Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Friday 28th January 2022 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, Fred Wilson, June Wischhusen and Roger Fowler.

One member of the public.

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

On Zoom: Cllrs Paul Mackin, Tony Dawson and Den Fensome.

Ward Cllrs Anthony Brown and Mark Liddiard, and Craig Smith from BEST Academies.

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllrs Nicola King, Jez Perkins, Elsa Tattersfield and Lisa Hayes.

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

3. **BEST Academies, Bedfordshire Schools Trust**
Craig Smith, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO of BEST Academies, gave a presentation on the proposed changes to the three tier education system in Central Bedfordshire, including: reporting that BEST is supportive of moving to a two tier education system; the 'Schools for the Future' process for the Shefford/Stotfold Cluster to date working towards this outcome; the changes to 'Schools for the Future' parameters/reset principles; the impact these changes bring to BEST Academies and those schools within the Trust in Shefford, especially Robert Bloomfield Academy; their concerns over the equity of the resource distribution for the Cluster Plan in the Schools for the Future programme; concluding with a question and answer session and to see what role the Town Council plays in ensuring families and children can access high quality education in Shefford and that there are enough school spaces for children in the town.
KP asked that CS send a written update to the Town Council once the school place figures are released by Central Bedfordshire Council.

4. **Minutes**
The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 17th December 2021 were approved and signed by the Chair. The Zoom recording of the meeting was agreed to be deleted.

5. **Matters Arising**
FW requested an update from Ward Cllrs on the poor reinstatement of the grass verge at the top of Ivel Road. PM concurred, and added his concerns about the appalling state of the footpaths and roadways throughout Ivel Road resulting from the works relating to utility services to the two new housing developments (Lucas Gardens and 17a Ivel Road), and the regulation and timing of these works. AB reported that the verges all along Ivel Road will be reinstated once all the utility works are completed. ML clarified that Central Bedfordshire Council do not have any jurisdiction to stop utility companies carrying out works to install new services; however, an audit is carried out by Officers once the work is completed, to ensure that a satisfactorily reinstatement of highways land (to its original state) is carried out by each utility company.

6. Public Question Time

FW reported the positive feedback he had received on the design of the new toddler play equipment being installed in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; however, it was noted that the play area did not include any traditional swings, and there were none in any other play areas in the town. CQ confirmed that there were traditional swings in St Michael's Close play area; Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green has two swings, both basket/nest types which allow greater accessibility, with one swing beings directly accessible from a wheelchair.

7. Central Bedfordshire Council

AB reported that the total population in Central Bedfordshire today is 294k. It is anticipated that this will increase to 329k by 2031.

The proposed Council Tax figures for 2022-2023 will be going to the Executive for approval. They include an increase of 0.949% for front-line services and 1% for social care, giving a total increase of 1.95% for Central Bedfordshire Council. In addition, there will be increases for the Police and Fire Services, and Shefford Town Council's Precept. The overall tax base for Central Bedfordshire has increased over the last twelve months by 2.5% as a result of the number of new homes that have been built and are now occupied. The 2021/2022 Council Tax collection rate for Central Bedfordshire was 96.91**%**, just above the average for England of 95.7%.

The grant the Town Council receives from Central Bedfordshire Council for cutting the highways grass verges will be increasing by 6% for the year 2022/2023, with this being reviewed annually thereafter.

Resurfacing works to the footpaths in Ashdown and Bury Road are scheduled to start on 3 February 2022. The resurfacing of the footpath in Hitchin Road will start on 15 March.

The final walk through for the town centre regeneration works is scheduled for 8 February 2022. Unfortunately, the Highways Officer who was leading on the project has left the Authority, which has impacted the project implementation schedule; however, the Council is committed to delivering the project.

AB is still awaiting a response from Officers regarding the necessity for the reintroduction of the 40mph speed limit on Hitchin Road. AB believes this is essential; Officers are not so convinced.

The proposed double yellow lines parking restrictions in Shefford including, Bloomfield Drive (outside the school and the school entrance), Ampthill Road (the junction to School Lane), Ampthill Road (the junction to Bloomfield Drive), New Street (the junction to Ampthill Road), and Shefford Road (on both sides of Samuel Whitbread), will be reviewed at the Traffic Management meeting on 1 February 2022.

With regards to the large dangerous hole dug by the convergence of the rivers Flit and Hit (by the swing bridge), the Ivel Drainage Board have confirmed that it was necessary to dig this hole to locate the syphon that was built into the river system when the navigational system was part of the River Flit. There are four of these syphon systems from Shefford through to the River Ivel; the syphon at the swing bridge is completely caked up, resulting in water retention on the adjacent land. As the syphons were installed and their maintenance the responsibility of the Environment Agency, AB has requested the hole will be back filled to a safe condition (by the weekend), until such time that the Environment Agency decide on what work needs to be carried out.

The planning application for a new shop to be built on the location of the Railway Steamer in Clifton Road has been withdrawn following discussions with Planning Officers. The application raised many concerns amongst residents. Both ML and AB had concerns regarding the impact of parking, as the proposed layout suggested car parking to rear of the site that would be used by most people. There were also concerns raised by statutory consultees within other departments of the Council.

Neither ML nor AB object in principle to having a shop at the location; however, it must be of the correct design to ensure it integrates into the local environment and community.
Residents have raised further concerns regarding noise emanating from 139 Clifton Road. Central Bedfordshire Council's Environmental Pollution Team have been monitoring and visiting the site, as well as the Parking Enforcement Team, who have taken action to enforce the parking restrictions (double yellow lines) - four parking tickets have been issued to two vehicles parked on double yellow lines at the top of Purcell Way.
The Council is setting up a Fairness Taskforce to address the fairness of the provisions and services within the Unitary Authority of Central Bedfordshire. ML has agreed to sit on the Taskforce. The Taskforce will be seeking to understand from Town Councils and other local interested parties the impact of the movement and transition, and consider the impact across the whole of Central Bedfordshire; the differing views depending on where you live in terms of access to services and provisions, including services for young people and elderly residents.
JW requested an update on the planning application for 6 Northbridge Street (The Porch) AB reported that Central Bedfordshire Council are still waiting for the reapplication. ML reported that the Planning Enforcement Team, and Planning and Conservation Officers, have explicitly agreed that the porch area, the paving, and the front-facing area of the building must not be altered whatsoever in terms of the character of the building (changes to the back of the building are more negotiable). One of the key points is to ensure the front face of the building is retained and preserved to keep the heritage value.

8. Crime

There was a total of twenty nine offences reported from 1st to 27th January 2022 (leaving 4 days unaccounted for), with the data being consistent with that of December, where a total of twenty seven offences were recorded (a similar number of offences for each category). A summary of the offences in January include: four instances of assault; nine instances of theft, burglary or robbery; three instances of criminal damage; six making off without payment (all from Ivel Road); one instance of vehicle crime; three instances of malicious communisations, harassment, public fear, alarm or distress; one drug-related instance; one instance of attempted murder; and one instance of a sexual nature.

RF recommended that the priorities for Shefford to be submitted for the next Police Priority Setting meeting should be anti-social behaviour, speeding and sale and consumption of drugs.

PM reported on the update he has received from PC Bignall, the Officer assigned to the speeding issues in Bedford Road. There have been several enforcements, with perpetrators being stopped and speeding tickets issued as part of a high-profile exercise. PM is due to meet PC Bignall to discuss further actions, with one suggestion being to alter the positioning of the 30mph signs to allow traffic speed checks to be conducted.

9. Town Mayor's Announcements

The report was distributed to Councillors and included: congratulations on the news of PM's MBE Award in the Queen's New Year Honours List for Services to the Community; the Council's plans for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations for Bank Holiday Thursday 2nd June 2022; the Mayor's attendance at a virtual assembly at Shefford Lower School to present the prizes to the winner and runners up of the naming competition for Pamoli Square; the ceremony to plant an oak tree donated by the Association of Jewish Refugees in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; a call for

volunteers to distribute the spring edition of the Newsline; and the Mayor's attendance at events (excluding normal council meetings) in January 2022.

10. Shefford Youth Involvement

It was reported that the Youth Hub will be the contact point on Monday 31st January for the TREE project, which is being delivered in key areas; Shefford being one, the other two being Biggleswade/Leighton Buzzard and Bedford. TREE stands for Tackling, Reducing, Ending Exploitation, and is a pilot multi-agency project combining Youth Teams, the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU), Central Bedfordshire Council, Youth Offending, and local policing units. There will be high-vis patrols around Shefford through detached work from 14:00 to 20:00hrs, talking to young people and residents to gather information and intelligence reports, targeting hotspot areas, serious youth crime and exploitation and County Lines activity. The TREE Project will return for a further two sessions in Shefford on Mondays 21st February and 14th March 2022.

11. Planning and Highways

A report on the committee meeting held on 5th January 2022 was approved for publication on the website.

12. Service and Environment

A report on the committee meeting held on 12th January 2022 was approved for publication on the website, and the recommendation was approved as follows: -

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.

13. Finance and Strategy

A report on the committee meeting held on 19th January 2022 was approved for publication on the website, and the recommendation was approved as follows: -

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

14. Town Clerk's Report

The report was distributed to Councillors and included: the submission of the Precept 2022/2023 required form to Central Bedfordshire Council; the submission of this year's Green Flag Award application for Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; the progress on the refurbishment of the toddler play area at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; the next planned Shefford Greenspace Conservation Group working party on Saturday 5th February 2022; the planning of upcoming events and projects including the tree planting ceremony on 1st February 2022; the Jubilee Orchard planting day with the Eco Council from Shefford Lower School; the release of S106 monies earmarked for cycle networks to fund cycle hoops and workstations around the town; an application for an additional allocation from the Welcome Back Grant Scheme; the first year of the Council's tree planting programme; and the winter works programme for the Council's green spaces.

15. Accounts

The list of payments for January 2022 was reviewed by Councillors and approved.

Meeting closed 18:00hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held on 2nd February 2022 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

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

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 5th January 2022 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/TRE/21/0667**

   The draft resolution for approval by the Committee for planning application CB/TRE/21/0667 (35 High Street, Shefford, SG17 5AX - Works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order: reduce back the overhang of the Beech Tree (T1) to the car park by reducing the radial spread by approx. 1m. Remove any major deadwood from the section of crown which overhangs the car park area. Tree protected by TPO 11/1998 and listed as T1) was distributed to Councillors and reviewed.

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

   The planning permission (application CB/17/00517/FULL) granted for the development of the Old Laundry clearly states in conditions five and seventeen that the roots and canopy of this Copper Beech tree should be protected and preserved during the construction works. In summary, these conditions were to ensure that the development would not result in harm to the protected tree near to the site, in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Central Bedfordshire Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009). Thus, the preservation and protection of this tree should not cease now that the development is complete.

   There is no major deadwood in the section of crown which overhangs the car park area. In fact, the canopy looks healthy and is already budding. The tree is well maintained (it was last crown-reduced in 2018 at the request of the developer), and the owner commissioned a Tree Safety Survey in December 2021, which confirms that no remedial works are required.

There is no valid reason given to reduce the radial spread by approx. 1m; what purpose would it serve, other than to be detrimental to the form and health of the tree? If the reason is to stop leaves and twigs landing on vehicles in the adjacent car parking area, then reducing the redial spread would be no benefit as prevailing winds will still blow leaves and twigs onto the car parking area. The only solution to this issue would be to construct a carport/canopy over the car parking spaces.

6. Plans for Consideration

CB/21/05368/FULL
14 Old Bridge Way, Shefford, SG17 5JA
Proposal: Installation of a light industrial cladded steel building for storage.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application.

7. Street Naming

Following a request from Central Bedfordshire Council to provide street name suggestions for the development of ten new dwellings in Iveldale Drive, two street names were suggested. However, the majority of the committee members supported the suggestion of Sekaran Close in memory of the late Dr Shiv Sekaran who worked at the former Shefford Health Centre (the site of the new development) for many years, and died of sepsis in March 2017. It was reported that the late Dr Sekaran's widow was delighted with the proposal and thought it would be lovely to have a permanent record of her late husband's work in Shefford, and so fitting for the site where his connection with Shefford first started.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to submit the suggestion of Sekaran Close as a street name for the development of ten new dwellings in Iveldale Drive.

Meeting closed 16:05hrs

Minutes of the Services and Environment Committee held on 9th February 2022 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

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

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

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllr Den Fensome after the meeting.

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

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the committee on 12th January 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**
   TD reported that a member of the public had requested the installation of benches in Pamoli Square. It was noted that this land is owned by Morrisons Supermarkets, and that any request for benches to be installed needs to be directed to the Manager or Community Champion at the store.

5. **Communications**
   It was reported that the delivery of the spring edition of Newsline (number 108) is in progress.
   It is proposed that the students of Robert Bloomfield Academy 'take over' the summer 2022 edition of Newsline, submitting the Council's articles and illustrating the regular submissions from external sources. Simon Feaver from Character Press has offered to give a presentation to the students on his role in editing and printing the publication.
   There are now over 800 followers to the Council's Facebook page.

6. **Parks and Open Spaces**
   The report on the parks and open spaces, including play areas, their inspections, and any repairs necessary was reviewed including the opening date of the newly refurbished toddler play area at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to hold the grand opening ceremony of the newly refurbished play area on Saturday 26th February 2022, with KP accompanied by the Prince and Princesses of Shefford leading the event.

7. **Shefford House**
   The report on Shefford House was distributed to committee members and reviewed including, the painting of the internal woodwork for the windows on the ground floor of the building.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to raise an order to W Firkins and Partners Ltd for the painting of the internal woodwork of the windows in the ground floor office, council chamber and hallway.

8. **Welcome Back Grant Scheme**
   It was reported that the Council had been successful in bidding for a further share of £4k of Central Bedfordshire Council's Welcome Back Grant Scheme to fund the following projects: the design, printing and installation of two sets of three 'Platinum Jubilee' lamppost banners (to swap with the existing 'Welcome Back' banners); an extra bracket for the lamppost banners; the design and printing of nine hundred sets of 'Jubilee Postcards' (there are seven postcards in a set, using the pencil drawings commissioned by TD); the design and printing of one hundred and fifty tote bags to advertise the Shefford markets; and the restocking, including preparation, of the town centre shrub beds.

Meeting closed 17:00hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee held on 16th February 2022 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

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

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

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllr Jez Perkins.

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

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 19th January 2022 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:** Cllr Fred Wilson expressed concerns on the safety of a large eucalyptus tree in the garden of 11 Iveldale Drive during the recent high winds. It was reported that the safety of this tree has previously been brought to the attention of the Tree Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council.

5. **Bank reconciliations**
   The bank reconciliations for January 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. It was reported that a transfer of £250k has been made on 15th February 2022 from the Council's current account to the instant access savings account.

6. **BEST Academies**
   The presentation on the Schools for the Future Programme, delivered by Craig Smith of BEST Academies at the meeting of the Full Council on 28th January 2022, was reviewed by the Committee.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers for JW to draft a response on the Council's position on the Schools for the Future Programme for Shefford for the Committee to review.

7. **Keech Hospice Care**
   The recommendation from the Services and Environment Committee to make a donation to Keech Hospice Care towards the cost of the overhaul of the Keech's 'Bob Sleigh' was reviewed by the Committee.
   It was reported that GD Maintenance and Cleaning Services waived their charges for the collection and return of the 'Bob Sleigh' from the Keech Hospice in Luton in December 2021, as the event was for a charitable cause.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to donate £200 to Keech Hospice Care towards the cost of the overhaul of the 'Bob Sleigh' ready for this year's events.

8. **OFCOM consultation**
   The notification from NALC on the Office of Communications' (OFCOM) consultation into its review of postal service regulation from 2022-2027 was reviewed and noted.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to send a response to NALC stating that the Council has not received adequate time to evaluate the consultation (before the deadline) and Members struggled to comprehend the jargon used in the consultation document.

9. **Community Safety Action Plan 2022**
   The draft Community Safety Action Plan 2022 prepared by the Community Safety Engagement Officer at Central Bedfordshire Council for Shefford Town Council was reviewed by the Committee.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers for the Community Safety Engagement Officer for Shefford, Julie Hobson-Cooper, to be invited to join the next meeting of the Committee to jointly review the detail in the Action Plan with Members.

Meeting closed 16:50hrs