

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Hitchin Town Talk Notes – Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2010** **6.15 pm – 7.15pm at the Gurdwara, Wilbury Way, Hitchin**

The Chair, Councillor Judi Billing, welcomed everybody to the Town Talk. She also welcomed Councillor Tricia Cowley, Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs, John Robinson, Strategic Director of Customer Services, North Herts District Council and Inspector Simon Tabert, Hitchin Police.

The next Town Talk, to take place before a Hitchin Area Committee meeting, will be on Tuesday 9th March, 2010 at the Roman Catholic Church Hall, Nightingale Road, Hitchin.

#### **Issues raised by members of the public present**

- Coopers Yard
- Charlton Village
- Hitchin Committee
- Bancroft Hall
- Roads
- River Walk – Bridge Street – Hermitage Road
- Scrap Lorries
- Police

#### **Police**

Inspector Tabert said that Hitchin was a safe place to go out and crime was down 20% and there was also reduced shoplifting. He did warn of risks with vehicles and homes and asked that people tell their friends and neighbours to be more aware when leaving their house or vehicle.

The dispersal order was working well with warnings given to 12 people, but no arrests made, meaning that the warnings not to return to the area were being heeded.

He said that the link with Police, PCSO's and the Town Rangers was a very positive and information exchanged to help reduce crime.

He said that actions in relation to scrap lorries take place at regular intervals and that it is difficult under the Road Traffic Act to recognise an obvious definition of what is seen as a dangerous load. He welcomed any information that the public gather with regard to scrap lorries.

## **Roads**

A resident asked about the current state of the roads especially with dangerous potholes. He was reminded that roads are the responsibility of Herts Highways but John Robinson said that as far as he understood emergency repairs are being carried out currently on the more dangerous potholes and he had seen this in Letchworth and that after these emergency repairs have been carried out a more thorough overview of roads will take place.

It was also mentioned that the North Herts District Council website had a link for reporting faults and that this website or Herts Highways website was where to go to report road issues. It was also mentioned that if everybody reported faults (example your neighbours or relatives), 10 reports were better than one.

## **Scrap Lorries**

There is an increase in scrap lorries through Hitchin and insecure looking loads. See the Police report re 'insecure looking loads'.

Councillor Judi Billing stated that residents of Bearton Road had a number of photographs including number plates which will be passed to the police.

Councillor David Billing mentioned that there was to be a tribunal in March with regard to the scrap premises and alleged breaches of planning control at the site.

## **Bancroft Hall**

A questioner raised the fact that he had been requesting permission to open a café in Bancroft Hall for some time but nothing had happened. He was told that he would be involved with consultation along with other users of Bancroft Hall and the Park in general with regard to the proposal to improve the park facilities. It is expected that this consultation will take place in Spring of this year.

## **Charlton Village**

A resident of Charlton Village requested to raise three issues.

1. The difficulties the village is having with Contractors traffic which is causing some problems with access. Inspector Tabert said he would speak to the police concerned to check on this to see if it is an unlawful obstruction. Also a meeting is to be held with Councillor Allison Ashley and a planning officer to discuss the issues.
2. He also reported that the Village Pub is again closed. He met with the brewery who are looking for someone new to take over but also they might consider selling as freehold. He was asked if the Village had the business skills to consider taking over the Pub. He said that they would love to have it and there had been talk about this previously but that the brewery put in unacceptable terms. He added that in the current talk with the brewery there was a possibility they might consider more favourable terms.

3. A small sub committee had been formed by the Village residents to look at the possibility of producing a Village Plan/Design Statement. The sub committee were to meet in the next few weeks and he would come back at a later stage to inform Committee of progress and request support and perhaps finance to enable the Village to achieve this.

### **River Walk**

It was mentioned that it was thought that a river access route would be available from Bridge Street past the flat development in Jill Grey Place through to Hermitage Road. It now seems that there is a notice saying 'private road'.

**Action** – This will be investigated and reported back through a Town Talk or Town Talk notes.

### **Coopers Yard/Coopers Alley**

It was mentioned that there is a temporary diversion on the footpath at Coopers Alley to Tilehouse Street. Information was requested about this footpath.

**Action** – Herts Highways will be asked for information about this footpath and the temporary diversion.

**Action Update** – The footpath is accessible and will be resurfaced by the Contractors at the end of the build.

### **Hitchin Committee**

A questioner raised the issue of Churchgate and that he had spoken to the Chair at the recent Councillors Surgery in the Market Place, as it had said on the Minutes of the last Hitchin Area Committee that there would be a Churchgate update at tonight's meeting. He had been told that there was to be a special Hitchin Committee meeting at 9.30pm convened for this purpose following a Scrutiny meeting at 7.30pm.

He was informed that yes a special meeting had been convened of Scrutiny and Hitchin Area Committee to discuss this and that it had been agreed by the respective Chairs to hold the two meetings together on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2010, at Roman Catholic Church Hall, Nightingale Road at 7.30pm. The meeting would involve a Part 1 and Part 2.

### **Snow effects on Waste Collection and pavements**

It was mentioned that NHDC were very helpful when contacted about waste collection issues during the recent snowy conditions.

It was also mentioned that the pavements were in a terrible condition and that it is felt people were not clearing paths because of the risk of being sued. It was stated that this is a myth and that it is very unlikely that one would be sued if you clear your path. It was added that as individuals we should do what we can to help each other.

It was said that the County Council website gives good advice.

### **Transition Towns Meeting**

It was announced that there will be a meeting in the Lucas Room at Hitchin Town Hall at 7.30pm on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 in respect of the Transition Towns concept and there will be a presentation.