

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICES AND MAINTENANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 13TH DECEMBER 2006**

PRESENT

Mr. Wren presided over Mesdames Harrison and Clark, Messrs. Mackin, Dear, Coward and Rance.

1. APOLOGIES

Mrs. Reddick.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. PRECEPT – 2007/8

The precept in respect of the Services and Maintenance committee was established and as such is **RECOMMENDED** to full Council.

4. PROPOSED TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE

Information received from the County Council's Highways Technician has indicated that three temporary road closures will take place between 15th January 2007 to 26th October 2007 on the UC130 and the A600 to Ireland. Two closures are required for patching works and the third closure is for surface dressing. The closures will take effect between 0830hrs and 1500hrs.

5. COPY OF SAMPLE LETTER FROM AMEY'S TO RESIDENTS re BUS STOP IN AMPHILL ROAD

A new bus shelter is to be erected outside No. 31 Amphill Road. This will involve the loss of 7 metres of parking area in the layby. Those residents that will be inconvenienced by the works are to receive a letter from Amey's informing them of the situation. The committee has received a copy of that letter and agreed for it to be distributed accordingly.

6. PLAY AREA INSPECTIONS

A further months Play Area Inspection Reports have been received from the contractor. These were read out to the committee and any remedial works were noted accordingly.

7. HIGHWAYS REPORT

The November report for highway repairs has been received from the County Council. Those items appertaining to Shefford were noted.

8. RESPONSES FROM BEDS C C OFFICERS – RE HIGHWAYS/PAVEMENTS

Letters of response have been received from both the Leader of the County Council and the Assistant Director of Highways and Transport in answer to the Council's concerns over the dilapidated state of the town's highways and pavements. The committee felt that the replies did not fully answer the committee's concerns and so a further letter is to be compiled by this committee which is to be ratified at the next meeting of the Finance and Policy committee.

9. E:MAIL FROM KNOWLES BENNING RE CONIFER TREES, NORTH BRIDGE STREET

A response has been received from the Council's solicitors regarding the conifer trees in North Bridge Street. The solicitor advised that the Council should be guided by the insurance company. The clerk was instructed to write to the insurer's accordingly.

10. QUOTES FROM CONTRACTORS RE CONIFER TREES IN NORTH BRIDGE STREET

Two quotes have been received from contractors regarding the reducing in height of the conifer trees in North Bridge Street. One quotation was accepted but authorization for the work can be carried will have to be obtained from the Council's insurers.

11. BEDFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

An e:mail enquiring about performance of both the Highways Helpdesk and the Highway Area Team in relation to the above has been received from the County Council. The clerk is to complete the questionnaire based on his experience over the last twelve months since Amey Infrastructure Services took over the highway maintenance contract.

12. BEDFORDSHIRE HIGHWAY DESIGN GUIDE

A copy of the above draft document has been received from the County Council. Mr. Mackin agreed to study the document and advise the committee of any relevant points.

13. DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENTS

The Countryside Access Service of the County Council has forwarded a copy of The Definitive Map and Statements for the Former Biggleswade and Sandy Urban and Biggleswade Rural Districts as at 10th November 2006. The map supersedes all previous copies and can be used as a reference for public rights of way. The Shefford branch of the P3 group is to be informed.

14. CONSULTATION-CORPORATE STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE - BEDS C C

Several information packages and questionnaires relating to the above have been received from the County Council. It was decided to issue the packages to members of the Over 60's Coffee Morning Club for completion prior to returning them to the County Council.

15. FOOTPATH 3 – IVEL CHANNEL

The Rights of Way Officer – Ivel Area, has informed the committee by e:mail that his department intends to extend the surfacing of footpath 3 alongside the Ivel Channel from the Millenium Bridge (due north of Bliss Avenue) eastwards to the junction with footpath 12 that runs southeastwards to the cul de sac in Ashdown Road. The officer has also indicated that he would welcome a financial contribution from the Town Council. The committee is to reply that although they welcome and appreciate the intended works and would like to contribute, they are unable to offer financial assistance due to additional increases in their annual expenditure e.g. the recent acquisition of the public conveniences from the District Council and the costs incurred by the current weed removal programme in the town which had previously been carried out by the County Council.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The County Council is to be contacted to enquire as to what their intentions are regarding the footpath between Cornish Close and Lucas Way.

County Councillor Mr. Younger is to be contacted about the possibilities of implementing a one-way traffic system in New Street.

Concerns were raised about inappropriate parking in Lucas Way. PC Busby is to be contacted to see if any vehicles are actually causing an obstruction.

The committee has received information that squatters are now occupying 136 Amphill Road. It is understood that Beds police are aware.

It has been noted that motorbikes are speeding along New Street and into Mallard Close via the footpath. Unfortunately no registration numbers have been obtained.

Concerns were raised about the safety of the support poles used for the Christmas lights display as they appear to have a lot of movement in the current high winds. It is understood that although the poles do have a lot of movement they are up to the required standard and are perfectly safe.

It has been noted that flooding has occurred on Duck Lane car park which may be caused by blocked drains. The Highways Department is to be contacted about the possibility of carry out a jetting operation.

It was suggested that because of the recent increased rainfall it might be a good idea to resurrect the Council's flood plan. Mr. Mackin explained that the plan is fully up to date and the Town Council's role is only to offer facilities and assist those authorities that have a more direct responsibility.

Concerns were raised about the reduced visibility splay caused by the recently erected builder's hoardings which surround the premises of the white house at the Ivel Road/Clifton Road junction. PC Busby is to be contacted to see if any remedial action can be taken.

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.