Minutes of the meeting of the Services and Environment Committee held on 11th September 2024 at 18.00hrs using www.zoom.us

Present: Cllrs Jez Perkins/Mark Greenwood (Chair), Tony Dawson, Fred Wilson and Elsa Tattersfield.

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

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllr Ken Pollard, Paul Mackin and Den Fensome.

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

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the committee on 10th July 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed digitally by the Chair. The Zoom recording was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Public Question Time:**
   FF conveyed a resident's concerns regarding a clump of black nightshade shrubs growing on land in Old Bridge Way, following the removal of conifer trees from this area. The shrubs have spread and are overhanging the footpath. The resident raised their concern as the shrub's green berries are poisonous and the footpath is a route to school for many students. It is believed the land was previously owned by the Daniel Bros (Shefford) Ltd and does not fall under the responsibly of Highways.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to report the issue on FixMyStreet and present the resident's concerns under the Public Question Time Agenda Item to the Ward Councillors at the September meeting of the Full Council.

   FF relayed a resident's concerns regarding the flooding of land along footpath 3 and the gardens of Heronslee houses along the River Flit/Hit. They have contacted Central Bedfordshire Council, the Environment Agency (EA) and the Member of Parliament, Alistair Strathern. Although they had a comprehensive response from the EA informing them of the manner of the river's flood management, they requested that Shefford Town Council contact the Environment Agency regarding this matter.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to respond to the resident deferring to the Environment Agency's recommendations due to their expertise and jurisdiction.

5. **Communications**
   It was reported that the autumn edition of Newsline were delivered successfully, with thanks given to the volunteers who helped deliver the publication. The deadline for submitting articles for include in the winter edition is 4th October.
   TD reported that the electronic edition of the Biggleswade Chronicle was sent to FF and upon request, can be forwarded to Members.

6. **Rural Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**
   Communication was received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding their Rural Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) consultation, and reviewed by the Committee.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers that there would be no collective response from Shefford Town Council and the consultation documents and link would be sent to the Full Council for individual responses.

7. **Parks and Open Spaces**
   The report on the parks and open spaces, including play areas, their inspections, and any repairs necessary was distributed to Councillors and reviewed, including: a quotation for the 2025 hanging baskets display; the winter works programme in Drovers Spinney; the replacement of the vandalised sign at Lucas Way Play Area; the removal of the offensive graffiti in Pamoli Square; the planting up of the gaps in the Town Centre shrub bed; tree works to ensure clear views from the new CCTV camera into St Michael's Play Area; the budgeting of additional bollards in the Market Square and a new CCTV system installed in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; the installation of Matta around the trampoline in St Michaels Close play area; the winter works programme in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green; the sale of surplus granite setts; the repainting of the town entrance sign on Clifton Road; and consideration for the creation of bee corridors on three roundabouts in the town.

   Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to raise an order to Plantscape for the summer 2025 hanging basket flower display using a peat free compost with a bright colour flower mix.

   Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to instruct Reynolds Landscaping Services and Branching Out to carry out the winter works programme in Drovers Spinney as agreed with JP and the Shefford Greenspace Conservation Group in accordance with the site's Management Plan.

   Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to purchase a new sign to replace the one vandalised at the Lucas Way play area, and to install once there is a marked reduction of incidents of anti-social behaviour in the Town.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to DJG Grounds Maintenance to remove the offensive graffiti on the brick wall in Pamoli Square.

   It was resolved by Delegated Powers to order a mix of shrubs/perennials/bulbs from J Parkers Wholesale to fill any gaps in the Town Centre shrub bed planting.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to instruct Branching Out to apply for planning permission (required due to the Conservation Area status) and carry out the works to remove a small tree in St Michael's Close Play Area, the removal of ivy and crown lifting of the trees between the play area and Pamoli Square to ensure unobstructed views into and around the play area from the new CCTV camera located on the corner of Shefford Library.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers for both the costs of the installation of a further three bollards in the Market Square (to prevent unauthorised parking on the pavement) and the installation of a new CCTV system at Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green to be included in the draft budget for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to replace the existing worn safer surfacing around the trampoline with Matta safer surfacing (a much higher wearing surfacing) in St Michaels Close play area.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to raise orders to Branching Out Tree and Garden Services and Reynolds Landscaping Services to carry out the winter works programme in Bellcote Meadow Millennium Green, including hedging cutting/tree works and flailing works respectively.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to offer the sale of the surplus granite setts, reclaimed from the Town Meadow Car Park to Timber Constructions Ltd. The proceeds will be added to the fund for community projects such as replacing/installing more benches in the town.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to raise an order to Projects in Wood to repaint the town entrance sign (blue background and gold lettering) on Clifton Road.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to explore the option of working in partnership with Countrywide Grounds Maintenance to create bee corridors on three grassed roundabouts in the town (Hitchin Road/Stamford Road/Ivel Road) using a wildflower seed mix (John Chambers Impact Showy Mix) supplied by Greentech Ltd. Permission will be required from Highways at Central Bedfordshire Council as the landowner.

8. **Shefford House**

The report on Shefford House was distributed to Members and reviewed, including: a quotation to carry out the repairs to a broken sash window and making good paintwork following the recarpeting of the stairwell; preparations of Room 7 for a new tenancy once the existing tenant has vacated the office; the purchase of office furniture for the Town Council staff offices; and to include the next phase of

upgrading the fire doors in the building in the draft budget for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to raise an order to W Firkins and Partners Ltd to repair the second-floor sash window, including replacing both sash cords, and to make good the paintwork on the stair stringers following the recarpeting of the stairwell.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to prepare Room 7 for renting out to a new tenant once the existing tenant vacates the office on 4th October 2024, including the diagnosis and treatment of damp in the chimney breast, and redecoration and recarpeting, which will allow for a more competitive monthly rental fee.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to purchase office furniture for the Town Council staff offices, including a new office chair for the Admin Assistant, a second-hand electric standing desk for the Town Clerk (to create an additional flexible workstation), and the installation of more heavy duty racking in the storeroom to maximise storage space.

It was resolved by Delegated Powers to include the cost of bringing the remaining fire doors on the first floor to the correct specification (including door closers) in the draft budget for the 2025/2026 financial year.

9. **Jubilee Postcards**
   It was reported that several local businesses have agreed to display and sell sets of the Council's Jubilee postcards (with a 50:50 split of the profits between the businesses and the Council), and it is proposed the packs of postcards will also be advertised for sale on the eBay selling site. All the proceeds will be added to the fund for community projects, such as replacing/installing benches around the town.

   Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to approve the sale of the Jubilee postcards in local shops and businesses.

   Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council to approve the sale of the Jubilee postcards online via eBay to reach a wider audience.

Meeting closed 19:45hrs