

MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2015
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE,
SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

Present:

Cllr D Albone (Chair)
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr I Bond
Cllr B Briars
Cllr M North
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr G Wilson
Cllr Mrs M Russell
Cllr P Biernis
Cllr S Watkins
Cllr B Rix

Mr R McGregor – Biggleswade Town Clerk
Mr M Thorn – Biggleswade Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs J Durn – Minute Taker, Biggleswade Town Council

3 Members of Public
1 Member of Press

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay. (Mr D Albone, Deputy Chair, will Chair the meeting tonight).

Non-attendance: Cllr Ms R Kerfoot, Cllr T Woodward

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – None declared
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Cllr B Briars Item 9y, Planning Application, Biggleswade Academy.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

We received the sad news of the passing of former Councillor, Mayor and friend, David Smith. The Chairman read out a note received from Mrs Wendy Smith, who thanked everyone for their flowers and messages of support. A Minute's silence was held in respect of our colleague.

4. 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 the public.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

There are no invited speakers.

6. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

Cllr B Briars asked if we have received an answer from CBC to his question raised at the Council meeting on the 10th November regarding the unacceptable level of fly-posting and banners around the town. The Town Clerk confirmed that no response has yet been received.

Cllr B Briars asked that a letter be written to CBC to request that the gyratory system is now revisited. Now that we have had a chance to see it in operation, it has become clear that there are a few things that require "tweaking" in order to allow traffic to flow smoothly. Rose Lane/Crab Lane and the other end of Crab Lane to the Baulk are particular areas in question. This will be discussed further on the Agenda under item 11c.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received and approved the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 24th November 2015 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade
- b. Members received and approved the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Public Lands and Open Spaces meeting held on 1 December 2015.
- c. Members received and approved the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Town Centre Management Meeting held on 8th December 2015.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

From the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 24th November 2015:

Page 2, item 8a) FOI Request: Cllr B Rix asked if we have received a response from CBC regarding concerns expressed on information released. The Town Clerk confirmed that no response has been received as yet.

Page 6, item f) Local Retailers concerns over bridge closure: Cllr B Rix asked if a meeting has been arranged with traders in the town to discuss their concerns on the bridge closure. The Town Clerk confirmed that this has not yet been arranged.
Cllr Rix asked that this item be brought forward to the next BJC Meeting in January. The Town Clerk will put this item on the Agenda.

Page 6, item k) Parking restrictions in Mallard Walk: Cllr B Rix confirmed that the resident was happy with the action taken by BTC in forwarding his comments to CBC.

Page 7, item d) Potton Road Informal Crossing Point: Cllr Mrs M Russell pointed out that this was not the type of crossing originally agreed. The kerbed build outs are unsatisfactory and dangerous for children to cross. This will be discussed further under Agenda item 11b.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. **CB/15/04343/FULL – Aldi Store, Bonds Lane, Biggleswade**
Render part existing brickwork to east and west elevations and removal of existing window.
It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Application.
- b. **CB/15/04368/ADV – Aldi Store, Bonds Lane, Biggleswade**
Three instances of signage: a corporate logo wall mounted vinyl on aluminium and an H totem sign with two signcases.
It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Application.

- c. **CB/15/04365/ADV – Aldi Store, Bonds Lane, Biggleswade**
Advertisement: Ten signs illuminated and non-illuminated, six wall mounted graphic vinyl on aluminium, a corporate logo signcase mounted on two posts, a corporate logo vinyl on glazing and H totem with two signcases.

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

- d. **CB/15/04369/FULL – 124 Mead End, Biggleswade**
Single storey rear extension and fenestration alterations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning 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/15/04380/FULL – 45 Maunder Avenue, Biggleswade**
Single storey rear extension.

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

- f. **CB/15/04245/FULL – Rear of 58 High Street and fronting Back Street, Biggleswade**
Erection of 5 No. terraced dwelling and ancillary works.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this Planning Application on the grounds of insufficient parking.

- g. **CB/15/04429/FULL – 6 Lincoln Crescent, Biggleswade**
Part single, part two storey front extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this planning 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/15/04282/FULL – 8 Brunswick Close, Biggleswade**
Erection of rear conservatory.

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

- i. **CB/15/04414/LDCE – 24 Elm Road, Biggleswade**
Lawful Development Certificate Existing: Single storey side extension, loft extension and rear conservatory.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this Planning Application on the grounds that no original Planning Application has been put forward.

j. CB/15/04434/FULL – 27 Oak Crescent, Biggleswade

Single storey rear extension and demolition of store.

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

k. CB/15/04344/FULL – 65 High Street, Biggleswade

Conversion of existing outbuilding to form habitable room with Shower Room. Install new lantern to existing flat roof over Kitchen. Ground floor side extension to form link between Kitchen and rear areas. Raise part garden area to meet new extension entrance. Part demolish shed and demolish external staircase, garden archway and Shower Room extension. Adjust internal areas.

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

l. CB/15/94438/VOC – Land South of Potton Road, Biggleswade

Variation of Condition 2 of CB/14/0906/RM for the creation of formal sports areas, ancillary open space comprising of football pitches and range of agreed play facilities and games areas. Revision to the types of play equipment and orientation of pitches. (A list of the variations will be placed on the notice board in the Council Chamber).

Planning Application previously went before Council on 13th May 2014.

CB/14/00906/RM – Land at the Kings Reach Development, South of Potton Road, Biggleswade Reserved Matter: Landscaping. Following Outline Application MB/03/01205/OUT application for creation of formal sport areas and ancillary open space comprising football pitches, a range of agreed play facilities & game areas.

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

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

m. CB/15/04285/FULL – 43 Fennel Drive, Biggleswade

Two storey rear extension.

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

n. CB/15/04474/LB – 48 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade

Front porch extension, removal of conservatory and replacement with single storey side extension, plus internal alterations.

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

o. CB/15/04473/FULL – 48 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade

Front porch extension, removal of conservatory and replacement with single storey side extension, internal alterations.

Planning Application previously went before Council on 19th May 2015.

*CB/15/00424/FULL – 48A Shortmead Street, Biggleswade (REVISED)
Erection of replacement two storey building to provide 2 No. 2 bedroom flats following demolition of existing single storey workshop building, detached garage/outbuildings, and provision of 3 No. parking*

spaces, amenity space and cycle storage.

The Chair read out additional information passed on by the Town Clerk that had been received after the Agenda had been distributed: This item is being discussed at a Development Management Committee Meeting being held on 27 May, and the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk will attend that meeting on behalf of the Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council Object subject to the receipt of further information.

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

p. CB/15/04578/FULL – 32 Sage Close, Biggleswade

Loft conversion, single storey front extension and alterations.

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

q. CB/15/04576/LB – Coach and Horses, 49-51 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade

Listed Building; Demolition of rear porch, rear bay window and covered canopy area. Remove existing rear chimney complete rear 1st floor extension over existing flat roof toilet area, rear porch extension. Change of use to form 2 no houses with slate roof coverings.

Concerns to be noted regarding demolition as this is a Listed Building.

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

r. CB/15/04575/FULL – Coach and Horses, 49-51 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade

Demolition of rear porch, rear bay window and covered canopy area. Remove existing rear chimney, complete rear 1st floor extension over existing flat roof toilet area, rear porch extension. Change of use to form 2 no houses with slate roof coverings.

Concerns to be noted regarding demolition as this is a Listed Building.

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

s. CB/15/04600/FULL – 25 St Johns Street, Biggleswade

Two storey rear extension and single storey porch to front elevation.

There was no objection to the rear extension, however concern was expressed over the front porch streetscape and encroachment over the building line.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this Planning Application on the grounds of encroaching the building line.

t. CB/15/03078/REG3 – Stratton Business Park, Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade

Outline: B1, B2 & B8 use employment development with associated infrastructure and ancillary works; all matters reserved except means of access. (Amendments)

Planning Application previously went to Council on 9th September 2015.

CB/15/03078/OUT – Pegasus Drive, Stratton Business Park, Biggleswade

Outline: B1, B2 & B8 use employment development with associated infrastructure and ancillary works; all matters reserved except means of access.

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

Planning Application previously went to Council on 24th November 2015.

CB/15/03078/OUT – Stratton Business Park, Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade

Outline: B1, B2 & B8 use employment development with associated infrastructure and ancillary works; all matters reserved except means of access.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this application as Members felt it is difficult to determine where changes have been made and there are too many unanswered questions.

It was **RESOLVED** that in order to obtain clarification, the Town Clerk will write to invite a representative to attend the next Council Meeting in order to provide the relevant information and answer Members questions.

The following response has now been received:

CB/15/03078/REG3

The Planning applications for Stratton Business Park were discussed at a Town Council meeting on the 13th October 2015, when Town Council had an invited speaker, Alex Harrison from Planning at CBC.

Members Questions were raised concerning archaeological value, particularly the Newton Bury ancient monument; countryside pedestrian footpath access, together with safe crossing to the north of Dunton Lane should also be considered. Mr Harrison said that English Heritage has raised objections to the proposals and CBC is currently looking at providing the right balance in order to fulfil these requirements.

Mr Harrison will take Councillor's concerns back to CBC and will ensure that they are taken into consideration.

The Initial Planning application number was CB/15/03078/OUT, having discussed this application with Alex Harrison REG3 should have been used on the initial application as this is a CBC application to itself hence the change from OUT to REG 3.

Changes to the application are removal of proposed access from Dunton Lane and the introduction of a landscape screen along Dunton Lane. Access to the proposed development will now be through the existing business park, this has a knock on effect in that changes had to be made to the application **CB/15/03226/REG3 – Stratton Business Park, Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade** Infrastructure works associated with expansion of Business Park, including **service roads, surface water and foul water sewers**. (Amendments) and **CB/15/04111/FULL – Land at Phases 5 & 6 Stratton Business Park east of Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade** Infrastructure works associated with expansion of Business Park, including **service roads, surface water and foul water sewers**.

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

Items U and V were both previously considered by Town Council on 24 November;

u. CB/15/04111/FULL – Land at Phases 5 & 6 Stratton Business Park east of Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade

Infrastructure works associated with expansion of Business Park, including service roads, surface water and foul water sewers.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this application as Members felt it is difficult to determine where changes have been made and there are too many unanswered questions.

It was **RESOLVED** that in order to obtain clarification, the Town Clerk will write to invite a representative to attend the next Council Meeting in order to provide the relevant information and answer Members questions.

Unfortunately the Planning Officer was unable to attend the Council Meeting on 15th December 2015.

Following receipt of additional information, it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application.

v. CB/15/03226/REG3 – Stratton Business Park, Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade

Infrastructure works associated with expansion of Business Park, including service roads, surface water and foul water sewers. (Amendments)

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this application as Members felt it is difficult to determine where changes have been made and there are too many unanswered questions.

It was **RESOLVED** that in order to obtain clarification, the Town Clerk will write to invite a representative to attend the next Council Meeting in order to provide the relevant information and answer Members questions.

Unfortunately the Planning Officer was unable to attend the Council meeting on 15th December 2015.

Following receipt of additional information, it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application.

w. **CB/15/04381/FULL – 28-28A Hitchin Street, Biggleswade**

Demolition of existing shop/take away and erection of new shop with accommodation above for 5 dwellings.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this Planning Application on the grounds of height of the building (Four storey and not three) and lack of parking provision.

Addition Planning Applications (Received 11.12.2015 by hand):

x. **CB/15/04528/FULL – 1A Brunswick Close, Biggleswade**

Front extension, forming an inside porch area.

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

y. **CB/15/04537/FULL – Biggleswade Academy, Mead End, Biggleswade**

Removal of existing modular unit & construction of new 290 square metre single storey free-standing three-classroom block to form new teaching areas and extension of existing car park.

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

10. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

Members received the following Accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 30th November 2015.
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure.
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 30th November 2015.

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

11. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **CB/TCA/15/00466 – Works to a tree in a Conservation Area: Fell one Maple tree on the corner of Bonds Lane just outside the car park boundary. Location: Aldi Store, Bonds Lane**

If the Council wish to comment on the application, they may do so by contacting Central Bedfordshire Council.

No comments were made. This item was **NOTED**.

b. **CBC proposal to extend 30mph speed limit on Potton Road, Biggleswade**

CBC has notified Town Council of the above proposal. This is considered necessary in the interest of road safety. The proposed speed limit extension would take the 30mph limit east of the new Eastern

Relief Road roundabout to include new residential developments and outlying properties that are currently covered by a 40mph speed limit.

Members are asked to make any comments by 8 January 2016.

This is something that is desperately needed and has the full Council support. Cllr P Biernis would like to see the speed limit decreased to 20mph in all school areas.

The crossing is a cause of concern as we need a pelican crossing and not the kerbed build outs that have been put in place. These are completely unsatisfactory, particularly for the safety of school children crossing the road at that point. The chicane is also dangerous and badly lit.

The Council welcomes the speed limit, but would like a light controlled crossing at that location.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk take this forward to CBC.

c. St Johns Street Area Biggleswade – Temporary One Way System

Members considered the attached correspondence from a member of public regarding the new gyratory system.

Lengthy discussion followed on this item. In summary the Members agreed to write to CBC with the following request:

- Re-introduce parking in Sun Street in order to act as a traffic calming measure.
- Change the timing on the traffic lights for ease of traffic flow
- Two lanes of traffic coming from Rose Lane into Sun Street
- Reduce parking in the area around the “pinch point” (Gladstone Close)
- Review and remove the temporary signage which is no longer applicable
- Request a member of the Highways Team at CBC to do a “walk through” in order experience the problems faced by the public first-hand.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk will write to CBC with these requests.

d. Proposal for the Rental of the Upstairs Space within the Old Court House

Hear2Listen have written a proposal for Council to consider regarding the rental of the upstairs of the Old Court House.

The Town Clerk reported that although there has been interest in rental, the decorative condition and poor state of facilities in the upstairs area has inhibited interest in taking on the property.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk obtain three estimates for the remedial work to the upstairs area. When obtained these will be brought to Council for further discussion.

e. Petition for a Zebra Crossing in Shortmead Street

Members considered a petition from a member of the public for the installation of a zebra crossing in Shortmead Street.

Members have always supported the installation of a zebra crossing in this area, and have previously offered to match funding with CBC on this project.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to CBC again, reiterating our proposal for a light controlled zebra crossing in this area, and forwarding this petition in additional support.

f. Bedfordshire Constabulary

Members received Crime Figures from Bedfordshire Police.

Concern was expressed that due to reporting structures, these figures do not accurately reflect crime in the area.

This information was **NOTED.**

g. Market Town Regeneration Fund

Members considered the Market Town Regeneration Fund information.

Cllr Mrs M Russell updated the Members on the current situation (originally brought to Council as an Exempt item).

The Town Clerk and Cllr Mrs M Russell have met with Mr Jason Longhurst, the Director responsible for Regeneration. Four of the largest towns are to receive £1m each for Regeneration, of which Biggleswade is one. The criteria has now been finalised and they are looking for ways to bring this forward.

There are two schemes currently being put forward, and these will be discussed in full at a meeting to be held in the second week of January 2016.

CBC is keen on filling the vacant shops in the town and would like to offer inducements such as 6 month rent/rates reductions in order to attract start-up businesses.

Although it was agreed that more business is to be encouraged and start-up help is essential, BTC are concerned that proposed signage and other alterations do not impose on existing business, and that we retain control of our town centre.

It was suggested that a small Working Party be formed to put together a proposal as a matter of urgency. In the meantime please forward any comments to the Town Clerk.

h. Land East – Community Facility

Members are asked to consider formally adopting the Orchard community building on Land east of Biggleswade.

The Town Council have been involved in discussions on the community building since 2011, at that time the Town Council nominated Cllrs P Vickers, J Lawrence, W Smith, S Grayston and the Town Clerk to liaise with CBC and the developers, at that time drawings were agreed along with a list of specifications, fixtures and fittings, along with an informal commitment that the Town Council would take the facility over on completion.

In early 2015 The Town Council were approached again, following the appointment of a new contractor, members who attended the meeting agreed some changes to the layout.

In May 2015 the Council nominated Cllrs D Albone, B Briars, M Foster & G Wilson to the Land East community facility group.

The facility is now close to completion and will require adoption by the Town Council.

Having discussed this matter with CBC, the facility can come directly to the Town Council.

The 106 agreement for the community centre, details that they are obligated to build, provide internal partitions as per the agreed plans and to also ensure that services are installed but it doesn't suggest anywhere in the 106 agreement that the building would be entirely furnished, it does suggest that lighting, internal fittings etc., should be agreed with the developer and council.

It also mentions that they are obligated to employ a caretaker for a four year period or to pay the costs of the employment of a caretaker for a four year period.

There also appears to be a one of sum in contribution to the community centre but no other commuted sums:

Village and Community Hall Contribution means the sum of £17.699.00 towards the provision or improvement of village or community hall facilities

Attached is a list of the equipment that was felt was required for the facility, this list was researched and compiled in 2011. This list will have to be reviewed and any further suggestions added and costed, up to date costs will have to be obtained for the original list.

It was **RESOLVED** to formally adopt the Orchard Community Building on Land east of Biggleswade.

It was **RESOLVED** to review the list of equipment.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Updates

1. London Road Bridge Works – Please find attached information regarding the diversions for bus services during the Biggleswade Bridge Closure commencing on 13th December. This document has been circulated to public information points in the town who may have members of the public asking for information about any changes during the closure. Current bus timetables are displayed in Biggleswade Bus Station or can be accessed online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/bus. If there are any questions about the actual works on the bridge please direct these to the Highways Department or via their dedicated email address for the closure strattonst@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

A response has been received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the concerns of a local retailer and the Town Council's request for a temporary footbridge. Correspondence is attached to this agenda.

This information was **NOTED.**

2. Crown Inn – We are still awaiting information on this.
3. Parking Consultation – No further information has been received.
4. Eastern Relief Road – Now Open.
5. Century House maintenance works – The following update was received:

M & J Roofing will be clearing gutters, replacing missing downpipes, slipped slates, repointing loose edges/joints etc. and replacing damaged timber around the edges of the roofline.

I doubt our contractors will need access but do we contact you if we need to get into the market managers office. I assume some access will be required in the rear compound. (I will send further updates if the situation changes).'

b. Biggleswade Police Station

Further to the Council Meeting of 24th November 2015, letters were sent to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to ask for updated information on the future of Biggleswade Police Station. The following reply has been received:

"Dear Mr Thorn,

As the community Chief Inspector for North Bedfordshire I have been asked to reply to your letter of 26th of November addressed to the Chief Constable.

You enquired about the closure of our enquiry office at Biggleswade police station. I can confirm that we are planning to close the enquiry office as a service desk to the public in February next year. This is a result of review and changing modes of communication with the force that has resulted in the staffing of public enquiry desks as being un-economic.

Access to police officers and staff now takes place by the use of our appointment system. Following contact by the public by a number of means, we now operate an appointment system that directs an officer to respond to pre-arranged appointment times to suit the person calling/emailing etc.

There will still be a staffed police presence at Biggleswade police station. Response officer's work from there and the PCSO team with their community sergeant will be supplemented by new community police officers we are currently recruiting to replace some of our lost PCSOs. These too will be based at Biggleswade.

I hope this reassures your council and highlights our continued commitment to policing in Biggleswade.

Best regards

Gavin

*Gavin Hughes-Rowlands
Chief Inspector
North Community Team”*

This information was **NOTED**. No further action to be taken.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

14. 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 (15a) Minutes of meetings & Recommendations of Committees.

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.