

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING INCLUDING PRECEPT HELD ON TUESDAY 28
JANUARY 2014 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE,
SAFFRON ROAD BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs H Ramsay (Chair), Cllr I Bond, Cllr Mrs M Russell, Cllr M North, Cllr T Woodward,
Cllr Ms S Mulchrone, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr B Briars, Cllr D Albone, Cllr S Watkins
Louise Wilcox – Deputy Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
Mary Davidson – WYG Planning and Design
Sam Vernon – Biggleswade Chronicle
Members of the public - 7

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr B Rix, Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence and Cllr D Lawrence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – none declared
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none declared

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor said that the Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr S Watkins, had attended a Holocaust Commemoration Service in Bedford.

The Mayor went on to say that Town Council staff and Councillors have donated £45 to St Johns Hospice in memory of Cllr Rex Skinner.

4. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr B Briars said that the High Street is still flooding, this should have been sorted out by CBC Highways already and asked that Town Council write to CBC to get this rectified.

Cllr Mrs M Russell made reference to the EU consultation regarding VAT recovery, which could have implications for Town and Parish councils

5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

6. BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Members received the Recorded Crime figures between 21 November 2013 and 20 January 2014.

Cllr G Wilson said that with regards to Dells Lane parking problems, as there is a TRO in place, the Police will not be taking any action. The Police also do not have enough staff.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that she is unhappy, there should be policing of dangerous parking at junctions, corners etc. We are waiting for CBC for the additional TPO's, and asked Cllr Wilson to ask Sgt Gary Kidd to look at the parking situation in Dells Lane.

Cllr Wilson said that he had already asked about Dells Lane parking. The PCSO's had put stickers on cars but do not have the same powers as PC's, Sgt Kidd and the voluntary Special Police Officers.

15 new Police Officers have just finished their training but are all going to Luton, we will have to wait and see where the next 15 are assigned to.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if it was correct that from Ampthill to Sandy we only have 1 PC and Specials.

Cllr Wilson said that there is no additional manpower for Biggleswade, and he would take Councils concerns to Sgt Kidd. Sgt Kidd is following instructions, but we could write to the Chief Constable at Kempston headquarters.

Cllr Mrs Ramsay said she would speak to the Town Clerk to sort out a letter.

7. **INVITED SPEAKERS**

Mary Davidson – WYG Planning & Design re amendments to London Road Retail Park planning application.

The Mayor suspended Standing Orders at this point to allow members of the public to ask questions after Mary Davidson's presentation.

MD said that the movement was slow last year, but things are starting move now, with small changes to the scheme.

The tenants so far are: Next in Unit A, H & M in Unit B, M & S (with a food hall) in Unit C, Matalan in Unit D, TK Maxx in Unit H. There have been changes with Unit E, it now looks as though the Arcadia Group will be taking this unit.

There has been a problem with Homebase which has delayed matters, WYG may have to move forward with a Compulsory Purchase Order in order to allow construction of the new roundabout and improved access to the business park.

Cllr Ramsay asked about the Units on the opposite side of the road.

MD replied that Homebase have been offered a new Unit, we just have to wait and see what they decide to do.

The building work should begin on site next month. The contractors have been on site tidying up in preparation. All the Planning Conditions are sorted, but there is one change on the other side of the road, Units 1 & 2 will now be occupied by Bensons and Halfords.

Cllr Wilson asked what is happening to Argos.

MD replied said that Argos hasn't said what they want yet. She said that Homebase and Argos are part of the same retail group and that Homebase have said that they do not want on Argos store on this site.

MD went on to say that the first phase is the works on the A1, the dualling works on London Road is the second phase, which is when they will be handing over a cheque to CBC for £100,000 which is S106 money for the Town Centre, the second cheque for £100,000 will be handed over when the first Unit is occupied.

Cllr Briars asked about the impact on traffic when the roadworks commence.

MD replied AMEY with CBC will implement stringent road management. It would be good if they would come here to update Members.

Cllr Briars said that if it's not managed, it cause a bottle neck, especially with the works at the other end of the town.

Cllr Ramsay asked about a timeframe.

MD replied that she would let Council know.

Cllr D Albone asked about the 'Variation of Condition'

MD replied that this has gone away.

Cllr Mrs Russell said that the revised plan shows the loss of 30 parking spaces and asked if there are any other amendments.

MD replied with improvements to Homebase service yard and, and if Homebase agree to re-arrange their car park, it is hoped to regain some parking spaces.

Cllr Russell asked if parking would still be restricted to 4 hours and also about a Shuttle Bus.

MD replied that the parking restriction would apply. However, she was not sure about the Shuttle Bus as WYG only contribute towards it.

Cllr Albone said that there is a newish bus service to the new estate, it's not a Shuttle Bus.

MD said maybe they could add an extra stop to the existing service.

MOP 1 said that the new bus service is run by Herberts. The big difficulty is that it's not advertised but it runs one an hour every hour.

MOP 1 went on to ask MD about Brantano as they were not mentioned in the presentation.

MD replied that Brantano have not committed yet, but it is hoped that they would stay. All the traders want continuation of trading. Also, Boots has shown an interest, this would be in addition to their existing store in the Town Centre and they would want the ability to operate a Pharmacy. The only food would be sold at M & S.

Cllr Ramsay said that there is pharmacy at the Saxon Centre which could cause difficulties for Boots.

Cllr Russell said it would up to the Health Service regarding issuing a licence for a pharmacy.

The Mayor reinstated the Standing Orders.

8. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 January 2014 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr B Briars asked that the word 'and' be added on Page 5, paragraph 20, to read: 'Cllr B Briars raised the issue of lack of good disabled parking, **and** the need to look at smaller areas such as Lawrence Road and Hitchmead and the need to look at yellow lines.

Members approved the minutes subject to this amendment.

- b. Members **approved the recommendations** of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 21 January 2014 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Items as listed on the F&GP agenda:

6) ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a) Budgets

Members considered budgets for 2013/2014.

Members were informed that the budgets had been looked at again in detail during the 21st January 2014 and that the proposed increase in the budgets was 8.93%.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed that the increase was a good way forward considering the 10.2% loss on the figures due to the loss of the grant from Central Bedfordshire Council.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if there was provision in the budget to cover projects that had to be completed in 2014/ 2015.

Cllr M North said that we have done well to keep the increase at 8.93% and proposed that the budgets are recommended to Town Council.

Cllr M North thanked the Clerk and staff for keeping a tight rein on the Town Councils finances.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council accept an increase of 8.93% to the Town Council budgets for 2014/2015 the equivalent of an 18.43 pence week rise per Band D Equivalent.

b) Local Government Pension Scheme: Ill-health early retirement risks

Correspondence has been received from Bedford Borough Council regarding the above.

Biggleswade Town Council is a participating employer within the Bedfordshire Pension Fund and as such is required to meet any obligations to the Fund in respect of pension costs for employees.

Many employers are becoming increasingly aware of the risks of participating within the Local Government Pension Scheme. One such risk causing concern is the cost associated with the ill-health early retirement of one (or more) of employees.

Bedford Pension Fund has obtained an ill-health insurance quote on behalf of the Fund's employers.

Bedford Pension Fund has obtained an ill-health insurance quote on behalf of the Fund's employees.

The premium paid will be off-set against contributions to the Fund. Therefore, there will be no increase in the contributions normally paid to the Fund for employers who decide to purchase the insurance. The premium payable to legal and general would be **£0.80 per £100 of Town Councils employee's salary roll.**

The above rate is based on a take-up rate via the individual employer choice route.

Members are asked to consider whether Town Council should proceed with purchasing ill-health insurance.

A copy of all correspondence is attached to this agenda.

Cllr M North felt that it was not clear if Town Council had to purchase the insurance.

Cllr Mrs M Russell felt that it was a lot of insurance, just under £2,500 per annum and that it was unlikely that staff would retire due to ill health; we should not proceed.

D Kemp (DCK) suggested that Town Council could bring the £2,500 into the year -end Accounts as an earmarked reserve and self-fund the likelihood of a member of staff retiring early due to ill health.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked if the money could be taken out of the reserve at some point in the future when it accumulates.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay proposed that Council self-insure and set the sum of money aside each year as an earmarked reserve.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council set aside a sum of money each year as an earmarked reserve, to cover the likelihood of a member of staff retiring early due to ill health.

9. MATTERS ARISING

a. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 January 2014

Page 3 – item 6e – PLOS recommendations – Cllr B Briars asked about the Additional Vehicle for the Works Team

LW said that she is looking into the additional vehicle and pursuing options for an electric vehicle.

Page 5 – 10a – Parking Strategy – Tasking Group – Cllr D Albone asked if this document had been presented to CBC yet.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said it would be presented at the Joint Management Committee meeting on Wednesday 29 January.

Cllr B Briars said that the Disabled Parking bays all need to be repainted as well as Rear Access Disabled Vehicles provision, and asked if this could be an agenda item.

Cllr Russell replied that it could go on the next TCM meeting.

Cllr Ramsay said that Cllr Briars should email this issue to the Town Clerk to ensure it is added onto an agenda.

Page 5 – The fence at The Crown Hotel blocking the Right of Way – Cllr D Albone asked if Town Council has contacted CBC.

Cllr Ms S Mulchrone said that she had heard that The Crown Hotel is to be a Wetherspoons, and they may want the walkway as part of their garden

Cllr Ramsay said that Town Council needs to keep an eye on developments.

LW said that CBC are to produce a new Definitive map showing 'Rights of Way' for the Town and a presentation is to be given to the April meeting of the Joint Committee.

Cllr Russell said that we need the map before the planning application from Wetherspoons is submitted.

MD handed the Mayor this statement regarding the bus service for the Retail Park:

The Council covenants with the Owner not to use the Bus Service Contribution (£230,000) other than for the purpose of providing and extending 185 Local Bus Service or a similar or replacement service

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. CB/13/04399/VOC – London Road Retail Park

Variation of Condition: to condition 26 (approved plans) of planning permission CB/13/00949/VOC the amendments involve the rearrangement of the end main terrace facing London Road to create five units, and the reinstatement of Unit E which is shunted forwards of Unit F,G and H to help break up the facade. These changes will result in the following amendments to the layout of the scheme and elevations on the terrace. 1. Additional entrances created by the formation of two new units. 2. Rear elevation amended to reflect the amended service area, resulting in an overall visual improvement on the permitted scheme. 3. Unit E is moved forwards, resulting in the loss of some car parking spaces. 4. The scheme will revert back to the existing scheme layout for Homebase. This means that the servicing will remain as it is and the car parking numbers will be reduced in front of their unit to reflect the current position. 5. The result of the above is that the car park numbers reduce to 795 from 825 spaces.

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

b. CB/13/04420/FULL – 49 Lawrence Road

Single storey rear 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/13/04419/FULL – The White House, School Lane, Southill, Biggleswade, SG18 9JA

Single storey rear extension – *This application was returned to CBC as not within Biggleswade boundary.*

d. CB/14/00138/FULL – 19 Courtlands Drive, Biggleswade

Single storey front extension and detached single garage

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/14/00057/FULL – 122 Mead End, Biggleswade

Single storey 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.

11. ACCOUNTS

a. Financial Administration

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 30 November 2013.
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure.
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 30 November 2013.

Adoption of the Accounts proposed by Cllr M North and seconded by Cllr T Woodward.
All Members voted in favour of adopting these accounts.

b. Financial Administration

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31 December 2013.
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure.
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31 December 2013.

Adoption of the Accounts proposed by Cllr M North and seconded by Cllr T Woodward.
All Members voted in favour of adopting these accounts.

12. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Request from the Royal National Lifeboat Institute

Correspondence was received from the RNLI requesting a donation of £20 to support their Special Appeal.

The RNLI is a charity funded almost entirely by donations, and they rely on donations to help fund their vital service in local communities.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed that as it isn't appropriate for Town Council to donate to some organisations and not others and that the Grants are for local organisations, and that this request be refused.

This proposal was seconded by Cllr T Woodward.

A vote was taken: 8 Cllrs voted in favour of this proposal - 2 Cllrs abstained

b. Precept figure for 2014/15

Members agreed the Precept figure of £667502 for 2014/15.

A copy of the Budget Summary was attached to the agenda.

Cllr M North proposed that Town Council agree the Budget figures. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Mrs M Russell.

All Members voted in favour of this proposal.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Planning application outcomes

A report detailing the outcome of recent planning applications was attached to the agenda.

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

b. Members' Customer Service Bulletin for period 16/12/13 to 12/01/2014

A copy of the above report is available in the Town Council office for Members to view.

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

c. Proposed Parking Strategy adopted 14 January 2014

The above document was adopted at Council meeting on 14 January 2014 subject to the following changes:

- Identifying Disabled Parking bays
- The need for restrictions in residential areas in the Town

A copy of the amended document was enclosed with the agenda.

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

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

15. 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(s) is discussed.

Items 16a and 16b - Contracts

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.