

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 23RD
FEBRUARY 2007**

PRESENT

Mr. Mackin presided over Mesdames Harrison, Clark, Holmes and Reddick. Messrs. Dear, Gray, Coward, Steeples, Fisher, Wren and Rance. District Cllr. Brown, County Councillor Younger and PC Busby.

1. APOLOGIES

Mr. Leith and District Councillor Birt.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 26th January were confirmed and signed.

4. MATTERS ARISING

None.

5. POLICE REPORT

This was given by PC Busby who listed the various categories of recent crime statistics which had taken place in the town and gave outline details of one or two crimes that hadn't yet appeared on the Crime Sheet.

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Once again the Mayor informed those present that there was still a need for more volunteers to help with the Summer Gala either on the day or the period leading up to it.

Enquiries are to be made for a more permanent 'home' for the various artifacts which had been rescued from the town's forge.

The Mayor outlined the outcome of a meeting that he and other members of the Services and Maintenance committee had recently had with Basil Jackson, the Assistant Director of Highways and Transport at the County Council. The meeting was deemed to be fairly successful and ended with Mr. Jackson informing members that he was committed to look at several areas of concern with particular regard to the state of highway and pavements in the town. Over the next three weeks the committee will survey various areas of the town with a view to passing the information on to Mr. Jackson who in turn has promised to deliver an 'action plan' by way of answers.

Members were informed that the County Council had issued a document entitled *AllTogetherBetter: A County Unitary Proposal for Bedfordshire* which can also be viewed on their website. The document gives information on their County Unitary Proposal and it is anticipated that the Government's preliminary response to it will be announced in late March. The Mayor informed members that if they had any thoughts or comments to make on the proposal he would pass them on to the County Council.

The Mayor also informed members of a meeting organized by the District Council entitled '*Closer to Communities.....capacity to deliver* which will give attendees an opportunity to discuss their proposals regarding Unitary Government in Bedfordshire and how the proposals might affect Town & Parish Councils. The meeting will be held in the Council Chamber at Priory House, Chicksands on Wednesday 14th March 2007 at 7.30 p.m. The Mayor urged as many members as possible to attend.

Mr. Wren gave a brief outline of the progress of the Summer Gala. At present there are 8 vehicles for the parade but as yet a marching band still has to be found. Application forms for stallholders etc. should be available in the next 7 days or so. Mr. Wren also stated that any volunteer help would be very welcome.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Mid Beds District Council Forward Plan 1st March 2007 to 30th June 2007.

7.2 Reported Crime Incidents – January 2007.

7.3 A letter from the Shefford Community Hall Trustees thanking the Town Council for buying the *Toledo Rangemaster* cooker for the newly refurbished kitchen.

7.4 A letter from English Heritage informing members of their proposals for Wrest Park now that the Silsoe Research Institute had vacated the premises.

7.5 Outdoor Access Improvement Plan 2006-2011 – Beds County Council.

7.6 Various Publications : Bedfordshire, The Playing Field, EEAPTC News, Local Councils Update, Get Out – Beds C C, Beds-Spread, Bulletin 32 Standards Board for England, Issue 43 Commen Tree, Mid Beds Local Strategic Partnership Newsletter 2006/7, Enjoy England, Looking Good April 2007 – a newsletter to provide information about Comprehensive Performance Assessment from Mid Beds District Council's CPA Project Team.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following were adopted :

Planning and Environment of 7th and 21st February 2007.

Services and Maintenance of 14th February 2007.

Finance and Policy of 21st February 2007

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9. COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr. Younger informed those present that the County Council's proposed budget increase is likely to be 4.3%.

Information received suggests that most Government money is more likely to be spent in the north of England rather than in the south.

The County Council's Unitary bid had been well received by Whitehall and formed just one of 21 bids received by them. It is understood that Central Government is likely to accept 8 to 12 councils as a unitary authority.

10. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr. Brown underlined the Mayor's request in urging as many members as possible to attend the '*Closer to Communities.....capacity to deliver* meeting at Chicksands on 14th March.

The Mid Beds trial waste food programme will be going ahead and will include some areas of both Shefford and Flitwick.

The paving slabs are to be removed from the front of the Indian Chef Restaurant and Kingsmede and replaced by tarmac. Five blue bollards will then be installed past the restaurant as far as the traffic lights to avoid inappropriate parking. The work should be started on 19th March.

It is predicted that the Mid Beds District Council's budget for the year 2007/8 will be increased by 4.9%.

It was reported that Shefford is in the top ten nominations for a new surgery. Planning permission for a new surgery in Hitchin Road was granted at the end of 2005. The Town Council's Planning and Environment committee will draft a letter in support of a new surgery for the town at their meeting on 7th March 2007.

11. ACCOUNTS

The Accounts as listed in the Minute Book were approved for payment. However, it was suggested that the cheque made payable to the Shefford Scout Group for the delivery of the Shefford Newslime magazine should be temporarily withheld due to the fact that residents in several areas of the town still hadn't received their copy some 4 weeks after the Scouts had received delivery of them from the printer.

12. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Highways Department of the County Council is to be contacted as it was reported that the Vehicle Activated signs in Amphill Road and Bedford Road still weren't functioning efficiently.

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It was reported that a wooden pallet had been thrown into the river in Southbridge Street causing debris to accumulate round it. The Environment Agency is to be contacted to remove both pallet and debris as a matter of urgency.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.
