



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 14th FEBRUARY 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 I Bond
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr H Ramsay
Cllr D Strachan
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 I Lord – Place Shaping Manager
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 1

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 F Foster, Cllr D Albone, Cllr K Brown, Cllr C Thomas, Cllr L Fage.

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. Amphill Civic Service

On Sunday 5th February, Mayor Cllr G Fage attended the Amphill Civic Service hosted by the Amphill Mayor and Amphill Town Council. Cllr G Fage noted that he had the opportunity to meet with other Mayors from neighbouring towns and discuss challenges they are facing.

b. Fame The Musical

On Friday 10th February, Cllr G Fage attended 'Fame The Musical' organised by Stratton Upper School where he had the opportunity to meet some of the cast members and teachers of the school. Cllr G Fage indicated that it was pleasing to see that the school was investing in the arts.

c. Working Group Attendance

Cllr G Fage indicated that a Working Group to look over Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Terms of Reference, and Schemes of Delegation had been established. Cllr G Fage asked that any interested Members who wished to participate should contact the Town Clerk to put their names forward.

d. Standing Orders Request

Cllr G Fage pointed out that a request under Urgent Standing Orders by Cllr Knight was put forward to bring an item for Electric Vehicle Charging Consultation to the agenda under Items for Consideration. The item will be discussed so that Council can decide whether it wishes to provide representations on the matter.

e. Access for All Meeting

Deputy Mayor Cllr Russell indicated that a meeting of the Access for All group, chaired by Richard Fuller MP, was recently held on Friday 3rd February.

The group was very disappointed to learn the revised timescale for the project, which meant that the new access will not be operational until January 2025. Network Rail were asked to look again at their project plan to try to shorten the timescale.

However, train operators GTR, announced that the work on a new toilet block is set to begin in February which will include male, female, and accessible toilets, with a new soakaway. Cllr Russell added that the transport interchange is still on course to be completed by the end of March.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

Mr Cliff Andrews, Deputy Chief Executive for Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) presented a cycle scheme for Biggleswade with the aim of providing access to bicycles for the Town residents at a low cost.

Mr Andrews indicated that the aim of the project was to promote the use of Biggleswade Green Wheel, encourage travel between key points in the Town as well as promote mental and physical wellbeing.

Mr Andrews explained that the pilot project aimed to procure 12 bicycles over 12 months through an app called 'app-bike' who not only provide the bicycles but offer maintenance and insurance in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). He added that CBC currently run a similar pilot in Houghton Regis with app-bike.

Mr Andrews indicated that BRCC aim to install new or additional bicycles and subject to Council agreement BRCC will fund and install additional racks to existing racks at Dan Albone Car Park, Franklins and The Lakes Recreation Grounds. CBC have plans to install racks at other spots which include the Market Square and Saxon Gate Leisure Centre.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Cllr Pullinger asked about resolution agreed upon in May last year regarding the updating of audio and video equipment of the Town Chamber.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responding to the question indicated that an external bidder had been sourced and the project was ongoing.

Cllr Russell proposed that the item come back to the next Council agenda.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting and added that for future reference Committee minutes should follow Town Council minutes.
- b. Members called for more formal salutations to be used when referring to individuals in minutes. Item 5. Invited Speaker – Tom Price should be changed to Mr Price.

Item 9a. Precept for Financial Year. Members indicated that the increase of 26p per week should be added to the resolution.

Item 9b. The resolution should only read: Members **RESOLVED** to accept the motion that any spend connected to PWLB monies is approved, in both the amount and purpose, at Council first, before spending.

Item 9d. Typo. GP practises should read GP practices.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 24th January 2023.

8. MATTERS ARISING

Members pointing to the issue regarding the Ivel Medical Centre inquired as to whether Officers had been able to facilitate a meeting with the relevant stakeholders. Officers have been re-tasked to arrange a meeting for Council.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Following discussions with Officers, Cllr G Fage indicated that two items from the Exempt session were to be brought to the agenda under Items for Consideration. Items relating to the

Public Works Loan Board and the Play Areas Update report were discussed in the open session of Council. The items were moved to Item 9f and 9g respectively under Items for Consideration.

a. **History Society Grant Application**

Members discussed the report presented by the Finance Manager regarding the grant application from the History Society following the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 17th January 2023.

It was noted that there was no record of receipt of this application.

Members **AGREED** to grant £900 to the applicant.

b. **Planning Templates**

Cllr Russell put forward new response styles to planning applications following the Neighbourhood Planning Training session in January. Cllr Russell explained that the advice received from the training session was for a formal response and one that highlights the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan as part of the statutory development plan.

Members **AGREED** to replace the usual response wording with a variation of the two templates when responding to planning applications from Central Bedfordshire Council.

c. **Bicycle Hire Proposal**

Following on from the presentation by Mr Cliff Andrews from the BRCC, the Place Shaping Manager added that the bicycle design would be standard but if the Council wished to change this it would be at a cost of £40 per bicycle.

Members **AGREED** to accept the recommendation that Council support the trial with the extra installation of bicycle racks at Dan Albone, Franklins Recreation and the Lakes Recreation in order to facilitate this goes ahead at no extra cost to the Council.

d. **Football Pitches Booking Policy**

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report and noted that Officers have amended all aspects of the Policy and Terms & Conditions raised by Members at the recent Public Land and Open Spaces committee.

Members **AGREED** to accept the Policy with minor changes to wording on Item 18 of the document to read next business day.

e. **Allotments Improvement Project Report**

Following on from the report which was approved by the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee on 31st January, the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships indicated that Officers visited the site and marked down 23 new 'half plots' of differing shapes, as opposed to the 10 plus half plots recommended in the report.

This number is significantly higher than the anticipated number of plots in the report and will generate circa £805 of new income per annum.

Officers will be approaching people on the waiting list (currently 42) to reduce it down to 19 applicants.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships thanked the Public Realm team who have worked hard to achieve such a positive result.

Members **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the recommendations of the report which stated that:

1. Officers would approach people on the waiting list to invite them to take out the half plots.
2. Officers promote to people on the waiting list and more widely to determine appetite level for new micro-planter style plots.
3. Officers use existing allotment budget allocation to spend an indicative £935 on the project to deliver lasting improvements by March.

f. **EV Charging Provision**

Members discussed the Public Notice from CBC with regards to the introduction and restriction of certain spaces specifically for electric vehicles to park and charge off street.

The proposed restrictions would enable electric vehicle users to have access to un-obstructed parking in EV charging bays, which is enforceable. The proposal for The Baulk Car Park called for a restriction of 8 bays from Monday to Saturday between the times of 0800-1600.

Members **RESOLVED** to respond to the consultation to ask for restrictions from 0930-1430 (due to the hours of 0800 and 1600 being school pick drop off and pick up hours) Monday to Saturday across 4 bays not 8 bays.

g. **Public Works Load Board Application 2023-2024**

Members discussed the report submitted by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive which sets out projects and the stages of maturity of these projects.

Members **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the recommendation that a PWLB application is made for up to £325,000 and that the eventual drawn down of monies by Council be considered in due course.

h. **Play Areas Update Report**

Members discussed the report by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships with regards to Kitelands Park and Brunel Drive.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships pointed out that at a recent meeting of the Public Land and Open Spaces Committee, Members suggested it would be good for the project to generate play areas data on usage patterns for the smaller play areas.

Officers approached CBC regarding gathering volumetric data for current and future play area regeneration who suggested that Council Officers conduct letter drops with questionnaires for each area in question before embarking on proposed works. CBC however accepted that this would not provide concrete proof of either current or future use due to turnover of residents in properties.

Following discussions Members **AGREED** to instruct Officers to embark on work that provides a qualitative and quantitative view around the potential use of the play areas including the relevant catchment areas.

Members also **AGREED** for Officers to provide rough numbers of children broken down by age group who live in proximity to each of the play areas and that it is not funded via the PWLB.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/00256/FULL - 2 Ullswater Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8LX**

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

b. **CB/23/00170/LB - 46 Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AP**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments. However, the Town Council voiced concerns regarding limited parking on Shortmead Street as it lies within the built-up area of Biggleswade.

c. **CB/22/04924/FULL - A1 London Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade**

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

d. **CB/22/04966/FULL - Dhillion Farm, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8SH**

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

e. **CB/22/04938/ADV - Noatum Logistics Unit 4, Symmetry Park, Gold Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8UZ**

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

f. **CB/22/04516/REG3 - 11 & 12 Woodlands, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 8QU**

The Town Council **OBJECTED** to some aspects of the proposed development.

- The application calls for a change of use of land, from the stationing of two transit pitches, to two permanent pitches for Gypsy and Traveller use, with associated parking and amenity units which should be stationed further away from the road and that is not the case with this proposal.
- The Town Council has objected previously and on this occasion on the grounds of noise pollution from the road. Permanent pitches stationed near the road will obviously make the noise pollution situation worse.

The Town Council also **OBJECTED** on the grounds that currently visitors temporarily use the transit pitches; once these are made permanent there will be no provision for temporary visitors.

g. **CB/23/00238/FULL - 36 Drove Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8HD**

The Town Council **OBJECTED** to the traffic aspects of the proposed development:

- There is a potential risk of increase to the footprint of vehicles for the development.
- Additional increase in the volume of traffic of an already busy road.

- Lack of an updated traffic survey since The Baulk was made a one-way road making the Eagle Farm and London Road junction even busier.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

The January 2023 accounts were not available for this agenda.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Minutes of the Biggleswade Allotment Association**

Members **NOTED** the minutes presented on the agenda.

b. **ASDA Car Parking Update**

Cllr Russell presented the letter of response from ASDA.

Members **AGREED** to respond once more to keep continued dialogue between the Council and ASDA for future reference.

c. **CCTV Update**

The Place Shaping Manager in his update to Members indicated that a letter was sent to Central Bedfordshire Council at the end of January following Town Council decision to progress.

This was acknowledged the same day, with the CBC Officer stating a response would be sent in due course; however nothing had yet been received at the time of the Council meeting.

Members **AGREED** for Officers to continue contact with CBC Officers to progress the matter.

d. **Drove Road Chapel Update**

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report on the Drove Road Chapel works.

Members **NOTED** the report and welcomed the progress of the project.

e. **Planning Case types and descriptions for Town Council Consultation**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships presented the report on planning applications indicating that Officers are now using the case types document to screen all incoming applications and determine which ones progress to each Town Council meeting. This will reduce the application volumes.

Members **NOTED** the report and called for Officers to source an updated copy of case types and descriptions from CBC.

f. **Schools for the Future Statutory Results**

Members **NOTED** the document from Central Bedfordshire Council.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No members of the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Specifications for IT Support**

Members **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the recommendation that the specification be put out to tender with minor amendments and that the process be managed consistent with the Councils Financial Regulations.

b. **Capital Assets Working Group Update**

Members **NOTED** the report and welcomed the progress of the Working Group.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **9.37pm**