

Hitchin Town Talk Notes – Tuesday 5th June 2018

6.30pm – 7.15pm – Benslow Music School

PLEASE NOTE

- If you wish to report an issue to NHDC you do not need to wait until the next Town Talk meeting. Compliments, Complaints and Issues can reported anytime to NHDC Customer Services via the NHDC Website or call 01462 474000
- You may also report issues to your local ward Councillor (contact details are on the NHDC website)

The Chair, Councillor Ian Albert, welcomed everybody to the Town Talk

Present-

- Cllr Ian Albert (Chair)
- Cllr Bernard Lovewell
- Cllr Martin Stears-Handscorn
- Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg
- Cllr Judi Billing
- Cllr Simon Harwood
- Cllr Nicola Harris
- Cllr Paul Clark
- Cllr Sam Collins
- Cllr Val Bryant
- Cllr Mike Hughson
- Cllr Clare Billing
- HCC Derick Ashley
- Milan Johnston (notes)

Issues raised this session

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|---------------------------|
| 1. | Charnwood (former Hitchin Museum) | - | Bernard Eddleston |
| 2. | Streetlights | - | Brian Foreman |
| 3. | Bins | - | David Leal-Bennett |
| 4. | Car Parking | - | Alan Day |
| 5. | Scrapyard Fire | - | Neil Dodds |
| 6. | Footpath Walsworth Rd | - | Member of audience |
| 7. | Litter | - | Mary Marshall |
| 8. | Waste | - | Brian Foreman |

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1. Charnwood – Hitchin Museum

BE pointed out that the Museum is completed and the public and community should be able to have full access. He asked what's happened to the building. Each time he asks the question he gets the response that they're waiting for the Museum staff. Cllr IA pointed out that he wrote to the Senior Estates Surveyor to raise issues of repairs, and they are currently doing a survey but no formal decisions have been made.

Cllr PC asked whether an update can be provided at the next area committee. Ask for a formal request from the relevant officer

Cllr SH suggested that the request needs to be specific. For example what is the strategy?

ACTION: Cllr IA will aim to provide the information at the next area committee

2. Streetlights

BF wished to complain about the replacement of the street lights. He asked how much research was done into LED lights.

Herts County Cllr JB stated that there are different opinions on the new LED lights, but she was not too sure about how much research was done.

HCC Cllr DA stated that across the county new LED lights were replacing the existing street lights as this was a way of the County Council saving money. He agrees that some of the lights are more focused and they are looking into this. Research which was undertaken found that LED lights are used world wide and are much more cost effective.

Brian feels like the LED lights are not bright enough to light up the pathways.

Cllr IA explained that the lights are positioned differently and suggested that the County Council look into this.

Cllr SH asked how much we are saving with the installation of LED lights.

ACTION: County Cllr DA is going to provide this figure.

3. Bins

DLB wished to complain on behalf of all the residents who have paid for their brown bins, yet Urbaser are now emptying all brown bins to try and solve the current issues.

Cllr EDH expressed her concern that it shouldn't have got to this stage.

Cllr SC suggested that residents that have paid for the brown bin service should receive recourse and questioned whether this could be used in the 2019 payment.

Cllr PC pointed out that battery and sharps recycling were promised yet no information has been released from NHDC.

Cllr EDH raised concern that residents were not given a receipt once they paid for the brown bin service instead they were told that PayPal was the receipt.

Cllr BL agreed that residents should be compensated but the issues with the bins need to be resolved first.

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4. Car parking

AD explained that Woodside car park has a lot of rubbish and litter. There was also a tree that came down and fell into a fence. Alan was told that the tree was safe and would like to know who's responsible for the trees in North Hertfordshire.

Cllr PC stated NHDC's Tree Officer is aware and is pushing to get the tree survey completed.

Cllr SC mentioned that he visited Woodside car park with the waste officer and it was all clean. The inspection vehicle is now parked in Woodside car park and is checked 2 – 3 times a week. Installation of CCTV has been raised and is currently ongoing.

5. Scrapyard

After the fire that took place at the Scrapyard on Cadwell Lane ND asked what investigation was done and what are they doing to prevent this from happening again?

Cllr JB explained that she can't comment on the prevention but she received emails from the director of Health at the County Council from the resilience team whom were giving advice about health implications and staying inside. Public Health England reassured the community by providing useful information

Cllr SH added that an assessment is currently being conducted by the Fire Officer which is ongoing.

6. Footpath

A member of the audience wished to complain about the uneven pavement along Walsworth Rd, when it rains there are 2 inch puddles. By the exit of the car park there is an overhanging tree which is blocking the footpath; the tree overhangs both NHDC and County Council land

Cllr PC commented that the Tree Officer would need to be advised to be able to investigate.

County Cllr DA will look onto the website to see if it has been reported.

7. Litter

MM pointed out that Redhill Rd accumulates a lot of rubbish. MM wants to know has there been a review of how many litter pickings have been done in the area, are we able to review this.

Cllr EDH explained that in the past the rubbish and litter has been reported and monitored. With the new contract there is the flexibility to get the crew to attend to overflowing bins.

Cllr CB agreed that a review of the town would be a good idea

Cllr MSH also pointed out that there are overflowing bins in the ward

Cllr SH explained that different bins around the town have different schedules which can be changed, if the contractor is made aware then the rota can be changed.

MM explained she was trying to establish when the bins are collected and when they are overflowing to see if there is a link

County Cllr DA asked if NHDC have considered on the spot fines.

Cllr BL pointed out that some Local Authorities have introduced this and feedback given is that it is very cost effective; it has been looked at and is kept under review

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8. Waste Bins

BF wished to complain about his waste bin not being collected and when he has tried to contact the Council the lines are busy. BF continued and asked can we expect improvements with the waste contract? Can NHDC do something about the communication?

Cllr EDH suggested there is no reason why the authority can't fix the issue, there have been communication problems with NHDC and Urbaser, and communication should be put in one central place.

Cllr SH pointed out that the Council have done press releases, been on the radio and communicated through social media.

Cllr MSH explained that a lot of questions will be asked at the committee, East Herts don't seem to have the same issue

Cllr SC spoke with residents from Bishop Stortford and they don't have any problems with their service

Cllr BL pointed out that the new contract is saving tax payers and NHDC lots of money

MM proposed that a green waste collection service be set up in addition to the brown bin collection service that residents have paid for.

Cllr EDH added that was an excellent idea

Cllr PC implied going forward this would be a good idea

County Cllr DA stated there is no real feedback on NHDC; can questions and answers be logged?

Cllr SH pointed out that this was raised with the Communications team at NHDC. Thousands of Facebook comments and questions could be answered at the Town Talk and recorded so that those residents get the answers

Cllr IA added it would be a good idea to log questions and answers on the NHDC website.

Meeting Closed at 7.15pm