



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 25<sup>th</sup> APRIL 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 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  
Mrs S Van der Merwe – Deputy Administration & HR 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. NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr L Fage.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

None.

**b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:**

Cllr Russell for Item 10a, Cllr Strachan for Item 10b.

### **3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **a. Mrs Amanda Cawthorn**

Cllr G Fage announced the sad passing of Mrs Amanda Cawthorn after a long illness. Mrs Cawthorn was very active in the Community and served the Town well. She was the Chairperson of the Biggleswade Community Safety Group and supported the Council in various events as well as playing an important role in the Biggleswade Response Unit. Members paused for a few moments to remember and pay their respects to Mrs Cawthorn.

#### **b. Farewell to departing Councillors**

Cllr G Fage noted that this was the final meeting of the present Council and indicated that several Members would be leaving. Amongst those departing was Cllr Hazel Ramsay who wished to say a few words.

##### **Cllr Hazel Ramsay**

Cllr Ramsay who addressed the Council indicated that she had been proud to serve Biggleswade as Mayor for three years. Cllr Ramsay noted her experiences will remain with her for many years to come and added the belief that the Council has worked together for the benefit of Biggleswade. Cllr Ramsay expressed her gratitude to Town Council Officers and staff.

Cllr G Fage thanked Cllr Ramsay for her contributions to the Town as a Councillor for 20 years and for her support to him during his time as well.

##### **Cllr Frank Foster**

Cllr F Foster had been a Councillor since 2015. He served as Chairman of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee for three years and as Deputy Mayor from 2019 - 2020. Cllr F Foster was instrumental in helping to develop the Public Realm Team and the new Council depot. In his capacity as Deputy Mayor he oversaw the successful opening of McDonalds in Biggleswade and the bench refurbishment in the Town Centre.

##### **Cllr Lesley Fage**

Also leaving the Council was Cllr L Fage who won a by-election in 2018. Cllr L Fage was Deputy Chairman of the Public Land & Open Space Committee in 2019-2020 and had very useful insights into planning applications. Cllr G Fage thanked her for her service to the Town.

##### **Cllr Kevin Brown**

Cllr Brown was elected in 2019 and was Chairman of the Appeals Committee. Cllr G Fage thanked Cllr Brown for his service.

##### **Cllr Rob Pullinger**

Cllr G Fage noted that Cllr Pullinger joined the Council in 2019 and although took over the role of Chairman of the Appeals Committee, later went on to chair the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Cllr G Fage pointed out that Cllr Pullinger's keen eye to detail and knowledge would be missed by the Council.

##### **Cllr G Fage**

Cllr Strachan wished to address the Council and congratulated Cllr G Fage, who would also be leaving the Town Council this year, for his excellent term in office as Mayor of Biggleswade. Cllr Strachan underlined that not only did Cllr G Fage put in tireless efforts in the Council Chamber, in leading the objection to the Land North planning application. He applauded his civic work and thanked him for all he had done for the Town.

Cllr G Fage thanked his colleagues and noted that he had attended 44 engagements during his term and had the honour to serve through the Platinum Jubilee, the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and now the upcoming Coronation of King Charles III.

Cllr G Fage went on to say he had raised £3,243 for his chosen charities, St John's Hospice and British Red Cross Ukraine Appeal

Cllr G Fage thanked Officers and Councillors for supporting him in the role, particularly BTC Administrator, Alison Dennis, who helped manage his diary, workload and in organising the Elvis charity night and the Civic Service.

c. **Biggleswade Football Club**

On Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April, Cllr G Fage set off Biggleswade FC on their walk from Biggleswade to the Eyrie in Bedford for their final home league game of the season to raise money for 'Willow', the new charity shop in Biggleswade.

d. **Spring Concert of East Beds Concert Band**

On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April, Cllr G Fage attended the Spring Concert of the East Beds Concert Band at Stratton Upper School. Cllr G Fage noted that it was a fantastic event having attended their Winter concert back in November and he looked forward to attending more of their events in a different capacity.

e. **Charter Lunch of Biggleswade Rotary Club**

On Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, Cllr Russell attended the Charter Lunch of the Biggleswade Rotary Lunch, which was the 57<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Club.

f. **Development Management Committee**

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April, Cllr Russell attended the Development Management Committee as asked by Council on the Tritax Symmetry Application, which was approved unanimously.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

There was no invited speaker.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Pullinger noted that last year a decision was made not to host the Street Food Heroes in the Market Square but continue with Bigg Eats events to be organised by the Town Council throughout the year. He enquired as to progress.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that a date for an event was still unknown as Officers were in negotiation with two parties. Once the third-party agreement was in place then a timeline of events could be established.

Cllr Woodhead asked whether the Town Council might consider escalating its concern in regard to the lack of maintenance in regard to the leaning lamppost on Shortmead Street. This had been in disrepair for the past 12 months.

Cllr Bond responded that Central Bedfordshire Council had informed him that it was being repaired on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April.

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

- a. Item 5 – Invited Speaker. Repword the last paragraph to read “a panel similar to that of the Langford Wind Farm be established”.

Item 5 – Invited Speaker. To end paragraph 3 at “under Item 10 Planning Application” and remove the remainder of the paragraph.

Item 9 – Second Interim Internal Audit Report – last paragraph to read “Members NOTED the report and extended thanks to Officers for their work”.

Item 10 – Proposal to read “The Town Council expressed the view that the contents of the letter by Mr Leeming satisfied their concerns, therefore the Town Council is prepared to REMOVE THE OBJECTION to this application.

The Town Council also AGREED that Cllr Russell would be attending the next Development Management Committee to provide the views of the Town Council on this matter”.

Subject to these amendments, the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

- b. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
- c. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023.
- d. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Town Centre Management Committee meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023.
- e. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.
- f. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

## **8. MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr Woodhead asked if there were any more updates following the installation of the EV Charging Points at The Baulk Car Park.

Cllr Bond referred Members to the minutes of the Traffic Management meeting.

## **9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **a. Bicycle Hire Proposal Report**

Members discussed the report presented by the Place Shaping Manager, who advised that Central Bedfordshire Council had recently informed him that they planned to install bicycle racks at Dan Albone Car Park on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

CBC should additionally set out the CBC, BRCC, App-Bike and BTC commercial agreements. Members expect as a minimum, that a commercial/legal agreement to be in place between BTC and CBC before any bicycle racks on BTC-owned land are used for the scheme.

It was noted that the Grasmere Road location had been impacted circa 20 years ago by flash flooding and was unlevel. This observation needs to be taken into consideration.

Members have also noted the plans to use existing bicycle racks in the Town Centre as a docking station and expressed concern at this.

Members **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** not to proceed with the bicycle hire scheme at the locations set out, until CBC presented a clear proposal on exactly where racks will be installed, with plans and drawings. This included Dan Albone Car Park, Grasmere Road and Franklin's Recreation Ground. It was agreed Officers should write to CBC urgently to inform them of the Council's decision.

b. **Amendment to Council Meeting Dates**

Members discussed the report by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships which recommended altering Town Council and Committee meetings during 2023 and 2024.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations by Officers:

- The Town Council meeting should move from the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023.
- The F&GP Committee should move from the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 to the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- The PLOS Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 should swap dates with the Town Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

Members also **RESOLVED** to accept a recommendation by the Chairman of the Town Centre Management to bring forward the next TCM Meeting from 19<sup>th</sup> July to 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/01107/FULL - 8 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0AN**

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

b. **CB/23/00223/ADV - 36 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JL**

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

c. **CB/23/01093/FULL - 45 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JF**

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. Internal Audit – Final Report 2022-23

Members **NOTED** and **ACCEPTED** the Internal Audit final report for the 2022/23 financial year.

### b. Accounts & AGAR for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

- i. Members **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED** the Annual Governance Statement of the Annual Return for the 2022/23 financial year.

Cllr G Fage and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive signed the statement during the meeting.

- ii. Members **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED** the Accounts and Statement of Accounts contained in the Annual Return for the 2022/23 financial year.

Cllr G Fage and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive signed the statement of accounts for the AGAR during the meeting.

## 13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

### a. Closure of the central reservation gap on the A1 at Upper Caldecote

Members discussed the correspondence by National Highways regarding the closure and noted that there was no indication with regards to funding or the construction of an underpass. Council had previously written to the relevant authorities about following a presentation by Mr Mike Wells.

Members were concerned about the reference to the decision of 'an appropriate access' to be constructed without giving any further detail.

It was **AGREED** that Officers would write to National Highways to advise that the Council supports the intended closure in principle and request clarity around what is meant by the term 'alternative access'.

The letter should also make clear that the Town Council strongly supports an underpass, for mobility, access, sustainability, and safety reasons.

### b. Pre-Consult to upgrade of Footpath No. 12 Biggleswade

Members discussed the correspondence from CBC regarding a re-proposal of Biggleswade Footpath No12 noting uncertainty regarding the accuracy of the map supplied.

Members noted they were keen to see this become a bridleway as proposed.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council is broadly supportive of the proposals based on the accuracy of the mapping and for Officers to write to CBC to ask for clarification.

## 14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Provision of Gas Contracts**

Members discussed the report presented by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive and the Finance Manager.

Members **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should agree a one-year contract with Tandem Together for the provision of gas at a cost of £10,767.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8.30pm**

DRAFT