

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OFF STREET CAR PARKING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 4 JUNE 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 S Watkins, Cllr D Albone  
Cllr B Rix, Cllr I Bond (Vice Chair)  
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk  
Louise Wilcox – Deputy Town Clerk  
Sam Vernon – Biggleswade Chronicle  
Members of public – 11

Also present Cllr M North and Cllr B Briars

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllrs. T Woodward and R. Skinner

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no interests declared.

**3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

MOP 1, resident of Fairfield Estate, expressed concerns at people parking on road rather than driveways and suggested extending yellow lines from Birch Road to Rose Lane.

Cllr Mrs M Russell explained that a TRO has recently been approved for exactly that extension of yellow lines and clarified that illegal parking is a police matter and not a Council matter.

MOP 2 said that commuters are parking in Dells Lane at the London Road end.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that a TRO will also deal with this issue and explained Town Council's position in pushing CBC to address these concerns.

MOP 2 said that ALDI car park notices have still not changed.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council is working through a solicitor to address this issue.

**4 MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received and approved the minutes of the Off Street Car Parking meeting held on 30 April 2013.

**5 MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Off Street Car Parking meeting held on 30 April 2013 - none

**6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**a. Change of Title of Committee**

Members considered a change of title of the Off Street Car Parking Committee to Town Centre Management, with the Terms of Reference to remain the same.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the committee name be changed to: **Town Centre Management.**

**b. Review of Licence**

EMR has asked Town Council for a review of the rent on the temporary car park at the railway sidings in Biggleswade. E.M.R is proposing a 200% increase on the current rent.

Members considered the proposed increase.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council enter into negotiations with EMR on a more formal basis, and ask them to halve the proposed increase.

***Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed to suspend Standing Orders to allow Martin Thomas of the Chamber of Trade to update the meeting on the proposal for a new car park in the town.***

***Members agreed to suspend Standing Orders at 7.22pm.***

Mr Thomas outlined the background from the Masterplan, the overriding issue being parking. This is a long running issue going back to the 1970's and the Chamber of Trade believes that commercial tenants for the town centre have been put off by parking issues over many years.

The Chamber themselves have considered parking and how it can be maximised. Mr Thomas has discussed the matter with developers and major retailers.

LXB (the developers of the London Road retail park) acknowledged the problems in the town with parking and have offered £100,000 to help.

The town is short of nearly 200 parking spaces. The landowner of the derelict site in Bonds Lane has been approached about the possibility of a development to include parking. He has looked at the figures and possible developers and tenants. He has expressed an interest and has done some preliminary works and the drawings produced show over 200 spaces.

There have been discussions over tenancies, possible a superstore, and about using a token type system for running the car park. The Chamber has offered contacts for possible developers.

A multi-storey car park is expensive to construct and it will cost up to £100,000 to develop the plans to full planning application. The landowner is looking for support from Town Council and then in-principle approval from CBC before going further. There is to be a meeting with CBC planners to check that the principle will be acceptable.

Mr Thomas reiterated the need for good car parking within Biggleswade, especially with the footfall in the town centre declining and 17 empty shops. This car park would need to be chargeable parking. It could be operated by the Town Council and it could be profitable.

Cllr Mrs M Russell commented that the landowner had commissioned the initial work and the preliminary drawing for the car park to built, charging would be essential. It s an opportunity for the Council to take this on; set a reasonable charge and then direct any income to other parking facilities.

There are uncertainties over the Rose Lane and EMR car parks and difficulties with ALDI and ASDA parking, ALDI in particular. This scheme would be a godsend for the Town.

Cllr Mrs Russell asked Councillors for their views.

Cllr B Rix said that instinctively the scheme sounds very attractive and asked Mr Thomas about retailers support and that he had indicated support of Chamber members.

Mr Thomas advised Councillors to ignore the annotations of Café/Superstore on the drawings - these are purely indicative by the architect. This development could be a catalyst for the town and more likely to encourage investors to fill empty shops.

Cllr B Rix asked if there is confidence enough for a retailer to take on this large sized scheme that would not conflict with the Town.

Mr Thomas said that due to confidentiality his response is limited, but the possible tenant would be positive and would enhance the Town.

Cllr D Albone said that these are exciting proposals for the Town but queried the access on Bonds Lane as this would be problematic with current problems with deliveries.

Mr Thomas felt the access would not be a problem, but it would hinge on the reversal of the Hitchin Street.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council has already discussed the reversal of Hitchin Street and that it would be more sensible for the traffic to come up Hitchin Street into Bonds Lane.

CBC Traffic Management Committee has deferred discussing the reversal of Hitchin Street. Cllr Mrs Russell expressed the real need for Hitchin Street reversal to proceed now, not to wait for the development of the car park.

Mrs H Ramsay referred to the agenda item saying that the concept is excellent, more parking, and more shops with minimal impact on residents. There are opportunities for parking charges, but with a combination of some free parking with chargeable long stay parking. Cllr Ramsay expressed support for Town Council managing the car park.

Cllr B Rix asked about the next steps and the role of the Town Council.

Mr Thomas clarified that there is no financial interest to the Chamber of Trade or himself.

The next step is for the Joint Committee and CBC Councillors to approve the scheme in principle. Following this, a detailed planning application will be prepared.

Cllr Mrs Russell asked for this is to be included on the next Joint Committee agenda.

***Cllr Mrs M Russell reinstated Standing Orders at 8.06pm***

**c. New Car Park**

Members considered the concept of a new car park for Biggleswade, and whether the Town Council is interested in managing such a facility.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council support the proposal and register an interest in managing the proposed car park.

**d. Charges for 'A' boards and Tables**

At the Off Street Car Park Committee, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Members were asked to consider delegated powers to issue licences for the placing of tables, chairs and 'A' boards within the parish boundary of Biggleswade.

Members recommended that Town Council proceed with entering into the Delegated Agreement with CBC.

Council approved the recommendation at the Annual Statutory meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

Members were now asked to consider the scale of charges for 'A' boards, tables and chairs.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the following charges are implemented for applications for licences

£50 per 'A' board  
£100 for up to 10 tables  
£200 for over 10 tables

Commencing from 1 January 2014

There was no recommendation for an annual fee.

e. **Request to display Berkeley Cars after the Ian Mantle Memorial Run – 20 July 2013**

Correspondence has been received requesting permission to use the Market Square on the afternoon of 20 July so that Berkeley Cars can be displayed for the public to view.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that permission be granted for Sunday 21 July 2013.

7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **CCTV Update**

Members received an update on the CCTV from the Town Clerk.

The Clerk said that it would appear that CBC is to remove the Biggleswade cameras from the contract with the Hertfordshire monitoring centre but that we are awaiting further clarification of the situation from both CBC and Herts CCTV. He pointed out that Town Council had asked for the contract to continue with Herts CCTV monitoring.

Cllr B Rix asked if there are merits for monitoring in Dunstable then dispatching Beds Police and suggested that officers at Dunstable are best placed to deploy Beds Police. The Clerk responded that Bedfordshire Police respond to issues raised by Herts monitoring centre.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council needs to reiterate the decision previously made to support continued monitoring by Hertfordshire CCTV control room.

Cllr Ms S Mulchrone said that the existing system works well.

Cllr D Albone asked if Town Council could urge CBC Councillors to support the continuation of monitoring by Hertfordshire CCTV control room.

Cllr Mrs M Russell suggested that Town Council write to CBC asking for progress on this issue.

b. **Christmas Lights Update**

Members received an update on the Christmas Lights.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that there had been a meeting regarding festoons and also a survey to establish fixings and electricity supply. The costing is expected imminently and will be presented at the next Committee meeting together with all of the other information and pricing so that Committee can make a recommendation to Council.

c. **Car Park Audit**

An audit of Biggleswade existing car parks was carried out by CBC as part of the parking strategy for Biggleswade.

For members to receive an update.

Town Council is awaiting the results of the audit.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Jon Medlock from Surfin Café said that he is supportive of paying for tables on the Market Square. It is good to have the formality of an agreement to refer back to and this would ensure the continuity of tables and chairs in the same place.

He said that he is willing to continue paying for space, to help keep the balance between market/café boundaries and he would like the opportunity to discuss the installation of sockets.

He went on to say that difficulties with parking have had a drastic impact on the footfall within the Town.

Cllr Mrs M Russell reiterated the need to get the town behind the Town Council on the reversal of Hitchin Street.

MOP 3 said that the Town needs the reversal of Hitchin Street now, and not later in tandem with the proposed development.

Martin Thomas said on the A boards, tables & chairs, that the opportunity to discuss the charges with Chamber members would be a good opportunity to work in harmony with the Town Council.

MOP 4 said that footfall in the town is terrible at present. Parking is sometimes unavailable in the White Hart car park.

MOP 5 asked if the charges for the tables and chairs would be charged by the metre and asked what timescale for the new car park.

Martin Thomas replied 2 – 3 years

MOP 5 said that he supports nominal car parking charges and asked if overnight parking in Town Council car parks could be chargeable.

## **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.