



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 12th DECEMBER 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 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 – 4 (3 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 I Agnew, Cllr D Albone, Cllr P Guilcher, Cllr S Patel.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

None.

b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item:

Cllr Russell for Item 10e, Cllr Foster for Item 10f and Cllr Jones for Item 13d.

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Mayor's announcements.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

Julie Balaam, Community Agent

Community Agent Julie Balaam briefed Members about her role in supporting Biggleswade residents.

She explained that her wide-ranging role includes benefits advice, filling in of application forms, facilitating access to public services and providing support for those living in poverty. Ms Balaam noted that in the first half of the current financial year, she had received 29 new clients compared to 38 in total for the whole of the previous financial year. She indicated that a new flyer for the service was produced in May and in circulation.

Cllr Woodhead asked how Ms Balaam integrated with Central Bedfordshire Council social care and how that works and if she had any thoughts on preventing digital exclusion.

Ms Balaam noted that she worked closely with Adult Social Care and most of her referrals came from them. In terms of client support, she advocates for the client.

As for digital exclusion she noted that this was very relevant as forms for services and care were very detailed. She explained however that the BRCC offers an excellent IT outreach service which runs a session every Tuesday afternoon from the Kings Corner on the Kings Reach and is free. It is volunteer and staff based and helps people to use their portable devices. She added however that there was a waiting list.

Ms Balaam noted as a side issue that if she is helping a client who lives on the Kings Reach and doesn't have Wi-Fi, it is often difficult for her to do so because of the poor mobile reception there.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were no Members' questions.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. P9. Item 9a. Add the word 'to' in the resolution to read Members resolved to approve.

P11. Item 15. Change the sentence at the end of the paragraph to read "The tennis courts foundations have degraded to a point that would not allow any resurfacing to be placed on top of the existing base, rather each court would need to be rebuilt from scratch".

Subject to these amendments the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14th November 2023.

- b. Members **NOTED** the minutes of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on Thursday 2nd November 2023.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **UK Shared Prosperity report**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships presented the report. In addition to the report, he noted that in late November a high-level application was sent to CBC and included the items on the table in the report; estimates were still pending.

Members commenting on the report pointed to item 4 which related to possible digital car parking boards being placed at the north and south end of the town and asked where this would be positioned. Cllr Russell pointed out that although this was still up for discussion, the Biggleswade Joint Committee had indicated that this would be at the entrances to the town – possibly at the top of London Road and the bottom of Shortmead Street.

Cllr Russell explained that items 1 to 4 in the report were discussed at the BJC with Ward Councillors as practical items which would make the town centre more attractive and easier to use.

Following further discussion, Members **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** item 1-4 of the original report with the addition of item 5 below, subject to costing and consideration:

1. Electrical power supply improvements to the Market Square.
2. Levelling pavements and pedestrian areas in the Market Square.
3. Blue and Brown 'Town Centre' directional signs.
4. Appropriate car parking signage for the Town Centre.
5. Improvements to public toilets yet to be defined.

Members **RESOLVED** to **REJECT** items 5-8 of the original report.

b. **Twinning Proposal report**

Members discussed a recent twinning proposal made to the Council made an individual working with the Town Council of Bailly and Noisy-le-Roi in France.

Members noted that other twinning partnerships would not affect the current twinning the town had with Erlensee.

However, it was agreed that the matter should be deferred for 12 months.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to respond to the individual, thanking them for their interest.

c. **Biggleswade 5Km Run**

Members discussed the recent proposal by Mr Aiden Jones to the Town Centre Management Committee in October for a 5km run in Biggleswade.

Members noted that the route selected by Mr Jones may now not be appropriate due to improvement works being carried out on the Green Wheel and the closures of various footpaths.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to contact Mr Jones in the new year and suggest forming a Working Group with Mr Jones and his committee, in order to move forward on the proposal.

d. **Central Bedfordshire Council's Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Consultation**

Cllr Russell presented the report and explained that the aim of the planning obligations document was to provide detail about CBC's approach to securing developer contributions. She stressed that the consultation was a very important document when looking at strategic planning for the town as well as other developments around town.

Cllr Russell pointed out that the consultation document is supported by the Infrastructure Development Plan which seeks to identify the infrastructure needs across CBC to support planned growth.

Cllr Russell highlighted several aspects of the report.

- CBC will work with Town and Parish Councils in securing and delivering the necessary infrastructure.
- CBC will consider what Town and Parish Councils say about desirable infrastructure.
- The local transport plan is being reviewed.
- Outdoor sports – provision of sports facilities proposals will be considered with reference to the playing pitch strategy and the outdoor sport priority projects.
- Recreational open space – the document states that Town and Parish Councils should be considered first for taking on management of these areas.
- Cemeteries – developers would need to work with Town and Parish Councils as the burial authorities, when considering new developments and the need for a new cemetery.

Following discussions, Members **RESOLVED** for Cllr Russell to adapt the report, taking Members observations into consideration, before Officers forward on to CBC.

e. **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIPS)**

Members discussed the LCWIPS plan and noted their favour towards it.

Members **RESOLVED** that Officers respond to the survey favourably and include that the Town Council would like to see an underpass at Footpath 7 to cross the A1 to allow access to/from Upper Caldecote and Northill.

f. **Temporary Gate Closure Request for Franklins Recreation Ground**

Members discussed the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council whereby they requested the closure of the main gate on Franklins Recreation Ground due to construction work to be carried out adjacent to the grounds.

The work being carried out entails creating a new section of the Biggleswade Green Wheel. In order to ensure the safety of the public, the gate will need to remain closed between 4th January 2024 and 25th January 2024.

Members **RESOLVED** to grant permission.

g. **Street trading consent - new location for existing trader**

Members discussed the correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council with regards to a change in location for the current street trading consent for The Jerk Hub.

Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to write back to CBC with their following objections:

- As BTC is a statutory consultee, can CBC as the licensing authority explain why BTC was not consulted on this change?
- The Town Council is concerned that an additional day of trading appears to have been authorised by CBC (Thursday) without any consultation with BTC.
- Town Council is opposed to Thursday trading as it poses unfair competition to shops.
- Town Council is opposed to any increase in trading hours as they pose unfair competition to shops.
- Town Council opposes the proposed location as it's too close to the war memorial.

h. **Household Waste Recycling Centres (Tidy Tips) Proof of Residence**

Members discussed the correspondence from the Chairman of the Marston Moreteyne Community Centre with regards to change in policy regarding the use of Tidy Tips.

Following discussions, Members **RESOLVED** for Officers to:

- Write back in support of Marston Moreteyne Parish Council's views on the introduction of ID for the use of Tidy Tips.
- Write to Central Bedfordshire Council and encourage them to review their policy with regards to the requirements for proof of residence ID at Tidy Tips/ Recycling Centres
- Contact CBC and encourage them to include recycling of glass further in their recycling programme.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/03635/FULL - 16 Ivel Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 0AN**

Demolition of existing conservatory and replace with single storey rear extension on same footprint.

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

b. **CB/23/03712/FULL - 40 Rutherford Way, Biggleswade, SG18 8GA**

Loft conversion with roof lights.

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

c. **CB/23/03763/FULL - The Elms, Stratton Park, Dunton Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8QS**

Erection of a new front porch, rear infill extension and alterations to fenestration.

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

d. **CB/23/03263/FULL - 1 Foundry Lane, Biggleswade, SG18 8DW**

Demolition of the dwelling and outbuildings. Creation of two, two bed two storey dwelling houses and four, two bed apartments with first floor podium communal gardens and covered parking bays, cycle and bin storage.

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

However, the Town Council emphasised that the application must clearly follow the local and neighbourhood plans and must take account of all CBC Officer observations.

e. **CB/23/03748/FULL - 27 Kitelands Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8NX**

Single story vaulted side extension. Single story rear extension following demolition of lean-to. Second floor extension above garage stepped in 1m from boundary wall. Garage front brought forward 700mm to mirror 1m roof pitch down side of property.

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

f. **CB/23/03757/FULL - Car Park at Chamomile Gardens, Cardamom Street, Biggleswade**

Creation of an additional 15 new parking spaces and conversion of 4 existing standard spaces into 4 accessible parking bays. Installation of new light column.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments and on the grounds that the application provides adequate parking for the building.

g. **CB/23/03801/OUT - Land to the East of Langford Road, Biggleswade and North of Queens Way and Denny Crescent, Langford, Bedfordshire**

Outline Application: Erection of up to 170 dwellings including affordable housing, with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access. All matters reserved except for means of access.

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this application on the grounds that it will have an impact on the already congested roads in Langford and Biggleswade and coalescence with Biggleswade.

h. **CB/23/03806/FULL - 4 St Margarets Gardens, Biggleswade, SG18 8NU**

Two storey rear extension and single storey side extension following demolition of existing garage.

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

i. **CB/TCA/23/00600 - Street record, Barn Field Close, Biggleswade, Beds, SG18 8FN**

Works to trees within a Conservation Area: T1, T2, T3 - Holm Oaks, T4 - Birch, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10 - Japanese Pagoda – Cylindrical maintenance to Crown, reduce and deadwood all the trees as required.

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application and notes the work to be carried out.

j. **CB/TRE/23/00597 - The Close Cottage, 17A Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT**

Works to a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (MB/88/00004/G1): Yew Tree located front of drive, remove limb over the drive back to near crown break (T1).

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this application and supports the CBC Officers views in regards to this application.

k. **CB/23/03805/FULL - 4 The Grove, Biggleswade, SG18 8JW**

Single storey front extension and rear glass canopy/veranda.

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

- The impact on the street scene.
- Overbearing on adjoining properties.
- Potential loss of light.
- Use of non-similar materials.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

a. **Financial Administration**

- i) Balance sheet to 30/11/23.
- ii) Detailed Income and Expenditure to 30/11/23.
- iii) Payment Listing from 01/11/23 to 30/11/23.
- iv) Summary Income and Expenditure to 30/11/23.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the reports as laid out.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Biggleswade Part of Bridleway No.22 and Footpath No.65 Report**

Members **NOTED** the closure request.

Members agreed for Officers to write to CBC and request that the closure dates are kept to a minimum and the work is finished as soon as possible. Members noted that a Rights of Way Officer is invited to a forthcoming Town Council meeting to discuss issues arising out of closures such as this one and potential solutions.

b. **Public Notice Parts Of Public Footpath No. 25 And No. 27 Biggleswade Closed**

Members **NOTED** the public notice.

c. **Public Notice for temporary prohibition of traffic on Market Square**

Members **NOTED** the public notice.

d. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure - Bonds Lane/ Foundry Lane, Biggleswade**

Members **NOTED** the proposed temporary closure.

Members also asked that Officers respond to CBC and request more information regarding the developer providing a timeline for completing all road surfacing works for the entire Bonds Lane at the end of the development works.

e. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure - Sycamore Close, Biggleswade**

Members **NOTED** the proposed temporary closure.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

Mr Mario Evans – Owner of Jerk Hub

Mr Evans speaking in regard to Item 9g - Street trading consent, explained the reasons for his desire to relocate his business.

Mr Evans noted that the reason he applied for relocation of his street food trailer was to free up the parking spaces in the Town Centre and allow more people to be able to park.

As for his trading hours, he applied for later trading hours license so that he is in the Market from 5-9pm. Mr Evans indicated that due to the cost of living, he was unable to open a shop front and chose this type of business model.

As for his proximity to the war memorial, Mr Evans said that as a former army veteran, the war memorial had meaning for him.

Cllr How, CBC Ward Councillor

Cllr How thanked the Council for inviting the Community Agent to speak and noted that her presentation was very informative.

With regard to the phone signals on the Kings Reach, Cllr How pointed out that Cllr Tranter of CBC East was running a social media page and was in contact with all the major providers with regards to the signals there.

As for the works on Sycamore Close and Beech Avenue, Cllr How indicated that if there were any public complaints with regards to the work, they could be directed to him as he is in contact with the project manager of the road works.

15. **EXEMPT**

None.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **9.10pm**