



MINUTES OF THE BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 10th JUNE 2025
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE, SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr J Woodhead (Mayor)
Cllr D Albone (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr I Agnew
Cllr G Barrett
Cllr M Foster
Cllr M Knight
Cllr M North
Cllr S Patel
Cllr M Russell
Cllr S Sajid
Cllr C Thomas

Mr P Tarrant – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Mr K Hosseini – Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships
Mr E Bour – Head of Finance & Deputy RFO
Miss A Green – Committee Clerk

Members of the Public – 0

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. P Guilcher, Cllr. J Jones, Cllr. A Skilton, Cllr. D Strachan, Cllr. S Sajid (apologies for exempt session).

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

- a. The Mayor informed Members that he has had a very busy start to the civic year, attending various events such as: the Jones 5K Run on 25th May; a briefing last week with the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff for all new Mayors and Chairs of Councils; the Biggleswade Good Neighbours AGM; the Biggleswade Community Carnivals annual duck race on Sunday 8th June; and a visit to the Third Biggleswade Brownies, where he discussed the environment and the Eco Badge.
- b. The Mayor announced that his chosen mayoral charities for the year 2025-26 would be Biggleswade Good Neighbours and Magpas Air Ambulance. He expressed a hope that over the next year the Council can run several events that support both those charities who provide support for members of the Biggleswade community.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present, either online or in person.

5. INVITED SPEAKER

- a. **Julie Balaam, Biggleswade Community Agent, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BedsRCC).**

Addressing the Council, Ms Balaam outlined her role as Biggleswade Community Agent to Members.

Ms Balaam's last report to Council was in December 2023, where she provided Members with an update on Q1 and Q2 for the financial year 2023-2024.

Ms Balaam informed Members that since her last report to Council, the demand for the services of the Community Agent have remained high. As such she has seen a considerable increase in the number of new clients as well as the number of returning clients.

She noted that the clientele of the Community Agent has broadened over the last financial year, to include a greater proportion of individuals who are working age and/or families, alongside an increase in the complexity the needs of many clients.

Supporting those over 65 remains a core part of the Community Agent's role. When supporting residents within this demographic the main focus is on assisting with long-term health or disability issues and helping to ensure older people remain independent and/or reduce the risk of self-neglect. An increasing proportion of people are facing financial hardship; this is especially true for those over 65 and often these individuals require support with applications for means-tested benefits such as pension credit and housing benefit and/or foodbank referrals. Ms Balaam highlighted the countywide trend of increasing reliance on food banks, drawing attention to the fact that many people are struggling as a knock-on effect of the cost-of-living crisis.

Ms Balaam outlined the case studies provided in her report to Members to illustrate practical examples of the support her role provides to residents.

Ms Balaam emphasised the unique support that the role of Community Agent can offer. She noted that community agents can assist in a variety of ways, thanks to the continuity of support they provide and the flexibility of the role. This makes it easier to support members of the community compared to other organisations.

Concluding her address to Members, she thanked the Council for their interest and support.

Members thanked Ms Balaam for her detailed report.

Members noted that they had been in discussions with Lloyds Bank regarding its upcoming closure. When they asked how the Council could support residents ahead of the closure, the bank advised that encouraging residents to adopt online banking would be the most effective approach. It was noted that in-branch tutorials on online banking are currently available, and Members suggested that this could provide an opportunity for the Community Agent to offer additional support to residents during this transition.

Ms Balaam thanked Members for the information. She informed them that, in a similar vein, BedsRCC offers a service called the "You Can Do It" service, which is invaluable in helping people become more confident in using facilities such as online banking. She added that while the move to online services is inevitable and it is important to prepare people for this shift, we must also acknowledge that there will continue to be a proportion of people who cannot access online services. It is essential that we ensure these individuals are supported as best we can.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

There were no Members' questions.

7. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

a. Minutes of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on Tuesday 29th April 2025

Pg 14. of the agenda – Pg 1. Minutes of the Annual Assembly- Cllr. D Albone was incorrectly recorded as in attendance at this meeting.

Pg 18. of the agenda – Pg 5. Minutes of the Annual Assembly - Typographical error in paragraph 4 of Central Bedfordshire - Ward Councillor Update. The name of the school referenced by Cllr Fage in his report should read "Edward Peake" not "Edward Peak".

Pg 19. of the agenda – Pg 6. of the Minutes of the Annual Assembly - There is a typographical error in the name listed. The name should read "Sally Hacking Ferguson" instead of "Sally Heley Ferguson."

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on Tuesday 29th April 2025.

b. Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting held on Tuesday 13th May 2025

The minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of the Annual Assembly Meeting held on **Tuesday 13th May 2025**.

8. MATTERS ARISING

Pg. 7 Minutes of the Annual Statutory Meeting – Item 16g: Proposed Temporary Road Closure – Saffron Rd, Biggleswade.

Members questioned whether the Clerk had received any update from CBC or Highways regarding the closure of Saffron Road.

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive responded that Officers had received a response and that he was persevering to find an adequate practical solution both for residents and staff of the Council.

9. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Call For Sites Update

Members noted that, a Working Group would likely need to be initiated to properly consider each Site referral.

Members raised concerns over the two sites that had previously been suggested for usage as health centres being put forward for residential development.

Members **RESOLVED** the following:

- For the Clerk to formally write to CBC regarding the £15,000,000 of funding allocated towards the building of a health hub for Biggleswade so as to understand if this was still a viable option.
- To **NOTE** the update.

b. Central Bedfordshire Local Plan Update

Members **NOTED** the update.

c. Home to School Transport Consultation

Members **NOTED** the documentation provided by CBC.

d. Unity Trust Bank and CCLA Bank Account Signatories

The Head of Finance and Deputy RFO outlined the report to Members.

Members **RESOLVED** that the Chairman of TCM and the Mayor become additional signatories on the Unity Trust Accounts and CCLA accounts.

e. A1 Underpass

Members expressed dissatisfaction with the response received from National Highways. It was noted that the Working Group will reconvene in July, at which point the next steps will be determined.

Members **NOTED** the update.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

a. CB/25/01305/FULL - 19 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JE

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

b. CB/25/01306/ADV - 19 High Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0JE

The Town Council **OBJECTS** to this application on the grounds that Members are opposed to internally illuminated signage within conservation areas.

c. **CB/25/01292/ADV - Texaco, 173 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EJ**

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

d. **CB/25/01512/FULL - 3 Broadmead, Biggleswade, SG18 8LF.**

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

e. **CB/25/00991/FULL - 25 Nursery Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0HR**

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

f. **CB/25/01634/FULL - 1 Poplar Close, Biggleswade, SG18 0EW**

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

g. **CB/25/01443/FULL - The Yorkshire Grey, 140 London Road, Biggleswade, SG18 8EL**

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

h. **CB/25/01576/FULL - Land to the rear of No.2 and No.8 St Andrews Close, Biggleswade, SG18 8BB**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments; however, Members wished to make CBC aware of their concerns over the potential risk of overdevelopment.

i. **CB/25/00764/ADV - 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; however, Members wished to draw CBC's attention to the additional illuminated wall signs requested in the application, noting that if granted, this would be a departure from the consistency of signage across the retail park.

j. **CB/25/01732/FULL - 15 Sandy View, Biggleswade, SG18 0HS**

The Town Council has **NO OBJECTION** to this application, subject to consultation with neighbours and consideration of their comments; However, Members requested that CBC review the application to ensure there is adequate access to the property.

11. **PLANNING APPLICATION OUTCOMES**

This report was **NOTED.**

12. ACCOUNTS

Financial Administration

a. Internal Audit – Final Report 2024-25

The Town Clerk & Chief Executive thanked Officers for their hard work in preparing for the Internal Audit. Members reiterated these comments and recognised the hard work of the Finance Team in preparing for the audit.

Members **APPROVED** the report and congratulated Officers.

b. Annual Governance & Accountability Return

The Town Clerk presented the report.

- i. Members **APPROVED** the Annual Governance Statement – Section 1 of the Annual Return for the financial year 2023/2024.
- ii. Members **APPROVED** the Accounts and Accounting Statements (Section 2) contained in the Annual Return for the 2023/2024 financial year.

Both the Town Clerk and Mayor signed the documentation.

Members also noted that the electors' rights of inspection of accounts will begin on Monday 23rd June 2025 and end on Friday 1st August 2025 consistence with Section 25 to 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

c. Financial Administration

Members **NOTED** the report.

13. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- a. There were no items for information.

14. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

- a. No members of the public were present, either online or in person.

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

15. EXEMPT

a. Exempt minutes of the Annual Statutory meeting 13th May 2025

The exempt minutes were **APPROVED** as an accurate record the Annual Statutory meeting 13th May 2025.

b. **Century House Report**

Members discussed the report by the Head of Governance & Strategic Partnerships and **AGREED** to the recommendations subject to Members amendment.

c. **Drove Road Report**

Members discussed the report by the Head of Finance and Deputy RFO and **AGREED** to the recommendations subject to Members amendment.

d. **Christmas Report**

Members **RESOLVED** to note the information provided and adopt the recommendations laid out within the report

The Mayor closed the meeting at **7:48 pm**