Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on Friday 28th March 2025 at 16.00hrs in the Council Chamber at Shefford House, 15 High Street, Shefford, SG17 5DD.

Present: Cllrs Ken Pollard (Chair), Cllr Paul Mackin, Cllr Fred Wilson, Cllr Den Fensome, Cllr Lisa Hayes, Cllr Steve Nash, Cllr Mark Greenwood, Cllr Christine Cullerton, Cllr Elsa Tattersfield, Ward Cllr Anthony Brown.

Five members of the public.

Locum Town Clerk: T Medley

1. **Apologies:** received from Cllr Cummings, Clerk Francesca Fitch, Admin Checka Quinlan and Ward Cllr Mark Liddiard.

2. **Declarations of interest:** There were no interests declared.

3. **Minutes**
   The minutes of the meeting of the Full Council meeting on 31st January 2025 were deferred until the April meeting, until amendments could be made.

   Minutes of the Full Council meeting on 28th February 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair. The Zoom recording of the meeting was agreed to be deleted.

4. **Matters arising**
   Concerns were raised over item 16 in the Minutes, Cllr Pollard stated that the conversation whereby it was agreed to defer instructing the services of James Corrigan for six months was part of a conversation after the meeting rather than a resolution agreed by full council, some Cllrs disagreed with this. Clerk recommended that Cllrs vote on the item again so that a resolution could be agreed at the current full council meeting. Cllr Pollard proposed that the TC instruct the services of James Corrigan, seconded by Cllr Wilson, 3 Cllrs (including Cllr Pollard and Cllr Wilson) voted in favour, 6 Cllrs against, it was agreed to defer the decision on whether the TC instruct the services for 6 months minimum.

5. **Public Question Time**
   Resident 1 concerns for safety along Ampthill Rd. There was an accident on 28th February at 7pm, a woman mounted the kerb, hit the lamppost and wall. The resident observed the accident and had the wall not been positioned as it was then she would have been hit by the vehicle. On 6th March at 5pm, a woman hit the resident's car which was parked outside her house, causing the car to be written off by the insurance company. The resident shared the information and photos with Cllr Brown, who will follow it up with the Highways team at CBC. There have been speed checks along Ampthill Rd, but driver's slowdown in response to seeing the cameras. There are also issues on Bedford Rd and Stamford Rd.
   Resident 2 invited the TC to celebrations for the 200yr Anniversary of the Baptist Church, a formal invitation will follow for the event on 11th May 2025.

Resident 3 was from a resident concerned for the current condition of Wren Park. Cllr Pollard has been in contact with CBC and can confirm that they have put a STOP order on Wren Park to prevent demolition, Cllr Pollard will update the resident.
Resident 4 An email was received from the Fish van, they were unable to access the power on 28/3/25. Cllr Mackin will follow this up.
Resident 5 A Cllr reported that a resident was questioning the rise in Council Tax and the TC portion. Cllr Wilson confirmed that the 7.5% increase is purely for the TC, there is a 5% increase for CBC. The 7.5% increase is to cover increases in NI, salaries, Pensions and addition of and repairs to CCTV in the town because of increased crime.
Resident 6 has reported that there are issues with streetlights in Heron's way, some lights are permanently on whilst others are not working, it has been reported on Fix my street, Cllr Brown requested that the case numbers be forwarded to him so that he may follow it up.
Resident 7 raised concerns via a Cllr regarding the changes to the tidy tip, from 26th March a booking system has been put in place. Cllrs expressed concerns that this would lead to an increase in fly tipping.
STMA Meeting Concerns were raised at the recent STMA meeting regarding the route from Paloma Rd to Hitchin Rd, the committee were asked to write to Cllr Brown stating their views and Cllr Brown will look into the situation, works are programmed for financial year 25/26.

6. Central Bedfordshire Council

Cllr Brown was able to provide the following update:

- The CBC budget has been set at 5%. Some of the recommendations that Ward Cllrs put forward were approved. Dunstable Library will remain open 7 days a week. The tidy tip will also remain open 7 days a week, but a booking system will be in place.
- Extra funding has been added to ensure all road gullies are cleaned during 2025 rather than as part of a 3-year programme.
- In order to meet the budget a reorganisation of staffing levels will be required and will incorporate approximately 150 redundancies.
- Ward Cllr grants of £2000 will be retained.
- The Environmental agency has reported on the failure of Shefford measuring station which failed to provide data during the September flooding. Apparently, the gauges were dislodged and floating around in the building. CC has a copy of the report. The EA Assets team have not been able to find out who is the responsible owner of the sluice gate. A new updated system will be installed in the financial year 25/26.
- The Highways programme has nothing new for Shefford although Cllr Brown was able to add that there has been a verbal agreement from the officer that the north area will be provided with funding for patch works for the worst path areas in Oakwood Rd. The STMA pathway is listed for completion the coming financial year.

- Cllr Brown visited Clophill lakes last week and was pleased to see what they will be offering in the near future.
- An Appeal date has not been issued for The Porch. Cllr Pollard confirmed that he has spoken with the owner who is looking at possible selling it, he now has a repossession order against the tenant. Cllr raised the possibility of the building being purchased for the community. Clerk advised the Council to apply to CBC for an Asset of Community Value (ACV) on the property, this will enable the TC to have first opportunity to purchase in the future. Clerk will share the details with Cllrs.
- Robert Bloomfield has once again received an Outstanding Ofsted report. Cllr Brown congratulated staff on reaching this high standard, even with the 2/3 tier debate still undecided.
- Cllr Pollard and Cllr Mackin invited Cllr Brown to attend a meeting with them at ARR, to discuss the ongoing maintenance of the road, it has been temporarily filled.
- Cllr Cullerton reported that the A507 road leading out to Ampthill has been cleared, including all ditches to prevent flooding.

7. **Presentation by James Corrigan:**
   A Teams call will be arranged at a separate time for James to give his presentation.

8. **Crime**
   The crime report was not available.

9. **Town Mayor's Announcements**
   Cllr Pollard has attended several Civic services at larger Town Councils.

10. **Shefford Youth Involvement**
    The Easter Youth Activity programme has been agreed. The programme will be held over 10 days: 7th-17th April, will include various sports, breakfast and games sessions, seed bomb making and lots more. Further details can be found on the Shefford and Stotfold Youth activities website.

11. **Vacancy on Robert Lucas Trust:**
    Cllr Wilson has recently resigned from his position as trustee after 13 years as STC nominated. Cllr Pollard expressed an interest in joining as trustee, proposed by Cllr Wilson, seconded by Cllr Mackin, all agreed.

12. **Staffing Committee:**
    The staffing committee currently consists of Cllr Mackin, Cllr Pollard and Cllr Dawson, with Cllr Dawson having resigned from the TC a new committee needed to be agreed. Cllr Pollard proposed retaining Cllr Pollard and Mackin but adding Cllr Hayes, Cummings, Culleton, King and Greenwood, seconded by Cllr Hayes, all agreed. A first meeting date will be set in due course.

    Locum Clerk has agreed to work 8 hours a week for the TC, split over 2 days, Cllrs agreed to her adding extra hours if she is available, Clerk will keep a timesheet.

13. Planning and Highways

Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2025 was approved for publication on the website.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for approval:

Three residents raised concerns regarding the safety of Wren Park Nursing Home, following the recent three fires in the building. They expressed concerns regarding the security of the site, the previous vandalism and trespassing on the land, the historic and cultural importance of the building in Shefford.

It was resolved for the residents to contact the Ward Cllrs and Andrew Davie at Central Bedfordshire Council, and for Cllr Pollard to contact the Bedfordshire Police, regarding this matter

CB/25/00275/OUT
Land rear of 172, Shefford Road, Clifton, SG17 5QS
Proposal: Outline Application: Proposed detached dwelling with reserved matters for landscaping.

It was resolved to object to this application on the following grounds:

- *The exit onto the main road is located directly opposite the present on-road parking for Samuel Whitbread Academy, which currently restricts the road to 1.5 lanes rather than 2 full lanes. At school drop off/pick up times, this road is subject to heavy traffic and congestion; with the additional traffic flow from the proposed development of twenty-nine family dwellings, this would exacerbate the traffic situation. Furthermore, there is a persistent issue of on street parking, which would have a negative impact on the entrance/egress and vision splay of the access road.*
- *This proposed dwelling would constitute overdevelopment of the site due to the size of the site, and the limited access for residents, delivery vehicles, emergency/recovery vehicles, waste collection services, etc. Additionally, it would directly contradict section 6.12 Infills and Backland Development of the CBC Design Guide, as it doesn't take into regard plot size or grain of development.*
- *Due to the design of the site limiting access for waste collection, it is impractical for waste bins to be taken to the entrance of the site; it would also cause great congestion on a heavily frequented footpath.*

CB/25/00392/FULL
7 Iveldale Drive, Shefford, SG17 5AD
Proposal: 1.5 storey side and rear extensions, single storey front extension with new dormers and rooflights. Demolition of garage and conservatory

It was resolved to support this application.

CB/TRE/25/00071
12 Mayfields, Shefford, SG17 5AU
Proposal: Works to Tree protected by Tree Preservation Order MB/08/00001/T5: Up to a 3m reduction to Oak Tree (green dot on sketch plan), to keep the tree at a healthy size and prevent damage caused by over growth.

It was resolved to support this application.

Proposed by Cllr Mackin, seconded by Cllr Cullerton, all agreed.

14. Service and Environment

Minutes of the meeting held on 12th March were approved for publication on the website.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for Cllr Pollard to respond to a resident regarding the updated meeting times and the Minutes available on the website and full explanation regarding the redaction of confidential information in the payments.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an order to be submitted for two sets of defibrillator pads for the BMMG defibrillator and to order a set of pads and a replacement battery for Shefford House.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for Cllr Christine to replace Clerk, Francesca fitch on the STMA Committee.

Proposed by Cllr Fensome, seconded by Cllr Cullerton, all agreed.

15. Finance and Strategy

Minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2025 were approved for publication on the website.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for approval of the Staffing Committee Minutes from a meeting held on 11th March 2025.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for approval of a donation of £250 to respite at Home to keep the charity organised and running smoothly.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an update to the mandate to extend the signatories to Chairs of sub-Committees.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for the review of policies to be deferred until the next meeting, allowing Cllrs to read them.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for an N Power cheque to be cashed at the Post Office.

Recommendation by Delegated Powers to be made to Full Council for Lisa Hayes to contact Hiscox Insurance to remove 2 wooden sheds and one container from the policy.

Proposed by Cllr Greenwood, seconded by Cllr Hayes, all agreed.

16. **Annual Town Meeting:**
    The date for the meeting was agreed as 16th May 2025, Cllr Pollard will book the STMA 6-8pm. Arrangements will be discussed at the Service and Environment meeting.

17. **Community Governance Review:**
    Clerk presented information received from CBC, she will scan and email out to Cllrs, Consultation will begin on 30th June 2025.

18. **Accounts**
    Clerk and Cllr Mackin have been looking at banking access, Clerk requested that Cllr Mackin transfer sufficient funds into the current account to cover payments. Cllr Mackin will also request upgrading his banking access to include setting up payments, he will also request making changes to the mandate to increase the number of Cllrs permitted to authorise payments.

    A quote has been received from CPM playgrounds for £190 and £240 for playground repairs, proposed by Cllr Wilson, seconded by Cllr Mackin, all agreed, Clerk will instruct CPM.

    Invoices were received from IT Doctor for assisting when the IT system crashed, invoices amounting to £243.24

    Clerk is requesting an extension for payment from Anglian water and the Pension provider as payments have been missed due to staff absence.

    The list of payments was circulated to Councillors and approved, proposed by Cllr Pollard, seconded by Cllr Mackin all agreed.

    April 2025 meetings:
    Planning and Highways 2nd April 19.00hrs
    Service and Environment 9th April 19.00hrs
    Finance and Strategy 16th April 19.00hrs
    Full Council 16.00hrs.

    Cllr Pollard asked all Cllrs to forward their preferences for meeting times for next financial year, the Standing orders will be reviewed in May, enabling Cllrs to make amendments if required.

Meeting closed 18:00hrs.