



**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022 AT THE OFFICES OF**  
**BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL, THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4**  
**SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE COMMENCING AT 7:00PM**



**PRESENT:**

Cllr R. Pullinger (Chair)  
Cllr M. North (Vice Chair)  
Cllr D. Albone  
Cllr I. Bond  
Cllr G. Fage  
Cllr M. Knight  
Cllr M. Russell  
Cllr D. Strachan  
Cllr F Foster (non-committee Member – via Zoom)

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

Members of the Public – 4

**Meeting Formalities:**

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed 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 Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr H Ramsay.

**ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES**

None.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item**

Cllr D. Albone – Item 6c - Allotments.

b. **Disclosable Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item**

Cllr Russell – Item 6a – Grant Application: RAF Cadets

Cllr Strachan – Item 6a – Grant Application: Biggleswade Community Safety Group

Cllr Pullinger – Item 6a – Grant Application: Biggleswade District Scouts

Cllr Bond – Item 6a – Grant Application: Biggleswade History Society

3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow Members of the public to put questions or to address the Committee, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Biggleswade Scouts and Biggleswade Phoenix Explorer Emily and Jenna gave spoke about their grant request is for a grant to allow four young people from the Biggleswade Scouting community an opportunity to attend the World Scout Jamboree in Korea as this is the largest youth event in the world. There will be over 40,000 people in attendance, from 167 countries. The young people attending will be able to share their experiences with other Scouts, Cubs and Beaver groups and their families across Biggleswade and hopefully inspire the next generation of Scouts. They hoped for the Town Council's support for their grant application.

Scout Leader Nick Kealy, Unit Leader of the Bedfordshire Jamboree Contingent. He explained that there are thirty six young people have been selected from Bedfordshire, fifteen of those are from Biggleswade District and four from the Town of Biggleswade. This is the largest educational event in the world, to be held in August 2023. Over the next eighteen months the process of fundraising for attendance will be a learning experience for those young people, teaching them teamwork, leadership skills, entrepreneurship. This is the 100-year anniversary of the Jamboree and those that attend will make life-long friendships as well as being able to impart knowledge to the next contingent that will be attending the 2027 Jamboree in Poland.

4. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

Members reviewed the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021** and these were **APPROVED**.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

From the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021**.

None.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Grants 2022 / 2023**

The Head of Finance & Planning advised the Council that the proposed budget for 2022/2023 is set at £18,687, with the total value of grant applications received this year sitting at £40,285.

Cllr Pullinger advised the Committee that there is also £3,100 remaining funds in the 2021/2022 budget and some of this funding can be used to cover some of the applications. Cllr G Fage also commented that there will be a further round of grants funding allocated later in the 2022/2023 financial year and any remaining funds will be allocated then.

Cllr Knight reminded the Committee that the proposed budget figure is yet to be agreed and will be done later in the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members would do a first round of proposals and if the value of these is over the proposed budget, a second review would be done.

Members **APPROVED** the following grant allocations:

1.	1 <sup>st</sup> Biggleswade Rainbows	£	148.50
2.	Biggleswade Scouts Unit 17 Jamboree Contingent	£	750.00
3.	Biggleswade Community Carnival	£	500.00
4.	Biggleswade Community Safety Group	£	800.00
5.	Biggleswade Crab Lane (Railway Embankment)	£	60.00
6.	Biggleswade First Aid Club	£	380.00
7.	Biggleswade Good Neighbours	£	500.00
8.	Biggleswade History Society	£	750.00
9.	Biggleswade Sea Cadets	£	1,000.00
10.	Biggleswade Sports	£	400.00
11.	Biggleswade Town Cricket	£	0
12.	BRCC in collaboration with Kings Corner / Biggleswade Baptist Church	£	1,805.82
13.	Carers in Bedfordshire	£	1,000.00
14.	Sue Ryder St. John's Hospice	£	1,000.00
15.	BigglesFM	£	1,850.00
16.	Biggleswade ATC Squadron (Royal Air Force Cadets)	£	1,000.00
17.	Mid Bedfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau	£	£500.00
18.	For Men To Talk Community Interest Company	£	0
19.	Ivel Flix	£	300.00
20.	East Beds Community Bus Ltd (Ivel Sprinter)	£	500.00
21.	Keech Hospice Care	£	1,000.00
22.	Train at Trinity Model Railway	£	0
23.	Biggleswade District Handicapped Swimming Club	£	400.00
24.	The Royal British Legion – Biggleswade Branch	£	0
25.	Central Bedfordshire – Biggleswade Library	£	0
26.	Magpas Air Ambulance	£	500.00
27.	The Need Project CBC	£	500.00
28.	Jones' Fitness	£	0
29.	Respite at Home	£	700.00
	<b>Total Value of Approved Grants:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>16,344.32</b>

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council would allocate £500 to the Biggleswade Carnival and that the Council seek to support the Carnival in kind in other ways.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council support Biggleswade Town Cricket Club through other means.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council work with the British Legion to establish what they plan to achieve and to help facilitate their plans in place of awarding a grant.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers would work with Jones' Fitness to help facilitate what is trying to be achieved instead of awarding a grant.

Cllr G Fage recommended that the Town Council Assist the Train at Trinity Model Railway by way of advertising on the Town Council website and social media platforms.

Cllr G Fage recommended that the Town Council monitor which charities respond to the grant award this year for future monitoring purposes.

b. **Interim Internal Audit Report**

The Head of Finance & Planning introduced the first interim Internal Audit Report for 2021/2022.

Members of the Council wished to extend their thanks to the staff for continuing to do their work to such a good standard.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Finance & General Purposes Committee to **APPROVE** this Interim Internal Audit Report.

c. **Annual Fees & Charges Review**

The Head of Finance & Planning stated that the reports submitted for review relate to the Council's taking into consideration the Revenue Income Optimisation Report recommendations and other requests from the Council in ensure the Council remains competitive and to continue to provide value to the residents of Biggleswade.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that the Council's overall objective is to be less reliant on its precept going forward. The Revenue Income Optimisation Report was conducted to compare Biggleswade Town Council's costs to other home county Councils for the same services.

**Market Fees:**

Cllr Knight reminded the Committee that market fees were changed back to pre-pandemic levels in August 2021 and recommended that these be reviewed by the Town Centre Management Committee in September 2022.

Cllr Strachan recommended the Town Centre Management Committee should review the pitch rates for larger than double pitches at the next reviews of the Market rates.

It was **RESOLVED** to keep the market fees at the current rate, and to replace the word "stall" with "Gazebo" and remove the size limit for the gazebo hire.

### **A-Boards:**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council not charge for A-Boards for the 2022/2023 financial year.

### **Cemeteries:**

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the cemeteries fees proposal for the 2022/2023 financial year.

### **Allotments:**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members that with the current waiting list of 74 people it is likely the Town Council may need to purchase land to fulfil its allotment requirements.

It was **RESOLVED** to increase the allotment fees to £65.00 for a small plot and £115.00 for a large plot to be implemented 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.

### **Orchard Centre Fees:**

Members discussed the wording around the category. Cllr G Fage stated the Town Council about what each of those definitions for each category means.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council adopts the proposed charges and re-name “Corporate Charges” to “Standard Charges” and “Non-Corporate Charges” to “Community Activities Charges”.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers draft a clear policy for the Orchard Centre including definitions of the “Standard” and “Community Activity”.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposed fees and charges only be implemented when the Town Council has approved the draft policy to back up the Council’s position on each charging category.

It was **RESOLVED** that the definition of the reduction for local charities in the Orchard Centre Report should reflect that this refers to “charities and not-for-profit entities for the benefit of Biggleswade residents”, not necessarily charities based in Biggleswade. This will be in keeping with the charity stalls policy currently in place for Market Stalls.

### **Sports/Leisure Facilities:**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council would approve the proposed sports fees at the following amounts for 2022/23 (inclusive of VAT):

- Football Pitches – Juniors - £14.00
- Football Pitches – Adults Pitch only - £35.00
- Football Pitches – Adults Pitch & Changing - £58.00
- Bowling Green Rink - £3.50
- Rink Season Ticket – Adult - £55.00
- Rink Season Ticket – Concessions - £26.00
- Bowls Club Pavilion - £2900.00
- 1<sup>st</sup> Meadow - £2900.00

Cllr G Fage commented that Parking Permits should also have formed part of the fees and charges review. Cllr Pullinger advised that the F&GP Committee had taken the decision not to change parking permit fees, however, as a result of additional costs now being paid in

relation to rental of parking sites, Members subsequently requested a fees review to be discussed at the next Town Centre Management Meeting.

d. **Playground Strategy**

This report is presented at this Committee meeting in line with a resolution from the Town Council Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 relating to the costs of the implementation of the first phase.

Members asked if Officers were intending to apply for as much S106 funding as possible and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed Officers are already prioritising S106 funding investigation and resourcing.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1) to acknowledge this report;
- 2) that the Town Council proceed with applying for funding of the full projected cost of this playground strategy at £519,400 through a Public Works Loan;
- 3) the Town Council incorporate the £122,000 drawdown within the 2022/2023 budget for this Strategy;
- 4) the remaining balance of the Public Works Loan to be phased over the remaining four year period as set out in the report, with the operational works implementation to be determined by the PLOS committee;
- 5) that Officers continue to request and resource as much S106 funding as possible for use on the Playground Strategy.

e. **Original Estimates for 2022/2023**

The Head of Finance & Planning advised Members this report is a stringent review of budgets based on running costs. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed this is a zero-based budget to determine commitments and Members are asked to consider planned growth items and a proposed reserves level.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that there is an extensive list of likely commitments for the year ahead and the report on page 46 is a list of commitments that will apply in the new financial year that are currently not budgeted for. Of particular concern are the potential costs for maintenance for the Council's capital assets. In response to Cllr North's questions relating to a lack of figures for forthcoming years, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that as intelligence becomes known for future commitments, this will be added to the growth chart to start to build a Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which has not been done at this Town Council for many years.

It was **RESOLVED** that the F&GP Committee accepts the headline budget based on Option 2, which represents a 7.5% precept increase for a Band D Property and **RECOMMENDS** the precept for 2022/2023 financial year be set at £1,424,171.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk's Efficiency Savings Project identify and implement budget savings of £25,000 by March 2022, representing an approximate 1.5% budget saving.

It was **RESOLVED** that before start of the new financial year Committee Chairs have an opportunity to scrutinise and refine the relevant Committee budgets within the overall budget set.

f. **Orchard Centre Report**

This item was originally included under Exempt in the Agenda; however, the report has been amended and therefore this item was discussed in the open session of this Committee Meeting.

The Head of Place Shaping and Town Centre Manager advised Members were asked to consider the revised report. This is a current position statement to Members following recommendations and resolutions from previous Council and Committee Meetings.

Cllr G Fage stated that, as per the earlier item 6c of this meeting, Members request a formal policy relating to Orchard Centre bookings, charging, amendments to the Terms and Conditions as well as a policy relating to certain categories of party events.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that this project report was compiled some time ago, with different iterations being brought to various committees in the latter part of 2021. The implementation timelines will need to be reviewed and Officers will send Members the updated timelines.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1) That Officers implement the recommendations from the report relating to the booking systems and marketing;
- 2) That Officers draft a formal policy setting out the Orchard Centre Terms and Conditions relating to bookings, charges and a policy on usage for certain categories of party events;
- 3) To accept the report and for Officers to update Members with the new timelines for implementation of the Orchard Centre Review recommendations in the near future.

7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow Members of the public to put questions or to address the Committee, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

There were no questions from the public.

The meeting was closed at 20:52 pm.