



**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**ON TUESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH 2025**  
**AT 7.00PM AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**  
**THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr D Strachan (Chairman)  
Cllr I Agnew (Deputy Chairman)  
Cllr D Albone  
Cllr G Barrett (Ex-officio Member)  
Cllr M Foster (Ex-officio Member)  
Cllr M Knight  
Cllr M North  
Cllr M Russell  
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive  
Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO  
Ms Helen Calvert – Administration & HR Manager  
Miss A Green – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 6

**Meeting Formalities:**

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, 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 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 the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- a. None.

**NO APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- a. Cllr Sajid.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

None.

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

Cllr Thomas for Item 9b.

Cllr Knight for Item 9b.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman had no announcements.

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

a. **Mr Dean Hawkins, Community and Careers Practitioner at Ivel Valley College**

Mr Hawkins expressed his support for the Biggleswade Community Group, commending their work in publishing Biggleswade Community News. Mr Hawkins highlighted that Ivel Valley are a major distributor of the print magazine, and the continued publication of the newsletter facilitates interaction between the wider community and sixth formers from the College. He urged Members to continue to support the group and consider their application for funding.

b. **Mr Tim Soden, The BIGG Theatre**

Mr Soden, as a representative of the BIGG Theatre, formally requested Members consider the grant application of £2000, to enable the organisation to complete ongoing improvements to The Green Room. He stated the funding would pay for - skirting boards, ceiling hatches, painting, furnishing and an additional set of curtains to separate the main theatre space from other areas of the building.

Mr Soden expressed that the organisation intends to use the Green Room as an asset to the community. Offering a range of uses such as music lessons, counselling sessions and meetings.

Additionally, Mr Soden informed Members that The BIGG Theatre are currently in conversation with Lloyd's Bank, about the possibility of using the Green Room as a community banking hub once the Biggleswade branch is permanently closed.

c. **Rhiannon Barrow, Biggleswade Community Gardens & Volunteer at Future Action Biggleswade**

Ms Barrow thanked Members for previous support and last year's funding. Due to last year's grant the Community Gardens were able to acquire benches, arches and equipment to support planting. Ms Barrow informed Members that this year's funding would be allocated to the purchasing of compost, fruit trees and bulbs.

Ms Barrow also spoke on behalf of FAB (Future Action Biggleswade). She explained to Members that the funding would be used for future venue hire, which in turn will enable FAB to continue to host events that promote local sustainable eco businesses, support independent businesses and bring more business to Biggleswade.

5. **INVITED SPEAKER**

No guest speaker was invited.

6. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

None.

7. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

No amendments were made to the minutes.

The Minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

8. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. The Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 14th January 2025.

Cllr Russell suggested that in future layout of minutes the exempt item comes before the section that reads "The Chairman closed the meeting".

9. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

a. **Budget Planning Cycle 2026-27**

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO presented a report to members and asked that they note the report and recommend to council to adopt the budget planning cycle for 2026/27.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the budget planning cycle for 2026/27.

b. **Grants Applications 2024/25 – Tranche Two**

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO presented a written report to Members. He requested Members consider the grant applications without prejudice and allocate funds where they deem appropriate.

Members were presented with and considered all eleven grant application requests.

Members **APPROVED** ten out of the eleven grants' applications, as detailed below:

APPLICANT:	AMOUNT REQUESTED	AMOUNT AWARDED
Above and beyond Cancer	£500.00	£500.00
Biggleswade History Society	£900.00	£900.00
Biggles FM	£1,850.00	£1,850.00
Biggleswade Community Gardens	£470.00	£470.00
Biggleswade Community Group	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
CHUMS Charity	£2,000.00	£2,000.00

Future Action Biggleswade	£150.00	£150.00
Hear2Listen CIC	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
Keech Hospice Care	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Biggleswade Community Carnival	£1,000.00	£1,000.00

The Chair, Cllr Strachan, added that successful applications would be paid for before the end of the 2024/2025 financial year, which is in line with the Council's Grants Policy.

## 10. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### a. **Insurance Renewal**

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO provided Members with a report.

Members noted that they would have preferred to see a statement that the Officers are content with BTC's level of insurance, as this falls under Officers' remit. Additionally, Members questioned how BTC's insurance compared with organisations such as similar Town Councils.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded there is no recommended good practice as far as he was aware, and we don't compare, contrast or benchmark against similar Town Councils because policies are Council specific.

Members **NOTED** the report.

### b. **Orchard Centre Marketing Plan**

The Administration & HR Manager presented a report written by The Deputy Administration & HR Manager summarising the proposed actions to promote The Orchard Centre.

Members thanked Officers for the report. It was noted that Facebook and Instagram's popularity have dwindled and suggested it may be worth expanding to TikTok as another avenue to promote the Orchard Centre.

In response to the points raised by other Members, one Member questioned whether the proposed actions were within budget.

The Head of Finance & Deputy RFO responded that there were pre-approved funds within the budget if Members resolved to move forward with actions laid out in the report.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive clarified that the actions suggested within the report would be rolled out on a trial basis and reviewed.

Members **RESOLVED** for a report to be presented at the next F&GP meeting detailing how the Marketing Campaign has impacted Orchard Centre bookings.

11. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

- a. No member of the public wished to speak.

It was **RESOLVED** to go into the exempt session in view of the nature of the business to be discussed.

12. **EXEMPT**

- a. Optimum Operating Model for Long-Term Letting