



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL STATUTORY MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 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 Agnew  
Cllr D Albone  
Cllr M Foster  
Cllr P Guilcher  
Cllr M Knight  
Cllr M North  
Cllr S Patel  
Cllr S Sajid  
Cllr A Skilton  
Cllr D Strachan  
Cllr C Thomas  
Cllr J Woodhead

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships  
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 4

**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. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR THE YEAR 2023/2024**

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mark Foster be elected to the Office of Town Mayor of Biggleswade, for the year 2023/2024.

**2. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Town Mayor, Cllr Mark Foster, signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Foster speaking after his election, noted that he was honoured and privileged to accept the position of Mayor of Biggleswade adding the belief that with new members, new ideas and an excellent team of Officers, it is important to welcome what this opportunity brings.

Cllr Foster formally thanked Cllr G Fage, for his exceptional job as Mayor in the last year and the standard he has set to follow.

On behalf of the Town Council, Cllr Foster wished Cllr G Fage well in his new role as a Central Bedfordshire Councillor for Biggleswade East.

3. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR**

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Mark Knight be elected to the office of Deputy Town Mayor of Biggleswade, for the year 2023/2024.

4. **DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

The Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Mark Knight, signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor, ex officio, shall be voting Members of every committee unless they signify that they do not wish to serve, consistent with Paragraph 38 of the Council's Standing Orders.

5. **MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

It was **RESOLVED** that the membership of Standing Committees and the appointment of Chairmans and Deputy Chairmans are adopted as follows:

i. **Town Centre Management Committee (TCM)**

Cllr J Woodhead (Chairman), Cllr S Patel (Deputy Chairman), Cllr I Agnew, Cllr D Albone, Cllr P Guilcher, Cllr M Foster, Cllr M Knight, Cllr M North, Cllr A Skilton, Cllr D Strachan, Cllr C Thomas.

ii. **Public Land and Open Spaces Committee (PLOS)**

Cllr M North (Chairman), Cllr C Thomas (Deputy Chairman), Cllr I Agnew, Cllr P Guilcher, Cllr M Foster, Cllr M Knight, Cllr A Skilton, Cllr D Strachan, Cllr J Woodhead.

iii. **Personnel Committee**

Cllr M Russell (Chairman), Cllr P Guilcher (Deputy Chairman), Cllr D Albone, Cllr M Foster, Cllr M Knight, Cllr S Patel, Cllr D Strachan, Cllr C Thomas, Cllr J Woodhead.

iv. **Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP)**

Cllr D Strachan (Chairman), Cllr I Agnew (Deputy Chairman), Cllr D Albone, Cllr M Foster, Cllr M Knight, Cllr M North, Cllr M Russell, Cllr S Sajid, Cllr C Thomas.

v. **Appeals Committee**

Cllr M North (Chairman), Cllr A Skilton (Deputy Chairman)

6. **BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE**

Under the constitution for the Biggleswade Joint Committee, Members are elected annually to sit on this Committee. It is likely that the composition of the Committee will change over the coming months.

It was **RESOLVED** that membership of the Biggleswade Joint Committee for 2023/2024 is adopted as follows:

4 Members: Cllr M North, Cllr S Patel, Cllr M Russell, Cllr C Thomas.  
2 Substitutes: Cllr D Albone, Cllr D Strachan.

7. **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES**

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Members be appointed to the Committees for 2023/2024:

i. **Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils (BATPC):**

3 Members for voting at the AGM: Cllr M Knight, Cllr M North, Cllr C Thomas.

ii. **Biggleswade Friendship Committee:**

1 Member: Cllr J Woodhead.  
1 Substitute: Cllr D Albone.

iii. **Fen Reeves meetings as proxy voter:**

1 Member: Cllr M Russell.  
1 Substitute: Cllr A Skilton.

iv. **Biggleswade Green Wheel Development Group:**

2 Members: Cllr M Knight, Cllr A Skilton.  
1 Substitute: Cllr D Albone.

v. **Police Liaison Officer:**

1 Member: Cllr S Patel.  
1 Substitute: Cllr P Guilcher.

vi **Sir John Cotton Educational Foundation**

2 Members: Cllr J Woodhead, Cllr M North.

vii **Langford and Biggleswade Community Fund Group**

2 Members: Cllr M North, Cllr C Thomas.

8. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

9. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

None.

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

None.

10. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

**11. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No member of the public wished to speak.

**12. INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

**13. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Strachan, in reference to the Biggleswade Joint Committee, asked that since there are now five Central Bedfordshire Council for Biggleswade, would it not be more appropriate for there to be five Town Councillors to be members of the committee.

Cllr Foster responded that under the current rules only four CBC Councillors would be members of the Committee, and four Town Councillors. Any changes would need to be made by the CBC General Purposes Committee.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive pointed out that this matter had recently been raised with CBC and that a response was pending.

Cllr Skilton asked for clarification on the co-option process for the vacant positions in the Council.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that advertisements were placed the day following the elections and indicated that there had been some interest. The process of how the selection will be made, will be for Council to debate.

Cllr Foster indicated that this would be an agenda item for the next Town Council meeting.

Cllr Albone pointed out that the footpath alongside the River Ivel, which passes under the A1, is flooded once more and recalled correspondence with CBC regarding this matter.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that he would be looking into the matter before responding.

Cllr Albone also noted that the surface of the White Hart Car Park had deteriorated and asked if there were any imminent plans to address this.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that at present there were no imminent plans as it would be taken under the normal course of maintenance.

Cllr Foster asked for action to review this and look at other car parks as well for any damage and potential safety issues.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responding to the matter indicated that this issue could be discussed at the Working Group.

Cllr Patel going back to the matter of co-option of new Councillors inquired about how many applicants there had been.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive pointed out that there were four people who had expressed an interest; but not all four had completed the application process.

**14. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**a. General Power of Competence**

Members **RESOLVED** the recommendation that Council exercises the General Power of Competence under SI.961 of The Localism Act 2011 (Consequential Amendments) Order 2012 and that it meets the criteria for eligibility relating to the electoral mandate and relevant training of the Clerk.

**15. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Mrs Sheila Grayston

Mrs Grayston indicated that she was attending the meeting on behalf of Mr Alex Cawthorn, husband of the late Amanda Cawthorn to express thanks in particular to the previous Town Council Members.

Mrs Grayston noted that Mrs Cawthorn's funeral was held that day and that her husband Mr Hawthorn wanted to express his gratitude for the tribute and honour the Council paid to Mrs Cawthorn recently.

Mrs Grayston noted that Officers who both she and Mrs Cawthorn worked with also attended the funeral and the family were very touched.

**16. EXEMPT ITEMS**

None.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8.00pm**