



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 6TH APRIL 2021
AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION

PRESENT:

Cllr M. Russell (Chairman)
Cllr G. Fage (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
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
Ms N. Villa – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council (Exempt item only)

Members of Public – 5

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 to 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 Mayor asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

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 Strachan – Item 11d.

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. The Mayor acknowledged the recent passing of Rose Forbes, who served as a Town Councillor between 2007 and 2011. She was very involved in other aspects of the town's life, particularly Trinity Methodist Church and the twinning with Erlensee. She also founded the Biggleswade Gospel Choir. Members participated in minute's silence in her honour.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

The Chairman asked members of the public to use the electronic "raise hand" function if they wished to speak. There were no requests.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

Mr Jonathan Medlock, Surfin Café

Mr Medlock spoke about his plans for the Surfin Café, Market House, Biggleswade.

The café opened in 2003, there are now 18 internal seats and the outside space has grown considerably. Mr Medlock would like to improve the outdoor offer by adding wind barriers, which also provide a COVID-safe zone between customers and the public. CBC Highways Dept has given its approval for the proposal. The chosen product is a high-specification barrier that will slot into the ground and which is wind-flexible. There will be an opportunity for market square advertising on some of the barriers, along with a "welcome to Biggleswade historical charter market" slogan.

Cllr G Fage commented that his first impression is that this will smarten up the Town Centre. He asked to see some of the paperwork from CBC to understand the formal requirements set by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Mr Luke Newman – For Men To Talk

Mr Newman spoke about the Facebook group called 'For Men To Talk'. This group is about giving a platform to men who are suffering with anxiety, depression and grief, an opportunity to talk with fellow sufferers and improve their well-being. The group has grown significantly over time and has an active social media page. Meetings are held weekly, via Zoom for the time being. He started with 23 people and has 17 regular attendees and estimates up to 75 men in total have been involved.

Mr Newman asked Members to keep his charity in mind if they become aware of funding or grant opportunities. Members thanked Mr Newman for his hard work.

6. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

a. **Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of 9th March**

Item 9b – Planning Application for Unit 11, Eldon Way: Cllr Pullinger asked for the record to be amended for accuracy that it wasn't resolved the Council would not comment, this item was not considered at all.

Items 11g and h – Biggleswade 10km: Cllr G Fage clarified that both parties should be invited to the Town Centre Working Group meeting at some point rather than individual meetings being held with those applicants.

b. **Minutes of the Town Centre Management Committee Meeting of 11th March 2021**

None.

c. **Minutes of the PLOS Meeting of 16th March 2021**

Page 25 – Item 9e – Tree Inventory: Cllr F Foster clarified there was duplication of this Minute from the 24th November 2020. This Minute should end at ...*"budget requirement going forward."*

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

a. Subject to the amendments being made as set out in Item 6a above, Members **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 9th March 2021**.

b. Members received and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on **Thursday 11th March 2021**.

c. Subject to the amendment being made as set out in Item 6c above, Members **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on **Tuesday 16th March 2021**.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

a. **From the Minutes of the Council Meeting of Tuesday 9th March 2021**

None.

b. **From the Minutes of the Town Centre Management meeting held on Thursday 11th March 2021:**

Item 11b - Parking Permit issues - The Parking Permit section on the Town Council's website and social media does not mention discounted permits or promotion of the decisions of that meeting. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive agreed to update the website and social media pages accordingly.

c. From the minutes of the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on **Tuesday 16th March 2021:**

Item 6i – 3G Football pitch: Members requested an update on whether there has been any further contact with the FA. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed he has not heard back and will follow this up with them.

Item 6k – Drove Road Cemetery Update: Cllr Knight requested the specification of works be shared with Members.

9. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. **CB/21/00203/FULL - 9 Walton Grove, Biggleswade, SG18 8G**

Part conversion of double garage - application deferred from the Council Meeting of 9th March 2021.

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.

b. **CB/20/04781/FULL - 9A Rowletts View, Biggleswade, SG18 0FD**

Single storey side extension - application deferred from the Council Meeting held on 9th March 2021.

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.

c. **CB/21/00899/FULL – Land to the rear 48- 52 Lawrence Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0LS**

Construction of new residential house, formation of access, parking, turning and garden areas.

Cllr Pullinger noted there is already planning permission for a 3-bedroom bungalow which Members had objected to. This proposal is for 3 bedrooms with another floor – previous grounds for refusal related to access issues to Lawrence Road.

Cllr L Fage stated that the additional traffic coming in and out puts considerable pressure on the current narrow, 2-way road and that residents should be supported in getting the traffic flow changed on Lawrence Road.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application due to the following comments: 1) Poor Access, 2) Lack of capacity on the road, 3) Raising the issue of construction lorries and the right of way access for four houses. 5) Lawrence Road must be made a one way 6) The two storeys are overbearing and intrusive of the neighbours.

d. **CB/21/00936/FULL - 66 Fairfield Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0BS**

First floor side extension and single storey rear extensions.

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/21/00978/FULL - 1 Holly Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HX**

Part conversion of garage, single storey rear extension and first floor side rear 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.

f. **CB/21/00817/FULL - 15 Eagle Farm Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8JH**

Proposed part two storey and single storey rear extension.

Cllr Albone asked if a deadline may have been missed in light of building works already having commenced.

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.

g. **CB/21/01056/FULL - 46 Tavener Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8GZ**

Single storey rear 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/21/01059/FULL - 1 Thirlmere Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8LU**

Single storey front 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.

i. **CB/21/01047/FULL - 37 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8PF**

Single storey flat roofed rear extension.

Members discussed the poor quality of drawings submitted and the need for professional, well set out drawings to give a clear understanding of the proposed development. It was difficult to make a decision based on the poor quality of the drawings and Members requested this feedback be provided to CBC for future planning applications.

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/21/01050/FULL - 21 Anne Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0DD**

Single storey 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.

k. **CB/21/01006/FULL - 33 The Baulk, Biggleswade, SG18 0PX**

Single storey rear / 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.

l. **CB/21/00980/FULL - 40 Potton Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DZ**

Single storey rear and side extension.

Ensure that existing car parking to the rear of the building needs to remain. No objection subject to neighbours.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided 1) that the existing parking remains and 2) that the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

m. **CB/21/00869/FULL - 10 Anne Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0DD**

Single storey rear 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.

n. **CB/21/01218/LB - 4 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EB**

Listed Building: To put retail sign on building.

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.

o. **CB/21/01111/FULL - 20 St Margaret's Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 8NU**

Part single and part 3 storey side extension, loft conversion with front dormer. Single storey rear extension and extension to 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.

p. **CB/20/04792/ADV - Orchard Chase Land off Saxon Drive Biggleswade SG18 5AY**

Advertisement: Two entrance signage boards supported on steel posts.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application due to the appearance of the signs being detrimental to the Green Wheel and concerns that they will not be removed when the development is completed.

q. **CB/21/01041/FULL - 5 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8PF**

Two storey rear extension and single storey rear 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.

r. **CB/21/01285/VOC - 60 Saffron Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8DJ**

Variation of condition number 3 of planning permission CB/20/04501/FULL (Reinstatement of single dwelling into two dwellings, 2 storey rear extensions to both properties). Changes in design from a double storey extension to 60 Saffron Road to a Single storey lean to 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.

s. **Transport Interchange at the Railway Station:**

Cllr G Fage addressed Council in relation to the planning application submitted by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Town Council has been corresponding with Central Bedfordshire to address a number of issues with this current version of the Interchange. The scheme has a budget of £2.4m from the HIF and what is being proposed falls far short of what could be achieved for that amount of funding.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council writes to Central Bedfordshire Council with the following comments:

- It supports the change of priorities for Saffron Road and Station Road, including the compulsory right turn out of Palace Street.
- It supports the proposal to install double yellow lines along Station Road.
- The crossing points as proposed appear sensible, however, they should be changed to zebra crossings without pavement buildouts which narrow the road. The uncontrolled crossings as proposed are very unsafe at such a busy junction.
- The Council regrets the lack of detail over electronic signage for bus and train times – this should be an obvious requirement for a transport interchange.
- Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that development “will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but for the lifetime of the development”. The Council argues that the Interchange is not large enough to sustain the population increases expected, particularly when new development will be further from the town centre and will rely more heavily on public transport.

- Once the new shuttle buses to the anticipated Holme Farm development are factored in, the Town Council believes the Interchange will struggle further to cope.
- The quality of the proposed shelter falls short of the standards outlined in the emerging Local Plan.
- Section 14.10.2 states Transport Interchanges “*should enable interchange between bus and rail by providing a high-quality waiting area and onward travel information, enabling a connected journey for locations that are not within walking or cycling distance of a railway station*”. There appears to be a single bus shelter, hardly larger than the one currently outside Baystrait House. This is not large enough to cope with potential passenger numbers, leaving people exposed to the elements whilst waiting. This will do little to encourage the use of buses – if trees need to be removed to create a larger L-shaped shelter then that would be preferable.

10. ACCOUNTS

a. Financial Administration

Members received the following accounts:

- Detailed Balance Sheet to 28/02/2021.
- Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee 28/02/2021.
- Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee 28/02/2021.
- Lloyds Bank Payment listing February 2021.

The Assistant Town Clerk stated that the Detailed Balance Sheet was erroneously sent out by the Accountant as this included a balance for an account the Council no longer has. He has asked the Accountant to issue a revised Balance Sheet.

The Accounts as listed were **ADOPTED**.

Internal audit

Cllr Ramsay stated that the Auditor’s report listed working with “district council” rather than Central Bedfordshire Council. Council will request that they correct their records.

Cllr Pullinger noted the last sentence on page 49 - “*invoices for the 2020 allotments are raised at the Orchard Centre by DCK*”. This should be clarified.

There were no items that the Auditor’s wished to bring to Council’s attention and Cllr M Foster remarked that, given the circumstances over the last year, Officers should be commended for the audit and he extended his congratulations to the team for their work.

The Internal Audit Report was **ACCEPTED**.

11. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Consultation on the Local Plan – Proposed Main Modifications

The response to this has to be sent by 5 May 2021. There is a significant amount of work to be done and everyone needs time to go through it properly in light of Land East, Holme Farm and Town Centre. Cllr Russell suggested deferring this to the meeting of 4 May 2021. She

offered to draft a response and asked Members to submit their comments to her by email for inclusion. It was noted that all responses will be sent to the Inspectors.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the Council Meeting of 4 May 2021.

b. **Highways Act 1980 Section 119 Pre-Order Consultation - Proposed Diversion of Part of Public Bridleway Nos. 28 and 2. Sunderland Hall Farm, SG18 8SD, Biggleswade, Dunton & Sutton CP**

Members debated the reasons for this proposed change, security and health and safety aspects of the proposal.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to the creation of a new Bridleway and supports this, but requests that the previous Bridleway be amended to a public footpath.

It was **RESOLVED** to ask for increased signage showing the new route of the Bridleway.

It was also **RESOLVED** that the Town Council contact CBC to request that this new Bridleway be maintained to as good a standard as the current Bridleway.

c. **Langford & Biggleswade Community Fund Group**

Cllr North updated Members on this application. The idea is to make a garden at Ivel Valley School, which will be maintained by students and the funds will be used for purchasing equipment, plants and tools. This request is solely for the Town Council to support an application for funds from the Wind Farm Fund.

Cllr Pullinger suggested the applicant should potentially look at requesting additional funds in order to purchase higher quality tools or equipment, which would last longer.

It was **RESOLVED** to support this application to the Wind Farm Fund.

d. **Speedwatch Signs**

Members wanted clarity of whether this request is for funds from Biggleswade Town Council or from Central Bedfordshire Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the 4th May 2021 Town Council meeting.

e. **Market Strategy**

Cllr G Fage updated Members that the Town Centre Management Committee and Officers have met three times over the last six months. A number of changes need to be implemented and this is a priority for the town centre to ensure the market can thrive and make it a draw for people into the town centre. The Town Council has engaged the services of Meg Green and Hannah Able from "Made in the Wade" as consultants. They have a number of fresh ideas on marketing, development and strategy for the Market.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the strategy for four months on a trial basis and to bring this item back to the Council meeting of 24 August 2021 for a final decision.

The pitch fees on slide 7 were **AGREED**, however these should not come into effect immediately - TCM or Council will need to approve when to implement them and that meeting will need to have the fees presented in full.

Given the strategy requires policy updates which are not due until June, it was **RESOLVED** that if questions are raised over a contradiction between the two, then the strategy should take precedent as the most recent document.

On 17th April 2021 non-essential traders will resume trading with the following restrictions:

- a. It was **RESOLVED** that no vans should be allowed on to the market as per the market policy – the only exception would be for those whose van forms part of the stall (such as the fish stall or the vintage clothes stall for example).
- b. It was **RESOLVED** that pitches will be either 10ft x 10ft, or 2 x 10ft x 10ft, no bigger and there should be no trading from outside of pitches.
- c. It was **RESOLVED** that decisions on inviting traders to return and putting this into effect should be with Meg Green and Hannah Abel, who will work closely with the Market Superintendent to deliver a smooth relaunch on 17th April 2021.

f. **Remote Meetings and Call for Evidence**

The Assistant Town Clerk updated Members. Current legislation does not permit remote Council meetings beyond 7th May 2021 but the Government does not plan to relax current lockdown rules until 17th May 2021.

NALC has been lobbying the government in regard to clarifying this and the Minister for Local Government has written to Councils nationally offering options to consider having fewer meetings and delegating more to Officers. The other issue relates to having members of the public attending meetings in person. Any councillor joining via electronic means and not in physical attendance at meetings will not be permitted to vote under the current legislation.

The Assistant Town Clerk has therefore been investigating alternate options of COVID-safe use of the Town Hall facilities for meetings, and is working with Node IT Solutions regarding additional technical software and equipment.

Members discussed the merits of maintaining live streaming capability in the interests of public transparency as well as COVID-safe attendance at meetings for members of the public.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer writing to the Minister of Local Government in response to the call for evidence to a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers should investigate all options of hosting Town Council and Committee meetings after 7th May 2021 in line with current government legislation and return to Council with a formal proposal on accommodating both Town Councillors, Officers and members of the public in a COVID-safe manner.

It was **RESOLVED** that live streaming of Town Council and Committee meetings be allowed to continue.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. **Central Bedfordshire - Temporary Closure – Biggleswade: Bridleway No 52**

The Order for the above bridleway closure has been sealed by Central Bedfordshire Council.

This Order was **NOTED**.

b. **Central Bedfordshire Council - Biggleswade Bridleway No 11, Rail Crossing Diversion Order and Biggleswade Bridleway Nos 13 & 14 Creation Order 2020**

The Highways Act 1980 notices confirming the above Orders together with copies of the Orders. The Notices will appear in the Biggleswade Chronicle on 19 March 2021. The Creation Order comes into operation on 19 March 2021.

Cllr Knight expressed concerns over the deadline for installation of the crossing footbridge, which is written as 31 November 2024. He added that large projects often over-run and questioned whether this may have an adverse effect on the installation if the bridleway is not installed by that date.

It was **RESOLVED** to request clarification on clause 1a relating to the deadline by which a crossing footbridge is to be installed, which is listed as 31 November 2024.

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.	<u>EXEMPT ITEMS</u>
	<p>Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council resolve to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.</p> <p>(15a – Staffing Update)</p> <p>The following resolution was moved that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.</p>

15.	<u>EXEMPT ITEMS</u>
a.	<u>Staffing update</u> The remuneration of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive was discussed.