Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Friday 17th December 2021 at 16.00hrs in the Council Chamber at Shefford House, 15 High Street, Shefford, SG17 5DD or viewed using www.zoom.us

Present: Cllrs Ken Pollard (Chair), Rene Madsen, Tony Dawson, June Wischhusen and Roger Fowler.

One member of the public.

Town Clerk: F Fitch.

On Zoom: Cllrs Paul Mackin, Den Fensome, Elsa Tattersfield, Lisa Hayes and Fred Wilson.

Ward Cllr Anthony Brown and one member of the public.

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllrs Jez Perkins, Nicola King and Steve Nash, and Ward Cllr Mark Liddiard.

2. **Declarations of interest:** There were no interests declared other than those already noted in the Standing Committee minute numbers 3155 12/21 and 3158 12/21.

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 26th November 2021 were approved and signed by the Chair. The Zoom recording of the meeting was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Matters arising**
   No matters arising.

5. **Public Question Time**
   Jane Wilkins raised concerns about planning application CB/TRE/21/0622 for works to a tree in her garden that was supported by the Council (resolved by Delegated Powers in the meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held on 1st December 2021). She highlighted the inaccuracies in the application, including: the address/Tree Preservation Order location was stated as Flat 1, when it is in fact 35 High Street; the Tree Preservation Order is located in a Conservation Area, although the application states it is not; and the applicant is not the owner of the tree, although they state they are. She asked for support in her objections to the work as she felt that it was an important, very old tree in Shefford, a managed veteran tree that had been reduced in size in 2018 following discussions with Lodge Park; the tree is surveyed on an annual/biannual basis and these works are not supported/recommended by any tree survey, and may be detrimental to the health of the tree. Great care was taken to ensure the tree fitted into this residential development during the planning stage and any further work would not solve what she thinks as the problem, which is that people don't like parking their vehicles under the tree (three or four parking spaces are affected).

AB affirmed he will ensure that the application is withdrawn, and a new application is submitted with the correct details, including the address and location. He will also make it known to Central Bedfordshire Council that the Town Council had supported the application on the grounds that the applicant was the owner of the tree. KP confirmed that Jane Wilkins would be notified when the new application is received so she can make representation to the Planning and Highways Committee when it is reviewed.

6. Central Bedfordshire Council

AB reported that both blue town entry signs in Bedford and Stanford Roads require attention and will be removed and repainted early in the new year.

The deadline for the consultation on various traffic waiting restrictions throughout the town is 30th December 2021. The full list of parking restrictions has been emailed through to the Clerk.

Yesterday AB witnessed the contractor starting the reinstatement of the grass verges on Ivel Road. The works will include laying new topsoil, reseeding and rolling. The contractor intends to complete the works by Christmas.

The Town Centre Regeneration Scheme is progressing, and Central Bedfordshire Council Officers have met with contractors to walk the areas within the scheme.

The upcoming schedule for footpath reworks includes Ashdown and Bury Road from 3rd February to 9th March, and Hitchin Road up to the roundabout from 15th to 24th March. Also, the replacement sign on the Hitchin Road new roundabout should have been installed.

AB gave an update on the Schools for the Future including; the confirmation on the new school to be built on Hitchin Road, but, as yet, there has been no confirmation on the changes to the Samuel Whitbread or Robert Bloomfield Academies. To accommodate the introduction of two-tier working, a meeting between Central Bedfordshire Council and BEST Academies is anticipated before the end of January 2022. AB has requested a meeting prior to that to be briefed with Ward Cllr Mark Liddiard.

Ampthill Road traffic calming audit was carried out on 12 October; any recommended modifications will be implemented as soon as possible.

Central Bedfordshire Council are currently working with Shefford Sports Club and the Shefford Town Memorial Association to improve their facilities for public use

PM reported that he had met with Police Constable Bignall at Bedford Road to discuss the speeding issues. PC Bignall will be arranging for speeding measures to be undertaken including: monitoring by a local Speedwatch Team, review with Central Bedfordshire Council Highways Engineers regarding moving the 30mph speed limit sign to facilitate monitoring vehicle speeds; provide the Council with information on speed indicator signs that are suitable for installation; and make an application for a further speed volume survey to be conducted. AB will follow up on these undertakings.

7. Crime

There was a total of thirty five offences recorded for the full month of November; only the first twenty five days of the month were recorded at the last meeting. This was an increase of eight offences committed: three assaults without injury; three instances of

making off without payment; one instance of public fear, alarm or distress; and one instance of trafficking drugs.
For the first sixteen days in December there were fourteen offences reported including: two instances of assault; four instances of theft, burglary, or robbery; one instance of criminal damage; two instances of making off without payment (both from Ivel Road); one instance of vehicle crime (interfering with a motor vehicle); two instances of malicious communications, public fear, alarm or distress; and two sexual instances.

8. Town Mayor's Announcements

The report was distributed to Councillors and included: the progress of the replanting of the brick planter in Pamoli Square; the success of the Town Carol service, which was held outdoors on the market square and raised £150 for Christian Aid; a possible additional allocation for Shefford from the underspend of the Welcome Back Grant funding; the Keech Hospice 'Bob Sleigh' ride around Shefford, with thanks given to the Biggleswade Ivel Rotary Club, Robert and Gary Dear, James Morris from Branching Out, and all the other volunteers who helped make the evening a success; thanks to the Christmas Lights Committee for the wonderful display of lights this year; and the Mayor's attendance at events (excluding normal council meetings) in December 2021.
Thanks were given by PM to all the volunteers who were involved in the Keech sleigh ride around Shefford, in particular, the Town Clerk and Leslie Fitch.

9. Shefford Youth Involvement

The Christmas Youth Activity programme was distributed to Councillors. The programme will be held over five days: Monday 20th December to Thursday 23rd December, and Wednesday 29th December to Thursday 30th December. It has been promoted on the Council's social media and in the Town and Hub noticeboards. Some of the activities have limited places, but most of the activities do not require prior booking, children can just turn up and attend the session. Mid-Beds Futsal have donated £401, raised through holding an eight week course of adult training sessions, to fund additional activities for young people delivered by the Youth Involvement Team. It is the intention of Mid-Beds Futsal to run further courses of these training sessions, initially set up to help people struggling through the COVID crisis, and make regular donations to fund youth activities with the proceeds.

10. Planning and Highways

A report on the committee meeting held on 1st December 2021 was approved for publication on the website.

11. Services and Environment

A report on the committee meeting held on 8th December 2021 was approved for the publication on the website, and the five recommendations were approved as follows:-

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for a Tree Safety Survey reinspection to be carried out by Maydencroft Ltd in Waterside, The Meads, Drovers Spinney and Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an order to be raised to Plantscape for the summer 2022 hanging basket display (the same quantity of baskets as displayed in 2021), with a red, silver, white and blue 'Platinum Jubilee' theme for the planting.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an order to be raised to Branching Out Tree and Garden Services for the winter works in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green including: tasks detailed in the management plan for the site; removal of self-sets, stump grinding, and crown reduction of trees on the land leading from Tippetts Drive; the clearance around the tree behind the basketball net; and removal of all the diseased ash trees in the set aside area (ash dieback disease).

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an order to be raised to 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to clear all the overgrown vegetation on the far section of the Tippetts Drive footpath leading to Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to continue to provide the grass cutting service on Council owned parks and open spaces, and the town's grass verges (roads as specified) for the 2022 and 2023 growing seasons. The specification has been amended to include additional grass cutting tasks in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.

12. Finance and Strategy

A report on the committee meeting held on 15th December 2021 was approved for publication on the website, and the six recommendations were approved as follows: -

Following a manual inspection of the memorials, recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for the repairs/refixing of twenty-five memorials found to be unsafe in the new part of the cemetery. An instruction for the works to be carried out by a NAMM registered Memorial Mason will be made once permissions have been received from living grave owners, where applicable.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an order to be raised to Reynolds Landscaping Services to supply, lay, roll and level a fine layer of crushed aggregate over the car park and around the Chapel, including the removal of any debris on the car park surface, and repairs to the grass edges at the rear of the Chapel.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to carry out the Grounds Maintenance Service, including the cutting of the hedges for the years: 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023; and 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an order to be raised to 2 Elms of Shefford Gardening Services to carry out the edging of the grass along the hard surfaced pathways through the cemetery.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for all the documents relating to Campton Burial Ground and Campton and Shefford Cemetery to be retrieved from the Bedfordshire Archives.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for the approval of the draft budget, and the precept for the year ended 31 March 2023 to be set at £358,780.

13. Town Clerk's Report

The report was distributed to Councillors and included: the Shefford Greenspace Conservation Group working party on Saturday 4th December, and the next planned working party on Saturday 29th January 2022; a round-up of other events in December; the imminent start of the refurbishment of the toddler play area at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; the closure of the office over the Christmas period; and thanks given to members for their support and cooperation during 2021.

14. Accounts

The list of payments from 1st to 15th December 2021 was circulated to Councillors and approved. The list of payments for the whole month of December will be circulated to Councillors at the end of the month.

Meeting closed 17:00hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held on 5th January 2022 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

Present: Cllrs Fred Wilson (Chair), Roger Fowler, Ken Pollard, Rene Madsen and June Wischhusen.

Town Clerk: F Fitch and C Quinlan (Admin Assistant)

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllr Paul Mackin.

2. **Declarations of interest:** none declared.

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 1st December 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Public Question Time:** no questions received.

5. **CB/20/04642/OUT, CB/21/04443/FULL and CB/21/05198/FULL**
   It was reported that the resolutions made by the Delegated Powers for planning applications CB/20/04642/OUT, CB/21/04443/FULL and CB/21/05198/FULL were as follows: -

   CB/20/04642/OUT
   Land to the rear of 201 to 228 Shefford Road, Clifton, SG17 5QS
   Proposal: Demolition of 210 Shefford Road and associated outbuildings and erection of up to 29 dwellings (Class C3) and provision of associated public open space, with all matters reserved except for access.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to object to this application on the following grounds: -

   The pedestrian/cycleway access to the rear of houses in Bury Road and Clifton Road will be detrimental to those property owners, creating a noise nuisance, litter and security issues.

   The planning application should include a formal pedestrian link from the north west section of the site through to Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; thus ensuring this does not become an informal desire line as it is the direct route to Shefford Town Council's award winning Green Flag site, Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.

   The outline planning application should include the small parcel of unregistered land to the northwest of the site as whilst the land is not under the ownership of the applicant, it has been maintained by them and will undoubtedly be developed in the immediate future; we do not feel that lack of ownership should preclude this parcel of land being excluded from the application, and can only presume it is to minimise future S106 contributions.

The vision splay onto Clifton Road should be extended to take into consideration the development's proximity to the busy access route for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic to the nearby Samuel Whitbread Academy, and the BEST nursery sites. It is also noted that the access proposed should be used to service this development only, and any adjacent future developments should be provided with a separate access route.

If Central Bedfordshire Council are minded to grant planning permission for this development, the above amendments would need to be made, together with S106 contributions towards the infrastructure for Shefford to reflect the additional loading on our community. Residents of this development, although in the Parish of Clifton, are closer to the Town of Shefford, and would utilise and access facilities/services and infrastructure in Shefford as opposed to Clifton. This would include schools, the health centre, rights of way (the footpath network linking to the centre of Shefford), highways, sports and leisure provision in Shefford (outdoor gym provision at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green), play provision (Bellcote Meadow Play Area), and parks and open spaces provision (Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green).

It was also noted that thought should be given to the relocation of the community boundary between Shefford and Clifton Parishes to partly include the 'Green Corridor' between the communities. Shared ownership would help to ensure that this is maintained.

CB/21/04443/FULL
The Railway Steamer, Clifton Road, Shefford, SG17 5AH
Proposal: Demolition of the existing building. Erection of two storey building which comprises retail units on the ground floor and residential flat on the first floor with associated private car parking spaces.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application with the following conditions/comments: -

It should be designed such that access/egress for the delivery vehicles can be achieved using forward gear only.

It is noted that the proposed building is encroaching on the residential property to the left hand side (1 Hyde Close) and should be sited further to the west.

From a safety viewpoint, it is desirable that the main entrance to the convenience store should be sited to the front of the building, rather than on the service road.

A simple cycle rack/hoops would suffice the needs of customers.

The goods entrance side door should open inwards otherwise there is a risk of collision with pedestrians on the service road footpath.

CB/21/05198/FULL
26 George Street, Shefford, SG17 5BS
Proposal: Erection of a two storey side and rear pitched roof extension following demolition of existing outbuilding to the side and rear of the property.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application.

6. Plans for Consideration

CB/TRE/21/00652
12 Hitchin Road, Shefford, SG17 5JA
Proposal: Works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order MB/01/00013/G1: trim overhanging branches to Oak Tree T3.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to object to this application on the following grounds: -

The branches of the tree are not significantly overhanging the adjacent property.

The tree does not obscure light from the adjacent property

The tree is not interfering with any other trees.

The tree has a high landscape value as it is located along one of the main routes into the centre of Shefford.

Due to its situation, the tree cannot be considered in isolation; similar works will need to be carried out to adjacent trees in order that the area is balanced from a landscape point of view.

7. Bus Shelters
A request from the Passenger Transport Service at Central Bedfordshire Council to upgrade the poster case displays on the two bus shelters on Ampthill Road (junction with School Lane) was reviewed.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to agree to the upgrade of the poster case displays in a portrait style.

Meeting closed 16.11hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Services and Environment Committee held on 12th January 2022 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

Present: Cllrs June Wischhusen (Chair), Jez Perkins, Ken Pollard, Rene Madsen, Tony Dawson, Paul Mackin, Den Fensome and Elsa Tattersfield.

Town Clerk: F Fitch and C Quinlan (Admin Assistant)

1. **Apologies:** none received

2. **Declarations of interest:** none declared.

3. **Minutes**
The minutes of the meeting of the committee on 8th December 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording of the meeting was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Public Question Time:** no questions received.

5. **Communications**
It was reported that the articles for the spring edition of Newsline (number 108) will be passed to Character Press tomorrow for editing and publication.
We have been approached by the Comet newspaper to submit an article (around 350 words) on Shefford to include in their towns and villages feature. By submitting an article (every seven weeks), either a roundup of news, something historical or just something topical, the Council will meet the aims in its Mission Statement 'to promote Shefford as a place to live, work, visit and a place to invest'. The Council's first submission, written by JW, is about Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.
Two thousand six hundred and twelve people were reached in the last twenty eight days through the Council's Facebook page, and followers to the page have increased to seven hundred and ninety six.

6. **Parks and Open Spaces**
The report on the parks and open spaces, including play areas, their inspections, and any repairs necessary was distributed to committee members and reviewed including: the annual jet washing of the WetPour safer surfacing in St Michael's Close and Lucas Way play areas; and the ordering of two litter bins (the same design and colour as those recently installed in St Michael's play area) and two removable cast iron bollards, both for installation in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green. This will complete the first phase of the refurbishment of the toddler play area.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to Broxap Ltd for the supply and delivery of two metal Derby Weyburn litter bins in RAL 6005 (moss green) for installation in the play area at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to Broxap Ltd for the supply and delivery of two cast iron Manchester bollards in RAL 6005 (moss green) for installation in the play area at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to raise an order to DJ Granger Grounds Maintenance Ltd for the jet washing of the WetPour safer surfacing in St Michael's Close and Lucas Way play areas this spring to remove all the algae and build-up of dirt and detritus.

7. **Shefford House**
   The report on Shefford House was distributed to committee members and reviewed.

8. **Events**
   It was reported that the Town Carol Service held outside on the market square was a great success, and it is hoped that next year's service can be held in the same location. £150 was raised for Christian Aid at the event.
   The Keech Hospice Care 'Bob Sleigh's' visit to Shefford was also a great success, with lots of positive feedback on social media. £667.50 was raised during the evening, with a total of £5,479.06 raised for the Keech Children's Hospice over all the sleigh evenings. The sleigh needs an overhaul ready for the Christmas 2022 visits, and as is hoped to give a repeat performance in Shefford, and possibly cover more streets over two nights if there are enough volunteers to support the event, a donation towards the work was reviewed by the Committee.
   The preparations have begun for the Platinum Jubilee celebrations on 2 June 2022, including the Town Crier, a piper, the bugle call, and lighting of the beacon followed by the choir. A separate family event will be held on Saturday 16th July 2022. Activities on the day will include the EatFeast food festival, the choosing and crowning of the new Prince and Princesses of Shefford, fun fair rides and stalls.

   Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to the Finance and Strategy Committee to make a donation to Keech Hospice Care for the overhaul of their 'Bob Sleigh' in readiness for its use leading up to Christmas 2022.

Meeting closed 17:00hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee held on 19th January 2022 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

Present: Cllrs Tony Dawson (Chair), Ken Pollard, Paul Mackin, June Wischhusen, Fred Wilson and Roger Fowler.

Town Clerk: F Fitch and C Quinlan (Admin Assistant)

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllrs Rene Madsen and Jez Perkins.

2. **Declarations of interest:** none declared.

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 15th December 2021 were agreed as a true record and were signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Public Question Time:** no questions were received.

5. **Bank Reconciliations**
   The bank reconciliations for December 2021 were reviewed by TD prior to the meeting and approved. The petty cash was also counted by TD prior to the meeting and approved.

6. **Police Crime Commissioner Cluster Session**
   An invitation to join the Police Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire at the parish council cluster session on Wednesday 16th March 2022 was reviewed by the committee. RF, KP and PM all confirmed they would accept the invitation to attend the cluster session on behalf of the Council.

7. **Precept for the year ended 31 March 2023**
   It was reported that the Precept requirement form for the year ended 31 March 2023, together with supplementary information and workings (a requirement for all Precept requirements over £140k) was submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council on 10 January 2022.

8. **Income and Expenditure for the nine months to 31 December 2021**
   The report on the income and expenditure for the nine months to 31 December 2021, together with a detailed explanation of variances for actual against budget, was distributed to all members and reviewed.
   A possible overspend for the year ended 31 March 2022 for Administration costs was predicted due to the professional costs of upwards of £3k to £4k (estimated) for the unforeseen (and unbudgeted) registration of land title BD335995. However, it may be that these costs will not be incurred until the next financial year, wherein a budget has been set of £6k for this expenditure. All other cost centres for the year ended 31 March 2022 are predicted to be on budget, as any underspends will offset overspends in the respective cost centre, be transferred to an earmarked reserve fund for an allocated project, or used to build up funds for a committed project, replacement equipment/furniture, and future/unplanned works.

9. **Disaster Recovery Test**
   The scheduling of a disaster recovery test for the Council's computer systems was reviewed.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to carry out a disaster recover test on the Council's computer systems to include a full recovery of the Rialtas Database and application software, and a sample of user accounts to demonstrate their recoverability. RF agreed to monitor the test on behalf of the Committee.

10. **Reserves Policy**
    The draft Reserves Policy was distributed to members and reviewed.

    Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to adopt the Reserves Policy.

11. **COVID Volunteers**
    It was reported that twenty of the Council COVID volunteers donated the monetary value of their vouchers to the Need Project, resulting in a donation of £400 to the Charity. Several of the Shefford Good Neighbour Group COVID volunteers used their vouchers to treat their regular clients to lunch/tea at their chosen venue.

12. **Transfer of funds**
    Following an increase in the interest rate on the Council's instant access deposit account, the transfer of funds between the Council's current and instant access deposit accounts to maximise interest was reviewed.

    It was resolved by Delegated Powers to authorise the Town Clerk, together with the Chair of the Finance and Strategy Committee to make transfers between the Council's accounts on a monthly basis, or as required to ensure cash flow is available to cover expenditure, whilst maximising interest received. All transfers made will be reported back to the committee at their monthly meetings.

Meeting closed 16:36hrs