

MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 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 G Wilson, Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr M North, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Albone, Cllr B Briars, Cllr B Rix, Cllr Ms S Mulchrone
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
Members of the public - 5

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr T Woodward and Cllr S Watkins (Deputy Mayor)

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item - none declared
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllr B Rix declared an interest in item 10c

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay informed Members that the copy of meeting dates for 2014/2015 now included dates for the Joint Committee meetings.

Cllr Ramsay went on to say that she had attended several functions in the last month including Carol Concerts and a 'Cinderella' Pantomime at Biggleswade Rugby Club.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

MOP 1 said that the report of the Parking Strategy Task Group did not mention Dells Lane as a problem area; it is a major issue during rush hour; traffic cannot get through, it is very dangerous and should be dealt with by the Police now and not in two to three years' time.

Cllr Ramsay said that she had noticed increase in traffic since the roadwork's had started on Eagle Farm Road/Drove Road.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that the area is not mentioned specifically, we do mention the need to implement restrictions in identified areas, to encourage commuters away from residential areas.

Cllr Ramsay said that Cllr George Wilson is our Police Liaison Officer.

Cllr Wilson said that the Police have insufficient man power to monitor the parking problems they perhaps should be dealt with by Highways. Cllr Wilson said that some lines have been painted on the road, but he would speak to the Police and would have an answer for the next Council meeting.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited Speaker.

6. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Mrs W Smith asked if the memorial plaque, that Town Council agreed to purchase with the £200 donated by Motley and Hope, could now be progressed.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that the Town Council will liaise with the History Society.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 December 2013 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr G Wilson asked that the minutes of 10 December 2013 be changed to show that he had sent apologies for not being able to attend.

- b. Members **approved the recommendations** of Public Lands & Open Spaces meeting held on 3 December 2013.

Items as listed on the agenda:

6) **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a) **Draft copy of Biggleswade Town Council Memorial Safety Policy**

Further to the PLOS meeting held on 17 September when a copy of the draft Biggleswade Town Council Memorial Safety Policy was attached for Members consideration.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this document be sent to the Diocese of St Albans for consultation and referred back to the next meeting of this committee for recommended adoption.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council now adopt this policy.

b). **Biggleswade Town Cricket Club.**

Biggleswade Town Cricket Club are currently considering the purchase of two 20ft storage containers for the storage of grounds maintenance equipment and playing equipment, with the containers to be sited adjacent to the pavilion.

Planning consent would be required for the siting of the containers.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council agree to the installation of the containers but request that screening is used to hide them. It was also **RECOMMENDED** that the Cricket Club apply for planning permission and notify Town Council when this is obtained.

c) **Grasmere**

This area continues to be monitored and since the works undertaken by Anglian Water earlier in the year there had been no further instances of the site being waterlogged. Twigden Homes have yet to confirm their responsibilities for the attenuation system.

Quotations have been obtained for the removal of the play equipment foundations and bases and subsequent re-instatement to grass.

Members are asked to consider the attached quotations A and B (A third quotation was requested but not received).

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Quote B is accepted.

d) **Compound at the Acorn centre**

The compound at the Acorn Centre must be vacated by 25th December 2013. Staff have been working over the past few weeks to begin clearing the compound and also to clear the compound area at the rear of the Bowls club where equipment will be relocated to. Staff will continue to progress this work over the coming weeks.

The loss of the Acorn Centre will cause storage difficulties and our staff are currently considering sourcing a temporary storage container to be sited at the rear of the bowls club.

Planning consent would be required for the siting of the container.

Members are asked to consider whether they would wish to proceed with submitting a planning application to enable the provision of this additional storage area.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council proceed with submitting a planning application and that consideration will be given to the location of the container so as not to interfere with residents.

e) **Additional vehicle for works team**

Following the recent staff appraisals a request for an additional works vehicle was included in the feedback taken to the Personnel Committee meeting held on 19th November. The basis of this request is to enable the Works Foreman to work more efficiently.

A Fiesta van or equivalent sized vehicle would be suffice. An initial quotation has been obtained for the purchase of a Fiesta van which is £9200. After 48 months the residual value of this vehicle traded in against a new vehicle would be in the region of £3500.00

A quotation to lease the same model Fiesta van has been obtained on a 48 month term and works out to be £171.07 per month, total £8211.36 over the 48 month term.

Members are asked to consider the acquisition of a small commercial vehicle for the commencement of the 2014/2015 financial year and a preference on leasing or purchase that should then be explored.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council investigate the cost of purchasing a low mileage used vehicle.

f) Request from BUFC

BUFC has requested that Town Council install floodlights at Eagle Farm Road and The Lakes football pitches.

A copy of their income and planned pay back was attached to this agenda.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council refuse this request on financial grounds.

8. MATTERS ARISING

a. From Council meeting held on 26 November 2013.

Item 12b: Have your say on changes to Housing Allocations Policy in Central Bedfordshire

The Town Clerk wrote to CBC with Town Councils views – a copy of the replies were attached to the agenda.

The Town Clerk was asked to invite the housing policy officer to attend a meeting of the Town Council.

b. From the Council meeting held on 10 December 2013

Item 10d: Proposed reversal of Hitchin Street

The Town Clerk to wrote to CBC to request 'that the decision of Traffic Management Meeting (held on 21 November 2013 regards the reversal of Hitchin Street) should be formally called in for scrutiny by the CBC Scrutiny Committee on the basis that the decision is unsound'

The reply from CBC was attached to the agenda.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that Town Council is not taken seriously enough; CBC has not taken on board the changes to the new proposal raised from the Parking Strategy Tasking Group. Town Council has been fobbed off. Cllr Russell asked that Town Council write to CBC regarding the new proposal.

A vote was taken: 10 voted in favour 1 voted against.

Therefore: It was **AGREED** that Town Council write to CBC regarding the new proposal.

Cllr D Lawrence asked that Town Council write Cllr Spurr and thank him for leaving options open.

A vote was taken: 2 voted in favour 9 voted against, the motion was not carried.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence asked that the minute of the Council meeting 10 December 2013, item 10d show the recorded votes taken for and against the resolution; Cllr Mrs J Lawrence asked that the minute of the meeting is changed to reflect the vote.

The Chair informed Cllr Mrs Lawrence that no recorded vote had been asked for at the time and as such the minute could not be changed.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed that in future all votes are recorded whether asked for or not, this was seconded by Cllr Mrs W Smith.

It was **resolved** that future votes will be recorded.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence made reference to communications in the local press and was also informed that this was not a matter arising from the Council meeting 10 December 2013.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence left the Chamber at 7.25pm

Cllr D Lawrence raised concerns that a minute of the meeting of Town Council 10 December 2013 was inaccurate and that Cllr Mrs J Lawrence did not say what was minuted; Cllr D Lawrence asked that the wording be removed and that an apology was given to Cllr Mrs J Lawrence.

Cllr Russell read the minutes from the paragraph indicated by Cllr D Lawrence to the Council and stated that the minutes had recorded exactly what had been said by Cllr Jane Lawrence.

The Chair informed Cllr D Lawrence that in reference to the other wording that Cllr J Lawrence had also been concerned about; this wording was not in the minutes of the Town Council meeting 10 December 2013.

Cllr D Lawrence left the Chamber at 7.27pm

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. CB/13/04241/FULL – Eagle House, 135 Potton Road, Biggleswade
Erection of two dwellings

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this application as this development would have an impact on the environment of neighbouring properties and also that the access to this site is on a very busy road.

b. CB/13/04321/FULL – Land at London Road and Stratton Farm, London Road, Biggleswade
Formation of new vehicular access to serve Stratton Farm, London Road

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/13/04398/FULL – 17 Spring Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HL
Replacement of existing flat roof to garage with new tiled apex roof

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.

d. CB/13/04372/FULL – 3 Byron Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8QF
Proposed two storey side and first floor 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.

e. CB/13/04475/FULL – 47 Potton Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DX
Erection of three dwelling to former builders yard

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this application as this development have an impact on the environment of neighbouring properties, it is overdevelopment for the area and the access is onto an already very busy road.

- f. **CB/13/04458/FULL – 87 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EE**
Single storey rear extension

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

10. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Town Centre Management Committee – Parking Strategy - Tasking Group**

At a meeting of the Town Centre Management Committee 19th November 2013, the Committee were asked to consider the Biggleswade parking strategy produced by Parsons Brinckerhoff.

The Town Centre Management Committee **recommended** that a Task Group of five was set up to look at the strategy over a number of weeks.

Members elected were Councillors David Albone, Ian Bond, Hazel Ramsay, Madeline Russell, Bernard Rix and Michael North.

Members of the Tasking Group have produced a report in response to the parking strategy produced by Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Members were asked to consider the report produced by the Tasking Group, (copy attached to the agenda).

Cllr Mrs M Russell informed members that the proposed parking strategy; builds on the Masterplan and Parsons Brinckerhoff surveys, it addresses and tries to balance the different needs of people who park in Biggleswade, shoppers, other visitors, employees of businesses in the town, commuters and residents.

There is still some detail to sort out – for example, the requirements for residents parking where there are no off – street facilities. There are several important uncertainties, Rose Lane, Bonds Lane, Dan Albone and the Station Yard.

Finance needs to be identified but would hope that some funding can be put aside in the coming years precept. Costs to be incurred and which have not yet been costed, include parking sensors and enforcement; resurfacing and marking out of bays, it is important to have good signage in place so that visitors will know what parking is where.

The Strategy recognises the need for charges for parking but proposes that the first hour should be free of charge wherever you park. The Strategy also proposes that any charges should be on the basis of covering the costs of implementing and maintaining the parking schemes- not to make a profit.

We need to understand how CBC wishes to proceed now they have published the results of the parking survey; we also need to work with CBC since the Town Council does not have the powers to implement on street controls.

The strategy will not work unless it is implemented in total.

If Council were minded to approve the Parking Strategy I would like to take it before the BJC on the 29th January 2014.

Cllr D Albone raised a concern that parking would be opened up on the market square during the Saturday market.

Cllr G Wilson raised concern that the Strategy did not mention disabled parking.

Cllr Mrs W Smith asked that Dells Lane is not forgotten and that stronger wording in the strategy to highlight the need for restrictions in residential areas would be useful.

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.

Cllr B Rix supported the points raised and suggested adding a sentence or two into the strategy document.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Parking Strategy is adopted and detail is added to the strategy document identifying disabled parking and the need for restrictions in residential areas in the Town

b. Committee Dates for 2014/2015

Members are asked to consider the attached Committee Dates for 2014/2015.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed that the Council meeting of 9th December 2014 be put back to 16th December 2014, as it is a long time until the next meeting on 13 January 2015. Cllr M North seconded this proposal.

A vote was taken: All voted in favour

Therefore it was **RESOLVED** that the Council meeting date for December be changed to 16th.

Cllr B Rix left the Chamber at 8pm before the next item was discussed.

c. Request for London Marathon Sponsorship

Correspondence was received requesting sponsorship for the London Marathon from a resident who is taking part with her Father. They will be dressed as Batman and Robin in aid of Crime stoppers.

They are planning to approach Biggleswade businesses and residents for sponsorship, any words of support that the Town Council could provide would be most welcome.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council write a letter of support and that Crime stoppers be asked to apply for a Community Grant.

Cllr B Rix returned to the Chamber at 8.04pm.

11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. A1 Roundabout improvements, Biggleswade

Central Bedfordshire Council is working with the Highways Agency (who are responsible for the A1) to replace the existing roundabout to the South of Biggleswade, on the A1 at the junction with A6001 London Road.

A copy of the details was attached to the agenda.

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

b. Temporary Closure of part of Biggleswade Bridleway 28

CBC has notified Town Council of the Temporary Closure of part of Biggleswade Bridleway 28 to allow surface works related to drainage, communications and development to take place. The closure is expected to continue from 14 December 2013 to 30 June 2015.

A copy was attached to the agenda.

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

c. Central Bedfordshire Council approval for expansion of St Andrews C of E VC Lower School, Biggleswade

Correspondence has been received from CBC to advise Town Council that the Executive of CBC, at their meeting on 10 December 2013, approved the expansion of St Andrews C of E VC School, Biggleswade.

Town Council approved this proposal on 22 October 2013.

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

d. Superfast Broadband Announcement

CBC has been working with neighbouring authorities and BT on a project to deliver superfast broadband across the area.

BT has now provided provisional mapping to show locations and phases of possible superfast access for resident and businesses.

A copy was attached to the agenda.

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

12. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

MOP 2 - in view of the bridge repairs on Shortmead Street can Council ensure that no works start on the A1 Long about until the bridge works are complete?

Cllr Ramsay said that she thought the bridge repairs would be finished this week.

MOP 2 - asked what is happening with Century House.

Cllr Ramsay replied that it would be on the agenda at the next Joint Committee meeting.

MOP 2 –said that the Parking Strategy is supported by the Chamber of Trade.

MOP 1 – asked about the Public Right of Way at The Crown Hotel that is currently fenced off.

Cllr Russell said that it is not on the Definitive Map, but this is to be revised. This has been a Public Right of Way for years and years.

MOP 1 – said this is a Right of Way, it doesn't matter about a map, and it cannot legally be obstructed. CBC needs to toughen up.

MOP 1 – asked if Town Council had any concerns about Standing Orders and altering the minutes in retrospect – it doesn't create a good impression to members of the public.

Cllr B Briars agreed that there had been a couple of issues by one or two Cllrs who had tried to flout the Standing Orders, but the Chair had stopped this.

MOP 1 - said he was reassured.

Cllr B Rix said that it has been a difficult meeting and thanked the Mayor for steering the meeting in the right direction.

MOP 2 – The fencing at The Crown was erected by the estates division of the owners, Town Council should write to them to remove it.

MOP 3 – asked what is happening with the bottle banks that were in the ALDI car park.

Cllr Ramsay said that ALDI had asked for the bottle banks to be removed.

Rob McGregor confirmed that ALDI has asked CBC to remove the bottle banks as they said that they needed the car parking space but the public are still depositing bottles there. CBC asked ALDI to reinstate the banks but was told 'no'.

As of today, ALDI has now requested that the bottle banks be returned, it's now up to CBC.

MOP 3 – said that it is a Health and Safety issue at the moment.

Cllr Russell said that we need to ensure that ALDI retain the bottle banks in the future and before CBC reinstated the bottle banks they would need a written undertaking from ALDI that the bottle banks would be in the car park for at least the next 12mths. .

13. **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.

Exempt Item 14a - 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.