



MINUTES OF THE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 19 FEBRUARY 2019 AT 7.00PM
AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

PRESENT:

Cllr M Russell - Chairman
Cllr D Albone
Cllr I Bond
Cllr B Briars
Cllr G Fage
Cllr M North
Cllr S Patel
Cllr H Ramsay
Cllr P Sheldon
Cllr Strachan

Mr R McGregor, Town Clerk
Mr M Thorn, Deputy Town Clerk
Mr S Newton, Town Centre Operations Manager
Mrs J Durn, Meeting Administrator

Members of Public – 8 - including Cllr S Watkins, Cllr L Fage, Dr H Whitaker, Ms R Harris.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr F Foster, Cllr M Foster

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Item 7c – Cllr P Sheldon
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Item 7f - Cllr G Fage, Item 7c) Cllr S Patel.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

- Item 5c: Ms Rebecca Harris, Tattoo Studio, Hitchin Street is concerned about the proposed A Board charges. What possible positive outcome will this achieve, particularly for the small business that are struggling to survive and are suffering from lack of footfall. Would the revenue be used on improving small business facilities. An open discussion with small business on how the town could be improved would be welcome.

The Chairman thanked Ms Harris for her comments which will be covered in the Agenda item.

4. **INVITED SPEAKER**

Ms Sarah Jewell – Best Bar None

Ms Jewell gave an overview of the “Best Bar None” scheme started by the Home Office in partnership with the drinks industry, aiming primarily at promoting responsible management and operation of alcohol licensed premises. It is primarily concerned with customer and community safety.

Cllr Ian Delgarno at CBC is keen to expand this scheme through Central Bedfordshire, and Biggleswade and Sandy have been identified as having a strong Pub Watch (an organisation that helps with Best Bar None promotion).

Support from BTC by way of hosting the Best Bar None Awards event for Biggleswade and Sandy would be welcome. Simon Newton, the Town Centre Manager, will also receive the appropriate training to allow him to carry out Best Bar None assessments in Biggleswade venues and will also represent Biggleswade at Group quarterly meetings.

Full information on the scheme can be found on:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/community.safety/best-bar-none/overview.aspx

The Chairman thanked Ms Jewell for presenting this very interesting information.

5. **MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received and approved the Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on 6 November 2018 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

6. **MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on 06 November 2018.

- a. Item 7a) Street Lighting: Cllr Russell asked for an update.

This item is being covered at the next Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting. The Town Clerk will then provide Members with an update of the situation.

Cllr Watkins understood that the programme of work will commence on 25 February. This will be confirmed at the BJC.

7. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Letter from Property Owner – Biggleswade Market Square**

Members considered correspondence and plans from the owner of a property on Market Square regarding vehicular access during market days.

It was pointed out that BTC raised objection to this development, specifically on the grounds of lack of parking and access, when the plans were first presented to Council. However, the objection was overruled by CBC and permission was granted.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk inform the owner that it is not possible to support this request.

b. Future High Street Fund

Members considered a report produced by the Government announcing a fund to support investment in High Streets and Town Centres.

It was **RESOLVED** to register interest with Central Bedfordshire Council for round two of the Future High Street Fund and to work up a bid.

c. A Boards, Tables and Chairs

Having declared pecuniary interest, Cllr Patel and Cllr Sheldon left the Chamber whilst this item was discussed)

Members considered a revised policy. It was **RESOLVED** to defer this item to allow consultation with local businesses and the Chamber of Trade and for a Working Group to bring forward recommendations.

d. Grimsey Visit 6 February

Bill Grimsey and his team visited at the request of the Neighbourhood Planning Group, and his report provides objectives, ideas and observations which will assist in the production of the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan, particularly based around the town centre.

Members considered feedback and it was **RESOLVED** to request Councillors to submit suggestions for town centre improvements and events, and to consult with traders and members of the public through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

e. National Association of British Markets

Members considered a request for the Town Council to become a member of NABMA.

It was **RESOLVED** to join this NABMA at a cost of £318.00.

f. Car Park Data from 01/08/18 – 31/01/19

Members considered the latest car park data. We are awaiting a quarterly report from CBC which will give more detailed information on fines, weekend parking comparisons, etc.

Once in receipt of this information it was **RESOLVED** to provide further analysis to show variations or trends in use for different days of the week and to assess the number of permits in use.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Biggleswade Railway Station Car Park – Proposed Works - Update

Work is due to start on 8 March to 24 March. The car park will be completely redesigned and will re-open on 25 March with an extra 55/56 spaces. BTC have agreed to suspend parking orders during that time, and will inform permit holders of these arrangements. Network Rail will advise commuters of alternative commuter parking in Sandy and St Neots.

9. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Dr Hayley Whitaker: Consider providing a whole day parking permit.
55 extra spaces is a huge step – but concerned that this is just a sticking plaster.
There will be a lot more commuters with the new houses being built.
When is the parking review
When will the charges recommended by this review take effect
What has happened to the suggestion of decking the station car park

We need to think about the future and urge Town Council to look at long term parking strategy.
On the plan of the town centre can you think outside the box and ask people what they would like to see in the town centre.

Mike Thorn: We have to go to formal consultation
We are trying to get the information together to make an informed decision. The suggestion of decking has been put to Network Rail.

Town Council is looking for possible sites for car parking. We would welcome any ideas from rail users.

Cllr Russell: We sympathise with commuters and are looking at transport links that would allow commuters to get into town without a car.

10. 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.

There were no Exempt Items

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.