

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9th April 2015

Present:	
Name	Organisation
Cllr Gul Khan	RBC
Cllr Sandra Vickers	RBC
Carol & Michael Froud	
Jack Beard	
Ruth Johnson	S A Central Club for the Retired
J A Ingram	
Norma Parris	West Indian Women's Circle
Tomiko Morley	Redlands Globe
Brian Morley	Redlands NAG
Miriam Sparkes	
Miss Joan Walker	NHS Retirement Fellowship
Nina Crispin	RBC
Douglas Dean	Thames Valley Pensioners Convention
Tony Hall	Civil Service Pensioner Alliance, Reading Group
Elaine Jalland	
Pearl Gibson	
Patience Odunsi	
Margaret Robertson	
Janice Scruby	
Jean Hutton	
Brenda Jenkins	Macmillan Cancer Support
Brian Oatway	
Diane Seydoux	
Brian Haines	Southcote Forum
Dianne Hilfi	
Judith El-Nager	
John Walford	Whitley Community Development Association
Mark Drukker	
Louise Keane	Alzheimer's Society
Derek Woad	
Mrs Mickie Robinson	Firtree
Martin McDonald	Alzheimer's Society
Jeni & Ken Tucker	
Lorna Walker	
Ravinder Nijjhar	
Shaheen Kausar	Reading Community Learning Centre
Princess Cudjoe	

Neil Scott	Reading Buses
Peter & Jan Staples	
Valerie Bond	
Peter Absolom	Readibus
J Penn	
Jill Jefferis	
Bridget Chubb	Firtree
Barbara Hobbs	
Brian Tull	
Matt Taylor	Age UK Reading
John Wilkinson	
Soon Heshe	RBC
Tracy Newport	
Vanessa Hart	

Apologies	
Name	Organisation
Cllr Rachel Eden	RBC
Cllr Rose Williams	RBC
Cllr Meri O'Connell	RBC
Janette Searle	RBC
Dorothy Witchelo	
Gina Harris	
Liz Grugeon	
Dalvinder Jammu	Berkshire Carers Service
Dolhi Bhalla	
Colin Ferguson	
Michelle Brown	
Heather Cresswell	
Deborah Wilson	
Carol Valentine	
Eileen Atwell	
Ann Worsley	

Agenda item 1: Previous minutes & matters arising
Cllr Gul Khan

The minutes of the meeting on 6th February 2015 were approved. The minutes are available from the Older People's Working Group page on the RBC website at:
www.reading.gov.uk/opwg

- As part of the deal, the developers will improve the statue island and resurface the road.
- The work in the area is due to be completed by the end of 2016.
- Thames Tower will be recladed in red brick.

The new Southwest interchange:

- Work has now been completed.



Questions/Answers

Q1. Could RBC Planning Department have said 'No' to extra storeys?

A1. The Network Management Team is implementing the decision to add extra storeys made by elected members. This will represent a good development for the whole area. Maybe it was not expected that we would need to put an extra crane on the roof, but we are trying to minimize the impact for everybody.

Q2. As a result of closing Blagrave Street, will there be any effect on the underground car park of the station?

A2. No, the road closure will only affect the bus stop in Blagrave Street. People will still be able to access the underground car park of the station.

Q3. Station Road is already too congested for buses. Can't we wait for Station Hill to be flattened before doing work on Station Road? The Council should have joined up thinking and planning this properly.

A3. Yes, demolition work has started on Station Hill. The area will become a 'pocket park' with a mix of residential and retail developments.

In an ideal world, we would like to coordinate things. However we work closely alongside other developments in the area so that users are not affected.

There is a lot of work in the town centre due to sewer collapses/upgrade and we can't plan ahead for those. The town centre is constrained by the current sewage network.

There are currently no plans for a bus station. The facilities developed on the North / South and South West sides of the station for traffic interchanges will include bus drop off.

Q4. No thought has been given to through traffic on the South side of the station. Reading is trying to accommodate bus traffic in a 19th century planned town centre. We have two options, either to flat out the town centre and to rebuild it as office accommodation town. Reading Buses seem to have all authority in Reading.

A4. Yes, in an ideal world we would have looked into that option. There has been a massive investment made to improve Reading Station - the developments made around Reading Station have been designed to accommodate that.

Q5. There are no facilities whatsoever on the North interchange of the station, no shopping/no toilets.

A5. There may be in the future. We are working with Network Rail to improve this. There is a very good CCTV network between the North and South Interchanges.

Q6. What is a pocket market? Is it a permanent fixture?

A6. It is a small public space where events / exhibits can take place. The pocket market will be an interim facility.

Q7. What will happen to the pocket market after?

A7. It won't exist any longer; it will be replaced by another developed area.

Q8. Is there going to be a bus depot in Reading?

A8. There are no plans for a bus station in Reading. There is a bus depot in **Great Knollys Street**. We are always looking at improving what we currently have and things do change. This may change in the future.

Reading Buses have a facility on West Street where drivers can access a restaurant and toilet facilities.

The bus stop near Apex Plaza may be relocated.

Q9. Once the crane has been put on top of Thames Tower, how will they bring it down again?

A9. It won't take 6 weeks, but there will be another week end closure of the area at the end of next year or beginning of 2017.

Q10. There is no pedestrian crossing in the area outside of Blagrove Street near Rail Air Link. We are concerned about this, we were told that it would be replaced. A majority of people feel that there is a need to reconsider the current crossing arrangements in Blagrove Street. We ask the Council to reconsider the pedestrian crossing to be replaced.

A10. The dynamics of the town centre have changed in response to the new traffic systems. We introduced a pedestrian island at the crossing of Forbury / Blagrove Street.

The pedestrian crossings near Rail Air Link and in Blagrove Street will not be replaced. At this current moment in time, there is no indication that a crossing will be provided.

Q11. Is it worth contacting Councillors to put a case forward for a crossing?

A11. Yes, certainly, you can. They are the elected members and will look at the requests you submit to them.

Q12. Will National Express be relocated to Reading Station?

A12. We don't know, we will check.

Cllr Khan: Reading Buses are one of the best networks in the Country. This town is progressing through Reading Borough Council and your cooperation. People wanted to get rid of buses from the town centre.

Agenda item 3: Access to Public Facilities around the town centre *Simon Hollingberry, Reading BC*

Public Toilets

Building Cleaning Services is responsible for cleaning of :

- 300 Housing Communal Areas including estate litter picking.
- Offices including Civic, Youth and Community, Schools, Station Subway, Explorer signs throughout the Borough.
We are in negotiation with colleagues in Highways to wash the traffic lights.
- The working day starts at 04:30 and finishes at around 22:30
- 1923hrs per week = 99,996hrs per year (man hour)

RBC has the following Public Toilets in and around the Borough:

- 15 Semi Automatic Toilet Units (Unisex) - but none in the town centre
- 2 Traditional Units (Male and Female) - at Cemetery Junction and Martin's Precinct.
- 2 Uri Lifts (nigh time economy) - young people out and about at night can be prosecuted if they don't use the Uri lift.

There is a small charge of 20p to use the toilets, there are no damages to the toilets. The unit in Cemetery Junction is free of charge but it attracts problems - drug abuse etc...

Public Accessible Toilet Wikipedia Definition:

"a bathroom, restroom, latrine, comfort room, powder room, toilet room, washroom, water closet, WC, Public Lavatory, Lav, Public Convenience's, Loo. Whatever you call it we all need them !!!!

Important point to note:

The provision of public toilets is a non-statutory provision. NON is the most important word here. If you Google Public Toilet Closures you will get pages and pages of news stories of Local Authorities closing Public Toilets, due to lack of funds.

In Reading, there are no plans at this time to close or curtail this service.

In the last 5 years £1m has been invested in modernising and updating units.

Quote

Raymond Martin Director of the British Toilet Association confirmed recently that " the industry believes that 40% of public toilets have been closed in the last 10 years..... Publically Accessible toilets are a VITAL public service/requirement. Failure to be able to find and access a good clean public toilet can cause considerable distress to many people when they are away from home."

RBC are members of the BTA (British Toilet Association) who are the campaigning body for the provision of publically accessible toilets. The BTA are at present working a Toilet Map for the whole of the UK. RBC will feature on this map For further details please contact:

www.britloos.co.uk

RBC also support Public Toilets UK which campaign to improve our health and well being Newsletter is produced on a monthly basis.

The contact is Gillian.kemp@ntlworld.com / www.facebook.com/PTUK

If you would like copies of the newsletter please contact

building.cleaning@reading.gov.uk

Changing Places

Funding provided through RBC (£50k) to enable a Changing Places toilet to be built. Changing Places was launched 10 years ago, there are now 750 around the country.

What are they?

They are toilet for disabled people who have a carer. They contain a hoist, a shower facility and a baby changing unit.

Reading's Changing Places Toilet is located on the first floor of the Broad Street Mall.

Reading Provision

All Reading Public Toilets have provision for disabled patrons - most of these units are Unisex and can be operated by a Radar Key (Free of Charge). Non Key holders will still have to pay 20p. When the review was carried out before the modernisation plan it was decided to concentrate on Public Toilets around the Borough as there is not a perceived problem with Public Accessible toilets in the Town Centre.

The Uri Lifts were installed to cater for the Nighttime Economy and are located in Butter Market and Hosier Street adjacent to the Night Service Bus Stop.

These operate from 21:00 to 06:00. All other units operate from 06:30 to 23:30 seven days per week.

A list of RBC Units with Post Codes is available in a hard copy form. Alternatively if you would like us to email you a copy please contact building.cleaning@reading.gov.uk

Business groups have complained that their shop is being used for services other than shopping. The Uri lifts are very helpful to prevent people systematically using shops.

Questions/Answers

Q1. Why do the Changing Places have a radar key?

A1. Because the equipment for this type of toilet is very expensive. £10,000 plus.

A lot of damage can be done if anyone could have access.

People can access Changing Places in Broad Street Mall by contacting their Security section.

Around the town, there are other toilets with provision for disabled users, some cost 20p to access.

Q2. There used to be a good underground public toilet in the Market Place, nearby bus stops and shops. Now it is closed and we have to go to Queen's Road Car Park for the nearest one. Why don't you redesign the unused shops in Market Place to transform them into public toilets?

A2. The underground toilet was no longer a viable option as it got flooded a few times and it didn't have disabled access.

Unfortunately, we don't have money to set up new toilet facilities in the unused shops.

Q3. There is a 20mins time limit on the semi automatic toilets. I dread the doors open automatically.

A3. The time limit for the semi automatic is usually 15mins. This is to discourage people sleeping in them at night as they have underfloor heating.

The door doesn't release itself - it still has to be opened physically.

Q4. There are no coat hangers in the public toilets.

A4. Yes there are in all public toilets. Some have been 'vandalised' and coat hangers have been stolen.

Q5. Signage to public toilets. In the City of Oxford, shops have a publication showing public toilets in the town centre, why not have the same in Reading?

A5. Oxford run a Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) and have designed a brochure listing the facilities around the town. CTS runs in towns where there is a limited number of publically accessible toilets. It may be something that we could do in Reading, however what we currently have in Reading works.

Q6. Could the plastic bag hangers in the toilets be changed?

A6. We will look into this.

Agenda item 4: Improving Day Services for Older People *Tracy Newport/Vanessa Hart, The Maples Day Centre*

We would like to start by reaffirming that Reading Borough council is committed to its day services provision for older people.

Over the past year there have been changes to the way day care services for older are provided in Reading. The appointment of the Neighbourhood coordinator and now a second coordinator who together they have set up local community social clubs around Reading. Also the merger of 2 day care centres which led to The Maples Resource Centre. Whilst the changes made up to this point have improved the day opportunities for older people, it is recognised that there is scope to further improve the current centre based offer in order to develop a service that is responsive and adaptable to user need and reflects the aspirations of both the current and future generation of service users.

We are therefore here today to announce that a consultation has now been launched to look at how further improvement could be made to ensure that the day care service continues to be responsive to the needs of older people in Reading. To ensure it moves in line with best practice to prevent the negative effects of social isolation, to promote wellbeing and continues to support older people maintain and develop their community connections.

The consultation asks older people, their families and carers for their views and to “Have your say” on how on how the centre might be enhanced, either at the existing location or if it were to relocate to a different site, which would bring service improvements.

The consultation is for 3 months and started 16th March 2015 and ends on 12th June 2015. During this time we want to hear from as many people as possible including community organisations who may want to use the centre space.

A paper copy is available today, there is also an online version on the Reading website at Have your Say - <http://beta.reading.gov.uk/olderpeoplesdayservices>

We have some suggestions about future possibilities as listed below:

- Physical activities to help people stay well - walks, swimming, cycling & the use of adapted bikes & gym equipment
- Activities to help people make new friends
- Advice and information on things like finances, benefits and housing.
- Advice about equipment and aids with the option to try things
- Advice about your health - medication, blood tests, dietary advice, medical conditions such as dementia, diabetes
- Support for carers
- Footcare, dentistry, optician
- A place for community groups to meet
- Access to technology, including telecare

Questions / Answers

Q1. Is it planned that the Council will provide all those activities or will the Council seek to outsource the activities?

Outside bodies should be given the opportunity to work in cooperation with the Council providing those activities. We provide lunch clubs to older people in the community, what will happen to those?

A1. When the results of the consultation come back there will be further consideration of what services are available and what can be provided.

Agenda item 5: Current issues and suggestions for future meetings

Cllr Gul Khan

Matters arising:

- Bus route 33 dropping people nearby the Civic Centre
At the last meeting, Reading Buses have confirmed that drivers were instructed to drop people as near as possible to the Civic Centre. If anyone is still having problems, please let Nina Crispin know and we will liaise with Reading Buses.
- OPWG Terms of Reference: this document can be found on the RBC website. But many older people do not have access to computers and do not have knowledge of how to use IT. There is assistance to access computers in the libraries, but the Council doesn't meet its responsibility by putting their information on the website. The information also needs to be available in written or in the press. People should not assume that the older generation are familiar with and use the internet on a regular basis.
- Is the Council charging rates for emptying industrial sites?
16/3 - response from Matt Dady
If they mean Industrial/ Commercial Waste; All businesses have a Duty of Care under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to arrange to dispose of their waste in the correct manner. This can be by the Local Authority or a private contractor such as Biffa, Select, Grundons etc. There is a cost to these businesses for the waste to be picked up etc but none is paid through RATES.
- Does the Council empty the Bottle recycling bins?
16/3 - response from Matt Dady
The Council does not empty them. They are emptied by FCC Environment who run the contract at the HWRC Island Road.
- **Reading Bridge Closure**

Reading Bridge will be fully closed to road traffic for two weeks from 18 May for essential strengthening works. Fully signed diversion routes will be in place for the duration of the closure. Further details of these routes will be on <http://beta.reading.gov.uk/bridges> once they are finalised

Drivers will be warned of the closures using the Council's Variable Message Signs, located on routes approaching Reading Bridge. We will also be liaising with neighbouring authorities regarding additional signage and advance warnings further afield. Reading Buses will be diverting services accordingly.

The road closure will cause significant disruption and you are advised to plan your journeys carefully.

For the next two weeks until approximately 24th April, there will be a closure on one side of the bridge. This will involve both a lane closure and the adjacent pavement being shut for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There will still be a lane running in each direction over the bridge and one of the pavements will remain fully accessible to pedestrians. Off peak lane closures will then resume when this section of the work is complete.

The completion of the project is currently estimated to be in late June or early July.

- **Reading Bridge: Pedestrian Access to be Maintained**

During the two week closure of Reading Bridge from 18 May for essential strengthening work, it was announced that pedestrians and cyclists will still be able to cross Reading Bridge during the closure. This follows detailed discussions with the contractors and structural engineers carrying out the work.

A revised work programme will allow for a narrow, fenced-off route for passing pedestrians and, with care, for people pushing prams or using wheelchairs. Cyclists will also be able to use the route but only by dismounting and pushing or carrying their bikes.

- **Consultation - Extra Care Housing at Arthur Clark and Albert Road sites**

This is information about the consultation that will take place over the next 6 weeks to further inform the design of the Extra Care Housing on the former Arthur Clark and Albert Road sites in Caversham Heights.

Consultation with older service users on services and accommodation for older people has been ongoing for a number of years.

As part of this process, staff set up a large exhibition and consultation event for service users, carers and professional stakeholders in March 2008, which looked at services, accommodation, individual budgets and other areas. The information from this consultation and work that preceded it, has led to various projects being set up, including the Extra Care Housing (ECH) development programme which aims to provide greater choice and independence in housing for older people with various care and support needs.

RBC has committed to providing 240 units of extra care across the borough in the coming years.

Albert Road Arthur Clark site

Following on from the consultation prior to the closure of the Albert Road Day Centre and the Arthur Clark home, A2Dominion were selected as our partner to work with RBC in providing an extra care housing facility on the site.

Plans are now being developed in readiness for submission to the planning authority and last week, in order to get comments on the proposed design, A2 held a drop in consultation at the local church and invited 1100 local resident to comment on the design. In the next 6 weeks, RBC will also be undertaking some consultation at local libraries, a visit to Asantewa House to do a presentation to them (Elders of the ethnic community), an Asian lunch club and the Barbados Friends Association Reading in order to reach some of the hard to reach groups.

Meetings have also been arranged with the Volunteers of Caversham next Thursday to show them the plans and get their views. I will also be gathering information for an EIA analysis

Unfortunately, dates have not yet been agreed but it is hoped to go to planning at the end of May so consultation will need to be completed before then. We will show what is being proposed and have a paper survey for completion at meetings. There will be an online survey, we will let you have a copy of the survey once it is complete next week.

If you have any queries please contact Jacqui Foster-Browne on 0118 937 2213 or email Jacqui.foster-browne@reading.gov.uk

Suggestions for future meetings

- Will all services for older people be run by RBC and what will be the situation for Voluntary Sector Organisations?
- Macmillan Cancer Research
- Central Coffee Shop for older people at 3B's

Next meeting:

- Friday 26th June, 2 - 4 pm, Council Chamber, Civic Centre