

## SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Soham Town Council held at the Pavilion, Soham, on Monday 10 December 2018.

Present: Cllrs R Aitchison (Chairman), C Warner, G Dyer, P Lane, G Ginn, H Ross, G Fisher, C Palmer, D Woricker, T Hinsley, G Woodbridge and Mesdames E Johnston, A Pallett & C Horman (from 7:49pm)

In Attendance County & District Cllr M Goldsack & District Cllr D Schumann

### 179/18 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

A resident made representation in objection to the letter distributed by Soundings (dated 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018-vehicle link to Soham Town centre) to all residents regarding the proposed Soham Eastern Gateway housing development (185a/18 below). The resident wanted his strong objections to the proposed access route and to the number of houses registered citing a number of reasons including poor road safety and vehicular access to any proposal attempting to gain access to the High St via Brewhouse Lane and to the detrimental impact such (a large scale) development would have to the views and outlook to existing houses on Qua Fen common. The resident noted that in addition to those concerns that his property on Qua Fen common as well as a number of surrounding neighbours' retained wells within their boundaries and made mention to his recent observations that this August (when the preliminary archaeological studies were being undertaken) the trenches drilled although not of significant depth had filled with water despite the unseasonably and prolonged dry summer weather and conditions. The resident therefore was concerned as to how the land would be effectively drained to enable new houses to be (stably) built but also on the stability and effect such works would have to his existing home. This resident also went further indicating that there had been a recent break-in in the area which had been reported to the Police but not resulted in any effective response. Given that the land on which the development was proposed was a publically-owned (ratepayer) asset he somewhat wryly suggested that the current Developers to this Scheme might wish to provide a number of houses specifically for police habitation (essential workers) and as part of the infrastructure and amenity improvements that residents are constantly being informed/instructed/promised will be integral benefits brought by this particular proposed development).

A second resident reiterated her past concerns and complaints to the Eastern Gateway development including any proposed High St access using Brewhouse Lane area.

A third resident wanted the minutes to record and reflect his personal thanks to those volunteers who annually put up the festive High St street light decorations and within the grounds of St Andrews church and also decorated the Christmas tree (opp Co-Op). The Chairman added her thanks to not only those volunteers but to all volunteers and community groups that work tirelessly throughout the year and often without remuneration in benefit of Soham and its residents.

The Chairman invited County & DCllr Mark Goldsack to make his monthly reports.

In his capacity as County Cllr he reported on the following matters:

- State of disrepair public highway/road markings in Soham town (and Isleham). Having publicised this issue via social Cllr Goldsack had, along with the Local Highways Officer, visited those areas of concern highlighted. He was pleased to report that it was agreed that areas in Mereside, both ends and Sand St to Tanners Lane and the bridge to The Butts had been identified and listed for relining works whilst a broken drain at one end of the Butts would require consideration as this required more major repair. CCllr Goldsack indicated that he had advised residents living on access roads to dwellings/properties on Angle common being not being part of the public highway and on private lands need to contact the owner, the Lord of the Manor via his Agents Cheffins for repair works. CCllr Goldsack noted the term and definition of 'grips' which are verges/banks associated with non-path or non-concrete roads which have been neglected and not been cut back in years but that this issue would be looked into with a view to correct in 2019.

CCllr Goldsack reminded those present that it was important for residents to use and report road issues via the county council website portal whilst Cllr Aitchison responded that not everyone has access to the internet nor used social media platforms and it might be an idea for this request to be advertised via the Neighbourhood Cares team or perhaps in the 'Never alone in Soham' Booklet.

Cllr Palmer pointed out a long standing flooding issue at the end of the Butts/Fordham Rd and DCllr Goldsack indicated that he would look into this matter.

- CCllr Goldsack noted that in collaboration with the Neighbourhood Cares team that he was spearheading the creation of a 'Man Shed' for Soham enabling and facilitating an environment where men could meet and collaborate on projects that would be of benefit to the community. The initiative remains in early stages and currently CCllr Goldsack is looking for suitable premises. In the meantime he is due to visit the 'Ramshed' Ramsey's equivalent club this Wednesday. Citing the benefits of mental health, combating loneliness and engendering comradeship as well as providing small DIY and maintenance jobs such as gardening, electrical and carpentry services.
- CCllr Goldsack noted that he had become a member of the council's Adult Services Committee since his election and as such become more closely associated with the Neighbourhood Care project in Soham. The mid term review of this initiative (the one on St Ives) has been good with most positive feedback and that he hoped as consequence that the scheme will not only continue to receive full funding support for Soham in 2019 but as a scheme be rolled out to other areas in the District in due course.
- Noting that this year the town council had agreed to support the Barcham Rd MHI initiative (189/18) CCllr Goldsack stated that he was continuing to work with stakeholders at the Shade primary school to secure the best and safest school crossing possible. Conceding that there is no simple solution given that the road design and layout of entrance to Kingfisher Way which now has to accommodate pedestrian and vehicular access to and from the CLT housing development CCllr Goldsack considered the MHI (up to 10k) initiative would only realistically provide for speed pads and islands which was considered less appropriate to a proper zebra style crossing. CCllr Goldsack noted that unlike the Barcham Rd MHI this bid is currently progressing without town council funding but irrespective of this a zebra-style crossing would require significant funding (up to £30K) to deliver. Investigating private funding

as well as other grants the school PTA and local benefactors for contributions Cllr Goldsack invited the Town Council to consider part funding this project.

Cllr Aitchison noted once again the responsibility of the Planning Authority and its planning committee (ECDC) to consider such matters and the wider detrimental impact and effects on road and existing residents when approving developments within the town as the problems left by the Developers do require solutions and money to be found which invariably falls to the resident and on the town councils precept demand (189/18).

The Chairman noted those (continued) additional demands and burdens made by County and District Councils on the town council which affected both its budgets and precept (rate demand) and that this would be something that would be considered by the membership later in the meeting.

Thereafter in his capacity as District Cllr continued to update the membership on District council related activities:

- Updated to Blackberry Lane Proposal (PL 17/00893/FUM). The Appeal by the Developers is scheduled to begin 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and proceed over a 3 day period (East Cambs District Council, The Grange from 10 am) . Noting that DCllr Goldsack planned to attend the hearing he stressed that this development remained within the development zone and moreover specified within current Local Plan (currently under examination) DCllr Goldsack considered the refusal by the Planning Committee to its (initial) application and the reasons for such, falling short on parking drainage and design remained valid but some concerns had been potentially addressed in the Appeal (TBD). However DCllr Goldsack reiterated his desire support for and advocacy to the provision of quality homes, developments and amenities in Soham that people want to and aspire to live and build communities in. DCllr Goldsack would update the council of outcome(s).
- Update to Planning application Clipsall lane Development (Fordham Rd, PA 18/00059/FUM, PL 92/18-80 new dwellings, Hopkins Homes PLC). DCllr Goldsack noted that this matter was deferred by the Planning Committee last week due to the concerns raised in Blackberry lane proposal (See above). Indicating that this Development had in his opinion better overall design and some good features this matter was deferred because again parking and housing layout was not considerate to nor conducive to ease of access for waste trucks, emergency vehicles nor considered to have safe and suitable amenity areas for children to play. It was noted that the Developer admitted that it had done the minimum required of it to progress the plans to application stage(s). On behalf of Soham and residents DCllr Goldsack did not consider the 'minimum requirements' acceptable and he would champion those Developers who would go 'the extra mile' in their amenity and infrastructure provisions.
- The Local Plan- is mentioned in previous minutes is now under examination but a recent communication from the Planning Inspector indicates it likely failure without modifications (to be identified) meaning that if it does the Planning Authority (ECDC) would need to start the process and work all over again. Although not yet formally confirmed DCllr Goldsack indicated that there would be a full district council meeting convened next week to discuss this disappointing news and he would notify the Office of outcome(s) in due course.
- Cherrytree Lane development Fordham Rd Soham –drainage, surface water and sewage difficulties, breaches of planning conditions. DCllr noted the recent meeting he attended with district council officers, town Cllrs Warner, Aitchison and Pallett, Cllrs from Fordham Parish Council and representatives of Anglian Water (AWA) and

the Developers of this site, Hopkins Homes PLC. Specifically the meeting was to air grievances and understand the current failures at this site<sup>1</sup> but as importantly from this to generatively learn from the experiences to ensure that the future delivery infrastructure improvements needed in water, drainage and sewage capacities and capabilities are either predominantly in place before or at the least moving with the build and inhabitation phases. DCllr Goldsack regretted that the overflow/ outlet into the open ditch at this site remains a possible threat of happening until April 2019. However all Parties appeared pleased with the commitments AWA made and included the following strategies: possible redirection of Fordhams waste away from Soham to Newmarket thus freeing up much needed capacity; the development and implementation of a new main sewage pipeline from Downfields area arcing east of town and downstream to Ely avoiding and acting to bypass Soham which will be needed for developments such as the Eastern Gateway; and finally, the implementation of a much larger than capacity pumping station near or in replacement of the current Cherry Tree Lane one. DCllr Goldsack made highlight and gave particular thanks to Cllr Warner for his persistence and in this matter and in his tenacity to facilitate and assist in finding practical solutions to this ongoing issue. Cllr Warner noted that there remained no drain provision under Regal Drive as per the planning conditions on this site and DCllr Goldsack indicated he would look into this matter.

- Finally on behalf of both District and County Councillors D and CCllr Goldsack wished all a wonderful and happy Christmas and every success for a happy and prosperous 2019 to everyone connected to Soham. The Chairman thanked County & District Cllr Goldsack for his update reports to the membership and thereafter:

181/18      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Chapman which were duly authorised by the membership. Apologies were noted from County Cllr Hunt and DCllr Sennitt.

182/18      CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES

The Chairman noted that the next Planning committee meeting would, due to the Christmas and New Year holiday period and as per previous years, be brought forward to Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018 (1pm Pavilion).

Cllr Aitchison noted that she had recently attended the ECDC seminar on promoting Tourism in the District (see correspondence 191/18) and reflected somewhat disappointedly that this was no longer a district-orchestrated activity<sup>2</sup> given that and unlike the extensive promotion, work and resources provided to Ely resulting in a comprehensive 'Visit Ely' strategy, other parish and town councils were less well served and assisted with promoting tourism and generating income from these activities in their specific areas. DCllr Schumann indicated that a District-wide Tourism Assessment was planned whilst the Combined Authority had pledged additional investment for market

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<sup>1</sup> A POSITION STATEMENT for 18/00059/FUM prepared and issued jointly by Anglian Water and Hopkins Homes dated 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018

<sup>2</sup> Although Soham Town Council receives currently £5000 to undertake promotion activities in the town from ECDC (Specified use grant)

towns such as Soham to assist them in developing their own tourism (and promotion) strategies and activities.

The Chairman noted that she had also recently attended, as part of her ongoing CPD, a tutorial course on Understanding Planning and would make copy of the slide presentation available to other Cllrs (see correspondence 191/18). Cllr Aitchison recommended to council that although it would take significant resources that it might (re)consider producing a neighbourhood plan for Soham<sup>3</sup>. DCllr Schumann reiterated that grants from central government remained available to assist the council in such activities and that he would send details to the Clerk. He also made mention of the upcoming East Cambridgeshire Parish Conference 2019 (January 7<sup>th</sup> 2019) which the Clerk confirmed the invitation via email had been received on the morning of the meeting and although it did not appear on the list of correspondence for the month had been forwarded to all Cllrs for them to RSVP.

APPROVED matter to be relisted for Planning Committee's further consideration.

Cllr Woodbridge informed Cllr members of Ms Morwenna Woodbridge's recent successes in standard bearing at the County and Regional Youth Championships, East Anglian Division. All members recorded their sincere congratulations to Ms Woodbridge and her achievements, who it was noted is a Pride in our Town award recipient.

183/18

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

NOTED Cllr Palmer redeclared DPI's to matters related to planning application 17/00893/FUM & 18/00021/REFAPP (PL 91/18 & PL 92m/18) respectively.

NOTED Cllr Hinsley's general personal interest to matters pertaining to (Cherrytree Development Hopkins Homes PLC)

Having declared a DPI and where no dispensations have been applied for or agreed with the Proper Officer<sup>4</sup> prior to a meeting it remained the responsibility of those Cllrs making DPI declarations<sup>5</sup> to take the necessary actions to recuse themselves from the meeting and prior to debate and or council decisions if any to those items and matters.

184/18

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2018

RESOLVED and APPROVED that the minutes of the meeting on the 12 November 2018 as printed and attached to these minutes as a true record of proceedings which were duly signed by the Chairman.

185/18

MATTERS ARISING FROM CURRENT AND WHERE NECESSARY PREVIOUS MINUTES:

**Chairman's announcement and town cllr updates (168/18)**

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<sup>3</sup> See previous approval minute 177/17 (e)

<sup>4</sup> Delegated to Clerk Soham Town Council

<sup>5</sup> Failure to comply with the rules is a criminal offence and may be punished by a **fine** of up to £5,000 and/or disqualification for up to 5 years.

NOTED that the name of the soldier as requested by Cllr Woodbridge at the previous meeting would be added to the 'roll of honour' in the plaque/plinth installed as part of 100 years commemoration of end of WW1.

NOTED Cllr Woodbridge extended his and the family's thanks to the town council for its consideration and decision in this matter and to the continued appreciation to the ground staff for the care taken in looking after his and all CWG graves and memorial stones in the cemetery.

**Town signs (COM17/18, 143/18 D)**

NOTED life size signs (draft in card paper) presented at meeting

**Millennium signs (171/18)**

NOTED refurbishment work completed, Office has located the original map locations but requires volunteers to assist in reinstalling the significant number (circa 120) of signs over the 3 routes.

**Extension – Tenancy Agreement Soham Town Rangers Youth Football Club (Barleyfields/Adizone area (COM15/18 FP70/18 122/18 155/18,171/18)**

NOTED meeting of representatives of Soham Town Rangers Youth Football Club, Soham Village College and manager of Ross Peers sports centre would now occur Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018 to discuss future pitch needs and recreation amenity provision in town.

a) **Soham Eastern Gateway updates (various previous minutes to 157/18+ attached)**

NOTED WITH ALARM letter issued by Soundings to residents concerning access to High St now proposed via Brewhouse Lane by changes (not currently specified) to lay-out of Staploe Health Centre (subject to private negotiation).

APPROVED unanimously to issue a letter of strong objection to Soundings CCC Highways & ECDC (Planning Authority) regarding proposed access route from Brewhouse Lane copied to District & County Cllrs, Mayor Cambridgeshire & Peterborough combined authority

*At 7:48pm a motion to Exclude the Public and Press was proposed by the Chairman Cllr Aitchison and seconded by the Vice Chairman Cllr Warner and as consequence the public and press were instructed to temporarily withdraw from the meeting. Thereafter:*

**Engagement and other legal matters (HM Land Registry and Scout & Girl Guide building lease (registration of land and Lease Terms & Conditions (COM 26c/18. 157/18 , COM 24/18 COM 26/18C -Cllr Johnston)**

NOTED 3 quotes from solicitors to act in specified matters of HM land registration of lands owned by Soham Town Council, preparation of lease or licence (TBD) for the Scout and Guide building on recreation ground and where necessary to assist in the re-establishment of the Barway (Hall) charity disposal or otherwise and where agreed of its land (single asset).

APPROVED by majority (2 abstentions) engagement of Woodfines solicitors and their those associated costs for the above matters (As listed in their email response to requested specification)

APPROVED by majority (one objection- see below) terms and fee conditions/structure for engagement of Mr Hanglin to act as Land Agent to Soham Town Council to assist it in identifying suitable land purchases to satisfy additional community amenity (open space) needs and where necessary extension/addition to current cemetery provision.

NOTED Cllr Hinsley's objection and inability to vote on this issue was due to the highlighting pen which had been used to draw attention to the specifics of the matter in the body of the email had, in his opinion, acted to obscure (redact) the relevant information/paragraph.

APPROVED copy of email to be resent to Cllr Hinsley

*At 8:05pm members of the public and press were readmitted to the meeting.*

*At 8:07pm Cllr Woodbridge left the meeting.*

186/18 MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following committees as printed and recommendations contained, unless otherwise specified under matters arising (below), be duly adopted.

Finance & Policy	-	12 November 2018
Planning	-	28 November 2018

187/18 MATTERS ARISING FROM CURRENT & PREVIOUS MINUTES OF STANDING COMMITTEES:

**Planning committee Minutes (general observation)**

Cllr Pallett wished it to be recorded that she has attended, observed and in some instance made representation on a number of occasions at the Planning Committee meetings held at ECDC (Planning Authority). Cllr Pallett indicated that she considered that the members of this committee worked hard and provided decisions that were based on judgement from them undertaking due consideration to issues as well as visiting all sites 'called in' for determination. NOTED & APPROVED that the Chairman of Planning and the Chairman of the town council, where necessary and due to time restraints, provide comment on any planning applications received over the Christmas and New Year period.

188/18 PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS MADE MONTHLY BUDGET ANALYSES & STATEMENT OF BALANCES TO 30 NOVEMBER 2018 RESPECTIVELY

NOTED INCOME & APPROVED schedule of payments to 30 November 2018. APPROVED approval of payments made to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 totalling £146 111.76 (inc vat) respectively and as attached to the council minutes as appendices.

NOTED the higher than usual monthly expenditure was due to payment of new playground and equipment by HAGS-SMP Ltd (capital expenditure).

RECEIPT OF INTERIM BUDGET REPORT AND TO CONSIDER AND APPROVED PRECEPT (RATE DEMAND) FOR SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL FOR SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020.

NOTED Cllr Palmers concerns that as County and District reduce their discretionary functions (not those duties they are legally obligated to provide) these shortfalls in services (ie public toilet provision) considered important to the residents are falling to the parish or town councils to provide (point in case the request by DCllr Goldsack to financial support major road improvement at Kingfisher Drive which statutorily fall to CCC Highways).

NOTED Cllr Worickers concern that any increase in town councils rate demand in current economic and political climate was naturally unwelcome but noted that any monies raised by the town council remains specifically dedicated to the town's use and solely for its residents benefit unlike the monies raised in domestic taxation by District, County, Fire & police services. NOTED the number of projects both currently underway (eg stabilisation works and introduction of a route suitable for cycle use between Wicken and Soham, cemetery road and toilet improvement works programme,) or proposed (land purchase, cemetery land, finance of Phase II new hall build) that Soham Town Council has approved to provide.

NOTED Cllr Warners handout in assessment that in the absence of grants and additional income and outside of the annual revenues generated by the hire of the Pavilion/recreation ground and cemetery fees, the precept requests historically have been insufficient to cover normal running costs and overhead expenditures.

NOTED that these grants invariably are dedicated to specified and/or legal (CIL, s106) prescribed use but nevertheless act to obscure the actual annual shortfalls.

NOTED & APPROVED all recommendations made by the Finance & Policy Committee at its November 2018 meeting under FP 101/18 (points A-O inclusive) including confirmation of the following:

APPROVED a precept (rate demand) of £322500 (proposed by Cllr Palmer\* and seconded by Cllr Fisher) for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

NOTED that the demand represents a 9.4% increase to Soham Town Council's current annual rate (£293775) but that this percentage increase is partially absorbed by the increased band D housing numbers (see note below) and should be noted this increase is not universally applied to the other domestic rate demanded by other relevant Authorities (District, County, Fire and Police).

NOTED that due to increase in D properties in Soham calculated from this (3563.6) compared to next years (3656.40) numbers (an additional 92.8 dwellings) the actual 'pocket feel' will be 6.7% (additional £5.17 for Band D dwelling on current £82.44, proportionately less or more for lower higher Banded properties).

NOTED that currently 73% of properties in Soham are Banded A-C and therefore are lower and will pay an amount proportionally less than quoted for a Band D property.

APPROVED VOTE OF THANKS to Clerk acting as RFO and to Cllr Johnston who was taking minutes at the meeting and operating the IT system and who



has assisted in the Office during the absences of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk due to sickness during 2018.

(\* *NOTED after the proposal for the above resolution an amendment for a change to a 5% increase was proposed by Cllr Ross but not being seconded was unsupported and failed to be voted upon*)

APPROVED all reports and assessments in respect of precept decision to be made available for public information on the town council's website

190/18

JOINT CCC MINOR HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT (MHI 2018-19)-SPEED REDUCTION/CALMING. TRAFFIC FLOW MEASURES BARCHAM RD

RECEIVED feasibility report from nominated Highways Officer regarding those potential measures and MHI works that may be reasonable/legal to take to reduce speed on Barcham road.

NOTED despite invitation to resident action group there was no response or representation at the meeting

APPROVED to defer any decision regarding level of financial support required to deliver project pending clarification of the reason for the higher (50% as opposed to original 10% max) level of contribution expected and to satisfactory responses to other enquiries (item to be brought as a matter arising at next or subsequent full council meeting)

191/18

CORRESPONDANCE – TO BE NOTED ONLY UNLESS OTHERWISE RECORDED (*italicised* and in **Bold**) IN THE MINUTES.

NOTED NALC - Chief Executive Bulletin - 26/10/18, 2/11/18, 9/11/2018, 16/11/18

NOTED CAPALC E Bulletins - October 2018 & November 2018

NOTED CCC Roadworks & Events Bulletin 1st - 15th November 2018

NOTED C (22<sup>ND</sup> November 2018 Cllrs Aitchison & Woricker to attend)

***See minute Chairmans and town Cllr updates (182/18)***

NOTED Modern Day Slavery Training (January 2019 interest to be received by end November 2018)

NOTED Information and advice about hearing loss in Soham- free workshop at Soham Library, 7 Clay St, Soham, CB7 5HJ 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019 10 am – 12.30 pm.

***ACKNOWLEDGED request by Cllr Pallett for this community public service to be advertised by local press (Press in attendance at meeting)***

NOTED IHMC Incident Report October 2018, 16th - 30th November

NOTED Policy Consultation: Technical amendments to the LGPS Funding Strategy Statement (consultation closes Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018)

NOTED Cambridgeshire Local Plan Examination - Update from the Council published 9th November 2018

NOTED UK Power Networks - Preparations for bad weather

NOTED CAPALC Pop Up Cafe - 20th November 2018

NOTED Falmouth Town Council Re-submitting Toilet Tax SCA Proposal To Government In 01/19 - Request To Complete / Promote Completion of Short Evidence Survey By Member Councils In Your Areas By 10/12/18

***NOTED a number of Cllrs have as residents responded in support***

NOTED Viva Awards - 18th November 2018

NOTED LCPAS - Understanding Planning - Bury St Edmunds - 05 and 07 December

**See minute Chairmans and town Cllr updates (182/18)**  
NOTED ECDC growth delivery newsletter, Autumn 2018  
NOTED CCC Bikeability cycle training offer (primary schools)

192/18 MONTHLY PAPERS/BIBIOGRAPHY/PERIODICALS/BULLETINS (LIST TO APPEAR IN MINUTES ONLY)

Andrezieux-Boutheon	No 224 December 2018
Civic update	9th November, 7th December 2018
The Rural Bulletin	13 November 2018

193/18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full town council meeting will be on Monday 21 January 2019 (ONE WEEK later than normal ie 3<sup>rd</sup> not 2<sup>ND</sup> Monday of month thereafter normal schedule (2<sup>ND</sup> Monday of month) applies commencing 7.15pm (Finance & Policy Committee meeting from 6:30pm).

NOTED Soham Town council offices will be closed AND there will be no ground staff provision from 12 noon Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2018 to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2019 inclusive (office re-opens Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019 9:00am).

NOTED there will be no vehicular access to the cemetery from 12 noon Christmas eve (Monday 24<sup>th</sup>) to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2019 inclusive-pedestrian access will be maintained throughout. Normal opening times resume Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019