



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 22nd 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 I Agnew
Cllr D Albone
Cllr G Barrett
Cllr P Guilcher
Cllr M North
Cllr S Patel
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
Mr I Lord – Place Shaping Manager
Ms F Gumush – Meetings Administrator

Members of the Public – 1

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 M Knight (Deputy Mayor), Cllr J Jones.

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**

None.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No member of the public wished to speak.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Cllr Thomas inquired about the status of the Ivel Bicycles which were being stored at the Bowls Club.

The Town Clerk advised that they would be moved by the Public Realm Team to the depot this week.

Cllr Woodhead thanked Officers for helping to organise a visit to Tritax Symmetry recently. He noted that visit to the Noatum Logistics and Co-op Distribution Centre at Stratton Business Park was fascinating and hoped it would develop relations with Tritax going forward.

Cllr Woodhead also pointed to activity around the former Red Lion pub and reminded that the Council had rejected planning applications for a change of use for this building. He added that activity seemed to suggest that the building was being prepared for use other than a licensed premises. Cllr Woodhead asked that Officers escalate the matter to Central Bedfordshire Planning Enforcement to investigate a potential breach of planning regulations.

Cllr Strachan pointing to the draft minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee asked if it was correct that there would be only four Ward Members of the Committee.

Cllr Russell, who is the Vice-Chairman of the BJC confirmed that following a decision by CBC it was agreed that there would be four Ward Members and four BTC Members of the Joint Committee.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. There were no amendments, and the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on Tuesday 8th August 2023.
- b. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee.
- c. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Town Centre Management Committee.
- d. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Biggleswade Joint Committee

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

P10 Item 9d – Biggleswade Station Interchange – Bus Gate. Cllr Albane commented that in the previous Council meeting held on 8th August 2023, Members had resolved for Officers to write to CBC asking for further detail. He added that the Place Shaping Manager had briefed Members with more details in an email and asked if the item would come back to another

Council Meeting. The Mayor responded that Officers would be bringing the item to the next Council meeting to be held on Tuesday 12th September.

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Meeting Structure Report**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships presented the report and thanked Members, for their inputs into the formulation of the report.

The Mayor expressed the view that the report provided some contextual and historical information for members to consider, and that members should focus on the objectives and recommendations within the report to move forward.

Members discussed the following:

- Time sensitivities of some agenda items.
- Central Bedfordshire Council's views on possible planning application extensions.
- Quorum for extraordinary meetings.
- Alternative meeting start and end times to the ones proposed in the report.
- Benefits / Impacts of changing to a one Full Council meeting per month format.
- Work-life balance for Members and Officers.

Pending an acceptable response from CBC regarding response deadlines to planning application feedback from the Council, Members **RESOLVED** to accept to trial monthly Council meetings, for a period of 6 months and that these meetings would be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Members **RESOLVED** that during the trial period for meetings to start at 7.00pm and continue until 9.30pm latest. If the business of the meeting cannot be completed by 9.30pm, business not completed should be deferred to the next Council meeting or an extraordinary meeting if required.

Members **RESOLVED** that all Committees should have four meetings a year and the scheduling should be cognisant of the budget setting for F&GP.

Members **RESOLVED** to not continue the Community Engagement Group meetings and to encourage members of the CEG to apply for co-option to the Biggleswade Joint Committee.

Before continuing with the meeting, the Mayor indicated that as other information was now available, he proposed for the Grasmere Road Network Rail Request Report to be discussed in the Exempt session. Members supported the proposal.

b. **Football Pitches Report**

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships presented the report and noted it was a result of discussions with local football teams about the inadequate provision of smaller football pitches for the growing youth team demand.

Officers consider the Stratton Way ground to be better placed to accommodate the request to create two smaller pitches from a single large pitch, as the Eagle Farm Road pitch was too small and too close to homes.

Members **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** the item until a report, including football bookings for the new season at the Stratton Way football pitch, can be brought to a future meeting.

c. **Drove Road Chapel Update**

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report and noted that Officers were receiving weekly updates on progress relating to outstanding items and specification items.

Member **RESOLVED** to agree to the recommendations that:

- Officers instruct the external project manager to proceed with option two of rebuilding the defective boundary wall at a cost of £17,450, sourced from the PWLB budget of £155,304.
- Discretion of up to £5,000 is provided to the external project manager to manage spend related to the agreed specification items for phase two.

d. **Car Park Repairs - Potholes**

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report and explained that Officers had obtained seven quotes for the car park pothole repairs.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation for the quote submitted by Linkway Surfacing to repair potholes at White Hart and Dan Albone car parks for £3,800, using a virement from Market Square Rates.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/23/02478/FULL - 12 Gilbert Avenue, Biggleswade, SG18 8FZ**

Loft conversion with rear dormer and front rooflights.

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

b. **CB/23/02602/FULL - 16 Tate Drive, Biggleswade, SG18 8UD**

Proposed (retrospective) single storey rear extension (sunroom).

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

c. **CB/23/02211/FULL - 5 Kingsfield Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8AT**

Alteration to shop front to include a new collection point for medication.

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

Members hoped that this would have the added benefit of alleviating the queues which formed at this shop.

d. **CB/23/02514/DOC – Land to North of Lindsell’s Level Crossing, Biggleswade, SG18 0AD**

Discharge of Condition 7 against planning permission CB/22/04935/VOC (Variation of condition number 8 of planning permission CB/21/02168/FULL: Construction of new ramped and stepped

bridleway bridge to facilitate the closure of Lindsell's level crossing; formation of new bridleway to western side of railway and associated works. Revised plans).

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to the Discharge of Condition 7 relating to artwork.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

- a. None.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Bigg Eats Event Update**

The Place Shaping Manager spoke about the event and indicated Officers' perception that it was a success. He explained that social media around the organisation and feedback from the traders was positive.

The Place Shaping Manager pointed out that learning from the event included deterring attendees from climbing over the war memorial, which was something the organisers attempted to do with temporary signage, and seating.

Following a recent meeting with the Royal British Legion it was agreed that the war memorial should be fenced off for all future events.

Members also discussed the following for future events:

- The possibility of the Royal British Legion attending to deter people away from the memorial.
- Appropriate fencing erected around the war memorial with enhanced signage to prevent people from entering during the event.
- The provision of larger bins or additional bins
- Officers to liaise with the organisers to ensure that more seating is provided for the next event.
- The next event is to be held on Thursday 14th September which will include a full road closure on Market Place.

Members **NOTED** the report.

b. **Barclays Bank Vehicle Parking**

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report and explained that as of 18th August, Barclays Bank had closed their Biggleswade Branch and would be using the Biggleswade Library to base their personal banker intermittently once the library re-opens. Until that time Officers have agreed that the Bank can park their mobile personal banking van at the White Hart Car Park every Friday for approximately six weeks.

Members **NOTED** the report.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Grasmere Road Network Rail Request Report**

Members discussed the report and **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendation to accept the increased licence offer and noted that were the works to take less time this would be better for the community.

b. **Kings Reach**

Members discussed the item and **AGREED** to discuss it in further detail at the next Capital Assets Working Group meeting. It was noted that Officers would seek to obtain information from the developer ahead of 12th September Town Council meeting agenda.

c. **Kitelands Play Area**

Members discussed various options relating to Kitelands Recreation Ground and the proposal for two tranches of external funding and **AGREED** to bring the item to the agenda of the Public Land & Open Spaces Committee meeting in October.

d. **Minutes & Recommendations of the Personnel Meeting**

Members of the Appeals Committee left the Chamber ahead of these discussions.

Members **NOTED** the Draft Minutes of the Personnel Committee.

Members **RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations, with the exception of the review of the Council's Capability Procedure which was not considered necessary.

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee will further review the minutes to ensure that they properly reflect the delegated powers of the Committee under the Council's Scheme of Delegation. Members to consider whether the delegated powers of the Personnel Committee needed to be updated at a future meeting.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **9.40pm**.