



**MINUTES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> 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 F Foster  
Cllr M Foster  
Cllr M Knight  
Cllr R Pullinger  
Cllr H Ramsay  
Cllr D Strachan  
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships  
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 I Bond, Cllr M North, Cllr J Woodhead.

**NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr K Brown, 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. Commonwealth War Graves Service**

On Friday 17th March, Cllr G Fage attended the official unveiling of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Plaques at Drove Road Cemetery. The plaques were placed to commemorate the 19 Commonwealth servicemen buried at Drove Road Cemetery who passed away in the First and Second World Wars. Cllr Fage noted that the ceremony was well attended by the Legion, Air and Sea Cadets and Councillors.

#### **b. Mr Desmond Ball**

Cllr G Fage announced the sad passing of Mr Desmond Ball. Mr Ball served the Town well by working with Community and voluntary groups and organisations such as first aiders and sports clubs. Cllr G Fage noted that Mr Ball also maintained the railway bank at the top of Lawrence Road and suggested that the Council take over the maintenance of this bank as a tribute to Mr Ball. Members paused for a few moments to remember Mr Ball.

#### **c. Town Council Annual Assembly**

Cllr G Fage reminded Members of the upcoming Town Council Annual Assembly to be held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Cllr G Fage noted that Committee Chairmen would need to submit their reports to Officers by 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

### **4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No member of the public wished to speak.

### **5. INVITED SPEAKER**

#### **Mr Mike Wells, Northill Parish Resident.**

Mr Wells who addressed the Council explained about the difficulties being experienced with crossing the A1 to Biggleswade, especially from Northill. He noted that in October Northill voted for an underpass to be built.

Mr Wells explained that he had met with local MP Richard Fuller and explained the details of the matter and the outcome of Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which said that respondents wanted to get across the A1 in a safe and sustainable way and that an underpass was the best way forward. Mr Wells asked for support from the Town Council.

Members **RESOLVED** to fully support the initiative of an underpass in line with Footpath 7, on the east side into Bells Brook as well as all the work that is being done with this initiative. The resolution to be shared with the honourable Richard Fuller MP and Central Bedfordshire Council.

### **6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were no Members' questions.

### **7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. No amendments were made to the Town Council minutes.

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14 March 2023.

- b. Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

## **8. MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr Albone inquired about the status of the Commemorative Plaques, Benches & Memorials Policy and whether an informal meeting was held with regards to this.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that the informal meeting had not yet taken place; however, amendments have been made to the policy with a possible meeting in the coming week.

Cllr Albone also asked if any updates were available regarding the Franklins Recreation Ground vandalism.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships indicated that the security company had advised the Council of further incursions. When approached by the security guard and warned, the intruders moved on.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships noted that a police crime reference number was being generated and camera footage revealed intruders to be teenagers.

## **9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **a. General Insurance Renewal Update Report**

Members discussed the report presented by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships.

Officers met with the BHIB broker in early March. The Broker is the largest Council provider of insurance in England and Wales. The Policy was reviewed and slightly amended to increase the fidelity guarantee. The Broker highlighted that due to a challenging market and current high inflation rates they were only able to source one quote which was the Town Council's current insurance provider.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation to suspend Section 17.2 of the Financial Regulations which states:

"The Council may, by resolution of the Council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of Council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all Members of Council."

Members also **RESOLVED** to renew the insurance policy for 3 years with the current provider. No virement was now required.

### **b. Bike Hire Proposal Report**

Members discussed the report regarding the bike hire proposal and noted that Central Bedfordshire Council are proposing to install bicycle racks closer to the main road and car park entrance rather than within Dan Albone car park. They also propose using Grasmere Road/Lincoln Crescent.

Members indicated that more detailed information was needed from CBC as to which areas they intend on using for bike racks and what the impact of these would be. Members observed that the location of Grasmere Road/Lincoln Crescent was an issue due to flooding and this would need to be brought to the attention of CBC.

Members **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** the report until a more detailed rationale from CBC was given to the issues and concerns highlighted.

c. **Drove Road Chapel Update Report**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive updated Members with regard to current restoration works at Drove Road Chapel noting that good progress had been made.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive indicated that once the scaffolding had been erected and the top of the building was viewable some additional works were deemed essential and these were outside of the original scoping exercise, this included repointing and stone masonry. It was essential that this work be carried out whilst the scaffolding was up and any other non-essential work not requiring scaffolding delayed until year 2.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive pointed out that these additional works amounted to an additional £15,000 after taking into consideration the Ward Councillors grant from Cllr I Bond.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation to draw down £15,000 from the year one PWLB underspend.

Members also **AGREED** that Council would receive a regular written report from the external Project Manager consistent with Officer recommendations.

d. **Play Streets Proposal Report**

Members discussed the proposal which looked to introduce play streets in Biggleswade.

Members supported the ambition but **RESOLVED** to **OBJECT** on this proposal on the basis of:

- Safety to children.
- Possible damage to cars and vehicles.
- Potentially teaching young children bad habits.
- Experience suggests that drivers ignore volunteers who are charged with managing road closures.

Members called for Officers to write back to CBC and propose that CBC encourage organise opportunities for children to play in much safer areas of Biggleswade such as the many green spaces and playgrounds.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/00744/FULL - 2 Holme Crescent, Biggleswade, SG18 8DA**

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application on the grounds of overdevelopment.

b. **CB/23/00010/FULL - 11 Arnold Rise, Biggleswade, SG18 8UF**

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

c. **CB/22/04808/FULL - 14 Simpson Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8YF**

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

d. **CB/23/00868/FULL - 107 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EE**

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

e. **CB/22/04252/FULL - Land at Springfield Bungalow and Stratton Farm Cottages London Road, Land at bridleway 58 to the south of Dunton Lane and Land to the south of Stratton Business Park Gold Road Biggleswade SG18 8UZ**

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this planning application on the grounds of:

- Traffic congestion at the A1S roundabout, cumulative from development so far but with another 1,850 houses the east of the town already consented.
- The need for sustainable transport to and from the town centre and nearby housing.
- Over-long queues of traffic at the Pegasus Drive/London Road junction.
- Pedestrian safety on Pegasus Drive.
- The impact on Rights of Way.
- Archaeological and ecological matters as referred to in officer report.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

March 2023 accounts were not available for this agenda.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **CCTV Update Report**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships who presented the report noted that Officers held a meeting with CBC Officers and reiterated the points raised in the initial letter response from CBC.

It was underlined that CBC will not consider the novation of the line earlier than mid-May. Officers had contacted BT Open Reach to ask them about the timeline for a new fibre line installation, and this would be approximately 6 weeks.

Members **NOTED** the report.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Energy Broker Update Report**

Members **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** the matter until Officer-derived quotes had been completed. It was suggested that ideally quotes valid between 5-10 days would yield the best results.

b. **Risk Management Update Report**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships noted that Officers have been implementing the new framework across the business and updating risk mitigations as per the existing External Auditor's recommendation.

Members **AGREED** to adopt the Framework and Approach with the expectation that populated documents would be shared with Members at the Finance & General Purposes Committee and Full Council.

**Recorded Vote**

Consistent with Paragraph 10 of the Town Councils Standing Orders, Cllr M Russell (Deputy Mayor), wished her vote against Officers recommendations to be formally recorded in the minutes. The remaining Members voted in support of the proposals.

c. **Telephony Convergence Contracts Update Report**

Members discussed the report which was presented at the recent Finance & General Purposes Committee and agreed that there was not enough clarity and comparison between telephony providers.

Members **AGREED** for officers to review the telephony quotes presented and provide a detailed breakdown of equipment and how it was used. Members also agreed that recommendations should entail how Officers and Councillors will benefit from the recommendation to be put forward.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8.40pm**