Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Friday 26th November 2021 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, Roger Fowler and June Wischhusen.

One member of the public.

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

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

Ward Cllrs Anthony Brown and Mark Liddiard.

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

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

3. **Minutes**
The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 29th October 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:** no questions received.

6. **Central Bedfordshire Council**
AB reported that Planning, Conservation and Enforcement Officers visited the property, 6 Northbridge Street (known locally as The Porch) this week. The Officers agreed that all building works must stop with immediate effect, and no further work be carried out until planning permissions are approved. However, both the leaseholder and the property owner were instructed to remove some of the electrical cabling works they carried out, and this work is currently in progress. Only tidying up work should now be witnessed, and Councillors were urged to inform AB if anything else is seen. The Town Clerk will be kept informed of any new developments regarding this matter.
Following an accident on the new roundabout, AB has been lobbying Highways to reinstall the 40mph buffer zone on Hitchin Road. However, Officers are reluctant to do so until a safety audit is completed.
It is proposed to resurface the footpath on Hitchin Road to the A507 junction using a new process called Rejuvo. The footpath will also be widened. The work is scheduled for January 2022.
The Highways Officer leading on the Town Centre improvement works has left Central Bedfordshire Council; however, it is intended that the Contractor, Ringway

Jacobs, will nominate a project manager to oversee the project. The completion date for the project is March 2022.
AB is chasing the results of the safety audit for the traffic calming scheme in Ampthill Road. Initial responses do recognise that the scheme has major flaws; it is hoped that a statement will be issued very soon on the proposed amendments to the scheme.
The resurfacing of the footpaths in Bury Road and Ashdown Road will commence on 3 February through to 9 March 2022. The Oakwood Road footpaths have also been identified as being in a poor condition, and will be included in the 2022/2023 programme of resurfacing works.
AB reported on the progress of the 'Schools for the Future' programme: confirmation has been received that the new primary school planned for Hitchin Road will be built and be available before 2023, in time for the change to the new two tier system in this area. It has been accepted that it is not feasible to have a 0 – 18 years through school on the Samuel Whitbread Academy campus.
AB has identified that Ringway Jacobs ordered the town entrance signs from the manufacturer, Broxap Ltd, three years ago; two of the signs are in a very poor state.
Officers are ascertaining if any action is required to reduce vehicle speed in Southfields following two recent road accidents. PM suggested the speed limit on all side roads/estates be reduced to 20mph; AB agreed that this suggestion would be ideal but realistically unenforceable.
FF reported that the lamp column outside the bungalows on Ivel Road by the willow tree (lamp column number 4A) is not working and the area is very dark at night. This has been previously reported on Fix My Street; however, no repairs have been carried out. AB is to follow this up.
KP reported that there is a pile of materials outside 4 Northbridge Street.
FW queried the letter he received from Parrott Construction regarding commencement of the planned development off Iveldale Drive/Mayfields in January 2022. AB reported that he has requested for all construction traffic to access the development from the slip road adjacent to 23 Clifton Road, and not via Iveldale Drive or Mayfields; however, permission has not been granted by the landowner for this access route. AB is pursuing the matter.
ML reported that no pre-application advice has been sought from Planning Officers by the owners of the land at the back of Kingsmede. Aerial photographs highlighting the flooding on the land and surrounding areas earlier this year have been passed to the Planning Officer, Martin Plummer.

7. Crime

There were twenty seven offences recorded for the first twenty five days of November, down significantly from forty nine offences for the previous month.
In summary, there were four instances of assault, ten instances of burglary/theft/robbery, two instances of criminal damage, seven instances of harassment and public fear alarm or distress, two instances of stalking and sexual (one each), and two instances of making off without payment. It is expected that the figure will increase by five or six offences for the total recorded offences for the whole month.

8. Town Mayor's Announcements

The report was distributed to Councillors and included: the raising of the Community Green Flag at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; Armistice Day and the Rededication of the War Memorial Service, with the attendance of HM Lord Lieutenant Helen Nellis, the Shefford branch of the Royal British Legion, Shefford Town Councillors and Staff, students from the three schools, and families who were descendants of the men named on the Memorial; the competition for the children of Shefford Lower School to name the area around the raised brick planter outside Morrisons Supermarket, and the winning name 'Pamoli Square'; urging Members to support the upcoming Christmas Lights Switch-on event; and the Mayor's attendance at events (excluding normal council meetings) in November 2021.

9. Shefford Youth Involvement

It was reported that the Youth Involvement Team will be running a Christmas programme, delivering six days of activities from Monday 20th to Thursday 23rd December, and the following week on Wednesday 29th to Thursday 30th December. The activities, trips and fun sessions are mainly starting from or being based at the Hub, but some will also be delivered in Arlesey and Stotfold. One of the sessions is a media class where the children and young people will learn about photography and podcasts. It is hoped to upload the podcasts to the youth page on the Council's new website. Food will also be provided for the children and young people attending the sessions.

10. Planning and Highways

A report on the committee meeting held on 3rd November 2021 was approved for publication on the website.

11. Services and Environment

A report on the committee meeting held on 10th November 2021 was approved for publication on the website.

12. Finance and Strategy

A report on the committee meeting held on 17th November 2021 was approved for publication on the website, and the two recommendations were approved as follows:-

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to make an application to Land Registry to register the property title BD335995. Cllrs Ken Pollard and Tony Dawson were nominated to be the two authorising signatories for the Town Council, witnessed by the Town Clerk.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to employ Emma Halpin of Ross William Solicitors, Hitchin to act as the legal representation for the Council in processing the complex application.

13. Town Clerk's Report

The report was distributed to Councillors and included: children from Shefford Lower School's Eco Council testing the QR coded Wildlife Quiz in Bellcote Meadow

Millennium Green; the Shefford Greenspace Conservation Group working party on Saturday 30th October, and the next planned task on Saturday 4th December to cut/tie back the overgrown willows on the bank along Footpath 3, and to drill holes in the 'bug' piles in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; thanks to Members for their help in delivering the winter edition of Newsline; a new trader at the Charter Market; thanks to all that helped with the Rededication of the War Memorial and Armistice Day Service; the upcoming events in November, including the Christmas Lights Switch-on on 27th November, the Town Carol Service on 13th December, the Christmas Tree Festival on 3rd to 5th December, and the Keech Hospice Christmas Sleigh on 16th December; and the topple testing of memorials at Campton and Shefford Cemetery.

14. Accounts

The list of payments for November 2021 was circulated to Councillors and approved.

Meeting closed 17:00hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee held on 1st December 2021 at 16.00hrs using www.zoom.us

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

One member of the public.

Town Clerk: F Fitch

1. **Apologies:** received from C Quinlan (Admin Assistant).

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

3. **Minutes**
The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 3rd November 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/21/04521/FULL and CB/04522/LB**
It was reported that the resolution made by the Delegated Powers for planning applications CB/21/04521/FULL and CB/21/04522/LB (both regarding 6 Northbridge Street, Shefford, SG17 5DN) was as follows: -

Firstly, Shefford Town Council would like to stress how important the building of 6 Northbridge Street is to the people of Shefford. It is protected by Grade II listing, falls within the town's conservation area, and is one of the oldest buildings in our community, being first documented in 1499 and is the site of Shefford's oldest inn. There is also a historic inscription on the internal wall on the first floor (upstairs room which overhangs the pavement) of the property that was discovered when the building underwent restoration in 1949. The inscription reads:

"God preserve our Royal King with health and peace
Help thou his way to agree and at Thy call hereafter rest
And let us pray to God alone, who reigneth in Heaven
And answer to his call, when our time comes."

Shefford Town Council recognises that the building must not be left empty to decay through misuse and welcomes the application for 6 Northbridge Street to be once again a functioning building in Shefford and for the parts already in decay to be restored in keeping with the planning and heritage legislation. However, we are concerned that the applicant and their professional structural engineers are unaware of the importance of the building, especially when they have misstated the building's age in the Planning Statement and Heritage Asset report as being built in 1919 and are not experienced enough to offer

advice and carry out alterations and restoration to this age and calibre of building.

<u>Shefford Town Council resolves to object to this application on the following grounds: -</u>

There is a high density of seating in the restaurant: sixty covers were counted, which doesn't allow for an appropriate space between tables for disabled access (including access to the toilets), fire risk precautions or safe dining, even excluding any COVID-19 regulations.

Also, it is questionable that the size of the proposed kitchen can cater for this number of covers, together with takeaway orders.

The plans in the application make no reference to any 'reception area' for customers collecting takeaway orders or waiting for tables, which will further reduce the free space in the restaurant area.

The Design and Access statement refers to 'ample car parking' to the rear of property. It is unclear what area of the car park is assigned to the property (there is a large hedge in the centre part of the car parking area), or exactly how many car parking spaces will be allocated to customer parking; will these spaces match the customer seating in the restaurant?

The application does not give any detail to the treatment of the front windows. These windows are showing signs of decay and need refurbishment/replacement. All works needs to be in line with the building's Listed status and location in a Conservation Area, which we assume will be to exactly match the original construction.

The application makes no mention of the archway leading to the car parking area to the rear of the property; it is believed that this archway (including the gate) is part of 6 Northbridge Street. The archway/gate is in a poor state of repair and needs urgent attention. This is also no mention of any agreement for the shared access to this car parking area, and the increased traffic movement patterns bringing disturbance to neighbours on both sides.

The application does not show any plans for the first floor of the property. With the knowledge that the first floor is currently being used as staff accommodation (albeit this may be on a temporary basis due to the renovation work), and the need to preserve the historic inscription on the internal wall, full details and plans for the proposed use and development of this part of the property must be included in the application, including all facilities such as toilets, washing facilities and access.

The large extractor unit, around half a metre in diameter, will create a noise nuisance, discharge extreme and obnoxious fumes (especially being so close to residential properties) and the stack will be clearly visible from Northbridge Street, which is not acceptable in a Conservation Area.

6. Plans for Consideration

CB/21/04726/REG3
Land adjacent to 28 Elm Road, Shefford, SG17 5LD
Proposal: Erection of single storey bungalow and associated hard standing.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application with the following comments: the trees on the adjacent land covered by a Tree Preservation Order should be protected at all stages of the development; and contractor's vehicles should be parked on site to allow the turning circle at the end of the road to be used, and so as not to obstruct access to neighbours' property or pedestrian access to the grounds of the Shefford Town Memorial Association. It should be noted that the trees shown on the plans to the rear of the property have been removed by the adjacent landowner.

CB/21/04816/FULL
11 Davy Drive, Shefford, SG17 5ZF
Proposal: Rear single storey extension, existing garage to be converted and roof to be raised, creating a first floor area over the garage.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to object to this application on the grounds of overdevelopment, a reduction of parking spaces and an unrealistic configuration of on-site parking allocation on the plans. Concerns were expressed that the proposed room was intended as a 'study' when the plans also show an ensuite wet room.

CB/21/04451/FULL
56 Clifton Road, Shefford, SG17 5AN.
Proposal: Install bay window to replace window to front elevation of house.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application.

CB/21/04866/VOC
5 Bloomfield Drive, Shefford, SG17 5BU
Proposal: Variation (or removal) of condition number of planning permission CB/21/01132/FULL (Two storey rear extension and single storey front extension with bay window and open porch) render and paint the property in line with the surrounding homes to maintain a balanced visual aspect rather than a patchwork – smooth trowel render.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application.

CB/21/05070/FULL
5 Planters Close, Shefford, SG17 5ZD
Proposal: Garage conversion.

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

- ***This is a retrospective planning application; the building work has been completed with no pre-application advice nor prior consultation with Planning Officers at Central Bedfordshire Council.***
- ***Overdevelopment***
- ***There is a loss of two parking spaces.***
- ***The conversion appears to be a business premises.***
- ***It is setting a precedent to neighbouring properties.***
- ***The first floor window is too close to the adjoining properties.***
- ***The proposed development is not integrated with the rest of the property and has just a single door for access at the rear and no access from the rest of the development.***

CB/21/04915/FULL
7 George Street, Shefford, SG17 5BP
Proposal: Single storey rear extension and ramped access.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application.

CB/TRE/21/00622
Flat 1, 33 High Street, Shefford, SG17 5DN
Proposal: Works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Order MB/98/00011/T1 and in a Conservation Area: Reduce back the overhang to the car park by reducing the radial spread by approx 1m, whilst maintaining a natural tree form. Remove any major deadwood from the section of crown which overhangs the car park area to Beech T1.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to support this application.

Meeting closed 16:35hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Services and Environment Committee held on 8th December 2021 using www.zoom.us

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

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

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllr Elsa Tattersfield

7. **Declarations of interest:** JP declared an interest in the review of the quotation from Maydencroft Ltd for the Tree Safety Survey reinspection in Agenda item 6. Due to JP being employed by the company, he left the meeting when the quotation was reviewed, and a resolution made.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the committee on 10th November 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording of the meeting was agreed to be deleted.

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

4. Communications

It was reported that the winter edition of Newsline (number 107) has been distributed to residents, and the deadline for submissions for the spring edition is 4th January 2022.

Pupils from Robert Bloomfield Academy will be involved in the Mayor's next video recording to be posted on the Council's social media early next year. The topic of the video will be to raise awareness of the Fair-Trade Goods scheme and encourage the sale and purchase of locally sourced goods and produce in Shefford.

5. 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: a quotation for the Tree Safety Survey reinspection of the trees on the Council's green spaces; the ordering of the summer 2022 hanging baskets; quotations for the winter works in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; and the continuation of the Council's grass cutting service for a further two years.

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 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.

6. Shefford House

The report on Shefford House was distributed to committee members and reviewed, including a quotation for the painting of the ground floor office.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to GD Maintenance and Cleaning for the painting of the walls in the ground floor office, to freshen up the paintwork in readiness of renting out the room.

7. Public Toilets

It was reported that the winter maintenance works on the toilet block have been carried out. An electrical fault was identified with the flush system, which may be an issue with the timer or with the consumer unit itself. This will be investigated once the Christmas lights are taken down (some of the lights are powered by electricity from the toilet block).

It was noted that when pulled, the disabled toilet alarm cord activates a flashing light; however, it does not raise an alarm at the White Hart, as believed by Members.

8. Events

It was reported that initial discussions have taken place around setting up a core group to coordinate the schedule of events during the year in the town, and to support the volunteer workforce involved in these events. The group may be expanded to include other volunteer organisations, as the aim of the group would be to support the individual volunteer groups during their activities so that they have a back-up workforce when needed.

A reminder was given on the dates for the Town Carol Service (13th December 2021 at 18:30hrs) and the Keech Hospice Christmas Sleigh (16th December 2021 at 18:00hrs).

Meeting closed 15:14hrs

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee held on 15th December 2021 at 11.00hrs using www.zoom.us

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

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

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

8. **Declarations of interest:** As RM is a member of the Shefford Christmas Lights Committee, he left the meeting when the Council's contribution in next year's budget towards the Christmas Lights was reviewed and a resolution made.

10. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 17th November 2021 were agreed as a true record and were signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording was agreed to be deleted.

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

12. Bank reconciliations

The bank reconciliations for November 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.

13. Joint Burial Board

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Burial Board Committee held on 29 November 2021 were distributed to members and reviewed.

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.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to GD Maintenance and Cleaning Services for the painting of the main entrance gates, together with the width railing/bollards immediately outside the gates.

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.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to Reynolds Landscaping Services to create a set of two steps to allow safe access to the raised grass area, to establish an area of contemplation.

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.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to Maydencroft Ltd to undertake a Tree Safety Survey of all the trees within Campton and Shefford 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.

14. Budget and Precept for the Year ended 31 March 2023

To ensure the necessary due diligence was carried out, a summary of the draft budget and precept for the financial year ended 31 March 2023 (showing the comparison with the current financial year) was distributed to members for review, together with a spreadsheet showing detailed workings to substantiate the budget figures, and a summary of additional work/projects identified as necessary to include in the budget, as follows: -

- Solicitor's fees for the registering of the STMA title deed and trustee advice.
- AAT Foundation training course for the Admin Assistant.
- Formalising an annual maintenance programme for the public toilets.
- Resurfacing/levelling of the crushed aggregate footpath adjacent to the set aside area in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green to ensure access for all.
- Year one of the three-year hedge laying programme in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.
- Installation of bollards at the Riverside entrance to Waterside to prevent unauthorised vehicular traffic.
- Year one of the ten-year tree planting programme.
- Funding of the third year of the programme to survey/control the Himalayan Balsam on the rivers/ditches in the town.
- Building a fund for phase two of the refurbishment of the Toddler Play Area in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green.
- A contribution towards a permanent cabling framework for the Christmas Lights, resulting in reduced costs, volunteer time/effort and increased safety.

- The Platinum Jubilee celebration events, including lighting of the beacon and a piper, a family event in July, lamppost banners and launch of the Shefford postcards.

It was reported that with the completion of some projects in the current financial year, the additional work/projects noted above, and an increase in day to day running costs, the precept has increased by 4.3%; however, with an increase of 3.3% in the tax base, this equates to a real time increase of 1%. In financial terms for Band D properties this is a rise of £1.26.

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.

Meeting closed 12:20hrs