

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON
19 NOVEMBER 2013 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT
HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs M Russell (Chair), Cllr I Bond, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr D Albone, Cllr B Rix
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
Sam Vernon – Biggleswade Chronicle
Members of the public – 5

Also present: Cllrs Mrs J and D Lawrence

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr S Watkins and Cllr R Skinner

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declaration of interests.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Members received and approved the minutes of the Town Centre Management Committee meeting held on 20 August 2013.

5. MATTERS ARISING

From the Town Centre Management Committee held on 20 August 2013 - none

a. Sun Street St Johns Street

Town Centre Management Meeting 20th August 2013; members **recommended** to write to C.B.C to enquire if the survey to investigate the feasibility of introducing a one way system Sun Street – St Johns Street could be jointly funded by C.B.C. (response from David Bowie attached to the agenda).

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council has been quoted £10k to carry out a survey into the viability of a one way system and has offered to pay £5k, splitting the cost with CBC, but CBC have nothing in the budget in 2013.

Cllr D Albone asked that this item is kept on the agenda for review at a later date.

Members **RECOMMENDED** that a letter is sent to CBC to remind them to budget for the survey in 2014.

b. Biggleswade Market Improvements

Town Centre Management Meeting 20th August 2013; members **recommended** to stop using existing stalls; to be phased in over a six month period; to purchase 12 pop up stalls to provide for the Farmers Market and the Charity stall; all current and future traders to provide their own stalls.

All market erectors have been informed that as from 1st April 2014 they will no longer be required and Traders on the market have been informed that as from 1st April 2014 they will have to provide their own stall.

Cllr D Albone asked if there had been any feedback with regards to these changes.

Rob McGregor said that there hadn't been any feedback.

c. **Commuter Parking – Tennyson Avenue, Chaucer Drive, Dickens Court and Dells Lane**

Town Centre Management Meeting 20th August 2013; members **recommended** that Town Council should fund the cost of a TRO to introduce 1 hour restricted parking in areas identified as problem areas.

(Response from David Bowie attached to the agenda).

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that David Bowie response stated that CBC are unable to proceed until Town Council has a Parking Strategy.

6. **INVITED SPEAKER**

Jonathan Medlock Biggleswade Chamber of Trade; to update members on the Christmas lights switch on for 2013.

Cllr Mrs Russell deferred this item at 7.22pm until later in the meeting, as Jonathan Medlock had not arrived to give Members an update.

7. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Request for Tuesday market rent reduction in January and February 2014**

The stall holders who support the Tuesday market have requested a reduction in rent during January and February 2014, as these are very difficult trading months, especially in the current economic climate.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the stall holders are offered a 50% reduction for January and February 2014 on the condition that the stalls and stall holders vehicles are not impeding the parking on the Market Square.

b. **Biggleswade Parking Strategy**

Members are asked to consider the Biggleswade Parking Strategy document attached to this agenda.

Cllr Mrs M Russell took members through the parking strategy document; A. light touch, B redistribute and C overbuild and revitalise.

Option B redistribute mentions extension to the Town Council station car park with pay and display and resurfacing; this is not feasible under the current licence; also Asda and Aldi are not in our control and Rose Lane resurface and charging will depend on the purchase of Rose Lane.

Option C mentions resurfacing Chestnut Avenue car park; resurfacing is not required.

Cllr Mrs M Russell pointed out that there are unknowns and misinformation in the strategy. In particular, the uncertainty over the status of Rose Lane and Bonds Lane will cause a problem in putting a strategy in place.

At the workshop it was agreed that the strategy would come back to the Town Centre Management Committee and the committee would report back with a strategy for the Town.

Cllr Mrs M Russell felt that it would be impossible to come up with a proposed strategy on the night and recommended that a task group of five is set up to look at the strategy over the next few weeks.

Members elected Councillors David Albone, Ian Bond, Hazel Ramsay and Madeline Russell (chair). Cllr B Rix asked that those not present at the committee were offered the final place and should they not wish to or are unable to he would take the final place.

Item 6 Invited Speaker deferred at 7.22pm.

Haley Down introduced herself and explained that she and Bill Simmons had been working with the Chamber of Trade, (Jonathan Medlock) to help organise the Christmas Lights switch on.

Haley explained that various meetings had taken place with the Town Council and those participating and that all was in order.

The stars from the Gordon had yet to confirm they would be able to attend but an alternative was in place.

Haley told members that the stage was in a new place this year and that everything was under control.

The Town Clerk informed members that the Town Council had dealt with the road closures and the other details under their responsibility and they were all up to date.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. A Boards Tables and Chairs – Delegated Agreement

Members receive a verbal update.

Rob McGregor said that the agreement has only just been returned to Town Council, so time is needed to look at how to implement the policy.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that this would not be implemented by 1 January 2014 as had originally been agreed.

b. Biggleswade CCTV

Members received an update on the CCTV meeting held on the 13th November 2013.

Rob McGregor said that Central Bedfordshire Council are trying to unpick the current contract; the contract was set up by Mid Beds District Council.

All services for the 16 cameras are divided by sixteen giving a cost per camera per annum. Central Bedfordshire Council are currently and have been looking at ways of taking the monitoring of their cameras back to Dunstable; the outcome of any decisions by CBC would or could have an effect on what the Town Council will do for the future.

Sandy Town Council are considering coming out of the CCTV contract. This may also have an effect on what the Town Council might do.

Central Bedfordshire Council will be having discussions with their members on various options around CCTV. (Town Council will be updated).

A meeting is to be arranged with Quadrant to look at what, if any, cost savings can be made around CCTV and to look at possible options of individual contracts with the Town Councils.

Meetings will take place quarterly with CBC, Sandy and Biggleswade TC.

c. Bonds Lane

For members to receive an update on Bonds Lane; proposed multi story car park and retail unit.

Cllr Mrs M Russell informed members that she had met Mr Ruggieri at the CBC business breakfast meeting.

Mr Ruggieri needs to know what S.106 demands will be placed on the development; the design incorporates CBC planning departments input. There had been some issues with the footway and the service yard. CBC had also raised the issue of upgrading Bonds Lane to Hitchin Street standards.

There are design pressures re: access to the development from Hitchin Street; Town Council agreed to the reversal of Hitchin Street. The Traffic Management meeting at CBC will take place on the 21st November 2013 to consider the reversal of Hitchin Street and does not include the Town Council's decision in its committee papers.

The Masterplan of 2011 and the County Council Transport Study of 2006 both support the Hitchin Street reversal and recommend further investigation and consultation.

There is an option for the northern end of Hitchin Street becoming pedestrianized, which would allow some of the market stalls to be located there. If implemented, this would mean that no traffic would be entering the Market Square and, therefore, there would be no impact on Century House.

Reversal of Hitchin Street is needed now to support the trade in Hitchin Street.

The report to the Traffic Management Committee makes sad reading and we should reiterate Town Council approval on the reversal of Hitchin Street.

Members **RECOMMENDED** to write to the Traffic Management Committee chair, Cllr B Spurr and reiterate that the reversal of Hitchin Street is vital for trade, the development of Bonds Lane and the possible pedestrianisation of the Northern end of Hitchin Street.

9. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Mop 1 felt that it was a sad reflection that there was no input into the parking document by Town Council and raised continuing issues around traffic trying to exit Tennyson Avenue onto Dells Lane, the commuter parking is still causing serious issues.

The dangerous parking issues are not being enforced properly.

Cllr Mrs M Russell informed; that Town Council had made a formal decision to support and fund a TRO and would bring this issue up before the Biggleswade Joint Committee, Dells Lane could be treated as a separate issue in terms of restrictions.

Mop 2 asked if he had missed the decision on the A boards, tables and chairs, item 8a on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs M Russell conveyed what the Committee had been updated on.

Mop 3 asked about his street light and why it had not been connected.

Cllr Mrs Russell informed; that it was an issue with the utility companies for which the Committee had no control.

10. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution **was not** moved that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

(11a Contracts)

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Committee **did not** resolve to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

11. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

a. **Rose Lane Car Park**

For Members to receive an update on Rose Lane Car park.

This item was taken out of the exempt agenda and dealt with as a non - exempt agenda item

Cllr Mrs M Russell informed members that in October 2013 members agreed to write to Rickerbys to address the issues that they had raised; to date Town Council have had no response.

The transaction should have been straightforward and it makes one nervous that something is going on in the background; we need to keep the pressure on. It will be difficult to make any decision on a parking strategy without confirmation on Rose Lane.