

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 JUNE 2013 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 G Wilson,  
Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Albone, Cllr B Briars, Cllr B Rix  
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk  
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant  
Derek Kemp – DCK Beavers  
Members of the public - 6

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr R Skinner and Cllr S Watkins

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – none declared
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllrs Mrs J and D Lawrence declared an interest in items 10d and 10e (planning applications) as listed on the agenda.

**3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr S Watkins was a judge of the Biggleswade Carnival Floats last Saturday.

The Mayor had attended a Garden Party hosted by the High Sheriff and was accompanied by Cllr Mrs M Russell.

Oliver Church, the newest member of the Ground staff has passed his LANTRA exam in Tractor driving.

If Members of the public felt that when they collect an agenda from the Town Council office, that they would like additional attachments to the agenda, they are to let the staff know and wherever possible this will be rectified.

There had been a query about the 'Exempt Item' wording; the Mayor confirmed that the wording that is used by the Town Council is correct.

**4. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

The Mayor read out the following update, received from AMEY, regarding the lowering of streetlights on London Road, Biggleswade:

The columns on London Road are lowered (Cols 23,25,28,30,32,38,40 and 42) and lantern changes are completed for Cols 18 to 10.

Lantern change on remaining columns on London Road is being delayed due to the delivery of materials.

They will keep Town Council updated on the schedule of work.

**5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

MOP 1 said that with regards to 'Exempt Items' the subject matter should be included in the Agenda

MOP 2 addressed the meeting regarding the proposed new car park on Bonds Lane. He said that he had attended planning meetings at CBC and they are very enthusiastic, there are to be more meetings regarding design etc. Support for the Car Park is phenomenal; the Council will be receiving petitions of support.

MOP 3, a resident of St Johns Street, addressed Members regarding planning application 10h as listed on the agenda. He said that the plans actually involve most rooms and walls of the house next door to him, but the neighbours have not discussed it with them at all.

The extension will go out 2½ metres and will block out the light to his house, but has been told by Planning Dept that as it is only their bathroom, it doesn't matter.

He said that the plans displayed in the Chamber do not show all the details of the alterations and asked that Town Council take his concerns on board when considering the application.

He said that work has already started on the property.

MOP 4 said that he is concerned about the increase in crime in the area and asked if we have enough Police.

Cllr G Wilson, the Police Liaison Officer, replied that this will be noted and he will discuss with Sgt Gary Kidd at their meeting next week. Cllr Wilson hoped to have an answer for the next Council meeting.

## **6 BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY**

Members received Crime Figures from Bedfordshire Police.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that an analysis would be useful, grouping figures together.

Cllr D Albone said that he was alarmed to read of a racially / religious aggravated Public Fear offence.

Cllr G Wilson said that this related to one character on the Market Square.

## **7. INVITED SPEAKER**

There was no invited speaker.

## **8. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

a. Members received and approve the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 June 2013 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, and Biggleswade.

b. Members to **approve the recommendations** of the Off Street Car Parking held on 4 June 2013.

Items as listed on the agenda:

### **a) Change of Title of Committee**

Members considered a change of title of the Off Street Car Parking Committee to Town Centre Management, with the Terms of Reference to remain the same.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the committee name be changed to: **Town Centre Management**.

### **b) Review of Licence**

EMR has asked Town Council for a review of the rent on the temporary car park at the railway sidings in Biggleswade. E.M.R is proposing a 200% increase on the current rent.

Members considered the proposed increase.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council enter into negotiations with EMR on a more formal basis, and ask them to halve the proposed increase.

### **c) New Car Park**

Members considered the concept of a new car park for Biggleswade, and whether the Town Council is interested in managing such a facility.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Town Council support the proposal and register an interest in managing the proposed car park.

d) **Charges for 'A' boards and Tables**

At the Off Street Car Park Committee, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013, Members were asked to consider delegated powers to issue licences for the placing of tables, chairs and 'A' boards within the parish boundary of Biggleswade.

Members recommended that Town Council proceed with entering into the Delegated Agreement with CBC.

Council approved the recommendation at the Annual Statutory meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

Members were now asked to consider the scale of charges for 'A' boards, tables and chairs.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the following charges are implemented for applications for licences

£50 per 'A' board  
£100 for up to 10 tables  
£200 for over 10 tables

Commencing from 1 January 2014

There was no recommendation for an annual fee.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed an **AMENDMENT** to this recommendation:

It is proposed that the scale of charges be as follows:

**Application for Licence**

'A' Board	£30
Up to 10 tables	£60
Over 10 tables	By agreement with the Town Council
Other use of public highway	by agreement with the Town Council

**Annual Licence Fee**

'A' Board	£50
Up to 10 tables	£250
Over 10 tables	To be agreed with the Town Council
Other use of public highway	To be agreed with the Town Council

It is recognised that in these difficult trading times, this is another imposition on local businesses. However, the annual fees are half those recommended by CBC and the application fees are about two-thirds.

The above amounts allow the Town Council to cover the costs of running the licensing scheme.

Initial Licenses to be in place by 1 January 2014.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **APPROVE** these amendments.

e) **Request to display Berkeley Cars after the Ian Mantle Memorial Run – 20 July 2013**

Correspondence has been received requesting permission to use the Market Square on the afternoon of 20 July so that Berkeley Cars can be displayed for the public to view.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that permission be granted for Sunday 21 July 2013.

9. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 June 2013 – Page 4 – paragraph 5 – Cllr Mrs J Lawrence asked that the following be added 'site 55 is moved back to the original location which was originally site 48 in 2009, it is now site 26 on the 2012 plan'

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. **CB/13/01818/FULL – 9a Market Square, Biggleswade**  
Installation of new shop front and alterations to rear door and windows
- b. **CB/13/01821/FULL – 9A Market Square, Biggleswade**  
Installation of 4 no satellite dishes and TV aerial to flat roof at No 9 Market Square and installation of 2 no air conditioning units to rear elevation at ground floor level at No 9 Market Square.
- c. **CB/13/01817/FULL – 9A Market Square, Biggleswade**  
Change of use from A1 (Shop) to A2 Use Class (Financial and Professional Services)

*Members considered the applications above and it was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to all three for the following reasons:*

- ***Object to the change of use***
- ***Object to the loss of a retail unit***
- ***Town Council does not allow satellite dishes and TV aerials on the Market Square which is in a Conservation Area.***

- d & e. **CB/13/01262/CA & CB/13/01248/FULL – 48 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade**  
Demolition of existing sheds outbuildings & stores & erection of 5 No Flats with associated external works.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this application on the grounds that it is an overdevelopment of the area, also, Members raised concerns about the access to the site.

- f. **CB/13/1909/ADV – 45 High Street, Biggleswade**  
1no. non-illuminated heritage sign & 1no. Non-illuminated heritage projecting sign.

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

- g. **CB/13/01754/FULL – 1 Sage Close, Biggleswade.**  
First floor 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.

- h. **CB/13/01922/FULL – 1 St Johns Street, Biggleswade.**  
Part first floor extension to the rear & pitched roof to existing single storey rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this application as it is an overdevelopment for the size of the property.

- i. **CB/13/01697/ADV – 35 High Street, Biggleswade**  
Advertisement: 3 x non illuminated letters 2 x externally illuminated projectors 3 x externally non illuminated vinyl's 1 x internally non illuminated vinyl 1 x externally non illuminated aluminium name plate 1 x non illuminated acrylic atm collar 1 x folded aluminium panel

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

## 11. ACCOUNTS

### a (i) Financial Administration

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

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

### a(ii) Members received and adopt the following accounts:

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

### b. Interim Audit Report 2012-13 – (Final Update)

Members approved the Internal Audit Report 2012-13 (Final Update).

A copy was attached to the agenda.

### c. Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 (attached)

- i. Members approved and adopted the Accounts and Statement of Accounts contained in the Annual Return for 2012/2013.
- ii. Members adopted and approved the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return for the year 2012/2013.

## 12. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

### a. St Andrews C of E VC Lower School, Biggleswade - Informal Consultation

Central Bedfordshire Council have written to advise members of Biggleswade Town Council that an informal consultation has commenced regarding proposals to expand St Andrews C of E VC Lower School, Biggleswade.

The proposal to expand the school is in response to population growth within the town and this is the first of a two stage consultation process required by Education law for proposals of this nature.

The 4 week consultation period will close on Wednesday 10 July 2013 and all responses to the consultation must be submitted by 5.00 pm on that day.

Members were asked to consider a response to the first stage of the consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council write to show their full support and encouragement to St Andrews.

### b. Drum Clock renovations

At the Council meeting on 9 April, Cllr M North said that the Drum Clock in the Town looks scruffy and could do with a clean.

An estimate has now been received for fully refurbishing the Drum Clock and was attached to the agenda for Members consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk obtains other quotations and that Pizza Express be asked help with a donation toward the cost.

Cllr Ian Bond voted against asking Pizza Express for a donation.

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. **Temporary Closure of part of Biggleswade Bridleway 28**

CBC has informed Town Council that the above temporary closure is expected to continue from 14 June to 13 December 2013, or until the works have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

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

c. **Bedfordshire Highways Area Team Boundaries restructuring**

The above team boundaries have recently been restructured and a copy was attached to the agenda.

d. **Street Naming and Numbering – land rear of Furzenhall Cottage, Furzenhall Road, Biggleswade SG18 0AD**

CBC has confirmed that the address of the dwelling being constructed at the above site will be as follows:

**The Furze, Furzenhall Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0AD**

A copy was attached to the agenda.

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

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

MOP 2 - re item Licensing fees for 'A' boards. He said that the location of 'A' boards is often in a different location to the shop and that he would check on the original enhancement documentation.

MOP 3 said that he wanted to clarify that the works that have commenced at his neighbours house is on the roof, and is not on the plans. He said that they are working illegally on the boundary of their gardens. He said that the plan on display relates to the rear of the property, there is an additional plan with Development Control showing all the internal alterations.

Cllr D Lawrence said that he would ensure that the Planning Officers inspect properly.

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.

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.

16. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

a. **Update from Ringrose Law re Employment Tribunal – Mr L Jackson**

An update has been received from Ringrose Law regarding Mr L Jackson's Employment Tribunal.

A copy was attached to the agenda and a further update handed out at the meeting.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said this was a good outcome for the Council; Ringrose Law, the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk should be thanked.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed the legal agreement as set out be approved.

It was **RESOLVED** that the legal agreement is accepted.

b. **Personnel meeting held on 4 June 2013**

There were no recommendations from the Personnel meeting held on 4 June 2013.

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

c. **Rose Lane Car Park**

The Town Council has been contacted by Trustees to the Lord of the Manor's agent to tell Council that he has a sale of Rose Lane car park lined up at £600,000; he is giving the Council the opportunity to match the offer.

Members must be aware that, as agreed by Council, a Section 26 notice has been served under the Landlord & Tenant Act to the Lord of the Manor; Council wishes to renew the lease for Rose Lane on the same terms as the current lease. A response is expected two weeks from the notice being served; the notice was dated the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013. (Copy of the notice was attached to the Agenda.) Attachment A

Members are asked to consider the possibility of purchasing the freehold for Rose Lane. It would be necessary to acquire a Public Works Loan Board loan and some preliminary enquiries have been made as to the cost of a loan. Please note that the maximum sum that Council can borrow in a single year is £500,000. (Copy of the loan details was attached to the Agenda.) Attachment B

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay read out the following terms:

A loan of £500k over 25 years

Fixed rate £32k per annum

Repayable ½ yearly

To include principal and interest

Rent currently @ £22k per annum – could easily rise if owners reviewed lease and rise at each renewal.

The Mayor went on to say that she thought it more prudent to acquire the property.

Cllr I Bond said he didn't think Town Council had much choice, car parking is critical for Biggleswade.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence asked how quickly Town Council has to make up its mind, is there a time limit.

Rob McGregor replied that he had received an email to say that another buyer is interested in the Car Park.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence said that she feels that Town Council is being played along, CBC are close to coming to an agreement, car parking is on the agenda for the next Joint Committee meeting in July.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that it's taken nearly 2 years for CBC to negotiate the purchase of the car park.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence said that CBC has been negotiating all this time; it should go to Joint Committee.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that the email doesn't state close to finalising. We need more car parks to belong to Town Council, we have had this car park valued several times and I propose that the Town Clerk is given authority to offer £500k or as high as £600k if necessary to purchase the car park.

Cllr M North said that he didn't know what CBC involvement in this was but agreed with Cllr Mrs M Russell that Town Council could use £100k from reserves if needed.

Cllr I Bond said that progress is not pushed by CBC at Joint Committee meetings.

Cllr B Briars said that LXB had offered £100k for parking and asked if it was still available.

Cllr Mrs M Russell replied that Sam Caldbeck, Principal Regeneration & Economic Development Officer, CBC, wants that for the transport interchange.

Cllr D Lawrence said that CBC has a lot of money on deposit, 1 million pounds for the new Health Centre, money could be invested in the car park, giving a return each year. They put their money to work.

Cllr D Albone said that he agreed to buying the car park for £500k, but money will need to be spent on it, Town Council will need to justify the money.

Cllr B Rix said that he is nervous about spending £600k, but raised concerns about losing the car park to CBC; it would be a merit for Town Council to manage its own car parks.

Cllr Mr M Russell said that there is no indication in the email that its CBC that may be purchasing the car park, is just says in negotiations.

Cllr M North made the point about charging, as in Bonds Lane, it means Town Council gets to set parking charges. It would be difficult to find the policies from CBC re parking.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that Town Council buys; we set the fees and get a return. If CBC set the fees they get the return.

Cllr D Albone said that we don't know who is apparently interested, but we have the opportunity to secure the site, it's not a huge difference to renting.

Cllr B Briars asked why CBC cannot be open and above board, they never let us know, they do not communicate.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that Satchells told us 2 years ago that someone else was interested in buying the car park and that the value was £1.5 million, since then we have had conflicting reports. They have also realised there could be problems with the old school as it is a listed building. Town Council has been messed about for 2 years; we should grab this opportunity with both hands.

Cllr D Lawrence said that since the valuation 2 years ago of £1.5 million, there has been a fantastic job done in bringing the price down.

Cllr B Briars said that the fact that it is common land is in Town Councils favour, there is no proof that CBC brought the price down.

Cllr D Lawrence proposed an amendment to Cllr Mrs M Russell's proposal; that Town Council prepares to make an offer to Satchells but waits until after the next Joint Committee meeting.

A vote was taken on the amendment and the amendment failed.

Cllr Mrs M Russell proposed that Town Clerk is given authority to offer £500k or as high as £600k if necessary to purchase the car park.

A vote was taken after which:

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Clerk is given authority to offer £500k or as high as £600k if necessary to purchase the car park.