



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14th DECEMBER 2021
AT 7PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, THE OLD
COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL



PRESENT:

Cllr M. Russell (Chairman)
Cllr G. Fage (Vice Chairman)
Cllr I. Bond
Cllr K. Brown
Cllr F. Foster (via Zoom)
Cllr M. Knight
Cllr M. North
Cllr R. Pullinger
Cllr H. Ramsay (for Exempt Session)
Cllr D. Strachan
Cllr C. Thomas

Mr P. Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr K. Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships, Biggleswade Town Council (via Zoom)
Mr P. Truppin – Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management, Biggleswade Town Council (via Zoom)
Ms W. Solomon – Head of Finance & Planning, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Professional Assistant, Biggleswade Town Council (Meeting Administrator)

Members of the Public - 2

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 that individual. The Mayor asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr D. Albone, Cllr L. Fage, Cllr M. Foster, Cllr J. Woodhead.

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 14b – Biggleswade Town Football Club.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4 December – Induction of Reverend Liz Oglesby-Elong

Cllr Russell attended the collation, installation and induction of the Revd. Liz Oglesby-Elong as the Vicar of Biggleswade. The Bishop of Bedford and the Archdeacon of Bedford led the service. Revd. Oglesby-Elong was formally welcomed to Bedfordshire by HM Deputy Lieutenant Andrew Wallis, having previously been at the Diocese of London, Cllr Russell welcomed her on behalf of the Town Council and the people of Biggleswade. Other parts of the ceremonial referenced various aspects of her ministry.

The ceremony was postponed from September due to positive Covid tests and, in the interim, the Revd. Oglesby-Elong has exercised her ministry as a Priest in Charge, taking part in both the Remembrance Parade and the Christmas Fair.

b. 6 December 2021 – Rail Access Group

Cllr Russell attended a meeting of the Rail Access Group on 6th December 2021. The project team from Network Rail reported that funding has been confirmed by the Department for Transport and they will appoint a contractor to take forward the detailed design and build. In the current climate, there were issues with securing a contractor within the allocated budget and the delay means that the access will not be completed until June 2023.

Network Rail reported that it is intended that both the bridge infrastructure at the station and that for Lindsell's Crossing will be lifted into place when the mainline is closed at Christmas 2022.

GTR confirmed that new toilet facilities should be in place by the end of March 2022.

Central Bedfordshire Council is still in the process of appointing a contractor for the Transport Interchange - when both contractors are in place then Network Rail and CBC will produce a shared timeline.

c. Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Russell updated the Council on progress to date. All the individual comments in the Regulation 14 Consultation responses are being considered and addressed in the Consultation Statement. The Town Council's Planning Consultant, Dave Chetwyn, is making suitable adjustments to the Neighbourhood Plan based on those responses and it is intended that the Neighbourhood Plan will be on the agenda of the Town Council meeting of 25th January 2022.

d. 26th November 2021 – Biggleswade Christmas Lights Switch On

Cllr G Fage attended the Christmas Lights Switch on 26th November and represented the Town Council on stage. All of the feedback he has heard from members of the community and schools has been very positive, with a number of residents saying that they'd attended the event a number of years running and had not seen as large a turnout as this year.

Cllr G Fage extended the Town Council's thanks and appreciation to all the Town Council staff and managers who worked so hard, from 5:00 am in the morning until after 11:00 pm.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

None.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Knight stated that the Council made a number of resolutions to the Traffic Consultation for Item 9b of the Town Council Meeting of 12th October 2021 (A00156 – Potton Road, Biggleswade – Traffic Calming and Waiting Restrictions). Also included was a strong objection to the introduction of speed cushions along Potton Road. At CBC's Traffic Management Committee meeting on 30th November 2021 the report stated the Town Council did not respond. CBC has approved the scheme without considering the Town Council's objection.

The Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Manager advised a response had been sent to the Highways Consultation team 22nd November 2021 – eight days before the Traffic Management Meeting. The Head of Governance reiterated that he has not received a response and would follow this up with CBC.

Cllr Bond was able to present arguments at this Traffic Management Meeting. The officer recommendations were accepted in their entirety as the Council's response was not sent within the stipulated deadline. The case manager at CBC referenced having received the letter in the Traffic Management Meeting. This carried less weight than a formal response would have if received in time - it made it more difficult to argue the case. Cllr. Bond requested that all consultations, planning applications, appeals and other articles which have deadlines be responded to within those deadlines.

Cllr Bond said that the Council could write to Cllr Dalgarno, Chairman of the Traffic Management Committee to see if he would be prepared to open a dialogue on this issue.

Cllr Strachan requested an explanation from Officers for why this matter was not completed in time.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 23rd November 2021** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

- **Page 8 – Item 9b: Housing Allocation Scheme:** The date of the Town Council Meeting should read 11 January 2022.

Subject to this amendment being made, the Minutes were **APPROVED.**

- b. Members were presented with the draft Minutes of the **Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of Thursday 14th October 2021** and the reconvened **Meeting of Thursday 18th November 2021.**

There were no questions posed to Cllr Russell as Deputy Chairman of this Committee.

- c. Members were presented with the draft Minutes of the **Town Centre Management Committee Meeting of Tuesday, 16th November 2021**.

Item 5: Members Questions: Cllr Pullinger pointed out that he had raised the two questions, not Cllr Russell.

- d. Members were presented with the draft Minutes of the **Personnel Committee Meeting of Wednesday, 24th November 2021**.

Orchard Centre Report: Cllr G Fage stated that there were other actionable items around the Orchard Centre Review that would need to be considered by other Committees and reinforced that those needed to be addressed in the next relevant Committee responsible for those actions, not just by the Personnel Committee.

- e. Members were presented with the draft Minutes of the **F&GP Committee Meeting of Tuesday, 19th October 2021**.

There were no questions posed to Cllr Pullinger as Chairman of this Committee.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. **From the Town Council Meeting of Tuesday 23rd November 2021:**

None.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Aspirations for Biggleswade 2021 – 2025**

Cllr G Fage stated this Corporate Plan is the Council's vision between now and 2025 to serve the Town both in its current form and in line with expected growth of Biggleswade in the future.

It was **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Aspirations for Biggleswade document.

- b. **Biggleswade 10km Run**

Cllr Knight commended the detail in the submitted proposal. Cllr Pullinger stated it needs to be clarified how much support the Council will give to the event but cautioned that the Council should not be an active partner. Cllr Pullinger also pointed out that CBC is usually involved in approving events such as these.

Cllr G Fage stated there are a number of events next year that will require Officer capacity. He recommended this be brought to another Town Centre Management Events Working Group, potentially in January 2022 to help with planning.

Cllr Pullinger asked Officers to let the organiser know that they are able to apply for a grant. The deadline for doing so is 31 December 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers a) meet with the organiser to discuss the potential scope of the event and expected Town Council involvement; b) put together a proposal for the Council to consider at a future Meeting; and c) invite the organiser to apply for a grant by the deadline of 31 December 2021.

c. **Public Consultation on Aligning Policies across BLMK**

It was **AGREED** that Members respond individually to the consultation.

d. **Prohibition of Turns – A00173 Baden Powell Way and Ouse Way, Biggleswade**

Cllr Pullinger stated that this essentially clarifies the restrictions on this junction. A number of residents have been caught out by the fact that it is not clear this is a bus lane and this plan will be provide road users with more clarity.

This report was **NOTED**.

e. **Financial Administration**

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

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31/10/2021.
- ii. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee 31/10/2021.
- iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee 31/10/2021.
- ii. Lloyds Bank Payment listing October 2021

f. **Signatories on CCLA Account**

Members were requested to approve additional signatories on the CCLA Account to facilitate funds transfers in line with Financial Regulations.

It was **RESOLVED** to add Wilhelmina Solomon as signatory on the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund Account.

It was **RESOLVED** that two signatures will be required on all CCLA request forms;

It was **RESOLVED** to add Cllrs R Pullinger, F Foster, M North and I Bond as signatories to the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund Account.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/21/04907/FULL - 30 Jupiter Way, Biggleswade, SG18 8EW**

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

b. **CB/21/04766/FULL - 36 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JL**

Change of use to Sui Generis (restaurant to arts centre with cafe/bar) including internal modifications.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application and **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** this planning application.

The Town Council wishes to convey to the Case Officer for this application that it strongly supports this planning application and does not share the concerns raised about noise pollution. Members would like to point out that, as this is an historic and long-established Town Centre, anyone looking to purchase or purchasing property there should expect to experience noise from businesses and entertainment establishments.

c. **CB/21/04767/LB - 36 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JL**

Listed Building: Change of use to Sui Generis (restaurant to arts centre with cafe/bar) including modifications to lower office floor by 700mm to create a customer toilet also re model former kitchen into two rooms and realign front doors.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application and strongly support Central Bedfordshire Council in this application.

The Town Council wishes to convey to the Case Officer for this application that it strongly supports this planning application and does not share the concerns raised about noise pollution. Members would like to point out that, as this is an historic and long-established Town Centre, anyone looking to purchase or purchasing property there should expect to experience noise from businesses and entertainment establishments.

d. **CB/21/04831/FULL - The Post Office, 3 Station Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8AA**

Change of use from vehicle workshop to parcel sorting area removing roller shutter door and replacing with new wall and doors. New cycle shelter to yard area.

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

e. **CB/21/05257/FULL - 1A Havelock Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DB**

Change of use from class E (retail) to class C3 to create 2 one-bedroom flats, with an extension at first floor level.

The Town Council wishes to point out to Central Bedfordshire Council that Members and Officers have been unable to access the planning portal on CBC's website to view these plans.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application subject to provision of a minimum of two off-road parking spaces within the curtilage of the property.

f. **CB/21/05338/FULL - 9 Playfield Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8JL**

Proposed ground floor rear extension.

The Town Council wishes to point out to Central Bedfordshire Council that Members and Officers have been unable to access the planning portal on CBC's website to view these plans.

As a result, it was **AGREED** that Officers request a further extension of time up to 12th January 2021 from Central Bedfordshire Council by which to respond.

g. **CB/21/05348/FULL - 146 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8PB**

Side extension with roof lights, reposition of entrance door with gable canopy.

The Town Council wishes to point out to Central Bedfordshire Council that Members and Officers have been unable to access the planning portal on CBC's website to view these plans.

As a result, it was **AGREED** that Officers request a further extension of time up to 12th January 2021 from Central Bedfordshire Council by which to respond.

h. **CB/21/05344/FULL - 24 Beech Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 0EG**

Single storey conservatory, on rear elevation.

The Town Council wishes to point out to Central Bedfordshire Council that Members have been unable to access the planning portal on CBC's website to view these plans.

As a result, it was **AGREED** that Officers request a further extension of time up to 12th January 2021 from Central Bedfordshire Council by which to respond.

11. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Notes of the Community Engagement Group Meeting**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members that these meetings are held regularly to garner feedback and gauge the public response to policies. These notes will be shared with the Council regularly going forward.

These notes were **NOTED**.

12. **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 Tony Reynolds

Mr Reynolds spoke about Holme Court Avenue. He has consistently experienced drivers travelling over the speed limit on this road, which poses a particular danger near the sharp bend. Mr Reynolds asked Council to request additional or different road calming measures to combat speeding.

Cllr Russell said that cars can be seen driving into the middle of the road to avoid driving over the speed cushions. Cllr Russell stated that the Town Council will ask CBC to address this.

13. **EXEMPT**

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.

(14a. Street Trading Application)

(14b. Biggleswade Town Football Club)

(14c. Drove Road Cemetery Chapel)

14. EXEMPT

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.

a. Street Trading Application

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to the trader having and displaying a suitable, recognised food hygiene rating.

Cllr H Ramsay entered the Council Chamber at this point.

Members discussed the need for the Town Council to have a clear policy to ensure there are not too many street traders in the same area and to ensure the display of food hygiene ratings. Cllr Russell requested that Cllr Knight and Cllr G Fage take these points to Town Centre Management.

Cllr Russell had also received a complaint about a busker on the square playing for extended lengths of time and with extra large speakers, which was causing nuisance to local businesses. Cllr Russell asked Officers to contact CBC Environmental Health to investigate the sound level and also to investigate what licencing is needed by the busker. Cllr Russell also asked if there is a limit to the time they are allowed to busk. This issue was also referred to Town Centre Management.

b. Drove Road Cemetery Works Quotations

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive thanked Mr Brian Hawkins for all his input and assistance over the last 2 years and for helping to keep up the momentum on the project.

Mr Hawkins advised Members that the tender specifications called for tenders that prioritised works by urgency and category of work. Tender specifications were sent to four contractors and two responses were received. These tenders were opened in accordance with the Town Council's policy, in the presence of two Councillors and two Officers on 2nd December 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the lower quote.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint a project manager.

It was **RESOLVED** that a letter of intent to be issued to the contractor.

It was **RESOLVED** to consider the funding for this project at the next F&GP meeting.

Members requested Mr Hawkins to quote for contract services to manage the project.

c. Biggleswade Town Football Club

Regarding an approach from a surveyor on behalf of the Club to lift a restrictive covenant.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers should investigate the request and bring a report to Council at the 11th January meeting as an exempt item. Officers were asked not to engage with the surveyor until the Council fully understands the issues.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8:28 pm