

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2007

PRESENT

Mr. Mackin presided over Mesdames Harrison, King, Holmes and Reddick. Messrs. Gray, Dear, Smith, Coward, Steeples, Leith and Pollard.
County Councillor Younger, District Councillors Chapman and Brown. PC Busby.

1. APOLOGIES

Mrs. Clark, Mr. Fisher and District Councillor Birt.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

At this point the Mayor welcomed Mrs. T Martin and Mr. P. Patmore who arrived to receive the OVFFF Cup. The Cup had been previously donated to the Town Council by Mr. and Mrs. Fisher and is awarded annually to one female and one male resident in recognition of the good works they had carried out for the benefit of the town. Mrs. Martin and Mr. Patmore were thanked for all the work they had done in the town after which they left.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of 28th September 2007 were confirmed and signed subject to the inclusion of two topics omitted from Item 12–Public Question Time (1565 : 9/2007)

It was agreed to discuss the effectiveness of PCSO's at the Finance & Policy committee.

It was agreed to discuss the possibility of having a local referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty with a view to requesting the District Council to organize it on behalf of the Town Council.

4. MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM

None.

5. POLICE REPORT

PC Busby reported on incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour in Shefford for the April to October period.

Under a key individual network, Beds Police will be looking for 20 volunteers in Shefford and District who will be issued with a quarterly questionnaire to complete regarding various matters of concern.

PC Busby also reported on an incident in Ampthill Road whereby a motorist failed to stop when requested to do so by the School Patrol Officer. The motorist was subsequently apprehended and as he did not have appropriate documentation his vehicle was impounded.

Residents in Clifton Road are to be issued with a letter advising them about the nuisance caused by inappropriate parking. The area adjacent to the Woolpack P.H. is a particularly hazardous area.

The County Council is to be asked if they are prepared to fund Vehicle Activated signs in Northbridge Street and South Bridge Street with a view to enforcing the existing 20 mph speed limit.

6. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mayor informed those present that the Annual Remembrance Service will be held on Sunday 11th November and unless otherwise instructed the parade will form in Old Station Way at 10.15 hrs. Those people who don't wish to march to the War Memorial may join the rest of the group there. Any donations towards a wreath should be given to the clerk.

The Mayor is currently compiling the Christmas card list and so if anybody knows of any groups or organizations that should be included they should let him know.

The Big Picture event went very well on 26th October and will continue to run on 27th October. Its purpose is to show what services are available to Shefford Community members and any Councillors that have some free time on the Saturday to meet the public will be very welcome. The Tesco Express store has been very generous with a considerable donation of refreshments and raffle prizes. The Mayor said he was disappointed to note that hadn't been any representation from the County Council's Youth Service although the Aragon Housing Youth Service was well represented.

There was no report on the progress of the Gala as Mr. Wren was unable to attend the meeting.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Recorded Crime for Shefford April to October 2007.

7.2 E:mail from Leader and Chief Executive MBDC re 'Update-Local Government Reorganisation/Unitary Authorities in Bedfordshire.

7.3 E:mail from Head of Libraries, Beds C C and forwarded to the Town Council from Cllr. Younger giving information that Shefford Library will be closed on Monday 19/11 and Tuesday 20/11 due to building work being carried out directly outside the library entrance. The building works are not associated with the library.

7.4 Mid Beds Forward Plan – 1 November 2007 to 29 February 2007.

7.5 A letter from Transportation Manager Beds CC informing the Town Council that Beds Highways is drawing up a Countrywide Freight Study to address the sorts of concerns that they have particularly with regard to Bedford Road and Stanford Road. A further letter informing the Town Council that Government guidelines issued this year asked Highway Authorities to review speed limits on all A and B class roads within their jurisdiction. Beds C C will also review existing speed limits through villages on minor class roads. It is anticipated that the work will commence next April and the Town Council's concerns regarding Shefford – Bedford Road and Stanford Road in particular -will be considered during the review.

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7.6 Various publications : The Playing Field, Local Council's Update, Horizon, Beds-Spread, Wootton's What, Where and When of Waste, September 2007, Ways to Tackle Climate Change from Defra.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following were adopted :

Planning and Environment of 3rd and 17th October 2007.

Services and Maintenance of 14th October 2007.

Finance and Policy of 17th October 2007.

9. COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr. Younger requested that as many Councillors as possible should attend the meeting on 1st November at the Rufus Centre in Flitwick. The meeting offers an opportunity for people to ask questions of both Beds police and the Chief Constable who will also be present.

There will be a new recycling plant sited in the Mid Beds area. Undoubtedly the cost of such a plant will be very costly but at the moment it still has to be agreed by all relevant authorities.

Tesco Stores still maintain that they are interested in having a store in the High Street and it is understood that the Mid Beds M P, Nadine Dorries, will be meeting Tesco's Chief Executive in the near future. Major works are to be carried out on their Flitwick store which is likely to delay any progress on the possibility of the Shefford store.

Cllr. Younger informed members that he had written to the Royal Anglian Regiment on behalf of the County Council and as a representative of the people of Bedfordshire to thank the servicemen for their recent tour of duty in Afghanistan.

10. DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

Cllr. Chapman informed members that the D C had received many complaints about Customer Services particularly regarding response times. Recommendations have been passed to the Executive and it is hoped that things will improve.

The D C is to make further progress regarding their initiative to put empty homes back into occupancy.

Cllr. Chapman will be meeting both the Leader and Deputy Leader of Postwatch to ascertain their views on recent post office closures. It is thought that the Shefford Post Office is unlikely to close as it serves such a wide area. However, if any surrounding post offices were to close it would undoubtedly generate even more traffic.

It is understood that Tesco's are actively pursuing the purchase of land that they would need in order to operate a retail store in the High Street but it should be noted that they are experiencing a degree of difficulty with some of the land areas they would need.

There will be a preview of the anticipated works to Tesco's Flitwick store in Flitwick's Central Library. Eventually Flitwick will have an extremely enhanced town centre which will include the railway station area.

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Cllr. Brown informed members that he had attended three meetings dedicated to waste and waste recycling. At the present time there are three preferred sites being considered but it would seem that one site in particular is more significant than the other two. It will be up to the consultation process to make the decision in due course.

Bio-degradeable bags will be issued to residents shortly and the D C will be having meetings with the Aragon Housing Association to ascertain the waste processes they intend to use.

Food waste will be separate as there is now more money available from Government.

11. ACCOUNTS

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

12. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Comments from members of the public that the 'Big Picture' event had been a great success.

A question asked about the possibility of a Traveller's Site in Arlesey. Cllr. Brown explained that as yet no sites had been allocated but Mid Beds D C had been asked to provide information on parcels of land that could potentially be used as a Traveller facility.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.