

HENLEY IN ARDEN ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY MEETING
MONDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER 2015
MINUTES

WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Cllr Leech welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised everyone that by law, the JPC had to hold two separate annual assemblies per annum.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr John Garner, Cllr Lorraine Taylor-Green, Cllr Mike Wilmott and Cllr Jayne Bridges

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF 8th APRIL 2014

The Minutes had been read and were approved as a true record by David Jackson and seconded by Robin Rumbles and signed by the Chairman.

REPORT BY STRATFORD DISTRICT COUNCILLOR STEPHEN THIRLWELL

District Cllr Thirlwell thanked the Chair for the opportunity to report on behalf of SDC and his work over the last 12 months to April 2015. Cllr Thirlwell said that he had been re-elected Deputy Leader for the fourth consecutive year and this had ensured that he was able to represent his ward with regards to policy and key decisions. He went on to say that he was an active member of the licencing panel and made representations at planning committee meetings when necessary. Key successes over the year had been :

- Re-negotiating the grass mowing contract to ensure an extra cut at no extra cost
- No increase in district council tax for the fourth consecutive year and remaining the lowest district or borough council tax in Warwickshire
- Maintaining the position of one of the top ten re-cycling authorities in the country. Thanks to all members of the public who assisted with their re-cycling to make this possible.
- Working with partners to roll out Phase I Broadband and securing a further £475K to support Phase II of the Broadband initiative.
- Increasing SDC's satisfaction rating, as seen by residents, by 10% from 81% to 91%
- Progressing the SDC Core Strategy; earlier this year, the Inspector completed the hearing and wrote an interim report outlining further work to be done. Positives to come out of the report were that there will be no uplift in housing numbers, SDC has demonstrated their co-operation with the authorities and the policy regarding Local Centre Villages is deliverable and sustainable. Policies in respect of protecting sensitive landscapes and the character of the district will not require further work. The Inspector only had one main issue with greenbelt land and that was regarding employment and this would have required removal of the designated land from greenbelt. The Inspector suggested an alternative site.
- Cllr Thirlwell also confirmed that the proposed Burial Ground at Haven Pastures which was due to go before the SDC Planning Committee next week was now due to be refused under delegated powers. Cllr Thirlwell advised that he had requested all of the SDC Planning Committee to undertake a site visit and a piece of case law had been brought to the attention of the planners and himself. The case law had found that it was inappropriate to create a cemetery in greenbelt land. The applicants have seven days to respond to the recommendation for refusal and demonstrate that there are special circumstances.
- Cllr Thirlwell confirmed that he had also undertaken his normal case load.

REPORT BY WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR MIKE PERRY

County Cllr Perry welcomed everyone and reported :

- WCC had to make £92m cuts from the period 2013-2017 which had been imposed by the Government. WCC had protected the highways and maintenance budgets and elderly care, including extra funding for the reduction of potholes and highway maintenance. There were also funds available for gritting routes in the County.
- There had been 500km fibre cabling laid and 220 cabinets installed in Warwickshire and 43,000 properties had access to broadband facilities. There was 95% coverage in the County and investment underway to deliver 97% coverage to include rural areas.
- Cllr Perry confirmed that he was Vice-Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee and he was involved in the new Social Care Bill which would help to deliver care to the elderly in their own homes and reduce hospital admissions. He went on to say that he had attended a conference and Shropshire CC had explained their model for elderly care which included call centres and extra assistance with care in the home. He said that he would be taking this model forward to WCC for consideration as there were central funds available to roll this out to the County.
- Cllr Perry confirmed that both WCC and SDC had opted out of the Combined Authorities proposals as they did not feel that a rural County would benefit.
- WCC was involved in taking an apprenticeship scheme forward and employers would have to contribute 0.5% towards provision of a scheme in the workplace.
- The Boundary Commission would reduce the number of County Cllrs from 63 to 57 which would necessitate Henley becoming a larger ward to include 9,000 residents.
- The Henley Music Festival had been successful which had provided a boost to the local economy.
- Gateway signs would be installed on Blackthorn Hill on Warwick Road, together with a flashing 30 mph sign near to the School and he was looking at the speed limits in Henley, together with the possibility of provision of extra 20 mph signage on Arden Road and High Street and the possibility of providing a zebra crossing across Warwick Road to the school gate over the bridge.
- Cllr Perry thanked everyone for their support during the last year.

REPORT BY COUNCILLOR BILL LEECH, CHAIR OF BEAUDESERT & HENLEY IN ARDEN JPC

Cllr Leech reported :

- A new JPC was elected in May 2015, comprising of six women and six men, all of whom have business experience, with the youngest being 24 years old.
- Since election, the new council has made many changes in line with their manifesto, admin expenses have been reduced by £25,000 annually. The JPC has also made an overdue VAT claim for the fiscal year 2014/15 of over £4,800.
- A new Parish Clerk has been appointed, Gill Bailey, who was the Clerk in Napton for over ten years.
- The old JPC committee structure has been replaced with working parties providing a better oversight and this has reduced the Clerk's working hours and made it possible to dispense with the position of Planning Clerk.
- The lease for Forward House has been terminated by mutual agreement with the landlords and the office will be vacated in the New Year. The old administration committed the JPC to a new three year lease, nine months prior to the lease expired, which remains a mystery.

- The new JPC has improved communications significantly with a new user friendly web site and has reverted to the Old Town Crest designed in 1915 for its logo.
- Minutes are produced in draft form on the web site within five days of the meetings and regular press releases appear in Henley Focus and Henley News by the Parish Clerk. The latest financial information appears on the JPC web site and is updated monthly so residents can see in detail how funds are spent.
- With the savings of £25,000, JPC propose to provide more generous annual community grants to qualifying organisations, including the Christmas Lights Committee and Working Party. The application process has been simplified and the beneficiaries will be announced early in 2016. A recent communication circulated by the Christmas Lights Committee advising that the JPC would not give them a grant was incorrect. The JPC has offered them substantial financial and infrastructure support to enable the existing lights to be improved, however, the Committee has refused any help.
- All grant making decisions will be made in public in future. Any organisations applying for a grant must have made their accounts available to the public on a web site and be prepared to operate competitive public tendering for major expenditure. The JPC also plan to introduce a mini-grant system, which can be applied for during the year, normally restricted to a maximum of £500.
- Having looked at the administration of the JPC, the top priorities are planning, as we have received a record number of applications during the last six months. The Planning Working Party, co-ordinated by the Parish Clerk, is dealing with them promptly and comprehensively. The full council, with unrestricted public participation deals with all major applications.
- Maintenance is also a priority as the Town has become scruffy. The previous JPC cut back the maintenance budget and SDC have also cut back the street cleaning it provides, including Birdcage Walk. We have discussed this with SDC, however, we think it likely that the budget for maintenance will need to be increased. The trees at the Riverlands require maintenance and the JPC will have an expenditure of £20,000 over the next two years on tree surgery.
- Traffic and parking is a problem area and the JPC have a working party trying to develop solutions. This could result in the Medical Centre and Croft car parks being taken over by the JPC so that parking is restricted in both to short term parking.
- Parish Assemblies should be held during April or May, however the JPC was wrongly advised that they could be held at any time. We have had to hold two identical meetings on the same night in the same place, which is a legal requirement. The JPC will review this situation during 2016.
- In 1296 Henley was a borough and subsequently there were three Royal Charters making Henley a Market Town. We are in discussions with SDC in respect of Henley being recognised as a Town again in 2016.

REPORT BY NORMMAN KENCH, HIGH BAILIFF, COURT LEET

The High Bailiff reported :

- He had only been appointed High Bailiff three weeks ago and it was a great honour to be appointed, however, he had served his apprenticeship with John Rutherford who had been the previous High Bailiff.
- He and his newly elected officers intended to raise the profile of the Court and be more involved in the Town activities. He advised that the next JPC meeting will be held in the Guild Hall and it should be a fun and entertaining meeting for Christmas.
- Some of the highlights of the Court's year are the Christmas Bazaar which will be held on the night of the Christmas Lights turn on and will be in aid of Myton Hospice.

- The Boxing Day Morris Dance will also take place in the Town, as will the Court Leet Dinner and Town Dinner which are scheduled to take place during the year. The Court Leet Day will be fun and enjoyable day for all the Town and will include a re-enactment of days gone by. All these events will also raise money for charity.

REPORT BY THE WAR MEMORIAL TRUST

Peter Crathorne, as a Trustee, was asked to give a Report on behalf of the War Memorial Trust as Jayne Bridges was away on holiday and gave her apologies.

Peter reported :

- The War Memorial Trust had separated from the Hub and two Trusts had been formed. Both Trusts were still registered with the Charities Commission, the Hub as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and the HWMT as a traditional trust. The new legal status meant that they could employ people and it takes away individual liability from the Trustees.
- The War Memorial Trust was in good order and the only issue was that the drains which had been installed in 1909 underneath the Memorial Hall were causing problems. The War Memorial Trust was in negotiations with their insurers regarding re-designing the drainage system.
- Peter thanked everyone for their continuing support and for the grants which had been received from WCC and the JPC in the past. This had enabled the War Memorial Trust and the Hub to continue for the benefit of the community.

REPORT BY THE BEAUDESERT & HENLEY IN ARDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

David Jackson, Chair of the NDP Steering Group reported :

- The NDP Steering Group had been set up 18 months ago and that it would be in line with both the SDC Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- There had been a series of consultation meetings which had been held throughout the year and there had been a delay due to the elections and the development of the Core Strategy as the NDP had to accord with the policies adopted within the strategy.
- A Questionnaire had been sent out to 1600 households in Beaudesert and Henley and they had received 550 responses. This would enable the Steering Group to pick out trends and identify issues of importance to Parishioners.
- The first draft of the NDP would go out to public consultation early next year and the final document would go out to a referendum at Easter time. This will then become part of the legislative framework to 2031 and help with future planning applications.
- The formulation of a NDP would preserve the good things about Henley and things that matter to residents.
- Ray Holding questioned that only 550 households had completed the Questionnaire and David responded by saying that this had been a good result and was more than sufficient as a representative number. David went on to confirm that the initial analysis held no surprises. Judith Lindley said that she lived in Wootton Wawen and they had delivered the NDP Questionnaire to every household and received a 75% response rate.

REPORT BY COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS **COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS :**

Peter Neville said that he had taken over as the CFR Co-Ordinator in September from John Pudney. He reported as follows :

- The CFR's were a voluntary organisation which assisted the Ambulance Service respond to calls within the eight minute guideline. The nearest ambulance was based at Stratford so the timescales for responses by them were tight.
- He said that they had eight active responders, with a further three who had recently undergone training and would be included on the rota shortly.
- During the last twelve months, they had been on call for 2,230 hours and responded to a call out once every ten hours (225 call outs). Calls had been mostly from elderly residents who had fallen.
- The CFR finances were in reasonable condition, however, they would have to replace the scheme car in the next year. The organisations relied on public contributions and he thanked everyone for their support.

HENLEY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Judith Lindley reported :

- The Library appreciates the support of the JPC , particularly since the closure of the Library in the Guild Hall in 2012. Without the grant support of WCC, the JPC and Wooten Wawen PC, the Community Library would be unable to pay their annual rent of £5,500. The web site is www.henleycommunitylibrary.org and is volunteer led.
- The volunteers (currently 38) keep the Library open for 24 hours per week during the Summer months and 22 per week during the Winter on a Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturday mornings. Visitors are able to borrow and return books, use the computer/internet services at no charge, print and photocopy documents and down-load e.books.
- Volunteers are assisted on computer related matters by volunteers from the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme. There is an intention to approach Warwickshire College for IT volunteers are part of their internship when the computer upgrade has been completed.
- The Library has applied for funding under the SDC Digital Inclusion Fund to improve the skill set of the volunteers so that they will be able to use the new computers and platforms when installed. This will enable them to be more effective for those members of the public who need help with computer related issues.
- An important service which has been inactive for the last two years is the SDC's Customer Access Terminal, which should allow visitors to speak to an officer at Elizabeth House and submit documents via a scanner. The system is in the process of being re-built and the Library will notify the community once it is in operation and has been completed.
- The Library has agreed, in principle, to provide storage & display of current planning applications.
- The Library provides regular activities outside opening hours, including Rhymes & Stories for Pre-School Children and Summer Reading Challenge for 4-12 year olds. There are also out of hours children's workshops which have included calligraphy, crafts and the making of artists' books and visits from educational group Lion Learners. The Library also hosted two events to support Warwickshire's A Library Card for Every Child.
- A poetry group meets regularly once a month and ran a series of talks, Worlds Apart to enhance the community pride in what local residents have done overseas.
- In October the Library hosted a book launch with readings and book-signing by Henley's Maitrey Abandhu, which was attended by 50 people. There is another book launch planned for Shirley Davies' memoir of her Black Country childhood in February 2016.

- Previous years activities have included tours to places of interest such as Bath, London's Royal Albert Hall, the BBC studios, the Houses of Parliament and National Arboretum.
- The Library also supports other community groups and operated a Citizen's Advice Bureau outreach clinic bi-monthly during 2014, however, this service has been cut and replaced with a CAB initiative Reach Out and Help which operates one-off events.
- The Library has helped to launch a children's book re-cycling initiative, OwnBooks, which has distributed more than 20,000 books free of charge to schools in Henley, Wooten Wawen, Lapworth and the Library.
- The Library held a joint fund-raiser with The Shakespeare Hospice and there is another event planned. The Library also participates in the St John's Church Christmas Tree Festival.
- The Library also distributes medical alert information in co-operation with the Lions Club and has helped with booking theatre tickets for Henley's theatrical groups.
- The Library offers membership @ £5.00 per annum for individuals, £10.00 for companies and £12.00 for families. This enables members to join the Board of Directors and who vote on Library policy.

OPEN FORUM

- Robin Rumbles asked if the savings made by the JPC would be returned to the residents with a lower precept. The Chair responded by saying that the intention was to increase the financial support for the important organisations in the Town for everyone to benefit. Cllr Thirlwell suggested that the Town would benefit also from the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the near future.

Cllr Leech concluded the Annual Assembly for Henley Parish and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 20.35 p.m.

Signed

Date

Attendance List :

**Mike Perry
 Alan Conway
 Norman Kench
 Peter Neville
 Judith Lindley
 Margaret Twigg
 Brian Twigg
 Robin Rumbles
 Peter Crathorne
 Bob Morgan
 Stephen Thirlwell
 Stewert Hemus
 Heather Hemus
 Peter Cornford
 David Broadbent**

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