



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 22nd NOVEMBER 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 F Foster
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
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 (via Zoom)
Mr R Young – Finance Manager
Mr J Woolley – Public Realm Manager
Ms H Calvert – Administration & HR Manager
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 2

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 I Bond, Cllr L Fage, Cllr R Pullinger.

NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr K Brown.

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. **Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday**

Cllr G Fage stated that the recent Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday events at the start of November were well attended by members of the public and well publicised by the Town Council and the Royal British Legion. Cllr G Fage expressed his gratitude to staff members who worked hard over the past several months in preparation of these events, adding that the Town Council received much positive feedback from members of the public.

b. **Biggleswade Town Council Christmas Fair and Light Switch-on**

Cllr G Fage reminded Councillors of the day-long Christmas Market and Light Switch-on, taking place on Friday 25th November, adding that he hoped to see many Councillors in attendance.

c. **Land to North of Lindsell's Level Crossing**

Cllr Russell commented on land north of Lindsell's Level Crossing. Central Bedfordshire Council had discharged Condition 3 on the revised plan despite strong objection by the Town Council, adding that not enough detailed planting and landscaping has been undertaken to mitigate a satisfactory visual impact of the bridge.

d. **Access For All Meeting**

Cllr Russell pointed out that an 'Access For All' meeting was held recently where Network Rail announced additional funding to enable staircases at the station to be reinstated. This will mean the station will have a new bridge, complete with a lift to each platform and staircases to each platform.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

No guest speaker was invited.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Knight welcomed investment in the town with the opening of a new pizza restaurant, however it was questioned whether any planning permission had been made with regards to the signage of the restaurant. Officers were asked to follow up on the matter with Central Bedfordshire Council.

Cllr Knight requested an update with regards to the CCTV upgrade and asked for the item to be included on the next Town Council Meeting Agenda of 13th December 2022.

Cllr Russell requested an update with regards to tree felling in the Town Square. The Head of Governance and Strategic Partnerships commented on the matter and said the Town Council were contacted via email only by Central Bedfordshire Council with regards to the felling of four trees in the Market Square. Town Council Officers have responded via email again to question the matter and strongly suggested that this was deferred after January 2023. No response has been received. It was **AGREED** that the item should be included on the next Town Council Meeting Agenda on 13th December.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

Members requested that future minutes are a summary of discussions and a record of actions and proposals rather than verbatim.

Members also called for the issue of electric scooters, which was discussed in the previous meeting as Item 14a under MATTERS ARISING, to be brought to the attention of the next Police Priority Setting meeting as it was now becoming a concern.

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on 8th November 2022.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **ASDA Car Parking Restriction**

The Head of Governance and Strategic Partnerships briefed Members regarding recent contact with Central Bedfordshire Council and reaffirmed the position to Members of the wording of the S106 Agreement relating to the two-hour parking at ASDA supermarket and that Central Bedfordshire feel that the wording is not to force ASDA to reinstate the 2-hour parking.

No response has yet been received from ASDA top-level officials following a letter from the Town Council.

Members **APPROVED** a proposal for The Mayor write to senior officials of ASDA supermarket, including the Store Manager at Biggleswade and Central Bedfordshire Council, and to publish this as an open letter. The letter should highlight that a consultation did not take place with Biggleswade Town Council or Central Bedfordshire Council and that this matter has now become a political issue.

b. **CCLA Signatories**

The Finance Manager informed Members that, following the opening of a new bank account for the Council, it was the appropriate time to review signatories and the account administrator.

Members **APPROVED** the recommendations submitted in the report by the Finance Manager to sanction suggested signatories and new account administrator for both the older CCLA account and the brand new one and **NOTED** the wish by the Deputy Mayor to be removed as a signatory for the new year for transfers.

c. **Unity Trust Credit Card**

The Finance Manager informed Members that although all payments are made on a supplier account, a debit or credit card was needed in the case of urgent payments and the Unity Trust Account was the only option in this case.

Members **APPROVED** the recommendations made in the report by the Finance Manager of sanctioning a 'multipay card' which will only be used in accordance with the procedural rules set out in the report.

d. **Saffron Road Closure Update**

Following correspondence by Central Bedfordshire Council with regards to the closure of Saffron Road, Members discussed in detail that such a move would be problematic to the residents of Saffron Road and the Town Council.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to check whether the plan for the closure of Saffron Road will be implemented ahead of formally writing to Central Bedfordshire Council.

e. **Bus Route Proposal**

Members discussed the letter received from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the bus routes and noted that the Town Council were not consulted with regards to the Interchange project as their letter stated.

Members **RESOLVED** the proposal for Officers to write to Lorna Carver from Central Bedfordshire Council explaining that closing the bus exit lane around Century House for a trial period was promised several months ago when the Town Council was responding to the planning application for the interchange. The Town Council also wanted to know the timelines for that going ahead.

f. **Memorial Bench Request**

Members were briefed by Town Council Officers regarding a letter received from a resident wishing to place a memorial bench in the Market Square.

Following discussions Members **AGREED** for Town Council Officers to draft a policy relating to commemorative plaques for benches and **RESOLVED** that the matter be brought to an agenda of the next Town Centre Management Committee in the New Year.

g. **Draft Order – Proposed Stopping Up of Highway adjacent to Drove Road**

It was **RESOLVED** has no objection to the stopping up of the western part width of Drove Road.

h. **Public Notice Underpass at Footpath 7**

Members noted that this was not a Public Notice but a letter from Northill Parish Council relating to a footpath which runs through the Industrial Development west of the A1 motorway.

Members **AGREED** that Officers write back to Northill Parish Council saying the Town Council supports the concept of a crossing but to request more detail on the proposal including finances.

i. **Public Notice Temporary Closure of Footpath 21**

Members **AGREED** that this was an issue discussed at an earlier meeting and did not need any resolutions.

k. **Town Crier Application**

Members **AGREED** to defer consideration off a Town Crier for at least 12 months due to competing priorities. If proposals are then brought forward this will require consultation with the community and advertising the role would be the process with any other vacancy.

I. Parking Standards for New Developments

Members discussing the proposal by Central Bedfordshire Council **AGREED** to defer the item to the next Town Council meeting to give Members more time to look at the details.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. CB/22/04157/FULL - 68 Drove Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8HD

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by Central Bedfordshire Council in their deliberations.

b. CB/19/04301/OUT - Land North of Biggleswade SG18 0HB

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council requested an extension to this planning application as a further meeting is required to be able to provide the necessary outcome. In the interim, the Town Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS**. The matter was then taken to the EXEMPT ITEMS for further discussion.

c. CB/22/04159/VOC - Land at Bonds Lane and Foundry Lane, Biggleswade

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to the variations to this planning application. However, the Town Council does **OBJECT** to the variation regarding changes to cycle storage due to new proposals being less accessible.

d. CB/22/04364/FULL - 17 Hunt Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8JZ

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this planning application provided that the neighbours are consulted and that any comments they may make are considered by Central Bedfordshire Council in their deliberations.

e. CB/21/04315/FULL - PLANNING APPEAL 57 Church Street, Biggleswade

The Town Council called for an extension to Central Bedfordshire Council's deadline of 16th December 2022 to enable this appeal to be discussed further at the next Council Meeting on 13th December 2022.

f. CB/EN/21/0226 - PLANNING APPEAL 4 - 12 Thames Bank, Biggleswade

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council supports the enforcement notice as issued by Central Bedfordshire Council on the alleged breach of planning control on the land in relation to the Highway verge outside numbers 4-12 Thames Bank, Biggleswade.

11. PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

- i. Detailed Balance Sheet to 31/10/2022.
- ii. Summary Income and Expenditure by Committee 31/10/2022.
- iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Committee 31/10/2022.
- iv. Lloyds Bank Payment Listing 31/10/2022

In the absence of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Chair, all financial reports were **ACCEPTED** as laid out.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

a. **Mr Tony Reynolds**

Mr Reynolds expressed concern regarding the lack of dental services provided in the town and enquired what action is being taken to resolve this.

Cllr G Fage responded to Mr Reynolds' concerns noting that they had met with GP surgeries and practices in town and that this was a national issue.

Members pointed to a petition on the change.org website calling for an urgent walk-in care clinic for Biggleswade.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Land North of Biggleswade**

Following discussions, Members **RESOLVED** to move the matter to an Extraordinary Council meeting to allow time for the transport consultants to opine on the applicant's transport assessment.

b. **Play Area Report**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships presented an update with colour palette options for the play area equipment to be installed at Franklins Recreation Ground.

Members **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the report made by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships.

c. **Public Works Loan Board Strategy Update**

Following a report presented by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive, Members **RESOLVED** that the working group would consider in depth what projects will be looked at.

d. **Saxon Gate Pocket Park and Linear Wood Update**

Members **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the report presented by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive to increase the Town Council's green spaces ownership and responsible stewardship.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9:30pm