

ELSTREE AND BOREHAMWOOD TOWN COUNCIL (EBTC)

TRANSPORT FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting held in the Council Chamber, Elstree Way Borehamwood on Thursday 29th October 2015 at 7.00pm

Present:

- Cllr C Butchins (Chairman in the Chair) (EBTC)
- Cllr R Butler (Town Mayor) (EBTC)
- Cllr Mrs S Parnell (EBTC)
- Cllr C Barker (EBTC)
- Cllr A Coleshill (EBTC)
- Cllr V Eni (EBTC)
- Cllr G Franklin (EBTC)
- Cllr Mrs F Turner (EBTC)
- Cllr E Silver (EBTC)
- Cllr G Silver (EBTC)
- O Dowden MP (MP for Hertsmere) (Minutes 15 – 19)
- L Heyman (Govia Thameslink Railway Ltd)
- Cllr A Plancey (Hertfordshire County Council)
- Cllr J Heywood (Hertsmere Borough Council) (Minutes 12 - 15)
- Cllr D Burcombe (Hertsmere Borough Council)
- PCSO M Sherlock (Hertfordshire Constabulary) (Minutes 12 - 15)
- D Sullivan (Sullivan Buses)
- S Simmonds (Sullivan Buses)
- J Cartledge (Resident)
- L Stack (EBRA)
- S Alford (EBRA)
- J Brown (Pensioners' Rights)
- N Clark (Resident)
- T & S Cleasby (Residents)
- Mr & Mrs Scholfield (Residents)
- Mr & Mrs Blackman (Residents)
- F Byrne (Resident)
- P Glover (Resident)
- S Lindley (Resident)
- C Greene (Resident)
- Mrs E Butchins (Resident)
- H Jones (Town Clerk)

[Only those residents wishing their names to be included in the Minutes are recorded above.]

Chairman's Introduction

Before calling the meeting to order, the Chairman, Cllr C Butchins (EBTC), introduced the agenda to those present, noting that:

- the meeting was on a themed topic: "Responsible Parking";
- the agenda was organised on a timed basis;
- all announcements and questions were to be made through the Chairman; and
- all present were asked to be considerate of the views of others and to conduct themselves with respect for the meeting.

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from A Dismore AM (London Assembly: Barnet and Camden), Cllr Mrs P Strack (EBTC), Cllr S Rubner (EBTC), Mr and Mrs C Blake, (Residents), C Messetter (Hertfordshire Constabulary), P Bradley (TfL), S Davies (BW Driving Instructors Association), M Goodyear (Hertfordshire County Council), Cllr L Reeve (Hertfordshire County Council) and A De Swarte (Resident).

13. DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were none.

14. TRANSPORT FORUM MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 2 July 2015 were approved and duly signed as a true record by the Chairman.

15. RESPONSIBLE PARKING

The item was received in four distinct sections relating to the roles and responsibilities of Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertsmere Borough Council and Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council.

Hertfordshire Constabulary

The Forum received a report from PCSO M Sherlock (Hertfordshire Constabulary). PCSO Sherlock had special responsibility for the Cowley Hill ward. It was noted that some success had been achieved with promoting responsible parking as part of the safer schools initiative carried out by "Safer Neighbourhood Teams". The Transport Forum had previously highlighted difficulties experienced by road users at peak school drop off

and collection times. Another problem was irresponsible parking in bus bays. In addition, a “Parking Monster” campaign had been initiated to promote good practice. D Sullivan (Sullivan Buses) stated that he had noted some improvements in school parking by parents in cases where bad parking had been reported to the school administration, as staff were able to contact the parents effectively. Cllr A Plancey (Hertfordshire County Council) noted that the problem of irresponsible parking was increasing as resident numbers increased due to the scale of local development. He stated that the problem was felt by local businesses and that Hertfordshire Constabulary was stretched. J Cartledge (Resident) reminded the Forum of the problem previously highlighted concerning parking on or near corners at road junctions. The issue was that whilst there might be no direct obstruction, the siting of these vehicles restricted the sightline of pedestrians and turning drivers, therefore posing a danger. A local resident, F Byrne, commented that the problem appeared to be worsening with Chandos Road being a particular area where poor parking was prevalent. D Burcombe (Hertsmere Borough Council) noted instances of parking on single and double yellow lines, and indicated that he had been abused by vehicle owners whom he had confronted about their parking.

Responding to a query from L Stack (EBRA), O Dowden MP indicated that whilst it was not an area of his expertise, the painting white lines on pavements to allow parking on part of them was not his preferred means of addressing the local problem. Instead he suggested initiatives to seek to aim for a longer term solution such as more designated parking bays.

Hertfordshire County Council

It was noted with regret by Cllr R Butler (EBTC Town Mayor) that no officer from Hertfordshire County Council had been able to attend the meeting.

P Glover (Resident) felt that there were insufficient parking areas in Elstree Village. The conservation area was inhabited by some 5,000 residents but there were only six on-street parking spaces near the crossroads.

The Chairman reported that S Davies (BW Driving Instructors Association) had sent an email to the Forum repeating the association’s concern at the problem of the large number of Goodman’s vehicles parked on and near Manor Way. In addition, it was felt that illuminated car park signs could help in encouraging parking in Council managed car parks. Cllr G Franklin also mentioned the problem of increased development with an anticipated 2,000 new homes in the area. Cllr E Silver felt that the topic could be considered by the appropriate overview and scrutiny committees at both Hertsmere Borough and Hertfordshire County Councils.

N Clark (Resident) indicated that the central reservation on Shenley Road was a very helpful and safe feature for pedestrians and that, in his opinion, no move should be made to remove this for the purposes of seeking to increase parking bays.

Cllr Mrs S Parnell (EBTC) called upon Members of both Hertfordshire County and Hertsmere Borough Councils to listen to the concerns of residents very carefully and to seek to support them. She felt that it was important for residents to have confidence in their elected representatives and that it was essential for those submitting emails to these authorities to receive responses within a reasonable period of time.

Hertsmere Borough Council

Cllr J Heywood (Hertsmere Borough Council Environment Portfolio Holder) reported that the Council had responsibility over the CPZs and employed ten enforcement officers and two supervisors. The statutory power afforded to the Authority included enforcing parking, yellow lines, disabled bays, schools and resident and visitor parking permits. She indicated that limited budgets did not allow comprehensive solutions to many of the problems identified by residents to be offered. However, particular areas of concern were targeted by the Council. She conceded that the number of vehicles on the roads was too high in terms of the capacity of the roads to cope adequately. She indicated that no more controlled parking zones were planned by the Borough Council at the present time.

It was reported that the introduction of traffic regulation officers was a costly venture for Hertsmere Borough Council. It was also noted that the Borough Council had no control over certain county managed or privately owned roads. In terms of school parking, the Borough was not permitted to “name and shame” those guilty of irresponsible parking. Cllr G Franklin felt that it was unhelpful that white zig zag lines by schools were not enforceable parking areas. It was noted that these were, in essence, a deterrent only.

It was noted that options were being considered at the planning stage for new developments for innovative travel solutions; for example, utilising s.106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (developer contribution) monies to fund shuttle buses (especially to and from Elstree and Borehamwood railway station).

Cllr E Silver (EBTC) commented that the high visibility of Traffic Wardens was a good means of deterring irresponsible parking.

J Brown (Pensioners’ Rights) reported that he had noted up to 170 free spaces at Furzehill Road car park during the daytime and that it was a very much underutilised resource. He suggested that Hertsmere Borough Council could consider offering free parking at this site for a trial period of six months. Cllr Mrs S Parnell (EBTC) reported that she parked at the Furzehill Road car park regularly and that it was often empty. In her opinion, it would be an ideal area for commuters to park (at an appropriate commuter rate) in order to free up parking bays for residents elsewhere in the town. Cllr J Heywood (Hertsmere Borough Council Environment Portfolio Holder) indicated that the Council had considered an option similar to the one suggested but that Officers had indicated that it was not a practical venture to undertake. *[Post-meeting note : paragraph 4.23 of Hertsmere’s Revised Parking Management Strategy, circulated in advance of the meeting, confirms that commuter parking permits are available for this location.]* She felt that the problem was that drivers were generally unwilling to pay for parking if they were not required to do so and that they were also unwilling to park in areas where they

were required to walk to their next destination (i.e. parking at the railway station was more attractive to commuters). F Byrne (Resident) felt very strongly that Furzehill and Brook Road car parks needed to be used more effectively and that the Borough Council should be asked to reconsider initiatives to help remedy the problem of under usage. He also sought clarification on changes to the controlled parking strategy of the Council.

L Stack (EBRA) reported that an initiative had been trialled in Scotland for exclusion zones around schools and he felt that this was a scheme that could be considered in Hertsmere.

Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council

The Chairman reported that the theme of 'Responsible Parking' had come about from discussions that had taken place at Full Council at the instigation of Cllr Mrs P Strack. The aim was to raise awareness and to clarify responsibilities in relation to badly parked vehicles in Elstree and Borehamwood. The strategy proposed was to launch a campaign to encourage vehicle users to park more considerately with the possibility of placing leaflets on windscreens.

He stated: *"What we wish to do is raise awareness by holding sessions such as this and by gaining publicity for the initiative in as many varied forums as possible, both in print and online."*

We are above all looking for your ideas as to what can be done to encourage 'Responsible Parking' within the limits that are available. Here we will move on to hear what representatives of the various authorities have to say about what their powers are and, I hope, what they might be able to contribute to this initiative."

The role of the Town Council and the Transport Forum is, I think, an interesting one. Currently the Council has no powers or direct involvement in parking on public highways. The Forum has no 'teeth' to ensure actions are taken. However, what it can do, and has done in the last four years or so that I have been involved, is to lobby the responsible authority - quite successfully I believe - for action. The most obvious example is in respect of changes at and on the approaches to Stirling Corner, where Transport for London has kept the traffic lights on for 24 hours and reduced the speed limit on the approaches."

16. TRAIN SERVICES

L Heyman (Govia Thameslink Railway Ltd) reported on difficulties experienced by the train company since the last Transport Forum meeting as a result of power problems with older units, flooding issues and damaged cross tracks. He apologised on behalf of the company for the inconvenience caused to passengers by disruptions to the service and train cancellations.

It was noted that service performance statistics could be viewed by passengers on the company's website facility (<http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/about-us/performance/>). In the last period there had been c.4,000 delays and 193 cancellations.

Turning to more positive matters, Thameslink was organising its largest ever driver recruitment, training and retention programme. At present the service was reliant on drivers working on rest days on an overtime basis. This caused difficulties in holiday periods because drivers were less likely to want to work additional hours at these times. Drivers had received a 3.5% pay rise in order to seek to improve retention.

It was noted that the majority of trains were 30 years old (some having recently been relocated to the Liverpool/Manchester areas). By 2018, all units would be replaced. Three new units were currently undergoing strategic testing prior to operation.

In order to assist with the "Responsible Parking" initiative, Mr Heyman kindly agreed to compile information on the postcodes of car parking season ticket holders at Elstree and Borehamwood station in order to provide data on commuter usage by passengers "railheading" from elsewhere, a practice which was encouraged by the station's inclusion in the London travelcard zone.

S Alford (EBRA) reiterated the comment made at the Transport Forum's previous meetings, that she felt it would be helpful for train drivers to provide an audio announcement of station identities, especially at peak times. L Heyman reported that the new trains would provide such announcements by way of an automatic system.

Responding to a query from Cllr D Burcombe (Hertsmere Borough Council), L Heyman reported that, whilst Elstree and Borehamwood station was busy, it was St Albans station in Hertfordshire which recorded the highest footfall numbers, especially at peak periods. Mr Heyman kindly agreed to provide the Town Council with relevant statistics.

[Post-meeting note : Annual usage in 2014-15 of the four Thameslink stations in Hertfordshire was St Albans City 7,474,130, Elstree & BW 4,043,680, Harpenden 3,315,890 and Radlett 1,198,702.]

17. BUS SERVICES IN ELSTREE AND BOREHAMWOOD

The Forum received an update report from Sullivan's Buses on service changes and updates.

It was reported that route 398 (Potters Bar - Borehamwood - Radlett - Watford) was being amended from the beginning of January 2016. The route would be diverted to run along Brook Road between Leeming Road and Tesco's and, therefore, no longer serving Shenley Road, Theobald Street and Gateshead Road.

Timetable changes were to provide for extra running time. It was stated that the same level of service would apply (except one poorly utilised return journey between Borehamwood and Potters Bar would no longer run).

From November 2015, Sullivan Buses passengers would benefit from real time information. As such, electronic displays at bus stops would show how many minutes away the next bus was from the stop and this information would also be available on smart phones. The possibility of mobile phone ticketing was being considered as a future project.

Cllr V Eni commented that he had received reports that the school bus to Nicholas Breakspear RC School in St Albans was often overcrowded. It was noted that Sullivan Buses had measures in place (a second bus) to address this concern.

S Simmonds (Sullivan Buses) also kindly agreed to provide helpful data on parking at bus stops to assist with the “Responsible Parking” campaign.

18. OPEN SESSION

Defibrillator Campaign

L Stack (EBRA) provided an update on the local campaign to install defibrillators at strategic points within Elstree and Borehamwood. It was hoped that this would roll out into a countywide initiative in due course. Most recently, a defibrillator (donated by the Borehamwood Spiritual Centre) had been obtained and was due to be installed at Elstree and Borehamwood railway station on 11 November 2015. It was reported that the biggest need was to raise awareness among the public about where defibrillators were located and to encourage appropriate training in their proper use. A defibrillator had previously been installed at 96 Shenley Road.

Address by O Dowden MP

Responding to an invitation from the Chairman, O Dowden MP stated that he felt that an informative discussion had taken place at the meeting. He expressed a desire to forge stronger links with Govia Thameslink Railway Ltd. It was noted that the reliability of the train service was one of the biggest issues of public concern reported to him in Hertsmere. As such, he hoped to hold Thameslink to its commitments and maximise on the engagement with this body together with the residents of Elstree and Borehamwood. He had previously met with the Chief Executive Officer of Thameslink in order to discuss the problems of capacity, regularity and reliability of service.

Stirling Corner

The Chairman provided the following update provided in email form from A Dismore (London Assembly: Barnet and Camden): in a written response from the Mayor of London on the question of improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities across the A1 at Stirling Corner it was stated: “*I understand that you met TfL officers on site in June to*

discuss potential designs for improved pedestrian crossing facilities on the southern side of Stirling Corner roundabout. The designs are currently being updated and a feasibility assessment will be completed by January 2016.”

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

[POST MEETING NOTE: The Transport Forum will meet at Fairway Hall from 2016 onwards rather than at the Civic Offices, and on a Wednesday rather than a Thursday. In addition, four rather than three meetings will take place in each Council Year (starting in May) with the option of an additional fifth meeting at the Chairman’s discretion. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 24 February 2016 at 7.00 pm, at Fairway Hall, Town Council Offices, Brook Close, Borehamwood WD6 5 BT]

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Date:..... CHAIRMAN.....