

ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

BURY ST EDMUNDS AREA WORKING PARTY

**Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 7 October 2014 at 5.00 pm
in the Conference Chamber West, F1R09, West Suffolk House,
Western Way, Bury St Edmunds**

PRESENT: Councillor R D Everitt (Chairman)
Councillors Chung, Cockle, Farmer, Nettleton,
Mrs Rayner, Springett, Mrs Stamp and Mrs P A Warby

11. Substitutes

No substitutions were declared.

12. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Oliver.

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

On Minute 7, Maintenance of the River Linnet, officers undertook to bring a report to a future meeting of the Working Party on the County Council's conclusions in relation to flooding problems at Gardiner Close.

14. Declarations of Interest

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which to declaration relates.

15. Christmas Fayre

Officers gave an oral update on arrangements being made to hold this year's Fayre from 27 to 30 November. The programme of events was being formulated and it would be the subject of a publicity launch on 13 November 2014 and advertisement on a dedicated website. Sponsorships had been obtained for the two entertainment stages. Greater use would be made of Abbey Gardens this year and this would include a Doctor Who exhibition. Children from selected schools would be invited to attend the first day of the Fayre, Thursday 27 November at 4.00 pm, and the Mayor would formally open the event at 6.00 pm. A fireworks display would then follow. The Thursday's events would be specifically aimed at local residents. The street market would operate over the remaining three days and there would be an additional Farmers' Market on the Sunday. 'Our Bury St Edmunds' was encouraging shops in the town to participate in the Fayre by extending their normal opening hours.

In response to Members' questions, officers advised that as much notice as possible would be given to local residents about street closures and parking arrangements and an endeavour would be made to ameliorate any particular problems caused to residents. The Town Council had kindly offered its offices for use as a control room. Additional overflow car parking could be

provided at the Saxham Business Park if needed. Councillor Nettleton pointed out that the Annual Fayre was not welcomed by some local residents whose amenity was directly affected by it. The Working Party acknowledged, however, that the Fayre was a key event in promoting the town and it provided a benefit to local businesses and support to charities. The report was noted and staff involved were congratulated for their hard work in organising the Fayre.

16. Street Vending/'A' Boards

Officers gave an oral report on the regulation of advertisements which was governed by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007. Under these regulations specific types of advertisement required consent from the local planning authority. Breaches of the regulations were a criminal offence and the Borough Council had powers to remove and destroy unauthorised advertisements without compensation. Various categories of advertisement were, however, excepted. These included, for example, advertisements on moving vehicles, fixed advertisements on retail premises and estate agents' boards. For those advertisements which required consent, officers advised that a balance had to be struck between allowing businesses to advertise flexibly and the impacts on the character of a locality and/or public safety. Currently recruitment was in progress in respect of vacancies in the development control staffing establishment. Once this was completed, a coordinated approach would be adopted to deal with unauthorised advertisements, as part of an overall approach to enforcement matters. In the first instance those responsible for them would be invited to apply for advertisement consent.

In response to Member's questions officers advised as follows:

- (a) advertisements on vehicles which were permanently parked required consent;
- (b) tables and chairs outside restaurants, cafés etc. required planning permission and a licence from the Borough Council as the licensing authority;
- (c) advertisements on roundabouts could be investigated by planning enforcement officers;
- (d) businesses could seek to regularise 'A' Boards by applying for advertisement consent and a licence. Impacts on amenity and public safety would be considered in determining such applications for advertisement consent;
- (e) it was acknowledged in a previous case involving a public house that, whilst the licence had been granted, advertisement consent had not. In relation to this situation it was mentioned that the cumulative impact of advertisements was a factor in reaching such a decision;
- (f) in the case of 'A' Boards not situated in the highway but on a forecourt these would not normally require consent. However, the situation was that ownership of the land would require checking. If the area was adopted by the County Council then its consent as a highway authority would also be required;

- (g) the issue of shops displaying wares on the pavement was not within the scope of the current review but such situations could be investigated by Planning Officers; and
- (h) Planning Officers would be required to maintain a check for unauthorised advertisements when out on site visits etc. Town and Parish Councils were also a means whereby the Council were notified of these. Complaints could also be made on line to the Council.

The Working Party noted this report and that the Review of Street Vending/'A' Boards would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 October 2014.

17. Article 4 Directions

Councillor Nettleton referred to the dichotomy which had arisen in relation to the making of Article 4 Directions for the Conservation Areas in the town whereby some householders had carried out works to their properties before the Directions were made, whereas other householders had been prevented from carrying out the same or similar works after the Directions had been made. He acknowledged that in some situations works had been carried out despite the existence of the Article 4 Directions, and therefore these were unauthorised and he questioned why no enforcement action had been taken in respect of such cases.

Officers responded by advising that the situation that existed was complex, particularly as different levels of Article 4 Directions were involved resulting in different Permitted Development Rights being removed. There was a backlog of enforcement cases currently but despite some of the present cases being several years old they could still be the subject of enforcement action. Plans were in place to address the backlog, and there would also be efforts to obtain Heritage Lottery Funding for the town's Conservation Areas. The Working Party noted this report and that issues in relation to enforcement were in hand under existing officer delegated authority. Therefore no further action was needed at the current time.

18. Street Scene

(i) Litter Bins

Maps showing the number of bins installed by wards and the distribution of litter bins throughout the town were tabled. Officers advised that the frequency for emptying litter bins was either daily or weekly or fortnightly or 8 weekly, as appropriate to their usage. There were future plans to review staff arrangements in the Cleansing Team to secure greater efficiency. Litter bins were tagged at the time of emptying to ascertain how quickly they were filled up. A 'Big Tidy Up' campaign was being promoted by Keep Britain Tidy during October. Details of this were available on the following link www.thebigtidyup.org/home/1221.

In response to Members' questions officers advised as follows:

- (a) there was consultation with Planning and Conservation Officers in siting new litter bins. On occasions there were opportunities for re-locating a bin from somewhere else;
- (b) the contents of litter/dog waste bins were disposed of at land fill sites; and

- (c) 'Team Pay Back' were used to carry out litter picking and general tidying up in specific locations as directed by the Council.

Councillor Nettleton posed the question whether some bins which were clearly not being used, because of the presence of litter in the street or amenity area around them, and others which were regularly the subject of vandalism should be removed. He suggested that this could result in a saving at a time the Council was being faced with cutbacks on spending. The Chairman acknowledged that this suggestion was worthy of consideration by the officers and that self help by residents and communities was also an alternative in respect of litter clearance at a time of reduced public resources.

(ii) Verge Trimming/Weed Control

Members' raised matters as follows:

- (a) there was a issue in respect of grounds maintenance as to which organisation was responsible for a particular area of land, and specific reference was made to the untidy state of verges in Abbott Road. Officers undertook to investigate this;
- (b) in relation to a reference to weed growth in gutters there was a reluctance to use chemical agents to remove this because of the danger of escape of substances into water courses. The Council's practice was to use hand tools to remove such growths; and
- (c) there were situations of growths overhanging from verges of cycle paths. Officers undertook to arrange clearance of these.

The Working Party asked that their thanks be extended to the Cleansing Team, for their responsiveness and good work in dealing with matters referred to them by Councillors.

19. Future Work Programme

- (a) Vinery Road (Holywater Meadow) Car Park

Councillor Nettleton reported that, whilst he was not the Ward Member, he had discussed with officers the issue of this car park being used for long term parking by hospital staff. He understood that it had been previously decided by Cabinet that waiting time was to be restricted to 2 hours and that residents in nearby Stamford Court would be issued with parking permits. Councillor Mrs Stamp advised that, after careful consideration and discussion with ward members, it had not been operationally possible to implement this decision and it had been decided, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, that signage be erected instead to discourage all day parking. Officers advised that a report on car parking would be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December when it would be appropriate to clarify the situation regarding the Vinery Road Car Park, and regularise arrangements.

- (b) Pedestrianisation arrangements for Abbeygate Street

It was noted that consultation by the County Council on the review of the current pedestrianisation arrangements would be referred to a future

meeting of the Working Party. Recommendations as to a response to the consultation would be made to Cabinet.

Members having future items for discussion by the Working Party were asked to notify them to officers.

20. Dates of Future Meetings

The Working Party had previously approved the following dates for future meetings:

9 December 2014; and
10 March 2015.

Both meetings are on Tuesdays and will commence at 5.00 pm.

The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm.

**R D EVERITT
CHAIRMAN**