



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 26th 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 (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D. Albone
Cllr I. Bond
Cllr K. Brown
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
Mrs S. van der Merwe – Deputy HR and Administration Manager
Mrs R. Jandu – Senior Administrator

Members of the Public - 1

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 be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Mayor asked that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this might infringe the Data Protection Rights of that individual.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr L. Fage.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Bond - Item 10a – Planning Application: Tree Works Application: CB/TRE/22/00196

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Albone – Item 10b – Planning Application - 17 Banks Road, Biggleswade

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Ukraine Conflict

Cllr Russell continued to remember people of both Ukrainian and Russian origin in our community and also those families locally who have taken in Ukrainian refugees. The situation in Ukraine remains in our thoughts and prayers.

b. Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation

Mr Dave Chetwyn of Urban Vision CIC has submitted technical responses to the Examiner's questions and the Town Council is awaiting further developments.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no questions from members of the public.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- a. Cllr Strachan asked the Town Council to arrange an informal meeting between Lead Partner from both local GP Surgeries, representatives from the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the Town Council and Mr Richard Fuller, MP for North East Bedfordshire, to discuss residents' well-publicised difficulties accessing medical assistance.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Council would contact the relevant parties to arrange a meeting.

- b. Cllr Woodhead said he had been contacted by a member of the public regarding the town centre public conveniences, which had been closed before the last buses have left on separate occasions over the preceding days. Cllr Woodhead asked for clarification on the opening hours and whether there has been a change in policy.

Mr Tarrant agreed to follow up on this.

- c. Cllr Knight raised the recent planning application for 19A High Street, to which the Town Council has raised its objections. He referred to building work for installing a commercial kitchen on these premises being well underway but understands that no planning application has been granted.

Mr Tarrant confirmed Officers had contacted Central Bedfordshire Council ("CBC") and had not yet received a response.

- d. Cllr Knight stated that a CCTV survey was to have been undertaken by the Town Council's current supplier. Mr Hosseini confirmed that the site visit by the supplier had gone ahead and the Town Council is awaiting the results of the survey.

- e. Cllr Albane referred to a recent email communication regarding the Transport Interchange, particularly to slides showing an option to remove traffic from the Market Square which would not be acceptable.

Cllr Russell said that the slides were proposals by CBC Officers and that Members of the Town Council had given feedback and listed their concerns to the CBC Principal Project Manager. Members have suggested alternatives and now operators supplying bus services within Biggleswade will have to be consulted. The Town Council is awaiting further information from CBC.

- f. Cllr M Foster asked for an update on the Flag Flying Policy and why the flag had not been flown on St. George's day this year. There is ambiguity about flag flying in the current policy which needs to be addressed. Cllr Knight requested that a revised version of the policy be brought to the next Town Centre Management Committee Meeting.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. The Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 12th April 2022** were received and **APPROVED**.
- b. The Minutes of the **Annual Assembly** held on **Tuesday 19th April 2022** were received and **NOTED**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 12th April 2022**:

There were none.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Public Works Board Loan**

Members reviewed the report issued by Mr Tarrant relating to investment in services for the Town, the Town Council's growth needs to meet future projects and funding to support that investment.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has changed its criteria Public Works Loan Board loans and there is specific wording that councils are to use when applying for and potentially drawing down on a loan.

Cllr Pullinger said that following the official precept setting meeting earlier in 2022 there had been amendments to the exact list of projects. The overall limit of £425,910 for Year 1 remains the same.

Cllr Pullinger recommended changes to the wording of the recommendation as set out in Mr Tarrant's report to reiterate the Council's fiscal programme and responsibility.

RESOLUTION TO BORROW

It is **RESOLVED** to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £1,106,000 over the borrowing term of 25 years for capital expenditure and 15 years for revenue expenditure. The loan repayments for a loan of £1,106,000 would amount to around £62,184 per year at a monthly cost of £5,182.00.

BTC will be increasing the Council tax precept for the purpose of the loan

It is also intended to increase the Council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 4.4% which is the equivalent of an additional £62,184 a year.

Impact on 2022/23 Budget

It is **RESOLVED** to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of £425,910 over the borrowing term of 25 years for capital expenditure and 15 years for revenue expenditure. The annual loan repayments will come to around £22,061 at a monthly cost of £1,838.

Impact upon precept 2022/23 (6 months effect)

It is also intended to increase the Council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 0.75% which is the equivalent of an additional £11,030 in 2022/23 and 1.5% which is the equivalent of an additional £22,061 per annum thereafter. This assumes that the loan application process will take up to 6 months to conclude. It is understood that there is currently a backlog in applications.

Addendum

Whilst the intentions regarding the precept are resolved, every effort will be made to avoid actual increases to the precept as a result of the loans through the ongoing cost and efficiency savings programme, revenue & income optimisation and through use of funds allocated in 2022/23 for one-off revenue projects.

Further, for clarity, the total loan requested over 5 years will be limited to £1,106,000 and no more than £425,910 will be drawn down without a further resolution of Council.

The resolution as laid out above was unanimously **APPROVED**.

b. **Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Draft**

Members had reviewed the consultation document.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council will not respond formally to this consultation.

c. **Town Council Meeting Calendar – May 2022 to May 2023**

Mr Hosseini notified Members of three changes to the Meeting Calendar as attached to the Agenda. These are:

- Include an additional Town Council Meeting on 23rd May 2023.
- Include a Personnel Committee Meeting on 1st November 2022.
- Add a Town Council Meeting on 8th November 2022.

Cllr Knight requested that the Town Centre Management Committee meeting scheduled for 15th November 2022 be moved to 18th October 2022 to facilitate Christmas planning.

Cllr Pullinger requested the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting of 21st June 2022 be moved to 5th July 2022.

The following corrections were requested:

- The Town Council meeting of 12th July be recorded as being at 7:00pm and not 2:30pm.
- The Biggleswade Joint Committee on 14th July 2022 be recorded as being held at 2:30 pm and not 7:00pm.

Subject to the amendments listed above, it was **RESOLVED** to proceed with the Meeting Calendar and to circulate the updated version to all Members via email.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/TRE/22/00196 - Shortmead Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 0FG**

Works to trees protected by trees Preservation Order MB/02/00006: W1: trim Oak Tree to give 3 metres clearance and balance Ash Tree and trim no more than 15%.

This Tree Works application was **NOTED**.

b. **CB/22/001161/FULL – 17 Banks Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DY**

Creation of vehicular access to rear of dwelling and double carport.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application, subject to Central Bedfordshire Council entering into consultation with all residents on Newtown Court to ensure that vehicular access to the property does not result in any loss of parking spaces on Newtown Court.

c. **CB/22/00466/FULL – Fairfield Cottage, Fairfield Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0AA**

New garage and store to replace a range of existing outbuildings and garages.

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/22/01420/FULL – 1A Havelock Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DB**

Conversion from A1 to C3 to create 1x one bedroom flat, with extension to the front and reduction in roof height.

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.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

Cllr Russell requested clarification on whether “Orchard Close” should be “Orchard Chase” and whether “Biggleswade Road - Land East of” should be “Baden Powell Way – Land East of”.

The report was **NOTED**.

12. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Grants 2022/2023

The thank you letters were **NOTED**.

13. 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.

There were no questions from members of the public.

14. 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.

There were no exempt items.

The Chairman closed the Meeting at 19:44