



**MINUTES OF THE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18th OCTOBER
2022 AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE,
4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL**



PRESENT:

Cllr M Knight – Chairman
Cllr D Strachan – Vice Chair
Cllr D Albone
Cllr I Bond
Cllr G Fage
Cllr M North
Cllr R Pullinger
Cllr M Russell
Cllr J Woodhead

Mr Karim Hosseini, Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr Isaac Lord, Place Shaping Manager, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs Sian van der Merwe, Deputy Administration & HR Manager, Biggleswade Town Council

Members of the public: 1

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman 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 Chairman 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 C Thomas.

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. Ms. Amanda Cawthorn – Biggleswade Community Safety Group

Ms. Cawthorn commented on the skewed records of crime because bike thefts are being recorded by British Transport Police, whose statistics are not included in the figures the Town Council have presented.

Ms Cawthorn is aware of a number of incidents where people reporting criminal activity are spending a long time on hold on the telephone to speak with the police, also delays of the police physically responding to reported incidents.

b. **Mr Mario Evans – Jerk Hub - Regarding the Market Development Plan**

Mr Evans offered to assist the Town Council with advertising the “Biggs Eat” events to grow the number of traders at special market events.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

6. **MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS**

None.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. From the Minutes of the **Town Centre Management committee Meeting** held on **Tuesday 19th July 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

Page 10 – Change “Counsel” to “Constable”

Subject to this amendment these Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Meeting from 19th July 2022.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

From the Minutes of the **Town Council Meeting** held on **Tuesday 19th July 2022** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

- a. Page 8 – Item 9c – Market Fees Update – Cllr Fage – the second bullet point will need to be refreshed when the market fees are updated.
- b. Page 10 – Item 10c – War Memorial – Cllr Woodhead has spoken with the RBLI who will investigate. Cllr Russell requested the word “allegation” be replaced with “concerns” with regards to missing names. Cllr Russell asked if there was any update following Officers’ meeting with the RBLI, Mr Hosseini said there was nothing to report to the Committee at this point.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Market Development Plan**

Cllr Fage requested Officers prioritise implementing the “Biggs Eat” programme first, seeing how this fares, deferring engagement with Street Food Heroes for the time being.

It was **RESOLVED** Members **APPROVE**:

- 1) Advertising pop-up stalls in the market and boost trader presence;
- 2) That Officers reach out to community and voluntary groups to boost presence specifically at Saturday and Tuesday markets;
- 3) That local businesses are invited onto the Market Square on a rotation basis to advertise their business, ensuring that the Market Superintendent plays a prominent role in that process;
- 4) That Officers implement the “Biggs Eat” themed food event programme, to commence in November 2022 and thereafter on a monthly basis.

It was **RESOLVED** Members **DEFER**:

- 1) The proposal to implement a footfall monitoring scheme to a future date.
- 2) The decision on future engagement with Street Food Heroes to a Town Centre Management Meeting in the first part of 2023.
- 3) The recommendation to support landlords filling vacant units for 12 months.

b. **Market Square Vision Update**

Members felt it is vital to review the “Biggleswade Town Centre Adopted Masterplan & Strategy 2011” in order to incorporate what has been included in the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Pullinger requested that Members be given an opportunity to develop a complete strategy for the Market Square vision via means of a full workshop.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers engage with Central Bedfordshire Council to express the desire to update the Biggleswade Town Centre Adopted Masterplan & Strategy 2011 in light of recent changes to the Town Centre and following the adoption of the Biggleswade Neighbourhood Plan.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers write to Central Bedfordshire Council to ask them to prioritise progressing the revision of bus routes to exclude the northbound loop around Century House.

It was **RESOLVED** that discussions around implementing a shuttle bus service be deferred to late 2023.

Members requested Officers investigate official ownership of the War Memorial and Victorian Water Fountain on the corner of High Street and Station Roads.

c. **War Memorial**

Mr Lord advised Members that the signage recently commissioned for the War Memorial has been completed and Officers are awaiting plans from CBC on underground cable placements before permanent installation.

Members **NOTED** the progress relating to signage expected to be in place before Remembrance.

Members **NOTED** the difficulties Officers have had in coordinating a schedule of maintenance.

Members **AGREED** that the chain welding project should not proceed.

d. **Defibrillator**

Members were asked to consider installation of a defibrillator unit on the Stratton Recreation Ground changing rooms.

Cllr Knight noted that the security of a defibrillator at Stratton Way was a concern and that either a vandal resistant enclosure was needed, or the defibrillator should be installed inside the changing rooms.

It was **RESOLVED** that the new defibrillator be installed at Stratton Way Recreation Ground changing rooms with the addition of motion sensor lighting for the path to the door of the changing room.

e. **King Charles III's Coronation**

This event is scheduled for Saturday 6th May 2022. Members suggested ideas and potentially a working group for event planning.

It was **RESOLVED** that Officers monitor official plans and recommendations and bring this to a future Town Council meeting with recommendations for supporting the event.

10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Bus Routes**

Mr Lord updated the Committee that Officers emailed CBC on 25th April 2022 with the agreed bus routes proposal. CBC Officers verbally expressed support, with questions around location of the bus stops and the feasibility of those on specific parts of the High Street.

CBC have advised the current proposals will be put forward to the Highways Capital Programme for FY 2023/2024. Feasibility studies will take three months to complete.

Members expressed concern this should have been planned together with the Transportation Interchange since bus routes are part of, and directly affected by, the Transportation Interchange.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council write to Central Bedfordshire Council's Senior Planning Officer and the Senior Portfolio Holder Cllr Ian Dalgarno, to express the Town Council's disappointment and concern at the lack of planning on the Transportation Interchange related to bus routes.

The Town Centre Management Committee would also like to request that Central Bedfordshire Council engage with the Town Council in planning for the Biggleswade elements of the Highways Capital Programme.

b. **Remembrance Sunday**

Mr Lord updated Members on current plans for the Remembrance Sunday parade. The parade will be mustering on Hitchin Street, proceed as usual up to the High Street and then around to the Marketplace. Risk assessments have been completed by the Safety Advisory Group.

Members **NOTED** the update.

c. **Crime Statistics**

Cllr Knight reminded Members of Ms Cawthorn's comments relating to crimes reported to the British Transport Police not being included in the Police statistics.

Cllr Strachan has reservations over the accuracy of the statistics due to bike thefts at the Station reported to the BTP and the delay residents have experienced in reporting crimes. Cllr Strachan recently attended the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Parish Conference, and a common theme was the difficulty of reporting crime through 101 or online as the website was not user friendly.

Cllr Knight feels it would be useful to include British Transport Police statistics to future reports. Members were advised by Mrs van der Merwe those statistics are available online and members would receive a link to those for their information.

It was **AGREED** that these concerns should be raised with PC Steven Beer at the next update.

d. **CCTV**

Mr Lord updated Members that the contract duration should be five years, and not three as outlined in the report.

The Town Council will shortly be signing a new Novation Agreement, with a new line installation scheduled for end of December 2022.

The indicative annual maintenance revenue cost for Year One are £17,850. Officers have requested an extra £2,000 growth in the next financial year budget, from £16,000 to £18,000.

The single mobile unit is on order with a different supplier and will arrive in the next three to four weeks, to be installed at Drove Road Cemetery. Officers will move the current mobile camera situated at the White Heart Car Park to Rose Lane Car Park when all the town centre infrastructure is in place.

Cllr Knight requested Mr Lord provide updates as soon as firm dates for installation are available.

e. **Christmas Event**

Cllr Pullinger noted the placement of staging on the bus lane and asked for a check on those plans. He also asked Officers to consider moving the overflow gazebos onto the road side opposite the shops rather than the pavement directly in front of those shops.

Mr Lord confirmed Station Road will be closed to support this event.

Cllr Fage stressed that regular Market Traders and Town Centre business must be given priority over non-resident businesses or traders and invitations to those local businesses should go out first.

Members **NOTED** the report.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No members of the public.

12. **EXEMPT**

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council resolved to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

(13a. Car Parks Tender)

The following resolution was **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

DRAFT

13. **EXEMPT**

a. **Car Parks Tender**

It was **RESOLVED** by the Town Centre Management Committee that Officers source information on parking suppliers that provide car parking machines that accept cash and card payments.

It was **RESOLVED** by the Town Centre Management Committee that Officers proceed with drafting a tender focused on car park payment services and bring this to a future town council meeting for approval.

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