

**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2015 AT
THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD
BIGGLESWADE**

Present: Cllr Mrs H Ramsay – Mayor/Chairman
Cllr Mrs M Russell
Cllr M North
Cllr P Biernis
Cllr D Albone
Cllr B Briars
Cllr G Wilson
Cllr Mrs W Smith
Cllr B Rix

Mr M Thorn – Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs J Durn - Minute Taker
8 Members of public (MOP)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr T Woodward, Cllr S Watkins, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr I Bond

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- (a) There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item
- (b) Cllr M Russell declared a Non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10b as she lives in Ivel Gardens.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor represented Biggleswade Town Council at the Civic Service in Leighton Linlade on Monday 8th February.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

MOP1: Is the press misinterpreting the Council view regarding Wetherspoons, as the implication is that the Town Council is objecting. Cllr H Ramsay said that the Town Council always welcomes new businesses, and all we wish to do is see that the right of way is sympathetically dealt with. We certainly do not have any objections to Wetherspoons opening.

MOP2: Regarding Item 10: Can MOP's also please have the supporting papers for the meeting electronically? This will be discussed in Agenda item 10.

MOP3: Regarding Item 10d: We would like to know how much Henry Harris pays to occupy the Market Square for the Fun Fair during Carnival week. The Deputy Town Clerk will take this question back to the Town Clerk.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

6. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr. G Wilson: Regarding Police Commissioner Referendum: Can we invite Police Commissioner Olly Martins to a Council Meeting. We understand that he is intending to hold a referendum on Polling Day to raise police precept to 15.8% in order to recruit another 100 police officers. We would like to invite him to explain this to us. We would also like to request the police financial accounts for the past two years.

Cllr. B Briars: Regarding trial of CBC Regulations for parking on paths and grass verges: This is particularly bad in the Stratton Road area. Can we please clarify the following?

- When did this trial start

- Where is it being trialled
- How is it being implemented and enforced
- What plans are there for expansion

Cllr P Biernis asked: Can we invite a member of the Highways team to a Council Meeting to discuss their plans for parking in Biggleswade.

This request will be taken back to the Town Clerk.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 January 2015 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr. Mrs M Russell asked for Item 9 paragraph 7: Planning Application for the Crown Hotel, is changed replacing “unless a large six figure sum is donated by Wetherspoons” with “. At the very least Wetherspoons should consider a large six figure sum“.

Cllr. Mrs M Russell asked for item 11b to be amended to read “Adam Turney”.

Cllr. Mrs M Russell asked for item 12b to be amended to read “A neighbourhood plan is required which can take years and also requires a referendum”.

Regarding Minute 13 Public Open Session: MOP asked for paragraph 3 to be changed to read “MOP3 – Town Issues are not properly publicised which can increase negativity”

Subject to the above amendments the Town Council **APPROVED** the Minutes of the 17 January 2015.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 January 2015

Regarding Minute 12a: Cllr P Biernis asked for an update on Biggleswade Town Council “calling in” planning to Central Bedfordshire Council. The Town Clerk has written and we are waiting for an update.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- a. **CB/15/00124/ADV – Biggleswade Retail Park, London Road**
Illuminated retail park identification totems and tenant sign panels

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** on the following grounds:

This is retrospective planning. The structures are already in place and “stick out like a sore thumb”. The Members felt that this has an overbearing effect; it is too large and too lit up. Strong objections were also raised to the name of “A1 Retail Park”.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked for the naming of the Retail Park to be put on the next Agenda for discussion.

- b. **CB/15/00148/FULL - 186 Drove Road**
Single 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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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/15/00137/FULL – 10A Lawnside

Demolish conservatory and re-build single storey rear extension plus other minor external amendments

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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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/15/00130/FULL – 16-18 Hitchin Street

Change of use from A1 to mixed A1/A3/A4. Currently empty unit, previously a bathroom showroom. We want to convert the empty unit into a Board Game Café which will include full café facilities, the ability to play and purchase board games and be fully accessible. The café will be licenced but only serve a limited drinks menu and only to those seated at a table.

This application has been withdrawn.

e. CB/14/04864/FULL – 109 London Road

Single storey ground floor extension. Approx 6m x 4.5m to rear of existing. Extent of building beyond existing ear wall 6m or less. Pitched roof.

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 Central Bedfordshire Council 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/14/04972/FULL – 18-20 Palace Street

Demolition of existing building

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that this building probably needs demolishing for health and safety reasons. She would also like clarification from Central Bedfordshire regarding the proposed development. Cllr. Mrs W Smith agreed that we would not want the building to be demolished and left in an undeveloped mess.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objections in this planning application.

g. CB/14/04363/ADV – Unit 2, London Road Trading Estate, London Road

Advertisement: various signs illuminated and non-illuminated

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **object** to this application on the same grounds as item 9a.

h. CB/15/00194/ADV – The Red Lion, 1 London Road

Advertisement: various signs illuminated and non-illuminated

The Members object to the signs, especially if they are lit. It was felt that too many black signs on a prominent white building do not fit in with the style of the conservation area. There was also objection to flood lights. The plans do not make it clear which way the flood lights will face, whether they light the building or the surrounds. We need to consider the impact on neighbours and the danger of distracting traffic. Further clarification is required.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this application on the above grounds.

i. **CB/15/00195/LB – The Red Lion, 1 London Road**

Listed Building: installation of various advertisement signs, illuminated, non-illuminated and flood lights.

The Members object to the signs, especially if they are lit. It was felt that too many black signs on a prominent white building do not fit in with the style of the conservation area. There was also objection to flood lights. The plans do not make it clear which way the flood lights will face, whether they light the building or the surrounds. We need to consider the impact on neighbours and the danger of distracting traffic. Further clarification is required.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this application on the above grounds.

10. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Local Government Electronic Communications England**

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government considering that the authorisation of the use of electronic communications, made and order that came into force on the 30th January 2015, the order is cited as the Local Government (Electronic Communications) (England) Order 2015. The Order applies to England only.

Schedule 12 to the Local Government Act 1972(b) (meetings and proceedings of local authorities is amended).

Where a member has given consent for the summons to be transmitted in electronic form to a particular electronic address (and consent has not been withdrawn), the agenda papers will be sent in electronic form.

Members will only receive summonses electronically where they consent to it being transmitted by this method and they may at any time withdraw that consent.

Members are asked to consider individually if they wish to consent to all committee and council agendas being sent in an electronic form, or members can carry on receiving the summons by post or by leaving it at the members' usual place of residents.

Members will have to consider if they wish to bear the cost of printing electronic copies.

A copy of the order is attached to this agenda.

It was suggested by the Members that perhaps it would be good to have a trial before going fully paperless.

Concerns raised were:

- To ensure adequate staff training on the sending out of scanned items
- The number of computer laptops being brought to meetings
- Do the Standing Orders allow for laptops at meetings
- Can this be trialled in tandem for two meetings to see if there are any problems

b. **Work to trees – 26 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade**

CBC has received an application to carry out work to preserved tree(s) as the above property. If Members wish to comment on the application, please do so in writing within 21 days of the date of this letter quoting the above application number.

A copy is attached to this agenda.

This was information was noted.

c. Biggleswade Town Cricket Club

At a meeting held on 4 February 2015 with Biggleswade Cricket Club, the Club highlighted various improvements that they are looking to carry out to improve the cricket facilities at Fairfield. The Cricket Club are working on a development plan and are keen to look at various grants that might be available.

To be eligible to apply for grants the Cricket Club are required to show security of tenure.

The Cricket Club ask if the Town Council can provide a letter to demonstrate that security of tenure exists, thus allowing the Cricket Club to pursue the various grants that may be available.

Members are asked to consider this request.

Cllr M North attended this meeting and was able to report that it was very interesting to hear the plans for developing facilities that are currently being worked on due to funding from the Lottery and other grants. There is no financial implication for the Council, and Cllr Mrs W Smith and Cllr B Rix pointed out that this group now has a large number of committed young people who should be supported and encouraged. The request to provide a letter to the Cricket Club to demonstrate that security of tenure exists was unanimously agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council provide a letter.

d. Request from Henry Harris

Correspondence has been received from Henry Harris requesting permission for hold the Fun Fair on the Market Square, Biggleswade during Carnival week 2015. He would like to set up Tuesday 16 June after 6.30pm, and open 18th, 19th, & 20th June. They will be off by 2.30pm Sunday 21st June.

Members are asked to consider this request.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that the only concern would be if these dates conflict with other activities such as the Farmers Market. The Deputy Town Clerk assured the Members that the dates do not conflict, and it was unanimously agreed that permission for the Funfair should be granted.

It was **RESOLVED** that Henry Harris be granted permission for the Funfair on the above dates.

a. Additional Allotment Land

The Town Council have been approached by Sue Murphy, Property and Assets Team at CBC, asking the Town Council if they would be interested in additional allotment land.

Any additional land would be wrapped up into the existing lease and any rent increase would be advised in advance.

The existing water supply could be extended by the Town Council if necessary.

At this stage members are asked only to register if they are interested in additional allotment land, if members register an interest further discussion will follow.

The Members would be interested in additional allotment land and would welcome a proposal so they can agree this formally.

It was **RESOLVED** to register an interest in the additional land.

11. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Further to Town Council meeting held on 13 January 2015 re Street names

Following the Town Council meeting of the 13th January 2015, where Council questioned why double barrelled names were not suitable as they do exist already. Also, why are Boyce, Holst & Byrd not suitable due to similarity of existing roads as the development is to the east and within a theme of names?

The following response has been received from Anne Smith, Technical Administrator, Building Control Regeneration and Business Directorate:

With regards to your query on unacceptable names please see the following excerpts from our street naming and numbering guidelines which have just been reviewed and updated:

Street Naming Protocols and Conventions

- *Street names with phonetically similar names will be avoided e.g. Churchill Road/Birch Hill Road and Willows Avenue/Winnows Avenue*
- *Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or awkward to spell*
- *All punctuation, including apostrophes, shall be avoided*

A copy is attached to this agenda.

The Members asked for further clarification as the information received does not clarify why double barrelled names are not allowed. Cllr D Albone gave an example of Vaughan Williams, which is not difficult to spell and has no punctuation.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to Central Bedfordshire Council and request further clarification.

b. Thank you letter

Correspondence has been received from Trinity Community Project, to thank Town Council for awarding them a grant.

A copy is attached to this agenda.

This letter was noted.

12. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

MOP1: Asked about the possibility of having the draft minutes in an electronic form.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that this was not possible due to the fact that draft minutes made recommendations and not decisions which may or may not go through to the next meeting. This would therefore be of no value.

MOP2: Planning applications – specifically regarding pavements: Does this Meeting consider this issue when reviewing plans; also does Central Bedfordshire Council consider the pavement issue as well. Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said that Council frequently on the grounds of access.

Regarding grass verges – for example Poppyfields. When walking in that area you have to walk on the grass verge. Can this be reviewed in detail in the future so that this situation can be avoided again?

Council have not had any complaints from the area you refer to. However, if the residents would like to write to Highways Department at Central Bedfordshire Council we are sure this is the best way to take this issue forward.

MOP3: What is the situation regarding the Crown Hotel Right of Way. Cllr M Russell said that Central Bedfordshire Council have been looking at evidence provided to support the right of way. We have been asking for help from members of the public who may remember dates from the past, to substantiate these claims. A meeting was originally being held at Central Bedfordshire Council to discuss this, but that was unfortunately cancelled by them and we have now been told that a decision will be determined by Planning Officers instead of coming to a Committee meeting.

It is important that the public are made aware of this because at the moment the Town Council is being wrongly blamed. Cllr Mrs H Ramsay will be providing a statement to be published online in order to clarify our position.

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(s) is discussed.

There were no exempt items for discussion.

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.

