

Town Talk Notes– Tuesday 17th November 2009 – 6.15 pm – 7.15pm @ Benslow Music Trust, Benslow Lane, Hitchin.

The Chair, Councillor Deepak Sangha, welcomed everybody to the Town Talk. He also welcomed Sgt Rob Oldaker, Hitchin Police. The next Town Talk, before a Hitchin Area Committee meeting, will be on Tuesday 12th January, 2010 at the Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, 50 Wilbury Way, Hitchin.

Issues raised by members of the public present

- Parking Tilehouse Street
- Town Hall
- Minutes of Cabinet Meetings
- Procedures Town Hall / Churchgate
- Police
- Tennis Club Pavilion

A resident requested that speakers, either asking a question or replying to a question, could please stand up.

Minutes of Cabinet Meetings

A questioner asked how long does it take for Minutes to be released on the website and accessible to the public? He referred to the Cabinet meeting which took place on the 20th October, 2009.

A Councillor said that all Committee Minutes were in draft and had to be approved before becoming accessible.

Action - to confirm this and establish when the Cabinet Minutes in particular will be available.

Action Update – Confirm that the draft Minutes of any Meetings need to be approved and if Members are on holiday this can take longer. The Cabinet Minutes of the meeting on October 20th are now on the website and available to members of the public.

Committee Services can also be contacted and Minutes of Meetings requested.

Parking Tilehouse Street

The resident had received an email in November 2008 where a Council Officer stated that they would advise of the programme in the next two or three weeks. Now the middle of November 2009 and still nothing had been done. It was mentioned that it is planned in 2011/2012 for a holistic approach be taken to parking issues in Hitchin.

Action – Councillor Richard Thake to speak to planning about the issue and a reply from the Council Officer available at next meeting.

Action Update - A proposed review of the current TRO, that refers to the single yellow line restriction of 'no waiting at any time between 8am to midnight' to that of a 'no waiting at any time restriction' ie to replace the single yellow line with double yellow lines. This will have

the effect of reducing street clutter as signs are not required for this restriction. The restriction does allow for quick loading and unloading to premises to take place.

Letters to residents and businesses in Tilehouse Street informing of this suggested amendment to the TRO will be sent within the next couple of weeks.

The wider issue of reviewing the current resident parking scheme will be looked at as part of the town wide review to take place in 2011/2012.

Procedures Town Hall / Churchgate

It was asked 'how to get best value with only 1 bidder?' There can be no comparison.

Councillors present stated that they also have concerns and that these would be raised at the Committee meeting to follow. Also that members of the Working Party and the Hitchin Area Committee will be asking the questions.

It was also said that Cabinet had not received a Business Plan with regard to the Museum and Town Hall and that along with the Collections Centre there will be vacant buildings which should be part of the Business Plan.

On a procedural point are Cabinet able to proceed to Full Council without a Business Plan.

It was said that Cabinet are to request Full Council to release funds to progress this, of which a Business Plan would be part.

I was also stated that there are considerable differences of opinion on this matter and discussion will take place at Full Council.

Concerns were raised that there won't be the opportunity to discuss it after Full Council.

Town Hall

It was stated that it was felt that the Town Hall had been neglected and had not been promoted by the Council. The Town Hall is a community facility for residents now but also future residents of Hitchin and that an extension of the current Museum should be considered.

The reason for the proposal was said to be financial savings but the speaker found it difficult to see where there would be any savings.

Tennis Club Pavilion

They would wait until their public presentation at the Committee meeting.

Police

Sgt Rob Oldaker from Hitchin Neighbourhood Team mentioned a specific initiative on the 12th December, 2009, in the Market Place, Hitchin called 'Know your limits. A similar event was run a couple of years ago and was very successful. This will take place on the 12th from 6pm onwards.

He added that crime and disorder were low in comparison to the rest of the county considering the number of people who come into the Town Centre every evening and weekends.

