

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT THE
OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD,
BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr G Wilson (Chair), Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr T Woodward, Cllr S Watkins,
Cllr P Vickers, Cllr Mrs S Grayston, Cllr Mrs R Kerfoot, Cllr D Albone, Cllr R Skinner, Cllr P Rook

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs R Forbes, Cllr P Woodward, Cllr Mrs W Smith and
Cllr D Smith.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(a) Prejudicial interests in any agenda item -

(b) Personal interests in any agenda item - Cllr PF Vickers registered an interest as a member
of the Central Bedfordshire Management Development Committee in respect of planning
applications listed on the agenda.

Cllr P Vickers registered an interest in item 5c as listed on the agenda.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session

4. Invited speaker – Central Bedfordshire Council

Helen Shaw from Central Bedfordshire Council presented the briefing and consultation process for
supporting Town Centre management.

Central Bedfordshire is in the process of working out the way forward for the whole of Bedfordshire
and wants to work with Town Council in Town Centre action plans to work out funding.

If Town Council decided on a Town Centre Committee, it would be made up of 5 CBC Councillors and
5 Town Councillors, control would be taken away, Council would have a voice in Bedfordshire, but
there would be no guarantee of funding.

Cllr G Wilson said that Town Council wishes to take control of general maintenance of Market Square
and other areas in the Town i.e. grass cutting etc.

Ms Shaw stated that to ensure maintenance etc, Town Council could set up an internal group and the
Town Clerk could then raise issues to high level officers of CBC.

Cllr Wilson said that if CBC Councillors take control, meetings become protracted and in consequence
has a carousel effect.

Cllr P Rook asked what advantages of a Management Committee.

Ms Shaw said there are no advantages.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence asked if CBC is aware of the Town Centre Partnership. Biggleswade Town
Council are last to be consulted by CBC, and are not in line of communication. It would be more
useful to be able to speak to a head of a department, to manage our own Town and precept our
money. We need to find a balance for Town Council and CBC as communication is very bad at the
moment

Cllr D Lawrence stated that with regards to parking management, local control would be better.

Cllr P Vickers agreed that Town Council needs as much self-control as possible.

Cllr Mrs S Grayston said that Town Plan Steering Group is working closely with Town Council. Biggleswade people want Council to have more delegated powers.

Cllr T Woodward said that the Town Centre did involve 3 different authorities, which makes things difficult to manage – it would be preferable for Council to independently oversee this area.

Cllr R Skinner stated that Town Centre signage needs updating.

Ms Shaw told Members that every Town Council has a Town Centre Plan which CBC wants to work with in partnership, to create a more co-ordinated process.

Cllr G Wilson said that there had been a number of consultations re junctions concerning the Baulk and Sun Street, but plans did not progress with no reasons were given.

Cllr D Lawrence said that Biggleswade needs a better transport system of which a local voice is not heard, the Town Council could fine-tune the details.

Ms Shaw said she would pass on Town Councils comments to Central Bedfordshire Council.

Cllr G Wilson requested feed back from CBC which Miss Shaw promised to do.

5. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. **CB/09/05450/FULL – 2 West Sunderland Farm, Dunton Lane Biggleswade.**
Amendments to above application: location plan, floorplans & elevations, position & types of roof windows.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objection to this application.

- b. **CB/09/05679/FULL – 8 Market Square, Biggleswade**
Full: Change of use from A1(shop) to A3(café).

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objection to this application **PROVIDING** this is a Café and **NOT A TAKEAWAY** and the hours restricted to 8am – 6pm.

- c. **CB/09/05761/FULL – The Black Bear, 10 Hitchin Street, Biggleswade.**
Full: Erection 7no. 1 bed flats with associated works for supported living units.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objection to this application provided the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed extension to the principle dwelling are complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

- d. **CB/09/05736/ADV – Unit 2, Biggleswade Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade.**
Advertisement Consent: 2no. illuminated elevation signs, 2no. poster frames, 1no. set of window graphics & 1no. deliveries panel.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise no objection to this application in principle **BUT** felt that the illuminated signs would be out of keeping with the rest of the development.

- e. **CB/09/05706/FULL – Ground Floor, Baystrait House, Station Road, Biggleswade**
Full: Change of use of part of ground floor to D1 use for training purposes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objection to this application.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Biggleswade in Nepal

Members received a copy of an email from a Biggleswade Resident who will be trekking in the Himalayas in October in support of the Princes Trust.

The Trust gives practical and financial support, developing skills such as confidence and motivation. It works with 14-30 year olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law. Since 1976 the Prince of Wales charity has helped over half a million young people and continues to support 100 more every day.

He has a website; www.jonphillips.co.uk which contains more information on the trek.

He would like the opportunity to take something from Biggleswade to Nepal to present the headman in the highest village he visits. The route they will take is not the most popular and the locals are generally thrilled to have visitors. He thought maybe a sign or another lightweight item could be presented by the Mayor, at his convenience, to help draw attention to trek.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council will provide a flag with Biggleswade Town logo as well as a donation of £50.

b. Brunel Drive – Additional Open Space

Members considered correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council to inform Town Council that they have been approached by Tom Greasley at TDS who is engaged by George Wimpey South Midlands with regard to the adoption of open space on the above development.

In addition to the play area in the centre of the development there are also two areas of open space at the rear of the houses, adjoining the alleyway and the railway.

TDS has approached residents whose properties back onto these areas to ask if they would wish to include the relevant sections within their respective gardens. GWSM also submitted an application to this authority for change of use of the land, from open space to garden. CBC were not consulted on this application, which was rejected, but they have spoken to Development Control and have been advised that GWSM can submit a further change of use application if they first approach Town Council to offer the land for adoption.

They have asked TDS to write to Town Council to offer the land with an appropriate commuted sum, but wanted to make Council aware of the situation and the proposal for its future should the land not be adopted.

GWSM are not proceeding with improvements or adoption of the play area but TDS has been employed to look after it for the foreseeable future.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer a decision until more information has been obtained clarifying Town Councils position **AND** that a strong letter be written to Lisa White, Central Bedfordshire Council.

c. Local Democracy Week 2009 Invitation

To celebrate this year's Local Democracy Week, w/c 12 October, Central Bedfordshire Council will be running a number of events for the children and young people of Central Bedfordshire.

Councillors are invited to two of the events: Political Speeding Dating and Take Your Councillor to School Day.

Political Speed Dating is a fun and light-hearted way for young people to interact with Councillors. Each session consists of a series of 3 minute interactions between the young person and the Councillor. The young person then has to vote for their favourite Councillor.

Take Your Councillor to School Day is a national initiative designed to give Councillors the chance to experience school life and engage with young people. It also provides the students with the opportunity to understand the role of the Councillor and Council in more detail.

Members will consider these invitations and those that wish to attend will return the forms to Central Bedfordshire Council.

7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

There are no items for information.

8. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.