



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 22nd FEBRUARY 2022
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE SG18 8DL



PRESENT:

Cllr M Russell (Chair)
Cllr G Fage
Cllr D Albone
Cllr K Brown
Cllr I Bond
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr H Ramsay
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr J Woodhead

Mr P Tarrant - Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini - Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr P Truppin - Head of Place Shaping & Town Centre Management
Mrs W Solomon - Head of Finance & Planning
Mrs Sian van der Merwe - Meeting Administrator
Miss S Jolly - Meeting Administrator

Mr Tom Price, Senior Sustainable Transport Officer, Central Bedfordshire Council
Mr Stephen Mooring, Head of Sustainability, Central Bedfordshire Council

Mr Tom Leeming, Tritax Symmetry
Mr Will Broadhurst, Tritax Symmetry

Members of the Public - 8

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees 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.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Lesley Fage.

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 Pullinger - Item 10c - Planning Application for Clubhouse at the Rugby Club.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Stotfold Civic Service – 13th February 2022

On 13th February, the Mayor was pleased to attend a Civic Service held by Cllr Alan Cooper, Mayor of Stotfold, at the Church of St Mary the Virgin in the presence of the Vice Lord-Lieutenant. Refreshments were provided afterwards in the Church Hall.

b. Tree Planting - 17th February 2022

On 17th February, Cllr Russell and Richard Fuller, MP for North-East Bedfordshire, planted two oak trees at the Spinney in Dells Lane, as part of Biggleswade's contribution to the Queen's Green Canopy to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Cllr Russell thanked the Public Realm team for the suitable underplanting to enhance the area. Refreshments followed at the Town Hall, where strategic issues for Biggleswade were discussed.

c. Neighbourhood Plan Update

The Regulation 16 Consultation, conducted by Central Bedfordshire Council, is now live on the CBC website. It runs for six weeks and ends on 28th March 2022. Comments are invited by email or post and comments received will be passed to the appointed examiner to be considered during the independent examination.

We have not yet been told about possible arrangements for the examination

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. Ms Susana Rice, Biggleswade 'Adopt-a-Street' Scheme

Ms Susana Rice explained that the scheme involves residents working on a voluntary basis and adopting a street to prevent a build-up of litter and to encourage community involvement in caring for the local environment.

Ms Rice asked whether the Town Council could contribute towards equipment and safety wear, as well as help with the disposal of collected waste.

Cllr Bond recommended that collected litter be reported on the "Fix my Street" app.

The Council consider this initiative further to determine how it can help and support.

5. **INVITED SPEAKERS**

b. **Update on Stratton Business Park Project by Tritex Symmetry**

Cllr Russell welcomed Mr Tom Leeming (Development Director) and Mr Will Broadhurst, (Graduate Development Surveyor), both of Tritax Symmetry, to give Members a presentation on their planned growth on Stratton Business Park.

Construction for Phase 1 was completed in February 2021 with a signed lease with the Cooperative Group Ltd for a 20-year period for their supply distribution centre, which will service 350 stores in the region. The building has been built in line with sustainability values and will run entirely on renewable energy via solar panels, with 50 EV Charging Points and futureproof ducting.

Phase 2 now has planning consent with four units to be installed and will be Net Zero Carbon construction. There will be 46 EV charging points with additional space allocated to accommodate more in the future. There is planning permission to install solar panels across 100% of roof space, however there will be graduated installation of these based on the needs of occupiers of the buildings. There is an “Energy Centre” connected to the National Grid.

To date, across the sites owned by Tritax Symmetry, 131,000 square feet of Grade A offices have been built between 2018 and 2021 and provide considerable employment opportunities across industrial, logistics and traditional office-based sectors. Many occupiers see themselves as Research and Development companies and include production.

Mr Leeming invited Members to a future visit to the site to inspect the development in person.

Cllr Ramsay enquired whether green roofing is a consideration but Mr Leeming said the sheer weight of soil and plants on buildings of this size would require considerable additional construction materials. Tritax have committed to maintaining several acres of landscaped wildlife areas as well as manicured green spaces on the park.

Cllr Bond wished to know about prioritisation by the power plant of different energy sources and this can be discussed on the site visit.

Cllr G Fage asked what the Town Council could do to embed the Co-op into the local community and encourage jobs investment in Biggleswade and Mr Leeming said that there are ongoing discussions between CBC and the Co-Operative Group Ltd.

Cllr Strachan asked whether there were plans for ground source heating and Mr Leeming advised the mixture of planned energy sources was based available supply and the needs of the businesses.

Cllr Woodhead asked whether any information is available about the number of apprenticeships that have been created as a result of the Symmetry Business Park. Mr Leeming agreed to investigate and inform the Town Council separately.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

- a. Cllr G Fage had received correspondence from a resident regarding awkward access to Franklins Recreation Ground via a gate. Cllr G Fage asked officers to investigate removing the gate to allow residents better access.

This was **NOTED**.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. Members received the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 8th February 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr Item 6b - It was **AGREED** that the wording 'It was agreed that the Mr. Tarrant would investigate' would be amended to 'It was agreed that Mr. Tarrant would investigate'.

Subject to the above correction, the Minutes were **APPROVED** as a true and accurate reflection of discussions.

- b. Members received the Minutes of the **Public Land and Open Spaces Meeting** held on **Tuesday 1st February 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr F Foster updated Members on the resolutions from the meeting and invited questions. There were none.

The Minutes were **NOTED**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 25th January 2022**.

Item 6b - Waste Sacks

Cllr North asked for an update about the withdrawal by CBC of the supply of waste sacks to the Town Council for distribution to residents. Cllr M Foster wrote to Cllr Dalgarno of CBC regarding this issue. CBC had replied, saying they were formulating a response to the issue.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Amendment to Standing Orders**

Formal notice is given for an amendment to Standing Orders. Members are requested to consider revocation of the following provision in Standing Order 29:

'A Member shall stand when speaking at Council meetings unless permission to remain seated is given by the Chairman.'

Members are asked to note that, under the current Standing Order 70, a resolution to add, vary or revoke a Standing Order shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council, unless a written draft of the changes has been prepared by the Town Clerk and has been circulated with the agenda.

This amendment has been prepared by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships. In view of this, a proposer and seconder for the changes is required in order to proceed for consideration, and to be deferred to the meeting of Council to be held on 8th March 2022.

This was formally proposed and seconded and stands adjourned to the Town Council meeting on 8th March 2022 for consideration.

- b. **Litter Picking Initiative - 'Adopt-a-Street'**

For Members to consider an 'Adopt-a-Street' litter-picking initiative for Biggleswade, as set out in the email attached to the agenda pack.

Members discussed the initiative as outlined in an email from Susana Rice attached to this agenda and in Item 4.a. of these Minutes.

Additional support from the Town Council was discussed to encourage civic responsibility, including:

- Increased supply of equipment.
- Liaison with CBC around classification of collected waste.
- Funding of waste collection.
- Imposition of Fixed Penalty Notices under the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005.

Members felt it is important to involve schools in this initiative.

It was **AGREED** that two volunteer councillors would work with officers relating to this initiative.

It was **RESOLVED** that officers would work with Ms Rice, Cllr Ian Dalgarno and waste services officers at CBC to support this initiative.

c. **Luton Rising Consultation**

The Consultation was **NOTED**.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/21/05527/FULL - 45 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JF**

Installation of bird deterrent spikes to selected sections of the pipework and brickwork at the side and rear of the building, and installation of bird spikes and bird netting to the parapet at the front of the building.

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

b. **CB/22/00300/FULL - 151 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EJ**

Two-storey side extension, dormer extension to the rear. Rear single-storey flat roof extension with parapet and roof lanterns, new door elements in aluminium anthracite.
(Re-submission of application CB/21/04173/FULL)

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.

c. **CB/22/00196/FULL - The Clubhouse, Langford Road, Biggleswade, SG18 9RA**

Erection of 12 no. 12 metre-high floodlight columns with associated lighting units.

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.

d. **CB/21/05161/FULL - Land to the North of Dunton Lane, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade**

At the Town Council meeting on 11th January 2022, Council had objected to this planning application because of lack of detail of landscaping. Further documents have since been submitted, including changes to landscaping, and those amendments were considered.

A formal response was proposed as follows:

'The Town Council continues to recognise the need to increase the power supply in Biggleswade and the strategic importance of delivering a substation to power both new homes and new industrial units.

Biggleswade Town Council raised objections over the lack of detail on the landscaping, specifically on important mitigations which were excluded from the documents submitted as part of the application.

Following the further submission of the Landscaping and Visual Impact Assessment Part B, the mitigating hedgerow along the footpath to the east of the site has now been included and there is also further detail on the significant effort being made to shield the site from view.

As a result, the Town Council has no objection to the planning application.

The Town Council wishes to make three further observations:

First, that there is no detail of how power will be distributed from the substation to existing smaller substations in the town, or to potential new developments such as Holme Farm.

Given Biggleswade's rural heritage and the unique aspirations of the nearby Garden Village, the Town Council asks that a planning condition is included to ensure that other than for the existing pylons, power only leaves the substation underground.

The Rights of Way Officer has recommended that a planning condition be included that the proposed footpath running from the northern tip of the site down to Dunton Lane, should be a bridleway. The Town Council supports this position.'

Finally, this development needs to be accompanied by a sizable S106 contribution.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council now has **NO OBJECTION** to the proposal and that the above response be submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council.

11. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Town Centre Management Budget 2022/2023**

Members received an oral update from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

Regarding the detail of each functional area, it was recognised that, in an effort to make budgets as accurate and tight as possible, the town centre events budget needed to be kept under particular review and might be increased over the current financial year.

It was **RESOLVED** that all budgets would remain the same, except for the town centre events budget which would remain under review.

b. **Public Notice - Bridleway No 14, Bridleway No 10, Furzenhall Road, Potton Road and Vice Versa - Temporary Closure**

This item was **NOTED**.

c. **Biggleswade Carnival**

Members discussed the location of the Funfair during Biggleswade Carnival 18th – 20th June 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Funfair would be located on the Market Square, with due regard to the needs of the Market and the protection of seating.

13. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

- a. Mr Steve Carter, a resident of Rose Lane, asked about revenue generated by the Rose Lane car park in light of the proposed increase in charges for residential parking permits with effect from 1st April 2022.

The Head of Finance and HR would supply the information requested.

- b. Mr Graham Jakes asked whether the Town Council had decided to go ahead with the culling of pigeons in the town centre in view of young residents' concerns regarding the killing of birds.

Cllr Russell replied by referring to the Town Council's current consideration of various measures to control the pigeon population.

- c. Mr Eamonn Watson, local resident and Publican, expressed his opinions regarding the pigeon population. He considered the population to be out of control, causing damage to the environment and endangering other bird species, also that people needed to be discouraged from feeding them.

Mr Watson's comments were **NOTED**.

- d. Mr Justin Cresswell-Ber, resident of Rose Lane, raised concerns about the price increase in resident parking permits amounting to a 20% increase and its impact on the cost of living. He said there had been no public consultation and communication about increases had not been adequate prior to Town Council agreement. He also commented that a parking machine had been out of order for several weeks.

Cllr Russell recognised the current difficulties with the cost of living, but said papers proposing the increases had been made public prior to being agreed by the Town Council. Mr Hosseini said the problem with one machine had been temporary, but that officers would look into the situation.

- e. Ms Paige Craft raised the subject of pigeon culling and asked whether the Town Council had considered alternatives such as deterrents, public information campaigns and artificial messing sites. Ms Craft recommended the Town Council contact PICAS UK Ltd, as renowned specialists in humane and non-lethal pigeon control.

Cllr Russell said that notices had been displayed asking the public not to feed pigeons and fixed penalty notices were an option. Cllr Russell asked Ms Craft to send PICAS's details to the Town Council.

14. EXEMPT

None.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.50pm