

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER  
2011 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD  
BIGGLESWADE**

**Present:** Cllr T Woodward (Chair), Cllr G Wilson, Cllr P Vickers, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr Mrs M Russell, Cllr D Albone, Cllr R Skinner, Cllr B Briars, Cllr I Bond, Cllr P Woodward, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr S Watkins  
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk  
Juliet Brookes – Finance Assistant  
PCSO – Bedfordshire Constabulary  
Nicky Mulligan – Grand Union Housing  
Nicola Hillier – Grand Union Housing  
Members of the Public- 36

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs W Smith and Cllr Ms S Mulchrone

The Mayor asked the Council if Item 9a could be brought forward to item 6 of the agenda.

It was unanimously **AGREED** that this item be brought forward

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

**(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 Mrs M Russell registered an interest on item 9c

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay registered an interest on item 9c

Cllr I Bond registered an interest on item 9c

Cllr P Woodward registered an interest on item 9c

**3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor advised the Council that the 1<sup>st</sup> Sub Committee meeting had taken place with regards to the website. He advised that there would be a Public Consultation and that all requests/ideas should be sent to [enquiries@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk) or to write into the office.

He also advised that bids would be formulated for final specification and that the site would be built against this specification. There would then be another Public Consultation which would be on the website and no other format, to fulfil obligation.

**4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no items discussed during the public open session

**5. BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY**

The PSCO ran through the Crime figure report from Bedfordshire Police for the month of September 2011.

She felt that the figures were low for the month of September 2011 compared to other surrounding villages.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence felt that for a small rural town that the figures were high, but was pleased that the Police are doing something about the crime.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence also advised that Alistair Burt had received a letter from a resident at Royal Oak Close. They are still experiencing problems at Dan Albone Car Park at night with noise, rubbish, cars and a small amount of graffiti. She asked if the Police could patrol this area and keep an eye on the situation.

Cllr Mrs M Russell advised that there seems to be an increase of Lamping. She had witnessed this at 11pm at the floodplain near the A1m and asked whether the Police could look into the situation.

Cllr G Wilson asked whether we could have more detail on offences, we used to have detailed sheets with the street location of the crime.

The PCSO replied that due to data protection and duty of care to victims, she didn't feel that this information was available, but would look into the issue.

Cllr D Albone asked how publicised the new non emergency number would be. The PSCO advise that as it was a nationwide change it would be publicised broadly by the corporate team.

## **6. INVITED SPEAKERS**

Nicola Hillier ran through the background of the scheme. She advised that previously there were approximately 22 bedsits for the elderly. Refurbishment to that building was not economically viable so a decision was taken to demolish the building. Consideration was given to the Extra Care Scheme for the elderly, due to the lack of funding support the scheme could not be taken forward, alternatively a scheme was undertaken to consider housing needs, a mix of units agreed by the housing needs team.

Paul Ainsbury felt that the wording "decants old people" was not a good choice of words. He felt that this building was an asset to the community. Paul felt that Grand Union needed to support people within the community and asked what they are going to do about the elderly provision.

Nicola advised that Grand Union had been working in partnership with C.B.C and they have looked at the future provision for the elderly in Biggleswade and the County.

Theresa Wall said when considering allocating properties, consideration should be given to people who are leaving other larger social housing properties particularly the elderly.

Nicola advised that to provide accommodation for the elderly would cost £125,000 per unit. Under the current proposed scheme properties would cost £93,000 per unit, complex developments have to be supported by funding. There is more involvement with the provision of "Extra Care Accommodation", requiring support facilities, specialist bathrooms etc; it's a more complex development.

Alison Martin asked why elderly homes cannot be standard, as most elderly people live quite independently and don't require "Extra Care Accommodation". She also felt that the area could not sustain anymore vehicles, there is not enough parking on the development, and there is no other off road parking, residents struggle to park at the moment.

The Mayor advise all that it was a constant battle with Central Beds regarding parking issues but if Central Beds are working within the legal requirements, there was nothing that the Council could do as they are unable to object on these grounds.

Alison Martin It may meet the legal requirements but it is totally impractical. Sun Street/Shortmead junction at present is horrendous.

Marion Hogarth advised that at present emergency vehicles have extreme problems in this area.

Sarah Hughes advised that she lives at Cedar Avenue and that from studying the plans present at the meeting, it seems that elevation C has a property missing. Her opinion was that houses will face down our road, two will overlook my garden, and every house has a garden backing onto the open space. Could the plans be reconsidered at the rear and consider the rear of property on looks.

Nicola advised that nothing was set in stone, but they had worked very closely with the Central Bedfordshire Planners and the conservation team.

Sarah felt that plots 6, 7 and 8, were designed to overlook the open space and which had parking to the rear of properties. Sarah question if cars would want to park at the rear of the property after having done shopping.

Nicola these plots have allocated parking and people will use them.

Sarah also had concerns with auto crime and public access to the site, she had spoken to PC Knowles in regard to the proposed pedestrian access to the site near Plots 107 and 108 and he feels strongly that there should be no through access due to noise and security issues.

Nicola the access needs to be fenced off.

Alison Martin asked why a walkthrough was put on the plan, she would prefer no walk through Central Beds had already tried to put a walkway and cycle way within the area but this had been reconsidered. She also asked what the Council meant by taking it to vote.

Nicola we will address public access to the site.

The Mayor advised Alison on the different options/procedures with regards to Planning Applications.

Paul Ainsbury said that the development would have a heavy impact on the schools.

The Mayor said it would possibly affect St Andrews Lower School.

Shaun Heath asked if the Town Council had a policy for elderly provision, The Mayor advised that this was dealt with by Central Bedfordshire Council as the Town Council had no legal responsibility.

Cllr Vickers asked who the Case officer was; Nicola advised that it was Samantha Boyd. Cllr Vickers advised that the issue had to be dealt with as a planning application. Cllr Vickers felt that the parking was in line with government guidelines, the conservation team would have been consulted, if properties 1 to 5 were turned around to alleviate the need for access, it was doubtful if the proposed development exceeded the density guidelines therefore if the application was withdrawn and the residents concerns taken into account, the plans could then be resubmitted as a revised scheme with no additional planning fee.

Paul Motley asked if Central Bedfordshire Council and housing officers would have more consultation with residents before submitting a revised scheme, as the residents had made some very valid points.

Duncan Strachan asked if the housing association were willing to listen and further consult, and could Council take on board Cllr Vickers advice and vote accordingly.

Cllr Albone felt that the site should be for the provision of sheltered housing.

## **7. MINUTES OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 August 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 13 September 2011 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- c. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Off Street Car Parking meeting held on 13 September 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 23 August 2011  
Cllr B Briars advised that on Page 3 Item D, that it didn't state when Cllr I Bond returned to the Chamber  
Cllr B Briars said that on page 4 – paragraph 1 – should read Mrs June Lawrence  
Cllr B Briars said that on Page 4 Item c, no chair had been elected and that this wasn't a Sub Committee it was a Working Party
- b. Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 13 September 2011 - None
- c. Minutes of the Off Street Car Parking meeting held on 13 September 2011

Cllr B Briars advised that the minutes featured "It was RESOLVED", as this was a Sub Committee they do not have the power to resolve, so these should read "It was RECOMMENDED".

Cllr B Briars asked that the Town Councils Website Working Party request that funds are available for them to meet all obligations.

It was agreed that funds of £1000.00 be made available.

## **9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### **a. CB/11/03095/FULL – Land at former Fairholme, Fairfield Road, Biggleswade** Residential development of 21 units and associated car parking and landscaping.

*Nicky Mulligan and Nicola Hillier from Grand Union Housing addressed the meeting regarding this planning application.*

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECT** to this application as it is an inappropriate development within this area, with the loss of sheltered accommodation and of too high a density.

Objections from member of the Public who were present at the meeting:

- \* The planning application conflicts with the Bedfordshire Community Safety Supplementary Planning Guide.
- \* There is a significant potential security risk that this could provide a series of different opportunities to escape into the network of existing pedestrian routes surrounding the site
- \* Insufficient parking, and associated increase in parking in Cedar Avenue and surrounding areas.
- \* Will cause difficulty for emergency vehicles as people will be forced to park on the street.
- \* Development will be overlooking properties gardens in Cedar Avenue
- \* No elderly accommodation provision on the site
- \* Increase in noise pollution
- \* Privacy Issues

### **b. CB/11/03089/FULL – 143 Potton Road, Biggleswade** Rear 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.

### **c. CB/11/03064/REN – Stratton Way School, Eagle Farm Road, Biggleswade** Renewal of Planning Permission: Retention of one double temporary unit BC/CC/06/0033

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objection to this application, but as it was a temporary unit planning would need to be applied again in 2 years time.

### **d. CB/11/02987/FULL – 79 Hitchin Street, Biggleswade** First floor and loft 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.

### **e. CB/11/03207/MWS - Land South of Broom, Broom Road, Stanford** Scheme details of drainage pursuant to condition 21 of planning permission No 28/2008 **For info only**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council noted this application

- f. **CB/11/03273/FULL - 33 Havelock Road, Biggleswade**  
Retrospective: Erection of two storey rear & side 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.

- g. **CB/11/03327/FULL – Flats 1 to 29, Copeland’s, Biggleswade**  
Erection of canopy over main entrance door

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

10. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011
- iii. Detailed Income & Expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011
- iv. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011
- v. Business Reserve Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011

Cllr M Russell thanked the Finance Assistant for the new revised additional Accounts paperwork.

Cllr M Russell also requested that an F & GP Meeting be arranged.

b. **Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit**

- i. Members reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit. A copy of the work programme for 2011/2012 was attached.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted

11. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Review of the Standing Orders**

**For Council to review the standing orders and consider amendments to, standing orders 30, 43 & 64.**

**Standing order 30 to consider option (a) or option (b)**

- (a) a member should stand unless permission is given by the Chairman to remain seated.
- (b) a member shall remain seated unless a request is made by the Chairman to stand.

It was **RESOLVED** that Standing Order 30 to remain as above.

**Standing order 43 to consider amending to read;**

The Chairman of the Councils Committees will be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council and the Vice Chairman will be elected at the first Meeting of the Committee following the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that Standing Order 43 read The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Councils Committees will be elected by members of the Committee at a small meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

**Standing order 64 to consider amending to read;**

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

It was **RESOLVED** that Standing Order 64 be amended as above

**For Council to consider;**

If Councillors arrive late for any meetings of Council, Committees or Sub Committees should the late arrival including the time of arrival be noted on the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** that if a Councillor arrives late for, or leaves early any meetings of Full Council, Planning, Committees or Sub Committees that the late arrival not the time be noted on the minutes, next to the relevant item on the agenda.

**b. Central Bedfordshire Highway Maintenance Three-Year Programme 2012 - 2015**

Bedfordshire Highways maintains the Council's three-year programme of capital highway maintenance schemes to tie in with the three-year programme of improvement schemes developed by the Council in accordance with its Local Transport Plan (LTP3) which came into effect on 1 April 2011. This plan can be found on the Council's website.

They would like to commence the consultation process on the maintenance schemes programme with Parish and Town Councils and to inform Council of the process and timescales for producing the draft programme for 2012 – 2015.

They would like Town Council's thoughts on the road, footway and drainage schemes which are believed to be important for the community.

Attached is an extract from the rolling programme, showing all road, footway and drainage maintenance schemes identified with Biggleswade. Also attached in a proforma to suggest maintenance schemes for consideration and to identify any other requests, these needs to be returned to CBC by **30 September 2011**.

Members were asked to consider identifying any other areas in need of maintenance.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following areas also be considered:

Cllr Ian Bond advised of the roads at Fairfield Road/Shortmead Lane

Cllr Mrs Jane Lawrence advised of the footpath that disappears at Church Street, toward the West End.

Cllr D Albone advised that the footpath at Saxon Drive disappears near the balancing pond.

Cllr D Albone advised that the footpath at Chambers Way which joins Kings Field also disappears

Cllr R Skinner advised of the road that leads to Sunderland Farm

Cllr B Briars advised that there is a real issue with potholes in general within Biggleswade

Cllr B Briars advised that there is an issue with weeds at the sides of roads

Cllr R Skinner advised that all gully's needed to be emptied.

Cllr D Lawrence asked that Highways check with the Utility Companies to ensure that any improvement works done are carried out in conjunction with the Utility Companies Maintenance Schedule.

**c. Town and Parish Council Conference – 5 October 2011- from 6.30pm**

Councillor James Jamieson, Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council has invited **2 Councillors** to attend the above conference and are asked to complete and return the attached booking form to CBC by 30 September.

Members were asked to nominate 2 representatives.

**No representatives were nominated.**

**12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**a. Turnpike Farm Bridge, Potton Road, Biggleswade/Sutton**

Further to their correspondence of earlier this year, Amey have informed Town Council that the proposed works at the above location are due to commence on 3 October 2011. Site preparation works will be carried out during the week commencing 26 September.

It is planned to carry out repairs to the bridge arch and southwest wingwall. In addition the existing cracked concrete facing will be removed and replaced with a more durable system. All of these works will take place away from the carriageway in order to minimise the effect of passing traffic and the external appearance of the structure will be maintained in its current form.

A copy was attached to the agenda.

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

**13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Rob Green asked that at a previous meeting it was discussed that an Open Day would take place at the Council Offices, he asked if a date had been set.

The Mayor advised him that the Open Day would take place on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011, and that the day would be publicised via the website, Biggleswade Bulletin, Local Press and noticeboards.

Duncan Strachan advised that he thought that Cllr B Briars was correct and that the Standing Orders would be held in abeyance for 21 days.

Duncan Strachan also wanted to comment on the discussion of Standing Order 30. He felt that Councillors need to be aware of why Councillors need to stand; firstly it is nice for the general public to see who is speaking, rude to members of public for Councillors to remain seated. He felt that the Councillors need to treat the public with respect and that the only reason they were Councillors was that the general public had voted for them. He felt that discipline needed to prevail.

Duncan Strachan felt that due to the ongoing Planning Rules and Obligation discussion that had taken place, he suggested that a representative from Central Beds should attend a training session for Councillors on Planning Procedures.

Duncan Strachan asked if the general public could receive a copy of the balance sheet at the next meeting.

**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 about to be transacted.