



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 10th OCTOBER 2023
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL



PRESENT:

Cllr M Foster (Mayor)
Cllr M Knight (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr I Agnew
Cllr D Albone
Cllr G Barrett
Cllr P Guilcher
Cllr J Jones
Cllr M North
Cllr M Russell
Cllr S Sajid
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr R Youngs – Head of Finance and Deputy RFO
Mr J Woolley – Public Realm 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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr S Patel, Cllr A Skilton, Cllr J Woodhead.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Russell – Item 10e.

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a. **Mantles Court Care Home**

On Tuesday 19th September 2023 the Mayor visited the Mantles Court Care Home for a tour and afternoon tea with some of the residents. The Mayor indicated that he had a pleasant afternoon speaking with the residents and noted the extensive amenities that the home offered.

b. **Green Wheel Walk**

On Saturday 23rd September, the Mayor hosted the 4-mile Green Wheel Walk. The walk was well attended. It was led by Cliff Andrews and supported by Richard Lawrence from Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity.

The walk began at Dan Albone Car Park, and followed the picturesque path along the River Ivel, concluding at the White Hart Pub. The walk included visiting the newly refurbished Franklins Recreational Ground and The Lakes football pitches. Around £140 was raised for the Mayor's chosen charities.

c. **Chamomile Gardens**

On Wednesday 4th October, the Mayor had a tour of Chamomile Gardens, where he had the opportunity to speak to some of the residents.

He noted that the large building on the corner of Sorrell Way and Cardamom Street houses 93 one and two-bedroom apartments tailored for over 55s.

d. **Elvis and Curry Night**

On the evening of Wednesday 4th October, the Mayor welcomed Mayors and Councillors from other towns as well as local residents to the Elvis and Curry Night. The event raised over £1,500 for the Mayor's three chosen charities.

The Mayor thanked the Biggles Lounge for their hospitality.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were no Members' questions.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

a. The Draft Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 12th September 2023.

b. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting held on Tuesday 19th September 2023.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

P9. Cllr Russell commented on the forthcoming Annual General Meeting of the Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils (BATPC) and noted that three Members of the Council had been nominated as representatives in May. She added that if other Members wished to attend then they needed to inform the BATPC for catering purposes.

Following on from that Cllr North, who is a nominated Member, indicated that he would not be able to attend the meeting due to prior commitments. The Mayor asked for any volunteers wishing to attend to inform Officers so that they could in turn inform the BATPC.

P11. Cllr Albone asked whether any information had been received by Officers following their letter to Central Bedfordshire Council in relation to the proposed one-way system on Lawrence Road.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that no further information had been received but this would be followed up.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **All Play Areas Equipment Replacement Report**

Cllr Russell commenting on this report noted that there were five noteworthy projects on the agenda which are meant to be funded from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The Council is currently fully committed to the Drove Road Chapel project which has been underway for some time.

With regards to the other projects, Cllr Russell noted that they are not fully costed as the tender process was ongoing. In light of this, she pointed to two issues for consideration:

1. The detailed approval of the project designs.
2. Funding.

Cllr Russell went on to explain that newer Members of the Council would not be fully aware of the process involved with the PWLB. Since the previous decisions, the country faced two national issues: a high level of inflation and higher interest rates. Council needed to understand the impact of these issues on the costs of the PWLB loan and on the precept in the medium term before making a final commitment to the drawdown for Year 2.

Cllr Russell also pointed out that the implementation of the Franklins Recreation Ground project had an adverse impact on the day-to-day work of the Public Realm Team through no fault of their own. The issue was capacity not capability. She noted that four projects on the agenda would also require Public Realm involvement. Scheduling of the projects would be important.

Members discussions continued with regards to the drawdown of monies from the PWLB and the ongoing tendering process of the various projects.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive indicated that in some cases, the figures were indicative prior to the conclusion of the tendering process, and these could be further refined. He further explained that the PWLB report on the evenings agenda, shows an indicative timeline; and if Members were minded to agree, some of the projects would begin in this financial year.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive underlined that the previous Council had agreed a level of precept for the existing financial year which would service this debt. He added that he was able to report this in detail at a later meeting.

Cllr Russell requested that a report on project management and other staff training be submitted to the Personnel Committee on the 7th of November.

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

- The final designs and costings of the projects be discussed and critiqued at the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee (PLOS) and then separately approved by Council.
- A further report regarding the current and future liability of PWLB loans is submitted to Council on the 24th October, but no commitments for further spend are made until the Council meeting in November.
- Defer decisions, including whether and when to go ahead, for all of the projects (Brunel Drive, Kitelands, Stratton Way Cemetery, Drove Road Chapel, and all play equipment replacement) until the November Council meeting.

b. **Orchard Community Centre Boiler Report**

Mr Lord presented the report.

Members discussing the warranty of the boilers, asked that Officers confirm with Members as to the warranty of the boiler to be supplied by the preferred supplier.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the Officer recommendations to give a virement of £4,325 from the vehicle leasing cost line to fund the replacement of the boiler at the Orchard Community Centre, carried out by Supplier A.

c. **Urban Designer Update Report**

Members **RESOLVED** to discuss the Urban Designer Update Report in the Exempt Session.

d. **Civic Functions, Town Mayor's Expenses & Town Mayor's Charitable Activities Policy**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive commenting on the report thanked Members for their contribution to the drafting of the policy as currently there was no governance connected to the expenditure.

Members discussed the report and **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation to adopt the attached Civic Functions, Town Mayor's Expenses & Town Mayor's Charitable Activities Policy without the clause which includes claims for 'reasonable clothing allowance for Civic events (Mayor only)'.

e. **Grants Policy Update Report**

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO presented the report and highlighted that it would be more beneficial to have a period of six months between the two tranches of grants.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the Officer recommendation to change the deadline date of the second tranche to 28th February and for Members to approve the associated changes to the Grants Policy.

f. **Change of meeting on 24th October 2023**

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO presented the report and reiterated the resolution taken at Finance & General Purposes Committee in September that an extra meeting would be needed to consider the grant applications and that an extraordinary F&GP Committee meeting should be held on 24th October.

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO noted that the Grants Policy states any payments in excess of £2,000 are usually recommended by the F&GP Committee to the next Council meeting.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the Officer recommendation that Members approve changing the meeting on 24th October from an F&GP Committee meeting to a Town Council meeting.

g. **Consultations on Local Plans, Model Financial Procedure Rules, Biodiversity Duty**

Members noted that the consultation was recently discussed at the County Committee where it was felt that it was too long and too complex to discuss at Council on the evening.

Cllr Russell proposed that Members respond individually if they wish to.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation.

h. **Creation of Biggleswade Footpath Nos. 78 and 79 and Bridleway No. 80 and the Extinguishment of Parts of Biggleswade Footpath Nos. 16, 19 and Bridleway No. 11**

Members discussed the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council.

Commenting on the information and map supplied, Members indicated that extinguishing footpath 19 and saying this was duplicated by the newly created section of bridleway 11 and footpath 17 was misleading as these were both completely different walkways and give different experiences.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to respond to the correspondence on the basis that:

- Members object to the extinguishment of Footpath 19 mentioned in proposal number 4, as one is a pleasant walking environment, whilst the other is a walk along the east side of the railway.

i. **Football Pitches Report**

The Chairman of the PLOS committee commenting on the report indicated that he was supportive of Officer recommendations except for the third bullet point which recommends that supporting quotes are brought to growth budget meetings. He suggested that this recommendation needed to be brought to a PLOS meeting.

Following discussions, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that letters informing all stakeholders had been sent out highlighting the potential changes.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept Officer recommendation to note the report and enable:

- The Public Realm team to carry out the required work to create two smaller pitches out of the single pitch at Stratton Way and to mark out the 2nd large pitch at the Lakes ground.
- The Admin team to market the new pitches on the website and on the booking system.

- Officers to bring the football facilities growth requirement with supporting quotes to the PLOS committee meeting.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/02524/ADV - Unit B, Normandy Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8QB**

Advertisement: Two illuminated fascia signs.

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

b. **CB/23/02506/FULL - 93 Rose Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 0JY**

Proposed two storey side extension.

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

c. **CB/23/02339/FULL - 45 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JF**

Decommissioning of this Bank. Removal of existing external signage, removal of external ATM and reinstating the door. Removal of CCTV camera, removal ADT alarm box.

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

d. **CB/23/02696/FULL - 41 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JH**

Erection of outbuilding (retrospective).

The Town Council does **NOT OBJECT** to this planning application subject to the following conditions:

- The building is not used for any purpose other than storage.
- It is not used for commercial purposes.
- An appropriate time-limit suggested as five-years is placed on the application as is.

e. **CB/23/02930/FULL - 26 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0AN**

Erection of part single and part two storey front extension.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to the arboriculture impact assessment and tree protection method statement being taken into consideration.

The report shows that the site includes a TPO Lime on site. The proposed extension will be underneath the canopy of the tree. This would not be acceptable. The proposed plan states foundations to protect the tree; however, no details of this have been included.

f. **CB/23/02798/FULL - 20 Eagle Farm Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8JH**

Demolition of existing conservatory. Erection of single storey rear extension and detached single garage with storage.

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

g. **CB/23/03004/FULL - 19 St Johns Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0BT**

Single storey rear extension.

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

h. **CB/TCA/23/00449 - 5 Chapel Fields, Biggleswade, SG18 0ND**

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: Fell, process and remove Tree of Heaven in rear garden.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** and has **NOTED** this application

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

- i) Balance sheet to 30/09/23.
- ii) Detailed Income and Expenditure to 30/09/23.
- iii) Payment Listing from 01/09/23 to 30/09/23.
- iv) Summary Income and Expenditure to 30/09/23.

The Council **RESOLVED** to accept the reports as laid out.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council and added that they looked forward to receiving an update from Officers following their meetings with CBC Officers.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Mr Norman, Biggleswade Resident.

Mr Norman highlighted of the volume of parking on Holmes Crescent. He underlined the danger of how some cars were parked, often double parking. He noted that on occasion the police had been called to have the cars removed.

Mr Norman indicated that his biggest concern was for the safety of children, cyclists and people with mobility cars as that corner of the road with the highest volume of parking was causing a blind spot.

The Mayor noted that it was unfortunate that Holme Crescent did not have the parking permit process established there and although the Council were unable to help or manage this situation directly, they were able to bring it to the attention of the Highways Authorities and Enforcement Officers.

The Mayor indicated that the matter would be raised with the relevant CBC Ward Councillors as well.

15. EXEMPT

a. Urban Designer Update Report

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report.

Members discussed the report and **RESOLVED** to proceed with company A.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **9.00pm**