



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 24th MAY 2022
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE SG18 8DL



PRESENT:

Cllr G Fage (Chairman)
Cllr M Russell (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr K Brown
Cllr I Bond
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 R Jandu – Senior Administrator
Mrs S van der Merwe – Deputy Administration & HR Manager

Members of the Public – 1 Member on Zoom, None in person.

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.

22/0022.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr L Fage, Cllr F Foster, Cllr M Foster.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

22/0023.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

22/0023.1 Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

22/0023.2 Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

22/0024.0 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

22/0024.1 Queen's Jubilee Celebrations

Cllr G Fage wished Members and Biggleswade residents a happy Jubilee weekend.

The Council are holding two events over the Bank Holiday weekend for the Queens Jubilee. The first event will be held on the evening of Thursday 2nd May 2022 in the Market Square, where there will be a Beacon lighting alongside acoustic acts and food and drink provided by local businesses. The second event will be held from midday on Sunday 5th May 2022 in the Market Square, where there will be a street party with food, drink, and family-friendly entertainment.

22/0024.2 Pub Watch Meeting

Members were informed that Cllr G Fage, Cllr Knight and the Place Shaping Manager, Isaac Lord, attended a Pub Watch meeting on Wednesday 11th May 2022.

The meeting was very informative, and a lot was learnt on how the Town Council can support local pubs and other town centre businesses. It was noted that local businesses have recently created a campaign to attract new customers. Cllr G Fage advised it's an important reminder to continue giving our custom to local businesses, including our pubs and bars as they play a vital role in our community.

22/0024.3 Leighton Linlade Civic Service

Sunday 15th May 2022 Cllr G Fage attended Leighton Linlade's Civic Service, he advised it was a wonderful celebration of the community. He looks forward to attending some many more civic services in the year.

22/0024.4 Bedfordshire Scouts AGM

On Wednesday 18th May 2022, Cllr G Fage joined Bedfordshire Scouts for their AGM at the Scout hub in Bromham. The Club now have a large number of people who wish to join.

It was hoped that there would be a greater number of Scout Leaders in the future, who can teach vital life skills to young children.

22/0024.5 Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire's Service of Thanksgiving 22 May 2022

On Sunday 22nd May, Mayor Grant Fage and Deputy Mayor Madeline Russell represented Biggleswade at the Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire's Service of Thanksgiving at St Mary's Church in Luton, celebrating Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The service was well attended by Mayors and other dignitaries from across the county, including representatives of Bedfordshire's voluntary organisations, whose contribution was also celebrated.

The service included hymns, choral performances, and readings, along with a unique extract from a speech the Queen gave back in 1947, on her 21st birthday.

It was a very joyful occasion and a fitting tribute to the reign of Her Majesty the Queen.

22/0024.6 Mayor's chosen Charities

Cllr G Fage announced that his chosen charities for this year are Sue Ryder St John's Hospice and British Red Cross Ukraine Appeal.

22/0025.0 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no questions from members of the public.

22/0026.0 INVITED SPEAKERS

Bedfordshire Police Community Cohesion Team's PC Steven Beer was unable to attend to give an update.

22/0027.0 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

22/0027.1 Members wished to know when the Flag Flying Policy as discussed at the Town Centre Management Committee Meeting of 17th May 2022 will be implemented. Mr Hosseini informed Members advised that the intention is to revise the Flag Flying Policy and then this Policy will be implemented. It was suggested it would be good to have both flags flown.

22/0027.2 Members wished to learn about which streets would be closed for the Queen's Jubilee Celebrations events and what street parties would be held. Mr Lord updated Members that the streets to be closed were Sanger Avenue, Spring Close, and Lawrence Road. Penrose Court Care Home will also be closed. The main event will be held in the Market Square.

22/0027.3 Members wished to learn how the Queen's Jubilee events will be advertised. Members were informed that posters and banners will be erected shortly to inform residents of the events.

22/0028.0 MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

None.

22/0029.0 MATTERS ARISING

None.

22/0030.0 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

22/0030.1 Financial Regulation

Mrs Pridding, Locum Head of Finance, presented Members with the updated Financial Regulations. It was noted that, in order to facilitate many of the recommendations in the Finance Review, it is advisable to update the Financial Regulations to better facilitate a more robust and appropriate set of controls and protocols.

Members agreed the following amendments should be made to the Financial Regulations:

- Clause 1.14 - and 5.8 to be altered to £2000 rather than £5000.
- Clause 7.8 - to be altered as there is no need for a business case for interim staff.
- Clause 6.13 - for the last sentence to be deleted.

- Clause 4.8 - to be altered to state that the projected outturn will be reported each month but will be presented to Council once a quarter.
- Clause 6.7 - to remove the words “principally salaries”.

Subject to these amendments being made, it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **ADOPT** the updated Financial Regulations.

22/0030.2 Banking Arrangements

Ms Pridding recommended changing the Town Council’s official bank to Unity Trust, which is widely used among other Councils across the UK. This recommendation has been made in line with recommendations from the Finance Review of 2021.

Members expressed reservations relating to the fact there is no local branch and transactions will need to be done via the local Post Office.

Members asked for a recorded vote on whether to change banks and Members voted as follows:

For	Against	Abstention
Cllr M Knight	Cllr H Ramsay	Cllr D Strachan
Cllr R Pullinger	Cllr M Russell	Cllr I Bond
Cllr J Woodhead	Cllr M North	-
Cllr C Thomas	-	-
Cllr K Brown	-	-
Cllr D Albone	-	-

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers would engage Unity Trust Bank as the Town Council’s approved bankers.

22/0030.3 Banking Signatories

Members received a written report from Mrs Pridding recommending that banking signatories for Biggleswade Town Council be classed by functional responsibility and not by name. This will enable good housekeeping practice connected to the financial processes of the Council. Mrs Pridding advised that annual changes to the list of signatories based on elections of chairs is good financial practice.

Members proposed deferring this to the next Town Council meeting and asked for a recorded vote.

For	Against	Abstention
Cllr M Knight	Cllr R Pullinger	Cllr K Brown
Cllr J Woodhead	-	Cllr D Albone
Cllr C Thomas	-	-
Cllr H Ramsay	-	-
Cllr D Strachan	-	-
Cllr I Bond	-	-
Cllr M Russell	-	-
Cllr M North	-	-

It was **RESOLVED** that the choice of signatories be **DEFERRED** to a future Town Council Meeting.

22/0030.4 Reserves Policy

Members received a draft Reserves Policy for consideration as recommended in the Finance Review 2021. This Policy sets out good practice relating to monitoring reserves and reserve levels in line with the annual budget setting process.

Members requested the following amendments to Sections 2 and 3 of the Policy:

- To amend “general fund” to “general reserve” to maintain consistency throughout the Policy.

Subject to these changes being implemented, the Town Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Reserves Policy.

22/0030.5 Member/Officer Protocol

Members were provided with a draft Member/Officer Protocol to support professional conduct in relationships between officers and Members. This will be an important point of reference and good practice which supports that important relationship, and the contents are based on the principles which most Members will already be aware of.

Members requested the following amendments:

- On page 37, paragraph 7, line three - removing the word “own” before “professional views”.
- On page 37, paragraph 7, on line four inserting “objective and evidenced” before “recommendations”.
- On page 37, paragraph 7, on line five - replace “own” with “professional view”.
- In relation to Page 40, paragraph 26 should be removed.
- Paragraph 19 should have its own section under “confidentiality”.

Subject to these amendments being made, it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **ADOPT** the Member/Officer Protocol.

22/0030.6 Diversion of Part of Biggleswade Footpath No. 24

Members considered correspondence and maps from Central Bedfordshire Council connected to the possible diversion of Footpath 24.

The Footpath currently crosses the football pitch, but users of the footpath tend not to cross the football pitch when it is in use.

The Town Council **RESOLVES** that it does not support the diversion of the footpath away from the football field and that consequently, it is not necessary for a finger post at the beginning of the route adjacent to Eagle Farm Road.

22/0030.7 Bomb Threats and Suspicious Packages Policies

Mr Hosseini stated these Policies will support execution and operational delivery of all events planned by the Town Council. This will be reviewed annually.

Members requested that “Production Manager” be amended to “the Town Clerk or appropriately delegated Officer” and that the numbering on the Appendix 1 of the Bomb Threat Policy be corrected.

Subject to these amendments being made, it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **ADOPTS** the Bomb Threat Policy 2022 and Discovery of Suspicious Packages Policy 2022.

Mr Hossieni confirmed all staff, based at the Head Office and at the Town Council’s other buildings will receive appropriate training.

22/0030.8 Lost Child Policy

Members debated the intricacies of collecting children based on modern familial responsibility and including vulnerable people. Members requested the Policy reflect “parents” instead of “mother” and “father” as the parent reporting a lost child.

Members requested this Policy to be amended to include “Vulnerable People” and changing the name of the Policy to “Lost Childs, Adults and lost Vulnerable People Policy”.

The draft Policy has been submitted to the CBC Safety Advisory Group for their approval. The Policy will be relied on heavily in the forthcoming months for the Town Council’s planned Community events.

Members stated that manning and management of this Policy needs additional review. Members requested that DBS clearance for staff and Safeguarding will need to be prioritised.

The Town Council **RESOLVED** to:

- i) Temporarily **ADOPT** the Lost Child, Adults and lost Vulnerable People Policy as included in the Agenda for this Town Council Meeting to cover planned events for the short term;
- ii) **DEFER** the final approval of the Lost Child, Adults and lost Vulnerable People Policy to a future Town Council meeting to review this policy in further detail.

22/0030.9 Street Trading Application

Cllr Knight requested that Officers ask Central Bedfordshire Council to share their business policy for Street Trading Applications so that the Town Council is aware of their position and policy and how they make decisions on these applications.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to the Street Trading Application.

22/0031.0 ACCOUNTS

Members received and **ADOPTED** the Accounts and reports as detailed in the Agenda up to **31st March 2022**.

22/0032.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

22/0032.1 CB/TCA/22/00216 – 3 Rankins Court, Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0LQ

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: Reduce crown of purple leaf plum tree.

This planning application was **NOTED**.

22/0032.2 CB/22/01753/FULL – 29 Dering Corner, Biggleswade, SG18 8XQ

Single storey 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.

22/0032.3 CB/22/01270/FULL – 35 Carter Meadow, Biggleswade, SG18 0LB

Rear single storey extension, with lean to roof, and roof lifting 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.

22/0032.4 CB/22/01555/FULL – 13 Lawrence Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0LS

First Floor extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided a) the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered and b) any existing rights of way to the rear of the property are preserved.

22/0033.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS OUTCOMES

Members considered the report of the planning application outcomes as of 19th May 2022 and this report was **NOTED**.

22/0034.0 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

22/0034.1 Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Examination - Town Council Response Letter to the Examiner

Cllr. Russell drew attention to two important points relating to the letter, which sets out why the Neighbourhood Plan had included certain policies.

The Examiner's rewording of Paragraph 57 deletes the reference to landscape design and screening and implies that the issue is just about scale and building design. The landscaping is key with reference to the Holme Farm development in the Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan wished to include Strategic Green Spaces to prevent coalescence with Langford, Sandy and Sutton. The Examiner's report deleted this section even though the concept is within the Local Plan – but not for Biggleswade - as Important Countryside Gaps.

Finally, the letter before Council is not the final version and it should be noted that Bedfordshire FA has described Biggleswade as having 'the worst football provision in the county' according to population size and demand – not 'the worst in the country'

The response letter was **NOTED**.

22/0034.2 Grants

Members **NOTED** the letters of thanks from organisations awarded Grants.

22/0034.3 Autism Bedfordshire Grant Report

This was **NOTED**.

22/0034.4 Biggleswade Green Wheel Development Group

Mr Hosseini advised an email was received from BRCC seeking to resume quarterly meetings which were held as a matter of course before the pandemic. The first meeting to take place on 15th June 2022 and Officers and Cllrs Pullinger and Bond from the Town Council will be attending.

22/0034.5 Cheering Volunteering

This was **NOTED**.

22/0034.6 Ivel River Bank Erosion – Public Complaints

Officers received correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council that works will be carried out in mid-November to shore up the sections of the Ivel River that are eroded away alongside a public highway. Mr Hosseini advised the timeline was extended from October to November due to the complexity of works needed.

Members will be provided with a technical breakdown of the works at the next Town Council Meeting.

The Town Council are awaiting official confirmation of the start date for those works and Officers will update the Town Council at the next Town Council Meeting.

22/0034.7 Biggleswade Twinning Association

This was on the previous Council Meeting and has erroneously been included on the Agenda for 24th May 2022.

22/0035.0 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no questions from Members of the public, either in person in the Chamber or via Zoom.

22/0036.0 EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution was moved that it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt items are discussed.

22/0037.0 EXEMPT ITEMS

22/0037.1 CCTV

Amend the resolution to “Members **RESOLVED** that Officers **sh**ould pursue S106 funding for additional CCTV equipment”. Also add “The Town Council **APPROVE** the proposal to procure eight fixed cameras (Product HCCTVPLTD-EUR-3309-1IV), one mobile camera and CCTV Monitoring and Maintenance at Century House (Product HCCTVP-BTC-006-MM).”

22/0037.2 Chamber Project

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers would procure any necessary equipment directly, as opposed to engaging third party suppliers.

22/0037.3 Rail works, Biggleswade

It was **AGREED** that Mr Tarrant would arrange a meeting with Cllr Bond and Cllr Russell.

22/0037.4 Objectives – Reporting Back to Council

The New objective was to: "Create a plan for traffic circulation in the town centre and for the layout of the market square, to be approved by the Council".

The Chairman ended the Meeting at 9:05pm