



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2021
AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION

PRESENT:

Cllr M. Russell (Chairman)
Cllr G. Fage (Vice Chairman)
Cllr I. Bond
Cllr K. Brown
Cllr F. Foster
Cllr H. Ramsay
Cllr L. Fage
Cllr M. Foster
Cllr M. Knight
Cllr M. North
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
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Professional Assistant, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 9 (including Cllr S Watkins, Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Councillor)

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

Cllr D. Albone.

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 L Fage – Item 9h – Planning Application for Boddington Gardens.

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a. None.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

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

a. **Mr John Cliff – Stratton Way Resident**

Mr Cliff’s home backs onto the Stratton Way Recreation Ground and he voiced his objection to the proposed 3G pitch being sited here. He said current users of the field are loud and use bad language which can be heard by his small children and the floodlights used for evening training shine into his children’s bedrooms. He would like alternative sites to be explored for the proposed football pitch.

b. **Mr Luke Jones - Head of Department for Physical Education at Stratton Upper School**

Mr Jones believes the 3G pitch proposal to be a fantastic opportunity for Biggleswade and suggested that Stratton Upper School would like to be considered for the site of the 3G pitch. To this end, Mr Jones has held discussions with the FA, The Football Foundation, the Principal Roz Hodges and Cambridge Meridian Academies Trust’s Tim Daly. He believes this to be an opportunity to bring the Community and the school closer together and further support Biggleswade’s participation in football.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

a. **BRCC Community Agent – Lisa King**

Ms Lisa King presented to Members on her progress since starting in the role in November 2021.

Lisa has been busy with digitising records; building a database to help proactively manage her client base; creating a Biggleswade Community Agent Facebook page; distributing promotional brochures for Community Agent services; liaising with Biggleswade Good Neighbours; maintaining an active Facebook and social media presence and setting up an audio book library.

Lisa has been carrying out socially distanced doorstep visits since the beginning of December 2020, in line with COVID Risk Assessment protocols; has been in contact with a number of previous clients; and has daily contact with two particularly vulnerable residents, assisting with their needs.

Members expressed their gratitude to Lisa for all her hard work so far and asked about expanding her work with Social Services and Faith Groups. Lisa confirmed she will be working with local faith groups in the future and is currently working with Central Bedfordshire Council Community Wellbeing Champions.

6. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

a. Members received the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 12th January 2021** via Zoom Webinar. The following amendments were requested:

- **Item 3c: Mayor’s Announcements: Opening of Percy’s Fish and Chip Shop:** Richard Fuller is the Member of Parliament for North East Bedfordshire.
- **Item 11b: Highways Act 1980 Section 26 Pre-Order Creation of Bridleways West Sunderland Farm, Biggleswade, SG18 8SD Biggleswade CP:** Sections B to D do not appear to lead anywhere, rather than whether this is a footpath or bridleway.
- **Item 14a: Personnel Policies:** Cllr Pullinger requested that the policies approved by the Council should be listed.

Subject to these amendments being made, the Council **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Council Meeting of **Tuesday 12th January 2021**.

b. Members received the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 26th January 2021** via Zoom Webinar.

Item 6: Budget and Precept 2021 – 2022: Cllr Russell’s initial has been listed as Cllr R Russell on the table of votes and should be amended.

Subject to this amendment being made, the Council **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Council Meeting of **Tuesday 26th January 2021**.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

a. **From the Minutes of Tuesday 12 January 2021**

Cllr Pullinger requested an update on the Public Realm team’s move into the temporary depot. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised that the solicitor is reviewing the extensive contractual documents and it has taken some time to work through them. Final quotations are being sourced for electrical installations in the depot, with the successful electrical contractor to project manage the installations. There is a possibility that the Council will need to apply for planning permission for the installation of the air conditioning unit at the back of the building as this overlooks housing.

b. **From the Minutes of Tuesday 26th January 2021**

Cllr M Foster requested an update on messaging to residents relating to the increase in precept. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Officers have been in contact with Central Bedfordshire Council to formally request that a statement be included with the official notice to residents, but that option was refused.

A letter to residents informing them of the precept increase as well as Town Council strategic projects will be distributed to residents in the coming weeks. This will also be published to the Town Council website and on social media platforms.

9. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/20/03824/FULL - 7 & 11 Britten Place, Sullivan Court, Biggleswade, SG18 8RE**

Conversion of commercial office space (B1) to two residential dwellings. Amended proposal and information from applicant correcting the proposed use of the existing units from B1 office use (not Class A2 use as previously specified) to residential, and submission of additional marketing information to support application. Revised existing floor plans to specify correct existing use as B1 office.

Members asked for the reason this has been re-submitted. The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed this application is to be considered by Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Management Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS**, as per previous objections - due to loss of commercial space. Amenities, including Retail units promised by the Developer are still yet to be delivered with the loss of these units, such delivery will be highly unlikely.

b. **CB/21/00142/FULL- 4 Ouse Way, Biggleswade, SG18 8PZ**

Single storey rear extension and partial garage conversion with addition of rear roof light.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application due to the loss of off-street parking.

c. **CB/21/00163/FULL - 204 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8PJ**

Single storey rear extension following demolition of single storey rear extension. Single storey extension and conversion of attached 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.

d. **CB/21/00211/FULL - 12 Maple Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0EE**

Garage extensions and conversion.

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.

e. **CB/21/00349/FULL - 42 Whittle Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8GF**

Loft conversion with roof lights to rear and 2 pitched roof dormers to front.

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. In addition, the Council is concerned about privacy 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.

f. **CB/20/04221/FULL- 63 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JH**

Re-submission of planning application CB/20/02609/FULL Conversion of existing bank to physiotherapy clinic at ground floor and residential flats and residential block to the rear.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that 1) CBC conduct a noise assessment and take due consideration of impact of noise from business next door. 2) The residents are aware that in terms of BTC Parking Permit Policy, there will be no eligibility for resident parking permits. 3) The Physiotherapy Clinic will be eligible for worker permits.

g. **CB/21/00268/FULL - 10 Exmoor Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 0FN**

Single storey side extension.

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.

h. **CB/21/00315/FULL - 4 Boddington Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0PJ**

Proposed demolition of existing single storey rear extension and erection of single rear/side extension and replacement of garage flat roof.

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.

i. **CB/21/00355/LB - 6 Ivel Mill, Mill Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8AZ**

Listed Building: Replacement of single glazed timber windows, external French doors & sills.

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.

j. **CB/21/00210/FULL - 48 Beech Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 0EQ**

First floor side extension.

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.

10. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

Members received the following accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31/12/2020.
- ii. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee 31/12/2020.
- iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee 31/12/2020.
- iv. Lloyds Bank Payment listing December 2020.

Cllr Pullinger queried two cash payments on 16 December (£140 and £800) and requested transaction details. The Professional Assistant would update Members on the details of those transactions separately.

The Accounts as listed were **ADOPTED**.

11. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Standing Orders**

The Assistant Town Clerk presented a written report proposing amendments to Council Standing Orders and explaining the reasons behind the changes. In undertaking this review the Assistant Town Clerk took account of the NALC Model Standing orders as well as those of other Local Councils.

Cllr F Foster requested a red-lined document stating where changes have been made and the Assistant Town Clerk would send that to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** any changes to the Standing Orders to the next Council meeting.

b. **Review of Fees and Charges 2021 – 2022**

The Assistant Town Clerk introduced the suggested fees schedules for Council facilities. He explained that fees for allotments are being submitted for 2022 – 2023 in order to comply with the one-year notice condition to allotment tenants.

Cllr Pullinger said a more thorough review of how fees and charges are decided is needed. For example, fees for the Orchard Centre are for half-day and full-day use, when the room is currently used on an hourly basis. Additionally, discounts are applicable to one category of booking only but should be available to others. Regarding the costs for cemeteries, he reviewed burial fees for Leighton Linlade and Sandy online and noted Biggleswade's cemetery fees are significantly below their fees.

Cllr Russell requested clarification on whether the Council is legally bound to increase their fees by 1 April 2021 or whether this can be implemented at another point in the financial year. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive said he would prefer these changes be implemented at the start of any financial year.

It was **RESOLVED** to freeze fees for the Orchard Centre, Burials, Sports Facilities and the Market, and to accept the allotments increase for 2022-23. Additionally, Officers are to conduct a review of all the Town Council's charges for the next financial year.

c. **Sutton Neighbourhood Plan – Submission Consultation (Regulations 16)**

Cllr Russell commented that the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan, which has been prepared by the same consultant who has been engaged to write Biggleswade's Neighbourhood Plan, has been well written. The Plan has merit and should be well received.

It was **RESOLVED** to thank Central Bedfordshire Council for allowing Biggleswade Town Council the opportunity to comment and to wish Sutton well with this plan.

d. **Biggleswade 3G Football Pitch**

Cllr G Fage stated this is an exciting opportunity for Biggleswade but has prompted a number of questions from Councillors and the public about the proposed location. Members wanted to know more about the selection process around this site. Cllr G Fage recommended responding to the Bedfordshire FA acknowledging receipt of the letter and stating that the Council would like to work with the Football Association constructively on any proposed sites and to start a feasibility study of those.

Cllr Woodhead welcomed the interest and potential investment in the town. Cllr Strachan recommended reviewing land in private ownership, development properties with planning requirements for a certain amount of recreational or leisure requirements, land under Central Bedfordshire Council's ownership or Stratton School. Cllr Ramsay requested that alternative sites further out of town be included in the site review, either along Baden Powell or further out of town, where there would be less chance of neighbours being subjected to noise or nuisance.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will work with the Bedfordshire FA to investigate other potential sites within Biggleswade and to conduct a feasibility study.

12. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Planning application outcomes**

Members noted the report.

b. **Public Notice - Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 - Section 14 Central Bedfordshire Council - Biggleswade Footpath Nos. 30 & 33**

Members agreed to take these two items together.

Members discussed the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council detailing the temporary closure as required to allow for ongoing construction works between 23rd January 2021 to 22nd January 2022.

Cllr M Foster requested the Town Council contact the Highways team to request that maps be included in all future public notices.

Cllr Knight pointed out this notice, as well as the notice for Footpath 33 were sent to the Town Council after the development has started. He suggested the Town Council give feedback to the Planning team that planned future closures, especially in relation to future developments, be given to the Town Council in advance.

It was **RESOLVED** to write to Central Bedfordshire Council to explain that if footpaths 30 and 33 are to be closed and construction is to take place nearby, that the quality of those paths must be maintained at least to the current standard, and preferably enhanced. The Town Council requests that the standard of the current paths is recorded by Central Bedfordshire Council and the paths are revisited upon completion to ensure they are not damaged by the work.

c. **Royal College of Art – Our Future Town Project**

The Royal College of Art (RCA) has published an interim report on its recent “*Our Future Town*” study for Biggleswade.

Cllr Russell had sent emails to multiple community groups inviting their participation in the study and the RCA had done a lot of work online, particularly trying to connect with younger people. Regrettably, the response from the public had been low. Members discussed ways of widening the sample size for future work, perhaps via the newly-formed Community Engagement Group, an interview on BigglesFM, posts on social media and the Town Council’s website, as well as approaching community groups.

Cllr Russell advised Members that the RCA is working with the Transport Planning Society and in conjunction with NALC. Lynda Addison from the Transport Planning Society has been in contact with Cllr Russell to ask if Biggleswade Town Council would like to continue with the study. This is subject to receipt of further details on how they will be taking this forward. The work so far has enabled the development of a number of tools to encourage and generate feedback from the public on their vision for their town but funding is needed to be able to take this forward.

d. **Electoral review of Central Bedfordshire Council: Final Recommendations**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has published its final recommendations setting out new electoral arrangements for Central Bedfordshire.

The report was noted.

e. **Crime Statistics – December 2020**

A report from the Deputy Administration & HR Manager outlining and analysing the Biggleswade crime statistics for December 2020.

The Deputy Finance and HR Manager Helen Calvert re-joined the meeting via telephone due to technical difficulties.

Cllr Strachan thanked the Deputy Finance and HR Manager and Amanda Cawthorn for their continued efforts in presentation of the information in its current format and added that the Crime Working Group will be looking at this and sharing the information with the police.

Ms Calvert noted the additional data showing percentages of crime over 2019/20.

f. **CB/TRE/21/00006 - The Lodge, The Lawns, The Baulk, Biggleswade, SG18 8PT**

Works to trees protected by a tree preservation order: MB/99/0007 fell Beech Tree T21 (2838), remove deadwood to False Acacia Tree T10 (2841) and Beech Tree T16 (2840). Crown lift by 2.5m to Weeping Ash Tree T2 (2854).

This report was **NOTED**.

g. **Town Clerk & Chief Executive Objectives**

Members noted the information from Councillor Woodhead (Personnel Committee Chair).

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.

Mr John Cliff – Stratton Way Resident

Mr Cliff expressed his thanks to the Town Council for its transparency in Council meetings through inviting the public to join and for its continued efforts on behalf of the Community.

Mr Cliff also pointed out that Cllr Pullinger's question on certain cash payments is covered by a credit of £760 listed on the finance statement.

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. **Staff Matter**

It was **RESOLVED** that a one-off payment of £550 be paid to all staff (excluding contractors) as a thank you for their efforts and commitment during a particularly difficult year. The amount to be proportionately reduced for part-time staff.