



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12TH JANUARY 2021
AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION

PRESENT:

Cllr M. Russell (Chairman)
Cllr G. Fage (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D. Albone
Cllr I. Bond
Cllr F. Foster
Cllr H. Ramsay
Cllr L. Fage
Cllr M. Foster
Cllr M. Knight
Cllr R. Pullinger
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C. Thomas
Cllr J. Woodhead

Mr P. Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr P. Truppin – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Ms N. Villa – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council (Exempt meeting only)
Ms H. Calvert – Deputy Administration & HR Manager, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 6

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Mayor advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Mayor advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Mayor asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs K. Brown and M. North.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item

None.

b. **Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item**

Cllr Pullinger – Item 9a – Planning Application for Apple Tree Close
Cllr L Fage – Item 9k – Planning Application for Boddington Gardens
Cllr M Russell – Item 11d – Planning Application for Ivel Gardens
Cllr D Strachan – Item 10 a. iv).

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. Cllr Russell advised Members that Christmas greeting cards were exchanged with Erlensee Mayor Stefan Erb and Erlensee Council Chairman Uwe Laskowski.
- b. St Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Biggleswade sent a Christmas card to all the Town Council Members, Officers and staff wishing everyone good fortune throughout 2021 with the message "*Thank you all for serving us over many years*".
- c. Cllr Russell attended the opening of Percy's Fish & Chip Shop with Richard Fuller (North East Bedfordshire MP) at Sullivan Court on Kings on 11 December 2020. The shop is named after the owner's grandfather, who opened a fish and chip shop after being demobilised at the end of World War II.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

The IT Administrator advised members of the public wishing to speak to use the "raise hand" function on screen.

None.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

None.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received the minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 8th December 2020** via Zoom Webinar.
- **Page 7 – Cllr G Fage – Item 11c: Back street parking** – Members raised concerns about the loss of one parking space given the limited parking and this should be included in the minutes.

Subject to this amendment, the minutes of **Tuesday 8th December 2020** were **APPROVED**.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of **8th December 2020**.

- a. Cllr R Pullinger requested an update on the Workshop Depot. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised it is anticipated that the Public Realm Team will take occupation of the new permanent rental depot in the first week of March 2021. For the time being and subject to contract, it is anticipated that the equipment will be transferred to Units 1 and 2 within the next three weeks, and then into the permanent unit at the beginning of March 2021.

b. **CB/20/03884/FULL - 8 Parry Rise, Biggleswade, SG18 8FU**

Revised application: Single storey rear extension and part garage conversion.

Members were advised that permission for this application was formally granted on 7th January 2021 and that no further discussion was needed.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/20/04541/FULL - 4 Apple Tree Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8NF**

Single storey side extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed dwellings are complied with to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

b. **CB/20/04496/FULL - Petrol Filling Station, London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8PL**

New 'Food Offer' pod to be constructed, with associated car parking spaces, refuse area & bollards.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

c. **CB/20/04501/FULL - 60 Saffron Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8DJ**

Reinstatement of single dwelling into two dwellings, 2 storey rear extensions to both properties.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed dwellings are complied with to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

d. **CB/20/04249/ADV - UIP, Building G106, Lancaster Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8TQ**

Advertisement: 3 high level fascia signs.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

e. **CB/20/04658/FULL - 4 Mitchell Green, Biggleswade, SG18 8GS**

Single storey rear extensions.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

f. **CB/20/00959/OUT - Land East of Biggleswade**

The Town Council has previously submitted comments on a number of occasions and Members would like the Town Council to submit a response in keeping with those previous comments to maintain the Council's stance. Members were advised of an objection from Central Bedfordshire Council around the junction at Chambers Way and London Road and Cllr Russell reminded Members that the Town Council had raised this concern with Central Bedfordshire Council nearly 5 years ago.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to Central Bedfordshire Council with previously issued comments and add that the Town Council wants the Chambers Way and London Road junction revision or upgrade to be included.

g. **CB/20/04634/FULL 16 South View, Biggleswade, SG18 8BZ**

Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing kitchen roof.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

h. **CB/20/04727/FULL - 120 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EL**

First floor extension incorporating loft conversion and single storey rear extension incorporating detached garage.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations. The Town Council want to emphasize to Central Bedfordshire Council Planning Team the importance of consulting with the neighbours due to the large size of this build and the resulting disruption and noise pollution that will affect the neighbours.

i. **CB/20/04700/FULL - 9 Auckland Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DR**

Single storey front and two-storey rear extension to replace conservatory.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are

considered by CBC in their deliberations. In addition, the Council is to ensure that their guidelines on the size of the proposed dwellings are complied with to eliminate detriment in respect of light and privacy of adjacent residents.

j. **CB/20/04731/VOC - 24A and B High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JL**

Variation of condition number 2 of planning permission CB/17/02774/Full: Installation of replacement windows - Removal of condition Installed without wood grain effect to standard UPVC finish.

Members noted that the Town Council has a consistent position on requirements for buildings within the conservation area, which other properties within the close vicinity have complied with to ensure repairs are appropriate to the conservation area design guides.

It was **RESOLVED** to **STRONGLY OBJECT** to this planning application because it is in the Conservation Area. The original planning permission clearly sets out the type of window finish that should be complied with. Should the Central Bedfordshire Planning Team be minded to approve this application, then the Town Council requests that the application is called in for review by the DMC in order to preserve the rules concerning the Conservation Area.

k. **CB/20/04370/FULL - 46 Boddington Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0PJ**

Rear dormer extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations-

l. **CB/20/04772/FULL - 8 Chamberlain Park, Biggleswade, SG18 8GT**

Single Storey Rear Extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

m. **CB/21/00018/FULL - 72 Windermere Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8LT**

Single storey rear extension following demolition of conservatory.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

n. **29 Market Square, Biggleswade,**

Advertisement application in relation to Seasons Kitchen.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

o. **60 Laburnham Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0NY**

Replacement and enlarged single storey side/ rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this Planning Application providing the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

10. ACCOUNTS

a. Members received and **ADOPTED** the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 30/11/2020.
- ii. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee 30/11/2020.
- iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee 30/11/2020.
- iv. Lloyds Bank Payment listing November 2020.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. **Council and Committee Meetings Dates**

Cllr F Foster extended thanks on behalf of the Town Council to the Town Clerk & Chief Executive, the Assistant Town Clerk and all the Town Council staff for ensuring the continued operation of the council despite staff absences and current staff vacancies. He added that visibly significant progress has been noted on matters that have been dormant for some time.

Members debated the current process with suggestions for returning to a bi-monthly meeting to offset longer agendas and over-running meetings or incepting a planning committee and other efficiencies. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive reminded Members there is a significant change agenda as the Council operations are being modernised and in order to deliver these changes to residents, significant input from Officers is required. The balance to ensure that they have the time to meet those strategic and operational changes is important.

It was **RESOLVED** to extend the current calendar and committee meetings dates trial period to May 2021 and take a final decision at the Annual Statutory Meeting.

b. **Highways Act 1980 Section 26 Pre-Order Creation of Bridleways West Sunderland Farm, Biggleswade, SG18 8SD Biggleswade CP**

Members advised the land affected by this plan currently has outline planning permission for a larger development. They felt this bridleway should have been considered first by the Garden Communities Project Board and included in the Site Master Plan, then considered by BRCC as this would become part of the Green Wheel. Members felt this application should only come back to Council for approval at the final step.

Members commented that the proposed bridleway between Points B and E on the plan does not appear to go anywhere, further supporting the belief this should be reviewed and agreed by those agencies previously mentioned in order to meet the needs of the community within the scope of the Site Master Plan.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to Central Bedfordshire Council and say this proposal is premature and that:

- 1) the Site Master Plan review should include and formulate the positioning of this proposed bridleway,
- 2) that the Garden Communities Project and BRCC should be involved in the planning aspects of this bridleway since their remit has direct impact on applications such as this and;
- 3) the proposed bridleway between points B and E should be reviewed as this appears to be a footpath rather than a bridleway.

c. **Abbotsbury Care Home**

Cllr Knight extended the Town Council's thanks to Mr Stephenson for his presentation at the Town Council meeting of 8th December 2020. It is clear that Abbotsbury's facilities do not meet modern standards and it is necessary to move Abbotsbury residents into better quality accommodation.

It was **RESOLVED** for the Town Council to write to Central Bedfordshire Council in support of Option 2, namely relocation of current Abbotsbury residents and closing this facility. In addition, the Town Council would like to request the following:

1. That the review for future accommodation needs for Older Persons is brought forward one year to 2023 to ensure there is no risk that demand will exceed capacity before a new care home can be built.
2. Where additional capacity is delivered, this should be located in Biggleswade rather than the wider Ivel Valley area. Biggleswade is growing rapidly and it is important that any future residents are able to stay within Biggleswade should they need residential care. This will also provide valuable employment within the town.
3. That Central Bedfordshire Council work closely with Biggleswade Town Council to agree potential future use of the current Abbotsbury site.

d. **CB/TRE/20/00693 21 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0AN**

Works to Trees Protected by Tree Preservation Order MB/09/0002/T8: Undertake regular pollarding process to rear Lime Tree and remove all regrowth back to original pollard points.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

e. **CB/TRE/20/00694 - 4 Eagle Farm Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8JD**

Works to trees protected by a Preservation order: MB/57/00003/G1 General pruning to Horse Chestnut and Lime Tree.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

f. **CB/TCA/20/00543 - 34 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AP**

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: fell Sycamore Tree T1 to ground level.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

g. **CB/20/03824/FULL - 7 & 11 Britten Place, Sullivan Court, Biggleswade**

Conversion of commercial units (A2) to two residential dwellings.

Cllr G Fage advised Members this planning application was submitted for review in November 2020, consultation on this application ended December 2020 and this has been called in for review at CBC's Development Management Committee (DMC). Cllr G Fage added there is no evidence these commercial premises have been advertised on the property market at a competitive price for any length of time. A draft letter from the Town Council to Central Bedfordshire Council has been prepared.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council write to Central Bedfordshire Council stating that the Council believes that this commercial property should be advertised on the property market for no less than one year at competitive rates before residential conversion can be permitted, in line with discussions regarding the Local Plan.

It was **RESOLVED** for Cllr G Fage to represent the Town Council at the DMC meeting to present the Town Council's position on this application.

h. **CB/TCA/21/00014 Millers Court, Biggleswade, SG18 0AL**

Work to Trees in a Conservation Area: remove lower canopy to Prunus Tree (1) and Weeping Birch Tree.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. **Planning Application outcomes**

Members noted this report.

b. **Crime Statistics – November 2020**

The Deputy Administration Manager and Amanda Cawthorn from Biggleswade Community Safety Group have been compiling crime statistics in a clear and easy to read form.

Cllr Strachan extended thanks to the Deputy Administration Manager and Amanda Cawthorn for their continued efforts on this report. Further comments and suggestions would be forthcoming by email separately due to some technical errors he was having during the meeting.

Cllrs Strachan and Russell, together with the Town Clerk & Chief Executive attended an introductory meeting with Chief Inspector Lee Haines (Bedfordshire Police) and Biggleswade's new Community Policing Inspector Louise Bates in December 2020. It was a productive meeting where the Council was able to open dialogue about concerns within Biggleswade.

Cllr G Fage advised Members there were a series of break-ins around the Town Centre on New Year's Day and these will be reflected in the December Crime Statistics. When the Crime Working Group met with the town's CCTV monitoring agency it was highlighted that

reports can be requested from them which might be useful in providing contextual information for the Crime Statistics meetings.

Members noted the contents of the report with thanks.

c. **OPCC Newsletter**

Members noted this newsletter.

d. **Biggleswade Community Emergency Response Plan**

Members expressed concerns about the clause about the delegation of authority in the event of an emergency to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Committee Chairmen without any limitation.

(Due to technical difficulties, Cllr Strachan left the meeting as a panelist and re-joined the meeting via telephone.)

Cllr Strachan urged Members to adopt the document in its current format and to submit their concerns in writing to Officers. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised that these delegations had previously been adopted by Council and nothing relating to the hierarchy has been changed in this version of the document.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the current version of the Community Emergency Support Plan with a review date of 6 months. Members were requested to submit any comments to the Town Clerk & Chief Executive by email.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive expressed thanks to staff members who were on standby to implement the Community Emergency Response Plan for Biggleswade between Christmas Eve and Boxing Day due to heavy rainfall and significant flooding events across Bedfordshire.

e. **Land to rear of 33 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade SG18 0AT CB/20/00985/FULL**

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Appeal by Mr M Welbourn CB/20/00985/FULL Appeal Reference APP/P0240/W/20/3257024 Site at Land to rear of 33 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade SG18 0AT

The decision on this appeal was "Planning Appeal Dismissed".

13. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow Members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

None.

14. EXEMPT ITEMS

The resolution was **moved** that it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be excluded whilst the following exempt items were discussed.

a. Personnel Policies

The Council received the following updated personnel policies and procedures for approval:

- Capability and Absence Management Policy
- Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
- Councillor and Officer relations protocol
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council approve the policies.

b. HR Update

The Council received an update on a staffing matter.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council note the report.

c. Rose Lane

The Council received an update on the lease negotiations relating to Rose Lane Car Park

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council delegate authority to the Assistant Town Clerk to finalise the lease negotiations.

d. Town Clerk & Chief Executive Objectives

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the policy in reference to the Town Clerk's appraisal and progress review.

It was **RESOLVED** to share this as a for information item on the non-exempt agenda for the next full Council. Cllr Woodhead (Chair Personnel Committee) would be tasked with reviewing the document in the meantime to ensure that any sensitive commentary is redacted prior to publication. Objective 6 would be amended to read – To demonstrate progress towards achieving the CiICA qualification by April 2022 and not February, recognising that the Town Clerk & Chief Executive cannot register until April 2021.

e. New Depot

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members on the negotiation taking place with representatives of the Landlord. It was normal practice for tenants to make good any and all alterations at the end of the tenancy agreement thus incurring additional cost. The Town Clerk did not deem this to be satisfactory and has renegotiated a different position whereby the majority of adaptations will not be required to be returned to their original state. This important change is to be included in the contract (Head of Terms) currently being negotiated. The impact of this is to save the Council money at the end of the 15-year tenancy agreement should it wish to terminate.

f. **Public Realm Manager**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members in regard to the recruitment of a new Public Realm Manager following the resignation of Bob Catchpole.