

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIGGLESWADE JOINT COMMITTEE  
HELD IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING AT  
BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, THE OLD COURT HOUSE  
4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL  
ON THURSDAY 13<sup>th</sup> JULY at 14:30 PM**

Present:	<b>BTC:</b> Cllr M Russell, Cllr M North, Cllr C Thomas, Cllr D Albone <b>CBC:</b> Cllr G Tranter, Cllr G Fage, Cllr Dr. H Whitaker, Cllr P Daniels <b>BTC Head of Governance &amp; Strategic Partnerships:</b> Karim Hosseini <b>BTC Place Shaping Manager:</b> Isaac Lord <b>BTC Meetings Administrator:</b> Funda Gumush
In Attendance:	<b>CBC Community Engagement Manager:</b> Sarah Hughes (via zoom) <b>CBC Sustainability Team:</b> Charlotte Secker (via zoom) <b>CBC Sustainability Team:</b> Lauren Chimes (via zoom)
Members of the public:	1

Following a reminder to Meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Chair advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting was being filmed and by being present attendees were deemed to have agreed be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chair advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chair asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

**PART A – ADMINISTRATION**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr S Watkins, Mr. P Tarrant, Mr N Shaw.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – None.

(b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None.

**3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Committee, through the Chairman, pertaining to items listed on the Agenda. Each speaker to be allocated a 3-minute speaking slot.

**No member of the public wished to speak.**

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Cllr Gareth Tranter (CBC) was elected as Chairman of the Committee for 2023-2024.

5. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Cllr M Russell (BTC) was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for 2023-2024.

6. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Members reviewed and **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

7. **MATTERS ARISING**

Cllr Fage inquired about an update regarding the Market Square Trees and pointed out that the trees had been removed for safety reasons.

Cllr Fage indicated that the matter could be brought to the agenda of the next Joint Committee meeting.

Cllr Russell noted that the matter was being looked at by the Town Council which would be presented to CBC and then onto the Joint Committee.

Cllr Whitaker commented that the replanting of trees had been deferred at the Town Council's request since the future of the Market Square was also being discussed but added that the funding was still available for the replanting.

8. **JOINT COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS GOING FORWARD**

a. **An overview of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference**

CBC Community Engagement Manager Sarah Hughes presented an overview of the Joint Terms of Reference.

Ms Hughes indicated that there were four Joint Committees in Central Bedfordshire which adhered to the same Terms of Reference. She explained the purpose of the Committees and values they held for delivering for communities.

Ms Hughes noted that the review of the terms of reference in 2017 introduced the facility to allow either a CBC Member or a Town Council Members to chair the committee; however, both chair and vice chair could not be held by the same organisation.

Ms Hughes also explained that the Terms of Reference includes provision for up to 15 co-opted members which would give the opportunity to include other views, voices and expertise. She also added that it would be helpful if the Committee set out what they hoped to achieve in the new financial year.

Cllr North inquired whether any of the other Councils had co-opted Members to which Ms Hughes responded that Houghton Regis, Dunstable and Leighton Linlade had done so.

Cllr Whitaker suggested that the Committee could invite members from the BRCC, Community Safety and even engage with the local schools to have a younger perspective present.

Based off this idea, Cllr Whitaker also proposed that the Committee look at the days and times the meeting was held to enable more community participation especially if the Committee was hoping students would attend.

With regards to the change of timing for the BJC Committee, Cllr Fage proposed:

1. That the BJC Committee meetings are held in the evening,
2. That the next meeting is held at The Orchard Centre.

Members discussed several options of how community groups could be invited to the meetings, and it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair are consulted by Officers before putting an announcement in the public domain.

With regards to the venue of the meetings, Cllr Whitaker proposed that the meeting is alternated between the Town Council building and the Orchard Centre.

Members **AGREED** to have the next meeting in October at the Orchard Centre at 7pm.

Cllr Whitaker proposed to have a more strategic approach to the agenda in which one item was focused on which would help with co-opted members who could be brought in for specific topics.

Members **AGREED** to a strategic agenda going forward.

It was **AGREED** that Chair and Vice Chair would meet to discuss possible ways of moving forward with the co-option of varying groups with a view to this being agreed by BTC.

**b. Confirm Secretariat arrangements for 2023/24**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships confirmed that the Town Council would continue to be the secretariat for the BJC.

Cllr Whitaker proposed that this is held for one year and that it can be determined further next year.

Members **AGREED** to the arrangements.

**9. PART B – ECONOMY AND TOWN CENTRE**

None.

**10. PART C – KEY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATES**

**a. Transport Interchange project**

Cllr North commented on the interchange project report and asked if there were any updates as to the timings of operation.

Cllr Whitaker responded that CBC are still testing the interchange as it stands and tweaks were being made in collaboration with the bus companies.

Cllr Albone asked whether the bus companies would be including the Market Square on their bus routes.

Cllr Whitaker responded that discussions with bus companies were ongoing, but the Market Square would continue to be on the routes.

Cllr Russell reiterated that the matter of buses in the Market Square had been discussed in Council and a proposal had been put to Highways for bus stops to be moved to the High Street rather than in the Square.

Cllr Russell also touched on the matter of signage and noted there was no signage from the Train Station or Bus Interchange to show direction to the Town Centre. Cllr Russell suggested that this could be an item for the agenda next time.

b. **Play Areas Project**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships noted that the main area of Franklins Recreation Ground and completed and that the Public Realm team hoped to complete the work by the end of August.

He added that the Town Council has been deliberating which play areas should next be regenerated and Kitelands has been selected as the most appropriate given its geographical location.

Cllr Fage urged the Town Council to make sure they sought out any funding available from Section 106 where possible for the regeneration of play areas.

The Chairman indicated that he had spoken with Alun Isaac of Isaac Mercer regarding the play areas on Kings Reach and informed that a review was taking place of all the play area equipment on the estate. He noted that they were now awaiting the outcome of the review.

Cllr Russell commented that the Town Council was in negotiation to take over the play areas in Kings Reach and hoped that soon the Council would have a positive update.

c. **Drove Road Chapel**

The Place Shaping Manager noted that phase one of the three-part project was completed in March, which consisted of high-level repointing works, stone repairs, roof repairs and work to the ventilators on the central tower.

He explained that Council have recently agreed for phase two to commence as soon as possible and after speaking to the external project manager, this is likely to be the beginning of August.

11. **PART D – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

a. **App-Bike: Biggleswade's new cycle hire scheme**

Ms Secker thanked everyone for their participation in helping to get the 12-month pilot project up and running.

The project so far covers 12 bikes initially and can be found at the Dan Albone Car Park, Biggleswade Train Station, Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, Kings Reach Shops and Grasmere Road.

As the project had only begun less than a week ahead of the BJC committee meeting, Ms Secker was unable to provide an update to their success. She indicated however that App-Bikes would be providing a monitoring report and that the team would be meeting with them monthly.

The Chairman raised issues with privacy relating to personal email addresses being used to obtain IDs for PAYG usage. It was understood to be sub-optimal and under review.

b. **Play Streets**

Ms Chimes who is the new active streets engagement officer at CBC presented the report and explained the pros of the project as below:

- Play Street creates a safe space for children to play freely,
- Close to home so no cars or extra travel are needed,
- Low pressure way to learn new skills outside of organised groups and PE lessons,
- Smooth tarmac is perfect for children to learn how to ride a bike, roller skate, scoot and skateboard,
- Helps build natural bonds and friendships with likeminded children of a similar age,
- Enables parents to re-engage with neighbour's post Covid.

Cllr Russell commenting on the matter noted that the Town Council had discussed the item several months earlier and strongly objected to the project and would not currently be supporting it.

12. **ITEMS REQUESTING ATTENTION BY CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

None.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> October at 7.00pm at The Orchard Centre.**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 3.34pm