



BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 – 2021

CONTENTS

AGENDA	Page 3
MINUTES – 23rd APRIL 2019	Page 4
REPORTS – 2020/21	
Annual Report – Cllr M Russell	Page 6
Public Land and Open Spaces – Cllr F Foster	Page 9
Town Centre Management – Cllr G Fage	Page 14
Finance & General Purpose – Cllr Mrs H Ramsay	Page 16
Personnel – Cllr J Woodhead	Page 18
COUNCIL INFORMATION	
Town Councillors’ Details	Page 19
Town Councillors’ Committee Membership	Page 20
Town Councillors’ Attendance Records	Page 21
Meeting Dates 2021/22	Page 22
Council Staff, Contact Details	Page 24

AGENDA

Biggleswade Town Annual Assembly will take place on **Thursday 6th May 2021 via Virtual Access** commencing at **7.30 p.m.** in order to transact the undermentioned items of business.

Members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman. Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VsbqM2PjQ_-eIAEf_8SV5A



1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **MINUTES OF MEETING**

To receive and adopt the Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Tuesday 23rd April 2019.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

4. **ANNUAL REPORT OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Annual Report will be presented by Cllr M Russell.

5. **REPORTS**

- a. Public Land and Open Spaces – Cllr F Foster.
- b. Town Centre Management – Cllr G Fage.
- c. Finance & General Purpose – Cllr H Ramsay.
- d. Personnel – Cllr J Woodhead.

6. **RESOLUTION AND QUESTIONS**

For the meeting to consider subjects and resolutions affecting the Town, from Local Government Electors.

7. **OPEN FORUM – MATTERS RELATING TO BIGGLESWADE**

- a. **Ward Councillors**
- b. **Town Councillors**



MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
HELD ON TUESDAY 23rd APRIL 2019
AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE



PRESENT:

Cllr M North (Chair)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr G Fage
Cllr L Fage
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Russell
Cllr I Bond
Cllr B Briars
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr H Ramsay

Mr R McGregor, Biggleswade Town Clerk
Mr M Thorn, Deputy Town Clerk
Mr B Catchpole, Biggleswade Council Works Manager
Mr S Newton, Town Centre Operations Manager
Mrs J Durn, BTC Meeting Administrator

Members of Public – 4

1. **APOLOGIES**

None

2. **MINUTES OF MEETING**

The meeting received and adopted the Minutes of the Town Assembly held on Tuesday 08 May 2018.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no Matters Arising.

4. **ANNUAL REPORT OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Annual Report was presented by Cllr M North. A full printed version of all the Reports presented to the meeting is available in the Annual Assembly booklet distributed prior to the meeting.

5. **REPORTS**

a. **PUBLIC LAND AND OPEN SPACES**

The Public Land and Open Spaces Report was presented by Cllr B Briars.

b. **TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT**

The Town Centre Management Report was presented by Cllr M Foster.

c. **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE**

The Finance & General Purpose Report was presented by Cllr H Ramsay.

d. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Neighbourhood Plan Report was presented by Cllr M Russell.

6. **RESOLUTION AND QUESTIONS**

There were no subjects & resolutions affecting the Town, from Local Government Electors.

7. **OPEN FORUM - MATTERS RELATING TO BIGGLESWADE**

- a. Ward Councillors: There were no matters relating to Biggleswade.
- b. Town Councillors: There were no matters relating to Biggleswade.

8. **OPEN FORUM**

The Chairman asked for questions to be taken at this point:

- Public Land and Open Spaces – No questions
- Town Council Management – No questions
- Finance & General Purpose – No questions
- The Neighbourhood Plan – No questions

DRAFT

Annual Report of Biggleswade Town Council 2020-2021

It is a privilege to serve as the Mayor of Biggleswade and I was delighted to be appointed last May for a second term although this has been a year of challenges for the Town Council.

The COVID-19 pandemic had arrived and both councillors and officers were having to adapt to new ways of working. More importantly, we had to ensure that the services we offer to the town were COVID-compliant and as normal as possible. In addition, staff were assisting both Central Bedfordshire Council and local voluntary groups to support the more vulnerable people in our town. Over the year, as the rules of lockdown/tiers changed, so the way the Town Council worked and what services could be offered, changed.

For councillors, the biggest change was to move to virtual meetings which are then live-streamed to YouTube. This allows the business of the Council to be transacted and has the advantage of making it easier for members of the public to understand the Town Council's work and speak to the Council on issues of importance to them. The disadvantages are those that are becoming generally more apparent about remote working and which get worse over time when you do not interact informally with colleagues. It is harder to get to know each other better and to maintain team spirit. As colleagues who chair Committees will also have found, it takes a good deal of concentration - and good eyesight - to watch up to 20 little boxes on the screen and conduct the meeting appropriately!

None of this has stopped the Town Council achieving a great deal in the last year.

We began the year without a Town Clerk but were very pleased to appoint Peter Tarrant, who joined the Council at the end of August. Peter's whole career has been in local government, with experience of local governance at all levels. He is bringing fresh ideas and energy to the Council and will help the Council to become more effective and better able to provide all the services which our growing town needs.

Two important changes have already been achieved. The Council has just launched its new website which is more accessible and makes it much easier to find information. The Council's Community Engagement Group will monitor it and ensure we deal with any glitches. Staff have received training to keep the website up-to-date and, over time, we hope to add more historical information.

The contract has been signed for the leasing of a unit in Eldon Way as a new depot for the Public Realm Team. As the town grows, there is more public space to look after and more equipment needed, which has to be properly stored. It is hoped that the Team will move into their new home in the next couple of months.

The Council has responsibility for an important heritage asset in the town – the Grade II listed Chapel in the Drove Road Cemetery. Investigatory work has been completed and it is hoped that repair work and damp eradication can be carried out in the coming year.

The Charter Market was reduced to only food stalls for a large part of the year but, to coincide with the return of other types of stalls, the market has been refreshed with new stalls, buskers and its own branding. With this and the bench refurbishment currently taking place, combined with more outdoor seating from cafes around the Market Square, the town centre will be buzzing on Saturdays!

More visitors will help all our local businesses to recover from the pandemic and we have been encouraging this with our 'Buy Biggleswade' campaign.

As well as being involved with the overall business of the Council as a member of all its Committees, I have continued to chair the Neighbourhood Plan Strategy Group.

This Group was first formed in June 2018 when Council resolved to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for the town and includes representatives of the community as well as four town councillors. Since then, Council has agreed the vision for the Plan and the areas to be covered by the Plan and there have been two engagements with the public. The first was in the spring of 2019 with drop-in sessions at the

Town Hall and the Orchard Centre and an online questionnaire. The second has just closed and was a Survey Monkey online survey (because of the pandemic) run for us by Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity. The next step is to produce a first draft of the Plan, including the feedback from those two engagements.

Alongside this work, BRCC have also conducted a review of the Biggleswade Green Infrastructure Plan which was first produced in 2010 and led to the creation of the Green Wheel. In various public engagement opportunities, residents were asked how they would like to see the Green Infrastructure Plan developed and also which local green spaces they most valued. BRCC have now produced a final draft of the Green Infrastructure Plan which has just been approved by the Town Council.

BRCC have also taken the results of the most valued local green spaces, analysed them against the Government criteria and recommend fifteen to be designated in the Neighbourhood Plan as Local Green Spaces. This would give them protection from development. The Town Council has also approved that list of 15 to be taken forward within the Neighbourhood Plan.

There is a statutory process to go through to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and that is due to start in the late summer/early autumn with a formal six-week consultation. The draft Plan will then be reviewed in the light of the consultation responses before being submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council as the Local Planning Authority. They will then take the Plan through the rest of the formal process which will involve a further six-week consultation, an examination by a planning inspector and finally, a referendum which we hope will take place in May 2022. All those on the electoral roll in Biggleswade will be entitled to vote in the referendum and, for the Plan to become Supplementary Planning Guidance, there needs to be a majority in favour of those who vote.

If the Plan is approved and becomes SPG, It will be taken into consideration by the Planning Authority when they consider all planning applications for Biggleswade. The Neighbourhood Plan is a chance for Biggleswade to have more of a say in the way our town develops.

The part of the mayoral role which has been sadly lacking this year is attendance at civic events. Very little has happened due to the pandemic. In a normal year, the Mayor would attend up to ten civic services across the county and various fundraising events, such as a Beating the Retreat or a lecture followed by a curry lunch, both supporting the Bedfordshire section of ABF The Soldiers' Charity. These civic events are a great opportunity to network, to raise Biggleswade's profile, find out what is going on and learn from others.

2020 marked 20 years of twinning between Biggleswade and Erlensee in Germany. A party from Erlensee was due to visit us but, again, it had to be cancelled. Instead there was a Zoom party on Saturday, 22nd August. Herr Stefan Erb, the Mayor of Erlensee, attended and I was invited to say a few words on behalf of the Town Council, which I was delighted to do, having visited Erlensee three times over the years. It is noticeable how good our German friends' English is, so I determined to finish with a few words in German: Ich hoffe aufrichtig, dass die Freundschaft zwischen unseren Städten noch mindestens weitere zwanzig Jahre andauern wird - und dass viele von uns dann anwesend sein werden, um dies zu feiern! (I sincerely hope that the friendship between our towns will continue for at least another twenty years – and that many of us will still be around to celebrate!)

Biggleswade would also have had a Civic Service on 7th March at St. Andrew's Church but it had to be cancelled. It would have been an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the work of so many volunteers who do so much within our community. It would have been particularly appropriate to be able to recognise all the work to support our vulnerable residents during the pandemic. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to give my and the Council's thanks to all those people who do so much for Biggleswade in so many different ways whether personally or running community groups and initiatives. They make Biggleswade such a good place to live.

The only service that I did attend was on the 16th April. There was an invitation from the Lord-Lieutenant to represent Biggleswade at the County of Bedfordshire Service of Thanksgiving for HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. The service took place at St. Paul's Church, Bedford, in the presence of the Lord-Lieutenant, Mrs. Helen Nellis, and the High Sheriff, Mr. Eric Masih. The Lord-Lieutenant spoke about the Duke, his visits to Bedfordshire and his key charities. The preacher was the Bishop of Bedford, the

Right Reverend Richard Atkinson and there was wonderful music from a small section of the St. Paul's choir. The occasion, on the eve of the Duke's funeral, was both solemn and moving.

Finally, I would like to say a huge thank you to colleagues, both councillors and staff, who have worked so hard in the last twelve months to keep the show on the road and to ensure that the Council made progress. Everyone has had to be flexible in so many ways to allow the Council to achieve what it has. We all look forward to settling down into a more normal routine but working hard to achieve our vision for Biggleswade, as articulated in the Neighbourhood Plan:

“Biggleswade should be a thriving, large market town with individual shops, services and leisure offer in the town centre, retail and business parks to the south of the town and plenty of green spaces to enjoy the open air”

**Cllr Madeline Russell,
Mayor of Biggleswade 2020-21
27 April 2021**

PUBLIC LAND & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE 2020/2021

Chair: Cllr Frank Foster, Vice Chair: Cllr Lesley Fage
Cllr Kevin Brown, Cllr Grant Fage, Cllr Mark Foster, Cllr Mark Knight,
Cllr Michael North, Cllr Colin Thomas, Cllr Madeline Russell,
Cllr Duncan Strachan

Chairman's Annual Assembly Report 2020/2021

Public Realm Staff

Following a period during the early days of the pandemic when the working regulations were being developed, it was decided that the staff would work half of their normal hours on a rota system. This changed almost a year ago when full-time working again commenced. During this very challenging year the Public Realm Staff have shown flexibility and have worked hard under very difficult conditions. They have continued to maintain our outdoor spaces to a high standard. There have been a number of changes to our Public Realm team which, together with the operational difficulties caused by the pandemic, has meant that the number of projects we hoped to complete is fewer than planned. The Council is recruiting further staff members and strengthening the management team to enable projects which have been on hold to be progressed.

PLOS "Walkabouts"

In August, during a break in the pandemic lockdowns, the PLOS Committee together with the then Public Realm Manager Bob Catchpole and the incoming Town Clerk and Chief Executive Peter Tarrant attended two targeted "walkabout" inspections of some of the town's Public Realm sites. This enabled us to see what progress had been made and also to put together a "wish list" of projects. Unfortunately, the continuing COVID crisis and the accompanying disruption has meant that some of the areas highlighted remain on the "to do" list.

Part of the Walkabout report of the 8th August 2020 as it relates to **Stratton Way Cemetery** has been included as an appendix at the end of this report. Most of what was reported then remains relevant now and will be progressed as appropriate through the coming year.

Flower Beds, Planters and Hanging Baskets

(a) Flower Beds

We have reviewed the suppliers of plants to the Council and also the range of plants to be used. The planting of our flower beds will soon be underway and we look forward to colourful displays throughout the summer and early autumn.

(b) Planters

The various planters, particularly those at the north and south entrances to the town, have been refurbished and the programme to update those at other sites will continue during this year.

(c) Hanging Baskets

Our hanging baskets are being assembled to our specification by a new supplier this year and will be put into place by the Public Realm team shortly and they will be maintained by them throughout the season.

Allotments

(a) Access problems

The development of the Taylor Wimpey site on Saxon Drive has caused considerable access problems to our Allotments. Council staff have been in regular contact with the builders to try to resolve the access difficulties as they arose. Taylor Wimpy have agreed to repair the damage to the allotments track

caused by their vehicles and the Town Council will keep the condition of the track constantly under review and maintain it as necessary.

(b) Signage

It is planned to have better signage to the allotments site itself also a plot map/plan to enable easier plot location.

(c) Areas for Recycling, Composting and Waste Materials

Our future plans include dedicated areas for recycling, composting and waste.

Buttercup Mead

The dilapidated fence between Buttercup Mead and the new Sorrel Gardens development off Sorrel Way has been replaced by the Public Realm Team and the small, rarely used and outdated play area is under review.

Play and Recreation Areas

The required safety inspections and basic maintenance schedule for play equipment has continued throughout the pandemic. The facilities have been open to the public when the pandemic rules have allowed this, and temporary signage to inform the public of the current rules has been put in place as the situation changed. Grass cutting and chemical weeding to control unsightly lichen and weed growth has continued.

A comprehensive review of all Play and Recreation sites is currently being undertaken and a report to Council will be presented shortly.

Tree Survey

A comprehensive survey of all trees that are the responsibility of the Town Council has now been undertaken. The survey is the initial stage of what will be regular inspections of our trees to keep them healthy, well-maintained and safe.

Saxon Gate Pocket Park and Biggleswade Linear Wood

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) owns both the Saxon Gate Pocket Park and Biggleswade Linear Wood and currently maintains them both.

Biggleswade Town Council (BTC) has been in discussion with CBC with a view to taking on the maintenance of these areas subject to a terms agreement and the payment of an appropriate maintenance fee. Also, negotiations relating to the possibility of BTC taking over the complete management of both sites on a 25-year lease agreement are currently underway.

The New Public Realm Depot

An ongoing problem for the Council has been the lack of facilities for our Public Realm team and suitable storage space for the equipment they use. During this year, following a detailed search, our Officers found ideal premises in Eldon Way, Biggleswade.

In addition to a staff room with catering facilities and toilets together with more than enough space to house the grass cutting and other essential equipment, there will be an enclosed workshop to enable in-house repairs and the maintenance of equipment, fencing and planters etc as required. The Council obtained the keys to these premises on Friday 23rd April 2021.

Public Realm Equipment

During late summer 2020 a comprehensive review of the equipment used by the Public Realm team was undertaken and a report was made to Council. The review concluded that it was essential that a substantial amount of new equipment was needed to enable our staff to work safely and more efficiently. The Council approved the expenditure and the equipment was purchased for delivery as and when new Public Realm Depot became available. Delivery of this new equipment is therefore now imminent.

Drove Road Cemetery

(a) Specialist Repairs and Maintenance at Drove Road

The boundary walls and the two chapels within the Grade II listed Drove Road Cemetery, which dates back to the mid 1800s, require some immediate repairs and other ongoing specialised maintenance. Some of the previous repair work has not been up to the required standard. The Council has now engaged Hawkins Historic Limited who are specialists in listed building repair. Mr Brian Hawkins from this company has put together specifications for various projects to go out to tender to cover both the immediately necessary repairs and future required repairs and maintenance. Mr Hawkins will project manage the works as they proceed.

The Town Council meeting of Tuesday 27th April 2021 attended by Mr Hawkins included further discussions on the Drove Road Cemetery situation and a clear roadmap for progressing this important matter will be put to Council in the near future.

(b) Public Realm Team Maintenance at Drove Road

The regular maintenance by the Public Realm team has been stepped up and the team has taken on the responsibility of maintaining any unkempt graves so that the overall appearance of the cemetery can be improved. This action will be undertaken only after every effort has been made to contact the deceased's family. Action has also been taken to fence off an area which had been reported as being used for drug related activity. Intrusive buddleia growth embedded in the chapel steeple has been removed.

(c) Tree Works

All trees within the cemetery have been inspected by a tree specialist with a view of putting together a programme of maintenance to cover the safety and health of the trees at the right time of the year. Some trees can be saved by the use of props to avoid them being felled. To aid vehicle access, our team are cutting back branches overhanging the driveway to the chapels. A large unsightly tree stump close to the main entrance, remaining after the removal of a diseased tree is to be removed as part of the programme.

(d) The Drove Road Chapels

Because of the lack of storage and workshop space, the two chapels have been utilised for those purposes by the Public Realm team. This situation will now change with the advent of our new Eldon Way depot. The consecrated chapel on the right-hand side when entering from Drove Road will be emptied of any stored items and will be returned, as far as possible, to its original condition so it can be used for religious ceremonies as required. The un-consecrated chapel on the left will be completely cleared and refurbished. Current plans are that this chapel could be let to a suitable business.

APPENDIX – STRATTON WAY CEMETERY

On 8th August 2020 a majority of the members of the PLOS Committee visited the cemetery. As Chair of the Committee I produced a report at that time. Most of that report remains relevant today so it is included below:

1. FUNDAMENTAL REVIEW OF BTC CEMETERIES

It is accepted that a fundamental review of the Councils cemetery policy is needed and that the notes here should be considered as part of that wider review.

2. NOTICE BOARDS AT THE ENTRANCE

It was felt that glazed lockable notice boards should be positioned on both sides on the outer side of the cemetery wall to avoid the need for unsightly encapsulated notices to be fixed (as currently) to the gates with cable ties.

3. CEMETERY MAP

The idea of a cemetery map was liked by the group with the following suggestions:

- i. The map position would work symmetrically if positioned to the left, opposite the current information board.
- ii. A signboard of similar style could be moved from the far end of the cemetery entrance which would match the style of the existing information board.
- iii. The cemetery map could be included on the BTC website.

4. ASHES SCATTERING AREA

- a. The concept of setting up an area for the scattering of ashes in the right-hand side (consecrated) second section of the cemetery was generally liked and was felt to be worth progressing.
- b. The idea of a “Remembrance Wall” for the affixing of remembrance plaques was also liked but it was felt that this wall should be incorporated as part of the ashes scattering area.
- c. It is suggested that the next stage to progress this would be for a plan to be produced by the Works Manager for discussion firstly by the PLOS Committee then the full Council.
- d. There are a number of things to consider with regard to the Scattering Area and the Remembrance Wall including:
 - (i) Benches around the perimeter
 - (ii) Paved area around the perimeter
 - (iii) Individual marker signs in the scattering area
 - (iv) Wall plaques
 - (v) Other Councils’ rules, regulations and pricing structures that relate

5. PLANTERS AND BENCHES

- a. Planters
 - i. It was felt that the “sleeper” type of planters as used elsewhere in the town could replace the existing concrete planters.
 - ii. It was felt that the two circular grassed areas which are positioned in the main central avenue should have a minimum of four planters positioned symmetrically.

- b. Benches

It would be preferable that any benches placed on these circular areas be of a similar style and that any that are in poor condition be removed. It would be preferable if the two circular grassed areas were laid out in the same way with the same number of benches.

6. CEMETERY POLICY

It was felt that there are various aspects of current cemetery policy which are in need of review. The group also suggested some ideas for further consideration including:

- a. A more orderly policy of where burial plots can be positioned.
- b. Consider contacting local faith groups to find out if our current policy meets their needs.
- c. Consider including a requirement in our burial regulations that funeral directors either make their own arrangements to remove excess soil or to pay a fee for BTC to do this.
- d. Consider having the soil storage area fenced off to reduce its visibility when/if soil has to be stored before clearance.
- e. Consider the idea of a grave maintenance policy which BTC could provide for a fee with options of various contract periods.

7. WASTE BINS

It was felt that the current wire mesh open waste bins should be replaced with a more suitable style.

8. NORTH END STRATTON WAY ENTRANCE

This entrance, together with the mown grass lead-in to it is very well used but could be improved. A check on the ownership of the lead-in strip was suggested. The sign at this entrance could be used for the cemetery map at the main entrance as it is of similar style to the one already there and a new sign placed here.”

Since the above report was written, and following a very wet autumn/winter period, the edges of the grass roundabouts which form part of the main central drive through the cemetery have become rutted and damaged and look very unsightly. Resolving this issue will be included in the plans for this year.

Cllr Frank Foster
Chairman Public Land & Open Spaces Committee
6th April 2021

TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2020/2021

Chair: Cllr Grant Fage, Vice Chair: Cllr M Knight
Cllr Ian Bond, Cllr Michael North, Cllr Robert Pullinger, Cllr Madeline Russell,
Cllr Duncan Strachan, Cllr Colin Thomas, Cllr Jonathan Woodhead, Cllr David Albone

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL ASSEMBLY REPORT 2020/2021

The last twelve months have been unprecedented for town centres across the country.

Sadly, and unsurprisingly, Biggleswade has not been exempt from the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our bars, pubs, cafes, restaurants, hairdressers and beauty salons have been forced to close, and many of our smaller independent traders have struggled to open due to the lack of space for social distancing.

As restrictions are easing, unfortunately the likelihood is that a small number of businesses will not trade again.

On behalf of the council, our thoughts are with every employee, business owner and landlord who have struggled through the last year.

We are sorry for the uncertainty and insecurity all businesses have had to face, but the Town Centre Management Committee is determined to do everything we can to tap in to pent-up-demand and get people spending in town again.

As we emerge from a year of lockdowns, there are now signs of hope and this Committee has an important role to play in securing the recovery.

In the last year, our Councillors have adopted a pro-active approach to filling empty shop units, helping no fewer than five new businesses to find the right premises, navigate the planning process, and get themselves established.

This new mentality of approaching potential investors in our town is something that is only going to gather pace as the economy picks up – I am determined to keep working at this.

Our Town Council has also revised parking orders, now allowing for two hours free in most of our car parks, and no charges at all on weekends.

We also have new parking signage, which is clearer, simpler, and more professional.

The task ahead is to publicise the free parking better and to finally sort out directional signage to help visitors find our car parks.

The Town Council's "Buy Biggleswade" campaign launched last summer – it has acted as a reminder to residents to back local businesses through the difficult period, and to do their bit in helping our town centre.

At Christmas time, in place of the annual switch-on event, the Committee worked to introduce a new light show to act as a constant draw into the town centre throughout the Christmas period.

This was very well received by residents and businesses alike – I very much hope we can deliver this in future years.

The Town Council has also taken unprecedented steps to reform our market offer - we have partnered with the team from Made In The Wade to rebrand the market, to source new traders, and to professionalise the whole operation.

We are only part way through that journey but in the coming months it will make the market a draw once again, bringing footfall into town from Biggleswade and beyond.

This year we have pushed Central Bedfordshire to finally complete the decluttering – our town centre looks much more inviting as a result.

This is complemented by the bench refurbishment programme – these have been well-received by residents and are often full of people out enjoying the sunshine.

Our hanging baskets will soon be back up back up, looking bigger and brighter than ever before.

Our planters on Hitchin Street have been refurbished as well.

I would like to thank Cllr Frank Foster and the Public Realm team for their partnership throughout the year.

Progress has been made on the provision of CCTV however there is a lot more to do in upgrading our cameras and improving coverage.

There were a number of break ins over the New Year period – sadly this is nothing new. Our Council has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the quality of the CCTV images makes securing solid evidence easy.

Next year the Committee will need to look closely at our town centre events offering, putting the budget to good use, carefully and strategically.

The Committee should also look to accelerate conversations with Central Bedfordshire Council, with the aim of knocking down Century House in the next two years, and prudently planning how the £800k S106 is deployed.

In my first year as Chairman, we have made good progress, but there is a great deal more to do.

I would like to thank my Deputy Chairman, Cllr Mark Knight, without whom the progress this year would have been but a fraction of what we actually managed to get up off the ground.

My thanks as well to the Town Council staff for their continued commitment to helping TCM carry out its agenda.

We have been a strong team this year and I look forward to another twelve months of delivering the transformation our town centre needs.

Cllr Grant Fage
Chairman
Town Centre Management Committee

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE 2020/2021

Chair: Cllr Hazel Ramsay, Vice Chair: Cllr R Pullinger, Cllr D Albone, Cllr Ian Bond, Cllr G Fage, Cllr M North, Cllr M Russell, Cllr M Knight

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL ASSEMBLY REPORT 2020/2021

Biggleswade Town Council Report on Financial Accounts Year Ended 31st March 2021

I am pleased to report the following information as an overview of the Town Council's financial performance for the year. The end of year closedown has not yet been finalised, so this report is not fully indicative of the final position for this year. Whilst we aim to report on the most important parts of the finances it must be understood that more detailed information is available which is subject to change when all year end entries have been completed.

Summary of Results for the Year

The council is currently showing a surplus on the budget of £66,627 for the year. However, there has been Section 106 grants received in the year that are to be recoded to reserves and released back to income when the related expenditure is incurred. This may affect the surplus to the extent that these funds have not been spent as of 31st March 2021.

You will see from the figures for this year that COVID has impacted on the income that had been budgeted for pre COVID. Biggleswade Council has ensured that our staff and officers have a safe working environment and has purchased equipment to conform to government regulations.

Significant differences are as follows –

- The Orchard Centre has achieved an income of £4,276 compared with its budget £50,250 and has expenditure of £77,517.
- Biggleswade Market Income was short of budget by £10,107.
- Council grants. Council awarded grants totalling £28,340 against a budget of £32,017.
- Car Park fees fell well short of budget (by £42,842) at £10,158 whilst expenditure was £84,047.
- The elections budget of £4,000 is to be moved to reserves for future election costs.
- Recreation grounds income was short of budget (by £2,951) at £6,289.

In July 2021 BTC opened a CCLA's Public Sector Deposit Fund account, making an initial transfer of £450,000. The aim was to increase the amount of interest that is received compared with the bank deposit rates. In the last three quarters of the financial year ending 31st March 2021 the Council has received £666 from CCLA in interest to date compared with an outturn the previous year of £593 for the full year.

Major Activities

During the year, the Council also undertook the following projects:

- Purchase of IT equipment for Admin purposes re COVID safety regulations £3,817.
- Purchase of vehicles/equipment for Public Realm £8,443.

Asset Disposals

A 2-ton Tipping Trailer /Rotovator Chipper was disposed of realising £1,667.

Public Realm Depot

A depot was sourced locally enabling Public Realm equipment to be stored safely and kept in workable condition. Previously, equipment had suffered from the outside storage from weather and damage. The depot includes staff amenities and workshop facilities for equipment maintenance.

Biggleswade Town Council's finances remain in a good position with an anticipated £685,000 in Bank and Cash balances.

It is too early to be specific about balances on General and Earmarked Reserves, but it is anticipated, as predicted at Budget Setting, that the General Reserve will still be below minimum target at the year end. Earmarked Reserves, nevertheless, are more than adequate for the council's medium-term needs. However, BTC has a strategy in place to restore the General Reserve to its target level over the next 3 to 4 years.

Cllr Hazel Ramsay
Chairman
Finance and General Purpose Committee

Personnel Committee 2020/2021

Chair: Cllr Jonathan Woodhead, Vice Chair: Cllr C Thomas
Cllr M Foster, Cllr F Foster, Cllr M Knight, Cllr M North,
Cllr R Pullinger, Cllr Mrs H Ramsay, Cllr M Russell, Cllr D Strachan

Chairman's Annual Assembly Report 2020/2021

1. Over the past year the main Personnel change has been the appointment of a new Town Clerk and Chief Executive to take over from the Interim Town Clerk, Philip Truppin. After a thorough selection process involving the whole Council we were delighted to appoint Dr Peter Tarrant as the Town Council's new Town Clerk and Chief Executive in August 2020. We were delighted to have Peter on board with his extensive experience of principal local authorities and the private sector.
2. Since Peter's appointment a transformation process has been underway to become one of the best Town Council's in the country and so that we can take on additional services that may be devolved to the Town Council in future. This work is ongoing but is already yielding results such as a move to a new Depot for the Public Realm equipment, additional savings being made and an enhanced Market offer.
3. Sadly, there have also been some departures of long-standing staff over the last year and we wish them the best of luck in their continuing careers. We have however welcomed other new staff into the Public Realm team and we welcome their contribution to helping our town flourish.
4. Like many organisations, this past year has seen Biggleswade Town Council staff working under constrained circumstances with the impacts of COVID-19 and remote working. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive has led the vanguard of remote working (which was a new departure for the Council) while balancing the need for an office presence to serve the needs of the public. I want to offer my thanks to all the Town Council staff for their commitment over this difficult time. I hope that as we come out of the pandemic we can all continue to strive to offer the best possible customer service to the people of Biggleswade.

Cllr Jonathan Woodhead
Chair, Personnel Committee

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL - TOWN COUNCILLORS

CONTACT DETAILS		WARD/PARTY	
Albone , Cllr David david.albone@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 48 Drove Road, Biggleswade SG18 8HD	Tel: 01767 221385	Ivel	Labour
Bond , Cllr Ian ian.bond@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk Shortmead House, Shortmead Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 0FG	Tel: 01767 313663	Ivel	Conservative
Brown , Cllr Kevin kevin.brown@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 9 Mulberry Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HU	Tel: 01767 225325	Ivel	Labour
Fage , Cllr Grant grant.fage@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 22 Rose Lane, Biggleswade SG18 0JT	Mobile:07748 512312	Holme	Conservative
Fage , Cllr Lesley lesley.fage@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 25 Boddington Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0PH	Mobile:07709 859108	Stratton	Conservative
Foster , Cllr Frank frank.foster@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 71 Wilsheres Road, Biggleswade SG18 0DN	Tel: 01767 314027	Ivel	Conservative
Foster , Cllr Mark mark.foster@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 22 Sorrell Way, Biggleswade SG18 8WB	Tel: 01767 220250	Stratton	Conservative
Knight , Cllr Mark mark.knight@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 30 Mountbatten Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 0JJ	Mobile:07753 250584	Stratton	Conservative
North , Cllr Michael michael.north@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 52 Dells Lane, Biggleswade SG18 8LP	Tel: 01767 600715	Holme	Conservative
Pullinger , Cllr Robert robert.pullinger@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 20 Soundy Paddock, Biggleswade, SG18 0RQ	Mobile:07989 987147	Stratton	Conservative
Ramsay , Cllr Mrs Hazel hazel.ramsay@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 56 Holme Court Avenue, Biggleswade SG18 8PE	Tel: 01767 312874	Stratton	Conservative
Russell , Cllr Mrs Madeline madeline.russell@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 31 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade SG18 0AN	Tel: 01767 312966	Ivel	Conservative
Strachan , Cllr Duncan duncan.strachan@ntlworld.com 3 Tennyson Avenue, Biggleswade SG18 8QD	Tel: 01767 225919	Stratton	UKIP
Thomas , Cllr Colin colin.thomas@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 11 Drove Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8HD	Mobile:07940 053496	Stratton	Conservative
Woodhead , Cllr Jonathan jonathan.woodhead@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk 21 The Baulk, Biggleswade, SG18 0PX	Mobile:07719 888476	Stratton	Conservative

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCILLORS

Cllr Ian Bond
Cllr Steven Watkins
Cllr Mark Foster
Cllr Dr Hayley Whitaker

MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEES 2020/2021

The Chairman and Vice Chairman, ex-officio, shall be voting Members of every Committee, unless they signify that they do not wish to serve

COUNCIL	FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE	PUBLIC LANDS & OPEN SPACES	TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT	PERSONNEL
Cllr. M. Russell (Mayor)	Cllr. H. Ramsay (Chair)	Cllr. F. Foster (Chair)	Cllr. G. Fage (Chair)	Cllr. J. Woodhead (Chair)
Cllr. G. Fage (Deputy Mayor)	Cllr. R Pullinger (Vice Chair)	Cllr. L. Fage (Vice Chair)	Cllr. M. Knight (Vice Chair)	Cllr. C. Thomas (Vice Chair)
Cllr. D. Albone	Cllr. D. Albone	Cllr. K. Brown	Cllr. D. Albone	Cllr. F. Foster
Cllr. I. Bond	Cllr. I. Bond	Cllr. G. Fage	Cllr. I. Bond	Cllr. M. Foster
Cllr. K. Brown	Cllr. G. Fage	Cllr. M. Foster	Cllr. M. North	Cllr. M. North
Cllr. L. Fage	Cllr. M. North	Cllr. M. Knight	Cllr. R. Pullinger	Cllr. H. Ramsay
Cllr. F. Foster	Cllr. M. Russell	Cllr. M. North	Cllr. M. Russell	Cllr. M. Knight
Cllr. M. Foster	Cllr. M. Knight	Cllr. C. Thomas	Cllr. D. Strachan	Cllr. R. Pullinger
Cllr. M. Knight	TOTAL = 8	Cllr. M. Russell	Cllr. C. Thomas	Cllr. M. Russell
Cllr. M. North		Cllr. D. Strachan	Cllr. J. Woodhead	Cllr. D. Strachan
Cllr. R. Pullinger		TOTAL = 10	TOTAL = 10	TOTAL = 10
Cllr. H. Ramsay				<u>APPEALS</u>
Cllr. D. Strachan				Cllr. K. Brown (Chair)
Cllr. C. Thomas				Cllr. I . Bond (Vice Chair)
Cllr. J. Woodhead				Cllr. D. Albone
TOTAL = 15				Cllr. G. Fage
				Cllr. L. Fage
				TOTAL = 5

REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

3 x Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils	Cllr J Woodhead. Cllr C. Thomas. Cllr M. Knight
1 x Biggleswade Twinning Committee	Cllr J Woodhead. Cllr D. Albone (substitute)
1 x Fen Reeves meetings as proxy voter	Cllr I Bond. Cllr M North (substitute)
2 x Biggleswade Green Wheel Development Group.	Cllr I Bond. Cllr R. Pullinger. Cllr M Foster
1 x Police Liaison Officer	Cllr D. Strachan. Cllr L Fage
1 x Sir John Cotton Educational Foundation	Deferred see Annual Statutory Minutes 26.05.2020
2 x Windfarm Grant Panel	Cllr M North. Cllr H. Ramsay

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RECORD

28th APRIL 2020 – 27th April 2021

Councillors	Council Meetings 2020-21	Annual Statutory Meeting 2020	Biggleswade Joint Committee 2020-21	Finance & General Purpose 2020-21	Public Land & Open Spaces 2020-21	Town Centre Management 2020-21	Personnel	Total
Cllr. M. Russell (Mayor)	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%	94%
Cllr. G. Fage (Deputy Mayor)	100%	100%		100%	100%	100%		100%
Cllr. D. Albone	89%	100%		100%		100%		97%
Cllr. I. Bond	100%	100%		100%		100%		100%
Cllr. K. Brown	89%	100%			100%			96%
Cllr. L. Fage	83%	100%			100%			94%
Cllr. F. Foster	100%	100%			100%		100%	100%
Cllr. M. Foster	94%	100%			100%		100%	99%
Cllr. M. Knight	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Cllr. M. North	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	33%	88%
Cllr. R. Pullinger	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	100%	100%
Cllr. H. Ramsay	89%	100%	75%	100%			100%	93%
Cllr. D. Strachan	100%	100%			100%	100%	100%	100%
Cllr. C. Thomas	100%	100%			100%	100%	100%	100%
Cllr. J. Woodhead	100%	100%				67%	100%	92%



PREDICTED MEETING DATES FOR 2021



Subject to change

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

DATES	TIME	MEETING	
2021			
5th January			
12th January	7.00 pm	Council	
19th January	7.00 pm	Finance & General Purposes	
21st January	2.30 pm	Biggleswade J C -via Zoom	
26th January	7.00pm	Council (Precept Setting)	
2nd February	7.00 pm	Personnel	
9th February	7.00 pm	Council	
16th February			
23rd February	7.00 pm	Town Centre Management	
2nd March			
9th March	7.00 pm	Council	
16th March	7.00 pm	Public Land & Open Spaces	
23rd March			
30th March			
6th April	7.00 pm	Council	
13th April		Postponed Council NP	
19th April	6:00pm	Postponed Appeals	
22nd April	2.30 pm	Biggleswade J C	
27th April	7.00 pm	Council (Postponed F& GP)	
29th April	6:00pm	Appeals	
4th May	7:00 pm	Annual Statutory	
6th May	7.30 pm	Annual Assembly	
11th May	7.00 pm	Personnel	
13th May	7.00 pm	Finance and General Purposes	
18th May	7.00 pm	Town Centre Management	
25th May	7.00 pm		
1st June	7.00 pm	Council	
8th June	7.00 pm	Public Land & Open Spaces	
15th June			
22nd June			
29th June	7.00 pm	Council	
6th July			
13th July	7.00 pm	Finance and General Purposes	
15th July	2.30 pm	Biggleswade J C	
20th July			
27th July	7.00 pm	Council	
3rd August			
10th August	7.00 pm	Personnel	
17th August			
24th August	7.00 pm	Council	
31st August			

7th September	7.00 pm	Town Centre Management	
14th September			
21st September	7.00pm	Council	
28th September	7.00 pm	Public Lands & Open Spaces	
5th October			
12th October			
DATES	TIME	MEETING	
14th October	2.30 pm	Biggleswade J C	
19th October	7.00 pm	Council	
26th October	7.00 pm	Personnel	
2nd November	7.00 pm	Finance and General Purposes	
9th November			
16th November	7.00 pm	Council	
23rd November	7.00 pm	Town Centre Management	
30th November	7.00 pm	Public Lands & Open Spaces	
7th December			
14th December	7.00 pm	Council	
		2022	
20th January	2.30pm	Biggleswade J C	

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL STAFF

Biggleswade Town Council Management Team

Name	Job Title	Email Address	Telephone
Peter Tarrant	Town Clerk and Chief Executive	peter.tarrant@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07940 389085
Philip Truppin	Assistant Town Clerk	philip.truppin@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07552 169073
Nina Villa	Head of Human Resources	nina.villa@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134
Simon Newton	Place Shaping Manager	simon.newton@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07494 075022
Jonathan Wooley	Deputy Public Realm Manager	jonathan.wooley@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07947 631350
Kay Croft	Administration and HR Manager	kay.croft@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134
Helen Calvert	Deputy Administration and HR Manager	helen.calvert@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07485 327611

Town Council Office staff

Alison Dennis	Committee Secretary	alison.dennis@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07904 594491
Sian van der Merwe	Professional Assistant	sian.vandermerwe@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07583 905829
Karen Saunders	Administrator	karen.saunders@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07376 489182
Tracii Thomson	Accounts Administrator	tracii.thomson@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07890 424010

Orchard Centre staff

Angela Thomas	Information Officer	angela.thomas@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07377 662466
Andrew King	Caretaker	andrew.king@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07552 169069
Graham Jones	Assistant Caretaker	graham.jones@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134

Public Realm staff

Carl Rummey	Machine Operative	carl.rummey@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134
Tony Tyrell	Property Maintenance	tony.tyrell@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134
Marsha Kenney	Operative	marsha.kenney@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134
Ryan Chambers	Operative	ryan.chambers@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134
Paul Manners	Operative	paul.manners@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134
Simon King	Operative	simon.king@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	01767 313134

Market staff

Colin Keeble	Market Superintendent	colin.keeble@biggleswadetowncouncil.gov.uk	07976 529624
--------------	-----------------------	--	--------------