

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 JANUARY 2011 AT THE
OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD
BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr T Woodward (Chair), Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr P Vickers, Cllr P Woodward, Cllr I Bond, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr Mrs M Russell, Cllr B Briars, Cllr R Skinner
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
Derek Kemp – DCK Beavers
Sam Vernon – Biggleswade Chronicle
Members of the Public - 6

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr D Albone, Cllr G Wilson and Cllr S Watkins.

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 I Bond declared an interest in item 9b as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs M Russell declared an interest in item 9b as listed on the agenda.

Cllr B Briars declared an interest in item 11d as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs W Smith declared an interest in item 11a as listed on the agenda.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Town Mayor's announcements.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

5. BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

There was no member of the Police present at the meeting, but a crime report dated from 1 December 2011 to 20 January 2012, was supplied for member's information.

The report stated that PCSO's, Biggleswade Community Safety Group and the Fire Service attended London Road Retail Park and secured 60 car number plates and identified 43 vulnerable vehicles (vehicles with valuables left in the vehicle)

There had been a number of domestic burglaries in London Road and Kingfisher Close – entry gained by forcing the garage doors open, fishing equipment and alcohol stole.

2 male suspects involved have been arrested recently.

Ongoing thefts on catalytic convertors – An operation will be done in the very near future working with the Environmental Agency at scrap metal yards.

A male had been approached in an alleyway from The Baulk to The Dells after drinking in The Rose pub, High Street and had his mobile phone taken.

The Town Clerk will write a letter requesting that a member of the Police Force attend Council meetings.

6. INVITED SPEAKERS

At this point the Mayor requested that item **10 (Finance)** be brought forward, to enable Derek Kemp to answer any questions, and Members agreed.

10. ACCOUNTS

a. Financial Administration

i. Members received and adopted the following accounts:

- i. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 30 November 2011
- ii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31 December 2011.
- iii. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31 December 2011
- iv. Summary of Income & Expenditure to 31 December 2011.
- v. Detailed Income & Expenditure to 31 December 2011.

ii. Members received and approved the **recommendation** of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 15 November 2011 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

b. PRECEPT FOR 2012/2013

Sub-Committee Budget meeting was held on 15 November 2011 in order to consider preliminary precept budget figures for 2012/2013.

At the meeting members agreed that the figures be accepted to go forward to the Precept Meeting for consideration and decision.

The Town Council is now invited to refer to the Budget Proposals (attached), which set out total expenditure, total income and net expenditure for the year 2012/2013.

The Town Council are asked to endorse the following **recommendations**:

- i. The Capital and Revenue Budgets for the year 2012/2013 with any amendments made by this meeting be agreed.
- ii. To levy a Precept on CBC of £631, 348, 00 for the financial year 2012/2013.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked if there was anything in the figures that Council were not aware of at the last meeting.

The Town Clerk raised concern that CBC has put the Cemetery Chapel at Drove Road on the at risk register and are now monitoring its condition.

Cllr Mrs W Smith asked how CBC had got involved as the P.L.O.S Committee had agreed at the last meeting to obtain costs for the work to be done.

The Town Clerk informed Councillors that a Town Councillors had arranged a meeting at the Chapel with a CBC officer.

Cllr Mrs W Smith said that P.L.O.S hadn't agreed to that meeting, only to obtain costs.

Cllr T Woodward said that the Councillor involved should have gone through the Town Clerk.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked what type of repairs were needed what deadline had been set.

Cllr T Woodward said that the Chair of Public Land and Open Spaces Committee was aware of the situation and would write to CBC to let them know.

Cllr P Vickers said he had concerns about the Town Council being placed in this position by a member of this Council having discussions with an officer from CBC. I suggest the use of Capital Reserves if and when we know the costs of repairs and the timetable of repairs. In the email from CBC regarding the

state of the Chapel, most Chapels that are 150 years old would be in much the same condition. We are one of the few local authorities that actually use their Chapel.

Cllr B Briars said that there was an issue with the report taking too long to produce, was no timetable given for completion of the report, we need to make sure things move at a better pace.

The Town Clerk said that Town Council had appointed Levitt's to carry out the survey, and it had gone through three different people, which had slowed things down.

Cllr Mrs W Smith said that Town Council needs to be pushing to get the prices.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence asked if the repairs could come under Revenue.

Derek Kemp replied that the Rolling Capital fund is set aside from Revenue and there are no restrictions on use.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that the actual increase for a Band D house is £1.56 per year. Was it correct that increases are to be capped?

Derek Kemp replied that Town and Parish Council are not capped for 2012/2013 but did not rule out the possibility of capping for future years. Increases should not exceed the rate of inflation.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council has reserves, but there are a lot of matters to consider. We need to be as ambitious as possible for the Town, CBC don't have much money. We want to go ahead with the Joint Committee, the Town Plan has raised issues, the roundabout at the junction of Sun Street and Shortmead Street needs to be resolved and we have commercially sensitive issues that we need to deal with.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that she did not agree that the Cemetery Chapel should be left much longer and proposed an increase of £640,000.00 (and not the proposed £631,348) this would mean an increase on a Band D property of 3%.

Cllr I Bond seconded the proposal.

Cllr P Vickers said that aside from the cemetery Chapel, Council has reserves of £750,000 approx. I never like to precept what I don't need to precept. Why ask rate payers to pay extra?

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Council may be capped in the future so we will be unable to increase the precept. The increase isn't that large an issue.

Members voted on the proposal: to increase the precept to £640,000.00

5 Councillors voted for the proposed increase

5 Councillors voted against the proposed increase

The Chair voted against.

Cllr P Vickers asked that it be noted that he voted against this proposal for a larger increase.

Cllr P Vickers moved that the precept as set out be adopted a precept of £631, 348, 00.

This was seconded by Cllr D Lawrence.

Members voted on the proposal that the precept as set out be adopted

5 Councillors voted for the Precept as set out.

5 Councillors voted against the Precept as set out.

The Chair voted for.

The **recommendation** of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 15 November 2011 was **approved** as set out.

c. **Annual Return 31st March 2011**

Members approved and accepted the Annual Return for 31st March 2011 (copy attached)

d. **Annual Audit 2010 - 2011**

Members received and recorded the external audit report for the year to 31st March 2011 (copy of Certificate was attached) and agreed that the recommendations be carried out.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

a. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 November 2011 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence pointed out that Cllr Mrs H Ramsay appeared twice on the attendance list also item 11c should state – 5 CBC Councillors and 5 BTC Councillors.

7 Councillors voted for the resolution and 8 voted against, including the Chairman's casting vote.

b. Members received and adopted Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 13 December 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 10 January 2012 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

d. Members received and approved the **recommendations** of the Public Land and Open Spaces meeting held on 10 January 2012 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Items as listed on the PLOS agenda:

5a. **Adoption of Brunel Drive public open space**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Council may consider adopting the play areas but only after seeing proposals for new play equipment from the developer.

5b. **Reports of PLOS Walkabouts on 30 August and 6 September 2011**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council arrange for a soil sample to be taken at Kitelands Park, to allow the installation of the new play equipment to go ahead. A certificate could then be obtained.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Ariel Runway be moved from Franklins to Grasmere. Franklins could then be developed for families.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Clerk write a letter to the owners of the floodlights.

5c. **Outstanding 106 monies**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council utilise the remaining 106 monies for items **b**, and **e** as listed on the agenda.

5d. **Installation of Street Snooker**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that in the first instance, Members visit a site when Street Snooker is in use.

5e. **Installation of Parkour**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council find out what equipment is available and the costs involved of installation and maintenance.

5f. **Appeal by Biggleswade Town Council re Land East of Saxon Drive, Biggleswade**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council write again to CBC to purchase the land.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a.** Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 November 2011 – Cllr Mrs M Russell said that during the public open session a member of the public asked if there was any progress with the Town Council website.

The Mayor replied that he had been in hospital and now that he was feeling better, he would ask the staff to send all relevant paperwork to him.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked if there was any feedback yet on item 11c (Joint Partnership Committee).

Cllr D Lawrence replied that the meeting at CBC is scheduled for Friday 27 January, so feedback would be available after that date.

- b.** Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 13 December 2011 – Cllr B Briars asked if Town Council had heard from CBC regarding item 4c (Planning Application).

The Town Clerk replied that we had not heard from CBC.

Cllr P Vickers said that Town Council used to receive feedback from Planning Dept and didn't know why it had stopped.

The Town Clerk said that he would write to CBC regarding this issue.

Cllr B Briars asked there was any feedback about item 5e (streetlight outside 10 Mead End).

The Town Clerk replied that the lamp was illegally disconnected and once reference numbers have been obtained from the lighting people, it was hoped that it would be reinstated free of charge.

Cllr R Skinner asked if there was any news on item 5d (street lighting outages in Biggleswade)

The Town Clerk said that everything was going well.

- c.** Minutes of the Planning meeting held on 10 January 2012.

Cllr B Briars asked if CBC has replied to Town Council regarding items 4d (holding objection to a Planning application) and also item 6d (request for confirmation of the location of Erlensee Way and Baden Powell Way)

The Town Clerk said that as yet CBC had not replied.

Cllr I Bond asked if there had been any progress on item 5b (his request to purchase Land Registry documents)

The Town Clerk replied that he is dealing with this at the moment.

Cllr I Bond said that he felt this item was taking a long time.

The Town Clerk replied that this was only discussed on 10 January 2012 and that he had been dealing with personnel issues.

Cllr Mrs M Russell requested that Councillors are provided with a running list of ongoing items.

Cllr P Woodward said that staff are under a lot of pressure at the moment, so if Councillors could bear this in mind.

Cllr T Woodward said that other items are more pressing at the moment.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that she understands that the staff are under pressure.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. **CB/12/00063/FULL – 52a High Street, Biggleswade**

Change of use of part of ground floor to Juice Bar Use Class 3

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise no objection to this application **PROVIDING** that the drinks are non-alcoholic.

At this point Cllr Ian Bond left the Chamber.

b. **CB/12/00087/FULL – Land North of Shortmead Cottage, Shortmead Lane, Biggleswade**

Installation of solar panels to supply energy for Shortmead stables and barn

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

Cllr Ian Bond returned to the Chamber.

c. **CB/12/00098/FULL – 1 Saffron Road, Biggleswade**

Demolition of existing first floor extension and erection of two storey rear extension.

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

d. **CB/12/00046/FULL – 63 Mead End, Biggleswade**

Front entrance porch extension including new W.C.

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/12/00044/FULL – 32 Derwent Avenue, Biggleswade**

Demolition of existing garage and construction of 2 storey side extension.

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

The following financial items were discussed earlier in the meeting.

10. ACCOUNTS

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b. PRECEPT FOR 2012/2013

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At the meeting members agreed that the figures be accepted to go forward to the Precept Meeting for consideration and decision.

The Town Council is now invited to refer to the Budget Proposals (attached), which set out total expenditure, total income and net expenditure for the year 2012/2013.

The Town Council are asked to endorse the following **recommendations**:

- iii. The Capital and Revenue Budgets for the year 2012/2013 with any amendments made by this meeting be agreed.
- iv. To levy a Precept on CBC of £631348 for the financial year 2012/2013.

c. Annual Return 31st March 2011

Members approved and accepted the Annual Return for 31st March 2011 (copy attached)

d. Annual Audit 2010 - 2011

Members received and recorded the external audit report for the year to 31st March 2011 (copy of Certificate was attached) and agree that the recommendations be carried out.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Further to Planning meeting 14 June 2011 – Request to clean memorials for Mary Tealby and Edward Bates

At the planning meeting 14 June 2011, request for donation towards renovation and cleaning of the above memorials, it was **RESOLVED** to agree in principle but requested that another quote be obtained before Town Council makes a decision to contribute to this cost.

Another quote has now been obtained and a copy was attached to the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** that this item could be considered for a Community Grant and that Cllr R Skinner would liaise with the History Society to clarify who the grant forms need to be sent to.

b. Swiss Garden Stakeholder Consultation Events

Shuttleworth Trust and CBC are currently developing proposals for a major restoration of the Swiss Garden on the Old Warden Estate.

Members were invited to two Stakeholder Consultation events:

Thursday 26 January: Landscape and Hydrology

Thursday 1 March: Buildings & Structures, Interpretation and Outreach

Both will be morning meetings.

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

c. Request for Occasional Town Centre Vehicle Display

Correspondence was received from Mantles Group Limited requesting permission to be able to display one or two vehicles, linked with a national campaign message, in the centre of Biggleswade, perhaps for one or two days each quarter.

The display would be located on the pavement area either to the south of Harrolds or to the east of the Surfin Café. They suggest a two day promotional period (avoiding Market days) each quarter and would be happy to make a small but realistic contribution towards Council funds or a local charity for the benefit so.

Any display would be tastefully and professionally presented.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to Mantles to ask for more details before a decision is made.

d. Invitation from The Lawns Nursery School and Children's Centre

The above invitation was received for Members to attend lunchtime meetings on 23 February and 14 June. These are regular meetings when members of the local community are invited to discuss local need in the community and to enable the school meet these needs.

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

e. Salvation Army Band request

Correspondence was received from The Salvation Army asking permission for band members to play Christmas carols and make a collection at the Saturday market on 8 December 2012, from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

It was **RESOLVED** that permission be granted.

f. CB/TPO/12/00010 – trees at Turnpike Farm, Potton Road, Biggleswade

CBC received as application to carry out work to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order: Reduction in height by 30% to 8 lime trees, 2 Cedar trees and 1 Scots Pine located to the side of dwelling on TPO/MB/73/00004 as listed T17, T18, T19, T21, T22, T23, T24, 25.

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

g. Request from H Harris

Henry Harris wrote to Town Council asking permission to hold a Fun Fair on the market square as part of the Carnival celebrations. He would like to arrive on Tuesday 19 June after 6pm, and leave by 8am Sunday 24 June.

It was **RESOLVED** that permission be granted.

h. Request from Tuesday Market stall holders

The stall holders who support the Tuesday market have requested a reduction in rent during January, as it is a very difficult trading month, especially in the current economical climate.

It was **RESOLVED** that this item be deferred to the next Off Street Car Parking Committee meeting. Date to be agreed.

i. Request from James Harris Funfairs

Correspondence was received from James Harris Funfairs requesting permission to use White Hart car park on the following dates:

Saturday 18 and 25 February
Saturday 31 March
Saturday 21 April

It was **RESOLVED** that this item be deferred to the next Off Street Car Parking Committee meeting. Date to be agreed.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Dunton Lane & Biggleswade Road, Biggleswade

CBC had notified Town Council of the above proposed temporary closure from 6 to 10 February to enable surfacing work to be carried out in safety.

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

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

14. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be moved that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

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.