

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2015 AT 10.00am
PRIORY HOUSE, MONKS WALK, CHICKSANDS
IN ROOM PH13**

Present:	Cllr M Jones, Chairman	Deputy Leader CBC
	Cllr Mrs J Lawrence	Cllr CBC
	Cllr D Lawrence	Cllr CBC
	Mr R M McGregor	BTC Town Clerk
	Mr P Fraser	CBC
	Cllr Mrs M Russell	Cllr BTC
	Cllr Mrs H Ramsay	Cllr BTC
	Cllr I Bond	Cllr BTC
	Mr M Thomas	Biggleswade Chamber of Trade
	Mr P Mason	Highways, CBC
	Cllr B Briars	Cllr BTC
	Cllr D Albone	Cllr BTC
	Jan Durn	BTC Minute taker
	MOP x 3	

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr T Woodward

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – none declared
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none declared

It was noted that the Town Council agreed at a previous meeting to give dispensation to all Town Councillor's to talk about parking (as this could be considered to be a pecuniary interest).

3. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

To receive questions from members on items not already included on the agenda. Questions should relate to the terms of reference of the Joint Committee and be submitted at least two working days before the meeting.

3a. Request for a Crossing in Shortmead Street

Cllr Mrs M Russell gave the background of this request to the meeting as it had been discussed at the Biggleswade Town Council Meeting on the previous evening (23rd June)

It has been the subject of much discussion over several years as to where the crossing should actually go. However it should now be pointed out that a retirement home has now opened, and there have also been hospitalisations involving children.

The Chairman would like an internal investigation to take place, the findings of which will then go to the Traffic Management Committee.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Members approved the minutes of the BJC held on 14 April 2015.

5. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

6. ELECTION OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

To receive nominations for the co-option of members to the Committee.

Mr Martin Thomas – Biggleswade Chamber of Trade.

The members are happy for Mr Martin Thomas to be a co-opted member.

7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman gave the following report:

Central Bedfordshire Council will be releasing funding (amount tbc) to Town Council's for them to bid for with the purpose of revitalising our Market Towns and to fulfil their potential.

This is aimed at Capital projects to improve the local infrastructure, public realm and fabric of the Market Towns. CBC will be looking at this to be complemented by revenue based activities that support skills development for local businesses through existing funds, in-kind support or through bidding for other funding.

We would recommend that the Town Council consider this as part of their budget planning. Central Bedfordshire Council will work in partnership with our priority Market Towns (of which Biggleswade is one) to support the development of proposals to bid for the funding and will provide guidance in the delivery of successful bids. A Market Town Specification is currently under development with the aim of launching the funding in autumn 2015.

Mr Paul Mason informed the meeting that the Stratton Street Bridge will be closed between Christmas 2015 and Easter 2016 (April). He read out the following draft press release:

The bridge will be closed from midnight on Christmas Eve until the 27th December.
During January and February 2016 further repairs to the bridge will take place.
In March 2016 the new bridge will be lifted into place.
In April 2016 construction of the bridge deck will take place.
There will therefore be an alternative, albeit longer, route from December 2015 to April 2016.

The Chairman commented that a meeting to discuss these issues had been proposed for 21st October. However, in the light of this information he feels it should now be brought forward and he will try and arrange for it to take place as early as August if at all possible.

The Chairman also informed the members that the Crown bridleway was on the Agenda of the DMC Meeting taking place this afternoon at CBC.

8. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Three members of public were present. As there are several reports on the Agenda to be presented on the matters that MOP wished to raise, it was suggested that this item be deferred to item 11.

The Chairman agreed to defer the Public Open Session to Item 11.

9. TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

Mr Paul Mason provided the members with an update:

CBC is writing to Network Rail to request a 150 year lease. Network Rail will have one month to consider this request.

CBC has asked to use Station Road as a temporary interchange. However, a Feasibility Study has not yet been completed.

The Chairman said that this might need to be brought forward to enable officers to come up with plans for discussion.

Cllr Mrs M Russell asked about the plans for Century House and the time scales of the work. Mr Mason said that he has asked for the reversal of Hitchin Street to be considered as part of the Feasibility Study.

10. COMMUTER PARKING

Paul Mason provided the members with an update.

Despite the deadline for the Parking Consultation ending on 31 May, CBC continued to receive responses for a further 10 days.

An analysis of the responses will now take place. This will take several weeks and Mr Mason will keep us updated on the findings.

11. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

MOP1 asked if the Committee were aware of the petition regarding all the traffic accidents in St John Street as he felt there was a gap in communication. He agreed that the proposed 7.5 tonne limit is a good idea; however, he also felt that the implications of the spread of traffic now coming off Sun Street to St John Street have not been fully considered. A letter to this effect is currently in the process of being submitted.

MOP2 would like to submit issues and views put forward at a recent Residents Meeting.

The Residents applauded the 7.5 tonne restriction and would like to know if consideration has also been given to the road priority, especially at peak periods such as school hours of 8.30/9.00am and 4.00pm, then commuters at 6.00pm. They felt that commuters should be encouraged to move away from these roads.

It was also felt that the only suggestions put forward of a one-way system and no parking, offer nothing to the residents of that area. They felt that the plans were weak. Parking, and in particular irresponsible parking, is the issue for all residents at the moment. The residents are willing to help in any way they can and have asked that CBC please take another look at this serious problem.

MOP3 Regarding Sun Street: Pleased to see the roundabout as coming out of Sun Street is a nightmare. Regarding parking: We now have 16 flats with 16 cars to accommodate. Some properties have 200ft+ gardens. Can you look at obtaining this land for parking spaces? Speeding problems could be better served by a chicane rather than sleeping policemen which people tend to ignore. In summary he felt that communication between residents and councillors was felt to be lacking.

In response the Chairman asked Mr Mason to provide an update to cover the following:

- The Consultation period ends next Friday
- We have received 35 objections
- We have not yet done an analysis of these objections

The original programme was for a meeting to take place in July, however there is only one Delegations Meeting (previously known as Traffic Management Meeting) taking place in July and it may therefore have to go to the next one in August.

12. LONDON ROAD & DROVE ROAD CROSSINGS

Mr Paul Mason provided the Members with an update.

The Chairman confirmed that this item will need to go through the Traffic Management Committee, however the dates have not yet been published and it is anticipated that there will not be a meeting until September. Members of the public are invited to attend.

13. GRAFFITI PROBLEMS

There have been comments from the public regarding graffiti around the town.

The Town Clerk has previously done a great deal of work around the removal of unwanted graffiti, and will pass this on to CBC. It was noted that there are graffiti boards for the artists to use, and more are being supplied by the land developers.

14. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

There were no exempt items.

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was suggested that the next meeting should take place earlier than the normal three months. The Chairman agreed to investigate arranging an Extraordinary Meeting in two months' time.

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Chairman