



**MINUTES OF THE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 01st DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.00PM
VIA ZOOM WEBINAR**

PRESENT:

Cllr G Fage – Chairman
Cllr M Knight – Vice Chairman
Cllr D Albone
Cllr I Bond
Cllr M North
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr M Russell
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr J Woodhead

Mr Peter Tarrant, BTC Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Mr Philip Truppin, BTC Assistant Town Clerk
Mr Simon Newton, BTC Place Shaping Manager
Mrs Sian van der Merwe, BTC Meeting Administrator

Members of Public – 6, including Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr M Foster and Cllr F Foster

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None.

(b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no questions from Members of the Public.

4. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

5. **MINUTES OF MEETING**

Members received and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Town Centre Management Meeting held on **Tuesday 6th October 2020** via Zoom Webinar.

6. **MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on **Tuesday 6th October 2020**.

Item 5: Taxi Rank: Cllr Strachan requested an update on the taxi rank. Cllr Fage advised that discussions on the transportation interchange are ongoing with Central Bedfordshire Council, with potential re-drawings of the plans. Once these are finalised then a discussion can take place about bus standing points and therefore the possible location of a taxi rank.

7. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Town Centre Events**

Members were provided with a list of suggested Town Centre events for 2021.

Cllr North asked for further information on Streetfood Heroes. These events have been in place since 2019 with food stalls and music - the Place Shaping Manager advised Members a block booking for the first Friday of every month is in place, which ties in with bank holidays in 2021.

Members felt a Working Group for event planning to support larger events would be useful and this should include traders in the town and public voluntary organisations. Members put forward suggestions for open air theatre, live music events and asking Shuttleworth if they would be interested in exhibiting as part of any events, where appropriate.

It was **RESOLVED** to form a Working Group to review the events list and investigate details around suggested events.

Cllrs Woodhead, Pullinger, Albone, Knight, North, Thomas and Fage volunteered to join the working group.

8. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Christmas Offering**

(i) **Scheduled events**

BTC's Place Shaping Manager confirmed a poster has been published on Facebook with dates and times of the light show and engagement events such as Santa's Grotto on Market Square (as part of the Market), Christmas stars, Christmas Markets with Charity Stalls and the children's competition. The events will be advertised across a number of local social media groups and Members requested timely reminders posted to Social

Media to ensure maximum visibility of these events within Biggleswade and surrounding villages.

The Santa's Grotto is being printed and two dates have been offered to the public for Grotto visits. This will be a long-lasting investment in the town's future festive events calendar.

Cllr Knight was contacted by a member of the public as to whether the road will be closed during the planned Christmas events and the Place Shaping Manager confirmed it will be closed between 17:00 and 20:00 Friday and Saturday evenings from 4th December to 19th December, and Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th December.

(ii) Live Music:

The Place Shaping Manager updated Members on the musician bookings for 5th and 12th December and has spoken with BATS about carol singing on 19th December in period costume.

Members NOTED the contents of the report.

b. **Parking Orders**

The Assistant Clerk thanked Members for their support in resolving this matter. The consultation period will end on 1 January 2020 and signage on the change of times will be published by way of notices placed in the Town Centre on Friday 4 December 2020, allowing for sealing in January 2021.

Cllr Knight felt the current signage needs to make it easier for people to understand, be less confusing and more easily accessible. Cllr Fage asked for the draft art proofs for the permanent signage to be submitted to the Committee before sign-off – this must be well in advance of the new parking orders being implemented.

Officers were asked to ensure visibility of this consultation via social media and the website. Any feedback from members of the Public will need to be considered by the Town Council once the consultation period has ended and before the order is sealed.

It was **RESOLVED** to continue with suspended parking orders until 31st January 2021.

Cllr Pullinger requested the Clerk arrange for the current temporary signage be updated as a matter of urgency to notify the public of the changes to be implemented in February.

c. **Market Working Group**

The Place Shaping Manager advised this Working Group had met mid-November following a presentation to Members of what the market strategy should be. Once the lockdown has been lifted, the Working Group will undertake visits to other markets to establish best practice.

Members requested that Place Shaping Manager's Market Strategy Report be distributed to all members of the Council, rather than just to the Working Group.

Cllr Knight felt it is important to look beyond the introduction of market and review and measure the market objectively by having key performance indicators such as footfall, tracking the number of stalls and understanding how the performance improves.

The Market Working Group will meet monthly to measure progress and ensure momentum.

d. **A-Boards**

This policy went live on 2 November 2020 and during the second lockdown a number of traders were closed. 25 applications have been received but there are some businesses that haven't applied yet. The Place Shaping Manager will follow up with those businesses who have applied to ratify applications and agree where the boards will be sited in line with Highways Act. To date, 1 A-Board has been removed, the owner has been contacted and they will be collecting this.

Members felt discussion should be had around what actions should be taken where licence applications have not been submitted.

Members asked for this to be added to the next Town Centre Management Committee meeting.

e. **Street Furniture**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members on this item. The town has 36 benches to refurbish and quotations have been received. The successful quotation from a specialist bench provider is £20k and will be covered by S106 funds.

The Public Realm Manager will be meeting with the service provider during the week and the plan is for 9 benches to be removed each time to leave some benches in place for public use.

It was **RESOLVED** that the town benches are refurbished in black and gold colours.

f. **Public Conveniences**

The Place Shaping Manager updated Members on the proposal for updating the public conveniences. Specifications have been drawn up and will be sent to contractors for quotes. Once the quotes are received, they will be submitted to Council for decision.

The Place Shaping Manager has been liaising with Central Bedfordshire Council's Surveyor on a complaint made by a member of the public of a low frequency buzzing noise in the public conveniences. This was subsequently identified as an aged extractor fan and a quote has been obtained for installing a new one, with discussions between the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council as to financial responsibility for those costs.

This item is deferred to the next Town Centre Management meeting.

g. **CCTV**

Cllr Fage updated Members on the Crime Working Group. The Working Group will meet soon to discuss a number of factors that need ongoing investigating including examining current CCTV cameras and coverage areas within the town; suggestions for new coverage areas; suggestions for walkie talkies connected to CCTV and control room.

There is a dependency on staff input on all of the above prior to the Working Group meeting.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Cllr Ramsay asked whether consideration could be given to coin-accessible toilets rather than the current offering which is subject to vandalism. These could potentially be more hygienic and user-friendly.

Cllr Ramsay also asked for consideration to be given to having live and local performers on the market square to generate footfall onto the square and also suggested schools would welcome opportunities for variety shows.

9. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

(10a. None)

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council resolve to **exclude** the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.