

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2015 AT THE
OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD
BIGGLESWADE**

Present:

Cllr H Ramsay (Chair)
Cllr D Albone (Vice Chair)
Cllr B Briars
Cllr P Biernis
Cllr M Foster
Cllr F Foster
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr T Woodward
Cllr S Watkins
Cllr G Wilson
Cllr M Russell
Cllr M North
Cllr I Bond

Nick Carofalo Central Bedfordshire Council Areal Highways Representative
Alistair Rundall Central Bedfordshire Council Areal Highways Representative
Derek Kemp, Accounting Solutions, DCK Beavers Ltd

Mike Thorn – Deputy Town Clerk
Michaela Beckwith – Minute Taker

4 Members of Public (MOP)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr B Rix and Cllr R Kerfoot.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- (a)** No Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were declared in any agenda item
(b) No Non-pecuniary interests were declared in any agenda item

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Council have received an invite from the Mayor of Erlensee for two representatives to attend the anniversary of the twinning on 24th October.

4. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr P Biernis asked if it was possible to clear up after events like the carnival straight after as a lot of litter was left lying around after this year's carnival.

Cllr H Ramsay said she would take this forward.

Cllr P Biernis also asked if the Town Council could ask Central Bedfordshire Council what provisions are in place for when the street cleaner is away on holiday.

Cllr H Ramsay said she would refer this to the Town Clerk.

5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no questions from members of the public.

6. INVITED SPEAKER

Nick Carofalo (NC) and Alistair Rundall (AR) – Central Bedfordshire Council Areal Highways Representatives

NC explained that their job was to help maintain and look after the highways as well as plan maintenance. They have a budget of £413,000 with an additional £9,000 to maintain road markings and £4,000 to maintain blocked gully connections. This budget is stretched across 22 different parishes. Issues are highlighted when they receive a report on them from the public. They then have five days to go out and inspect the area and then report back on the issue. Updates can be found either online or by calling highways. It is always helpful when the public include phone numbers on reports as it allows them to be able to call to check what area the issue was in if the report was unclear.

Those sites which are already scheduled to have major works done will not have money spent on them. Recently, Holme Court Avenue and Wilsheres Road have had major works conducted on them.

Cllr G Wilson asked if utility companies are chased up if they damage the pavements.

NC replied that they are and that there is usually a period of up to a year in which the utility company is liable to fix the damage.

AR added that the slabs by Morrisons are being sorted and an order has been raised.

Cllr G Wilson then asked what would happen about Hitchin Street
Nick said that he was waiting for answers from the design team.

Cllr P Biernis questioned how much of the £413,000 budget is spent on Biggleswade.

NC explained that the money is used wherever it is needed rather than each parish being assigned a certain amount. However, a lot of the budget has been spent in Biggleswade especially regarding the gullies at Rose Lane Car Park.

Cllr P Biernis also mentioned that some of the dropped kerbs do not line up.

NC said that if this is reported to his team then they can be looked into and sorted.

Cllr M Foster suggested that the CBC portal had a phone number field to fill out when reporting an issue.

NC replied that there is to be a session with CBC to discuss their customer service so that improvements can be made.

Cllr M Foster enquired about the time scales from reporting a problem to getting action.

NC said that his team really try to hit that five day target to respond although other departments are not as efficient in achieving the target.

Cllr B Briars asked what was meant by indiscriminate parking.

NC explained that it includes things like parking on grass verges like they were in Laburnum Drive. This problem was solved by putting in vehicle crossings. Sixty of the worst areas for this is compiled, six of these per year are looked at. Letters are sent out to the area where the indiscriminate parking is occurring. If nothing improves legal TRO's are put in place and notices are put up. After this, fines can be issued. However, the cars do need somewhere to go.

Cllr M Russell said there are a lot of uneven pavements in Biggleswade.

NC replied that money has been spent repairing pavements an example is in Saffron Road. However, money does have to be spent carefully.

Cllr M Russell also asked for a list of the key projects taking place in this financial year.

NC explained that the gully near the bridge would be sorted around December which ties in with planned bridge works. In October Beech Avenue will have retreading some on the carriage way costing £115,000. Wilsheres Road will have retreading done on the footway costing £123,000. Although the plans for next

year can change the following is currently planned to go ahead. The A6001 London Road near Dunton Roundabout at the cost of £159,000. Lawrence Road's carriageway will be retreaded, costing £121,000.

There are many more sites in Biggleswade which are planned for years 3 and 4.

Cllr M Foster mentioned that by Saxon Drive area there are grass verges which people have walked across, creating paths as a more direct route.

NC informed him that they cannot carry out aesthetical issues but the local transport plan or rural match fund could help. If a list of issues are put together it can be given to them as a project.

AR commented that he believes this issue has been passed onto rights of way at CBC as well as the issue of the shared road/path up at Kings Reach area.

Cllr I Bond raised the point that Fairfield Road is not maintained and that there are members of the public maintaining the road and the repairs which have taken place do not last long.

NC informed him that this road was a historical highway which means that it is not maintained under the same criteria as other modern roads. This again can be put forward as a project to the local transport plan or rural match fund. NC was aware that Mark Bossant was looking into the road repairs but was unable to secure money for it.

Cllr D Strachan explained that it is hard to determine what areas fall under whose responsibility and it would be helpful to know the areas of budgets.

NC replied that there is a need for a basic guide.

AR said the budget for Wilsheres Drive comes under structural maintenance who have a bigger fund.

Alistair said that they do have the ability to pass on reports to the right department to deal with.

STANDING ORDERS WERE SUSPENDED TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ASK QUESTIONS

MOP 1 highlighted that Mead End was in need of repair due to large holes in the road.

NC confirmed Mead End is an identified area. However, the footway and carriageway are not planned to be repaired from 2019 onwards.

Money has been spent on patching the area. NC agreed to look into the resurface of the road and is available to meet MOP1 on site.

STANDING ORDERS WERE REINSTATED

Cllr H Ramsay moved item 10 Accounts forward with the agreement of the council.

10. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

Members received and adopted the following accounts:

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

b. **Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015**

- i. Members approved and adopted the Accounts and Statement of Accounts contained in the Annual Return for 2014/2015.
- ii. Members adopted and approved the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return for the year 2014/2015.

Cllr D Strachan asked Derek Kemp (DK) if there is anything which should be brought to the attention of the council.

DK replied that everything is all in order and that if any councillors wished to have something regarding the accounts explained to contact him.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received and approved the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 June 2015 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade, provided that the changes below were made.

Cllr D Strachan – Item 2 – declared a pecuniary interest
Cllr M Foster – Item 9 – Principal was incorrectly spelt in planning applications
– Item 8 – Sergeant was incorrectly spelt
Cllr F Foster – Item 10a – Should read dispensation not dispensary
Cllr M Russell – Item 10a – the word consultation should be removed
Cllr D Strachan – Item 12 – Clerk was incorrectly spelt.
Cllr B Briars – Item 10b – change elected to ask how they were appointed

- b. Members received the Recommendations of the Town Centre Management meeting 2nd June held on 2 June 2015 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade. The recommendations were approved as follows:

Item 6a Improvements: Rose Lane – Mill Lane and St Andrews Street Car Parks.

It was **RESOLVED** that a full set of quotations are obtained for a disabled ramp, improvement works to the footpath and a height restriction barrier.

Item 6b Improving Wayfinding and Mapping System in Biggleswade Town Centre.

It was **RESOLVED** that a mock up sign is produced and the measurements used are imperial, not metric.

Item 6c Biggleswade Town Market

Cllr M Russell circulated copies of a statement signed by Hitchin Street traders to say that they were in agreement with temporary closures of the top end of Hitchin Street to enable market stalls in this area.

Cllr M Russell proposed to amend the recommendation of the Town Centre Management Committee (a) to consult with all interested parties on the layout of the Market Square and (b) to proceed with the closure of the top of Hitchin Street to allow new market traders onto that space. The proposal was seconded by Cllr I Bond.

Cllr M Russell asked for items (a) and (b) to be considered separately and requested a recorded vote on each item.

Cllr M Russell proposed an amendment to item (b) to go ahead immediately to obtain the necessary traffic order to close the top end of Hitchin Street to traffic for Saturday Markets and to invite new market stalls to use the top part of Hitchin Street between the Market Square and Bonds Lane.

A recorded vote was taken for the amended item (b) of the recommendation, which was unanimous.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will immediately obtain the necessary traffic order to close the top end of Hitchin Street to traffic for Saturday Markets. New market stalls can then be invited to use the top part of Hitchin Street between the Market Square and Bonds Lane.

Cllr M Russell proposed an amendment to item (a) to consult with all interested parties on the layout of the stalls on the market square.

A recorded vote was taken for the amended item (a), which was as follows:

Votes for: Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr I Bond, Cllr M North, Cllr M Russell, Cllr Tim Woodward and Cllr D Strachan
Votes against: Cllr B Briars, Cllr P Biernis, Cllr F Foster, Cllr S Watkins, Cllr D Albone and Cllr G Wilson.
Abstained: Cllr M Foster

The Chairman Cllr H Ramsay used her casting vote for the proposal.

It was **RESOLVED** that consultation is to take place with the market traders, shop keepers and members of public in the Market Square and Hitchin Street about the current market being laid out according to the plan presented, with stalls on the Market Square itself and the south side of Market Street, with the parking spaces on the north side of Market Street.

In order to obtain opinions of the proposed plans a market stall is to be set up where councillors can hand out questionnaires. Cllr F Foster, Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr M North, Cllr D Albone, Cllr P Biernis and Cllr B Briars put themselves forward to help with the stall.

Cllr M Foster asked that questions are asked on a neutral basis.

Cllr B Briars mentioned it could be put online as well.

Cllr P Biernis said that no existing market traders should be forced to move on the Hitchin Street area.

Item 6d Dan Albone Car Park

It was **RESOLVED** that the matter should be taken forward with the Town Council's solicitor and take the final draft lease to the next available Town Council meeting.

Item 6e Christmas Lights

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr M North, Cllr I Bond, Cllr B Rix, Cllr M Foster and Cllr M Russell are on the working group.

Item 6f Pedestrian Crossing – Shortmead Street crossing

It was **RESOLVED** to investigate further the possibility of a crossing for Shortmead Street.

Item 6g Sun Street – St Johns Street One Way System

Councillors put together a list of items which they would like to be changed regarding the proposed no waiting restrictions put together by CBC.

The list is as follows;

Parking restrictions on both sides of the mouth of Fairfield Road

To introduce the weight limit of 7.5t after the bypass has opened

To allow a big enough turning circle on Rose Lane for busses

To investigate the timing on the traffic lights by Crab Lane in regards to cyclists

To relax existing parking restrictions

20mph zone on the Sun Street, St Johns Street and Rose Lane triangle

A vote was taken on whether a 20mph zone should be suggested to CBC where 9 voted in favour of keeping it in the list.

Item 6h Request to display model Funfair in aid of Great Ormond Street

Cllr M Russell informed council that the gentleman requesting to have the model funfair originally wanted it on Carnival day. However, there was no space for it but it was suggested to him that if he wished to display the model on another day this would be fine.

8. MATTERS ARISING

a. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 9 June 2015.

Cllr D Albone asked for a future agenda item on Maunder Avenue and the lack of footpath.

Cllr G Wilson asked if there had been any feedback from the Langford and Biggleswade Community Fund Group.

Mike Thorn replied that there has not been a meeting yet although one is planned for July.

Cllr M Foster asked if the member of public who asked about the safety of the fair equipment had received a response from the Town Clerk yet.

Mike Thorn could not confirm if a letter had been sent but stated that a risk assessment and appropriate checks had been conducted and that he had spoken with the member of public who raised the original question.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a. **CB/15/01983/FULL – 172 DROVE ROAD, BIGGLESWADE**
Single storey rear extension and rear dormer to loft conversion.

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 principal dwelling are complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

- b. **CB/15/01983/FULL – 8 ELY CROFT, BIGGLESWADE**
2 storey side & rear 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 principal dwelling are complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

- c. **CB/15/02064/FULL – 12 YORK CLOSE, BIGGLESWADE**
Demolition of existing and construction of new rear conservatory.

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 principal dwelling are complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

- d. **CB/15/01586/FULL – Rear of, 47 Potton Road**
Erection of two detached bungalows and detached garages.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** on the grounds of overdevelopment.

- e. **CB/15/02026/FULL – New Inn Public House, 16A Market Square**
Alterations to the existing garage to the rear of the pub. The existing door is to be removed and replaced with a window, a new double door opening to be created and 2 no. doors and an installation of an extract fan to create a micro brewery within the garage space.

A vote took place where 8 members had no objections, 1 wished to object and 2 abstained.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise **NO OBJECTIONS**.

- f. **CB/15/01293/FULL – Land East of Baden Powell Way, Biggleswade**
Construction of a new sewage pumping station with enclosure and 6m high telemetry mast.

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 principal dwelling are complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

- g. **CB/15/01959/FULL – 1E Winston Crescent, Biggleswade**
Convert rear part of car port to living accommodation insert one dormer window to front elevation & two dormers to rear elevations.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this application on the grounds that it would create parking problems in the area.

h. CB/15/02159/FULL – 60 Fairfield Road, Biggleswade

Two storey rear 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 principal dwelling are complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

i. CB/15/01013/FULL – 171 London Road, Biggleswade, Site of Former

Construction of 6 dwellings (social housing) and all ancillary works. Revised Plans: Street scenes & site plan, Scheme 1.3 PL-001.3 & floor plans and elevations, Scheme 1.3 PL-003.3.

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

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Bedfordshire Constabulary

Members to received Crime Figures from Bedfordshire Police.

Cllr G Wilson has made several phone calls and sent several emails to Sergeant Gary Kidd. He has also tried talking to the headquarters at Kempston who put Cllr G Wilson through to Peter Nouch at Ampthill, where he received no response. He said the actual reports do not add up and are confusing. Therefore, he recommended that the Town Council write a strong letter to the Chief Constable asking why there has been no response.

Cllr P Biernis was concerned for the rise in crime.

b. Full House Theatre

Cllr T Woodward suggested that they apply for a grant at the correct time as that is what the usual response is for those seeking funding.

Cllr M Russell explained that they are unable to do so as they would like to deliver the show in September before the grants are issued.

Cllr S Watkins asked if an exception could be made so that members could consider it now.

Cllr M North proposed Council reply to the Theatre Group saying that although they are sympathetic to the request, Council require more details on where and when it will be held, and what the group will be doing.

This was seconded by Cllr S Watkins.

Cllr D Albone said although we cannot provide a venue we could make suggestions.

Cllr B Briars asked for an assurance that if it is to be funded by BTC that it would take place in Biggleswade.

Cllr G Wilson also asked that the Council ask the group if this is a one off performance or an annual event.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will write to the Full House Theatre Group asking for more details on location, dates, content of the show and whether it is to be a one off.

c. Venue for Muslims in Biggleswade

Cllr T Woodward explained that he has met with those who are looking for the venue and has explained that money is not usually given to faith groups to build anything or fund the project. However, he has put them in touch with those who could possibly recommend accommodation to them.

Cllr M Russell said that it is not unusual for a faith group to have to rent somewhere and the money for the rent is usually generated by the members of the group.

Cllr M Foster believed that, although Cllr T Woodward had spoken to those looking for a venue, the Town Council should still send a response.

This was seconded by Cllr F Foster.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will write to the individuals informing them that the council is unable to provide funding or a venue for their group.

d. Appeal regarding site at 2 Wilsheres Road.

Cllr P Biernis asked why CBC would object to the application.

Cllr T Woodward explained that it most probably was due to the building regulations.

e. Town Centre Benches

Cllr F Foster believed that quotes should be obtained before winter to repair the benches in the Town Centre.

Cllr M Russell also believes that the benches should be maintained but the cost to have it done externally should be compared with the cost incurred if Town Council staff were to do it. She also believed that the Town Council should reclaim the Market Square.

Cllr T Woodward believed that there was a programme in place to refurbish the benches and Town Council staff were able to carry this out. He had mixed feelings on reclaiming the Market Square as there will be costs to incur and the market rent will not cover them. However, he could not see it being a problem trying to reclaim it as long as Town Council take on the costs as well.

Cllr M Russell said that the future of Century House needs to be found out. If the busses were to be moved then the space could be very useful.

Cllr F Foster proposed that in the short term the benches are rectified and that a dialogue is opened with CBC about the costs of the Market Square and the future of Century House.

Cllr M Russell seconded the proposal.

Voting was unanimous.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will rectify the benches in the Town Centre and that a dialogue with CBC is opened in order to discuss possible costs involved with reclaiming the Market Square and what is the future of Century House.

f. CBC proposal to introduce No Waiting and No Stopping – London Road, Biggleswade

Cllr G Wilson asked if this will be the entire length of London Road

Cllr D Albone replied that it would only be opposite Mantles.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objections.

g. Mobile Catering Unit – Pegasus Way, Stratton Business Park

Cllr M Russell said that we would need to be careful about the locations of caterers due to their being restrictions on caterers at the retail park. However this location served the industrial area.

It was **RESOLVED** that there were no objections from the Town Council for a mobile catering unit to be set up in Pegasus Way, trading Monday to Friday from approximately 6:30 – 15:00.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Planning application outcomes

A report detailing the outcome of recent planning applications was received and noted.

b. **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 – Section 53 – Claimed bridleway through the Crown Hotel, Biggleswade**

This was noted.

13. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

MOP 1 – Item 6 regarding the market – he suggested that the car wash could be used for parking on market day.

Cllr M Russell explained that the Council had already been in contact with the owners who declined.

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(s) is discussed.

Agenda Item (15a) – Minutes of Meetings

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.