

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 22 JULY 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 B Briars,
and Cllr P Biernis
Sergeant Gary Kidd – Bedfordshire Constabulary
Angela Thomas – Administrator
Members of public - 7

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr D Albone, Cllr M North, and the Town Clerk. Also, Cllr B Rix gave apologies for late arrival.

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 announced that following an invitation from CBC, the Deputy Mayor represented the Town Council at the Riverside Festival in Bedford.

4. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr P Biernis stated that more funding for road repairs is required for Bedfordshire. Several members of the public have also spoken to him about the state of the footpaths.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay stated that the funding comes under Central Bedfordshire Council - Highways, and all such reporting should be dealt directly to CBC Highways, for them to take it forward.

The Council agreed that it was evident that the state of the footpaths left a lot to be desired.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay updated the Council regarding Cllr Briars previous question about the Tree in the Market Square. The Town Clerk had spoken to the Area Steward from Amey, who stated he had planned a meeting with the specialist contractor, as Amey could not do it. The Town Clerk was hopeful the meeting would take place week commencing 28th July.

Cllr P Biernis raised concerns about the Health and Safety aspects of the paving slabs next to the tree, and asked if we could inform CBC.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said there were complaints about lorries in Hitchin Street. At one point a lorry came up Mill Lane and because the kerb is at the wrong angle, the driver manoeuvred around the corner and the kerb was subsequently damaged. This is one of the reasons why kerbs are being damaged in Hitchin Street.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked that an email be sent to the Town Clerk, and Cllr M Jones, so the concerns can be raised with Joint Committee meeting, therefore bringing it to their attention.

5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

MOP 1: Thank you Mayor – should we ask questions of Sergeant Gary Kidd now or later. It was agreed that the public would be allowed to ask questions later.

MOP 2: Asked for a copy of the Police Report that was with the Council papers.

6. BEDFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

The members received the Crime Figures from Bedfordshire Police.

7. INVITED SPEAKERS

Sergeant Gary Kidd: Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for inviting me to talk to you this evening.

He gave an informative talk on the crimes in Biggleswade, making a comparison between the Crime Figures committed between June 2013 and July 2014. Sergeant Gary Kidd stated that although there has been an improvement, there are some grey areas, in particular Thefts. A lot of crimes have been committed where people have helped themselves to goods in the High Street and the Retail Park in London Road.

The reported crimes had been split into 10 packages:

Violence against the Person/Sexual Offences/Robbery/Domestic Burglary/Burglary Other/Vehicle Crime/Other Theft/Criminal Damage/Drugs and Other Notifiable Offences.

With regards to vehicle crimes, there was a big jump from 8 – 31 in the period from June 2013 - July 2014. In one incident residents who lived in London Road had gone on holiday, and upon their return found that the catalyst convertor on his Van had been stolen. On Monday, 21st July PCOs were marking catalysts in the Town Centre to help alleviate this problem.

The Bedfordshire Constabulary now have 6,000 vehicles detailed on their database.

300 personal alarms have now been issued, and there is more help available for vulnerable individuals where chain locks have been issued. It will not be too long before more personal alarms are available, and these can also be used as alarms for garden sheds etc.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if the Councillors had any questions.

Cllr I Bond asked if the report also included other crimes committed during that period?

Sergeant Gary Kidd announced that assault crimes were also included during that period, along with the vehicle theft. It is very difficult to get DNA, and it is not for the want of trying.

Cllr Mrs M Russell understood there was a meeting held at Dells Lane. She asked Sergeant Gary Kidd if he could address anything at this stage?

Sergeant Gary Kidd made reference to the report entitled "Community Concerns Operations – Dells Lane Area, Biggleswade" which was attached to the minutes of 8th July.

A breakdown of reported injury related Road Traffic Collisions between 1st June 2013 and 31st May 2014 showed there were 25 reported injuries. In that report only 1 was referred to Dells Lane.

There were 2 collisions that raised concern within the area of London Road, Dells Lane and Holme Court Avenue. On the 27th January 2014 a pedestrian walked onto London Road when a vehicle travelling from the High Street collided into her causing slight injury.

Also on the 12th March 2014 Vehicle 1 was driving from the Back Street, turned right into Dells Lane, when Vehicle 2 was driving in Dells Lane towards the junction of London Road where they both collided, causing slight injury.

On the 3rd July between 07.00 hours and 13.00 hours, PCSO's, Special Constables and Members of the Biggleswade Community Safety Group (BCSG) were engaged in Biggleswade, responding to previous concerns raised by residents from the Dells Lane area regarding inappropriate and illegal parking in that area.

Special Constables were engaged in Speed Enforcement with a Speed Gun from 7.30 hours and 09.00 hours on the junction of Dells Lane and Bunyan Road. 5 vehicles were caught speeding and prosecuted for excess speed – the highest recorded at 44 mph.

At the same time the Special Constables were tasked with prosecuting any vehicles found to be illegally parked in the Dells Road area and causing a dangerous obstruction. At this time, no vehicles were parked illegally on the day.

Outside Biggleswade Train Station between 0735 hours and 09.00 hours, members of the Biggleswade BCSG, advising commuters regarding the illegal and inappropriate parking in the surrounding areas. It resulted to 180 leaflets being distributed.

On the same day, 35 addresses were visited and all residents were issued with Crime Prevention Advice Packs. A total of 14 residents were engaged with the vast majority raising their concerns with the vehicles parked on the street, and a couple of them mentioned the noise from the nearby pub.

Both PCSO's and Biggleswade BCSG did a community Speed Watch in Holme Court Avenue, where 59 vehicles were observed not exceeding 30 mph.

Cllr G Wilson stated that in the last few months the Bedfordshire Constabulary have recruited Special Constables. Is it not possible to have 2 fully employed in Biggleswade Town Market?

Sergeant Gary Kidd said not really as they may be required, for example, Leighton Buzzard, or somewhere else. Therefore, we cannot physically have 2 Special Constables in one place.

Cllr G Wilson asked about the possible closing of Biggleswade Police Station. Sergeant Gary Kidd replied by saying that although Ampthill is closing, we still require Biggleswade Police Station to stay open.

Cllr B Briars raised concerns about the parking still happening near the corners. Sergeant Gary Kidd said that they had taken on board what has been said, and still trying to sort the problem out. Unfortunately, you cannot observe when cars are not there, and we can put tickets on cars that are causing obstruction, but we cannot stop them from returning. However, we shall still be monitoring the situation.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that you cannot help people from still worrying. The statistics shows a lack of accidents down Dells Lane, however residents feel it is an accident waiting to happen.

Sergeant Gary Kidd was aware that it is difficult for people who have elderly relatives, and cannot get passed the cars. Also, there is a concern for funeral cars, and fire engines. As there is no traffic restrictions placed on the roads, then we cannot stop them from parking, hence the parking is still continuing on the streets.

Cllr H Ramsay wondered if the Town Council could issue road traffic orders (TRO's), or not. CBC were not prepared to consider TRO requests, unless the Biggleswade Parking Strategy was in place.

Sergeant Gary Kidd said they will have a look at it.

Cllr H Ramsay said that at the moment we are limited to the actions we could take. However we are negotiating with CBC to expedite the parking strategy.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay suspended standing orders to allow the members of the public to ask Sergeant Gary Kidd questions.

It was mentioned that a member of the public (MOP 1) was travelling down Dells Lane, around Mead End when a car drove on the pavement as there was not enough room for the driver to pass through the road. Also, a white car had been parked at Mead End, and it would have been extremely difficult for a figure engine to get passed. Please can you look into this as it is a continuous problem, and there is still evidence showing it is not being dealt with? Once the situation has been sorted, it is only then it will allow everybody to enjoy their life more easily.

Sergeant Gary Kidd did say that all calls should be prioritised by the Police and sometimes not all the issues get dealt with. He asked MOP 3 to send him an email directly with the car registration details, where cars are causing an obstruction. They will not be able to prosecute but they will be able to give them a warning, making them aware that the Police have noted their actions.

MOP 1 said thank you and please can you leave your email details, whilst he appreciated it is difficult to keep track of the situation.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked for any other questions.

MOP 2 asked if it was possible to get more members to join the Biggleswade Community Safety Group (BSCG). Unfortunately, whilst the parking situation arises in Dells Lane, residents cannot agree where the problem is. For example, as long as residents can park in front of their house, or indeed relatives can park near their house, then they do not see a problem. No one in Dells Lane is actually a member of the BSCG.

Cllr Mr H Ramsay asked if the Group had an Information Sheet, and MOP 2 said No. Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if they could supply one for the Notice Boards.

Sergeant Gary Kidd, asked how often does the BSCG meet? This could be a useful contact for vulnerable people.

MOP 2 confirmed that the BCSG met every 6 – 8 weeks at 7.00 pm – 8.00 pm.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay reinstated the Council Standing Orders.

8. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 July 2014 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- b. Members received the Draft Minutes of the Joint Management Committee meeting held on 25 June 2014 at the Offices of Central Bedfordshire Council, Chicksands.

Cllr Mrs M Russell, raised the point that although she thanked the Chairman for his help in resolving the bus situation, in Hitchin Street, it does not appear to be solved, as buses are still travelling down Hitchin Street.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that we will ask the Town Clerk to write to Cllr Jones (CBC) to investigate this issue.

9. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8th July 2014 were discussed.

MOP 3 made reference to the exempt items regarding information being available.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if the minutes would be acceptable subject to the amendments, as requested.

The Minutes of the 8th July 2014 were checked for accuracy, and matters arising.

Cllr I Bond mentioned he had a session with the Town Clerk on 22nd July 2014, as the inspections of the playground equipment had been done by our insurance company.

There was no evidence of serious damage, apart from a spring bent at Fairfield Playground which was removed immediately.

The Minutes were **agreed**, and the signing of each page to be done at the same time as the 22nd July Council Meeting minutes.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. **CB/14/02473/FULL – 25 Mountbatten Drive, Biggleswade**

Two storey rear extension, first floor front/side extension and single story front 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.

b. **CB/14/02509/RM – Land North East of Potton Road, Biggleswade**

Reserved Matters: following outline application MB/03/01205 for parcels 33, 37a, 37b, 49, 52 and 53a for 90 dwellings including appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.

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/14/02537/FULL - 22 Glebe Road, Biggleswade**

Single Storey front 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.

d. **CB/14/02545/FULL - 22 Glebe Road, Biggleswade**

Single Storey front extension

Please note Items 10c and 10d required approval, as there was a variation to the front of the house.

Application 1 - Shorter extension

Application 2 - Longer extension

Cllr I Bond stated it was very unusual to have two planning applications in at the same time. It was confirmed a phone call was made to the Planning Department, CBC who also agreed it would have been better to do them separately.

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 June 2014
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 30 June 2014

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt Detailed Balance Sheet to 30 June 2014. Summary of Income & Expenditure. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 30 June 2014.

<u>Proposed:</u>	i.	Cllr Mrs M Russell	<u>Seconded:</u>	i.	Cllr I Bond
	ii.	Cllr B Briars		ii.	Cllr Mrs M Russell
	iii.	Cllr Mrs M Russell		iii.	Cllr B Briars/Cllr I Bond

12. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Partnership Community Defibrillator Scheme**

At the Parish Council Conference on 29 April attendees were told about a community emergency defibrillator scheme for town and parish councils that we would be launching shortly.

The scheme is to be launched in partnership with Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS), who have agreed to match fund the £30,000 contribution from Central Bedfordshire Together (CBT); meaning that there is now £60,000 to invest in this scheme.

This additional investment means that there will be funding for the initial purchase of defibrillator and secure storage cabinets. The support sort from Town and parish councils that wish to participate is the cost installation, energy, maintenance, insurance and awareness sessions. Full details can be found in the attached Expressions of Interest Guidance Notes.

If Town Council would like to take part in the scheme, the Expression of Interest Form has to be returned by 31 July.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked for any questions regarding the Scheme, and made reference to the return of the form by 31st July.

Cllr Mrs M Russell realised that people needed to be trained, however it was not clear who will do the training and take ownership of it.

Cllr B Briars stated there is a lack of equipment etc, and possibly more training may be required. Should the Council get involved?

It was suggested that maybe ASDA could get involved as they open long hours.

Cllr G Wilson suggested the garage at Sainsbury's as they are open 24 hours.

Cllr B Briars suggested this be deferred until further details of cost and training etc. are available.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay requested the Town Clerk should obtain the information.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Planning application outcomes**

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

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay noted the following had been approved by CBC Planning, even though the Committee had objected:

London Road Retail Park: 14/01181/VOC
Mead End: 14/00288/FULL

Council Meeting – 24/6/14

Bonds Lane, Aldi Store: 14/01316/ADV
High Street, 43 14/01136/FULL
New Road, Sandy (Former Plant Site, Warren Villas Quarry): 14/00139/MW

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked if there were any other comments anybody would like to make?

Cllr B Briars made reference to the pharmacy licence being granted to Retail Park, in London Road and asked for this to be raised at the Joint Committee. Cllr I Bond agreed to send an email to the Town Clerk to add this item to the next Joint Committee agenda, as he thought the situation was ridiculous.

b. Trinity Methodist Church, Biggleswade – Restoration of Rear Hall

Correspondence has been received from Trinity Community Project to inform Members that the restoration of the hall is virtually complete, and that they are just awaiting delivery of tables and chairs to complete the project.

The President of the Methodist Conference will perform the opening and dedication ceremony on 19 October, the details of which are to be finalised.

The Mayor, Town Clerk and Councillors are invited to attend the ceremony, the details of the programme have not been finalised, but it is likely to take the form of an afternoon tea followed by a service in the Chapel in the early evening.

A copy was attached to the Agenda.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked the Council to confirm their acceptance to either Sue in the office, or direct to Trinity Methodist Church, Biggleswade.

c. Carriageway Maintenance Works

CBC has notified Town Council of carriageway maintenance works at Potton Road, between Devon Drive and Drove Road junction, commencing on 28 July and is expected to last 8 days to complete.

Potton Road will be closed as a through route between 09:00 and 15:30.

A copy is attached to this agenda.

It was noted that 8 days is a long time for Potton Road to be closed as a through route between 09.00 am and 15.30 pm.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked for any comments.

Cllr Mrs M Russell accepted that roads need to be serviced, however should it take as long as 8 days to repair? I expect the road to be re-opened as soon as possible.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay stated that temporary traffic lights will be in place and should alleviate any problems with getting out of the road.

Cllr P Biernis raised a question and Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that she could not see whether Retailers had been told of the road works, or not. Cllr P Biernis was asked to write to the Town Clerk, so that he can write to make sure they are aware.

d. Thank you letter – Trinity Community Project

Correspondence has been received from the Trinity Community Project thanking the Mayor for the donation of £250 which was paid from unused Mayoral Allowance 2013/14.

The letter of Thanks from the Trinity Community Project was **noted** by the Council.

e. Request from Cllr G Wilson re First World War Commemoration Funding

Further to the Council meeting held on 8 July, this item will be discussed at the next Council Meeting on 12 August 2014.

It was confirmed that the request from Cllr G Wilson will be discussed at the next meeting on 12th August 2014.

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions. Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked the members of the public if they had any questions. None were received.

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.

Agenda Items 16a & 16b – Contracts 16c - Staff

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.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay thanked the members of the public for attending, and they then left the meeting.

At 8.10 pm, Cllr B Rix joined the meeting.