

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OFF STREET CAR PARKING COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 FEBRUARY
2013 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON
ROAD, BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs M Russell (Chair), Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr Ms S Mulchrone, Cllr R Skinner, Cllr G Wilson
Cllr D Albone, Cllr S Watkins
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
David Bowie – Head of Service – Traffic Management, CBC
Members of the public - 31

Also present: Cllr I Bond, Cllr M North, Cllr B Briars and Cllr T Woodward

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs W Smith

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – there were no Disclosable Pecuniary interests declared.
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – there were no Non-Pecuniary interests declared.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A member of the public, MOP 1, spoke in support of the reversal of traffic in Hitchin Street. He said that people are driving away from the town at the moment; we need people to have more time to see the shops. The reversal would take pressure of St Andrews Street/High Street roundabout and would be a more direct route.

A member of the public, MOP 2, asked if David Bowie would be staying for questions.

David Bowies said that he would stay for questions.

A member of the public, MOP 3 said that residents are not taken into consideration with the reversal of Hitchin Street; the road would get busier and more dangerous.

Martin Thomas, Chamber of Trade, spoke in support of the reversal of Hitchin Street. He said that before the 1990's Hitchin Street was very successful and should have been enhanced at the same time as the Market Square, but there was no money to do it.

For the Town to be commercially successful new retail is needed, the reversal of Hitchin Street is part of the Masterplan. There are 8 empty shops in Hitchin Street, which is one third. No-one knows its there. The shared areas will help. Perhaps there will be more parking later in Bonds Lane.

A member of the public, MOP 4, asked if Town Council had thought about multi-storey parking at the Station.

Cllr Mrs M Russell replied that it's the Finance that would be a problem.

Jamie Harris addressed the meeting regarding the Biggleswade Christmas Lights. He said that his family had put up the lights for the last 50 years, before last Christmas. In January 2012 all the lights were in working order, any cables that needed to be had been replaced.

He said that he had then been told that the lights were now on a 3 year contract only to rent them. He said that no-one had asked him or told him that the lights needed updating. He said that he was disappointed with the new display, and the lights that he had replaced were not used.

Martin Thomas said that he thanked everyone for their past involvement with the lights. The £12,000 needed to be raised each year gets more difficult each year, with restrictions imposed by the insurance company. He went on to thank Town Council and Councillors for their support as the Chamber of Trade were no longer able to fund lights with repairs etc.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received and approved the minutes of the Off Street Car Parking meeting held on 6 November 2012.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Off Street Car Parking meeting held on 6 November 2012 – none.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that ALDI has still not changed the signs in the car park.

6. INVITED SPEAKER

David Bowie - Head of Service - Traffic Management, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Cllr Mrs M Russell introduced David Bowie and explained that David has been working closely with the Town Council to look at parking in Biggleswade.

7. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. NEW INN WALKWAY

For members to consider ongoing problems with the New Inn walkway

Members **RECOMMENDED** that in light of the decision made at full Council on the Planning application for the New Inn, that no further discussions take place on this item.

b. STREET CLEANING

Members considered a report from Craig Siddle Service Manager- Operations Waste Services.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council review and ask for another report in 6 months time.

c. HITCHIN STREET

Members received an update on Hitchin Street improvement scheme & considered a petition from traders in Hitchin Street asking for the reversal of traffic in Hitchin Street.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council support in principle the reversal of traffic flow in Hitchin Street, subject to cost and other issues that need to be considered.

d. BIGGLESWADE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Members considered the Biggleswade Christmas lights.

A copy of comments from some Biggleswade residents was attached to the agenda

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council was approached by the Chamber of Trade who said that they could not fund the Christmas lights and they asked Council to take them on. It was slightly less cost to Town Council as insurance was already in place.

Town Council, as with all contracts, needed to obtain 3 quotes for the Christmas lights.

A visual inspection was carried out on the old lights and they were found to be uneconomical and needed rectifying, there were unfit for purpose in their present state.

Town Council chose Lamps & Tubes blindly, as when the quotes are presented to Council, the name of the company is blocked out. Sandy Town Council chose the same company.

LED lights use less electricity but are more expensive to buy.

Town Council have entered into a 3 year contract, and it would not be possible to do too much other than add to the lights if necessary. The Committee will meet with Lamps and Tubes soon to look at 2013/ 2014 Christmas lights.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that Town Council legally has to obtain 3 quotes. There were no lights in Hitchin Street as the roadwork's overran. The power points are ready for the lights in the future.

Cllr D Albone said that the committee came to the right decision it was all that could be done at the time; but we do need to consider festoons in future years.

Cllr G Wilson said he thought the lights were bland but the Christmas tree looked superb; it was a shock as the lights were entirely different.

Cllr T Woodward thanked the Committee for all their hard work, if they had not stepped in, there wouldn't have been any Christmas lights. It's not ideal, but something had to be done.

Cllr D Albone said that we need to start planning for this year and try and keep people informed in what direction we are going.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that OSCP Committee hold a meeting with Lamps & Tubes and take the results of this to the next OSCP meeting.

Items e and f where deferred to the next OSCP meeting

e. MARKETS

For members to consider the introduction of specialist markets for Biggleswade.

This item was **DEFERED** to the next meeting of the Off Street Car Park Committee.

f. CCTV PLAN

For members to consider the CCTV Plan 2013 – 2017

This item was **DEFERED** to the next meeting of the Off Street Car Park Committee.

g. REQUEST FOR PARKING

The Town Council has received a request from contractors who will be carrying out renovation works to 36 High St, Biggleswade, SG18 0JL. The Contractors would like to pay for the use of two dedicated parking spaces in the White Hart car park while the renovation works are being carried out.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council refuse this request; that the Contractors offload and are advised that they can park in Rose Lane car park free of charge.

h. Request from Henry Harris

Correspondence was received from Henry Harris requesting permission to hold a Fun Fair on the Market Square, to arrive after 6pm on Tuesday 18 June and remain there until Saturday 22 June (Carnival Day).

The Farmers Market is due to take place on Wednesday 19 June.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that permission be granted and that the Farmer's market be moved to Wednesday 12 June.

i. Commuter parking in Dells Lane, Mead End and Tennyson Avenue, Biggleswade

Correspondence was received from residents of the above area regarding commuters who do not wish to pay the fee to park at the railway station car park, parking on these roads.

The double yellow lines added at the junction of Dells Lane and Mead have resulted in cars parking on the opposite side of the road causing major obstructions to traffic flow in Dells Lane and Mead End.

Cars are left overnight and on occasions for a whole week, visitors and tradesmen attending residents have nowhere to park.

The residents are requesting restricted parking enforcement such as has been implemented in Saffron Road.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council support the residents' requests.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. ALDI CAR PARK

Members received an update on Aldi Car Park.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council has been working hard to get ALDI to remove the signs as the car park on the north side of the road should be for members of the public and not just ALDI shoppers. Town Council has also asked for the time allowed to be increased to 2 hours or 3 hours but ALDI has refused.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay confirmed that the car park to the north of Bonds Lane is behind Iceland.

9. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A member of the public, MOP 1, said that with regards to the Christmas lights, they found the Committees comments encouraging ; they thought moving the stage was a good idea; they also question how the Committee would gauge public opinion bearing in mind Cllr D Albone comments on keeping people informed.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that we do need to look at opinions across the board.

Martin Thomas said the Chamber of Trade has raised more money than previous and asked that people remain positive about the lights. The Chamber is happy to discuss where the stage is situated.

J. H said that the lights have never been a problem before and asked why the Committee had the lights inspected.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said it is standard practice that Council have all electrical appliances tested each year.

J.H asked for a breakdown of what problems there were with the lights.

Cllr Mrs M Russell read out the report that had been carried out by an independent qualified electrician. The report identified; unsatisfactory connections, breakdown of lamp seals 50 – 60% failures, water ingress to lamp holders, corrosion of holder pins, incorrect lamps fitted, lack of IP rated connection caps on cable ends, use of domestic household three pin plugs with incorrect fuses, and use of domestic house wiring.

The equipment was not mains tested due to the problems highlighted in the report.

J.H said that water retention in the lamp holders was not a problem.

Cllr T Woodward said that time constraints were an issue in making sure we had lights for 2012/ 2013 as dates to complete had to be adhered too.

S.G said that the Town Plan Steering Group were happy that the Town Council had taken over the Christmas lights and she felt that the lights were modern and tasteful.

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.