



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 24th 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 J Jones
Cllr S Patel
Cllr M Russell
Cllr S Sajid
Cllr A Skilton
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr R Youngs – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 5 (2 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 P Guilcher, Cllr M North, 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 Thomas, Cllr Skilton and Cllr Patel for Item 9a.

3. TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

Representatives from various organisations that submitted applications for grants gave a short presentation to Members in support of their grant applications and the intended purpose for the use of those funds.

The representatives were:

Ms Rhiannon Barrow – Biggleswade Community Garden
Ms Fiona Soden – Bigg Theatre
Ms Monika Carpenter – Biggleswade, Sandy & District NCT
Ms Carole Birtwhistle – Biggleswade Community Safety Group

5. INVITED SPEAKER

None.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no Members' questions.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. P7 Item 9a - third paragraph should read 'Council needs to understand the impact'.
- P9 Item 9g - sentence should read 'too complex to discuss at Council this evening'.
- P9 Item 9h - last resolution should be removed as it did not receive the votes required.
- P11 Item 13 - remove the '1' at the end of the sentence in UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on 10th October 2023.

8. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of 10th October 2023.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Grant Applications First Tranche

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO presented the report.

He noted that grant application requests for more than £2,000 had to be approved by the Town Council as stated in the grants policy.

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO added that successful applications would be paid in October, again in line with the Council's grants policy.

Members considered all the grant application requests and agreed grants for sixteen organisations.

The table below shows the amounts awarded.

| APPLICANT | AMOUNT REQUESTED | AMOUNT AWARDED |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Biggleswade Community Carnival | £1,500 | £1,000 |
| Biggleswade Community Garden | £1,500 | £1,000 |
| Biggleswade Community Safety Group | £432 | £432 |
| Biggleswade ATC Squadron (Royal Air Force Air Cadets) | £1,000 | £875 |
| Autism Bedfordshire | £1,000 | £500 |
| Wellbeing in Biggleswade | £500 | £500 |
| Biggleswade Arts Collective CIC | £2,000 | £1,500 |
| Biggleswade Community Group | £2,000 | £1,500 |
| Bigg Welcome | £1,200 | £500 |
| Veg Box Donation Scheme | £700 | £375 |
| Sue Ryder St John's Hospice | £3,000 | £1,000 |
| Biggleswade, Sandy & District NCT | £1,450 | £600 |
| Magpas Air Ambulance | £1,300 | £250 |
| Biggleswade Scout Group | £279 | £279 |
| Biggleswade Amateur Theatrical Society | £5,000 | £1,000 |
| Respite at Home Volunteers | £1,000 | £600 |
| TOTAL | | £11,411 |

b. **PWLB Report**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive presented the report.

He noted that the Council currently have five PWLB loans, some which date back to October 1964.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that Council has engaged with Central Bedfordshire Council to determine if any S106 monies could be sourced for projects the Town Council wishes to progress. CBC have indicated that the Council projects do not match any S106 criteria.

Members discussing the report noted that it was important for Officers to get clarity on the full scope of land included under the PWLB loan for Stratton Way in 1964.

Members also commented that Officers should be seeking clarification on the levels of S106 funding when large scale land development planning applications are submitted.

Members comments included the requirement for better information through the reporting to show the full Public Works Loans liability.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the following recommendations:

- That Members note this interim position and the contents of this report.
- That Officers actively engage with CBC and other grant providers to determine if complementary funding streams can be sourced to help mitigate the Councils future commitments.
- That further debate take place at Council in November once estimates of cost are refined and project specifications supported by PLOS.

- That Officers take advice from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and other appropriate parties (including internal audit) and report back to Town Council the result of those inquiries with a recommendation as to the way forward with regards to the future of the balance sheet.

c. **Interim Internal Audit Report 2023-2024**

Members discussed the contents of the first report submitted by the new internal auditor Heelis & Lodge.

Consistent with good practice determined by the Finance & General Purposes Committee, any internal audit report should be considered by Council immediately on receipt.

Members echoed comments of appreciation to the Head of Finance and the Town Council team for the quality of documentation and results of the audit.

Members **RESOLVED** that all recommendations be implemented in a timely manner and where there may be potential issues, for these to be mitigated as best advised by the Head of Finance, and that the F&GP Committee should confirm the recommendations have been fully implemented.

d. **Additional PLOS Committee Meeting**

Members discussed the report that pointed to recent resolutions taken by Council on 10th October 2023 which recommended that designs and costings of projects should be discussed and critiqued by the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee before approval by Council.

The Chairman of the PLOS Committee and Officers recommended holding an extraordinary PLOS Committee on Thursday 2nd November 2023, at which additional project information on Brunel, Kitelands and Stratton would be available.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Not Applicable.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

Not Applicable.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

None.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Not Applicable.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

None.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8.20pm**