



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 9th AUGUST 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 K Brown
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr H Ramsay
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr J Woodhead
Cllr C Thomas

Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Ms K Saunders – Administrator
Mr I Lord – Place Shaping Manager

Members of the Public – 0

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.

22/0104.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr R Pullinger, Cllr M Foster, Cllr L Fage.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

22/0105.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

22/0105.1 Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Bond – Item 11b – Discharge conditions for Lindsell's Crossing.

22/0105.2 Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Brown – Item 11b - Discharge conditions for Lindsell's Crossing.

22/0106.0 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

22/0106.1 Mayor's Fundraising Dinner

Cllr Fage reminded Members of the Mayor's fundraising event on 29th September 2022 for St. John's Hospice.

22/0107.0 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present in the Chamber or online.

22/0108.0 INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

22/0109.0 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

None.

22/0110.0 MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

22/0110.1 From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting of Tuesday 26th July 2022** held at 7:00 pm in the Town Council Offices at The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

- Page 11 – Allotment Documents and Fees - bottom of the page – amend the minutes to read "...tenant is not to display or permit to be displayed".
- Page 11 – Allotments Documents and Fees - The recordal of the resolution of the Town Council to reflect the decision not to have a concession structure for allotment fees has not been recorded and should be added, including making changes to the terms and conditions.

Subject to the above changes the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Meeting from 26th July 2022.

22/0110.2 The Minutes of the **Extraordinary Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 26th July 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

These Minutes were **NOTED**.

22/0110.3 The Minutes of the **Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting** held on **Thursday 14th July 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr Russell noted there will be corrections made to the Minutes at the next Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting in October 2022.

22/0110.4 The Minutes of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 5th July 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

These Minutes were **NOTED**.

22/0110.5 The Minutes of the **Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 7th June 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council. The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

These Minutes were **NOTED**.

22/0110.6 The Minutes of the **Personnel Committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 2nd August 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Cllr G Fage **AGREED** that recommendations from Committees to Council should be set out under this Agenda item, rather than the resolutions of the Committees which are recorded in the Minutes.

22/0111.0 **MATTERS ARISING**

From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** of **Tuesday 26th July 2022** held at 7:00 pm in the Town Council Offices at The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

- Page 11 – Allotment Documents & Fees: Detail on what Officer said should not be included in the Minutes.

22/0112.0 **ACCOUNTS**

22/0112.1 **Financial Administration**

Members received the following Accounts:

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31st June 2022.
- ii. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee 31st June 2022.
- iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee 31st June 2022.
- iv. Lloyds Bank Payment listing June 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **ADOPTS** the Accounts as set out.

22/0113.0 **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

22/0113.1 **Proposed No Waiting Restrictions - A00227**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **ACCEPTS** the proposals for Fairfield Road and Shortmead Street but **OBJECTS** to the proposals for Sun Street.

22/0113.2 **Lost and Found Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy**

This policy contains amendments requested at the Town Council meeting of 12 July 2022. Prior to any events taking place in the future Officers will conduct briefings with all staff reflecting this policy and risk assessments and a refresher on the Lost/Found policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **ADOPTS** the Lost and Found Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy.

22/0113.3 Christmas Offer Procurement

It was **RESOLVED** that this Item be moved to the Exempt session for further discussion.

22/0114.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

22/0114.1 CB/22/02887/FULL - 2 Buttercup Mead, Biggleswade, SG18 8TT

Installation of replica roof, and new window frames, to existing conservatory, which is at rear of property.

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.

22/0114.2 CB/22/02881/DOC - Land to North of Lindsell's level crossing, Biggleswade, SG18 0AD

Cllr Bond left the Council Chamber for the duration of the discussion on the next item as declared under Pecuniary interests.

Discharge of Condition 3 against planning permission CB/21/02168/FULL Construction of new ramped and stepped bridleway bridge to facilitate the closure of Lindsell's level crossing; formation of new bridleway to western side of railway and associated works.

Cllr Russell read the following statement:

Reasons in support of the Discharge of Planning Condition 3 - Landscaping

Despite the challenges posed, the Town Council has been broadly supportive of the Housing Infrastructure programme and the investment that it is bringing to our town.

The item before us is the discharge of the planning condition on landscaping for the bridle bridge at Lindsells Crossing. The bridge will be very intrusive at 41 feet high and will be far from in keeping with the surrounding rural landscape – Biggleswade Common (the largest stretch of common land in Bedfordshire); the River Ivel and the bridleway across to the sandhills and the RSPB (one of the few tourist attractions near the parish of Biggleswade).

Understanding that Lindsell's level crossing is one of the most dangerous in the country and that its closure is paramount, the Town Council supported the initial planning application subject to *“a strong recommendation for planning conditions around landscaping to minimise the visual impact.”* The Town Council also asked to be consulted proactively about any planning conditions – a request which was honoured in the breach.

In its decision notice, Central Bedfordshire Council notes that Condition 3 is required to mitigate the visual impact on the surrounding rural area, in line with Sections 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework, *“achieving well designed places”* and *“conserving and enhancing the natural environment”*. The Town Council argues that the Condition is also required to meet Policy EE5 in the

Local Plan, requiring that *“to safeguard intrinsic character, scenic beauty and perceptual qualities of the landscape such as tranquility, all development proposals will need to have regard to the key characteristics and sensitivities of the site and its setting.”*

The landscaping plan which was on the table at the Development Management Committee in July 2021 when the application was approved showed a tree belt over 30 feet wide (110 trees) encircling the bridge. Planning Condition 3 also required larger trees to be planted, irrigation to be put in place and for any trees which failed within five years to be replaced. This scheme was approved by the Landscaping Officer at the time and was a major reason why planning permission was given.

Network Rail are now asking for Condition 3 to be discharged based on a subsequent landscaping plan which only shows a third of the original trees and has removed the need for irrigation which, given the terrain, is vital for newly planted trees to survive. Moreover, there is almost no planting remaining to the south-east. It is imperative that the bridge is properly screened on the south-east to protect the views of Biggleswade Common and the RSPB and to retain the open view for the houses north of Potton Road. The proposal before us complete fails to satisfy this imperative.

It would seem to me to be unethical to gain planning permission on the basis of one landscape plan and then substitute another inferior plan to get the planning condition discharged.

Given the position of this bridge, its size and its proximity to such important open spaces, discharge of Condition 3 as now proposed is flawed and does not meet the relevant Local Plan and national policies. Central Bedfordshire Council should be insisting on implementation of the landscaping plan as approved by the Development Management Committee.

The number of trees originally proposed are needed to properly screen the bridge and the requirements to ensure that the trees are properly established and irrigated are vital.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to the discharge of Planning Condition 3 on the revised plan and demand that Network Rail are obliged to implement the landscaping as per the plan approved at Development Management Committee in order to mitigate the visual impact of the bridge.

Cllr Bond re-entered the Council Chamber at this point.

22/0114.3 CB/22/02691/FULL – Land at former Scaffolding Depot, Potton Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0DU

Erection of ten dwellings and the conversion of an existing building into two one bed flats.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application as:

- The traffic impact on Furzenhall Road and Potton Road.
- There are too many dwellings hence overdevelopment.
- Loss of residential parking on Winston Crescent.

- Properties would be very close to the railways line which will lead to noise pollution for residents.

The Town Council notes that the Highways Officer has objected.

22/0114.4 CB/22/03013/FULL – 8 The Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 0PS

First floor extension over existing garage. Two storey rear extension with dual hipped roof.

Single storey rear extension.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that there is no loss of parking on the driveway and that neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by CBC in their deliberations.

22/0115.0 PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES

Cllr Fage advised Members that the Planning Application for the Red Lion has been refused.

This report was **NOTED**.

22/0116.0 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None.

22/0117.0 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present in the Chamber or online.

22/0118.0 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.

(Orchard Centre)
(Christmas Offer Procurement)

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.

22/0119.0 **EXEMPT**

22/0119.1 **Orchard Centre**

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers are to proceed with the recommended action.

22/0119.1 **Christmas Offer Procurement**

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

- a) Purchase one Christmas tree from Christmas Tree Supplier C.
- b) Hire giant C9 lights from Festoons and Motifs Supplier D on a three-year agreement with a one-off infrastructure cost.
- c) At Officer's discretion hire between 4-11 motifs from Festoons and Motifs Supplier D on a one-year hire agreement, within existing budget.
- d) Purchase Market Square tree lights from Festoons and Motifs Supplier D with a lighter wrap and colour-changing bulbs.
- e) Hire stage, sound and lighting from Stage, Sound and Lighting Supplier D.
- f) Officers will continue to search for a volunteer Santa through charities and not-for-profit organisations. Failing this, Officers will circulate an email to staff and Councillors and failing any volunteers, Officers will book an external supplier at the cheapest rate.
- g) Officers will devise a Business Plan with the Christmas Working Group on the Grotto.

The Chairman ended the Meeting at 20:03