

Minutes of an **Interim Council Meeting** of Buckingham Town Council held at 7.20pm., following the Public Session, on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014** in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham.

Present: Cllr. T. Bloomfield  
 Cllr. H. Cadd  
 Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins  
 Cllr. P. Collins  
 Cllr. J. Harvey  
 Cllr. P. Hirons  
 Cllr. D. Isham  
 Cllr. R. Lehmann  
 Cllr. A. Mahi  
 Cllr. Ms. R. Newell  
 Cllr. L. O'Donoghue (Mayor)  
 Cllr. M. Smith  
 Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark  
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury

Also attending Mr. C. P. Wayman (Town Clerk)  
 Mrs. K. McElligott *for the Committee Clerk*

#### **459/14 Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors M. Try and W. Whyte.

#### **460/14 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **461/14 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 (IM/02/14) ratified at Full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> October 201 were received and accepted.

#### **462/14 Public Toilets**

The Town Clerk updated Members with his email to Andrew Grant, CEO of AVDC and the response received from Mr. Jon McGinty, Deputy CEO, and a conversation with the agents for the sale of the land behind 13 High Street. The agents were still seeking bids for the land, and had set a cut-off date at the end of the month. Mr. McGinty had been more concerned with the safety and insurance aspects of the proposed site than with the putative access to the land; AVDC might incur 'vicarious liability' if they permitted a dangerous crossing point to be created. The Clerk also pointed out that expert opinion from the County Council had been noted and the plan amended accordingly. However, the Town Council was willing to consider alternative sites for suitability. He had also asked whether the risk to pedestrians of the current link to the Heartlands, via the entrance road to the car park had been assessed.

462.1 (420.1) To receive a verbal report from Cllr. Stuchbury, following a brief report made to the Planning Committee on the District Councillor meeting re public toilets held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October.

Cllr. Stuchbury said that the District Council had changed its opinion since the meeting, from exacting the maximum pecuniary benefit for ratepayers to the dangers of siting the toilets on the opposite side of the road to where the majority of

users would be. It had been estimated that the Council could have charged £200,000 for access to the land behind. Other figures quoted in the meeting were years out of date; he had asked whether these costs had been diligently re-examined, and if planning permission might be granted for development of the site, which was all in the floodplain. If the corner site was not safe for pedestrians to cross, how could it be safe for vehicles? The Town Council had also proposed a safe footway linking the bridge to the Heartlands to the site, where pedestrians could cross in safety with a view of traffic both in and out of the car park, endorsed by BCC. There was an existing access into the site; a second was unnecessary. He was disappointed that the meeting discussed at length the discarded proposal to extend the Community Centre to include Shopmobility as well as toilets, with the Town Council taking on responsibility for both. This would lengthen the time before toilets were available, and increase the costs; this was not acting in the best interests of the people of the Vale, and was contrary to their previously held view.

462.2 The Deputy Town Clerk had provided a written report and historical review of the current situation.

Members discussed the matter at some length, pointing out inaccuracies in AVDC's response, and recalling the reasons why the extension plans had been abandoned. The use of the recent successful Access Event to criticise the proposal was condemned, particularly as the occasion had showed up the deficiencies in the design of the Moreton Road conveniences. Accusations of 'predetermination' of the application were linked with the various impediments presented by AVDC; Councillors also asked why AVDC had sited the recycling bins there, if the corner was so dangerous.

Discussion moved on to the New Homes Bonus funding, and the Clerk was asked to investigate how much of the total was generated by development in Buckingham. The total of NHB bids received this cycle was less than the funding available, so all bids could be covered, though decisions had to be ratified by the Cabinet (in private session).

Members considered the Recommendations in the Deputy Town Clerk's report; Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Cadd, and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** that the planning application should proceed, and the proposals for modular toilets on the shrub bed and the extension to the Council Chamber be rejected.

With reference to consideration of an alternative site adjacent to the bus stand in the High Street by North End Court, and authorisation of expenditure of £200 to facilitate this:

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Hirons, that this be retained as a fall-back position should the application be refused for valid planning reasons;

Amended by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Lehmann, that the decision be postponed until the outcome of the planning application is known;

Amendment agreed by 12 votes to 0, 2 abstentions; this then became the substantive motion, and was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Members agreed that the item be the subject of a press release for the information of residents, for whom decent toilets were a major issue.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

#### 463/14 **BMKALC (request from Cllr. Harvey)**

To arrive at a Council view on whether we approve or disapprove of the motion / direction of travel put forward to the EGM of BMKALC – and agree who should be our delegates (one voting, one non-voting) to the meetings on Friday 7 November. The agendas for the AGM & following EGM with a position paper, plus the Constitution, had been circulated with the agenda for Members' information.

Cllr. Harvey outlined the situation at BMKALC and the reasons for him having resigned in July. The governance was in a state of disarray, inaccurate minutes were not always corrected and reissued, and the last quarterly report had essentially been two sides of A4. The calling of the EGM was unconstitutional; one of the reasons given was that the constitution was 'in flux'; an implausible description – a constitution, once agreed, could only be changed by formal procedure.

Of the budget of £114,000, largely sourced from parish subscriptions, MKC and BCC, £77,000 was allocated to staff salaries; AVALC existed on a few hundred, largely used for room hire.

In answer to a suggestion, the Town Clerk pointed out that secession in favour of direct membership of NALC was not possible, as NALC was effectively a federation of the County Associations, though there was currently some discussion on this subject.

Cllr. Stuchbury recommended that a letter be sent to BCC's Chief Officer with these concerns, copied to Cllr. Chilvers for the Finance Committee. Scrutiny may find that this was not the best use of officer time. Cllr. Harvey said that this should await the outcome of Friday's meeting(s) and highlighted that BMKALC was a body separate from the CC. This was agreed.

It was agreed that Cllrs. Harvey and Hiron represent the Council at the AGM, and the EGM if it followed as proposed. **ACTION CLLRS. HARVEY AND HIRONS**

#### **464/14 Consultation from Bucks County Council**

To receive and discuss a consultation on spending cuts, and agree a response.

Proposed by Cllr. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. Smith, and **AGREED** that no response be made to the consultation as it was a cosmetic exercise; the decisions would be made without reference to the responses, as had happened previously. A letter would be sent separately explain this.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

#### **465/14 CPRE**

To receive notice of the branch Annual General Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

Noted.

#### **466/14 Chairman's Announcements**

None.

#### **487/14 Date of next Meetings:**

Full Council	24 <sup>th</sup> November 2014
Interim Council	22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2014

Meeting closed at 8.15pm

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....