

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2013 AT
THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD
BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs H Ramsay (Chair), Cllr S Watkins, Cllr B Rix, Cllr B Briars, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence,
Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr Mrs M Russell, Cllr I Bond, Cllr M North
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Louise Wilcox – Deputy Town Clerk
Sally Morris, Chief Executive - SEPT
Richard Winter, Executive Director of Integrated Services - SEPT
Members of the public - 5

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs W Smith and Cllr D Albone

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

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay announced the sad death of Cllr Rex Skinner and held a minutes silence in remembrance.

Cllr B Briars said that Rex is very well known throughout the town. Rex was Deputy Mayor in 2002, a role of which he was very proud. He was a very active member of the Horizon Club, Biggleswade History Society and Biggleswade Twinning Association. He had been a part-time Fireman and drove the Biggleswade Sprinter for many years. His passing is a very sad loss for the whole of Biggleswade.

4. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if there was any update on Rose Lane car park.

Rob McGregor said a holding letter had been received but with no timescale stated.

5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no items discussed during the public open session.

6. BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Members received a copy of the Crime Figures from Bedfordshire Constabulary.

Cllr G Wilson said the receipt of the crimes are slightly out of sync with the meeting dates. They are needed 2 weeks prior to the meeting so that Members have the opportunity to raise any comments with Sgt Gary Kidd.

The Town Clerk reminded members that crime figures only go to the last council meeting of the month. Cllr Wilson said that it had not been agreed that the figures would be produced monthly.

7. INVITED SPEAKERS

Sally Morris, Chief Executive and Richard Winter – SEPT updated Town Council on Biggleswade Hospital and said that she would answer any questions.

The demand for in-patients has dropped off, more people are being looked after in their own homes, and there has been 6 or 7 female patients in the hospital in the last year.

The Commissioner has recently asked to look at the criteria for Biggleswade Hospital. Patients are being reviewed at Bedford Hospital and more will be going to Biggleswade Hospital. There are 118 social care patients being evaluated at Bedford Hospital.

SEPT is a provider and respond to what the Commissioners require. The future of the hospital is not within SEPT remit, there are other services on site not run by SEPT.

Cllr B Briars said that when SEPT last came to this Council last time it was mentioned about possible expansion, and asked if this this ongoing.

RW replied that a bed review has been undertaken and there have been talks about possible utilisation, but nothing has been firmed up as yet. We provide what the commissioners need us to provide and are happy to provide whatever is required.

SM there is financial pressure facing the CCG's, there is no funding to create new services, however additional services may be transferred to/from elsewhere.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked about The Halsey Centre on the hospital site. It had been hoped that the Halsey Centre would provide a service to all GP surgeries in Biggleswade and the surrounding areas in providing some outpatient care i.e. hearing tests, eye tests and physiotherapy etc.

RW said that they could not discuss the future of The Halsey Centre because their concern was only with the Hospital.

The Mayor suspended Standing Orders at 7.15pm to enable Members of the public to ask questions.

MOP 1 - I am confused at the different bodies, I had hoped that the CCG would expand minor services on the site.

S.M - When the land was owned by the Bedfordshire CCG it did focus on commissioning services on the site to make it a hub, however it has been under a different NHS over the last twelve months.

MOP 1 said she is a member of the Patient Group at Saffron Road Surgery and the patients and staff had been told that the Saffron Road building was going to undergo expansion to build an extra floor to provide more patient services. Apparently, the monies set aside for this have 'disappeared' and she wondered if in the changeover of Trusts this money has been used elsewhere.

RW - NHS is complex. The Council should invite John Rook to talk through the future of the site as the Commission of primary care not with the CCG it now sits with NHS England.

MOP 1 asked that the Council invite John Rook to attend a Council meeting.

Members asked; what is the future of the site.

SW - services will be provided till March 2014 to allow for the increase in patients during the winter months and then the review will be looked at; if the location is not full it would be irresponsible not to review.

Members felt that Biggleswade needs to keep its voice heard and the balance needs to be kept between Bedford Hospital and Biggleswade.

SW reiterated that the decision lay with Bedford Hospital Trust.

Standing Orders were reinstated at 7.21pm.

8. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a.** Members received the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 November 2013 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr B Briars requested that the following be added to the resolution of item 11c – Potton Road/Drove Road and Sun Street, Biggleswade – Section 106 Junction Improvement - 'what happened to the proposed roundabout as per 106 agreement'

Members approved the Minutes subject to this alteration.

9. **MATTERS ARISING**

a. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 November 2013

Item 11c – Cllr D Lawrence said that the roundabout design was looked at and costed for 106 agreement and not for implementation.

Cllr B Briars felt that Town Council has been misled.

Cllr D Lawrence said Town Council was shown conceptual design.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that the issue is that the design was changed but did not come back to this Council.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/13/03601/FULL – 6 Rose Lane, Biggleswade**

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.

b. **CB/13/03570/FULL – Land adjacent to Toybox Day Nursery, The Saxon Centre, Kingsfield Road, Biggleswade**

Two storey block of eight flats.

Cllr Ramsay asked about any 106 money that had been allocated for this site. Cllr D Lawrence said that 106 money was not involved with this site. Cllr Briars said that the site had initially been earmarked for community use. Cllr D Lawrence said that it was true that a covenant had been had been placed on this land which had since been removed and that no money was involved with this site.

It was **RESOLVED** (4 votes in favour, 6 abstentions) that Town Council raise no objection to this planning application.

c. **CB/13/03722/FULL – Wells Court, Church Street, Biggleswade**

6 no. Metal Bollards on footpath to prevent un-authorized parking

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

d. **CB/13/03789/FULL – 2 Abbots Walk, Biggleswade, SG18 0LF (address changed to No 9)**

Change of use from A1 to A5, hot food take-away & exterior vents.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this application on the following grounds:

- Inappropriate for the area
- Over provision
- Generating noise & smells
- Threat to viability and vitality of town centre

11. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

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

- b. Internal Audit Report 2013-14 (First Interim)

Members received and agreed the findings of the Internal Audit Report 2013-14 (First Interim)

A copy was attached to the agenda.

12. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Request from St Andrew's Church - Biggleswade

Correspondence was received from St Andrew's Church requesting permission to stage their Nativity Tableau and carol singing in the Market Square on Saturday 21 December between 10am and 12.30pm, as in previous years.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council agree to this request.

b. Have your say on changes to Housing Allocations Policy in Central Bedfordshire

CBC is reviewing the above Policy for social and affordable rented housing. Allocations Policy governs who can apply to join the housing register for a council or Housing Association home, what type and size of property they can apply for; and what priority applicants have in relation to each other.

The proposed changes stem from new freedoms in the Localism Act 2011, allowing councils to reflect local priorities in the way that they manage housing allocations.

From public consultations on the changes has begun, and will remain open until 31 January 2014. You can read all of the associated documents and give feedback online at; www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

Paper copies of the consultations documents are available at the Council's offices at Watling House in Dunstable; or alternatively can be obtained by contacting the Partnerships and Engagement Team, on 0300 300 4237.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence suggested Town Council should comment on housing allocations; and ask that the first choice should be for local people and people with families in the area.

Cllr B Briars asked to include comments on the reduction in affordable housing on Land East development and the difficulties this will cause.

c. Work to Trees – Brigham House, 93 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0LD

CBC has notified Town Council of an application to carry out work to trees at the above property which is within the Biggleswade Conservation Area.

A copy was attached to the agenda.

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

d. Localism Act 2011 – Register of Interests

Members have previously received and endorsed the Dispensations relating to setting the precept granted by the Clerk, this affects all Councillors for the duration of their term of office.

All the Councillors forms, except for one, have been completed and returned to the Town Clerk.

A copy was attached to the agenda for completion.

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

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Planning application outcomes**

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

Cllr I Bond said that Town Council raised 'Strong Objection' to the Halifax application, but CBC had approved. This should go to Joint Committee.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence said that Town Council should write to CBC expressing concerns re lighting and localism. It is incredible that this application has been approved, Town Council should be able to have a say on our Town and that signs on 2 sides of the Halifax building is too much.

Cllr Ramsay said the Halifax sign would be a distraction to drivers as it was close to the traffic lights and a junction.

Cllr D Lawrence said this would now set a precedent in the Town. We need to appeal against this decision.

Cllr B Rix asked what would be the cost of an appeal.

Cllr D Lawrence replied that it would cost £15k - £20k. Town Council needs to look at the time limit to lodge an appeal.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that she agreed that Town Council should write to CBC, but to be aware of time limits. Their response could go to next Council meeting.

b. **Update re Rural Match Funding**

Further to Council meeting 23 April 2013 when it was **RESOLVED** that Town Council submit a bid for funding of 2 TRO's, CBC have confirmed that 20 proposals from Town and Parish Councils have been received and are currently being subject to detailed design and costing work by AMEY, the highway contractors.

These schemes will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of Central Bedfordshire Council in February 2014 and then the Executive Committee in March 2014 following which confirmation will be provided to Town Council as to which applications have been successful.

A copy was attached to the agenda.

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

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

MOP 2 said that H & H, Skipps and Johnnys Plaice all have internally illuminated signs.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that it's the size of the Halifax signs on 2 sides of the building that is the problem.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence said that there has been long running debates over some signage and named Poundland and Paddy Power as examples of companies that have complied.

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.

There were no Exempt Items.

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.