



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2024  
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES  
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL**



**PRESENT:**

Cllr. J. Woodhead (Chairman)  
Cllr. S. Patel (Deputy Chairman)  
Cllr. I. Agnew  
Cllr. M. Foster (ex-officio voting Member)  
Cllr. M. Knight (ex-officio voting Member)  
Cllr. A. Skilton  
Cllr. D. Strachan

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Mr I Campbell – Community Development Manager  
Ms F Gumush – Communications & Events officer  
Ms K Chambers – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 2

**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, Cllr. D. Albone, Cllr. P. Guilcher.

**NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

None.

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

Cllr. Woodhead and Cllr Foster for Item 12b (Rose Lane Car Park St Andrews School Report).

### 3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### a. **Poundland at the A1 Retail Park**

Cllr. Woodhead highlighted to the group that there are plans for another Poundland to be opened at the Biggleswade A1 Retail Park. Residents have voiced concerns about the one in the market square closing as a result. Cllr. Woodhead has reached out formally to the business and has received no response yet, but reassurances have been provided that this unit will remain open.

#### b. **Suspected Arson at Abbots Walk**

Cllr. Woodhead has also been in touch with Boddy & Edwards, the managing agents for Abbots Walk, due to a couple of suspected arson attacks. The agents want to do some refurbishment work, which should be considered as part of the bigger town centre vision. The Community Development Manager and the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships have been to view the site.

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

No one from the public wished to speak.

### 5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

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

Cllr. Skilton noted that there is a campaign by Age UK to prevent digital exclusion of certain demographics. There are cards available in their shop with free postage and this will put residents' names onto their petition. These cards are also available at Biggleswade library.

Cllr. Skilton also indicated that Item 12b relating to Rose Lane Car Park may not be suitable for the exempt section and proposed for the item to be moved into the public session.

Cllr. Strachan asked that, should this be put to a vote, could the reasoning for Item 12b being in the exempt session be shared with the group.

The Chairman and Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that there were two reasons for this decision:

- The commercial aspects connected to item 12b and
- The confidentiality and relations to stakeholders.

Members **RESOLVED** to keep Item 12b as exempt.

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

a. P7 Item 5 – phrasing. 5km cannot be classed as a marathon.

b. P7 Item 8 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph – missing text. Line should read 'The Place Shaping Manager', not 'Place Shaping'.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Centre Management Committee meeting held on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

## 8. **MATTERS ARISING**

P7 Item 8 – Cllr. Strachan asked if any further developments have been made relating to the bus interchange.

The Community Development Manager responded that Highways are unlikely to allow the move of bus stops to the High Street for the foreseeable future. Buses will continue to turn and drop passengers off near Century House, despite the new interchange. The Chairman indicated that a further update and timelines could be useful from Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) surrounding this.

P8/9 Item 9d – Cllr. Strachan highlighted that the minutes indicated that Bigg Eats would be discussed at this session relating to a third-party agreement being presented. However, this is not on the agenda.

The Community Development Manager responded that he and the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships have sent a draft contract to Bigg Eats and were awaiting to hear back. This will come to a Town Council meeting for discussion.

## 9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### a. **D-Day Anniversary Event**

The Community Development Manager presented the report. He indicated that the intention of the event should be to link the significance of the event to the local community.

It was also highlighted that this event might require the purchasing of wreath stands as there are concerns that these might blow away in adverse weather.

Permission has been sought and granted for the Shuttleworth Collection to bring D-Day era vehicles to the town centre, with the hope to keep them there until after 3pm to allow school-age children to view them.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations that:

- BTC work in partnership with the Royal British Legion and the Shuttleworth collection.
- BTC provide help and support in arranging and organising the 80<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of D-Day in line with the experience of previously well-run annual events organised by the Biggleswade Branch of the Royal British Legion.

### b. **Benches and Memorial Plaques Waiting List**

The Community Development Manager commented that the decision has been made to have one model of bench, either in black or green dependent on its location, as is written in the policy presented.

Members noted that it is important to consider the addition of new benches within the town centre, as this area has little space due to those pre-existing. The latter are considered in keeping to the town and therefore the new benches should be placed in new areas.

Members pointed out that there is the possibility to change the named locations listed in the report, as there are a variety of places that could be benefitted by the installation of benches.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt a revised policy which is inclusive of areas owned and managed

by BTC. The benches will vary in colour dependent on the setting they are placed.

## 10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### a. **UKSPF Update Report**

The Community Development Manager presented an overview of the report, highlighting plans to repave the town space, install digital signs, and update the toilets in Century House.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that they are awaiting financial information from CBC and therefore this is a continuing work in progress that will come back to Council once details have been solidified.

Members raised various questions relating to points within the report, highlighting the options available in terms of signage and the benefits that these might have. Digitalisation was considered but it was highlighted that this would require a variety of extra resources that would incur further cost.

Members also noted that the responsibility of the market square belongs to CBC, allowing them to organise the repairs. Comments were made that funds might be available to restore the pavement within BTC.

Members **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report and bring this back to Council once further information has been provided.

### b. **Electrical Infrastructure Market Square**

The Community Development Manager noted that discussions between BTC and CBC Officers were held about the management of the square. Information has been received informally that CBC Officers will be coming to look at the market square in the next fortnight.

Members noted that this issue was discussed at Town Council on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 (Item 11f) and preferably these ideas would be adhered to by CBC in their works.

Members **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report and asked that the Town Clerk & Chief Executive write formally to the Chief Executive of CBC and express concern about the electrical installations on the market square.

### c. **5KM Run**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that the Safety Advisory Group will be consulted and may disagree with the first route. Other routes will have to be considered if this is the case.

Members **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** the officer's recommendation:

- Officers recommend support for this venture and will collaborate with the event organisers, Jones' Fitness, while support the CBC SAG process to ensure a safe, legal, and fun event.
- Officers have submitted the full documentation pack to the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and are awaiting their report.

d. **Biggleswade Shopwatch**

The Community Development Manager indicated that he has been invited to Shopwatch meetings and will be attending on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Members noted the importance of linking BTC CCTV into this programme so that it can be requested where necessary.

Members asked if there had been updates to CCTV since it being mentioned at a previous meeting. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive indicated that he would look into this and provide an update.

Members **NOTED** the report.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

12. **EXEMPT**

a. **Car Parking Electric Vehicle Charging Tender Evaluation**

Members recognised that in order for EV Chargers to benefit the local community, they need to be affordable and accessible to a majority of electric vehicles.

Members **AGREED** to pause the idea of EV Chargers for the foreseeable future.

b. **Rose Lane Car Park St Andrews School Report**

Members reviewed the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that a formal agreement will be written in regard to car parking for the construction period.

Members **RESOLVED** that there was a need to purchase parking permits.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **9:00pm.**