



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 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 M North
Cllr S Patel
Cllr M Russell
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 – 1 (online)

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 J Jones, Cllr S Sajid.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Patel for Items 9c and 11b.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor did not have any formal announcements; however, he indicated that there were two urgent items which needed to be discussed in the meeting:

- nomination for the 2023 BATPC County Committee,
- proposed one way system for Lawrence Road.

b. Access for All Meeting

The Mayor invited Cllr Russell to brief Members on a recent 'Access for All' meeting she attended with Richard Fuller MP.

Cllr Russell explained that the following updates were given during the meeting:

- The new access at the station is still in the detailed design phase. It should be completed and up-to-date costings in place by end of November. It is expected that final financial approval will be given in December. Enabling work will start on site in January and it is expected that the project will be completed by December 2024.
- The new toilets at the station opened on 20th June but are only available when the station is staffed. Future staffing hours will be dependent on the outcome of the ticket office closure consultation and the position is not likely to be known until March/April 2024. The staffing position will also affect the availability of the new lifts.
- There is a problem with the transport interchange where the cambers of the exit road and Station Road meet producing a dip. The contractors will rectify this but there is no timescale yet for the interchange to open.
- The work at Lindsells Crossing will resume in October when the ramps on the eastern side will be installed. The ramps on the western side will be lifted over the track during a track possession over the Christmas period and then installed. Completion is expected March 2024.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

None.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Cllr Skilton expressed concern over the increase in anti-social driving around the Rose Lane area and the Asda Car Park, and the potential illegal modification to vehicles. He indicated that this matter had been brought to his attention by Biggleswade residents and asked if Officers could raise the matter with the police as well as the Community Safety Group.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that Officers could work with the nominated Member to the Police Liaison Committee as well as report it to the responsible Inspector and bring the item back to Council.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. P7 Item 6. Members Questions - paragraph 4. The sentence should read 'the building was being prepared for use other than...'
- b. P11 Item 15d. Minutes & Recommendations of the Personnel Meeting.

Cllr Skilton asked for it to be recorded that members of the Appeals Committee left the Chamber at the start of one Agenda item as required.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd August 2023.

- c. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting.

8. MATTERS ARISING

P7. Cllr Albane inquired about a previous item relating to the Bus Gate and noted that it was not in this agenda. Members discussed and agreed that since they had been briefed with regards to the issue, the item did not need to come back to the agenda again.

P9. Cllr Albane asked whether any new information had been received with regards to the Stratton Way football pitch. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responding indicated that he would be briefing Members outside of the meeting with further contextual information.

P10. Cllr Thomas noted that the Bigg Eats event was being held on the 14th of September and asked if the Council had advertised this through its communication channels. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that the same method of advertising as before was being implemented such as social media, posters and the Council's website. In future as the event grew, other methods would be considered.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Nominations for the BATPC County Committee

The Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Council's County Committee will be holding elections this year. The Committee comprises 21 representatives, seven from Parish Councils in the Bedford Borough area, and seven each from parish councils and Town Councils in the Central Bedfordshire area.

BATPC are seeking one nomination from the Town Council. Currently the Council is represented by Cllrs Russell and North at the County Committee. This is separate from already nominated AGM representation where the Council is represented by Cllrs Knight, North and Thomas.

Members **RESOLVED** to nominate Cllr Russell to represent the Town Council at the Association's County Committee.

b. New Town Council Meeting Structure Schedule

Following the Town Council resolution on 22nd August 2023, Officers produced a new meetings schedule within the current municipal year.

Members asked for Officers to obtain written confirmation from Central Bedfordshire Council that this would not pose any significant issues for them in agreeing deadline extensions on an ad hoc basis for planning applications.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the new meeting schedule, which would enable Officers to update the Town Council noticeboards and website.

Members **RESOLVED** for the trial period to run until the end of the current municipal year.

c. **A00407 Lawnside, Biggleswade, Part Time No Entry**

Members discussed the public notice provided by Central Bedfordshire Council who were proposing to introduce a part-time no-entry on Lawnside, Biggleswade.

Members recognised that there are significant safety issues on Lawnside that need to be addressed, but felt this specific proposal is flawed with negative impacts that need to be considered and mitigated in a revised scheme:

- The proposed time restrictions do not match the local school's opening and closing times.
- The closure will adversely impact school staff, school deliveries, and parents accessing the school. Mitigation should be provided to address the needs of those with disabilities and minibus traffic to Lawnside and Ivel Valley schools.
- Access to several dwellings will be significantly impacted, with similar impacts to deliveries to those dwellings.
- There's no evidence that the knock-on impact on Lawrence Road has been considered or addressed.
- There's no evidence of consultation with residents to assess their views of these proposals.
- How will any regulations be enforced?
- An alternative solution may be to consider how Lawnside could be widened, or the introduction of a 5mph speed limit.

For these reasons, the Town Council is opposed to the current proposal but would welcome the opportunity to consider a revised scheme that ensures the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using Lawnside.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to write to CBC with their concerns and **REJECT** the current proposal.

d. **A00404 Lawrence Road, Biggleswade – One Way**

Members discussed the correspondence from CBC which looked to introduce a one-way traffic system on Lawrence Road, from the junction with the northern section, extending in a south easterly direction to the junction of Crab Lane.

Members indicated that although they were broadly in favour of the proposal a number of concerns were raised due to the challenging aspects of the road in question:

- Who and how will enforcement of the new order be implemented? It is highly possible that drivers will ignore a no entry sign.

- By making the area one-way, existing parking spaces will be impacted and vehicles will potentially be displaced into other areas and streets. There is already a parking issue with that section of the road and this measure would make it worse.
- What is the anticipated impact of restricting access to emergency vehicles?

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to respond to CBC with the above concerns.

Members **RESOLVED** that they want to see a review conducted once this proposal is implemented to assess its effectiveness, especially regarding the above points.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/02689/FULL - 58 Rowan Crescent, Biggleswade, SG18 0PG**

Single storey side extension and installation of new access ramp at front and rear of the property.

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

However, Members indicated a concern that the flat roof being proposed is quite large and a pitch roof would be more appropriate and weatherproof for an annex extension.

Members asked for the planning officer to consider and note this.

b. **CB/23/02695/FULL - 43 St Johns Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0BT**

Single storey front porch extension.

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

c. **CB/TRE/23/00382 - The Close Cottage, 17A Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Works to a tree(s) protected by a Tree Preservation Order: MB//TPO/00004/G1 (T1) - Yew tree front of drive to remove leaning Ivy-covered stem over the drive back to crown break (T2) - Yew tree side of drive to dismantle to near ground level.

Members **OBJECT** to this planning application for the following reasons:

- The sketch is of poor quality to allow detailed assessment.
- The suggestion that providing space for a removal lorry is not an appropriate reason to remove the ivy on tree T1 shown on the plan.
- It is also suggested that tree T2 on the diagram be removed to near ground level because it is encroaching the drive. A TPO will have been placed to protect the tree, a small amount of pruning would suffice.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

a. The Planning Application Outcomes report was **NOTED**.

b. **The Red Lion Planning Appeal**

CB/22/00857/FULL & CB/22/01357/LB PINS refs: APP/P0240/W/22/3313193 & APP/P0240/Y/22/3313199

Members **RESOLVED** to nominate representatives on behalf of the Council closer to the date of the hearing when the formal notification will be provided.

12. ACCOUNTS

a. **Financial Administration**

- i) Balance sheet to 31/08/23.
- ii) Detailed Income and Expenditure to 31/08/23.
- iii) Payment Listing from 01/08/23 to 31/08/23.
- iv) Summary Income and Expenditure to 31/08/23.

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

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a. None.

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. EXEMPT

None.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8.06pm**