

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 31ST AUGUST 2007

PRESENT

Mr. Mackin presided over Mesdames Harrison, Clark, King and Reddick. Messrs. Fisher, Dear, Smith, Pollard, Leith, Coward and Wren.
District Councillor Chapman, PC Busby and PCSO Keen.

1. APOLOGIES

Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Gray, County Councillor Younger, District Councillors Messrs. Birt and Brown.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 27th July were confirmed and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

None.

5. POLICE REPORT

PC Busby reported that in general the incidents of crime and nuisance behaviour in Shefford for the month of August were reasonably low.

PC Busby also offered information regarding the incident at Waterside on 10th August. At first it was thought that travellers were 'scouting' for a new place to settle. However, PC Busby's understanding of the situation was that only one member of the group turned into Waterside from the Bedford Road to allow his horse to get a drink from the river while his fellow travellers carried on to the traffic lights. All travellers then met up again and continued on their journey. Overall it was felt that if the travellers had intended to settle there, then the police action had warned them off anyway.

At this point, the Mayor informed the members that the Town Council had subsequently sought advice from the Environment Agency as to their requirement for vehicular access to Waterside and further information was still being collected with regard to erecting gates, bollards or whatever else was required there. The subject will be further discussed at the next Services & Maintenance meeting on 12th September and a Risk Assessment regarding any other possible sites in the town that could attract traveller's attention is to be carried out.

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed members that on 12th September there would be a hearing at the District Council's offices regarding the Tesco Stores alcohol licensing application.

On 5th September the Planning & Environment committee will be having a meeting with the District Council's Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Development Control Officer. It is anticipated that numerous topics will be discussed including enforcement, building on floodplain and the proposed Tesco retail development in the High Street. Mr. Mackin said that although it was a Planning meeting, members from other committees were invited to attend.

The Mayor finished by saying that with reference to the forthcoming Tesco Licensing hearing, he has several sets of questionnaires and copies of the MBDC Licensing Policy if anybody required them.

Mr. Mackin also outlined details of an incident on 24th August whereby mud from the wheels of HGV's working on a development in Ivel Road had covered part of the road causing a possible skid hazard to other vehicular traffic. Mr. Mackin attempted to contact the Planning Department of the District Council in order to ascertain the planning conditions of the development. When he contacted the D C's offices at 2.15 p.m. he was informed that there were no Planning/Enforcement officers on site due to the forthcoming holiday period. Bearing in mind that the office should be open until 4.00 pm, Mr. Mackin decided he would make a formal complaint. He then contacted Beds police to seek their assistance in remedying the 'mud on the road' situation in Ivel Road.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Letter from MBDC informing members that the Audit Commission has judged them as 'good'.

7.2 Invitation to a Green Infrastructure Plan Workshop – 25th September from 7.30 – 9.30 pm at the Biggleswade Baptist Church.

7.3 Mid Beds Forward Plan – 1 September to 31 December.

7.4 Information from the C C regarding the NIRAH Application for a Science Research Park and associated matters.

7.5 Invitation from the BRCC to attend an evening entitled 'Youth Engagement' on Wednesday 14th November 7.00 – 9.00 pm at Cardington Village Hall.

7.6 Invitation to the AGM of the BRCC – 12th September at 7.30 p.m. Derwent Lower School, Hitchin Road, Henlow.

7.7 Copy of Youth Participation Members Training Feedback from MBDC

7.8 Various publications : Beds-Spread – July & August, Horizon, Local Counties Update, BRCC Network, Fieldwork from CPRE, Local Council Review.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no committee reports during August. Mr. Mackin, Mrs. Harrison & Mrs. Holmes reviewed and commented on all Planning Applications received during the month.

1550 : 8/2007

9. COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

This could not be given as Cllr. Younger was unable to attend the meeting.

10. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr. Chapman informed those present that the County Council had registered an objection to Central Bedfordshire being awarded Unitary Status. He said at the very least this would delay matters but the D C would continue to deliver services for the next two years. Bearing this in mind the D C would need to know what roles/responsibilities Town and Parish Councils would or would not like to take on.

A policy on 'Play' was currently being considered with a possible lottery grant of up to £200,000. Any monies allocated to a town or parish could be used towards either new play areas or updating an existing one.

Determination the Center Parcs Planning Application will be announced in September.

Cllr. Chapman further added to the comments of the Mayor and PC Busby regarding the travellers at Waterside. The DC's Home Environment Team had visited the site on two occasions but could not take action until there was actually some activity on site. However, the team was aware of the situation and as such were prepared to act at the first onset of a problem as they now had a lot of information based on their experiences from previous incidents of this kind in the mid-Beds area.

11. ACCOUNTS

The Accounts as listed in the Minute Book were approved for payment.

12. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public advised the members at the very onset of a situation of mud on the road i.e. Churchill Way, the Town Council should immediately contact the developer and make him aware of any such situation as it was their responsibility to remove it.

It was noted that if Tesco's were granted a licence to sell alcohol up to midnight then this would allow anybody leaving a public house after closing time to purchase further supplies which could potentially have an adverse effect on the lives of the residents in and around the area.

A question was asked as to whether or not any further traffic calming measures were to be carried out in Clifton Road. Overall this would be a County Council issue but the Town Council did not think it was likely at the present time.

A further question was asked about the 7.5 tonne lorry restriction in the town. The Mayor answered the question in full and further added that a delivery lorry could travel along Churchill Way and enter the town as long it was making a delivery.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.