

**PARKING STRATEGY WORKING PARTY held at 6.30 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES
SAFFRON WALDEN on 10 JANUARY 2000**

Present:- Councillor M A Hibbs - Chairman
Councillors Mrs M A Caton, Mrs D Cornell, R J Copping, R A Merrion, R J O'Neill, A R Row and G Sell

Officers in attendance:- M Dellow, Mrs T Halford, Mrs S McLagan,
M T Purkiss and A Stewart

I. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R J Copping drew attention to his interest insofar as he was member of the Dunmow Town Strategy Group and Great Dunmow Town Council, Councillors Mrs D Cornell and M A Hibbs declared their respective interests insofar as they were members of Saffron Walden Town Council and Councillor G Sell declared an interest insofar as he was a member of Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council.

I. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

I. BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute PS 21 - Resident Parking Scheme - Saffron Walden

It was noted that a reply had still not been received from Essex County Council concerning a proposed amendment to the order to permit short term parking. However, work on this project had now been assigned to a different officer at the County Council and it was hoped that the matter would be addressed without further delay.

(ii) Minute PS22 - Letter from Great Dunmow Town Council

Councillor Copping reported that Great Dunmow Town Council were very satisfied with the outcome of the deliberations on the Parking Strategy.

I. FEEDBACK FROM CAR PARK TOUR

Councillor Hibbs apologised that he had not been able to attend the recent tour of Council car parks. However, he understood that other Councillors had found the exercise to be extremely useful and a number of suggestions had been forthcoming particularly in relation to signage.

The following suggestions would be followed up by officers and discussed with the County Highways Department and costed proposals would be presented to the next meeting of the Working Party:-

Stansted Mountfitchet

New signs to be erected on the Cambridge Road on entering Stansted at both ends of the village detailing car park availability at both Crafton Green and Lower Street.

Enlarge existing sign opposite entrance to Crafton Green Car Park and incorporate information about Parish Council Offices.

Provide new sign to Lower Street Car Park at High Lane turning off the Newport Road.

Provide a new sign from the Grove Hill approach into Stansted indicating Lower Street Car Park.

Provide a new sign on Church Road (coming from Mountfitchet High School) indicating Lower Street Car Park.

Provide new signage on the A120 from both Takeley and Braintree. NB: free parking is only available between 10.00am - 4.00pm.

Install an earlier sign on Stortford Road indicating Free Parking at Chequers and Angel Lane (including times) and long stay at White Street.

Renew sign on High Street for White Street Car Park to incorporate information about the Catholic Church and the recycling site and indicate that the Council Office Car Park is free on both Saturdays and Sundays. Produce the same sign on the opposite side of the road in between the Petrol Station and the Council Offices (ie 2 from westward and 1 from eastward).

Saffron Walden

Enlarge the Windmill Hill signage showing Swan Meadow as both a shoppers and visitors car/coach park.

Erect new signs within the curtilage of the Council Offices indicating Swan Meadow as above and the Common as a short stay car park. Also include sign stating that Council Offices were available, free of charge, on Saturdays and Sundays.

Erect a new sign on the roundabout so it can be seen from Little Walden Road and Ashdon Road indicating Swan Meadow.

Erect a new sign at the end of Church Street indicating Swan Meadow.

Enlarge signage opposite War Memorial at the top of the High Street for Swan Meadow raising awareness.

NB: It was proposed that all the signs should indicate the number of spaces available in each car park.

Officers would also look at the need for car park signs at Thaxted.

Councillor Hibbs also asked that Officers look at the maintenance of the vandalised signs at the Swan Meadow car park.

During the tour it had been suggested that investigations be initiated as to the possibility of having a mini roundabout installed at the Lower Street junction at Stansted in conjunction with the Parish and Town Council and Officers agreed to pursue this matter.

Members considered that once the costed proposals had been approved at the next meeting of the Working Party consultation should be undertaken with the various Town and Parish Councils and the Tourism Officer.

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES - OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Community Development Manager reported on outstanding issues relating to the introduction of new charges and the proposed amendments to the Resident Parking Scheme. It had been noted earlier in the meeting that a response was still awaited from Essex County Council concerning visitor parking being incorporated within the Resident Parking Scheme.

In relation to promotional maps for the car parks Members felt that it would be more useful to prepare a separate map for each centre perhaps incorporating other promotional information, but it would be inappropriate to design maps in isolation.

The final outstanding issue related to the production of a Parking Strategy for Uttlesford and it was hoped that this would be produced by the end of the year.

Councillor Sell asked whether it would be possible for local residents to obtain season tickets for the Crafton Green car park which was currently underused. Officers explained that this was not permissible under the current Order. The situation could be reviewed at the end of the 18 month trial period. However, it could be pointed out to residents that no charges were payable after 6pm and the car park could be used for overnight parking. It would also be appropriate to discuss with the Parish Council ways of promoting better use of the car parks in Stansted Mountfitchet.

I. **DECRIMINALISATION**

Members considered a report from Councillor O'Neill of a meeting of the Parking Committee for East Anglia which he had attended on 3 December 1999. Councillor O'Neill stated that it was evident that some of the urban authorities in Essex wished to introduce decriminalised schemes and it was probable that such authorities could benefit financially from decriminalisation. However, Essex County Council preferred a countywide approach and intended to commission a study during the early part of this year.

At the meeting of the Parking Committee, Councillor O'Neill had put forward the view that Uttlesford Members were far from persuaded that decriminalisation was the right solution for a largely rural district. It would be out of proportion to the scale of our problem and would give no real additional powers that the Council did not already have. Also, it would not be financially viable, because unlike urban authorities it would not generate the revenue to make it pay for itself and would probably mean an increase in staff and costs at a time when the Council was facing severe budgetary difficulties.

The Head of Community and Leisure Services considered that the Council needed to be in a position to consider the impact in Uttlesford if the Police withdrew Traffic Warden patrols. Whilst it was generally felt that decriminalisation was not appropriate to Uttlesford it was understood that if it was introduced on a countywide basis it could be that urban areas would offset the costs of the more rural areas.

It was clear that no Members of the Working Party supported decriminalisation and it was considered that the existing Traffic Warden service provided more comprehensive control. Essex County Council would be advised that Uttlesford considers that, being a rural area, the considerations are very different from urban areas and the Council must be fully involved in any review process.

I. **FAIRYCROFT ROAD CAR PARK**

Councillor Hibbs referred to his meeting with the staff of Waitrose and asked whether the staff could be offered season tickets at Swan Meadow. It was reported that when the extension to the car park was opened there would be some additional season ticket spaces available and the matter could be reconsidered at that time.

I. **NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be arranged in consultation with the Chairman once a response had been received from Essex County Council concerning the proposals for signage.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.