

MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2016
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD BIGGLESWADE

PRESENT:

Cllr D Albone (Chair)
Cllr I Bond
Cllr M North
Cllr S Watkins
Cllr G Wilson
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr M Foster
Cllr B Briars
Cllr F Foster

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

16 Members of Public

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr P Biernis, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr B Rix, Cllr Mrs M Russell.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

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
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item: Cllr M Foster, Item 9a).

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

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. Members of the public will be allowed one three-minute slot.

- Mr Thanet: Regarding Orchard Community Hall pricing: Would the Council consider discounting the price of room hire for charitable concerns and block bookings who have limited funds.
- Mr Dorow: Read out a substantial statement highlighting objections to the Planning Application for Show Persons Site Kennel Farm, Saxon Gate and asked that the Council reconsider this application. He asked that the following salient points be addressed by Council.
 - Given the considerable financial and voluntary resources that have already been put into developing the Green Wheel in this area, and the fact that the site is on a slope which would allow fairground machinery to be visible for miles around, would the Council please demonstrate that the amenity of nearby occupiers will not be unduly harmed by the development.

- Council to please demonstrate that the scale of the site and the number of pitches will not dominate the nearest settled community (Please refer to Policy GT5). The site is on an incline and therefore the 24 trailer park spaces for fairground equipment, 8 mobile homes, 16 caravans, 4 workshops and 16 car park spaces will be highly visible.
 - Concerns that external Consultants have been employed at the expense of the tax payer in order to sell the site as an environmental asset. The views of English Heritage have been ignored, despite guidance placing great weight on protection of heritage sites due to the Scheduled Monument in this area.
 - Why is this development not part of the broader housing development strategy.
 - Why is it that the Planning Application is for both accommodation and the storage of machinery.
- Mrs Sparrow: Regarding the Planning Application for Show Persons Site, Kennel Farm, Saxon Gate: Voicing serious concerns on behalf of the residents over the access route to the proposed site and the implication for residents in this area.
 - Mr Milne: Regarding the Planning Application for Show Persons Site, Kennel Farm, Saxon Gate: Firstly, this topic was discussed 8 years ago when we were advised that Stratton Park land was sold as arable land, and this has been the case until now; therefore, how can you break this agreement. Secondly, at that time the issue of rates was also discussed – the fairground people sell rides and therefore operate as a business – so can the Council please explain why they are falling over backwards to house these people and to accommodate storage. Thirdly – these plans are obviously well advanced – where is there any mention of charges.
 - Mr Wilkinson: Regarding the Planning Application for Show Persons Site Kennel Farm, Saxon Gate: Speaking as the owner of Stratton Park Industrial Estate and on behalf of the business owners of the park, in order to put forward strong objections to this planning application. We have a small, quiet estate, which despite the name industrial, has non- industrial units. No amount of screening will disguise the proposed site which is on raised ground and is inappropriate to that area.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

There was no invited speaker.

6. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

There were no Members questions.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received and approved the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 22nd March 2016 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no Matters Arising.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/16/01072/FULL – Land at Kennel Farm, Saxon Drive**

Proposed change of use from agricultural land to a Travelling Show people site (4 plots) with each plot to accommodate: 2 x mobile homes/chalets, 4 x caravans, 1 x workshop, 4-6 x trailer parking spaces and 4 x car parking spaces.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this Planning Application for the following reasons:

Concerns over access to the site
Inappropriate use of the site

The location of this site with regard to a Scheduled Monument (Stratton Moat)
Covenants on the land to be investigated
The size of the site is too large
Visibility of the site is inappropriate

It was suggested that other more suitable venues can be considered.

Members requested that this Planning Application is Called In.

- b. CB/16/01163/ADV – A1 London Retail Park, London Road**
Individual illuminated letters to main building (Sign REF: 1-4) illuminated box signs to estate
Totem structures (Sign REF 5-12).

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

- c. CB/16/01126/FULL – 17 Royal Oak Close**
Single storey front extension to provide ground floor bathroom.

It was **RESOLVED** that 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.

10. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Stratton Street Bridge

The anticipated date for completion is the end of June 2016, subject to weather conditions.

Members asked if there was any possibility of a pedestrian/cycle pathway being put in place to help the public as this had originally been shown on the plans.

This question will be raised at the forthcoming Biggleswade Joint Committee meeting on the 20th April.

b. Fees for 2016/2017

- i) Members were asked to consider the fees for 2016/ 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposed fees are accepted. This item is subject to review by the Town Centre Management Committee.

- ii) Members were also asked to consider fees for the Orchard Community Hall, which will formally be handed to the Town Council on the 5th April 2016.

Taking into account input provided by the public, it was **RESOLVED** to:

- Review the fees three months from the opening date
- Agree a 50% discount for charitable concerns
- Agree a 10% discount for block bookings of 5 and greater

There will be further discussion to finalise details on items such as refundable deposits for large events, and the actual length of time that the fee covers, for example, whether charges would cover specific times, ie. Hourly bookings, or full/half days.

c. LCS Situation Analysis

Members welcomed this Report and felt that this was a very full and comprehensive account, not only covering governance, policies and processes, but also containing helpful comments and actions that can be taken forward in a positive way.

The Town Clerk will circulate the Agenda for an all-day Strategic Planning meeting, being held on Monday 18th April between LCS Consultants and Councillors, to discuss the way forward, and to build an action plan for implementation into the business plan.

This information was **NOTED**.

d. Equality Policy

Our consultants LCS Ltd, recommended widening our current Equal Opportunities Policy beyond employment to cover services and other aspects of the Council's responsibilities. Following the Briefing on the Councils' equality responsibilities, members present requested that a new policy be brought to Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that a new Policy be brought to Council at the earliest opportunity.

e. Risk Management Scheme

Members considered the Risk Management Scheme (a requirement of CiLCA) put forward by LCS.

The expanded Risk Register, including strategic, operational and compliance risk will be brought forward to the Finance and General Purpose Committee as part of the 2016/17 Risk Assessment.

This information was **NOTED**.

f. Ivel Valley Sprinter

A request has been received from the Ivel Valley Sprinter for approximately £900 to fund nine new timetable cases.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council do not agree to this request. Members asked that Ivel Valley Sprinter be invited to apply for a grant for this request at the appropriate time.

g. Consultation on Central Bedfordshire Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

Members will respond to the request to complete an online survey individually.

h. Mapping for Biggleswade Excluded Area – Highways Act 1980 Section 27

Members considered the request for additional routes put forward by the Senior Definitive Map Officer at CBC.

It was **RESOLVED** that this item be taken forward to the Town Centre Management for further consideration.

11. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Appeal by Aldi Stores Ltd – CB/15/04365/ADV – Site at Aldi Store, Bonds Lane, Biggleswade**

Advertisement: Ten signs illuminated and non-illuminated, six wall mounted graphic vinyl on aluminium, a corporate logo sign case mounted on two posts, a corporate logo vinyl on glazing and H totem with two sign cases.

Central Bedfordshire Council have written to inform Council that an appeal has been made to the Secretary of State against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the proposed development described above.

This information was **NOTED**.

b. **Thank you letters**

This information was **NOTED**.

c. **Thank you letter from Central Bedfordshire Council**

This information was **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 Sharp: Has been attending Council Meetings for many years but 18 months had to stop as he could not hear the proceedings. He was told that the sound had been improved, but is sad to say he did not hear any of the discussion that took place tonight, and this sadly was the same for several members of public seated to the side of him.

The Town Clerk will investigate this.

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 (14)

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.

