

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 8 MARCH 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 B Rix  
Cllr M Foster  
Cllr D Albone (Vice Chair)  
Cllr B Briars  
Cllr F Foster  
Cllr S Watkins

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

4 Members of Public

**1. APOLOGIES**

Cllr P Biernis, Cllr T Woodward.

**ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES**

Cllr Ms R Kerfoot.

**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 – None

**3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor thanked everyone for their support at the Civic Service. Many messages of thanks have been received from people who attended. The Event was a great success.

**4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no questions from Members of the Public.

**5. INVITED SPEAKER**

There was no invited speaker.

**6. MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

There were no Members questions.

**7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a.** For Members to receive and approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

**Page 1, item 2, a):** Cllr D Strachan asked that the Minutes record that he had a Disclosable Pecuniary interest in Agenda item 11a, and also that they record Cllr Strachan left the meeting at item 11a and returned at the end of the item.

**8. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no Matters Arising.

**9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**a. CB/16/00538/FULL and CB/16/00676/LB – Coach and Horses, 49-51 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade**

Demolition of rear porch, rear bay window and remove existing rear chimney. Rear first floor extension, conversion and alterations to create two dwellings. Replace front door canopies with timber surround.

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

**b. CB/16/00521/FULL – 2 Wilsheres Road, Biggleswade**

Two storey side extension and part single part two storey front side & rear extension following demolition of existing garage & utility room.

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/16/00675/FULL – 10 Snowdrop Walk, Biggleswade**

Loft extension with raised roof and rear dormer.

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/16/00598/FULL – 133 Potton Road, Biggleswade**

Two storey side/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.

**e. CB/16/00350/FULL – 2 Crab Lane, Biggleswade**

Proposed change of use from residential to offices.

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

**f. CB/16/00667/FULL – 3 Kitelands Road, Biggleswade**

Single storey front 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.

**g. CB/16/00682/VOC – 9 Railway View, Lawrence Road, Biggleswade**

Removal of Condition 1 to planning CB/15/03334/FULL (conversion to 3 residential flats) site fully residential use only, with no commercial usage on site for this historic provision to relate to.

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

## 10. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

### a. Tender for Four Common Rights of Biggleswade Common

The Fen Reeves of Biggleswade Common have contacted members to ask if there is an interest in making an offer to purchase one or more Common Rights.

After discussing the attached information, Members requested that this item be deferred to the Exempt Agenda for further debate.

### b. Mid Bedfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau – (MBCAB)

Mid Bedfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau are placing an application before the windfarm community fund to seek funding for a community home visit outreach worker. MBCAB are requesting the support of Biggleswade Town Council and Langford Parish Council prior to submitting the application.

Members asked that the Town Clerk write a letter in support of this application.

### c. Refurbishment of Benches – Biggleswade Market Square

A proposal from Cllr F Foster:

a) To rectify matters of the benches in the short term and, b) Should it be BTC policy to start a dialogue with CBC with a view to BTC taking back responsibility for the Town Square.

Cllr F Foster was surprised that this item, previously raised at the Council Meeting of 23 June 2015, had not yet been satisfactorily resolved. He felt that the benches, although not BTC responsibility, were in such a bad state that it should be a priority to maintain them in the short term, whilst awaiting a dialogue between BTC and CBC on the future of the Market Square and Century House.

The Town Clerk said that he is aware of the ongoing problem caused by birds and low branches from the trees. However, despite having no responsibility or budget for the benches, the ground-staff have previously cleaned and re-varnished the seats to the manufacturer's instructions, in addition to the weekly cleaning already carried out by CBC operatives.

Cllr Mrs M Russell felt that, although in agreement with this proposal initially, the Regeneration bid process is now so close to realisation, that it would be prudent to wait until this is finalised. Under the terms of the bid the ownership of the Market Square would return to the Town Council, and the Regeneration fund would then be applied to refurbishing and upgrading the whole of the Market Square, including Century House, tree roots, benches and street furnishings. BTC will then have full responsibility for its' own Town Centre.

Following a vote, it was **RESOLVED** that this proposal was not carried forward.

### d. Stratton Street Bridge

A proposal from Cllr D Strachan:

a) That the Town Council considers Central Bedfordshire Council's reply of the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016 to the Mayor's letter to the Chairman of Central Bedfordshire Council and takes such action as it deems appropriate.

Cllr D Strachan felt the CBC response to be unacceptable as Cllr Bowater has not had the courtesy to send a personal reply to Cllr Mrs H Ramsay directly; which he felt to be discourteous under the terms of governance.

Discussion took place on the viability of requesting a Freedom of Information request to CBC as it was felt that the performance of CBC and its' Contractors was appalling. Information released was pathetic, with excuses of work not being completed due to low night-time temperatures requiring a quicker setting product than the product used. Neither CBC, nor the Contractor has offered any clear evidence to support steps being taken to mitigate this delay.

Work has now been pushed back for completion in June, and Members are extremely concerned about the severe impact on Biggleswade businesses.  
It was felt that due to the timescale required for a Freedom of Information request, and the anticipated response that this would be commercially sensitive information, it would be more appropriate for individuals to write in to CBC with this request.

Cllr B Rix gave notice of his intention to write and request FOI from CBC in a personal capacity.

- b) The reports sent to the Town Council re: The Stratton Street (High Street) Bridge works be placed on the Agenda of all Town Council meetings until completion is effected and the High Street is re-opened to traffic.

It was **RESOLVED** that this will be placed on the Agenda of Town Council Meetings until completion.

## 11. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### a. **Temporary Closure of Part of Footpath No. 27**

Central Bedfordshire Council have notified Council of the closure of part of Footpath No. 27. This closure is required to enable works to electrical cable to take place in safety. The closure is expected to continue from 5 March to 11 March 2016.

Cllr D Albone found this information to be confusing as the footpath has been closed now for at least three weeks.

### b. **Central Bedfordshire Council – Corporate Management Team**

Central Bedfordshire CMT hold regular monthly meetings, as part of an initiative to find out more about the larger Town Councils, the CMT held their February meeting at the Town Council offices on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The CMT asked that they spend an hour with the Town Clerk and Chairs of the Council, TCM, PLOS and F&GP in order that they could find out more about the Town Council, how they are set up, how they operate and what issues are important to the Town Council.

Cllr Mrs M Russell gave an overview of the meeting, and said that in addition to the information on the attached notes, BTC had specifically asked that issues concerning Biggleswade should be able to be made at Joint Committee.

### c. **Stratton Street Bridge - Updates**

Updates were **NOTED**.

## 12. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions. Members of the public will be allowed one three-minute slot.

Mr Bacon voiced concerns over the state of the benches due to bird droppings and overhanging tree branches.

## 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 is discussed.

Agenda Item 14a (Additional evening meetings and Minutes & Item 10a from the agenda).

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.