

# Town & Community Report to the Annual Town meeting 2020-2021

The Town & Community (T&C) committee has responsibility for all aspects affecting the town and its residents. There are ad hoc working groups and sub committees which report to it.

The sub committees are:

Events - Cllr. Sarah Miller (Chairman)

## Ad hoc working groups

- Bus group
- Signage Group
- Markets Working Group
- Waste Working Group
- Henley in Bloom

## The committee has responsibility for:

- Police Liaison
- Street Cleaning, rubbish bins, retail & business waste monitoring
- Resident Parking + Permits
- Street Furniture
- Tourism, Tourist Info Centre & Council Services
- Twinning
- Markets
- Festivals + Events
- CCTV
- Shopwatch

The committee makes representation to Full Council regarding policy on strategic matters relating to above.

## Achievements

### Northfield End York Paving – This was completed early 2021

After the status of the road and pavement in front on 90-102 Bell St was resolved as highway a few years ago OCC laid out the 5 residents parking slots in a way that was safe in keeping with the area. More recently ownership of the triangle was acquired by HTC at no cost. After many years the area could now be restored to be made attractive in a way consistent with this heritage area in one of the oldest parts of town.

The T&C team led by Helen Barnett, together with the Karl and Kyle and the parks team worked with OCC to carry out this work, funded by HTC with the £10k set aside. The Northfield End residents group led by Helen Gaynor worked in partnership with HTC. The pavement was restored to York paving replacing the gravel and the wooden sleepers were replaced, making the area safer for pedestrians. The green triangle has been improved and enhanced with plants. This was an excellent multi agency project and the end result is a fitting finish to the attractive part of the town.

### Street cleaning

A new monthly cleaning regime started in January 2021 which will concentrate on specific areas within the Town and include chewing gum clearance.

### Recruitment 2020/2021

We have employed a Communications Manager who will manage how the Council communicates with its residents and other stakeholders. The Communications Mgr will be responsible for working on the new HTC website, maintaining the image and brand of Henley Town Council; promote Council services and projects, manage the Council's media presence and manage the information centre.

## Events

During lockdown we cancelled most events. We did however organise a very successful Remembrance Day which we live streamed. We will continue to organise events in the town including the Annual Town Meeting, Mayor Making, Town Medal, Remembrance Day, Health and Wellbeing Festival.

### Christmas Festival

Despite the loss of the Living Advent Calendar and Christmas Festival, we set up a digital advent calendar for retailers, which proved to be very popular. 24 venues 'Windows' decorated for Christmas with something going on inside, an offer or gift.

There was music (Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 3<sup>rd</sup> December to Christmas Eve)

We also created an Elf Trail - Find the eight Elves hidden in the shop windows around the town, when you have found all eight re-arrange the letters that you find to spell a festive word to win one of a selection of prizes from Mr Simms sweet Shop.

There was late night shopping on Thursday in December and the market stayed open a little longer for those wishing to buy late presents.

We also purchased additional larger Christmas lights for the Town which looked fabulous.

## Progress

### Waste

A new Waste Working Group was created to work on ways to reduce waste and litter in the Town.

Under Henley Housekeeping we are looking at replacement or refurbished bins and general improvements to the town centre to improve the aesthetics and cleanliness for residents and visitors.

*Thank you to all the shop keepers who continue to contribute by keeping the shop fronts and pavements clean.*

Waste Reduction Solar Bins are being trialled mid year.

### Street Signage

We are investigating potential locations for new signage in the Town.

### Trees

Two trees in planters are to be placed in the Town kindly paid for by the Anthony Lane Foundation (for the first 2 years)

### Markets

We are still hoping to add new markets, Antique, Vintage, and/or Flower markets as well as organising our own markets to have better control on the quality and variety of goods on sale. Importantly we are looking to have markets which compliment the shops in the town rather than compete with them.

During lockdown a new one- way system was put in place to navigate the market and face coverings encouraged. *SODC heralded our markets the best in South Oxfordshire for Covid measures*

### Town Ranger

During lockdown a Town Ranger was deployed to assist with the implementation of the new measures in our retail spaces.

### Parking Permits

During Lockdown, even though the Town Hall was closed, staff hand delivered parking permits to residents.

### Phillimore Fountain Restoration

Meetings have taken place (via Zoom) with the Phillimore family to discuss ways we can restore the Phillimore Fountain, outside St Mary's Church. We have received quotes and look forward to further conversations with the Family at a later date.

### **Town Tenants**

Continue to work with landlords and local agents to keep the vacancy rate for empty shops below the national average. Working with retailers & hospitality outlets to ensure minimum disruption to the towns businesses and residents.

### **Repair Cafe**

Due to Covid we aim to launch Henley Repair Café in 2022. The Repair Cafe is a one stop shop in which people **repair** household electrical and mechanical devices, computers, bicycles, clothing, etc. ... **Repair cafés** are held at a fixed location where tools are available and where they can **fix** their broken goods with the help of volunteers

### **Single Use Plastic**

HTC have abolished plastic water bottles from all meetings and replaced with branded HTC glass bottles and plumbed in water.

### **A Boards + On-street Poster Advertising**

New Policies have been written and protocols revised. Anyone found offending will now be pursued.

### **Refill**

Encouraging refill of water containers. Cafes, restaurants in the town participate in offering free water refills.

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This last year has been difficult for all – many of us have never encountered anything like this before. We saw shops, restaurants, pubs all closing. Office workers were sent home, some furloughed, some not. Covid touched us all, and scared us.

But we all worked together. Henley residents pulled together, helping one another, making sure the elderly were looked after, the sick were looked after. Groups were formed to help distribute food, to shop for those isolating. We stuck together and we helped each other. We are a tight community.

HTC also had to shut shop. Meetings were held over Zoom, Council officers and staff were all home based, many furloughed. It's been difficult for everybody.

I would just like to say a big thank you to all the residents, the helpers, the volunteers, the mutual aiders, and of course our wonderful NHS.

To all members of the committee, sub committees and working groups for your significant contribution throughout the year.

And to my Vice Chair Cllr. Paula Isaac, Sheridan Jacklin-Edward - Town Clerk, Helen Barnett - Town & Community Manager, Nicci Taylor – Market Manager and Naomi Hutchinson, Communications Manager for your continued support (and patience) during this last year.

Cllr. Sarah Miller  
Chair Town & Community.