



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25th JANUARY 2022
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 D Albone
Cllr I. Bond
Cllr K. Brown
Cllr F. Foster
Cllr M. Foster (via Zoom)
Cllr M. Knight
Cllr H. Ramsay
Cllr M. North
Cllr R. Pullinger
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
Mr P. Truppin – Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs 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 - 3

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Mayor advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed to be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The 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 L Fage, 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 D Albone – Item 11f – Planning Application: 17 Banks Road.

Cllr K Brown – Item 11e – Planning Application: 15 Hazel Walk Footway.

Cllr I Bond – Item 11e & g – Planning Applications: 15 Hazel Walk Footway, Tree Works: 43 Shortmead Street.

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. Standing Orders ask that Members stand when addressing Council. The Mayor suggested a trial of remaining seated.

It was **RESOLVED** to lift Standing Orders for the purposes of this meeting in order that Councillors and Officers need not stand when speaking during the meeting.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Mr Tony Reynolds commented on Item 11d. He recalled this being discussed before and Cllr Russell confirmed it had been approved five years ago. Mr Reynolds is specifically concerned about the lack of leisure land within Biggleswade and is concerned about this application.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

Ms Jo Hansen-Cole from Mid Bedfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau ("CAB") presented statistics on the services provided to Biggleswade residents by the CAB. She said that CAB advice covers benefits, employment, housing, consumer, family, law and courts, immigration, health and debt issues. The service is free, confidential, independent and impartial. The CAB has provided assistance to 649 clients based in Biggleswade across 2,551 issues over a two-year period. Members asked if the statistics could be provided in more detail, by Ward.

Ms Hansen-Cole explained the process of call triaging of the client's needs based on complexity of their query and the Bureau's capacity to assist. The biggest constraint is the small size of the current premises they occupy in Biggleswade. Ms Hansen-Cole suggested this would be one way that the Town Council could assist the CAB by notifying them of any suitable premises. There was discussion of the complimentary role of the Community Agent and Member asked that Ms Hansen-Cole be introduced to the Community Agent.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Strachan requested an update on the Town Council's efforts at engaging with the Biggleswade GP surgeries to understand some of the difficulties the surgeries are facing following a number of complaints by the public about not being able to access medical appointments.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships confirmed two separate requests have been sent to the surgeries asking for a meeting, with the second being copied to the Clinical Commissioning Group. To date the surgeries have not responded to either request.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 11th January 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade.
- Questions to Invited Speaker – Cllr Strachan – The second paragraph should clarify that temporary accommodation is based in “Central Bedfordshire”.
 - Item 9c – Play Areas Strategy - spelling correction to “suggested”.

Further to these amendments being carried out, the Minutes were **APPROVED**.

- b. Members received the draft Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday, 18th January 2022**, held at the Offices of the Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

These minutes were **NOTED**.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. From the Town Council Meeting of Tuesday 11th January 2022:

None.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 15 Submission Version**

The Mayor informed the meeting that the Regulation 15 Submission Version of the Neighbourhood Plan has been updated after the Regulation 14 Consultation and is now proposed for submission to Central Bedfordshire Council. It will be submitted together with the Consultation Statement which shows the consultation responses and how they have been acknowledged.

Mr Dave Chetwyn of Urban Vision CIC gave an update to Members on the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan process. Once submitted, CBC, as the Local Planning Authority, will publicise the Neighbourhood Plan and organise an Independent Examination by a Planning Inspector. The Plan will then go to referendum when people in Biggleswade will decide whether or not it will become part of the statutory development plan for the town.

Cllr Fage issued the Town Council’s thanks to Mr Chetwyn and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group who have been working on this project tirelessly for almost four years.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council submit the Regulation 15 Version of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Regulation 14 Consultation Statement to Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Mayor extended her thanks to Cllrs Strachan, Bond and North as members of the Strategy Group; to the other Members of the Strategy Group; to Dave Chetwyn and Jon Baldwin for their professional support and to Helen Calvert for all the administrative support.

Members then thanked Cllr. Russell for steering the Neighbourhood Plan through to completion.

b. **CBC Housing Allocation Scheme**

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers write to CBC saying that the Town Council is very supportive of the changes, particularly the prioritisation of local people, and is encouraged by what Central Bedfordshire Council are trying to achieve.

c. **Council and Committee Meetings Dates**

The Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management introduced the proposed calendar for 2022-2023, with four meetings scheduled for each committee across the year.

Cllr G Fage stated that there had been previous agreement that the month of August should be kept as clear as possible.

Cllr Knight agreed to the TCM meeting to be moved to 19 July 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** that, subject to the above change, the proposed calendar should be adopted.

10. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Budget for 2022/2023**

Members considered the financial recommendations from the Finance & General Purposes Committee of 18th January 2022.

- i. Summary Original Estimates for 2022/2023.
- ii. Precepts & Band D percentage for 2022/2023.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed that the precept decision must be sent to CBC by midnight of the day of the meeting.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee recommended a Band D increase of 7.5% for 2022/23 and that cost savings of £25k should be identified to offset the £25k potential shortfall.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive advised the Council to consider approving a higher Band D increase at 9.25% rather than the 7.5% recommended by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Finance Officers are already investigating cost and efficiency savings to be presented to Council in March 2022. He explained that there are additional expenses to be factored in for the 2022/2023 budget year that will have an effect on projected outturn.

Members expressed their concern regarding F&GP's recommendation to set the precept and keep the Band D percentage of 7.5% whilst relying on potential savings and felt this was unsound practice.

Cllr Pullinger summarised the resolutions of the F&GP Committee and the position on reserves, the savings target, the decision for the chosen precept level and the effect of the Town's growth on the next budget.

The Committee recommendation was put to the vote. A recorded vote was requested.

Cllr Michael North	Against
Cllr Robert Pullinger	For
Cllr M Knight	For
Cllr C Thomas	For
Cllr H Ramsay	Against
Cllr F Foster	Against
Cllr G Fage	For
Cllr D Strachan	For
Cllr D Albone	Against
Cllr K Brown	For
Cllr I Bond	For
Cllr M Russell	Against

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **ACCEPT** the recommendation of the F&GP Committee for a precept of **£1,424,171** which translates to a Band D increase of 7.5% and requires £25,000 of savings.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/21/05562/FULL - 1 Holly Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HX**

Two storey side and rear extension following the demolition of the existing garage.

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

b. **CB/22/00036/FULL - 45 Cooks Way, Biggleswade, SG18 0GY**

Demolition of existing rear conservatory and erection of new rear 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.

c. **CB/21/05375/FULL - 3 Tate Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8UD**

Loft conversion to create two bedrooms with front roof lights and three rear dormer windows.

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.

d. **CB/21/05398/FULL - Land to the east of Saxon Drive and the development Orchard Chase**

Change of use of agricultural land to a Travelling Show people site to create 4 plots. Each plot containing 2 x static caravans, 4 x tourer caravans, 1 x workshop, 4-6 trailer parking spaces, and 4 x car parking spaces. Total for the site 8 x static caravans, 16 x tourer caravans, 4 x workshops, 24 trailer parking spaces and 16 car parking spaces.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **does not object** to this planning application, subject to the planning conditions originally set down by Central Bedfordshire Council in the previous and directly-related planning application for this same site (CB/17/02682/REG3) being met by the Applicant, with the following specific modifications, additions or clarifications:

- A revised landscaping scheme must include all hard and soft landscaping, soft landscaping on the boundaries of the site and a scheme for landscape maintenance in perpetuity for the amenity of the residents of Orchard Chase, which development has been built in the intervening time between the granting of CB17/02682/REG3 and this application. In particular, the mitigation on the visual impact on residents of Orchard Chase should be considered.
- The consideration of effective drainage is essential, especially considering potential impact to the new Orchard Chase development bordering the site.
- The access road to the site must be properly surfaced with tar and adequate surface water drainage from the site is to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge into the highway.
- That the restriction on working hours on equipment, vehicles and plant should be as in the previous decision notice or aligned to the restrictions placed on Stratton Business Park, if stricter.
- That there be a restriction on HGV movements to be prohibited on, to or from the site between the hours of 10pm and 7am.
- That all residents on Orchard Chase be consulted regarding this application.

Cllr M Foster stated that he would be calling the application in for consideration by the Central Bedfordshire Council Development Management Committee.

e. **CB/22/00077/FULL – 15 Hazel Walk Footway, Biggleswade, SG18 0HQ**

Proposed first floor extension to existing dwelling.

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

f. **Planning Appeal APP/P0240/D/21/3287440 - CB/21/02927/FULL - 17 Banks Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DY**

An appeal has been made to the Secretary of State against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the proposed development described above. Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, conversion of garage with front bay window and widening of front vehicular access.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NOTED** this Planning Appeal.

g. **Works to trees - CB/TCA/22/00002 - 41 Wharf Mews, Biggleswade, SG18 0AW**

Works to trees in a Conservation Area: remove deadwood and prune overhanging branches to 41 Wharf Mews the tree is in the property of 43 Shortmead Street.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NOTED** this planning application.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. Mr Tony Reynolds

Mr Reynolds expressed concern about the lack of engagement by the GP Surgeries. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive stated that personal and face to face communications would be the next step. If this does not work then escalation to the Clinical Commissioning Group would be appropriate.

Mr Reynolds asked if there had been any communication from Central Bedfordshire Council about the resumption of garden waste collections. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships will follow this up.

- b. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive reported that Central Bedfordshire Council's Waste Team will no longer be delivering food waste and recycling bags to the Town Council for distribution. CBC have asked the Town Council to tell residents to ring Central Bedfordshire Council direct to request those items. CBC have expressed concern about the volume of usage by Biggleswade residents.

Cllr Bond said that if the Town Council writes to him officially he will follow this up with the relevant team.

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.

None.

15. EXEMPT

None.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8:26pm