



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 22nd MARCH 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 K Brown
Cllr I Bond (via Zoom)
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr H Ramsay (via Zoom)
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr J Woodhead (via Zoom)

Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mrs W. Solomon – Head of Finance & Planning
Mrs S van der Merwe – Deputy Administration & HR Manager

Members of the Public - 3

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 L Fage and Cllr Albone.

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 Thomas – Item 10j: Planning Application

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Ukraine

Cllr Russell continued to remember the people of both Ukrainian and Russian origin in the Biggleswade community and said that the situation in Ukraine remains in our thoughts and prayers.

b. Biggleswade Civic Service

The Civic Service was held at St. Andrew's Church on Sunday 20th March 2022 in glorious spring weather and it was a lovely occasion. Cllr Russell extended her sincere thanks to St. Andrew's Church, Deputy-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire Mrs Ruth Bell, the British Legion Standard Bearers, the Biggleswade & District Choral Society and organist Justin Waters. There was special thanks for the members of Council staff who supported the event so well. Many plaudits have been received from those who attended.

Cllr Russell was pleased to announce that the collection during the service raised £408 for Sue Ryder St. John's Hospice in Moggerhanger.

c. Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan – Update

From a choice of three offered by Central Bedfordshire Council, a planning inspector has been identified to take forward the examination of our Neighbourhood Plan. The Regulation 16 Consultation ends on 28th March 2022 and CBC expect to have the responses and all other documents ready for the inspector shortly afterwards.

If all goes smoothly, the inspector's findings should be known by mid-May 2022 and, if the inspector so recommends, CBC will then identify a suitable date for a referendum.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. Ms. Selina Bailey

Ms. Bailey referenced social media posts describing an amount budgeted for sound equipment for the Council Chamber.

Cllr Russell advised that discussion in this first open session should be limited to items on the agenda and invited Ms. Bailey to raise her concerns in the second Public Open Session.

5. INVITED SPEAKERS

None.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

None.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

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

The Minutes were **ACCEPTED** as a true and accurate record of Town Council Meeting.

- b. Members received the Minutes of the **Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting** held on **Thursday 20th January 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr G Fage said that the suggested Market Square Workshop to enable discussion on place-shaping plans for Biggleswade between Central Bedfordshire and Town Councils is commendable and hoped that the meeting can be re-scheduled soon.

The Minutes were **NOTED**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 8th March 2022**.

Item 8a: Adopt-A-Street Litter Picking Initiative: Cllr G Fage asked for momentum to be maintained on this initiative. Mr. Hosseini advised Members that Officers have met with the Adopt-A-Street representative and discussions are continuing relating to financing the equipment that the Adopt-A-Street initiative needs.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **CB/21/05161 – FULL – Land to the north of Dunton Lane, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade and CB/21/05590/eb – Land to the North of Dunton Lane, Biggleswade**

Members were asked to consider the communication from Nick Vose, Director, Marengo Communications on behalf of the developer for the sub-station.

Cllr Russell said that Council needs to note that S106 funds are not applicable to this type of infrastructure project.

The planning application was discussed by CBC Development Management Committee on 16th March 2022 and the decision was to approve the application as per the officer recommendation. DMC ignored the Town Council's request for two conditions to be put on the application: for the footpath to become a bridleway; and that overhead cables should not be used to distribute power from the substation.

- b. **Queen's Jubilee Events**

Members received an oral update from Mr. Hosseini on the events planned for the Thursday and Sunday of the Queen's Jubilee weekend in June. Members had been provided with an early draft schedule of these events and Mr. Hosseini thanked Officers, staff and Councillors for their input into the planning of these events to date.

Officers are still working to encourage community-led events on other days of that weekend.

Meetings have been organised with contractors for the logistics, equipment and various entertainment acts. Cllr Knight said that he and Cllr G Fage are meeting with Officers once a week to progress and facilitate arrangements.

Members recommended starting to promote the planned events on social media platforms and on the Town Council website over the next few weeks.

c. **Biggleswade Library Consultation**

Cllr G Fage proposed that the Town Council formally respond to the consultation in support of the changes which ensure both the longevity of the library and its ability to meet modern demand. Cllr Pullinger said considerable thought has gone into how best to use the library space with planned growth to the children's section and a reduction in the amount of space for non-fiction because people use online resources in a digital age.

Cllr Pullinger requested Officers proactively engage with Central Bedfordshire Council about the possible use of the previous Registry Office building on London Road.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council write to Central Bedfordshire Council in support of the proposed changes as set out in the consultation documents.

d. **Ukraine Briefing and Community Voluntary Service Funding Fair**

Members were provided with two briefings from BATPC, the first from the National Association of Local Councils on the situation in Ukraine and the second on a Community Voluntary Service Funding Fair.

The briefings were **NOTED**.

e. **Biggleswade Station Interchange Consultation**

Members were asked to consider the consultations on the Traffic Regulation Orders for the planned transport interchange.

Cllr G Fage said that concerns have been raised on previous occasions over the planned location of the zebra crossing because it is not on the desire line and it is unlikely that people will use it in the way CBC has set out. The location also results in a loss of parking.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to the zebra crossing in the planned location as it is not on the desire line and would result in a loss of parking on Station Road.

If there is to be a zebra crossing, this should be on the south side of Saffron Road rather than the north side.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/22/00816/FULL - 10 Foxglove Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8SP**

Proposed conservatory to the north elevation (existing conservatory to be removed).

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.

b. **CB/22/00871/FULL - 31 Maunder Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8GL**

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.

c. **CB/20/03784/FULL - 33 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Re submission of planning permission CB/20/02285/FULL Partial demolition of workshop, convert remaining workshop into two dwellings and erection of single storey bungalow.

Planning appeal - The decision against this appeal has been received as 'Planning Appeal Dismissed'.

The appeal outcome was **NOTED**.

d. **CB/20/02285/FULL - 41 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Conversion and extension to existing workshop with partial demolition to create two dwellings and erection of a detached part single, part two storey dwellinghouse.

Planning appeal - The decision against this appeal has been received as 'Planning Appeal Dismissed'.

The appeal outcome was **NOTED**.

e. **CB/21/00899/FULL - 48- 52 Lawrence Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0LS**

Construction of new residential house, formation of access, parking, turning and garden areas.

Planning appeal - The decision against this appeal has been received as 'Planning Appeal Dismissed'.

The appeal outcome was **NOTED**.

f. **CB/22/00523/FULL - Unit F1, Stratton Business Park, London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8QB**

Install six rapid electric vehicle charging stations and associated equipment within six existing parking spaces at McDonald's.

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

g. **CB/22/00966/FULL - 6 Jemmett Grove, Biggleswade, SG18 0QE**

Single storey rear side 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.

h. **CB/21/04624/FULL - 29 Osprey Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8DZ**

Retrospective erection of 1 metre and 1.7 metre high fencing.

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.

i. **CB/22/01033/FULL - 14 Mersey Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8NQ**

Single storey link extension and garage conversion.

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.

j. **CB/22/00575/FULL – Land off Drove Road adjacent to 1A Drove Road, Biggleswade**

Erection of 5 dwellings with associated car parking, access road and amenity space.

This item was resolved at the Town Council Meeting of 8th March 2022.

11. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Sustainable Transport Corridor Engagement Festival**

A Sustainable Transport Corridor consultation is being conducted by Central Bedfordshire Council on 25th and 26th March 2022 at the Orchard Community Centre.

Cllr G Fage said that there is information on CBC's website relating to the strengths or weaknesses of each of the four routes included in the consultation but other weaknesses needed to be added.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council write immediately to Central Bedfordshire Council to highlight the following additional weaknesses:

- Use of The Baulk for East/West connectivity is problematic in that it is one-way;
- Hitchmead Road is not wide and a more sensible solution would be to use the grass verge alongside Stratton School playing field;
- Option 1 - Maunder Avenue has no footpaths and pedestrians use the road;
- Option 3 – the junction of Eagle Farm Road/Drove Road/London Road is very dangerous and if this option were chosen, considerable changes would be needed to make it safer for all types of users;
- Option 3 – the vegetation along the south side of Stratton School Farm needs to be severely cut back to make the bridleway wide enough for the types of vehicles indicated to travel down this route;
- The London Road/Chambers Way option – this is a dangerous junction for vehicles turning right from Chambers Way into London Road.

Cllr Russell requested that the consultation come to the next meeting to enable a formal response from the Town Council.

12. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

- a. 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.

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Ms. Selina Bailey

Ms. Bailey referenced a social media post regarding funds earmarked for upgrades to the Council Chamber sound system. Cllr Russell pointed out that the Council is being transparent by livestreaming all Council and Committee meetings to YouTube. Much of the equipment currently in the Chamber was inherited from Mid-Beds Council twenty years' ago and is not really adequate. Also, the acoustics in the Chamber are very poor. The Council has budgeted the funds should the current equipment fail.

Ms Bailey also asked why the Council's budget increase of 7.5% was passed at a time when many people are struggling financially. Cllr Russell said the Council's costs have also increased, citing the National Insurance increase imposed by the Government as an example. Mrs. Solomon confirmed that the 7.5% increase to a Band D property equates to £12.64 per annum, or £0.24 per week. The total precept for the Council is £1.4 million. Cllr G Fage added there is also a cost reduction and efficiency drive to save £25,000 and the Town Council is closely scrutinising all expenditure.

Cllr Dr Hayley Whitaker

Cllr Whitaker said that CBC Ward Councillors have awarded up to £1,000 to the Adopt-A-Street initiative. CBC was originally advised that the Town Council would be administering those funds but she had now received information to the contrary. Cllr Whitaker asked the Town Council to reconsider.

Mrs. Solomon responded that the Town Council is happy to support the Adopt-A-Street initiative but as the funding is coming from Central Bedfordshire Council into the Town Council's bank account, the Town Council will have to manage the expenditure in line with its Financial Regulations.

Mr. Hosseini said he will be contacting the Adopt-A-Street representative to clarify the process of managing the funds in line with the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

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.

13. EXEMPT

a. Capital Asset Register Project

Mr. Hosseini updated Members on the progress of the review of all Council Capital Assets.

It was **RESOLVED** to defer any decision until further information was available.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 7.44pm