



Ref: Agenda/F&GP-15/06/2021

10th June 2021

Dear Sir or Madam

All Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Committee that will take place on Tuesday 15th June 2021 at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully

Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Distribution: Committee Members
 Notice Boards
 Press

Committee Members: Cllr. R. Pullinger (Chair)
 Cllr. M. North (Vice Chair)
 Cllr. D. Albone
 Cllr. I. Bond
 Cllr. G. Fage
 Cllr. M. Knight
 Cllr. H. Ramsay
 Cllr. M. Russell
 Cllr. D. Strachan

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item
- b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item

3. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. 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, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FvQBwnKzSTqiomnn4Q_5og

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

- a. For Members to receive and approve the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes meeting held on **Tuesday 19th January 2021**.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on **Tuesday 19th January 2021**.

7. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Credit and Debit Card Report**

For Members to consider a written report from the Assistant Town Clerk on the rules for the use of Credit and Debit Cards.

- b. **Financial Request - Biggleswade Community News**

For Members to consider the financial request from Biggleswade Community News.

- c. **Website Update**

For Members to consider approving the Website Support Package.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a. **Asset Register**

For Members to receive an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

- b. **Contracts Database**

For Members to receive an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

- c. **Financial Risk Assessment**

For Members to receive an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

- d. **Grants and Sponsorship**

For Members to receive an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

9. 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.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FvQBwnKzSTqiomnn4Q_5og

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one)** three-minute slot.

10. EXEMPT ITEM

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

11a. Utilities Contract

11b. Finance Review

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.



MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19TH JANUARY 2021
AT 7PM VIA ZOOM WEBINAR FUNCTION

PRESENT:

Cllr H Ramsay (Chairman)
Cllr R Pullinger (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr I Bond
Cllr G Fage
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr M Russell
Cllr F Foster (non-Committee Member)

Mr P. Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr P. Truppin – Assistant Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Meeting Administrator, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of Public – 2

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 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.

The Chairman reminded the non-Committee Member in attendance at this meeting that he is not able to submit proposals or vote on any matters, nor will he be able to comment without being invited to do so by the Chairman in accordance with meeting governance rules.

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 I Bond – Item 6d – Grants & Sponsorships 2021/2022.

Cllr D Albone – Item 6d – Grants & Sponsorships 2021/2022.

3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

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

None.

4. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

Members received and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purpose Meeting held on **Tuesday 17th November 2020**.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Asset Register Update**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Professional Assistant updated Members on the progress of this project. A working copy of the Asset Register has been collated from two separate sources involving and significant administration into verifying current information in the document.

The results of the audit will determine purchasing procedures and time lines for replacement of equipment in the future. The Town Council will need to build the purchase timetable into annual budgets for non-capital assets.

An Asset Audit commenced on 18 January 2021 starting with Office and IT Equipment, the Public Realm and Market Equipment being looked at during the next two weeks. Furthermore, a full list of buildings and land in the Council's ownership is being investigated and the results of those searches will be included in the Asset Register.

Cllr Fage asked for clarification regarding the purchase order process for assets. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed this process is now in place for the Town Council purchasing procedures.

Cllr Pullinger asked if there were plans to revalue any assets, in particular buildings and open spaces. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members that an independent Chartered Surveyor would be engaged to assess buildings and property valuations, with valuations for other assets being conducted by the Town Council's current Accounting Solutions provider.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive reminded Members that this project is still ongoing and Members will be updated at the next F&GP Committee meeting on 13 April 2021.

b. **Contracts Database Update**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Professional Assistant updated Members on the progress being made in respect of operationalising the database, this included collating copies of contracts and reviewing contracts currently due for renewal.

The Town Council's next steps will be conducting a procurement assessment to determine if current contracts offer value for money, testing the quality of their offer and identifying what impact they have had.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive will be working with support staff to develop a programme to measure the effectiveness of current contracts. As well as identifying and putting in place a procurement and vendor check policy in line with financial regulations. Depending on the value of each contract, an assessment will be made as to whether an external tender process is to be implemented for the contract renewal.

The Assistant Town Clerk has created a draft Biggleswade Town Council Service Contract which will be offered to all contractors as their contracts expire. This contract will need to be individually adapted to the services specific to the vendor.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised Members an update would be provided at the next F&GP Committee meeting on 13 April 2021.

c. **Financial Risk Assessment**

The Assistant Town Clerk reminded Members this is part of the annual requirement under audit regulations to examine the Council's exposure to risk.

Changes not included in previous Risk Assessments and now included are for sports facility fees and car parking fees. The assessments have taken into account the significant impact of COVID-19 on the income and activities of the Council.

Cllr Pullinger commented that the overall framework of the Risk Management Scheme needs to be reviewed as, although the assessments explain what might go wrong, they do not expand on or quantify the consequences in the event of those risks materialising, and also there should be further information on mitigating factors to those risks.

It was **RESOLVED** 1. to accept the Risk Management Scheme in principle. 2. To note the offer from Cllrs Fage and Pullinger to provide some alternative templates for the Assistant Town Clerk to consider for future years and to bring proposals to the next F&GP Committee Meeting on 13 April 2021.

d. **Grants and Sponsorships 2021/2022**

Members commented on the draft version of Grants and Sponsorship policy on the Town Council's website and that a number of current grants submitted do not appear to meet the criteria of the draft policy. Cllr Pullinger advised the Committee the draft policy was previously submitted to full Council on 9 August 2016 and deferred for review by the next F&GP Committee meeting. It had subsequently not been reviewed or adopted.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers review the Grant & Sponsorship policy and re-submit this to the F&GP Committee meeting on 13 July 2021 for approval.

Members voted on applications as follows:

Organisation	Grant requested 2021/2022	Committee Resolution
Autism Bedfordshire	£500.00	Approved: £500
Bedford Daycare Hospice	£1,000.00	Approved: £500
Biggles FM	£1,850.00	Approved: £1,850
Biggleswade Allotment Association	£2,800.00	Defer pending further investigation
Biggleswade ATC Squadron (Royal Air Force Air Cadets)	£1,000.00	Approved: £1,000
Biggleswade Good Neighbours	£500.00	Approved: £500
Biggleswade History Society	£750.00	Approved: £750
Biggleswade Sea Cadets	£1,500.00	Approved: £1,500
Biggleswade United Football Club	£310.00	Defer pending further investigation
Carers in Bedfordshire	£2,000.00	Approved: £2,000
Central Bedfordshire Swim Squad	£1,000.00	Refused
East Beds Community Bus Ltd (Ivel Sprinter)	£750.00	Approved: £750
Hear2Listen	£1,000.00	Refused
Keech Hospice Care	£1,000.00	Approved: £1000
Magpas Air Ambulance	£536.00	Approved: £536
Ivel Valley School	£800.00	Approved: £800

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the Biggleswade Allotment Association's Grant application to allow Officers to meet with their Chairman to discuss the Committee's questions. This meeting is to include Cllr F Foster in his capacity as Chairman of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer the BUFC Grant application to allow Officers to meet with BUFC to investigate the factors behind the application as well as potentially to offer the Town Council's Public Realm team assistance.

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.

None.

9. EXEMPT ITEMS

None.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL

Report to Finance & General Purposes Committee 15th June 2021 Procurement Cards: Regulations for use

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: None

Finance: No effect on Budget

Equality: None.

Environment: None.

Community Safety: None.

Background

Members are advised that, during the Finance Function Review undertaken by Mike Platten from Farsight Consulting, jointly working with the BTC Management Team, mention was made concerning the use of procurement (credit and debit) cards as permitted under the Council's Financial Regulations.

Appended to this report for consideration is a draft guidance document for officers who make online purchases, or other purchases which need to be paid for using a procurement (credit or debit) card.

Introduction

Financial Regulations provide for the use of credit and debit cards as follows:

6.17 Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Town Clerk and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £1,000.

6.18 A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Council, and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Council or relevant committee.

6.19. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the Council will be specifically restricted to use by the Town Clerk and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.

At the present time, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive holds a debit card issued by Lloyds Bank.

Summary

The scope of the attached document is to specify the rules and procedures for use of credit and debit cards by council officers. At the moment, the reason why there has only been one card issued is due to regulation 6.18 referred to above, since the council's bankers do not issue corporate prepaid cards. Members may wish to consider a recommendation to Council to alter that regulation, noting that this committee would set the spending limits for any

employee to which a card has been issued. Also, to allow the issue of corporate credit cards to officers other than the Town Clerk if considered appropriate by Council.

The main objective is the adoption of the rules and procedures so that, if additional employees are in the future permitted to have cards, these regulations are already in place.

Recommendations:

Councillors are requested to :

1. Recommend, for Council approval, the attached Procedures for the Use of Procurement Cards.
2. Consider whether to propose a change in Financial Regulation 6.18 at the next review to delete the reference to 'prepaid' and to permit issue of credit cards to other staff. Also, to consequentially amend Financial Regulation 6.19 to allow any officer that has been approved by council to use a corporate credit card.

Philip Truppin
Assistant Town Clerk

June 2021

PROCEDURES FOR USE OF PROCUREMENT CARDS

1 Introduction

1.1 The following notes contain guidance for members of staff who wish to make online purchases, or other purchases which need to be paid for using a procurement (credit or debit) card:

1.2 Staff must not use personal credit cards for any transactions; personal credit card transactions will not be recognised as a council liability.

1.3 Misuse of the procurement cards will be considered a disciplinary offence and will be subject to the provisions within the Council's policy on Staff Discipline and Grievance.

2 Online purchases

2.1 Card holders can make online purchases in accordance with the terms and conditions of card issue. Details of each purchase must be transferred to the monthly transaction log together with the receipt / copy order and forwarded to the RFO for update on the Council's Accounting system. Card holders are responsible for ensuring there is sufficient budget to fund any purchases before they place an order and that the expenditure is approved. Online purchases can only be completed on websites that have a secure payments area, which is activated before card details are entered.

2.2 Normal purchasing procedures will apply. Other policies, including anti-fraud and expenses, are also referenced within Financial Regulations.

2.3 Use of online auction sites (e.g. eBay). Purchasing from online auction sites will not be permitted.

2.4 Cardholders must comply with the conditions of use set by the issuing bank and this document, both of which they will receive when they apply for a card. The conditions set out in this document are additional to other financial policies/procedures.

2.5 Cards are provided to named cardholders and are not transferable. Upon receipt of the card, the cardholder must memorise and destroy the PIN in confidential waste (e.g. shredding). The cardholder is responsible for the security of the card at all times, and must take reasonable precautions to prevent theft. The card should only be accessed by the cardholder.

2.6 Individual transaction limits and overall credit limits will be set by Council in accord with financial regulations, on advice from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

2.7 Cards may not be used for withdrawing petty cash unless so resolved by Council, save that the Town Clerk & Chief Executive is at present so authorised; cards can also not be used for non business-related expenses or personal items.

2.8 Cardholders may not use personal loyalty cards (e.g. Nectar, Clubcard etc.) in conjunction with the card. If any such use is made, it will give rise to a taxable benefit in kind which the individual will be liable for.

2.9 When using an internet purchasing site, the user must delete the credit card details on completion of every transaction.

2.10 Cardholders are responsible for keeping receipts for any purchases made using the card. All transactions on the receipt must be allowable purchases; it is not permitted to make any personal purchases using the card, even if reimbursement is made to the Council.

2.11 On receipt of the statement each month, each transaction must be matched to a receipt and the receipt attached to the statement. If a receipt is missing, the cardholder may be liable to reimburse the Council for that transaction.

2.12 If a card is lost or stolen the cardholder must contact the bank as soon as possible to notify them of the loss or theft. They must also notify the Town Clerk & Chief Executive as soon as possible and in any event within five days of contacting the bank.

2.13 If unauthorised use is made of the card, the cardholder must notify the bank immediately. They must also notify the Council.

2.14 If the cardholder leaves the Council's employment they must return their card to the Council.

3 Scrutiny

3.1 Every card transaction must be recorded on to a Monthly Transaction spreadsheet. Receipts for all purchases must be submitted with the spreadsheet monthly. The spreadsheet and accompanying receipts should be reviewed monthly by the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. The transaction receipts shall be reconciled monthly with the debit card statement.

5.2 In the event of any discrepancy, the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee must be notified and an investigation initiated. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining and submitting receipts for all transactions. Failure to produce transaction receipts may result in the cardholder being held liable for the sum of the said transactions.

June 2021

BIGGLESWADE COMMUNITY NEWS
www.biggleswadecommunitynews.uk
Editors@biggleswadecommunitynews.uk
Tel: 01767 448954

Biggleswade Community Group was established in the summer of 2020 with funding from two grants received from organisations that had recently closed down and personal regular donations. In August 2020 its small production team launched the monthly Biggleswade Community News, as an A5 8 page booklet, with spot colour. In its new format they could only afford to print, in house, 400 copies a month. Copies are distributed to local churches, the Library, community centres, newsagents, etc. The electronic subscriber list now stands at 220 which includes many club leaders, church members etc., some of whom print copies for their churches, members and friends or share their emails with others. So total on line circulation is now unknown.

We have built strong links with various social care departments at Central Bedfordshire Councils and other council wide support organisations and events websites, who regularly send us updates. We gather information from all over Central Bedfordshire that could affect or support our residents and businesses. When mailing out to our subscribers we can also alert them to important information in the accompanying emails. On request from either Council, we can also email our on-line subscribers with any important news that comes mid newsletter. We daily post daily news to our subsidised websites as well as the Group's own and other local Facebook pages. Our ethos is to circulate local news in all formats. A member of our team is a CBC Community Champion.

Earlier this year we increased our print run to 700 and joined with Biggleswade Good Neighbours and they now deliver 470 copies to each of their client households. Despite the increased cost, we felt these bleak times were just when people needed to still feel connected to their community. Again feedback has been very positive. Last month, to help publicise the Neighbourhood Plan, BGN asked if we could also provide copies for their volunteers. We now feel that we should continue this increased print run indefinitely as those volunteers can share information with others in the community. BGN are particularly grateful for this, and they make all the deliveries, which helps us! But to sustain the newsletter indefinitely we must seek outside funding.

From now on we will print 1000 copies a month with BGN receiving 670, leaving 330 to distribute round the town pick up points, the minimum we require. Unfortunately our small reserves cannot cover such an increase for very long, although we recently received another small monthly donation from a local resident, which all helps. Before covid we often increased our mailing list through personal encounters, and hopefully that will recommence. Lately people are also signing up through our newsletter website above, which also has a donate facility. We will stay at 8 pages until we can obtain additional funding as our preferred size would be 12 pages, when we could consider offering small adverts for local businesses. .

If we go to 12 pages we must use commercial printers. We have obtained quotes for 1000 copies of a 12 page A5 booklet with spot colour. They are around £2,300 to £2,400 per annum. Our current donations are around £800 per annum. We therefore require additional, preferably core. If the Town Council were minded to contribute to our project, we would be happy to provide sufficient room in the newsletter for any information they may require each month or periodically.

BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
Report to Finance & General Purpose Committee Meeting 15th June 2021
Website Update

Implications of Recommendations

Corporate Strategy: None

Finance: £3,348 cost to complete additional website design work.

Equality: None

Environment: None

Community Safety: None

Background

Biggleswade Town Council launched a new website in April 2021 that is more accessible, modern and user friendly.

Introduction

The new Biggleswade Town Council website requires further works in order to ensure that the Town Council's processes are as modern and efficient as possible. The planned work will include the creation of calendars for the Orchard Community Centre, the charity market stalls, the football pitches and future events. Additionally, the planned work will give members of the public the ability to pay for all Town Council services via the website.

Summary

In order to complete the further website work, Tim's Digital will need to provide additional support for the next six months at a cost of £558 per month.

Recommendation

To approve the cost of Tim's Digital's Website Design Package to complete the remaining work for the Biggleswade Town Council website.

Helen Calvert
Deputy Administration & HR Manager

WEBSITE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Your website should get better every day,
we can help get you there



HOW IT WORKS



DEDICATED RESOURCE

You confirm the number of
hours each month time

We protect the developers'
time



SHARED TASKS & PRIORITIES

You add / change priority /
delete tasks

We add time estimates and
work on your highest
priorities



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

You sign off the changes to
the development site

We release them to the live
site

WHAT IT COVERS



CUSTOM DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

We can build new plugins,
features, whatever you
need



CONTENT UPDATES

We can create new pages
or make updates to existing
content.



ZOOM TRAINING

121 or 1 to many, we can
share our best practices
with your team



HELP WITH SET UP / CONFIGURATION

We can update any current
configurations, so your
software works as you want
it to.



CONSULTANCY

We can advise on your
ideas, priorities and future
road-map plans.



MOST OTHER THINGS

If it can be supported by
modern browsers, we can
almost certainly make it
happen.

SUGGESTED PLANS



STARTER

2 hours/week development time
1 hour/month project management
time

Example changes:

Add / update content, simple training

Per month investment:

~~£620~~ £558

Save 10%



DEVELOP

4 hours/week development time
2 hours/month project management
time

Example changes:

Starter + update website functions,
in-depth training

Per month investment:

~~£1240~~ £1054

Save 15%



PRO

8 hours/week development time
3 hours/month project management
time

Example changes:

Develop + new website functions,
consultancy

Per month investment:

~~£2380~~ £1904

Save 20%



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