

# **BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the**

### **TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted**

**On Monday 17 June 2019 at 7.30 pm**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors: W Conian (Chair)  
N Taylor (Vice Chair)  
S Cloughton  
P de Hoest (substituting for Cllr M Hardinge)  
P Fisher  
A Peeler  
T Porter

#### **ALSO PRESENT:**

Officer: J Mason – Town Clerk  
18 members of the public

#### **TE 31/19 (i) Election of a Chair of the Committee for the Council year 2019/20**

Cllr S Cloughton proposed and Cllr N Taylor seconded that Cllr W Conian be appointed as Chair of the Committee for the Council year 2019-20. There being no other nominations Cllr Conian was appointed unanimously.

#### **(ii) Election of a Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Council year 2019/20**

Cllr S Cloughton proposed and Cllr P Fisher seconded that that Cllr N Taylor be appointed as Vice Chair of the Committee for the Council year 2019-20. There being no other nominations Cllr Taylor was appointed unanimously.

#### **TE 32/19 To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Hardinge.

#### **TE 33/19 To receive Declarations of Interest regarding items on the agenda**

Cllr P Fisher declared a personal interest in item TE 43/19 {Footpath application - Chesham Playing Fields, Berkhamsted (HCC ref: DAC/155/MOD) Right of Way Appeal} because he knew the organisers and had signed the petition;  
Cllr W Conian declared a personal interest in item TE 43/19 because she had signed the petition;

Cllr P de Hoest declared a personal interest in item TE 43/19 because he had signed the petition.

**TE 34/19** Approval of the **minutes of the meeting** held on 1 April 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2019 were signed as a correct record and were duly signed as such by the chair.

**TE 35/19** Actions taken following the 1 April 2019 meeting

The following points were **noted**:

**TE 26/19 CIL Working Group**

Cllr G Steven's request that a vehicle speed activated device in the Hall Park area be added to the list of possible CIL projects has been actioned.

**TE 27/19 Heritage Hub Questionnaire**

The completed questionnaire has been returned to the Heritage Hub project team.

**TE 28/19 Parking**

DBC would not be able to allow market vehicles to park at the rear of the Civic Centre on Wednesdays.

**TE 29/19 Phasing of traffic lights at the High Street/Lower Kings Road/High Street junction and implementation of waiting and loading restrictions in Lower Kings Road**

Now that the new Council is in place the meeting with HCC do discuss these matters will be arranged.

It was **agreed** that Cllr I Reay should be invited to attend together with Cllr G Stevens, Cllr W Conian, Cllr S Cloughton and Cllr T Porter.

**Action Town Clerk**

**TE 36/19 Chair's Communications**

- (i) 3 April e-mail from Jennifer Ponsford, Project Manager, Ashridge Car Park Improvements, updating the Town Council on reasons for delays to the project.
- (ii) Berkhamsted Chamber of Commerce Chair's Report 2018-19
- (iii) HCC - Walking in Hertfordshire – May

- (iv) WhyNotWater Affinity Water Manifesto

To **consider** any action arising from the above

It was agreed that the Town Clerk should contact Lina Nieto, Affinity Water, Public Affairs, to obtain information that might be suitable for the website and for circulation at the Allotment Management Team meeting.

**Action Town Clerk**

- (v) Proposed Waiting Restrictions Robertson Road Area – decision not to proceed – HCC Lance Holman’s 14 May e-mail refers
- (vi) NALC Annual Conference 28 October 201
- (vii) Chiltern Society Event - Outdoor Nature Sound Spa 4 June
- (viii) Transforming West Herts Hospital Estates and Services - Emerging preferred way forward. Thursday 13 June at Metropolitan Police Bushey Sports Club Ltd, Aldenham Road, Bushey, WD23 2TR Registration opens at 6.15pm for a 7pm start.

#### **TE 37/19 Communication with representatives from other organisations**

- (i) Hertfordshire County Council

It was **noted** that the Town Clerk has been in discussion with Cllr I Reay of Hertfordshire County Council regarding his future input to the Committee’s deliberations. He is very happy to attend meetings if available and/or to submit written comments subject to this being acceptable to the Committee. The Committee was very pleased to **approve** this proposal and the Town Clerk will advise Cllr Reay.

- (ii) Berkhamsted Castle Trust and Friends of St Peter’s

Mr P Matthews is the Town Council nominated Trustee on BTC and Friend’s of St Peter’s. Following discussions it is proposed that he would prepare written reports for the committee and/or Full Council augmented with an annual verbal report. It is also proposed that he attend the final meeting of the Castle Liaison Group meeting on 28 June 2019. The Committee **approved** this proposal.

#### **TE 38/19 Public Participation**

It was **RESOLVED** that Standing Orders should be suspended during the course of the meeting so that **members of the public might speak**

The Chair suspended standing orders and Mrs S Johnson advised that she was representing the Berkhamsted Citizens Association, the town’s civic and amenity society. Its members were particularly interested in discussions that took place within the Town Planning and Transport and Environment Committees and therefore often attended these meetings. Referring to the Association’s achievements over the years she and her colleague Gordon

Bluck were delighted to present to committee members copies of the BCA's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of the Footpath Map with Berkhamsted Town Map.

It was noted that many footpaths were in need of repair and maintenance. This was an issue that the Town Warden could report.

Mr J Gray then spoke about the state of Church Lane and emphasised the rubbish from commercial premises, cigarette ends and the need for urgent repairs to the cobbles. (See also TE 41/19 (iii) below). Mrs Johnson concurred with this view and advised that the BCA had been in regular discussion with HCC about Church Lane.

Thanking Mrs Johnson and Mr Gray the Chair reinstated standing orders.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **TE 39/19 Air quality monitoring and Clean Air Day**

The Chair suspended standing orders and Ms A Haeri referred to the No Idling Campaign which would be launched by Transition Towns to coincide with Clean Air Day on 20 June. She had spoken previously on the poor air quality in the town. Although legal limits appear to be met this is achieved via arithmetic averaging whereas a closer analysis of data shows there are periods when safe levels are breached.

Ms S Holmes referred to DBC's publicly available data about levels of nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere. This was available to 2016 although she had seen a draft of more recent data. She had noted that monitoring stations were not accurate both descriptively and in terms of northings and eastings which was confusing and should be rectified. Results from the Northchurch Air Quality Monitoring Area showed consistently high readings throughout the day and although March this year had been better than last, April, May and June had worsened. She undertook to circulate the information as requested.

Thanking members of the public for their contribution the Chair reinstated standing orders and the meeting resumed.

#### **(i) Air Quality**

The Committee **noted** that Dacorum Borough Council is monitoring air quality using a number of diffusion tubes located at key sites in Berkhamsted. All are mounted at heights well above the levels at which pedestrians, including young children are likely to breathe vehicle emissions. The selection of tube locations, their height and the subsequent analysis is a standardised national process: this may result in data that does not reflect the actual exposure of poor air quality by residents.

Following a discussion the T & E Committee **approved** the following course of action:

1. This committee invites the Borough Council to conduct a pilot trial, over a 12 month period at least, whereby diffusion tubes are mounted as tandem pairs – one at head height in the same locations as current.
2. The Committee suggests the Lower Kings Road as one such pilot.
3. The data should be logged along with the Borough's body of diffusion tubes and made known to this Committee on a regular basis.

It was **agreed** that the Town Clerk should write to the appropriate officer and the Chief Executive at DBC asking them to initiate these actions. In addition, she should ask that the location information referred to by Ms Holmes be investigated to ensure that in future there is no confusion regarding the precise locations of the diffusion tubes. Up to date information would also be requested.

**Action Town Clerk**

(ii) Clean Air Day

It was **noted** that the national campaign to reduce air pollution has designated 20 June as Clean Air Day. Publicity material is to be found at: URL <https://www.cleanairday.org.uk>

The T & E Committee **endorsed** the statement that:

“This Council supports the endeavour and plans to display relevant posters on its notice boards and will request the Borough Council to publicise the Clean Air Day”. It was agreed that the Town Council should plan to be more involved in promoting next year's Clean Air Day.

**Action Town Clerk/Council**

The Town Clerk would ensure that the publicity material was available on the website and posters placed on notice boards. **Action Town Clerk**

Furthermore, it was **agreed** that the Town Council should support measures to stop idling of car engine.

**TE 40/19 CIL Working Group**

The notes of the meetings held 20-02-19 & 24-04-19 were received and adopted. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 26 June at 4pm. It was acknowledged that the work currently being undertaken on the preparation of a communications strategy would feed into the need to consult widely on possible CIL projects.

**TE 41/19 To consider the following issues raised recently by members of the public**

- (i) Reduction of speed limit in Cross Oak Road to 20 mph

It was **agreed** that this matter should be referred to HCC. The view was expressed that wider 20mph zones should be considered. There was a

brief discussion about consultation process, the development of a 20mph zone in the central area north of the High Street and proposals that such zones be developed to the south, around Charles Street.

- (ii) Poor state of pavements in Shrublands Road

Similarly this matter **would be referred to HCC** and to Hertfordshire County Councillor I Reay together with the photographs taken by a member of the public.

- (iii) State of the cobbles and general maintenance Church Lane

Cllr Reay had advised that funds have been allocated for repairs to the cobbles although a precise date had yet to be set. Cllr Reay anticipated that this would be in the current financial year.

- (iv) To **note** congratulations and issues raised in Ms J Jones' 9 May e-mail

It was agreed that the Town Clerk should write to Ms Jones and thank her on behalf of the Town Council and also update her on the points raised.

- (v) Condition and repair of the Victorian iron railings opposite Berkhamsted Station, adjacent to the canal

There was a general discussion about this issue and it was noted that Town Council representatives had met in April with HCC representatives to discuss this and other issues in Station Road. The work required would be considered as a possible project for CIL monies.

- (vi) Graffiti on canal bridge walls near station

It was **noted** that this is an on-going issue and the Town Warden frequently reports incidents to both DBC and the Canal and River Trust as appropriate. The Deputy Town Clerk will be arranging a date for a CARP meeting in the near future.

## **TE 42/19 Tree issues in Berkhamsted**

- (i) The committee confirmed and agreed the following summary of tree related concerns and possible actions set out below:

- a) There is a need to initiate with DBC further planting of trees in the High Street, particularly in the stretch to the west of the High Street/Kings Road/Lower Kings Road junction;
- b) As illustrated by a freedom of information request made of DBC by a member of the public, a substantial majority of replanted trees do not survive, most possibly because of lack of watering after planting. This situation should be remedied;

- c) Trees that are felled are often not replaced, particularly in residential roads. This would seem to be contrary to DBC's Tree Policy;
  - d) Tree felling as a result of development is of particular concern. The need for such felling should only be agreed if such action can be clearly justified against stringent and pre-agreed criteria. Replanting of any felled trees should be a condition of planning permissions and should be robustly enforced;
  - e) Historic trees in public and other places are valuable community assets. Therefore, areas of the town where additional TPOs could be introduced should be identified. For example, trees around The Moor not covered by TPOs already in place in the vicinity.
- (i) Cllr S Cloughton reported on his recent helpful meeting with the Trees and Woodlands Team Leader. Lack of consultation with the public before trees were felled had been discussed and various options for advance warning had been mooted. It was noted that leaflet drops did take place when a number of trees were affected. This issue required more deliberation and the officer was waiting to have a meeting with his managers to discuss further. One helpful development was that the government was proposing to hold a consultation on the need for prior consultation for tree work although there would always be the exception for dead, diseased or dangerous trees.

Following discussion it was **agreed** that the Town Council should work to achieve the points set out in a – e above. The aim would be to agree a strategy and plan for trees in the town with DBC that would address the concerns already iterated. The role of volunteers to help with associated tasks, particularly watering, would be included in such discussions as would funding or provision of trees from outside bodies, for example, Defra or The Woodland Trust. It was noted that the next round of bids for trees from the Woodland Trust would start in November and it was hoped the town would be able to benefit from this initiative.

It was **agreed** that the Town Clerk should write to DBC's Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Delivery) and the Group Manager (Environmental Services), outlining the above and emphasising the Town Council's wish to work together with DBC to achieve the desired outcome.

**TE 43/19      Footpath application - Chesham Playing Fields, Berkhamsted (HCC ref: DAC/155/MOD)Right of Way Appeal**

The Chair suspended standing orders. Mr A Hodgkins, a members of the group that had originally requested that the above footpath be added to the HCC Definitive Map presented the appeal that the group had submitted to the Rights of Way Section at the Planning Inspectorate. This was as a result of the recent HCC decision to refuse the application. He summarised the seven reasons for

appeal which are: Challenge date; Intention of the landowner; HCC's analysis and interpretation of "as of right" user evidence; HCC's summary and interpretation of evidence of overt acts by the landowner; HCC statements inconsistent with user evidence; dedication at Common Law and finally, evidence of use. In summary, he stated that the evidence demonstrates that the route has been enjoyed by the public as a right of way for a full period of 20 years since the right of the public to use the path was brought into question.

Thanking Mr Hodgkins for his contribution the Chair reinstated standing orders.

- (i) Following a discussion it was **agreed** that the Town Council should forward appropriate comments to the Planning Inspectorate supporting the original application. The closing date for such comments is 19 July 2019.
- (ii) The above will be **noted** at the Town Planning Committee on 24 June with a view to a draft of the comment being agreed at the subsequent meeting of that committee on 15 July. This will enable the 19 July deadline to be met.

**Action Town Clerk**

## **TRANSPORT**

### **TE 44/19 Parking**

Report on the Parking Forum Meeting held on 12 June 2019

Cllr S Cloughton reported back on the meeting which had also been attended by Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of DBC and the Group Manager (Procurement, Commissioning and Compliance). They had been able to provide considerable detail including the fact that the piling work had started today (17 June). Given the 32 week build period plus 2 weeks commissioning, the opening was scheduled for March 2020. Communications with the public would be given high priority and DBC had also agreed to involve the Parking Forum in management plan discussions. DBC had also undertaken to share the draft operational plan with the Forum prior to the public consultation. The reinstatement of the Moor had been discussed and Forum members had asked if this could take place before next spring/summer given the apparent lower than anticipated uptake of spaces. No definitive answer had been received.

The Chair thanked Cllr Cloughton for his report.

### **TE 45/19 Community Bus Service**

Cllr Conian presented the paper she had prepared which had been circulated with the agenda. The objective was to examine a proposal that a community bus service be piloted with the objective of cutting individual car journeys at peak times.

She hoped that the outcome of the discussion would be to establish a working group that would be able to put together a feasibility study and pilot scheme, in partnership with Community Action Dacorum, who already had experience in the field of community transport provision. It was anticipated that members of the public would also be members of the group

During discussion it was agreed that it would be helpful to include members who had experience in the successful provision of community based transport. It was also emphasised that the intention was not to compete with other transport providers but to provide a complementary service.

It was **agreed** that such a group should be established and Cllr N Taylor expressed an interest in being a member. Cllr M Hardinge might also be interested. If other councillors wish to be involved they should advise the Town Clerk.  
**Action Town Clerk/Councillors**

**TE 46/19      Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....