

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JUNE 2012 AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

Present: Cllr T Woodward (Chair), Cllr Mrs J Lawrence, Cllr D Lawrence, Cllr Mrs W Smith, Cllr G Wilson, Cllr P Woodward, Cllr P Vickers, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr I Bond, Cllr Mrs M Russell, Cllr D Albone (arrived late), Cllr B Briars, Cllr R Skinner
Rob McGregor – Town Clerk
Sue Crowther – Administrative Assistant
Sam Caldbeck – CBC
Adrian Clothier – Beds Highways
Martin Thomas – Chamber of Trade
Members of the public - 7

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr S Watkins.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(a) Prejudicial interests in any agenda item – there were no prejudicial interests declared.

(b) Personal interests in any agenda item - Cllr PF Vickers registered an interest as a member of the Central Bedfordshire Management Development Committee in respect of planning applications listed on the agenda.

Cllr P Vickers declared a personal interest in items 4c as 6g as listed on the agenda.

Cllr I Bond declared a personal interest in items 4c and 5c as listed on the agenda.

Cllr P Woodward declared a personal interest in item 4c as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs W Smith declared a personal interest in item 4c as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay declared a personal interest in item 4c as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs M Russell declared a personal interest in item 4c as listed on the agenda.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence declared a personal interest in item 4c as listed on the agenda.

Cllr D Russell declared a personal interest in item 4c as listed on the agenda.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Cllr P Vickers left the Chamber at this point.

Ms D Kenny gave the following information in relation to item 4c as listed on the agenda - planning application CB/12/01511/LB - 2 – 6 High Street, Biggleswade.

I have been involved in Yoga for Health and would like to establish a Yoga/Meditation/Pilates centre in Biggleswade in the old Whiteman building, to include ground floor access for the less able bodied.

In consultation with Robin Uff Conservation Officer a C.B.C works are being carried out to stop the building falling down as the building is in a precarious state and needs essential repairs. Traditional materials are being used for the repairs.

The hairdressers will stay and the plans will be amended to suit, the café will come later, this will be a vegan and vegetarian café to promote healthy eating.

People want more facilities and the plans are to run evening classes, classes for mothers and babies and I ask for Councils support.

There are 2 car parks in Shortmead Street, perhaps a 3 hours limit could be imposed on both car parks.

Cllr P Vickers returned to the Chamber.

a. INVITED SPEAKER

Adrian Clothier – Bedfordshire Highways and Sam Caldbeck - CBC – re improvements proposals for Hitchin Street, Biggleswade.

The Hitchin Street project is one of the Masterplan's key projects. It proposes improvements to public realm on Hitchin Street from the Market Square to the junction with Mill Lane with the introduction of shared space principles. These improvements will be designed to introduce a more comfortable and more attractive area for shoppers, residents and businesses. It uses finance from both the Local Area Transport Plan budget and S106 funding.

Key area 3: Hitchin Street

Improve the physical appearance and vitality of Hitchin Street as part of the growing town centre and to provide good links to Franklins Recreation Ground from the Market Square.

This project is linked to Key area 4 (Bonds Lane and Foundry Lane areas) and Key area 5 (Franklins recreation ground and river lvel).

This project was identified as requiring LAMP support as far back a 2010 and the current work was initiated by Council officers during November 2011, at which point ward members were consulted on scheme principles and key points of contact in the local business community. Cllr's David and Jane Lawrence were identified as scheme champions and key liaison points. Initial designs of the proposed improvements have been produced and are in process of being refined following consultation with the scheme champions. It is envisaged that public engagement including workshops with local businesses will follow agreement with ward members, champions and the Town Council on draft scheme components beginning early in 2012/2013.

SC said that Hitchin Street will be single level shared space, 3 metres wide for traffic and there will be provision for on street parking. The lighting is to be upgraded to match the existing heritage style lighting.

SC said that they plan to use money effectively and hope that businesses will invest as well.

Cllr P Woodward asked if there would be markings to define the carriageway as it could be a hazard for young children

AC replied that there would be colour contrast not kerbs and by removing vehicle dominance, speed will be reduced.

Cllr D Albone asked how the proposed cycle way would fit in with this scheme.

AC replied that as far as he is aware this scheme does not support or prevent a cycle way, this would require signs and these are not included in this scheme.

Cllr Mrs M Russell said that she was glad to see this plan, she is in favour of shared spaces, it would be better on a single level and asked how many extra parking spaces would there be in Hitchin Street.

AC replied that there would be 2 or 3 extra spaces.

Cllr B Briars asked what would stop cars parking on the paths and could there be markings.

AC replied that some schemes allow this; we can introduce a T.R.O. with entry signs showing that it is an enforcement area.

SC said that issues could be addressed in the future.

AC said that enforcement could be done by the mobile traffic car.

Cllr R Skinner said Bonds Lane at the entrance to Hitchin Street is a dangerous corner is this going to be improved.

AC replied that the visibility is restricted by the building line, but carriageway narrowing should allow cars to edge out further, it will be an improvement on what we have at the moment.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked that if cyclists are going to be mixed in with pedestrians and cars, there would need to be a notice to say 'Shared Space'. She has the same concerns as Cllr P Woodward and asked about more definite shades to separate the carriageway and pedestrians.

AC replied that it would still rely on people's judgement and mannerisms, the speed limit would be 20mph.

SC said that it is designed to encourage people to slow down through use of materials.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay said the road could be closed down initially as in Luton and eventually opened for vehicles.

AC said that the road would be closed for the works to be carried out.

SC said that we could be creative and close for other use such as themed markets etc.

AC said that more pedestrians take ownership of shared space the more vehicles slow down.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence said that businesses are struggling as Hitchin Street is not part of the town, it would be better to make all one place, and it could be used for the market etc. People will need training on the new idea for Hitchin Street and asked if more of a contrast could be made between the road and pedestrians, traffic has to be aware of pedestrians in a shared space. This is phase one there will be more in future plans to clear street furniture.

Cllr Mrs H Ramsay asked how many market stalls would it be possible to get in the shared space.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence suggested we would get more stalls this would require permission from Peacock's to use the area in front of the store and a road closure from C.B.C.

Cllr D Albone said that the shared space needs to clearly show where cars go as on the plan it looks like both the Carriageway and the footway are the same colour.

AC replied that it would be same material, on one level, the blocks will be laid differently on the carriageway.

Cllr D Albone said that pedestrians should take precedent.

Cllr D Lawrence said that this is Phase 1 on the Town Centre Master Plan and hoped that there is nothing incompatible with other phases.

Cllr Mrs W Smith asked if this 1st phase would be completed in financial year.

AC replied that it would.

Martin Thomas, Adrian Clothier and Sam Caldbeck left the Chamber.

At this point the Mayor, Cllr T Woodward said huge 'thank you' to Town Council staff for all the time and effort that went into organising the Jubilee Fun Day on 5 June, it was great for Biggleswade.

Cllr Mrs J Lawrence said to thank the Committee involved.

4. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/12/01775/FULL – 178 London Road, Biggleswade**

Demolition of rear conservatory; erection of 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 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. Town Council ask that CBC monitor carefully the impact on the adjoining property.

b. **CB/12/01962/VOC – Georges Hall, 67 High Street, Biggleswade**

Variation of condition nos 3 & 8 on planning permission CB/09/00938 dated 11/12/2009.

Condition 3 to be varied to: The use hereby approved shall not be brought into use until the Noise Control Scheme Report Ref: 12049-002 (Philip Acoustics Ltd, April 2012) has been implemented in full. Thereafter the scheme shall be retained in accordance with those details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Condition 8 to be varied to: The premises shall only be open to the public between the hours on 08.00 and 01.00hrs Monday to Saturday and 08.00hrs and 00.00hrs Sundays, Bank or any other Public Holidays and at no other time without prior written agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council raise no objection to the variation to **Condition 3** but **OBJECT** to the revision of **Condition 8** and **INSIST** that the opening times are in line with other establishments in the town and close no later than **MIDNIGHT.**

Cllr P Vickers left the Chamber whilst the following planning application was discussed.

c. **CB/12/01511/LB – 2 – 6 High Street, Biggleswade**

Part demolition of rear outbuilding, reconstruction of outbuilding including pitched roof, construction of external staircase within courtyard, change of use to part first floor and ground floor to holistic health centre, change of use part ground floor from residential to commercial café kitchen use, change of use from hairdressing salon to hot food café and refurbishment various elements of building.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council put a **HOLDING OBJECTION** on this application subject to more information being received on the following concerns.

- More information is requested about the status of the rear outbuilding that is due for part demolition.
- Parking
- Amount of footfall
- Change of use of the building
- Logistics of partitioning the building
- Traffic
- Size of the project
- Inappropriate next to St Andrews Church
- Hot food will need an extraction system

Town Council request CBC **PUT A HOLD** on work that has already commenced.

A COPY OF THE REPLY FROM CBC WAS ON DISPLAY IN THE CHAMBER.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this planning application. Whilst Town Council welcomes development of the building, request that the applicant submits a **REVISED PLAN.**

Cllr P Vickers returned to the Chamber.

- d. **CB/12/00730/VOC – Land South of, Potton Road, Biggleswade**
Amended description – The applicant has sought consent for conditions 32 & 33 of planning permission reference MB/03/01205/OUT dated 13/11/2006 to amalgamated & varied.

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

- e. **CB/12/01120/FULL – Eagle House, 135 Potton Road, Biggleswade.**
Change of use from offices with car park to single dwelling with minor fenestration changes.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council raise no objection to this planning application **PROVIDED** that where the fenestration is overlooking neighbouring properties, they must have obscure glass and be fixed windows.

- f. **CB/12/01837/FULL – 5 Railway View, Lawrence Road, Biggleswade.**
Single storey extension to the existing out building structure at the bottom of the garden.

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 principle dwelling are complied with in order to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents. Town Council ask that CBC monitor carefully the impact on the adjoining property.

5. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Hear2Listen – request for office space**

Hear2Listen is a new youth counselling service being set up in Biggleswade, it is a Community Interest Company (CIC) specializing in early interventions and will be offering counselling to young people between the ages of 12 and 25.

They are looking for office space for the delivery of their services and ideally would like two small rooms where one to one counselling can take place and create a safe space for young people to call their own being able to walk in.

It was **RESOLVED** to give the £400 outstanding from the Grant allocation, to help look for alternative premises. Town Council has no suitable office space to offer.

b. **Leisure Strategy Introduction**

Central Bedfordshire Council's Leisure Services has recently embarked on the production of a suite of documents which together will comprise a comprehensive Leisure Strategy of the whole of Central Bedfordshire. Members were invited to comment.

It was **RESOLVED** that Town Council write to CBC to let them know that the information in the documents does not reflect the true situation in Biggleswade. The Data source used for this document is not wholly accurate. The Town Council feels that Stevenage Leisure is not treating the general public as priority when running the swimming pool in Biggleswade. Town Council would like to be involved in discussions with Stevenage Leisure when their contract is due for renewal. C.B.C is asked to provide the Town Council with an asset register of all facilities in Central Bedfordshire in order that a true comparison can be made.

c. **Request from Biggleswade History Society**

Flutters Bingo took the Green Heritage plaque down when the building was decorated and have not replaced it. Flutters say that they have now lost the plaque.

The History Society has written to them requesting that the plaque be replaced at their own expense and Flutters have offered £20 towards the cost.

The History Society is asking if Town Council would write to Flutters to request that the plaque be replaced and that Flutters bear the cost.

It was **RESOLVED** that a letter is sent to Flutters requesting they replace the Heritage plaque at their own expense.

6. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Various, Biggleswade

CBC has notified Town Council of temporary road closures at Apple Close, The Dells, Cedar Avenue and Fairfield Road between 1 and 31 August, to enable thin surfacing works to be carried out in safety.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

b. Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Langford Road, Biggleswade

CBC has notified Town Council of temporary road closure of Langford Road, Biggleswade on three periods of up to 3 days during July, August and September to enable surface and dressing work to be carried out in safety.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

c. Thank you letters received

Thank you letters were received from various organisations who are in receipt of Grants from Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

d. Biggleswade History Society newsletter

Town Council has received copies of Biggleswade History Society Newsletters for April and May, they were attached to the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

e. Street Naming and Numbering – Land South of Potton Road.

CBC has confirmed postal addresses for 103 dwellings – Blocks 25, 26, 29,34 and 36 – Land South of Potton Road and a copy was attached to the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

f. Members' Customer Service Bulletin for 23/04/2012 – 20/05/2012

A copy of the above has been received and is available for Members to view in Town Council office.

g. CB/TCA/12/00159 – Notification of tree works in a Conservations area: Cut back roots of Elm Tree growing under the boundary line from the Conservative Club. 6 High Street, Biggleswade.

CBC has received the above application and a copy was attached to the agenda.

It was **RESOLVED** that this be noted.

7. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Cllr P Vickers left the Chamber whilst Ms D Kenny addressed Members in support of her planning application – 2-6 High Street, Biggleswade.

Cllr P Vickers returned to the Chamber.

A member of the public asked if there had been any progress on the new Town Council website.

Cllr T Woodward replied that Town Council is having trouble getting responses from companies who have been asked to quote.

A member of the public asked if improvements to Hitchin Street would affect the current two way system in Bonds Lane.

Cllr Mrs Wendy Smith replied that the improvements would have no effect on Bonds Lane traffic flow.

8. 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.

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.