



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 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 K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships  
Mr I Lord – Place Shaping Manager  
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 5 (2 online, 3 in Chamber)

**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:**

None.

### **3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **a. Sue Ryder St John's Hospice**

On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August, the Mayor visited Sue Ryder St John's Hospice in Moggerhanger. The organisation is one of the Mayor's three chosen charities this year. He was shown around the facilities and spoke with staff to get a better understanding of the care provided and the work they do.

The Mayor noted that the hospice provides essential palliative care and bereavement support and commended them for the amazing job that they do.

#### **b. Pub Quiz at the Rose**

On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August, the first of the Mayor's charity events was held. The Pub Quiz which took place at The Rose Pub was a sellout and over £1,100 was raised for the Mayor's charity fund.

The event was attended by Mayors from neighbouring towns, showcasing the spirit of collaboration and unity. Representatives from all three of the Mayor's chosen charities, MIND BLMK, Tourettes Action, and St John's Hospice Moggerhanger, were in attendance, along with Biggleswade Town Councillors who showed their support for the event.

The Mayor expressed appreciation to the Local Businesses that generously donated raffle prizes, and to the Rose as excellent hosts.

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

#### **Ms Debra Fisher**

Ms Fisher commented on Item 9c Market Square & Town Centre Brief and commended everyone involved for the work put into it. Ms Fisher asked if any considerations had been made for the direction of traffic for Hitchin Street.

The Mayor responded by saying that discussions had been held over the years with regards to Hitchin Street and the direction of traffic but added that Members agreed that it would not be included in the brief for now

#### **Cllr Hayley Whitaker, Ward Councillor**

Cllr Whitaker indicated that in the previous Council meeting, Members had asked for an update on Lawrence Road. She explained that a CBC Members' Briefing had been held earlier in the week and Members were informed that the design for the road was completed, although Members had not seen it.

Cllr Whitaker added that it was her understanding the design would be going to consultation at the end of the week. As the project would be completed next year, consultation is expected soon.

Commenting on Item 10a, the planning application for 'We Buy Any Car', Cllr Whitaker noted that she had called the planning application in on the basis that 12 car parking spaces would be lost, there is no footpath for keeping pedestrians safe and low-loader lorries would be used for transporting the cars which again affects safety.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

There was no invited speaker.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were no Members' questions.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. P8 Grasmere Road Report. There is a typo in the text in two places where licence is spelled incorrectly.

P9 Proposed Closure of Biggleswade Station. Second bullet point should read legal obligations not implications.

P11. Planning Application. The top line should be removed so the text should just read: The two permanent pitches for Gypsy and Traveller use, with associated parking and amenity units should be stationed further away from the road and that is not the case with this proposal.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 25 July 2023.

Members also **NOTED** the minutes of the three sub-committees of the Biggleswade Joint Committee, Finance & General Purposes Committee and Personnel Committee.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising, and Cllr Russell thanked Cllr Whitaker for coming back to Council with the information regarding Lawrence Road.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **External Audit Report**

Members considered the comprehensive report which included the audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations as follows:

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 set out what the Council must do at the conclusion of the external auditor's review. In summary, the Council is required by 30 September 2023 to:

- Publish (which must include publication on the authority's website) a statement that the limited assurance review has been concluded and that the statement of accounts has been published.
- Of the rights of inspection conferred on local government electors by section 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; and the address at which, and the hours during which, those rights may be exercised.
- Keep copies of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum.

- Ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return remains available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was first published.

b. **Management Accounts Report**

Members welcomed the new Management Accounts Finance report and commented that it was more concise and generally easier to read.

The recommended process is:

- The usual finance reports will still be available to provide full detail on the Biggleswade Town Council website, under “About the Council/Organisation/Finance Transparency Documents/Monthly Accounts”.
- A single sheet report format was approved, with commentary, to provide some context behind the numbers shortly after month-end.
- The new report will be continually assessed, and refinements should be considered.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the new finance report to Council going forward.

c. **Market Square & Town Centre Brief**

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report and thanked Members for taking part in several informal working group meetings over the past month.

The Mayor noted that this was not a finished article but a vision brief for Members to work with.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to engage with urban designers, to source quotes for their work, which would include them meeting with Members on at least two occasions to discuss a vision for the Market Square, and to present a report to Council when appropriate.

d. **A00405 Biggleswade Station Interchange – Bus Gate**

Members discussed the public notice from Central Bedfordshire Council and noted that the proposal was not an actual gate but traffic markings placed to prevent the use of the road other than that of public transport buses.

Members agreed that the notice did not provide enough information as to what was being requested.

Ward Councillor Cllr Whitaker commenting agreed that the proposal was not an actual gate but one similar to that of Venus Road on Kings Reach, which was a road for buses only. The rationale was to prevent cars from parking at the bus interchange.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to write to CBC Officers asking for more detail to the proposal to outline its requirement and enforcement options.

Members **AGREED** not to comment on the matter until more information was received.

e. **D-Day Anniversary Guide**

Members noted that two former Councillors from Biggleswade had taken part in the D-Day Operations – Cllr Cook and Cllr Brunt.

Members commented that this is an important anniversary to mark and **RESOLVED** for Officers to consider options to mark the occasion and to present a report to the Town Centre Management Committee in October.

## 10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

### a. **CB/23/01105/FULL - Unit P, A1 London Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8NE**

Stationing of a pod to the car park (for We Buy Any Car) retrospective.

Members **OBJECT** to this planning application on the grounds that:

- There will be a loss of parking spaces.
- There is potential risk to public safety due to the transporters loading and unloading within the main car park deliveries for all other businesses on the retail park take place in designated loading areas away from the public.

### b. **CB/23/01106/ADV - Unit P, A1 London Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8NE**

Advertisement: Fascia signage consisting of various vinyl signs (Retrospective).

Members **OBJECT** to this planning application on the same grounds as they did for the planning application above in that:

- There will be a loss of parking spaces.
- There is potential risk to public safety due to the transporters loading and unloading within the main car park deliveries for all other businesses on the retail park take place in designated loading areas away from the public.

## 11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

## 12. **ACCOUNTS**

### a. **Financial Administration**

- i) Balance sheet to 31/07/23.
- ii) Detailed income and Expenditure to 31/07/23.
- iii) Payment Listing from 01/07/23 to 31/07/23.
- iv) Summary Income and Expenditure to 31/07/23.

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

## 13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### a. **CCTV Status Update**

The Place Shaping Manager noted British Telecom were waiting on time estimates from the fibre engineers to complete the work, but the equipment had been sent out for testing. Officers would continue to seek a delivery date.

Cllr Russell thanked the Place Shaping Manager for his continued efforts on this matter.

b. **BTC Allotment Meeting**

Members **NOTED** the meeting report and welcomed the developing relationships with the allotment holders.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

**Cllr Hayley Whitaker, Ward Councillor**

Cllr Whitaker indicated that she sent the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships information relating to St Neot's Market Square refurbishment. She suggested that there could be ideas for Biggleswade at a later stage.

**Ms Debra Fisher**

Ms Fisher asked if any further updates had been received from ASDA Supermarkets regarding their car parking facilities.

Cllr Russell noted that it was disappointing no progress from ASDA had been made with regards to this despite Town Council efforts.

Ms Fisher also reported on the abuse of one-way roads in Biggleswade and asked what could be done to tackle the issue.

The Mayor commented that although this was not the direct responsibility of the Council, it was an issue in the Town and asked whether Ward Councillors could take the matter forward on behalf of the Council.

Cllr Whitaker said that they would be able to help, and also recommended Officers to request a review of one-way street signage around the Town from CBC.

15. **EXEMPT**

- a. None.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **7.41pm**