

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2010 AT THE
OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD,
BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs W Smith (Chair), Cllr D Smith, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr T Woodward, Cllr P Vickers, Cllr Mrs R Forbes, Cllr Mrs S Grayston, Cllr Mrs R Kerfoot, Cllr D Albone, Cllr R Skinner, Cllr P Rook
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
Laura Hutchinson – Biggleswade Chronicle
Bill Simmons – Biggleswade Christmas Lights
Members of the public - 2

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr P Woodward and Cllr S Watkins

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(a) Prejudicial interests in any agenda item - there were no prejudicial interests declared.

(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 Mrs J Lawrence and Cllr D Lawrence declared an interest in items 3e, 3f and 6e as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs S Grayston declared an interest in items 4c and 4d as listed on the agenda.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Cllr Mrs W Smith brought item 5c forward to the public open session to enable Bill Simmons, Biggleswade Christmas Lights, to address the meeting.

Cllr Mrs W Smith summarised the events to date including a lack of response from the Chamber of Trade following the meeting held on 5 March & the subsequent letter. At that meeting it was agreed that the Christmas Lights would be taken over by volunteers subject to the Chamber of Trade executive's approval but to date, despite numerous attempts, the Town Council has not received a response.

Bill Simmons then addressed the meeting, saying that he attended the meeting in March with Jonathan Medlock and Graham Jones, as a representative of the volunteer group who offered to take over the Christmas lights. This was approved by the Chamber of Trade and was to be agreed in writing, but communication has proved to be difficult.

Today (12 October) Bill received an email from Chamber of Trade stating that they are waiting for the accounts to be finalised, so that an urgent meeting can take place in regards to monies for promotion of the Christmas lights and also that they wished to retain ownership of the lights in order to act as a 'safety net' but leave the organisation to a voluntary body, which would report to the treasurer, Graham Jones.

Bill Simmons said he would not want to be part of this arrangement and doesn't want to work with them as they are unprofessional; they haven't even cashed Town Council's cheque that was sent in January 2010. Town Council have been trying to contact the Chamber of Trade since March.

Mr Simmons has a proven track record for fund raising but is not prepared to work with the Chamber of Trade or be associated with them. The volunteers worked with them last year and this proved to be painful.

Cllr Mrs R Kerfoot asked if the lights are owned by the Chamber of Trade. Bill Simmons said that they are.

Cllr P Rook said that if the cheque isn't cashed couldn't Town Council cancel it and pass on funds to the volunteers.

Cllr P Vickers said that although he is concerned about the lack of progress, Town Council has a commitment to honour the cheque, it is a donation and it would be improper to withdraw funding.

Cllr Mrs S Grayston said she was appalled by the situation, the members of the Chamber of Trade are experienced business people, they plead poverty but fail to tell people about Town Council monies, they are not telling the truth.

It was **RESOLVED** that a letter be written to the Chamber of Trade stating that Town Council is happy for them to do whatever necessary to ensure the Christmas lights are in place for Christmas 2010, but would ask for a firm commitment and reassurance that a more positive approach is taken towards the lights in future years.

Town Council will again ask for 2008 & 2009 accounts relating to the Christmas lights.

4. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/10/03511/FULL - 1 Sabel Close, Biggleswade**

Full: Rear/Side Single Storey extension

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.

b. **CB/10/03476/FULL – 1B Market Square, Biggleswade**

Full: change of use to A5, erection of new shop front and erection of extract duct to rear.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this application as it is loss of a valuable retail unit, parking would also be a problem as there are double yellow lines outside and the road is already very busy.

c. **CB/10/03113/FULL – Hitchmead Special School, Hitchmead Road, Biggleswade**

Full: Car Park extension and alterations

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

d. **CB/10/03111/FULL – Hitchmead Special School, Hitchmead Road, Biggleswade**

Full: Single Storey front extension.

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

e. **CB/10/03585/FULL – 94-96 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade.**

Full: Subdivide existing shop to form a new two bedroom flat. Incorporation of roof windows & change existing doors to windows.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **DEFERRED** making a decision until further information is obtained regarding this application.

f. **CB/10/03595/FULL – 54-56 High Street, Biggleswade.**

Full: Two storey rear extension & change of use of first floor to residential & ancillary works to no.54

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

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Local Democracy Week and European Democracy Week

Correspondence was received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding Local Democracy Week and European Democracy Week, this includes a 'Take your Councillor to School Day' as well as other events throughout the area.

Any Councillor wishing to participate need to contact CBC.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members would contact CBC if they wanted to participate in any of the events.

b. Town & City Parking

Correspondence was received from Town & City Parking who would like to install the latest infrared vehicle detection system in the White Hart car park.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **AGREE** to the installation of this new vehicle detection system.

c. Biggleswade Christmas Lights

Members are asked to consider ownership and transfer of Biggleswade Christmas Lights.

This item was discussed during the public open session earlier in the meeting.

d. BATPC Annual General Meeting – Thursday 21 October

The BATPC Annual General Meeting is to be held at Kensworth Village Hall on Thursday 21 October commencing at 7.30pm. 3 delegates were invited to attend.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members would let the Town Clerk know if they would like to attend this meeting.

e. Central Bedfordshire Members/Public Meeting – Friday 22 October 2010

Members were invited to attend the above meeting hosted by South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT). The meeting will be held at the Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick, commencing at 14.30hrs.

Dr Patrick Geoghegan, SEPT's Chief Executive, will be leading the meeting on the topic of 'Potential Future Plans for Local Mental Health Services'; it is also a chance to meet the newly elected Governors.

Attendees are also invited to become a member of the Foundation Trust.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members would let the Town Clerk know if they would like to attend this meeting.

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Bedfordshire Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams

Correspondence was received from Bedfordshire Police explaining changes to the structure and working arrangements of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams within Central Bedfordshire and the associated benefits.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

b. Thank you letter from Rotary Clubs

A letter was received from the Rotary Clubs of Biggleswade and Biggleswade Ivel, to thank Town Council for all help with the crocus planting venture, on Saturday 2 October.

Although there were not enough participants to break the record, over 2,000 crocus corms were planted, ensuring a lovely display in the spring and highlighting Rotary's campaign against Polio.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

c. Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Lime Tree Walk, Biggleswade

Central Bedfordshire Council notified Town Council of a proposed temporary road closure in Lime Walk, to take place within four days from 29 November to 1 December between 0800hrs and 1800hrs, to enable water connection work to be carried out in safety.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

d. Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Hitchin Street, Biggleswade

Central Bedfordshire Council notified Town Council of a proposed temporary road closure in Hitchin Street, to take place on 2 Sundays between 14 November 2010 and 27 February 2011, from 0800hrs to 1300hrs, to enable crane lifts onto roof.

Town Council contacted CBC to inform them that we have our Remembrance Day Parade on 14 November and they then replied that the closure dates will not include that date.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

e. Application for Premises Licence

Central Bedfordshire Council have received an application for a Premises Licence for the sale of alcohol at the General Convenience Store, 94 Shortmead Street.

It was **RESOLVED** that a letter be written to CBC Planning Department, to ask for clarification regarding this licence application and also planning application 4b as listed on the agenda as Town Council has asked for the decision to be deferred.

f. Examination into the soundness of the Central Bedfordshire (North) Site Allocations Development Plan Document

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

7. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.