

MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 23 AUGUST 2011 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD BIGGLESWADE

Present: Cllr T Woodward (Chair), Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr P Vickers, Cllr Ms S Mulchrone, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr Mrs M Russell, Cllr D Albone, Cllr R Skinner, Cllr B Briars, Cllr I Bond
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
Paul Taylor – Environment Agency
Adam Foster – Environment Agency
Members of the Public- 5

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr P Woodward, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence and Cllr S Watkins.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(a) Prejudicial interests – Cllr I Bond registered an interest in item 9D as listed on the agenda.

(a) Personal Interests - Cllr 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 T Woodward registered an interest in item 5 (invited speaker – Environment Agency) as listed on the agenda.

Cllr I Bond registered an interest in items 9D and item 5 (invited speaker – Environment Agency) as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs M Russell registered an interest in item 9D (invited speaker – Environment Agency)

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed Members that the Biggleswade History Society has invited them all to the English Heritage Open Day at Drove Road Chapel on Saturday 10 September.

The Mayor reminded Members who haven't done so already, to let the Finance Assistant know if they will be attending the Xmas meal on Friday 16 December.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

a. Environment Agency addressed the meeting regarding Flood Risk and Flood Warning Areas in Biggleswade and had displayed a map showing details of areas which are most at risk.

Paul Taylor said that the Flood Mapping published last year shows improvement of data available, showing depth, velocity etc and explained that different colours on the map shows different probability and historical flooding.

Adam Foster said that the improved Flood Warning Service map also shows access routes for emergency services etc and would encourage anyone living in a risk area to check their postcode and could receive a warning via email, text etc.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked where a detailed map could be obtained.

Adam Foster replied that the map was for just for today, to show Councillors.

Paul Taylor added that the information may change, it is better to contact Environment Agency direct.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that presumably the information needs to be kept up to date for insurance companies as well.

Paul Taylor said that the website shows more information, but is due to be updated next year, and in answer to the question about insurance, an Insurance Rating Request can be sent out free of charge.

Cllr Mr H Ramsay asked when during next year would the website be updated.

Paul Taylor replied that they are waiting for new software to be installed.

Cllr P Vickers said that part of the Flood plan to West of River is outside Parish of Biggleswade.

Adam Foster said that there are 214 properties at risk, grouped for community figures.

Cllr P Vickers said that the River Ivel north and south of the Mill is very congested and overgrown with weeds, and asked if this would have any impact on flooding.

Adam Foster replied that it would depend on location and size of flood plain. Their maintenance plan is published on the website, but they would take any queries away with them.

Cllr P Vickers said that the area had not been cleared for a long time.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked who does what on the river and controls the levels. The last couple of years the river has flooded more often. The new housing estate in Arelsey has had an impact. Cllr Russell asked why the water level is so high south of Holme Mills.

Adam Foster replied that the levels are controlled by fixed weirs, flooding and normal water are maintained by these, and any flooding would be from the Flit catchment area rather than Aresley area.

Cllr R Skinner said that reeds towards the weir are higher than the bank in places and asked if the trap is working correctly and when is the area due to be dredged.

Adam Foster said that would take these questions back to the office and contact Council with the answers.

Cllr D Albone asked about the White areas on the map that was on display.

Adam Foster said that these areas are outside flood zone as they are slightly higher ground.

Cllr D Albone asked if these areas are a less risk of flooding.

Paul Taylor replied yes, these areas are less likely to flood.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said this was not accurate, she had seen horses standing in water in the fields.

Adam Foster replied that Environment Agency only deal with the River Ivel, not surface water.

Cllr P Vickers requested that Mr Taylor and Mrs Foster come back to Council with answers re weeds, congestion etc.

6. BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Members received a Crime figure report from Bedfordshire Police.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that a member of the Police Force should be present at Council meetings.

7. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 July 2011 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- b. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 9 August 2011 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

- c. Members received and adopted Minutes of the PLOS meeting held on 9 August 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 26 July 2011- Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that on page 2 – paragraph 9 – should re ‘manned 24hrs’
- b. Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 9 August 2011 - none
- c. Minutes of the PLOS meeting held on 9 August 2011 - none

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a. **CB/11/02128/FULL – Baystrait House, Station Road, Biggleswade**
Replacement of 91 windows.

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

- b. **CB/11/02831/FULL – 8 The Baulk, Biggleswade**
Demolition of existing lean to & bay, internal alterations & construction of single storey side & rear extensions.

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.

- c. **CB/11/02498/MW – Broom Quarry, Gypsy Lane, Broom.**
Variation of Condition 3 of planning permission 21/2006 to allow an extension of time to complete mineral extraction & restoration to 31 December 2014

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

- d. **CB/11/02730/FULL – Shortmead Cottage, Shortmead Lane, Biggleswade**
Erect replacement barn on site of former derelict barn

At this point Cllr I Bond left the Council Chamber due to prejudicial interest declared.

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

Cllr I Bond returned to the Council Chamber

10. ACCOUNTS

- a. **Financial Administration**

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31 July 2011
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure.
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31 July 2011

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Bedford College Student Achievements Ceremony 2011**

Bedford College asked if the Town Council would once again sponsor one of the student awards for the 2011 Event which will take place on Thursday 24th November at Bedford Corn Exchange. A key part of the event is the sponsorship of awards by local businesses and organisations and each student nominated for an award will receive a gift voucher or prize.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council donate £50 in sponsor money to this event.

- b. Members considered the letter from Mrs June Lawrence that had recently been received.

The letter stated that in the accounts, there is an amount of £45,000 unallocated.

Cllr T Woodward said that this amount was allocated for contingency staffing costs only in case another Works Manager needed to be appointed. The money has been rolled over and cannot be spent on anything else.

Cllr P Vickers said that there is always a variation on the budget - often excess but not always.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk would write a letter to Mrs Lawrence to explain the situation.

c. **Town Councils website**

Members considered updating the Town Councils website.

It was **RESOLVED** that a sub-committee/working party be formed to look at various options for the Website and to take back to Council.

The sub-committee will be formed of: Cllr T Woodward
Cllr I Bond
Cllr Mrs M Russell
Cllr B Briars
Cllr Ms S Mulchrone

Dates of meeting dates to be confirmed.

12. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Portable signs – site approval**

CBC informed Town Council of portable signs site approval at the junction of High Street/Rose Lane from 15 to 20 August 2011 to enable works to be carried out.

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

b. **Proposed Road Closure – B659 Hitchin Street, Biggleswade**

CBC had received a request for a Temporary Road Closure at the above location for surfacing work to be carried out in safety, for one weekend between 12 and 30 September 2011 from 2100hrs on Friday to 0600hrs on Sunday.

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

c. **CBC – Chairman’s Invitation – Afternoon Tea – Sunday 25 September**

Cllr Peter Hollick, Chairman of CBC, has invited Members to join him at Woburn on Sunday 25 September for Afternoon Tea, the cost will be £12 per person.

The reply form was attached to this agenda for Members to return to the Chairman's PA.

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

13. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

A member of the public asked if users would be asked what they want from the Council website.

The Mayor said there would be a public consultation.

14. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the public bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 Council resolved to exclude the public and the press by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted