

**BEACONSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2011  
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, BEACONSFIELD**

**Present:** R.H. Keith (In the Chair), P. Bastiman (PB), K.M. Brown (KB), G. Corney (GC), G. Davie (GD), M. Denyer (MD), G. Grover (GG), J.G. Lowen-Cooper (JL-C), J. Legg (JL), S. Mackintosh (SM), A.J. Pike (AP), J.P.A. Read (JR), J.L. Simmonds (JS) and A.M. Walters (AW).

**Apologies:** Cllrs. Jones and Saunders.

**Absent:** None.

**Also Present:** County Cllrs. Adrian Busby and Peter Hardy  
Mr. Rob Brighouse (Managing Director, Chiltern Railways)  
Mr. Rob Munday (Local Beaconsfield Manager, Chiltern Railways)

**Minutes taken by Margaret Mathie**

**ITEM 1. ADDRESS BY MR ROB BRIGHOUSE, MANAGING DIRECTOR CHILTERN RAILWAYS**

**Action**

The Mayor welcomed Mr. Rob Brighouse, Managing Director, Chiltern Railways and Mr. Rob Munday (Local Beaconsfield Manager, Chiltern Railways) to the meeting and explained that Mr. Brighouse had been invited to briefly address the meeting and to answer any questions which Members or the public wished to raise.

The Mayor pointed out that as a daily commuter into London he had experienced first hand all the recent problems which had occurred following the decision by Chiltern Railways to change timetables in September 2011. He then invited Mr. Brighouse to address the meeting and asked for his comments on the problems which had been caused by the timetable changes and what measures he and Chiltern Railway intended to introduce to solve those problems.

Mr. Brighouse thanked the Mayor and Town Council for inviting him to the meeting and then gave a brief resume of his career in the railway industry which had included time spent working in the UK, Australia and Hong Kong. He had joined Chiltern Railways in 2000 as Projects Director and was now Managing Director of the company, as Adrian Shooter, who had visited Town Council meetings would be retiring from the post at the end of 2011.

Mr. Brighouse explained that Chiltern Railways was an investment led business which had taken over the Chiltern line in 1996, and that £600m had been spent upgrading the route after the existence of the line had been threatened with closure some 20-25 years ago.

Mr. Brighouse also explained that Chiltern Railways was not subsidised by the government, in fact this year they would be paying £3.7m to the government and over the next 5 years the payment would be £60m. They were currently half way through their 20 year franchise.

Mr. Brighouse reported that with effect from the following week, as part of the revised service following on from the problems which had been experienced since the introduction of changes and the new timetable in September, that more carriages would be added to trains going into Marylebone. He said that an extra 320 seats would be added from Beaconsfield and gave details of which train times would have more seats. It was hoped that the addition of these extra seats would ease the problem of overcrowding.

Mr. Brighouse said that whilst his aim had been to carry out a major re-cast in May 2012, the government had stated that this would not be possible due the London Olympics in Summer 2012. Therefore, major changes and improvements would not be introduced until December 2012. Mr. Brighouse said that his aim was to provide a better service to railway users and that he was committed to achieving this.

The Mayor then opened up the discussion and invited members of the public to ask questions of Mr. Brighouse.

A lady in the public gallery referred to the lack of publicity by Chiltern Railways of the two public meetings which they had organised, one of which had been held in High Wycombe and one at the Bellhouse Hotel. She considered that Chiltern Railways were not trying hard enough with communications to their travelling public and that far more effort needed to be made on their part.

<p>Mr. Mike Lawson a Gerrards Cross Parish Councillor said that he travelled into London from Gerrards Cross once a week on a regular basis and that there had been one problem or another on each journey since September 2011. Gerrards Cross Parish Council had recently conducted a survey of commuters of which there were three positive responses out of 11 replies. The main complaints were having to stand all the way into London, queuing, lack of information etc. Mr. Lawson also mentioned that he had heard a rumour from platform staff that Chiltern Railways did not have sufficient numbers of train drivers on the route.</p> <p>Mr. Brighouse responded that Chiltern Railways did not have any shortage of drivers and that the information Mr. Lawson had was totally incorrect. He pointed out that loyalty to Chiltern Railways amongst train drivers was very high. When the new adjustments had had time to settle down, he was sure that commuters would see an improvement, but time was needed.</p> <p>Mr. Lawrence Dunhill of the Bucks Free Press queried why there would not be a new timetable until after the London Olympics in July/August 2012. Mr. Brighouse replied the government had said that timetable changes could not be made until after the Olympic Games had finished in 2012, and therefore the new timetable would be introduced in December 2012.</p> <p>Mr. Jack May said he ran a student website in High Wycombe and raised the matter of the poor communications which Chiltern Railways had with their customers, and the difficulties they appeared to have in getting messages across to the rail travelling public. He complained that trains were frequently cancelled and yet staff at the railways stations did not know about the cancellations or what was happening with replacement trains. He suggested that Chiltern Railways should consider using Twitter and even the electronic boards at stations to give out information about trains which had been cancelled.</p> <p>Mr. Brighouse replied that Chiltern Railways were currently looking at the customer service boards and other ways of improving communications with rail users. He said that frontline staff on platforms needed to be better informed and there was no defence of ill-informed staff and poor communications.</p> <p>Cllr. Legg raised the matter of the footpath which led from Beaconsfield Railway Station upto Caledon Close and asked if Chiltern Railways could look at the lack of lighting on this footpath which was very well used by people travelling by train. The lack of light on the footpath posed a potential danger to people using the path after dark.</p> <p>Mr. Rob Munday agreed to investigate the matter of lack of lighting on the footpath from the railway station to Caledon Close.</p> <p>Cllr. Bastiman pointed out that he was also a regular commuter into London Marylebone and had experienced the recent problems first hand. He enquired if Chiltern Railways would be offering discounted fares for commuters who travelled from, say, High Wycombe, Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross because of all the problems which had been experienced over the past three months. Mr. Brighouse replied that whilst Chiltern Railways wished to apologise for the problems over the last three months, they were unable to offer any discounts, particularly as he had previously pointed out that Chiltern Railways ran as a loss making business. However, Mr. Brighouse did mention the fact that season ticket holders had been sent a letter offering them, for a limited period, a 5% discount when they renewed their season ticket.</p> <p>The Mayor thanked Mr. Brighouse and Mr. Munday for attending the meeting which was much appreciated by Councillors and the members of the public present at the meeting. The Mayor also thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting and asking questions.</p>	
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<b>ITEM 2. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>	
Questions from the public had been dealt with under the previous item.	<b>Action</b>
<b>ITEM 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
These were as set out above.	<b>Action</b>
<b>ITEM 4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING</b>	
The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2011 were received, confirmed and signed.	<b>Action</b>
<b>ITEM 5. MAYOR'S REPORT AND DEPUTY MAYOR'S REPORT</b>	
Members considered written reports by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor on their attendance at	<b>Action</b>

events and functions since the last Town Council meeting.	
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**ITEM 6. HOLTSPUR BANK NATURE RESERVE**

<p>Consideration was given to the minutes of the Holtspur Bank Nature Reserve Management Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2011. Cllr. Grover apologised for the fact that due to an oversight on his part, the minutes had had to be sent out electronically rather than with the agenda paperwork.</p> <p>The Mayor pointed out that the Management Committee should not be allocating actions and tasks to the Town Clerk.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Holtspur Bank Nature Reserve Management Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2011 be received and adopted.</p>	<b>Action</b>
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**ITEM 7. REPORT OF COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

<p>Cllr. Busby reported that a consultation had just commenced regarding home to school transport charges. Cllr. Mike Appleyard would be hosting a Question and Answers meeting at Beaconsfield High School on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012 at 7.30pm, which members of the public were invited to attend. A decision would be made by Bucks County Council in February/March 2012.</p> <p>Cllr. Busby then referred to the fact that Thames Valley Police were reviewing their Neighbourhood Policing areas. The north and south wards of Beaconsfield would be merged if the proposals currently being consulted on were finally approved. He pointed out that the Town Council probably needed to ensure that the number of officers based at Beaconsfield was not reduced as a result of the two wards being merged. The Chief Constable had given an assurance that numbers of officers would not be reduced, but the situation would require monitoring.</p> <p>Cllr. Busby then referred to the fact that Bucks &amp; Milton Keynes Fire &amp; Rescue Service emergency control rooms might be operated in conjunction and from the Cambridgeshire control room. At present the control room was located in Aylesbury, but assurances had been given that a move to share control room and operate out of Cambridgeshire would not be detrimental to residents of Buckinghamshire, as local fire stations had good "local" knowledge of the county. County Cllr. Hardy said that he had nothing to add to the comprehensive report given by Cllr. Busby.</p> <p>Cllr. Lowen-Cooper then mentioned rumours circulating in town that the last of the 11+ examinations would be held in September 2012 and enquired how this would affect Beaconsfield High School. Cllr. Busby reminded Members that schools could now elect to become Academies and that this would revolutionise the school system, in that schools themselves would be able to select and set its own admission criteria. His understanding was that Bucks CC would continue to operate the 11+ system for one more year and if Academy schools wanted the 11+ retained then it would remain. However, Bucks CC would not be determining the future of the 11+ system. Cllr. Busby agreed to consult Cllr. Mike Appleyard who was the County Council's Portfolio Holder for Education and come back to confirm whether the September 2012 intake of pupils at Beaconsfield High School would be the last intake as a result of having sat the 11+ examinations.</p> <p>Cllr. Busby reported that there were several public consultation currently on the Bucks County Council's website. Cllr. Walters pointed out that the County Council could not expect the general public to look regularly at the BCC website and asked that consideration be given to improving the way BCC alerted the public and parish/town councils to the existence of public consultations on its website.</p> <p>Cllrs. Busby and Hardy left the meeting at 8.47pm.</p>	<b>Action</b>
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**ITEM 8. REPORT OF DISTRICT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

<p>Cllr. Walters pointed out that the next Full SBDC Council Meeting would be held on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011.</p>	<b>Action</b>
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**ITEM 9. OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE – 3<sup>rd</sup> NOVEMBER 2011**

<p>RESOLVED that the minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 be received and adopted.</p>	<b>Action</b>
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**ITEM 10. COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE – 10<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2011**

<p>RESOLVED that the minutes of the Community Safety Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011 be received and adopted.</p>	<b>Action</b>
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