-being of its residents over a significant period of time by their clearly evidenced links with the Town or its organisations.*

Councillor Mrs Zakss advised that two people had been awarded the Town Medal this year; Mrs Mary Aldred and Mr Peter Holloway.

Mrs Aldred had been nominated by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs Liz Hodgkin

The Mayor, Mrs G Zakss presented the Town Medal to Mrs Mary Aldred and invited Council Hodgkin to speak.

Councillor Mrs Hodgkin reported as follows;

when being asked to provide a nomination for a Town Medal you need to reflect and consider the qualifications required to receive one. There are guidance notes and one of the main points states –

“has fundamentally contributed to the sustainable well-being of the Town and its residents and/or organisations.”

The main point here being “fundamentally contributed to the sustainable well-being of the Town”.

Mary Aldred has done that in spades and certainly came to my mind when sitting one day having a coffee with the Manager of the Eyot Centre, Pete Holloway. I did not tell him that was what I was thinking but it seemed to me that it was time Mary was recognized by the town she has provided community service to for over 35 years.

In that time she has given service to the Brownies, the Guides, Henley Lifesaving Club, Thames Rescue and probably others too, whilst also working at the Royal Mail in Henley.

Mary was widely known as a post woman in Henley and admired for her dedication and perseverance in all conditions and continued working as such up until her retirement. A postal delivery is a physically demanding job for a young person in the best of weather but in sometimes terrible winter conditions Mary made sure that her customers had their usual reliable service. I understand that it was quite common for her to look after peoples’ properties and mail whilst they were away on holidays. It was felt that she was an almost walking, working neighbourhood watch scheme of her own. Mary went that extra mile from being a good employee to being a caring member of her local community. Thus from her working life this has carried through to her voluntary work.

She was a volunteer with the guides and brownies for many years. Later, with the late Arthur Trimmings, she helped run the Henley Lifesaving Club. This doesn’t just mean turning up at the pool! She was the Secretary and thus there was a lot of administration work which Mary took on, such as form filling for the Royal Lifesaving Society regarding exams that had to be taken, managing the book keeping and paying the bills as well as sorting out the awards and chasing up the candidates.

Mary belongs to the Thames Rescue Service and has been part of it since the 1970’s. This service turns out in all weathers and provides an invaluable support to the many boating activities that take place.

The level of requests for help has progressively grown year on year. In 1980 there were 10-15 outings and in 2000 there were nearly 25 and there are probably even more now. Most of these would be a full day’s service. Mary has always been part in what has gone on. She has provided, totally voluntarily, her time and made available some of her own resources for both the Lifesaving Club in Henley and the Thames Rescue Service both in Henley and elsewhere. Without her enthusiasm and commitment both would have folded when groups of other people have left. She has provided the continuity to both clubs.

Likewise at the Eyot Centre she is an active supporter of the boating activities. The Thames Rescue Service houses its boat at the Centre and through the years

she has supported major open days and club canoeing events as well as joining in the club fun days.

Behind the scenes she has cleaned, maintained, guarded, overseen and operated the 14 ft Henley Dell Quay Dory. This by the way was donated by the Lions Club in 1977. She has willingly turned out in the cold and wet, braved the elements and not having owned a car, borne hard journeys by scooter, cycle or public transport to get to events. She has braved hours in strong hot sunshine, heavy rain and freezing conditions. She has never left an event due to any of these extreme discomforts.

Mary has a close association with the Eyot Centre in her role with the Royal Life Saving Society in helping the Centre's canoeing coaches retain pre-requisite life-saving qualifications. Many of the Centre's young members have benefited from her quiet encouragement to become qualified lifesavers. She also gives her time voluntarily to provide lifeguard cover for winter training sessions at Gillotts pool.

Never one to push herself forward she is always ready to help and does it discretely and willingly whether it be running the rescue boat or serving refreshments at competitions for the Centre events.

There are I believe many people like Mary in Henley who quietly get on with helping and providing support for others. She does this not only for the organisations she belongs to but also as a kind neighbour to those she lives near and is highly respected by all those who come into contact with her. The medal committee unanimously felt that it was time to recognize this dedicated woman and show our appreciation for her work.

Mr Holloway had been nominated by Councillor Chris Pye.

The Mayor, Mrs G Zakss presented the Town Medal to Mr Peter Holloway and invited Council Chris Pye to speak.

Councillor Pye reported as follows;

I was first introduced to Pete some 40 years ago as a young lad interested in outdoor pursuits and the proud owner of a canoe, Pete, very quickly taught me the laws of the river and how to paddle a canoe. But that is not why I nominated Pete for this award. The reason for my nomination was because of his tireless dedication to the youth of Henley for over 40 years.

Pete was first introduced to canoeing in 1966 at the age of 18 when, as a member of Chiltern Edge Youth Club he took part in a six session canoeing course at the Riverside Boat Centre (later to become the Eyot Centre) in Henley. Having enjoyed canoeing so much and making new friends, he continued to visit the Centre and become involved as a helper. In 1971 Pete identified a need for individual young people to be able to use the facilities at Eyot and started the Eyot Boat Club.

After a year as assistant leader, Pete became Club Leader in 1972. He gained his canoe coaching qualification and as a member of the Great Britain Canoe Slalom Team in 1979-80, competed in the Commonwealth Championships and various international competitions, gaining a gold medal at Ausbert in Germany.

Pete has always been interested in youth work and completed a part time Basic Youth Leadership course with Oxfordshire County Council in 1967. Placements

followed, first as Assistant Leader at Chiltern Edge Youth Club until November 1970 and then in conjunction with further Youth Leadership training, as part-time Leader with Henley Youth Centre for a number of years.

Pete's involvement with youth work in South Oxfordshire, particularly with Eyot, has formed a big part of his life for over 40 years. During this time, Pete has worked with hundreds of young people and has watched them move onto adult life, introducing them to opportunities that they may not have normally had.

As Leader of the Eyot Centre for more than 40 years, Pete had been instrumental in its development to its present status as a community water sports venue catering for young people belonging to other organisations such as schools, College, youth clubs, scouts, guides, Nomad and the like and also members of our resident Clubs.

It is for these reasons I was proud to nominate Pete for the Town Medal.

6. **TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING ANNUAL REPORTS ON THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES FOR 2008/9**

- i. Planning and Transportation. Councillor C I Pye, Chairman, reported that the Planning Committee continues to look at planning applications. These applications vary down from small and large extensions to new build and larger developments. Some of the larger applications to date include Market Place Mews and Quebec Road

More recently, of course, we have been considering the options of the Core Strategy for Henley. This in its general form is an opportunity for the town and Town Council to consider the future development of the town, Commercial, industrial, retail and housing. You will probably be aware of South Oxfordshire District Council's proposal for the development of Gillotts field, land off Fairmile and land off Reading Road, none of which found favour with the majority of the Town Council. However, we will continue to listen to your views and keep you informed.

- ii. Finance and Administration The report given by Councillor A J Follett, Vice Chairman, (in the absence of the Chairman, Councillor B G Wood), is attached to these minutes
- iii. Town Management The report given by Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin, Vice Chairman (in the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs J Wood) is attached to these minutes.
- iv. Best Value and Facilities Management The report given by the Chairman, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin's report is attached to these minutes

The Mayor thanked all Chairmen and Vice Chairmen for their reports and invited Ian Reissmann, Chairman of the Townlands Steering Group (TSG) to present his report.

- v. Townlands Steering Group  
Mr Ian Reissmann updated the meeting on progress towards securing a new Townlands hospital for Henley towards modernising the health services in and around Henley, particularly at Townlands.

There had been many ups and downs over a number of years. In 2005 some 4,500 people had met in the Market Place, Henley, to protest against the then imminent

threat of closure. This was no longer the case and building work on the new Townlands Hospital is hoped to start in 2010.

The TSG is the formal advisory Committee to the Council. Membership consists of Councillors, groups across and beyond Henley, business health groups, charities and church parishes around Henley. The group has credibility as a voice of the community.

The PCT reorganised in 2007 and appointed a new Chief Executive, Andrea Young. Andrea announced that she would work to preserve Townlands hospital and the Townlands Project Group was formed to look at services. In 2008, Andrea Young confirmed that all existing services would be reproduced in new facilities in brand new buildings on the site. The original plan had been agreed in 2007 and the original goal was to take an Outline Business Case to the board for approval in November 2008. The process had changed and was now 'competitive dialogue'.

The tender process started and a document was drawn up. Adverts appear in the European Journal in January 2009 and closed in March 2009. Three types of bid were invited.

1. Provision of beds in Peppard Ward
2. Provision of all other services
3. Provision of 1 and 2 above combined

The Procurement Group was now looking at the more than 30 responses to shortlist 6 – 9 bidders to talk to in detail as to how the needs would be provided in new buildings. There would be one additional service; a Day Hospital. A Community Forum had been established to make sure that people in and around Henley are given the opportunity to contribute views. On Thursday 7 May at 6.00pm the first meeting of the Forum would be held in Henley Town Hall. All are welcome to attend. The Townlands Newsletter, produced every other month as required, would give details of the responses to the advert.

It was anticipated that the contract would be awarded at the end of 2009 or early in 2010 and building work started in July 2010.

The TSG would continue to work closely with the project group. Ian Reissmann, Dr Peter Ashby, Cllr Terry Buckett MBE, Cllr Dr Barry Wood and Dave Smewing would all be active on the project and would work to make sure that the new hospital was as good as it could possibly be.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G Zakss, thanked Mr Reissmann for his excellent report and for all his hard work on the Townlands Hospital project.

## 5. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND RESOLUTIONS TO BE DECIDED BY THE MEETING**

No written question had been submitted prior to the meeting.

### *Question 1*

Mr Roy Aitkin, Elizabeth Road, asked about the development of the rest of the Townlands site.

Mr Reissman replied that although the TSG was concerned about the whole site it had made clear that it would never get involved in commercial or non-health services on the site to ensure that there was no conflict of interest. The site is 6 acres and 2 acres were needed for health services. The Community could influence proposals for the other 4 acres; the TSG could not.

*Question 2*

Mr Ken Arlett, Elizabeth Road, referred to Councillor Follett's report on the removal of funding from South Oxfordshire District Council for the One Stop Shop. SODC had previously given up running the cemetery which had created a £40k debt for the Town Council and they had tried to give up running the public toilets in Henley as a loss leader. Page 4 of the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting on 24 April 2008 had stated that all the profits from Kings Road car park were put back into maintaining that car park. Proceeds from Kings Road car park had been £219k and from Greys Road car Park £96k. Henley was therefore subsidising other areas such as Didcot.

District and Town Councillor Mrs J Bland replied that car park revenue is ring-fenced and spent on improvements to infrastructure and new trees. No profit is made.

*Question 3*

Mr Ken Arlett, Elizabeth Road, referred to the new wheelie bins being provided by District Council. He asked why he was expected to pay £30 for a bin for garden waste when the other types of bins were free.

District and Town Councillor Mrs J Bland replied that this was to keep down the precept and prevent other Council Tax payers subsidising those residents requiring garden waste bins.

Viv Greenwood, West Street enquired whether those people who have not formally been asked have the opportunity to make representation

District and Town Councillor Miss L Hillier advised that she had attended a Cabinet meeting at District Council the previous day. Exemptions had been published in the Henley Standard. District Council were still open to requests for further exemptions and she would be able to pass these on the following day.

Mr D Ellis asked if it would be possible to have the different types of bins on display in Henley Town Hall, so that the public could see how big they are.

Councillor Bland replied that terraced houses which were not able to accommodate bins could have bags. She agreed to enquire whether it would be possible to have bins on display in the Town Hall.

Councillor A Follett advised that the Waste Action Group (WAG), of which he was a member, had held monthly meetings with SODC and had addressed the matter of properties in the town where bins would be a problem. Every road in Henley had been reviewed and c550 such houses had been identified. At the next meeting they would ask for a progress report. Councillor Follett agreed that it was a good suggestion to have bins on display in the Town Hall if SODC would permit this.

Councillor C I Pye advised that wheelie bins had recently been delivered in Nuffield where what is proposed is to park a bin of each type at the end of each road of terraced

houses. He asked the District Councillors present to comment on whether this would happen in Henley

Councillor Mrs J Bland replied that nothing is set in stone. If there is room to accommodate communal bins this would be considered. No OAP would have a bin if there were not able to move it unassisted. Bins have benefits in that they avoid rats etc.

Councillor Pye advised that he was aware of cases in Lower Assenden where elderly residents struggled with bins.

*Question 4*

Mr Ian Reissmann asked for the Town Council's view on the proposal to develop Gillotts Field.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G Zakss, replied that the Town Council very much objects to any development on Gillotts Field. This was unanimous. The Town Clerk had suggested that the field could be designated as a registered common to strengthen the position. The field had originally been purchased by Henley Town Council in order to prevent development.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G Zakss, invited residents to give their views on the Core Strategy by registering these on the SODC website. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for all that they do for the community.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

**The Mayor, Councillor Mrs G Zakss invited everyone to join her for a drink and meet with other colleagues supporting the town.**

Mayor

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