



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12th APRIL 2022
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE SG18 8DL



PRESENT:

Cllr M Russell (Chairman)
Cllr G Fage (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr K Brown
Cllr I Bond
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr H Ramsay
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mrs W Solomon – Head of Finance & Planning
Mr I Lord – Place Shaping Manager
Ms H Calvert – Administration & HR Manager
Mrs S van der Merwe – Deputy Administration & HR Manager

Members of the Public - 5

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, Cllr M North and 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:

None.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Ukraine Conflict

Cllr Russell continued to remember 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. Sandy Civic Service – 27th March 2022

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor both attended Sandy Town Council's Civic Service on 27th March 2022. The Mayor, Cllr. Martin Pettitt, had tested positive that morning and his Deputy, Cllr Joanna Hewitt, led the proceedings. It was an enjoyable occasion and another chance to catch up with colleagues, including the Police and Crime Commissioner.

c. Biggleswade Rotary Club – Charter Lunch – 12th April 2022

The Mayor attended the Biggleswade Rotary Club's Charter Lunch at the John O'Gaunt Golf Club. A Charter Lunch is the anniversary of the Club's founding and Biggleswade Club is now 56 years' old. The Mayor was invited to say a few words in response to a toast and was able to thank the President of the Rotary Club, Barbara Hazell, for being a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

d. Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation

The Mayor said that some questions had been received from the inspector who is examining the Neighbourhood Plan. The questions are technical and have been referred to Dave Chetwyn of Urban Vision Enterprise CIC. We were also informed that we cannot now expect the inspector's final report until the end of May. There is no indication yet of when the referendum may take place.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. Mr Reynolds – Palace Street Consultation

Mr Reynolds expressed concern about traffic turning right from Palace Street into the path of vehicles coming round the bend on the corner of Saffron Road/Station Road. Cllr Russell said that the junction of Station Road and Saffron Road will become a T Junction under the proposed plans which will slow traffic down. Mr Reynolds queried whether this change will involve a loss of parking. Cllr Russell said that the Town Council has responded to the overall changes proposed with suggestions to minimise the loss of parking. The Town Council is awaiting the outcome from Central Bedfordshire Council.

5. INVITED SPEAKERS

Lisa King – Biggleswade Community Agent

Ms. King provided Members with an update on the services she has provided to the community in the last year. She thanked the Town Council for its support of the Community Agent role which assists some of the most vulnerable within the town.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were none.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members received the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 22nd March 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8DL.

- Page 11 – Hitch Mead should be corrected to read “Hitchmead”.
- Open Session - Ward Councillor Grant – Cllr M Foster asked for the record to be corrected to reflect “up to £1,000” instead of “up to £2,000”.

With these amendments, the Minutes were **ACCEPTED** as a true and accurate record.

- b. Members were provided with the Minutes of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting** of **15th March 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, 4 Saffron Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8DL.

Cllr Pullinger said that further details of the Cost & Efficiency Review will be brought to the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 21st June 2022.

These Minutes were **NOTED**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 22nd April 2022**.

Cllr M Foster asked for an update on the Ward Councillor's Grant for the Adopt-A-Street Litter Picking initiative.

Mr Lord said that the Council had procured all relative litter picking equipment to the full amount of the grant in collaboration with the representative of the litter picking initiative. This equipment has now been delivered to the Council and arrangements for storage of the equipment will be finalised in the coming days.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

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

Officers are continuing to finalise details relating to the two planned events. Since the report was issued, the marketing strategy has been changed and the Town Council will not proceed with issuing the 9,000 leaflets.

Designs for marketing materials are progressing and the events will be promoted through the website, social media platforms and the Biggleswade Bulletin. Procurement processes for staging, PA, lighting systems, bunting and cherry picker are at final stage. Participation by local organisations and businesses is still being confirmed and entertainment is being booked.

Cllr Knight expressed his thanks to Officers for their efforts in planning these events and added that publication in the Biggleswade Bulletin presents better value for money than mailshots. Details will be published in the May edition of the Bulletin.

Cllr Pullinger asked whether the bunting will affect CCTV coverage. Mr Lord said that the location of the bunting will not affect CCTV.

Cllr Strachan requested the Town Council promotes these events through its website and via press releases.

Cllr Pullinger suggested closing Station Road to ensure the safety of residents in the Town Centre on the planned events days and Mr Hosseini confirmed this is being assessed.

Cllr Pullinger asked why the report indicates the Town Council's support for four street parties only, rather than all plans. Mr Hosseini said that the Town Council will provide administrative support for all parties.

Cllr M Foster asked if there is a cut-off point for people who want to apply for road closures. Mr Hosseini confirmed it would be early May and the Town Council will publish this on its website.

b. **Sustainable Transport Corridor**

Cllr G Fage noted that the consultation is at an early stage but the impact of this scheme on Biggleswade has much wider ramifications than is currently evident or has been taken into account by Central Bedfordshire Council ("CBC"). Members felt that the Council had not been adequately consulted, despite all promotional material seeming to indicate a partnership between the Town Council and CBC.

Mr Hosseini confirmed that the issues raised in the Council Meeting of 22nd March 2022 were submitted to CBC, along with an invitation for CBC Officers to meet with the Town Council. CBC have yet to respond and Mr Hosseini will follow this up.

It was **RESOLVED** to arrange a face-to-face meeting between the Town Council and CBC to progress this scheme.

c. **Public Notice – BT004 Palace Street, Biggleswade – Banned Turn**

This consultation has arisen due to the proposed changes for the Transport Interchange which will affect the junction of Station Road and Saffron Road. Traffic would be required to turn right only, into Saffron Road.

It was **RESOLVED** to support the proposed change to traffic exiting from Palace Street.

10. **ACCOUNTS**

- a. Members received and **ADOPTED** the accounts to 28th February 2022.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a. **CB/21/05233/FULL - 19A High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JE**

Proposed kitchen extract system. Amendments to this application in respect of the above property. Other documents received: Environmental Noise Assessment v.1 dated 25.10.21.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council **STRONGLY OBJECT** on the grounds of a) the impact on residential properties in immediate proximity from noise and odour; b) the obstruction to the highway that would be caused by users of a takeaway; c) potential noise generated by users of the takeaway.

The Town Council also expressed its concern that there has been no "Change of Use" application.

b. **CB/22/00957/FULL - 12 Collings Crescent, Biggleswade, SG18 0PZ**

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/22/00857/FULL - The Red Lion, 1 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8ED**

and

d. Conversion of former public house to one dwelling and demolition of a single storey rear extension with conversion of the outbuilding into garage and storage building.

CB/22/01357/LB - The Red Lion, 1 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8ED

Listed Building: Conversion of former public house to one (1x) dwelling-house, demolition of single storey rear extensions, and conversion of outbuilding into garaging and storage building.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECT** to this planning application on the grounds that:

- a) The recent owner of this site (UK Regeneration) presented commercially viable plans to Town Council evidencing commercial and community-supported demand for town centre hospitality facilities.
- b) The low number of large, vacant commercial buildings in town centre supports that there is good demand for commercial properties in the town centre and the current owner has not given sufficient evidence as to why the conversion of this property to a dwelling is necessary.
- c) Recent pre-planning advice issued by Central Bedfordshire Council for the Whistle & Flute on Mill Lane in Biggleswade indicated that CBC was not minded to support a conversion of the property to a residential dwelling. It would stand that the same principle should apply to this property if consistency in approach is to be maintained.
- d) This Town Council is concerned that this planning application proposes demolishing part of a listed site.
- e) The Pollution Officer has concerns over noise and the Town Council wishes to note that the nearby Stratton House Hotel is a popular outdoor venue and an important community asset.
- f) The Local Plan sets out under Policy EMP2 that a change of use to non-employment generating sites should “only be considered where there is no reasonable or viable prospect of the site delivering an employment generating use”. Evidence has not been supplied with this planning application demonstrating that this property would no longer support employment-generating use.
- g) The Local Plan sets out under Policy R1 that the proposed use would NOT positively support the vitality of the Town Centre by enhancing the range of facilities offered and/or stimulating activity outside normal shopping hours. This planning application shows no evidence of supporting the vitality of the Town Centre in the prescribed way.

Members requested that CBC Ward Councillors call this planning application in to DMC if CBC officers are minded to approve it.

- e. **CB/22/00727/FULL - JRL Plant & Logistics, Site of Unit N, Stratton Business Park, Montgomery Way, Biggleswade, SG18 8UB**

Erection of a workshop.

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

- f. **CB/22/01170/FULL - 1 Delius Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8UA**

Loft conversion with rear facing dormer, and front facing rooflights.

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.

- g. **CB/22/01176/FULL - 23 Mead End, Biggleswade, SG18 8JN**

Front extension, and alterations to covered walkway.

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/22/00257/FULL - Brook Cottage, Langford Road, Biggleswade, SG18 9RA**

Timber carport.

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/22/01001/FULL - 191 Mead End, Biggleswade, SG18 8JX**

Replace front porch, garage conversion, single storey side extension and loft conversion with rear dormer.

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/22/01100/VOC - 78 Hitchin Street, Biggleswade, SG18 8BE**

Variation of condition number 3 of planning permission CB/20/01989/FULL (Single storey rear extension, two storey front extension, removal of chimney, alterations to existing garage roof and additional alterations to existing dwelling) - Increase pitch of new garage roof.

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.

- k. **CB/TCA/22/00170 - Hitchin Street, Biggleswade, SG18 8AS**

Works to a tree within a Conservation Area: Tree to be pruned back.

This Tree Works application is **NOTED**.

I. **CB/TRE/22/00155 - Beaumont Park Nursing Home, Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Works to trees protected by a Preservation Order:

- T1 — Sycamore—remove deadwood.
- T2 and T3 Limes — re-pollard at previous points to allow clearance at access.
- T4 — London Plane an overall crown reduction.
- T5 Cherry on edge of car park — dead remove.
- T6 in Rear garden area reduce to give 2 m clearance.
- T7 Oak reduce crown by 2.5 to give clearance to building.
- T9 and T10 Yews — Deadwood and raise crowns to 3m.
- G1 Leylandii Hedge— cut back to boundary.

An extension has been granted to the **13th April 2022** for comments to CBC.

This Tree Works application is **NOTED**.

12. **PLANNING APPEALS**

a. **CB/MWE/21/0510 - Warren Villas Quarry, New Road, Sandy**

Planning appeal - Non-compliance with planning permission no. CB/11/01376/MW (condition 17 - restoration).

This Planning Appeal was **NOTED**.

13. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOME**

- a. This report was **NOTED**.

14. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Civic Service 2022**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

b. **Biggleswade Neighbourhood plan Regulation 16 Consultation**

The update was **NOTED**.

c. **Great Big Spring Cleaning Week**

Mr Lord updated Members on Council's support for various litter picking initiatives in and around Biggleswade, through the Adopt-A-Street initiative and local community groups.

There are plans for future litter picking and community engagement events in collaboration with Plastic-Free Biggleswade throughout the next couple of months. Mr Lord will let Councillors know how they can get involved.

d. **Grants 2022 – 2023**

The correspondence was **NOTED**.

15. 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.

a. Mrs Grayston – Biggleswade Speedwatch

The recent CBC event to discuss sustainable transport in and around Biggleswade was poorly attended, which was disappointing to see. There are many conflicts between the different modes of transport, current road layouts are problematic and it is clear there is much work to be done with CBC to correct a number of issues. Mrs Grayston added that it is important to preserve the integrity of the Green Wheel as part of this design work.

b. Mr Reynolds – Town Centre pathways

Pavements in the town centre are in very poor repair where utilities works have been completed and tar is put down instead of replacing the paving blocks. This has caused a checkerboard effect. He added that all the pavements in the town centre are in various states of disrepair.

Cllr Russell said that in the longer term it was hoped to replace all the paving but, for the time being, any causes for concern should be reported to Central Bedfordshire Council Highways.

c. Mr Andy Skilton – Sustainable Transport Corridors

Mr Skilton is a representative of the Walking & Cycling in Biggleswade Facebook Group. Mr Skilton wanted to remind Members that these are sustainable transport corridors and that lack of parking and inconvenience to motorists should not be the primary driver in the response to the consultation. To encourage sustainable transport, cars should be removed. If Councillors are serious about encouraging walking and cycling, which has health benefits, he is urging Councillors to encourage and sell those schemes to the public.

Cllr Russell thanked Mr Skilton and said that the Town Council acknowledges his feedback. However, in certain places, parking outside residential properties is necessary for less able residents.

d. Leanne Thurlow – Pigeons

Ms Thurlow asked for a status update and time frames for the proposed pigeon cull. Ms Thurlow also asked if Council has engaged with Humane Wildlife Solutions.

Cllr Russell stated that this was not an immediate priority for Council but thanked Ms. Thurlow for following up with Council.

16. EXEMPT ITEMS

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.

(17a Capital Asset Register)

(17b Car Parking)

(17c CCTV)

(17d Staff Update)

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.

17. EXEMPT

a. Capital Asset Register

Mr Hosseini updated Members on costs for conducting surveys on a number of Capital Assets.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Financial Regulations and to appoint Mr David Clifton (FRICS) to conduct surveys on identified properties on the Capital Assets Register.

b. Car Parking

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers proceed with an update to the TRO to formally recognise operational parking permits.

c. CCTV

Mr Hosseini updated Members on the CCTV Strategy.

Members **NOTED** that this would return to Council in June.

d. Staff Update

Members **NOTED** the update on various staffing matters from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21:25