



**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY  
2021 AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION**



**PRESENT:**

Cllr H Ramsay (Chairman)  
Cllr R Pullinger (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr D Albone  
Cllr I Bond  
Cllr G Fage  
Cllr M Knight  
Cllr M North  
Cllr M Russell  
Cllr F Foster (non-Committee Member)

Mr P. Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council  
Mr P. Truppin – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council  
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 2

**Meeting Formalities:**

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman 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 Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

The Chairman reminded the non-Committee Member in attendance at this meeting that he is not able to submit proposals or vote on any matters, nor will he be able to comment without being invited to do so by the Chairman in accordance with meeting governance rules.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**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 I Bond – Item 6d – Grants & Sponsorships 2021/2022.  
Cllr D Albone – Item 6d – Grants & Sponsorships 2021/2022.

3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

The Chairman advised Members of the public wishing to speak to use the “raise hand” function on screen.

None.

4. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

Members received and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purpose Meeting held on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020**.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Asset Register Update**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Professional Assistant updated Members on the progress of this project. A working copy of the Asset Register has been collated from two separate sources involving and significant administration into verifying current information in the document.

The results of the audit will determine purchasing procedures and time lines for replacement of equipment in the future. The Town Council will need to build the purchase timetable into annual budgets for non-capital assets.

An Asset Audit commenced on 18 January 2021 starting with Office and IT Equipment, the Public Realm and Market Equipment being looked at during the next two weeks. Furthermore, a full list of buildings and land in the Council’s ownership is being investigated and the results of those searches will be included in the Asset Register.

Cllr Fage asked for clarification regarding the purchase order process for assets. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed this process is now in place for the Town Council purchasing procedures.

Cllr Pullinger asked if there were plans to revalue any assets, in particular buildings and open spaces. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members that an independent Chartered Surveyor would be engaged to assess buildings and property valuations, with valuations for other assets being conducted by the Town Council’s current Accounting Solutions provider.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive reminded Members that this project is still ongoing and Members will be updated at the next F&GP Committee meeting on 13 April 2021.

b. **Contracts Database Update**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Professional Assistant updated Members on the progress being made in respect of operationalising the database, this included collating copies of contracts and reviewing contracts currently due for renewal.

The Town Council's next steps will be conducting a procurement assessment to determine if current contracts offer value for money, testing the quality of their offer and identifying what impact they have had.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive will be working with support staff to develop a programme to measure the effectiveness of current contracts. As well as identifying and putting in place a procurement and vendor check policy in line with financial regulations. Depending on the value of each contract, an assessment will be made as to whether an external tender process is to be implemented for the contract renewal.

The Assistant Town Clerk has created a draft Biggleswade Town Council Service Contract which will be offered to all contractors as their contracts expire. This contract will need to be individually adapted to the services specific to the vendor.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members an update would be provided at the next F&GP Committee meeting on 13 April 2021.

c. **Financial Risk Assessment**

The Assistant Town Clerk reminded Members this is part of the annual requirement under audit regulations to examine the Council's exposure to risk.

Changes not included in previous Risk Assessments and now included are for sports facility fees and car parking fees. The assessments have taken into account the significant impact of COVID-19 on the income and activities of the Council.

Cllr Pullinger commented that the overall framework of the Risk Management Scheme needs to be reviewed as, although the assessments explain what might go wrong, they do not expand on or quantify the consequences in the event of those risks materialising, and also there should be further information on mitigating factors to those risks.

It was **RESOLVED** 1. to accept the Risk Management Scheme in principle. 2. To note the offer from Cllrs Fage and Pullinger to provide some alternative templates for the Assistant Town Clerk to consider for future years and to bring proposals to the next F&GP Committee Meeting on 13 April 2021.

d. **Grants and Sponsorships 2021/2022**

Members commented on the draft version of Grants and Sponsorship policy on the Town Council's website and that a number of current grants submitted do not appear to meet the criteria of the draft policy. Cllr Pullinger advised the Committee the draft policy was previously submitted to full Council on 9 August 2016 and deferred for review by the next F&GP Committee meeting. It had subsequently not been reviewed or adopted.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers review the Grant & Sponsorship policy and re-submit this to the F&GP Committee meeting on 13 July 2021 for approval.

Members voted on applications as follows:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Grant requested 2021/2022</b>	<b>Committee Resolution</b>
Autism Bedfordshire	<b>£500.00</b>	<b>Approved: £500</b>
Bedford Daycare Hospice	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>Approved: £500</b>
Biggles FM	<b>£1,850.00</b>	<b>Approved: £1,850</b>
Biggleswade Allotment Association	<b>£2,800.00</b>	<b>Defer pending further investigation</b>
Biggleswade ATC Squadron (Royal Air Force Air Cadets)	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>Approved: £1,000</b>
Biggleswade Good Neighbours	<b>£500.00</b>	<b>Approved: £500</b>
Biggleswade History Society	<b>£750.00</b>	<b>Approved: £750</b>
Biggleswade Sea Cadets	<b>£1,500.00</b>	<b>Approved: £1,500</b>
Biggleswade United Football Club	<b>£310.00</b>	<b>Defer pending further investigation</b>
Carers in Bedfordshire	<b>£2,000.00</b>	<b>Approved: £2,000</b>
Central Bedfordshire Swim Squad	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>Refused</b>
East Beds Community Bus Ltd (Ivel Sprinter)	<b>£750.00</b>	<b>Approved: £750</b>
Hear2Listen	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Keech Hospice Care	<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>Approved: £1000</b>
Magpas Air Ambulance	<b>£536.00</b>	<b>Approved: £536</b>
Ivel Valley School	<b>£800.00</b>	<b>Approved: £800</b>

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the Biggleswade Allotment Association's Grant application to allow Officers to meet with their Chairman to discuss the Committee's questions. This meeting is to include Cllr F Foster in his capacity as Chairman of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the BUFC Grant application to allow Officers to meet with BUFC to investigate the factors behind the application as well as potentially to offer the Town Council's Public Realm team assistance.

**7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

**8. 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 Committee, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

None.

**9. EXEMPT ITEMS**

None.