



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 14 MARCH 2023
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 Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas

Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr R Youngs – Finance Manager
Mr I Lord – Place Shaping Manager
Mrs S van der Merwe – Deputy Administrator & HR
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 L Fage, Cllr M North, Cllr R Pullinger, Cllr H Ramsay, Cllr J Woodhead.

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. Councillor Tim Woodward

Cllr G Fage announced the sad passing of former Biggleswade Mayor and Councillor, Tim Woodward. Cllr Woodward was Mayor of Biggleswade between 2011-2013. He was also a Central Bedfordshire Councillor from 2012 to 2019, representing the Ward of Biggleswade South. All Members and Officers stood for a moment of silence.

b. Dunstable Civic Service

On Friday 3rd March, Cllr G Fage attended the Dunstable Civic Service which took place at the Salvation Army Church. Cllr G Fage noted that it was well attended, and guests were entertained by a brass band as well as a rock choir.

c. Willow Foundation

On Saturday 4th March, Cllr G Fage opened the Willow Foundation Charity Shop in Biggleswade. Cllr G Fage, who performed the ribbon cutting ceremony, pointed out that the shop was the only one in Bedfordshire and believed it would be well supported by the community.

d. Sandy Civic Service

On Sunday 5th March, Cllr G Fage attended the Sandy Civic Service and noted that it was another well attended Civic Service with Mayors from across the County.

e. Biggleswade Civic Service

On Sunday 12th March Cllr G Fage attended his own Civic Service which took place at the St Andrews Church. Cllr G Fage thanked everyone who was able to attend and noted that the Bishop of Bedford also participated in the sermon.

f. Commonwealth War Graves Commission

On Friday 17th March at 12.00pm the Biggleswade Town Council will be hosting the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at a plaque unveiling ceremony. This will be taking place on the Rowan Crescent entrance to the Drove Road Cemetery.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Mr Andrew Skilton

Mr Skilton who addressed the Council indicated that he wished to speak about Item 10f, which was a planning application for the erection of a telecommunications mast. Mr Skilton indicated that he had seen several posts on social media supporting this mast which is on the Land North development and one that the Town Council is opposed to.

Mr Skilton noted the area chosen for the mast is an open green space or park for the residents of Furzenhall Road, Northfields, and Winston Crescent and popular with dog walkers all year round.

He added that he was not opposed to the mast in principle as the area needs better phone signal coverage but not at the cost of amenity land. Mr Skilton indicated that he hoped the Council would take this into consideration when making their decision.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

No guest speaker was invited.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

None.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

P9 Item 6. Cllr Albone indicated that he had made a query regarding the closure of a footpath on the Biggleswade Common, but this was not recorded in the minutes.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on 28 February 2023.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr Strachan asked about the outcome of the meeting invitation regarding the Ivel Medical Centre and relevant stakeholders.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that the MP's office had proposed a date for mid to late April to which the Integrated Care Board responded that they would be unable to attend due to election purdah.

Cllr Russell commenting on this, indicated that another meeting of the Patient Group was to be held on the 13th of April with the Ivel Medical Centre, when Dr. Hartree hopes to reveal who will take over running of the Practice. A meeting in late April would therefore not be beneficial.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Design Guide Topic Session**

Cllr Russell set out a proposed comprehensive Town Council response to the Central Bedfordshire Council's Design Guide and Housing Policy Technical Guidance.

Cllr Russell noted that the reference to the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan is less clear and the guide simply says that their policies 'should be taken into consideration'.

Following discussion, Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to send the proposed response adding that wording was needed to clarify where the design guide sits in the hierarchy of planning guidance.

b. **Land North of Lindsells Level Crossing Update**

Members **NOTED** the update following Central Bedfordshire Council's decision to release 'Discharge of Condition 3'.

c. **Biggleswade Baptist Church Workshop Request**

Members **VERBALLY ENDORSED** the request from Biggleswade Baptist Church to apply for a planning approval to Central Bedfordshire Council and a grant from the Wind Farm Committee to enable the provision of a workshop.

d. **Biggleswade Substation**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence as a meeting had been arranged on a separate day to discuss the matter of the substation.

e. **Anglia Water Proposed Works**

The Deputy Administration & HR Officer who presented the report, indicated that Anglian Water sent a further email informing that if the proposal is approved, there would be a carriageway lane closure to Dells Lane adjacent to the Spinney, with a three-way traffic lock system in place during the trial excavation. The Deputy Administration & HR Officer added that the PRV excavation would take a total of 15 working days.

Members noted that the work should improve water pressure for quite a few houses in the town. Members also indicated that the contractor has suggested a good will remuneration of about £200 for landscaping.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation to approve the installation of the PRV to enhance water provision but to add that Town Council would like to see an increase to the landscaping that is being offered.

Members also wanted it to be noted that they were concerned about the amount of time the project will take to complete.

f. **Commemorative Plaques, Benches & Memorials Policy Update**

The Place Shaping Manager who presented the report, noted that Officers would, in future, be using SharePoint for all policies when sharing tracked changes with a final policy version being submitted to Town Council meetings for resolution.

Following a discussion, Members **AGREED** for an informal meeting to be held with the Place Shaping Manager to discuss the policy.

Members **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** the policy to the next Town Council meeting

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/00464/FULL - 1 Rowletts View, Biggleswade, SG18 0FD**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

b. **CB/22/04939/ADV - 8 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JL**

The Town Council noted that they **OBJECT** to this planning application on the grounds that:

- The building is in a conservation area. No consideration has been given to this in the application.
- It is visually disruptive to the street scene.
- It is inconsistent with the Central Bedfordshire design principles.

Members **OBJECTED** to the application as it is non-compliant with CBC design principles as listed in the CBC Design Supplement 6: Shopfronts and Signage, section 5.04 E.

"5.04E On traditional buildings or new buildings in sensitive areas (in conservation areas or adjacent to or within the setting of listed buildings) in particular, internally illuminated fascias and projecting signs are out of character and will be resisted."

c. **CB/22/03466/ADV - 17 Market Square, Biggleswade, SG18 8AS**

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- It is visually disruptive to the street scene.
- It is inconsistent with the Central Bedfordshire design principles.

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"5.04E On traditional buildings or new buildings in sensitive areas (in conservation areas or adjacent to or within the setting of listed buildings) in particular, internally illuminated fascias and projecting signs are out of character and will be resisted."

d. **CB/23/00441/FULL - 27 Sun Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0BP**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

e. **CB/23/00480/FULL - 220 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8PJ**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

f. **CB/23/00691/TDM - Land adj to Furzenhall Road, Biggleswade, SG18 0ES**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

However, the Town Council noted that they **OBJECT** to the telecommunications mast being moved closer to homes in the area. The Council believes the planning application, which currently shows the location of the mast, is the best possible situation for its location.

g. **CB/TCA/23/00098 - 43 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. ACCOUNTS

a. Financial Administration

- i. Balance sheet to 28/02/23.
- ii. Detailed Income and Expenditure to 28/02/23.
- iii. Payment Listing from 01/01/23 to 28/02/23.
- iv. Summary Income and Expenditure to 28/02/23.

Members **ADOPTED** the February Accounts as laid out.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Contracts Database Update Report

Members **NOTED** the report by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships.

b. Internal Audit Interim Report

Members **NOTED** the report by the Finance Manager and thanked Officers for all that they were doing.

c. Minutes of the Community Engagement Group

Members **NOTED** the minutes.

d. Minutes of the Allotment Meeting

Members **NOTED** the minutes.

e. Good Friday Parade

Members **NOTED** the parade which is an annual event.

f. Planning Application Potential Breach

Members **NOTED** the item and requested that in future it would be helpful for the name of the planning application to be written in the heading the item.

g. Closed Bridleway Update

Members **NOTED** the update from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding closed bridleways and footpaths on Biggleswade Common.

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No member of the public wished to speak.

15. EXEMPT

a. Energy Broker Advice

Members **NOTED** the Energy Broker's insight on market turbulence and the Broker's view that it was prudent not to cancel existing energy contracts early due to prohibitive penalties.

The new Brokers will be providing Officers with new energy quotes.

Members **AGREED** for Officers to report to Town Council on 28th March.

b. **Franklins Recreation Ground Vandalism**

Members **NOTED** the good work Officers had done to mitigate the effect vandalism had on the recreation ground as well as the good progress by the Contractor to recover some of the lost time due to this. The Contractors are now working to a mid-April completion date.

Members also **NOTED** that Officers had engaged with Police with regards to vandalism.

c. **Risk Framework Update Report**

Members **NOTED** the Risk Framework Update report and **AGREED** to put it forward to the Finance & General Purposes Committee on the 21st of March followed by the Town Council Meeting on the 28th of March.

The Council is required to maintain an overview of its risks and this will be shared as part of its internal and external audit process and will be referred to as part of the AGAR.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8.55pm**