



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 26th JULY 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 I Bond
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr H Ramsay
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr J Woodhead
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mrs S van der Merwe – Deputy Administration & HR Manager
Mr I Lord – Place Shaping Manager
Ms K Saunders – Administrator
Mr R Youngs – Finance 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.

22/0088.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Mark Foster, Cllr K Brown, Cllr Lesley Fage.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

22/0089.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

22/0089.1 Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

22/0089.2 Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Strachan – Exempt: Kings Reach Estate S106
Cllr Bond – Variation of Rail Crossing and Planning Application 32 Shortmead Street.

22/0090.0 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

22/0090.1 New Finance Manager for Biggleswade Town Council

Cllr G Fage welcomed the new Finance Manager Rob Youngs to the Town Council.

22/0090.2 Meeting Proceedings

Cllr G Fage advised Members that planning applications will no longer be printed and put up for viewing in the Council Chamber. Members were encouraged to access these records via the live links on the copies of agendas emailed to them.

22/0090.3 Access for All Scheme

Cllr Russell attended a meeting on 15th July 2022, chaired by Mr Richard Fuller, MP for North-East Bedfordshire. The Network Rail Investment Authority approved the scheme and a contractor is to be appointed shortly, with works to commence in October 2022. Limited funding and costs increases have resulted in Network Rail reducing the scheme to save £582,000. The new bridge will only have lift access to the platforms and both sets of stairs have been removed. This will still allow access for wheelchairs and buggies but will not remove congestion on the northbound platform, which poses a significant safety hazard. The current steps are inadequate and need handrails. Concerns were raised about the hours staff will work and if this will affect access to the lifts.

Since the meeting the Access for All Group have contacted Network Rail to ask for reinstatement of the steps on the northbound platform. The plans for the toilets have been changed again and it is not yet known if the staffing issues will have an effect on access to the toilets.

The Transportation Interchange is on course to be completed in Spring 2023. There is a groundbreaking meeting for the Transportation Interchange on 26th August with the next Access for All Scheme meeting happening immediately after the ceremony.

Discussions have been commenced with bus companies regarding future routes and layovers. Town Council Officers need to be part of those discussions, and it was recommended that Officers get in touch with Lisa Wright and Jade Jones from CBC.

22/0090.4 Electricity Sub Station

Cllr Russell was invited to attend the sod-cutting ceremony for the electricity sub-station on 18th July 2022 and after coffee, networking and a detailed health and safety briefing given the proximity of high voltage cables, the usual photos were taken with spades in the ground.

22/0090.5 Neighbourhood Plan Update

Final amendments to the Plan have been submitted to CBC from the Town Council's planning consultant Dave Chetwyn and it is hoped that the referendum can take place on 15th September 2022.

22/0091.0 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

22/0091.1 Mr Mark Inskip – Biggleswade F.C. regarding Item 5L

Mr Inskip wishes to highlight the lack of leisure facilities within Biggleswade. In 2005 the Kings Reach Masterplan was signed off and included leisure provisions and recreation facilities for football. The 2011 Census shows 16.5k residents in Biggleswade, with a potential 50% growth in that population within a ten-year period to 2021 but sports and leisure facilities as promised have not materialised. Other local towns have excellent sports facilities and Biggleswade sports players have to travel to Cambridge, other parts of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire to avail themselves of those facilities.

Mr Inskip is asking the Town Council to intervene to get the developers to meet their obligations.

22/0092.0 INVITED SPEAKER

Ny Moughal and Susanna Oats from Taylor Wimpey

Mr Moughal said he is presenting to the Council to provide Members with Taylor Wimpey's proposals for the balance of "Site 4" on Kings' Reach.

There are plans for 353 mixed-size, double story family residential homes, 139 will be affordable housing, 35 plots for "self-built" homes. The net developable area is 21.85 acres, with 10.8 acres of public open space, including children's play areas.

The original Outline Planning Permission was secured for the whole of Kings Reach for 1600 homes in 2006. This planning permission has expired and Taylor Wimpey are re-submitting the Outline Planning Application for the remaining site in keeping with the previous designs while still meeting current policies and standards.

Following questions from Members, he stated there would be 3-story apartments and play areas aimed at children up to the age of 10 but no football pitches or other leisure facilities.

Mr Moughal was not aware of planned S106 funding associated with this proposal.

Cllr Russell asked if Taylor Wimpey's designers are aware of Biggleswade's emerging Neighbourhood Plan ("NP"). Cllr Russell wished to bring to his attention that the NP would potentially going to referendum in September and will require higher-standard building than the earlier stages of Kings Reach, to include a mix of accommodation units for first-time buyers, people looking to downsize, housing suitable for the elderly, external green space, private gardens, private space, balconies of sufficient size to accommodate planting and a number of other factors. Cllr Russell stated that Taylor Wimpey should be up to speed with significant changes in design standards for developments in Bedfordshire.

Cllr Russell pointed out there is a Leisure Policy within the Neighbourhood Plan which has clear guidelines on what is expected as far as provision of leisure facilities within Biggleswade.

There was a consensus with Taylor Wimpey that we can work together to understand the detail of the application, in the hope of securing a well-designed application accompanied by the required infrastructure.

22/0093.0 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

None.

22/0094.0 MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

22/0094.1 From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting of Tuesday 12th July 2022** held at 7:00 pm in the Town Council Offices at The Old Court House, Biggleswade, SG18 8DL.

- Ms H Calvert is the Administration & HR Manager – remove “Deputy”.
- 22/0080.4 – Amend the resolution: “It was RESOLVED that the Town Council approves the completion of the following website work up to the value of £1,210” and remove the rest of the wording.
- 22/0080.3 - Banking Signatories: Cllr Pullinger requested this be changed to one Officer and the rest are Councillors.
- 22/0084.3 – Biggleswade Twinning Association: Remove “vote heading” from the paragraph.
- 22/0084.1 – Allotment T&C's: Change Cllr F Foster to Cllr M Foster.
- 22/0084.2 – Sustainable Travel Corridor: Amend the wording to reflect that land will need to be taken alongside Stratton School.

Subject to the above changes the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Meeting from 12th July 2022.

22/0095.0 MATTERS ARISING

None.

22/0096.0 ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

22/0096.1 Allotment Documents and Fees

Mr Tarrant addressed the Town Council and thanked Ms Saunders for her assistance with this project.

Officers and Members met with Biggleswade Allotment Association members to collectively update the draft Terms & Conditions. Further benchmarking was done by Officers based on size of plots and costs of plots at other local councils. Officers noted other local councils offered concessions to pensioners, students and those on benefits and Members are asked whether the Town Council should make allowance for this as part of its future fee structure.

Members requested the following amendments to the draft Terms & Conditions:

- Under End of Tenancy: Amend “not more than 30 days” to “more than 30 days”.
Page 26
- Page 26, paragraph 3: Amend “compensation” to “reasonable costs”.
- Page 24, sub-heading Advertisements: Amend “... display or permitted to display” to “tenant is not to display or permit to be displayed”.

- Page 25, Enforcement: Informal Warning: Amend “contacted by email” to “contacted by email or by letter where no email address is available”

Officers are sharing regular updates to the Allotment holders relating to the audit of allotments and the ten-point plan connected to that.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Town Council that:

- It **REJECTS** the recommendations to apply concessions to allotment fees for pensioners, students and benefit recipients and all references to concessions need to be removed from the documents.
- It **ACCEPTS** the current terms and conditions subject to the removal of concessions and amendments suggested in the discussion, and to submit this document for further review at the next PLOS Committee meeting in October 2022.
- It **ACCEPTS** the recommendation to freeze the allotment fees for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 at the current rate.
- It **ACCEPTS** that a full review of allotment sizes should be undertaken with new software introduced to enable the annual fees review in 2023.

Cllr G Fage extended his thanks to Ms Saunders for all the hard work she has been putting in on the allotments.

22/0096.2 Consultation on Variation of Rail Crossing Diversion Order: Biggleswade BW 11

Cllr Bond declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to this consultation.

It is very important that the line of a path is correctly recorded. Cllr Bond noted that CBC’s document is dated 12 July 2022 and Network Rail were granted a Non-Material Amendment to move the bridge 2.65m to the east and 5m north, which is not reflected in this document. Cllr Bond referred the Town Council to the relative Non-Material Amendment Record at CB/22/01778/NMA.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council write to Central Bedfordshire Council making it clear that these drawings are inaccurate when compared with CB/22/01778/NMA, and that the consultation document should be amended with accurate measurements and correct scaling to ensure complete accuracy.

22/0096.3 Consultation on new powers to improve road safety

This consultation relates to installation of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition camera for Sun Street.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to the installation of an ANPR camera on Sun Street as it is not needed.

22/0096.4 War Memorial Signage

Mr Lord advised Members there had been recent instances in which individuals have been disrespectful to the War Memorial. The Town Council is seeking to put up signage to deter such incidents.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **APPROVES** the purchase of two high-quality signs from Supplier B to read *“By respecting this memorial you are*

respecting the fallen. Please do not play in this area. Lest we forget.” and install these at the War Memorial.

22/0096.5 CCTV Strategy and Christmas Offer Funding

Cllr Fage tabled an urgent item following recommendations for TCM & F&GP Committees related to the procurement of CCTV equipment and Christmas Offer funding.

Mr Tarrant confirmed that two issues were considered at the F&GP Committee Meeting:

- 1) To allow a sum of £25,000 to be drawn down from Rolling Capital to allow the Town Council to implement its CCTV strategy.
- 2) To draw down a maximum allowance of £4,000 for the Christmas Offer.

Cllr Pullinger confirmed that the recommendation from the F&GP Committee Meeting earlier was to enable the capital funding of this from the Reserves **only** in the event that S106 funding for Biggleswade is unable to be released.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **APPROVES** the purchase of 8 Cameras and a mobile unit and the supporting equipment as part of the CCTV Strategy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **APPROVES** the draw down of Reserve Capital Funding up to £25,000 in the event the Town Council is unable to access S106 Funding from Central Bedfordshire Council towards the CCTV strategy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **APPROVES** the draw down of up to a maximum of £4,000 for the Christmas Offer from the Reserve Capital Funding.

22/0097.0 ACCOUNTS

There were no account records for consideration.

22/0098.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

22/0098.1 CB/TCA/22/00367 - 37 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8ED

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: G1 - Leylandii Hedge - Cut back overhang by 2m. G2 - Leylandii Hedge - on rear boundary - Cut back overhang by 2m and reduce in height by 3m to previous pruning points.

The tree works application is **NOTED**.

22/0098.2 CB/22/02606/FULL – 32 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 OAP

Replacement agricultural building.

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 by CBC in their deliberations.

22/0099.0 PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES

Cllr Bond informed Members that the planning application for the Red Lion was refused by Central Bedfordshire Council.

This report was **NOTED**.

22/0100.0 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

22/0100.1 The Mayor's Fundraiser

Members were informed that an invitation would be circulated for the Mayor's Charity event to be held at Biggles Lounge on 29th September 2022 at 7pm to raise funds for his chosen charities.

22/0101.0 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

22/0101.1 Mr Mark Inskip – Biggleswade F.C.

Mr Inskip mentioned a number of local football pitches in various localities around Biggleswade - at Etonbury (3g) and Stotfold's new stadium with 5 football fields, Bedford and Flitwick. Mr Inskip feels the developers pay no attention to, and are not accountable for, providing leisure and sport facilities which are vital to the Community.

Mr Inskip said previous meetings with the F.A. have highlighted that funding is available for Biggleswade football facilities, the provision of land for these facilities is the first step.

Cllr G Fage said tonight's presentation from Taylor Wimpey was the start of the consultation with them.

22/0101.2 Ben Walton – Biggleswade F.C.

Mr Walton and Mr Inskip have been working closely to get new football facilities in Biggleswade and have been let down by various entities. They are asking the Town Council to be an active partner in progressing this project. Mr Walton is aware of land behind the Co-Op distribution centre which would fit the parameters of what is needed. Mr Walton said their work to date has support from the Bedfordshire Football Association and both F.A. and private sponsor funding is available when the land is available to build football pitches and supporting facilities.

22/0102.0 EXEMPT

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

(Kings Reach Estate S106)
(HR Update)

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

22/0103.0 EXEMPT

22/0103.1 Kings Reach Estate S106

The Town Council considered the update provided.

22/0103.2 HR Update

Members considered various Staff HR matters.

The Chairman ended the Meeting at 8:35pm