



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL ASSEMBLY MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023**  
**AT 7.30PM 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 M North  
Cllr R Pullinger  
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  
Mr R Youngs – Finance 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. ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES**

Cllr L Fage

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

None.

**3. ANNUAL REPORT OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Annual Report as included in the Agenda was presented by Cllr G Fage.

During his address to Council, Cllr G Fage noted that the Town Council had worked hard to get back to normality following pandemic-related disruption.

Cllr G Fage pointed out that in completing the Council's Strategic Plan for the town, there was now a clear set of aspirations which the Council can seek to deliver against up to 2025.

During his address, Cllr G Fage indicated that it was an honour to serve during important events the Town Council hosted such as the Platinum Jubilee and organisation of a book of remembrance following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, along with the Proclamation of the Accession in the Town Centre.

One of the many successes the Town Council has seen was also the YES vote for the referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan, and Cllr G Fage thanked Cllr Russell, who chaired the steering group, and everyone who put in hours of work behind the scenes to make the plan a reality.

Cllr G Fage touched on the large strategic projects of the Town, such as the refurbishment of Franklins Recreation Ground and the restoration of the Drove Road Chapel. He also pointed to the challenges facing Biggleswade such as development without enough infrastructure in particularly the very clear lack of access to health care.

Cllr G Fage explained that whilst the Town Council supports development to the east of Biggleswade, it does not support development to the north, due to the location, impact to the road network and sustainability of the site.

Cllr G Fage thanked all who supported his year as Mayor including Councillor colleagues and Town Council staff.

#### **4. REPORTS**

##### **a. Public Land and Open Spaces Committee**

The Public Land and Open Spaces Committee Report as included in the agenda was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Cllr M North.

Cllr North pointed to the improvement projects such as the work at Franklins Recreation Ground which is due to be completed by the end of April. He added that the refurbishment of Kitelands and Brunel play areas were being prioritised and would be next for improvement.

##### **b. Town Centre Management Committee**

The Town Centre Management Committee Report as included in the agenda was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Cllr M Knight.

Cllr Knight indicated that the Town Council, which operates six car parks, has agreed a tender specification and begun a procurement process with the goal of upgrading the car park machines.

With regards to the Town Square, Cllr Knight noted that success of the markets, particularly on Saturdays, continues grow with 20 or more traders.

Cllr Knight went on to explain that whilst crime and anti-social behaviour remains a challenge in Biggleswade, the Town Council has agreed to install eight new CCTV cameras and one new mobile CCTV camera.

##### **c. Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The Finance and General Purposes Committee Report as included in the agenda was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Cllr R Pullinger.

During his presentation, Cllr Pullinger indicated that the Town Council's financial performance for the year 2022/23 showed an overall surplus was an indicative figure of £1,560 as the year end close down was still underway.

Cllr Pullinger noted that changes and improvements made to date included the restructuring of the financial organisation within the Council, reviewing financial policies and procedures to ensure best practice as well as introducing card payment facilities.

In 2022/23, the Council obtained a loan of £426,000 from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) to fund the first phase of several improvements to the Town's assets, including refurbishment of play areas and cemeteries. Cllr Pullinger noted that following a public consultation in early 2023, the Council will be applying for a further PWLB loan up to £325,000 to fund the next phase of improvement works.

**d. Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee Report as included in the agenda was presented by the Chair of the Committee, Cllr J Woodhead.

Cllr Woodhead in his report, indicated that the Council had welcomed seven new members of staff, ranging from Office Staff, Finance and Public Realm operatives.

Cllr Woodhead noted that the Council continued to modernise its procedures and policies around Personnel to ensure that everyone has the necessary training and tools available to them.

**5. RESOLUTIONS AND QUESTIONS**

There were no subjects or resolutions raised.

**6. OPEN FORUM – MATTER RELATING TO BIGGLESWADE**

**a. Ward Councillors**

Cllr I Bond

Cllr Bond indicated that most of the work carried out by Central Bedfordshire Council is behind the scenes and not always visible to the public. He added that CBC has worked well with the Council especially on planning applications such as the land north of Biggleswade which they expect will come to planning over the coming weeks.

Cllr M Foster

Cllr M Foster pointed out that one of the biggest changes in town has been from a three-tier to a two-tier education system whereby education will be based on primary and secondary school. CBC has been closely involved in the positive process.

Cllr M Foster indicated that a CBC application was made for a free school which was approved and depending on various considerations will be based at the Ivel Valley school site, with the Ivel Valley school relocating.

Cllr M Foster also noted that the power station in Dunton Lane is in the process of development which will be an important development, in term of additional power, for the town and wider areas.

b. **Town Councillors**

None.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.20 pm