



**MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024**  
**AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**  
**THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr. J. Woodhead (Chairman)  
Cllr. S. Patel (Deputy Chairman)  
Cllr. D. Albone  
Cllr. G. Barrett (ex-officio voting Member)  
Cllr. M. Foster (ex-officio voting Member)  
Cllr. M. North  
Cllr. A. Skilton  
Cllr. D. Strachan  
Cllr. C. Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships  
Mr I Campbell – Community Development Manager  
Ms F Gumush – Deputy Administration & HR Manager  
Mx K Chambers – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 2 (1 online).

**Meeting Formalities:**

Following a reminder to meeting attendees that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman 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 Chairman 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 I. Agnew, Cllr. P. Guilcher.

**b. REMOTE ATTENDANCE**

Cllr M Knight.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

None.

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

None.

### **3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Woodhead noted that there are several upcoming events for the Town Council in the upcoming month and that Officers are working hard to make each well attended.

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

#### **a. Cllr G Fage, Biggleswade Ward Councillor**

Cllr Fage highlighted the Remembrance Day event and asked whether the start of the parade could be delayed further so that participants are waiting for less time before the start of the service. Cllr Woodhead responded that he would share this with the organisers for their consideration.

### **5. INVITED SPEAKER**

None.

### **6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

- a. Cllr Woodhead raised concerns that the Christmas lights are starting to be put up, but that previous discussions resolved for this to be started after the Remembrance Day service. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that this will be looked into and a response will be shared with Members.

### **7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. (P7) Item 9a – Change 'Chamber of Commerce' to 'Trade'.

(P9) Item 9e – Change 'county's' to 'counties'.

(P10) Item 10d – Change 'license' to 'licence'.

Subject to amendments, the Draft Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Centre Management Committee held on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2024**.

### **8. MATTERS ARISING**

#### **a. Banking Hubs**

Members noted that Lloyds Bank in Biggleswade is now closed on Fridays.

#### **b. Accessibility of Pedestrian Walkways**

Members asked whether there had been any response to concerns over accessibility. Officers responded that nothing had been received but that this would be chased.

### **9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **a. French & German Twinning**

Members asked whether community groups would be invited to be involved with the twinning process should it go ahead. Cllr Woodhead responded that the first meeting

was on an informal basis and that the specifics relating to twinning events and responsibilities will be developed in future.

Members raised concerns that progress has been made without previous consultation with Members. Cllr Woodhead replied that the idea was primarily initiated by Bailly / Noisy Le Roi and by Erlensee, but that no actions have been progressed yet. Members also noted that Noisy Le Roi is already twinned with Albion, Michigan and Godella, Spain.

Members discussed the idea of creating a list of ideas and outcomes that the Council wishes to achieve through twinning.

Members raised that Christmas cards used to be exchanged with the twinned town and that this should be restarted this year for Erlensee and for the potential new towns.

Members **RESOLVED** that Officers engage with both towns and establish a modest baseline for twinning.

b. **Lost and Found Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy**

Members asked what is considered a public premise under Martyn's Law. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that it is defined as a collection of open spaces outside buildings which form a square.

Members asked whether DBS checks would be required in relation to this policy. The Community Development Manager replied these would be needed for anyone working with children and vulnerable adults.

Members queried whether the policy would act as a refresher for Officers in the lead up to big events. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed that this would happen before any events.

Members **RESOLVED** to enable Officers to enact the change to the current policy once Martyn's Law has received Royal Assent.

c. **Bigg Eats Update**

Members highlighted the importance of working with local businesses to ensure that it does not have a negative impact. Members raised concerns about moving the event to pay day weekend and introducing merchandising and packaging. The Community Development Manager responded that Officers are eager to continue fostering positive relationships between participants and local businesses. He also added that the new packaging could be provided by a local business.

Members **RESOLVED** to enable Officers to negotiate with the Bigg Eats organisers and local businesses, including the following action points:

- Attracting greater cuisine/drink options and variety of stalls by reaching out to local establishments and food trucks.
- Increasing the minimum requirement from 8 to 12 stalls.
- Increasing the flat £300 fee to £500 for each event.
- Extending the timetabled 7 events (March-September) to 10 events, by the organisers incorporating hired bottle gas heaters, sound and light.
- Introducing the Bigg Eats event offer routinely into local events.
- Invite Bigg Eats organisers to source cold food/drinks trucks for BTC

- recreation grounds under seasonal licence at £100 per trader.
- A visiting mobile 'other towns' Bigg Eats event offer with a built-in flat fee per event.
- From March to September, operate a Sunday afternoon Bigg Eats event offer monthly.

## 10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### a. **Crime Data**

Members asked that a more comparative style report be provided in future so that differences can be identified over long periods of time. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that the police do not have capacity to provide analysis, but that comparisons could be included by Officers.

Members asked whether Shopwatch will resume soon. The Community Development Manager responded that the previous member responsible for coordinating meetings no longer volunteers in that capacity, and that this will likely resume in future. He also added that the Community Safety Group will now be meeting quarterly instead of monthly due to low attendance.

Members **NOTED** the report.

### b. **BTC Business Forum Event**

Members asked whether any responses have been received from the feedback form shared after the event. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that five responses have been received so far.

Members discussed running the event annually after the next event in March 2025. The next event would focus on ensuring attendance of larger companies and building a network within Biggleswade. Members asked that future topics for discussion be shared with the Committee as event planning progresses.

The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships noted that there is intention to establish a business page on the Council's website. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive added that this would direct local businesses to available grants and contacts.

Members **NOTED** the report.

### c. **Events Calendar Update**

Members discussed the potential for the Flower Show to include involvement from the Biggleswade Allotment Association.

Members raised concerns about the costs relating to each event and how these would be funded. The Deputy Administration & HR Manager responded that charges are low to encourage new markets, but that these could be increased if the offer is continued.

Members also asked whether having multiple markets on the same day would cause unnecessary competition and/or any overcrowding. The Deputy Administration & HR Manager responded that the invited markets would not have the same number of stalls as other towns and that capacity has been discussed with the Market Superintendent.

Members **NOTED** the report.

d. **Christmas Lights Switch On Update**

Members asked whether the Christmas Tree delivery date provides enough time for it to settle and be decorated. The Deputy Administration & HR Manager responded that this will be investigated with the provider and made earlier if possible.

Members also raised whether the Christmas lights will be removed by Twelfth Night. The Deputy Administration & HR Manager responded that she has consulted with the electrician, decorator and Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure that this happens.

Members **NOTED** the report.

e. **Remembrance Day Update**

The Deputy Administration & HR Manager thanked Cllr Fage for his comments and these will be shared with other organisers for their consideration.

Members **NOTED** the report.

f. **Market Square Vision Update – Consultancy Expression of Interest**

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive noted that Members would need to decide the best way to share the near-final draft of the document, as this would incur further costs to the process if Members chose to meet face-to-face or virtually with the consultation. Members expressed interest in receiving this digitally and making comments within another meeting.

Members asked whether the document would be approved by Members in a meeting setting before being finalised. The Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships responded that the document would be circulated in November/December for feedback, which would then be shared with the consultants. Once reworked, this would be presented to a meeting in the new year. Members asked that physical copies be provided when shared.

Members asked whether the Council would be able to adapt the final document in future should any projects emerge. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive confirmed that this document will be owned by the Council and therefore can be changed in future.

Members **NOTED** the report.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

a. **Cllr G Fage, Biggleswade Ward Councillor.**

Cllr Fage commented that the publicity surrounding Charter Market is an asset and that it has done well over the summer period.

Cllr Fage noted that the Committee's finances were not included in the agenda and that there should be an opportunity for public scrutiny in future. The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that the Original Estimate Planning Cycle for 2025/26 was agreed at Council and that individual Member consultation was taking place informally with Standing Committees. The conclusions would then go to F & GP and full Council for formal resolution. He added that Officers are working hard to provide well-considered budgets and that these will be shared accordingly.

12. **EXEMPT**

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting at **8:12pm.**