

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015 AT 10.00am**  
**PRIORY HOUSE, MONKS WALK, CHICKSANDS**  
**IN ROOM 14**

**Present:**

Cllr M Jones, Chairman	Deputy Leader CBC
Cllr Mrs J Lawrence	Cllr CBC
Cllr D Lawrence	Cllr CBC
Mr P Mason	Highways, CBC
Mr M Williams	Principal Traffic Manager, CBC
Mr P Salmon	
Mr P Fraser	CBC
Ms J Randall	Regeneration Team, CBC
Mr M Thomas	Chamber of Trade
Cllr Mrs M Russell	Cllr BTC
Cllr Mrs H Ramsay	Cllr BTC
Cllr I Bond	Cllr BTC
Cllr M Foster	Cllr BTC
Cllr D Albone	Cllr BTC
Mr R McGregor	Town Clerk, BTC
Mr M Thorn	Deputy Town Clerk, BTC
Michaella Beckwith	Minute Taker, BTC
6 Members of Public (MOP)	

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr T Woodward and Cllr B Briars.

**2. MEMBERS INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest.

**3. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

The issue of shared space on Maunder Avenue was requested to be considered on the next agenda.

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members amended the minutes of the Extraordinary BJC held on 27 July 2015.

Item 8 was corrected to read:

“It was felt that this timing will cause considerable damage to the Town from before Christmas to Easter 2016.”

**5. MATTERS ARISING**

It was brought to attention that some shops had not received letters regarding the bridge works and that no one had been to see the shop owners in person as was agreed. This has resulted in 58a High Street being cut off.

Mr Williams apologised for this issue and stated that we will be speaking to our contractor to improve communications. This will include a representative from the Council and a communications officer from Amey.

It was asked if the owner of the land on which the pedestrian diversion is currently relying on, had given permission for this. To which Mr Williams needed to check.

Pictures were also shown of the rear car park which had rubble left. It was highlighted that this wasn't suitable for the shops customers to use. Thus, it was suggested that CBC should pay the rent for a shop elsewhere on the high street whilst the works take place.

Mr Williams said that he would look into the possibility of relocating the Bridal Specialist currently at 58a High Street, Biggleswade and that Mr Williams would meet with the tenant as indicated in his email dated 23rd October.

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It was brought to attention, that some shops had not received letters regarding the bridge works and that no one had been to see the shop owners in person as was agreed. This has resulted in a shop owner's shop being cut off.

Mr Williams apologised for this issue. A diversion has been set up and sign posted.

It was asked if the land owner, of the land on which the diversion is planned across, had given permission for this. To which the answer was, not currently.

Pictures were also shown of the diversion route which had rubble on. It was highlighted that this wasn't suitable for the shops customers to use. Thus, it was suggested that CBC are to pay the rent for a shop elsewhere on the high street whilst the works take place.

Mr Williams said that he would look into the possibility of moving boarding to allow usual access to the shop and to look into the suggestion made.

## **6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no announcements or communications.

## **7. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME**

Jodie Randall – member of the regeneration team spoke about the Market Towns Programme. She explained that there is £4 million of capital funding available to be used, with the aim to rejuvenate market towns which had been affected by development. CBC are expecting bids for £25,000 - £1million to be submitted and the town would need to seek 50% of match funding. CBC would also be looking to seek a high return on their investment although this return will be measured in different ways depending on the bid put in. However, a return of £1.50 - £2 for every £1 put in is to be expected. The bids must show good community engagement and can include infrastructure, shop frontage, empty shops etc.

This programme is to be launched on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015, when specification packs will be sent out. Applications should be submitted before 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and announcements of successful applications will be made around March 2016. All funding must be spent before February 2018.

The question of whether these funds could be used to combat against the effect of the bridgeworks was raised. However, the funds would not be released until all bids had been considered around March time, which is too late.

There was a concern that the deadlines to submit a bid were tight. But it was explained that some of the work could be done after approval for the bid was given.

A request for an extraordinary meeting, with Jody Rendell, to discuss proposals and the application was raised.

## **8. BRIDGE CLOSURE UPDATE**

Mr M Williams gave an update on the bridge closure. He explained that there would be a mid-December closure which was to be through to mid-April. A large part of the work will be done over Christmas as they have been given permission from Network Rail to use the railway track for 55 hours. There will be 2 way traffic lights over the bridge in the week running up to the 13<sup>th</sup> December. Landmark dates are to be distributed this week.

Mr P Mason hoped that the Eastern Relief Road will open on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015. At this time the one way route for heavy vehicles will be put in place.

The lack of communication between CBC and shop owners/ residents was raised. It was explained that this may be due to the contractor who went round, not knowing the area. Although Mr M Williams said he would look at going around with contractors.

It was suggested that the barriers could be moved to make it look as though the area was pedestrianised to combat the lack of consumers going to the area. However, concerns over health and safety and delivery drivers in the area was raised.

It was asked if the contractors could clear their materials to a smaller area whilst not working allowing less of an impact. Although, this may not be possible due to health and safety.

Back Street will be used as an alternative route during the bridge closure. During this time it will be one way and parking bays will be moved to accommodate this. CBC have already tested and seen that busses can use this route. The change will be implemented a few days before the closure at which time it will be clearly sign posted.

Mr M Williams went on to talk about suggestions which had been raised.

- Extended parking times - which he confirmed would be extended to 3 hours on Shortmead Street, Station Road and Hitchin Street.
- Closure of part of the exit road along bus station on Saturdays - which could not be done at the time due to the bus companies being against it.
- Park and Ride system - which funding for will not be released until the retail park is finished in April. However, the number 80 bus will now run to the retail park.

The remaining suggestions which were not discussed will be circulated around via email.

## **9. PARKING**

Mr P Salmon explained that the development of the commuter resident parking consultation had a vast amount of replies, all of which have been looked at. A full document has been drawn up as a result. A 28 day statutory consultation period will apply once it has been published. It will then go to a traffic order meeting to discuss any objections. The plan can then be implemented. However, this will not conflict with the bridge works. CBC have up to 2 years to implement the plan. Once implemented it can then be reviewed and altered.

The parking will be enforced and the parking enforcement team is to double in numbers. Although, prior to this residents will be notified and it will be made sure that they understand the new parking restrictions.

## **10. TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE**

Network Rail are not prepared to sell or rent the land needed for the transport interchange. However, CBC are looking at a possible on street transport interchange. Detail will go to the next Joint Committee meeting.

## **11. HITCHIN STREET**

Mr P Mason said that there may be a possible reversal of Hitchin Street and will know in the near future. This means there is no point in repairing the paving yet. Until it is decided, Hitchin Street will be kept safe.

It was requested that the Joint Committee should meet more often. Cllr M Jones said that he will work with officers and arrange a meeting around December time as long as there was information to feed back.

## **8. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

MOP 1 – owns the shop which is being boarded off due to the bridge works. She felt that there had been a lack of care which has had a big impact on her business.

Mr M Williams replied that he will arrange a meeting with her this week and will also look into the suggestions made earlier. He once again apologised for what had happened.

Cllr M Jones also echoed the apology on behalf of CBC.

MOP 2 – felt that the closure of the exit road by the bus station on Saturdays would be beneficial as would provide loading bays.

Cllr M Williams said that there was no reason why it couldn't be looked at in the future. However, to close the road to aid the town during the bridge closure would not be viable.

Cllr M Jones explained that in order to discuss it at the Joint Committee meeting, Biggleswade Town Council would have to give positive confirmation that this is what they wish to be implemented.

MOP 3 – asked who is in charge of the contractors carrying out the bridge works.

The reply was that CBC are in charge of the contractors and had to obtain permission from Network Rail to work over their railway tracks.