

MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2015
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE,
SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

Present:

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay (Chair)
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr I Bond
Cllr B Briars
Cllr M North
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr G Wilson
Cllr D Albone
Cllr B Rix

Mr M Thorn – Biggleswade Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs J Durn – Minute Taker

2 Members of Public

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr P Biernis, Cllr Ms R Kerfoot, Cllr Mrs M Russell, Cllr S Watkins, 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 D Albone - Item 11i,
Cllr B Briars – Item 11i.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Christmas Fair and Lights – 20th November

The Mayor thanked the Councillors, BTC Administrative Staff and BTC Ground Staff for their extensive efforts in making the Christmas Fair a success.

4. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

- Members are pleased to note that the Council Meeting Agenda and attachments are now on the website and available to the public.

5. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no questions from the public.

6. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received the Minutes of the Council meeting held on the 10th November 2015 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

- **Page 4 item c: Planning Application CB/15/03377/VOC Biggleswade Retail Park, London Road.**

It was requested that in the case of a close vote the result of the vote should be recorded in the Minutes. The words “No Objection” can be misleading as in some cases it appears that all the Councillors are in favour.

- **Page 6 item 12: Public Open Session:**

Please delete the words “would not” from the second line as these have been typed twice.

Following these amendments the Minutes will be signed.

- b. Members received the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the Finance and General Purpose meeting held on 17th November 2015 at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr M North asked that Members be aware of the conclusions on page 4 of the Internal Audit which requires the Council to introduce a tender limit of £25,000 in its extant documentation and ensure that any such tenders are advertised accordingly in the appropriate Government Contracting website.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the **RECOMMENDATIONS** of the F&GP and accept the Financial Regulations presented.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

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

Page 4, Item 10a: Proposal for an FOI Request – Cllr B Rix:

Cllr B Rix wished to record that he was unable to attend the previous meeting and was unhappy that his agenda items went ahead for discussion without his attendance, as he felt these should have been deferred to the following meeting. The Chairman stated that she had been informed that Cllr. Rix had spoken to the Town Clerk prior to that meeting and that no request for a deferral had been received.

However, in his absence the Members did discuss this item and resolved that the Town Clerk would write to CBC with the concerns expressed. The Town Clerk is awaiting a response.

Page 4, Item 10c: Request for proposed sign from Rotary Club of Biggleswade:

The Deputy Town Clerk has heard from John Scott of the Rotary Club regarding alternative suggestions for a suitable location for the Rotary sign. Stratton House Hotel have given permission for the sign to be placed either on the wall of the hotel or on the fence within their boundary wall.

Page 5, Item 10d: Century House – Property Maintenance:

No update is available as no further information has been received as yet.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. **CB/15/04057/FULL – Cherry Trees, Kitelands Road, Biggleswade**

Change of use from residential institution (C2) to residential (C3) to create ten new flats.

Planning application previously went before Council on 27th January 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council **OBJECT** to this application until questions have been clarified to their satisfaction 1) that the ownership of the car park marked blue on the plans is confirmed; 2) if the number of residences is increased to ten that there will be sufficient spaces for each residence; and 3) that the use of the flats is established, i.e. whether residential or special needs. The Town Clerk will write to CBC to obtain these clarifications.

b. CB/15/04108/FULL – 19 Ripon Court, Biggleswade

Timber outbuilding for use as a beauty and wellbeing business ancillary to the dwelling.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this application providing that clarification is obtained from CBC regarding the possible existence of a Covenant on that land which would preclude the setting up of a business. The Town Clerk will write to CBC to request this information.

c. 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.

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

Outline: B1, B2 & B88 use employment development with associated infrastructure and ancillary works; all matters reserved except means of access. (Amendments)

Planning application previously went before Council on 8th September 2015.

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.

e. 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.

f. CB/15/03897/FULL – 5 The Avenue, Biggleswade

Single Storey rear extension to dwelling.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may have are considered by CBC in their deliberations. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guideline on the size of the proposed dwelling is complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

g. CB/15/04136/FULL – 123 Dells Lane, Biggleswade

Single storey front extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may have are considered by CBC in their deliberations. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guideline on the size of the proposed dwelling is complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

- h. CB/15/03565/FULL – 57B & 57C London Road, Biggleswade**
Extension to ground floor office (57B) and first floor dwelling (57C). (Amendments)

Planning Application previously went before Council on 13th October 2015.

When being asked to consider Amendments, Members would like to request more specific information be supplied in order that they can make a more informed decision. Councillors requested that the vote of 8 in favour with 2 abstentions be recorded in the Minutes.

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/15/04105/FULL – 19 Anderson Road, Biggleswade**
New conservatory to the rear of the existing dwelling.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may have are considered by CBC in their deliberations. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guideline on the size of the proposed dwelling is complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

10. ACCOUNTS

a. Financial Administration

Members received the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31st October 2015.
- ii. Summary of Income & Expenditure.
- iii. Current Bank Account, receipts and payments to 31st October 2015.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to the adoption of the above accounts.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Bedfordshire Constabulary

Members received and **NOTED** the Crime Figures from Bedfordshire Police.

b. Bedford College Student Achievements Ceremony 2015

Members were asked to consider sponsoring Bedford College Student Achievements Ceremony 2015. The deadline to sign up as a sponsor for Bedford College Student Achievements Ceremony 2015 is Wednesday 25th November. In return for supporting the event, Bedford College offer you an acknowledgement in the Awards brochure and Biggleswade Town Council will also receive a VIP invitation for the event.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise **NO OBJECTION** to sponsoring this event and that a cheque for the amount of £50 be sent in support of our sponsorship.

c. Biggleswade Police Station

Cllr D Strachan asked Members to consider the future of Biggleswade Police Station.

Cllr G Wilson has spoken with Sgt Gary Kidd regarding the future of Biggleswade Police Station and has been informed that the Station is closed to the public and now houses the Police Complaints Division. The Police presence will consist of police travelling from Shefford to Biggleswade in order to patrol the area. There will be no active police presence at Biggleswade.

Concern was expressed by Members that the views of Biggleswade Town Council regarding policing have apparently been ignored.

A proposal was made to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable referring to the article in the local press and asking for clarification of the situation. Also expressing our concerns that the Town Council has not been informed of these proposals and nor have they received any notification of changes being made to Biggleswade policing.

An amendment was made to this proposal that a letter be written to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable to ask for updated information on the future of Biggleswade Police Station. There have been reports in the local press but the Town Council have not yet received any official information to allow them to review these plans.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable with this request.

d. **Standing Orders**

Members were asked to adopt the Standing Orders with the following amendments;

16a *"To receive and record apologies from members not able to be present and to note absent members from whom no apology has been received".*

16e *"To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes for the public to put questions through the Chairman relating to matters listed on the agenda. Each speaker will be allowed (one) three minute slot and will give their name to the chairman prior to speaking and that their name is recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise*

16n *"To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes for the public to put questions to the Chairman, each speaker will be allowed (ONE) three minute slot and will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking and that their name is recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. (Revised Standing Orders attached).*

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **APPROVE** the revised Standing Orders.

e. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Sun Street, St Johns Street, Rose Lane, Crab Lane – Biggleswade – Proposed Temporary One Way Order**

CBC has notified Town Council that they have received a request for a Temporary Road Closure at the above location, to enable the installation of a gyratory system.

The closure will take place from 5 December 2015 18.00 – 0.00 and again 6 December 2015 08.00 hours to 18.00 hours.

This information was **NOTED**.

f. **Correspondence received from Local Retailer regarding the bridge closure**

Members considered the a letter received from a local retailer listing numerous concerns regarding the impact that the closure of the railway bridge in the High Street will have on local businesses, including parking, accessibility and trade.

It was **RESOLVED** that a written response be sent to express Council sympathy and support in this matter, and to inform the Retailer that we will ensure their correspondence is forwarded to CBC for their attention.

It was **RESOLVED** that this item regarding the effect of the bridge closure on local traders, be put on the next Council Agenda, and that an invitation be issued to all local shop owners/traders to invite them to a separate meeting in order to discuss their concerns and to give them CBC contact details in order to address these issues directly.

g. Internal Audit Report 2015-16 (First Interim)

Members considered the Internal Audit Report 2015-16 (First Interim)

This information was **NOTED**.

h. Proposed Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders – High Street, the Baulk, Chestnut Avenue, Back Street, Station Road, Biggleswade

Members expressed many concerns including the already current traffic problems at the junction of EFR and Drove Road, the availability of parking spaces, and the access to the White Hart car park which appears not to have been considered.

A proposal was made to ask for clarification of these points from Gareth Hughes, Network Co-ordinator at Central Bedfordshire Council, followed by an amended proposal to ask for written confirmation that information given at the Biggleswade Joint Committee is correct.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk write to CBC to obtain this confirmation.

i. Budget Overspend

The Budget overspend is £6,300.37 and Members were asked to consider the additional £4,829.42 required for further works to replace the 3 columns in Drove Road and Dells Lane.

It was confirmed that BTC currently own approximately 200 lampposts and CBC own approximately 1200 in Biggleswade. BTC is not currently in receipt of a maintenance programme from either CBC or the maintenance company, which we understand is covered by Amey. Members suggested that we obtain a list from Amey showing those lampposts that they consider to be a priority.

The overspend of £6,300.37 was **NOTED**.

It was **RESOLVED** to proceed with orders for the additional work at a cost of £4,829.42, to request that these works are carried out as soon as possible and to write to CBC to ask them to provide a list of work that they consider requires urgent attention within the next year.

j. Works to a tree protected by a Preservation Order: Fell one Copper Beech tree located as in the location address.
Location: Land to front of 8 – 22 London Road, Biggleswade

CBC has notified Town Council that they have received an application to carry out work to preserved tree(s) at the above property. If the Town Council wish to make a comment regarding these works, please do so by 27th November 2015.

This information was **NOTED**.

k. Parking Restrictions – Mallard Walk

Cllr B Rix informed the Members that he has received a letter from a resident of Mallard Walk raising concerns that they had not been included in the parking consultation. Cllr Rix was asked to contact the resident to discuss BTC forwarding his letter to CBC with a covering letter from BTC

It was felt that there may have been some confusion with the parking restrictions in nearby Sandpiper Close, which will be subject to parking permits. There are no restrictions being placed on the "Birds" Estate. Once the final Consultation is complete, the residents affected will receive a letter.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Planning application outcomes

A report detailing the outcome of recent planning applications is attached to this agenda.

This information was **NOTED**.

b. McCarthy & Stone proposal for former Travis Perkins site on Shortmead Street

McCarthy & Stone, developer of retirement apartments, will be holding a public exhibition to display the proposals for the site's redevelopment with a mix of one and two bedroom properties. This exhibition is to take place on Wednesday 25th November 2015, between 3pm and 7pm at the Chapter House Rooms, St Andrew's Church, Shortmead Street. The Town Council have also received an extended invitation to attend a stakeholder preview session which will take part at the same location between 2pm and 3pm.

This information was **NOTED**.

c. A1 in the East of England

In December 2014 the Government published its Road Investment Strategy including proposals for a number of strategic studies across the country, one of which was to examine the economic case for improving the A1 in the East of England. Work on this study had now commenced and is expected to complete in Autumn 2016.

BATPC received an invitation from the Department of Transport for one County Association representative to attend the first A1 Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting on 23rd September. A report from Cllr Mrs M Russell, the County Committee representative who attended the meeting is attached to the Agenda.

Members felt there are ramifications for the Town; in particular there is no mention of unsafe footpaths which cross the road. Cllr Mrs M Russell will keep us informed of progress.

d. Potton Road Informal Crossing Point

Central Bedfordshire Council has written to notify the Town Council that the works associated with the delivery of the Potton Road informal crossing point will commence on Saturday 21st November 2015 for two weekends.

"The purpose of the scheme is to provide an improved crossing facility in the vicinity of bridleway 9/footpath 30 to the northwest of Potton Road, connecting to the Green Wheel and routes to Edward Peake School and town centre to the southeast. The crossing point will include kerbed build outs similar to those provided on Drove Road in order to decrease the distance pedestrians need to cross the carriageway and to improve the conspicuity of the feature to approaching motorised road users. Vehicle swept path analysis has been carried out to ensure large vehicle types can negotiate the feature and pass opposing stationary vehicles.

These works will complement the improvements to be delivered as part of the adjacent development where additional crossing points, bus stops and footway works will be provided.

Traffic management whilst the works are being carried out are as follows;

*Saturday 21st – 2 way traffic lights
Sunday 22nd – 2 way traffic lights
Saturday 28th - Road closure
Sunday 29th – 2 way traffic lights*

During the works, we will liaise with the site supervisor of the BERR to ensure there are no conflicts in positive traffic management".

It was pointed out that the Town Council has previously raised concerns that given the increase in housing under development, the current speed limit in this area is not sufficient and should be changed from 40mph to 30mph.

e. **Updates**

1. London Road Bridge Works – Updates from CBC are attached to the Agenda
2. Crown Inn – Public Consultation: no further update has been received.
3. Parking Consultation – Town Council responses to on Street parking proposals, returned on the 28/10/15.
4. Eastern Relief Road – update 03.10.15 - We are in the final stages of inspections with Highways.

The RSA3 is scheduled for 11th November 2015 and depending on what that brings up the road will open. The target date of Friday 13/11/2015 has now passed. We have no further information at present.

5. Century House maintenance works. (No update).

f. **Draft Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee**

Members received the draft Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee held on the 26th October 2015.

Members who attended the BJC were disappointed to note that the Minutes did not reflect the full content of the meeting, and that this should be brought to the attention of the Chair.

There are particular concerns regarding the manner in which CBC are managing the negotiations with Network Rail over the impending bridge work. No Senior Managers attended the BJC, and it was felt that they should have been at the meeting in order to explain why they were unable to negotiate more strongly on our behalf.

There were also concerns that there were footpaths on either side, but not actually across the bridge. Members asked that a letter be written to CBC to request a temporary pedestrian bridge.

Members requested that the attendance list for the BJC Minutes be altered in order to clarify which of the actual Committee Members and Subs are entitled to vote and to make those who attended as non-voting committee members easier to identify.

These concerns will be taken to the next BJC.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

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

Comment was made by a member of public regarding lampposts – who said he recalls that a considerable number of the old concrete lampposts had been condemned many years ago.

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.

Exempt Items (**RECOMMENDATIONS**)

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.