



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11th JULY 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 I Agnew
Cllr D Albone
Cllr G Barrett
Cllr J Jones
Cllr M North
Cllr M Russell
Cllr S Sajid
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 – 3 (two online, one 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

a. Cllr P Guilcher, Cllr M Knight, Cllr S Patel.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Cllr Barrett for Item 10b.

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

None.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. App-Bike

On Friday 7th July, the Mayor and several other Town Councillors, attended the formal launch of the 'App-Bike', Biggleswade's new bike hire scheme. The scheme is a joint venture between Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), Central Bedfordshire Council and the Town Council.

The Mayor explained that the scheme is designed to open up cycling for Biggleswade residents, especially for those who don't own a bicycle or might like to try cycling. The four locations included areas such as Dan Albone Car Park and Kings Reach Square with the hope that the railway station was also a planned location.

The Mayor hoped that the scheme would be a success and encouraged everyone to use and support it.

b. East Beds Concert Band Summer Concert

On Saturday 8th July, the Mayor had the pleasure of attending the East Beds Concert Band Summer Concert at Stratton Upper School.

The Mayor indicated that it was a fantastic evening where there was something for everyone.

The East Beds Concert Band is a community wind band that welcomes participants of all ages. The band's repertoire encompassed a great mix of music from the 70s to Land of Hope and Glory.

The Mayor added that he looked forward to attending the next Winter/Christmas concert to be held on Saturday 9th December.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

PC Steven Beer

PC Beer gave an update for Biggleswade and noted that in the last month the most commonly seen offence was shop lifting with 18 incidents. Following this was assault without injuring with 13 offences and 5 incidents of criminal damage to vehicles.

In terms of recent achievements, PC Beer indicated that Bedfordshire Police in the last month had carried out three property closures due to anti-social behaviour and drug related offences.

Bedfordshire Police also completed an environmental vulnerability assessment in the Market Square in relation to youths who were seen on rooves of buildings, throwing things down and causing anti-social behaviour.

PC Beer explained that youths were issued with behavioural contracts, and in any other offence, their parents would suffer the consequences.

PC Beer also said that two Officers from the Biggleswade Community Policing Team are among the top three for stop and search across the entirety of Central Bedfordshire, in that they are

the ones who are going out there engaging and stopping individuals following intelligence submitted to them regarding offences.

Cllr Strachan touched on the matter of drug use and dealing, especially around recreation areas. It was suggested that it would be helpful in repeating the idea that if the public have any intelligence regarding any criminal activity that they report it using the 101-telephone line.

PC Beer agreed that public intelligence is one of the biggest resources the police have and whilst 101 could be busy especially after 6pm, logging incidents or intelligence online at Bedfordshire Police was also possible.

PC Beer reiterated that if a crime is actively on-going that people were aware of, then they should call 999 which avoids waiting in line and gets mobilisation of units quicker.

Cllr Barrett noted that as a new Member to the Town, he was not able to compare if the figures presented were 'good' or 'bad' and asked if PC Beer could give further information, to which PC Beer said he would share the data with Members later.

Cllr Woodhead noted that the 'top' offence in Biggleswade was shoplifting and wondered if there were any areas where this occurred more frequently.

PC Beer indicated that this could be provided in more detail if Members wished.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Cllr Skilton informed Members that he had been contacted by a resident, asking if there was a Women's Safety lead on the Council. The Mayor responded that at present there was no such lead and welcomed other ideas by Members for such initiatives which could be considered.

Cllr Albone pointed to the two new pedestrian crossings on Chambers Way and Saxon Drive noted that they were still not functioning and asked when they would be operational.

CBC Ward Councillor Cllr Grant Fage, assisted members with additional information, indicating that the operation of the pedestrian crossing had been held up by UK Power Networks, that both sets of traffic lights were erected as part of S106 funding due to the development on Sorrell Way and are the responsibility of the developer. Cllr Fage added that he would escalate the matter to CBC.

Cllr Strachan asked if the Council was aware that the Rail Delivery Group is carrying out a consultation with a view to closing ticket offices generally around the country which began on the 5th of July, ending on the 26th of July.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that the Council were aware of the consultation, but Biggleswade Town Council had not specifically been consulted on their opinion.

Members **AGREED** to add the item on the next Council agenda to discuss before Officers submitted a response to the consultation.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. P6 - Cllr Strachan indicated that Cllr Barrett and Cllr Jones should not have been included in the Present List as technically they had not been voted until the Item for Co-option.

P7 – Item 5. Declaration of Acceptance of Office should read 2023/2027 not 2023/2024. Also the Mayor welcomed the newly co-opted Councillors should be moved at the end of that section with the addition of a line which says they signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

P10 – Item 9c. The length of time plaques can remain on benches is not covered. It should read “that going forward the policy should include the length of time of 15 years that plaques could remain on new benches.”

P11 – Item 9g. The last paragraph should be amended to read: “and that subject to further consideration, the possibility of future meetings could be held in the evening.”

P12 – Item 14a. the last paragraph should have the additional line: “and in keeping with the current process would continue to be published on the Council website.”

P12 – Item 12e. The planning application outcome needs to be amended to reflect the fact that this modification is premature as the mounds had not been removed yet.

P13 – Item 16. There is a typo – email trail not email trial.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 27th June 2023**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting **Tuesday 27th June 2023**.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Committee Memberships & Newly Co-opted Councillors

Newly Co-opted Councillors, Cllr G Barrett and Cllr Jo Jones, indicated their preference as to which Standing Committee they would like to join.

Cllr Barrett joined the Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) and the Appeals Committee.

Cllr Jones joined the Personnel Committee and the Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee (PLOS).

Cllr Agnew requested to stand down as a Member of the PLOS Committee.

b. Lost and Found Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy Review

Members commented on the policy and noted that the other Council policies were structured differently and questioned whether it could be reviewed the following year with minor amendments so that it is more specific.

Members **RESOLVED** to review the policy next year with a view to reviewing policies every two years thereafter.

c. EV Charging Update Report

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships advised members that the CBC proposal and project with BP Pulse for EV charging points in the town is for inside Mill Lane Car Park

He also advised that were it not to be supported, future phases of the project would be an option for circa 2025/26..

Members believed having rapid chargers near the Town Square was not a good idea and areas such as the Retail Park or Sainsburys would be better suited.

Members felt from the ones already being utilised that there was not a great urgency for more to be fitted and Mill Lane Car Park was too small an area to have rapid chargers there due to its proximity to Franklins Recreation Ground and diminished revenue.

Cllr Woodhead made the proposal.

“Biggleswade Town Council wishes to ensure that residents have access to public EV charging points but must obtain good value for the town's residents and users of any public charging infrastructure. BTC officers shall conduct a procurement process to identify additional potential suppliers with the goals of ensuring (a) the price of energy bought to charge vehicles on BTC land is capped, (b) achieving fair value for the use of BTC assets, and (c) an optimal choice of locations in BTC controlled car parks.”

Members **RESOLVED** to not support the recommendation that the Town Council is included in a host agreement with CBC and BP Pulse for two rapid charge points in Mill Lane car park, and support the proposal made by Cllr Woodhead.

d. **Funfair Update Report**

Members were advised that Officers have stressed to the organiser that toilets must be provided and that all entrances and exits need to be kept free from cars and were awaiting a response.

Members noted the issue of parking at Eagle Farm Road and asked whether the school or the Weatherly Centre has been approached with regards to using their parking facilities and what other alternatives had been thought of.

Members noted that it was important to operationalise the event and ensure this was covered in the agreement.

Members **RESOLVED** to agree that the event can go ahead as per the event management plan subject to:

- A positive response regarding the provision of toilets,
- Operationalising the insurance risk element,
- The emergency entry and exit being kept clear.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that the event management agreement needed to include the above amendments before it was agreed and signed.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/01952/VOC - Park Corner Farm, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8SH**

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

b. **CB/23/02059/FULL - 27 Wharf Mews, Biggleswade, SG18 0AW**

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this application on the grounds that:

- The area is a flood risk.
- The build reduces public access to the sense of space.
- The build is not in keeping with the current structure and its surroundings.

c. **CB/23/01989/FULL - Home Farm House, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8QU**

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this application on the grounds that:

- It is a development outside of the Green Wheel.
- Access to the site is on a blind corner and close to a roundabout and potentially unsafe.
- It will add to the congestion in accessing the A1 and will lead to a potentially dangerous right of way issue.
- It is deemed overdevelopment of the site

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

For Members to review and consider the following Accounts documents:

- i. Balance sheet to 30/06/23.
- ii. Detailed Income and Expenditure to 30/06/23.
- iii. Payment Listing from 01/06/23 to 30/06/23.
- iv. Summary Income and Expenditure to 30/06/23.

The Town Council **RESOLVED** to **ADOPT** the Accounts as laid out.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Cllr Paul How

CBC Cllr Paul How, who was unable to participate in the Public Open Session due to a technical issue, sent in a written message indicating that CBC Cllr G Tranter, has escalated the issue of the two new pedestrian crossings in Chambers Way and Saxon Drive not being live with Central Bedfordshire Council.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Biggleswade Community Benefit Fund Report**

Members discussed various options relating to projects around the Town.

Members **RESOLVED** that Kitelands Recreation Ground would be the project proposed for two tranches of external funding.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **9.05 pm**