

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2011 AT THE
OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD
BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr P Vickers (Chair), Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr P Woodward,
Cllr S Watkins, Cllr Mrs R Forbes, Cllr D Albone, Cllr R Skinner, Cllr Mrs S Grayston
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Juliet Brookes – Finance Assistant
PC Ian Wilson – Bedfordshire Constabulary
Madeline Russell – Governor Stratton School
Rob Watson – Head teacher Stratton School
Members of the Public - 8

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr D Smith, Cllr T Woodward and Cllr P Rook

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(a) Prejudicial interests – there were no prejudicial interests declared.

(a) Personal Interests

Cllrs P F Vickers registered an interest as members of the Central Bedfordshire Management Development Committee in respect of planning applications listed on the agenda.

Cllr R Skinner registered an interest in item 11b (grants) as listed on the agenda –
The New Horizon Club, Biggleswade History Society, Biggleswade Twinning Association

Cllr G Wilson registered an interest in item 11b (grants) as listed on the agenda – East Beds
Concert Band, Biggleswade History Society, Biggleswade Twinning Association

Cllr Mrs R Forbes registered an interest in item 11b (grants) – Biggleswade History Society,
Biggleswade Gospel singers, Biggleswade Twinning Association

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Town Mayor's announcements.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Mr Harries questioned the Town Council in regard to the closure of Biggleswade Recreation Centre and would the Town Council consider carrying out the same exercise as Sandy Town Council to keep the Recreation Centre open. Mr Harries was advised that the Town Council had made no provision in the precept for such an exercise but the issue was to be discussed tonight under item 11a on the Agenda.

5. BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

PC Ian Wilson advised that the crime figures are on the internet and you can view via Street level.

He advised that there were 94 recorded crimes in January, high percentage mainly due to the spray painting, criminal damage incident, and that the investigation was still ongoing for this crime.

6 House Burglaries in January and 3 House Burglaries in February. Worry pattern and effecting Holme Ward.

PC Ian Wilson informed Town Council of the 2 most recent "big jobs". World War 2 Shell, the bomb disposal took away and he advised wasn't live. Recent nasty GBH at the White Horse pub which has led to a 40 year old male to be arrested he is currently on bail at present.

The robbery at Cambridge Coins, PC Ian Wilson confirmed that there had been a positive arrest this week; a 71 year old male had been arrested.

PC Ian Wilson advised that the police helicopter was in operation today due to illegal immigrants.

If any Street Signs are reported missing PC Ian Wilson advised that they are in the police's possession as they had been found at Stratton Park Industrial Estate.

Figures for February had dropped; mainly most of the crime for this month was shoplifting within the Town Centre.

PC Ian Wilson advised the Council that a PSCO may attend Council meetings from time to time to present crime figures/reports.

Cllr D Lawrence enquired as to whether the New Parishes/New Boundaries would be reflected in the crime figures. PC Ian Wilson advised he would check on the boundaries.

6. INVITED SPEAKERS

Madeline Russell, Stratton School Governor came to give a brief overview as to why Stratton School are looking at Academy Status. She wanted to set the scene as to why, what process and how Stratton School will change.

In October/November 2010 Stratton School were aware of the impact of the listed services not being provided by Central Beds. In total a £¼ million reduction in funding from 1st April 2011.

Central Bedfordshire Council are to defer the full cost of services.

There will be an impact on the Connection service, Hearing – Visual support, educational psychology, reduction in music services, computing funding gone and training school money gone.

Central Bedfordshire Council gave a brief in February 2011 along with a draft price list aimed at all schools, the price list seen an increase to some schools of 100%.

On 7th February 2011 the Governing Body took a decision to formally apply for Academy Status, this would allow the school to obtain funding direct from government, this funding would help plug the funding gap by around £4000,00.

Stratton School have registered an interest to D.F.E. The Secretary of State will decide on the application. At present there is no firm decision.

If Stratton School are able to gain Academy Status and the Governors decide to sign the funding agreement they will receive £25,000 in funding to cover the conversion costs of legal fees, accountancy requirements and the consultation process. Once a decision has been made Stratton School hope to convert by 1st September 2011, the beginning of the Academic Year.

DFE, currently has 2000 schools hoping to become Academy Status, this figure includes 6 Upper Schools located in Central Bedfordshire.

Rob Watson, Head teacher Stratton Upper School continued to give an overview of the situation. He advised that he was very proud of the school and Academy Status would introduce more Freedom to the School which would include the following:

- Independence from local government.
- Benefit to students.
- Free from National Curriculum (although they do not choose to exploit this at present)
- Able to vary pay & conditions of staff (area of high sensitivity for staff)
- Academy must be outward facing and in line with other schools in the area.

He feels that it would be a great opportunity and be a great benefit to students.

Rob Watson then asked if he could address any question or queries that any Councillors may have.

Cllr D Albone asked that depending of the decision of Secretary of State, if your application was to be turned down, would the decision be challenged.

Rob Watson, felt that there would be no reason for the school to be turned down, as the school features all of the positive requirements needed. He was not aware at this stage of any school that had been turned down.

Cllr D Albone also asked how would the public have input into the system of the schools development, if Stratton School was to become an Academy.

Rob Watson advised that nothing was set out at present but felt that the partners within the Community and Local Governors within school, would have input.

Cllr Mrs S Grayston asked as a Governor of Ivel Valley school that currently work very closely with Stratton School, is the application strictly for Stratton School, would any assistance or funding be available for other schools.

The initial thoughts are if Stratton School becomes an Academy it would become academy as an independent school. Although the initial application is in conjunction with Holmemead Middle School.

Cllr R Skinner asked whether the cutbacks and becoming an Academy would effect transportation and enrolling children from out of town.

Rob Watson advised it would be C.B.C Statutory Duty that the Admissions Services stay the same.

The Chair thanked Madeline Russell and Rob Watson for their time and for updating the Council.

11. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

It was agreed that Item 11a items for consideration be brought forward.

a. **Biggleswade Recreation Centre**

Correspondence has been received from two user groups of the Biggleswade Recreation Centre, who are unhappy at the closure of the facility. They are asking for help from Town Council to keep the Centre open.

Madeline Russell advised the Town Council on the current situation. .

Biggleswade Recreation Centre is part of Stratton School, it was a joint scheme/agreement for school sports facilities. The school contributed to maintenance and upkeep.

Stratton School was asked to take on the running of the facility, but this brings issues of charging and existing staff transfer.

Biggleswade Recreation Centre currently has 4 members of staff which were employed via Stevenage Leisure. Unfortunately Stratton School has no money in the budget to transfer these employees.

Other problems have included Health and Safety and 1st Aid Issues when renting the facility.

The Recreation Centre has lots of clubs using the facility, and it was a suggestion that perhaps clubs could be self reliant i.e. provide their own 1st Aiders and Public Liability Insurance.

It would appear that there is disparity on the agreed and the actual costs that Stevenage Leisure has been charging.

Stratton School has to cover all costs, major part of cost being site agent's fee. The school were currently looking into a swipe card entry system.

Until Stratton School have had 100% guidance and clarity from Central Bedfordshire Council in regard to staff transfer issues, the situation at present will remain the same.

It was **RESOLVED** that this was an exceptional situation and outside of the grant funding timescale. If clubs would like to apply for grant funding to help towards the costs of Public Liability and or 1st Aid Training, then they should request an application form from the Town Council and each application will be looked at on its own merit.

7. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 February 2011 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- b. Members received and adopted Minutes of the OSCP meeting held on 1 March 2011 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- c. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 8 March 2011 at the offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 February 2011 – none
- b. Minutes of the OSCP meeting held on 1 March 2011 -none
- c. Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 8 March 2011- none

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a. **CB/11/00698/FULL – 72 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade**
Single storey front 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. Town Council ask that CBC monitor carefully the impact on the adjoining property.

- b. **CB/11/00761/RM – Land South of, Potton Road, Biggleswade**
Reserved Matters: Layout scale, appearance and landscaping of internal roads and means of access to residential blocks 27,28 and 30 together with associated foul and surface water drainage (pursuant to outline planning application MD/03/01205/OUT dated 13 November 2006)

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

- c. **CB/11/00879/FULL – 6 Snowdrop Walk, Biggleswade.**
Loft conversion with raised roof, gable-end and rear dormer.

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. Town Council ask that CBC monitor carefully the impact on the adjoining property.

10. ACCOUNTS

- a. Financial Administration

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 28th February 2011
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure.
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 28th February 2011

- b. Internal Audit Report (2nd Interim) 2010/2011

Members received a copy of the Internal Audit Report and agree the recommendations on the Action Plan.

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a. **Biggleswade Recreation Centre**

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This item was brought forward on the agenda.

b. **Grants/Donations**

- i. Members considered a request from Biggleswade Town Cricket Club asking Council to sponsor match balls as in previous years at a cost of £10 per game.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council would sponsor 5 match balls at a cost of £10 per game.

- ii. Members considered applications for Community Grants and it was **RESOLVED** that the following grants be made:

1.	Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust	£100
2.	1 st Biggleswade (St Andrews) Rainbow Trust	£40
3.	Biggleswade Sea Cadets	£300
4.	East Beds Concert Band	£300
5.	St Andrews Church Holiday Club	£250
6.	Biggleswade Crab Lane Railway Embankment Committee	£116
7.	Biggleswade First Aid Club	£325
8.	Biggleswade Gospel Singers	£150
9.	Biggleswade Sports	£300
10.	Biggleswade Utd Youth Football	£300
11.	Brigham Pre-School & The Den	£400
12.	Friends of Abbotsbury	£250
13.	Ivel Stroke Club	£200
14.	Keech Hospice Care	£500
15.	New Horizon Club	£200
16.	Victim Support	£200
17.	Simply Scouting (Clare Roshier/Chelsea Duffin)	£200
18.	1 st Caldecote & District Rainbow Unit	NIL
19.	Ivel Rangers	£100
20.	Twinning Association	£100
21.	Biggleswade FM	£500

c. **Meeting dates for 2011/2012**

Members considered Committee dates for the year 2011/2012.

It was **RESOLVED** that these dates be approved.

d. **Fees for 2010/2011**

Members considered Town Council fees for 2011/2012.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following increases be implemented from 1st April 2011

All Market fees be increased by 5%

Burial charges to be increased by 5%

Rotavation to be increased by 5%

Allotment charges to remain the same as previously agreed

Drove Road recreation ground, fees agreed previously with Chair of Finance and the Town Clerk.

Recreation fees to be increased by 5%

e. **Biggleswade Bulletin**

Members were asked to consider renewing the contract with Biggleswade Bulletin; this cost will be the same as the previous year, £194.50.

It was **RESOLVED** that the contract be renewed

f. **Street naming and numbering – Phase 2, Land South of Potton Road, Biggleswade**

CBC has contacted Town Council confirming that they have received an application for Street Naming for the above development, and have requested one more name on the theme of Devon towns.

A copy was attached to the agenda as well as a copy the previous minutes.

It was **RESOLVED** that the name **Torquay** is to be used as previously agreed.

j. **Quotations for repairs to roof and refurbishment of upstairs offices at The Old Court House**

Town Council had asked 4 companies to quote for repairs to roof and refurbishment of upstairs offices at The Old Court House, Saffron Road.

3 quotations have been received and copies were attached to the agenda for Members to consider.

It was **RESOLVED** that due to the high quotations received, to proceed with the lowest quotation received for the roof repairs, as this is essential works that needs to be completed. The Town Clerk will speak to Satchells to discuss the possibility of renting the top part of building after possible renovations, to either one two bed flat or two one bed flats.

12. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Post Office at Bonds Lane**

Correspondence was received from the Office Manager of the Post Office at Bonds Lane; to inform Town Council that the current franchise expires on 28 March 2011 and those new franchisees has been secured, enabling them to remain at Bonds Lane.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted

13. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no items discussed during the public open session.