



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2025
AT 7.00 PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr M Foster (Mayor)
Cllr G Barrett (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr I Agnew
Cllr D Albone
Cllr P Guilcher
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr S Patel
Cllr M Russell
Cllr S Sajid
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 E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Ms H Calvert – Administration & HR Manager
Mx K Chambers – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 3 (1 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 J Jones, Cllr A Skilton.

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

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

a. Mr Harjit Nandha, Postmaster at Bonds Lane Post Office

Mr Nandha raised concerns about the recent announcement that the Biggleswade Lloyds bank branch will be closing in November 2025 and that this should allow the town to be eligible for a banking hub.

b. Cllr Grant Fage, Biggleswade Ward Councillor

Cllr Fage noted that there is an ongoing audit on banking provision being conducted by Central Bedfordshire Council, which could benefit Biggleswade's banking situation.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

a. Northill Parish Council

Cllr Daniels highlighted that Northill Parish Council had three goals: to provide an update on planning; to understand Town Council's perspective; and to gain the Town Council's support. He raised concerns about the existing crossing on Footpath 7 and the dangers it poses to pedestrians. He also noted that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan consultation in 2022 had 100 responses linked to an A1 crossing, but that no provision was made when published. Cllr Daniels asked the Town Council to join with Northill Parish Council in objecting to any future applications and promoting an underpass over a bridge.

Members asked whether any contact has been made with Sainsburys in Biggleswade due to their proximity to the proposed crossing. Cllr Daniels responded that this has not happened but would be beneficial.

Members noted upcoming development on local roundabouts and the potential increase of traffic, making this crossing more unsafe and increasing the need for the crossing.

Members asked why an underpass would be better for that crossing. Mr Mike Wells responded that a bridge would include a long detour for pedestrians and cyclists and very tall in height. He highlighted that an underpass would be less costly than other highways projects and promote less road traffic in that area.

Members asked whether the underpass could also be used as a bridleway. Cllr Daniels answered that he hoped this could also be accommodated.

Members asked what the overall cost of a bridge or an underpass would be. Mr Wells noted that they have asked for this information from the developers and CBC, but the information has not been forthcoming yet.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- a. Members asked whether Items 9d and 9e could be discussed together as the topics were related. The Chairman agreed to this approach.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

- a. Item 7a (Minutes of TC 10/12/2024): Make reference to Crab Lane as 'the area'.
Item 8a (Dunton Lane Road Closure): Change 'shared' to 'share';

Item 13a (Access for All Update): Include the concerns raised by Members in the discussion.

Subject to these amendments, the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 7th January 2025**.

- b. Item 9a (Precept 2025-26): Ensure the resolution implies that the precept was set.

Subject to these amendments, the Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Town Council Meeting held on **Tuesday 21st January 2025**.

- c. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 14th January 2025**.
- d. Members **NOTED** the Minutes of the Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 28th January 2025**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Item 6b (Footpath on Rivel lvel): Members asked for an update to come to the next Town Council meeting.

Item 7a (Minutes of TC 07/01/25): Members asked whether any update on the cutting schedule for Crab Lane has been received. Officers confirmed that there still has not been any response, but that this will be chased again.

- b. There were no matters arising.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- a. **Meeting Schedule 2025-2026**

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Meeting Schedule 2025-26, pending the following date changes were made:

- Personnel Committee (03/06/25) be moved back to 20th May 2025.
- Town Centre Management (15/07/25) needs a start time of 7pm.
- Council – Broader Budget Setting (18/11/25) move to 25th November 2025.
- Additional F&GP meeting on 6th January 2026.

- b. **Christmas Lights Tender – Expression of Interest**

Members discussed the installation and removal of the Christmas lights and how best to schedule this around key events (e.g. Remembrance Day Parade, Twelve Days of Advent). Members agreed that the lights should not be installed before the parade, switched off on the 6th January 2026 and removed a minimum of 12 days after Christmas.

Members discussed the possibility of extending the specification to include more Christmas lights on adjoining streets to the High Street and having a laser light show as done in previous years.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the Christmas Light Tender document and that it be discussed at the Town Centre Management Committee on Tuesday 18th February 2025 for any further specification suggestions.

Members **RESOLVED** that the following Members would sit on the assessment panel for the tender evaluation:

- Cllr M Russell
- Cllr Jonathan Woodhead
- Cllr Sarju Patel
- Cllr Mark Foster

c. **Safety of Lithium-ion Batteries Campaign**

Members **RESOLVED** to write a formal letter of support to Mr Ron Bailey and Electrical Safety First.

d. **Lloyds Bank Closure**

Members discussed the upcoming closure of Lloyds in November 2025 and that the town will only have one building society remaining in Biggleswade (Nationwide), who have a national campaign promising to keep facilities open until 2028. Members raised concerns about the impact this will have on residents and the need for a banking hub.

Member **RESOLVED** to:

- Formally request Cash Access to reassess Biggleswade as a priority location for a banking hub, given the changed circumstances.
- Engage with local stakeholders, including Cash Access, the Post Office, local businesses and residents, to push for the establishment of a banking hub.
- Write to the local MP and bank representatives to ensure financial services remain accessible in Biggleswade.
- Support the local Postmaster's efforts to bring a banking hub to Biggleswade by facilitating discussions with relevant banking bodies and advocating for a swift resolution.
- Write to Lloyds Bank PLC to express the Council's disappointment in their decision made without public consultation. The Town Council also seeks reassurances that alternative banking provision be made available for those customers reliant on branch transactions. The Council should also express concern that with the branch closure there will be fewer ATMs in the town operated by banks or building societies.
- Write to CBC Officers regarding the ongoing audit of banking provision in the area.
- Approach local Councils to gain their support and understand their concerns relating to the reduction of banking facilities in the local area.

e. **Establishment of a Banking Hub in Biggleswade**

Members **RESOLVED** the above resolutions for both items.

10. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

a. **CB/25/00151/FULL – 36 Oak Crescent, Biggleswade, SG18 8JT**

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

b. **CB/25/00254/VOC – The Leylands, 106 Broom Road, Stanford, Biggleswade, SG18 9JE**

Members did not comment as the planning application falls outside of Biggleswade.

c. **CB/25/00187/FULL – Unit N, A1 Retail Park, London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8NE**

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

d. **CB/24/03449/FULL – Unit 1, Symmetry Park, Gold Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8YY**

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

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED**.

12. **ACCOUNTS**

Financial Administration

a. **Position & Accounts for December 2024**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the December 2024 Financial Management report.

13. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

a. **Access for All Update – 06/01/2025**

Members **NOTED** the report.

b. **Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Pegasus Drive, Biggleswade**

Members **NOTED** the report.

c. **CB/24/01037/OUT – Site of Former Woodlands Nurseries Update**

Members **RESOLVED** that Officers engage with Northill Parish Council and organise a meeting to discuss the Town Council's engagement.

d. **Dunton Lane Cable Works Update**

Members **RESOLVED** that Officers ask for more up to date information on the works.

14. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

No one from the public wished to speak.

15. **EXEMPT**

a. **Planning Update**

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations.

b. **Biggleswade Community Sports Hub**

Members **NOTED** the attachment.

c. **Town Clerk's Performance Monitoring: Outcomes 2023/2024 and Objectives 2024/25**

Members NOTED the outcomes.

The Mayor closed the meeting at **8:30 pm**.