

Hitchin Town Talk Notes – Tuesday 8th June 2010
6.30 pm – 7.15pm at Westmill Community Centre, John Barker Place, Hitchin.

The Chair, Councillor Judi Billing, welcomed everybody to the Town Talk, the first of the new Civic Year.

The next Town Talk, to take place before a Hitchin Area Committee meeting, will be on Tuesday 13th July, 2010, at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, 50 Wilbury Way, Hitchin, SG4 0TP.

Issues raised

- Churchgate Liaison Forum
- Lawn Tennis Club
- Remit of Simons – Churchgate Development
- Officers Communication/Churchgate Development
- Hitchin Councillors – Disappointing
- Older Peoples Bus Passes

Bus Passes

It was raised that there is anxiety among older people regarding the future of their bus passes. They really like their passes and don't want to lose them. It was requested that the future of bus passes be reported back.

Action – The concern of elderly people re the future of bus passes be passed on and the answer reported back.

Tennis Club

He speaker started by saying how the Tennis Club was an asset to the town and should be looked after. The Club are prepared to spend £100,000 on a new Club building but are experiencing opposition as to the renewal of the lease. The Club's lease has five years left and there is some reluctance to build without a longer lease.

This issue will be discussed as part of an agenda item in the Area Committee meeting following the Town Talk.

Simons Remit

A speaker requested information re the Simons Remit. He said that the public voted previously not to build round St Mary's. It was said that a few Councillors did vote against or abstain as they were concerned that the Simons proposals were not like the planning brief.

Simons had been selected as the preferred development partner

and had to put together their vision which they are now consulting with the public towards a planning application. The consultation lasts for a year and the public's views will be put into the pot. There will be plenty of opportunity to hear views through the Town Talks and Councillors Surgeries as well as through the Churchgate Liaison Forum.

Churchgate Liaison Forum

A resident raised the question of the chairing of the Churchgate Liaison Forum as it was understood that Hitchin Councillors would be taking it in turn to chair this forum. It was stated that the Churchgate Liaison Forum was purely for residents of Hitchin to let their Councillors know their wishes and they would take their views forward.

To maintain consistency the Forum should find an independent Chair.

Officer Communication/Churchgate

A resident complained of a lack of response to correspondence sent over a couple of months. Also that some felt it disappointing that the Churchgate Association of Retailers were not able to join the Churchgate Liaison Forum because the organisation did not meet the criteria.

This would be investigated by Members.

Hitchin Councillors – Disappointing

Some residents feel very disappointed at the Council meeting in February. With the move of the Market, redevelopment of St Mary's Square and Portmill Lane car park and that with the exception of 3 items there were 20 variations from the current Churchgate Planning brief.

The speaker had visited the exhibition in the Church several times and found very few Councillors present. At the Churchgate Liaison Forum there were no apologies from Councillors and only one turned up.

He was told that a number of apologies had been given and that the Forum meeting clashed with a number of Council meetings.