

MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2016
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 Strachan
Cllr M Foster
Cllr D Albone (Vice Chair)
Cllr P Biernis
Cllr B Briars
Cllr F Foster

Mr R McGregor – Biggleswade Town Clerk
Mrs J Durn – Meetings Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council

2 Members of Public

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr R Kerfoot, Cllr B Rix, Cllr T Woodward

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

Cllr S Watkins

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item - None
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllr D Strachan, Item 11a.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements however the Mayor drew attention to updates from CBC Officers, Peter Fraser and Michael Williams, regarding Stratton Bridge which has been circulated to Councillors.

4. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were no questions from Members.

5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions that are pertaining to matters listed on this agenda.

There were no questions from members of the public.

6. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received and approved the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9th February 2016 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- b. With the exception of item 6 b. Members received and approved the Recommendations of the Town Centre Management meeting held on 16th February 2016 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Item 6b: Market Town Regeneration Fund: Cllr D Albone was unhappy with the wording "possible shared space" as he was concerned about visually impaired and disabled people who rely on things such as kerbing. Cllr Mrs M Russell explained that this is, at the moment, just a concept. However, she would expect that once the concept was accepted, Council could look at taking back the market square and revitalising the area, with ideas such as new, upgraded toilet facilities, and the reorganisation of the bus terminal to a more convenient location. This will be a huge undertaking and the Council will draw on the expertise of professionals to ensure that the outcome is exactly what we want it to be for the town.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council proceed with this **RECOMMENDATION** on the basis that it is conditional on the market square being handed back to the Town Council.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9th February 2016

Page 3: Cllr F Foster asked for an update regarding the ongoing question of refurbishment of the Town Centre benches.

The maintenance and cleaning of the street furniture is the responsibility of CBC; however Town Council is aware of the problems and has also been actively cleaning the benches due to constant problems with birds around the public area.

Cllr F Foster requested that this item be brought forward to the next Council Agenda.

9 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a. **CB/16/00277/ADV – Unit C, A1 Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade**

New external Marks and Spencer branded signage to Unit C of the A1 Retail Park development on London Road, Biggleswade. Two signs are located to the front elevation facing into the Car Park; one face-illuminated sign to the entrance door surround and one halo-illuminated sign at high level fixed to a projecting canopy. One additional sign is located to the rear of the Unit facing the A1. This sign is also proposed to be halo-illuminated.

This Application was taken in two parts:

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to the sign located to the front elevation facing into the Car Park.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to a sign at the rear of the Unit facing the A1 due to close proximity of residential housing.

- b. **CB/16/00369/FULL – 64 Fairfield Road, Biggleswade**
Removal of existing conservatory, two storey rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that 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/16/00419/FULL – 33 Exmoor Avenue, Biggleswade**

Garage, following demolition of existing garage and wall.

It was **RESOLVED** that 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/16/00404/FULL – 37 Hitchmead Road, Biggleswade**

New fencing extended to boundary of property: Retrospective.

It was **RESOLVED** that 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/16/00307/FULL & CB/16/00308/LB (Listed Building) – The Crown Hotel, 23 High Street, Biggleswade**

Ground floor infill and rear extension and first floor side extension to existing listed hotel building. Change of use of existing shop unit to hotel use and incorporation within existing hotel. Conversion of existing garage to disabled accommodation. Internal alterations, creation of beer garden, new bin store, plant, disabled parking and associated works.

Concerns were raised regarding lack of parking facilities and lorry access. Following lengthy discussion a recorded vote was proposed by Cllr F Foster, seconded by Cllr M Foster. There were 11 in favour and 4 absent.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Application.

Additional Item:

f. **CB/15/04897/VOC – Land fronting Potton Road, Biggleswade**

Variation of Condition 21 to planning permission CB/14/02013/FULL dated 02.04.15 (301 dwellings) to allow for minor material amendments to the site layout, location of house types and inclusion of new house types.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Application.

10. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

Members received the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31st January 2016
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure.
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31st January 2016

The accounts represent figures as at 31 January 2016, which is 10 months into the financial year, and show is to be on track, probably ending the year with a surplus.

Cllr M North proposed that Council adopt the accounts, seconded by Cllr Mrs M Russell.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council adopt the accounts presented.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Bedfordshire Constabulary

Members received notification that due to restraints and underfunding, Bedfordshire Police are unable to prepare monthly or bimonthly police and crime reports and are unable to attend Council meetings.

Members expressed disappointment at this news. It was felt that a simple email report containing this information, which is important to the Town, would not be too time consuming.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write a letter to Bedfordshire Constabulary to convey Council views.

b. General Reserves

Following a **RECOMMENDATION** from the F&GP Meeting held on 12 January 2016, Members were asked to consider, that the amount of general reserves in excess of the recommended minimum at 31st March 2016 are transferred to the rolling capital fund.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION**.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Planning application outcomes

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

Comments were made that decisions for objections on planning applications made by BTC are being overruled by CBC. It was pointed out that Council take particular care in their deliberations on plans affecting the town and present valid reasons for any objections raised. It was therefore disappointing to note that these appear not to have been taken into account.

b. Excluded Areas in Biggleswade

Adam Maciejewski has provided members with an updated plan of excluded routes in Biggleswade, the proposal is to include the excluded routes onto the definitive Map, the orders will be made in late April 2016.

This plan was discussed at length and the information was **NOTED**.

c. Pollution Watch

Anglia Water would like to inform members of a new campaign called pollution watch. (information attached).

Council were pleased to receive this information as they have been reporting pollution issues for some time without success.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to Ms Wilkinson to inform her of the pollution affecting Franklins Mill.

d. Biggleswade – CAP

For members to receive the minutes of the Biggleswade CAP meeting, (attached).

The Town Clerk and Cllr Mrs M Russell were invited to attend a meeting of the CAP (Community Alcohol Partnership) meeting held on the 5th February 2016. Unfortunately Cllr Russell was unable

to attend, the Town Clerk represented BTC. The Town Clerk reported that this had been a useful meeting in terms of presenting joint ideas which would help manage the pressure that Biggleswade has encountered for several years now, particularly in dealing with alcohol problems in the town. The initiative is being launched in the Market Square at the end of March and Members will be updated on any further developments.

e. Launch of Central Bedfordshire Local Plan

CBC is launching the new Central Bedfordshire Local Plan to residents and stakeholders.

The key messages are around CBC commitment to providing sustainable levels of growth together with appropriate supporting infrastructure, while protecting the unique character of Central Bedfordshire.

In order that members are aware, the communications that will go out are comprehensive and include:

- An updated website including a link to the launch video www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/localplan
- E-mail notification or letter to 5000 residents and stakeholders
- Social Media Alerts
- Press Release
- A bespoke letter to Neighbouring Authorities

CBC will launch 'Call for Sites' on Monday 22nd February. (to be considered at Town Council 8th March 2016).

This information was **NOTED**.

f. A1 East of England Strategic Road Study

Cllr Mrs M Russell provided a report of the second meeting of the A1 Stakeholder Reference Group.

This information was **NOTED**.

g Grants - Thank You Letters

Good Neighbours, Trinity Community Project, Ivel Sprinter, Keech Hospice Care, Revitalise and Hear 2 Listen have sent a letters thanking the council for the grant donated to them.

This information was **NOTED**.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions.

- Is there a timescale for completion of the work on the bridge as there are great concerns for the survival of business on the bridge.

The Chairman reported that we understand CBC Executive is currently looking at the situation of businesses in the bridge area. We believe that work is due for completion at the end of May; however, it is unfortunately weather-dependent.

- Can the Council please look at the state of the benches around the market square?

This subject has been covered under **item 8a Matters Arising**; it will be brought to the next Council Meeting as an Agenda Item.

14. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

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

(Recommendations of the Town Centre Management meeting – parking management).

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolved** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.