



**MINUTES OF THE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 7.00PM
AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD,
BIGGLESWADE**

PRESENT:

Cllr M Foster (Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr I Bond
Cllr B Briars
Cllr G Fage
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M North
Cllr P Sheldon
Cllr D Strachan

Mr M Thorn, Deputy Town Clerk
Mr S Newton, Town Centre Operations Manager
Miss Helen Calvert, Meeting Administrator

Members of Public – 6, including Mr Bacon, Mr Corey Albone, Cllr L Fage, Dr Hayley Whitaker

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr M Russell

ABSENT

Cllr S Patel

Members welcomed Simon Newton to the meeting and into his new role as Town Centre Operations Manager for Biggleswade.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

- (a)** Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Item 7b – Cllr Sheldon
- (b)** Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Item 6a & 6b Cllr G Fage

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.

Dr Hayley Whitaker presented data of Biggleswade commuters as promised at the Council Meeting on 23rd October 2018. The data displayed some of the following information:

- 31.4% of commuters parking at Biggleswade Station live more than two miles away from Biggleswade Station. The data showed that the further away from Biggleswade Station the more likely you are to drive.
- 79% of people using Biggleswade Station use the station as it is the closest one to where they live.
- 19.4% of people using Biggleswade Station spend money in Biggleswade everyday as a result.

The data has been sent to Biggleswade Town Council's Town Clerk and Alistair Burt.

Dr Whitaker questioned the data sent by Biggleswade Town Clerk relating to the number of transactions as a vast majority of these are one-hour tickets and so do not give an accurate representation of the occupancy of BTC car parks.

Dr Whitaker informed members of the following:

- Concerns were also raised by several commuters, the majority of those female, on the safety of now having to walk further in the dark to their cars as a direct result of being unable to park at Biggleswade Station.
- A number of commuters commented that they would happily travel via public transport to Biggleswade Station if there was a reliable bus service. This would alleviate the number of cars that wish to park at Biggleswade Station.
- Cycling to Biggleswade Station is also an issue as there are very few spaces to leave bikes outside the station.
- As a result of being unable to park at Biggleswade Station commuters are now parking on residential streets within Biggleswade. This is causing a problem for a number of Biggleswade residents who are now leaving traffic cones outside of their driveways.

Dr Whitaker proposed to members that the Car Parking Regulations should be relaxed to allow commuters to park in BTC car parks.

Corey Albone made the following points in relation to the Car Parking Regulations:

- 180 people have signed a petition to change the Biggleswade Car Parking Order
- 75% of spaces in BTC car parks are unoccupied as a result of the Car Parking Order.
- Residential streets have been affected as commuters are now using these streets to park their vehicles.
- 560 people park at Biggleswade Station per day.

Corey Albone proposed the following action to be taken:

- A temporary relaxation of rules in BTC car parks.
- Those with a permit can pay daily if they struggle financially to pay the permit charge in a lump sum.
- That we collaborate to put together an alternative plan for parking in Biggleswade. Corey Albone was happy to work with Councillors and BTC staff on putting together an alternative arrangement.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- a. Members reviewed the Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on 21 August 2018 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Item 3: it was noted that the draft minutes need to be corrected as there were no questions from members of the public.

The Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on 21 August 2018 were **APPROVED** with the alterations to Item 3.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on 21 August 2018.

Members asked for an update on Item 7b, Deliveries to Wetherspoons. There was no further update to report.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Off Street Parking - Update**

Members considered an interim progress report on car park management.

It was noted that the statistics presented contained limited information and hopefully more information will become available as data accumulates in time.

Members were grateful for the work of Dr Whitaker in presenting data of Biggleswade Station commuters.

Members of the public were reminded that the necessary data had been compiled and reviewed by BTC ahead of putting into place the current Car Parking Order. The charges in BTC car parks aids in covering the cost of the lease that BTC pay to continue management. The regulations have made it possible for residents of Biggleswade and those visiting Biggleswade to shop to park in our BTC car parks where they previously were unable/found it difficult to do so.

It was suggested that we put together a Working Group to review the data and make recommendations.

Members raised the following points for future consideration:

- Concerns were raised on changing the Car Parking Regulations which may make our car parks less accessible for shoppers as we approach a busy retail period.
- Some businesses within Biggleswade have seen a reduction in turnover since the Car Parking regulations came into force on 1st August 2018.
- It was deemed beneficial to look into providing a more reliable bus service for commuters.
- It was agreed that the scheme is working in terms of allowing shoppers to park in the Biggleswade Town Centre but suggested that the free hour could be reviewed. Input was welcomed from Simon Newton, Town Centre Operations Manager.
- It was felt that Network Rail could help to alleviate the issue by building a two-storey car park for commuters.
- It was requested that a Working Group should be put together as a matter of urgency.

It was **RESOLVED** to hold a Working Group to review the information currently available. The following members wished to attend the Working Group: Cllr M Foster, Cllr D Albone, Cllr I Bond, Cllr B Briars, Cllr G Fage, Cllr F Foster, Cllr M North, Cllr P Sheldon. It is intended for a further meeting of the working group once 6 months data has been collected and to report back to Town Centre Management Committee with any recommendations.

b. Commuter Parking

Members considered correspondence from Alistair Burt MP and a rail user regarding commuter parking.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that we reply to Alistair Burt, thanking him for his letter and explaining that a review of car parks will be carried out after 6 months of operation. Also, that alternative options continue to be explored however the rail operators could do more to support commuters. Also, to note that any changes to usage of Rose Lane car park would only be a short-term solution due to the length of the current lease.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to reply to correspondence from the Potton resident, noting the concerns and advising that car park usage would be reviewed after 6 months operation.

c. White Hart Car Park

Members considered a request from Greene King to change the name of the White Hart Car Park. It was **RESOLVED** to respond to Greene King that the car park has been known as the White Hart Car Park for many years and it is not intended to change the name or the signage.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Street Lighting Update

Members **NOTED** that work is still underway.

b. A Boards

Members **NOTED** the update.

c. Market Layout and Management

Members **NOTED** the update.

8. 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 Whitaker wished for conversations regarding commuter parking to not be adversely against commuters. It was noted that Dr Whitaker had been in contact with Adam Turney at Central Bedfordshire Council who explained that CBC would welcome looking into additional car parking in Biggleswade if BTC could provide evidence of there not being enough spaces in BTC car parks. The current Car Parking Regulations mean that BTC Car Parks are underutilised.

EMR – the Deputy Town Clerk informed members that Town Clerk had made contact but there has yet to be a response.

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.

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.