

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OFF STREET CAR PARKING COMMITTEE HELD ON
14 August 2012 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 S Watkins, Cllr D Albone.
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Louise Wilcox – Deputy Town Clerk

Also present Cllr B Briars, Martin Thomas, Chamber of Trade

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr Ms S Mulchrone, Cllr R Skinner, Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr G Wilson.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Minutes of the of street car park meeting held on the 15th May will be carried forward to the next meeting of the Off Street Car Park Committee.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Aldi Car Parks

Members considered a response from Central Bedfordshire Council on enforcing covenants to the Car park North of Bonds Lane.

The Committee suspended Standing Orders and invited Mr M Thomas C.O.T to give some background on the covenants relating to the car park.

Mr Thomas informed members that the covenants were placed on the original purchasers – Castle Keep, the developers of the land by - Mid Beds District Council. Central Bedfordshire Council, if minded to, could approach Castle Keep to ask them to ensure the covenants are enforced. Castle Keep would then be required to contact Aldi to ensure the covenants were enforced.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed that a letter is sent to Central Bedfordshire Council to ask that they take action to enforce the covenants and that the letter is followed up at the next meeting of the Biggleswade Joint Committee. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Mrs H Ramsey and put to the vote.

It was **RECCOMENDED** that a letter is sent to Central Bedfordshire Council and that the letter is followed up at the next Meeting of the Biggleswade Joint Committee.

b. Ask Restaurant – Waste Bin Storage

Following on from the O.S.C.P meeting of the 15th May 2012, a letter was sent to Ask as recommended by the Committee. No response to the letter has been received from Ask.

The variation to the Planning condition was dealt with by officers of the Old Mid Beds Council who no longer work at C.B.C, so they cannot comment on the discussions that took place.

Members were asked to consider any further action in relation to this matter.

Members were unhappy with the response from Central Bedfordshire Council in relation to the variation of the planning condition. Members felt that the variation had not been carried out legally.

Members were disappointed that no response had been received from Ask in relation to moving the bins from Town Council property.

Members **RECCOMENDED** a letter is sent to Central Bedfordshire Council stating that the variation to the planning condition has not gone through the correct legal process in that the Town Council was not consulted. Therefore the variation does not stand and enforcement on the original condition should take place.

Also that a letter is sent to Ask Restaurant giving formal notice that the bins need to be removed from Town Council property.

c. Asda Car Park

Following on from the O.S.C.P meeting of the 15th May 2012, a letter was sent to Asda as recommended by the Committee, no response received, a further letter has been sent no response received.

Members were asked to consider any further action in relation to this matter.

Members **RECCOMENDED** that a further letter is sent to Asda regarding increasing parking hours in Asda car park from a limit of two hours to three hours and making it clear that the Council will pay any legal fees should Asda agree to the increase.

d. Biggleswade Christmas Lights

Correspondence had been received from the Chamber of Trade identifying a deficit in the funding of the Christmas lights for 2011 – 2012.

Members were asked to consider covering the shortfall in funding for the Christmas lights in 2011 – 2012 and to consider how best to fund the Christmas lights in 2012 – 2013 and for future years.

Standing orders were suspended to allow Mr M Thomas of the Chamber of Trade to give an overview of the current position in relation to the Christmas lights.

Mr M Thomas informed the Committee that there was a deficit in the funding of the lights in 2010 – 2011 and that this deficit was met by the Chamber of Trade.

Mr M Thomas also highlighted that there was a deficit in funding of the 2011 – 2012 Christmas lights and asked that Council fund the deficit, as they had informally agreed at a meeting that they might consider this.

Mr M Thomas informed members that in 2011 they had asked that he try and obtain additional quotes for the installation of the Christmas lights and to that end he had obtained one other quote.

Mr M Thomas felt that the lights were old, heavy, required constant repair and no upgrades to the lighting scheme were carried out.

At a meeting held with a lighting company to discuss the lights and a quotation to install the lights, discussions revolved around whether the lighting company could provide Christmas lights under contract.

The lighting company suggested providing lights over a three year contract. The benefits would be that features could be made of the trees in the Market Square which would allow the lights to remain in the trees for the three year period. This would help reduce installation costs.

The lights would be modern installations although some of the existing could be incorporated. At the end of the three year contract, the lights would be replaced with a complete new scheme should a new contract be entered into.

Mr M Thomas further asked if the Committee would consider funding the Christmas lights in the future, with the Chamber of Trade continuing to organise and fund raise.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if the lighting display discussed would incorporate Hitchin Street.

Mr M Thomas said it would but felt that due to improvements to Hitchin Street this autumn, there may be a problem this year.

Mr M Thomas informed the Committee that he had asked Mr J Harris to quote for 2012 – 2013 Christmas lights installation.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked if Mr J Harris had been asked to quote on the same terms as the other company.

Mr Thomas informed members that Mr J Harris was unable to quote on the same terms as he was unable to foot the cost of new lights up front. The brief Mr Harris was given was the same as previous years.

Cllr Mrs Russell pointed out that the quote from the lighting company had only been received, today the 14th August, so had not been studied in detail. Cllr Mrs M Russell asked what the brief was on coverage of the lights.

Mr M Thomas assured members that the brief was to include all the usual areas, the Market Square and its approaches.

Cllr B Briars asked that if a number of the lights are going to remain in place throughout the year, would it not be possible to have a P.A system that could also remain in place throughout the year as the current system is inadequate and people have difficulty hearing.

Mr M Thomas said that he would try and look at the possibility of a permanent P.A. System.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Cllr Mrs Russell felt that the Committee had three decisions that they had to make.

1. To consider the deficit for the 2011 – 2012 lights.
2. To consider if the Council should take on the funding of the Christmas lights in the future, with the Chamber of Trade continuing to fund raise and organise.
3. To consider a contract for the hire of the Christmas lights and to include Mr J Harris in the quotation process on the same terms as other quotations.

Members were asked to consider funding the deficit for the Christmas lights for 2011 – 2012. Cllr D Albone proposed funding the deficit and the proposal was seconded by Cllr S Watkins and was put to the vote.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council fund the deficit for the 2011 – 2012 Christmas lights.

Members were asked to consider the Town Council taking formal responsibility for funding the Christmas lights in the future with the Chamber of Trade continuing to organise and fund raise, with any funds raised going into the Town Council budget.

It was **RECOMMENDED** the Town Council take formal responsibility for funding the Christmas lights in the future but request that the Chamber of Trade continue to organise and fund raise, with any funds going to the Town Council budget.

Members were asked to consider contact hiring of the Christmas lights.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that contract hiring of the Christmas lights should be investigated and three quotations should be obtained to go forward to the meeting of the Town Council in September 2012.

e. Biggleswade and Sandy Local Area Transport Plan

Central Bedfordshire Council were seeking to arrange a meeting to discuss a refresh of the Biggleswade and Sandy Local Area Transport Plan with Biggleswade and Sandy Town Councils.

C.B.C would like to keep it to a maximum of three attendees per Town Council to keep the numbers manageable.

The only date given was 28th August 2012. The timing was not clear but it was thought to be in the day. In any case, Council meets that day.

Members were asked to consider nominating 3 Councillors to attend the meeting.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cllr Mrs M Russell and Cllr Mrs H Ramsay attend and that an e mail is sent round other Councillors to find one other who would be in a position to attend.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Residents Letter

A copy of a letter to Mr D Bowie, CBC, regarding commuter parking in a local estate. was attached to agenda.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this be noted.

8. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A Member of the public was delighted to hear the positive discussions that had taken place on the Christmas lights.

9. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

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.